

Domestic Violence* and the Role of the Church

***a.k.a. Relationship Abuse,
Interpersonal Abuse, Intimate Partner
Violence, Family Violence**

**A CRC Communications webinar October 1, 2014
presented by Bonnie Nicholas and Tara Aday**

The Presenters

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What is it?

Domestic – refers to relationship

Blood, marriage, residence, intimate partners

Violence – refers to harm

Physical, sexual, emotional

*“Any attempt to impose my will on another human
being is an act of violence”*

- Mahatma Ghandi

True or False

- Domestic Violence always involves physical harm such as black eyes and broken bones.
- Couples counseling is needed in cases of marriage or relationship abuse.
- It's easy to get out of a violent relationship - just leave.
- Relationship abuse is pretty rare, affecting about 1 in 20 people.
- There are ample community resources to address domestic abuse. Churches don't really have a big role to play.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

A pattern of learned behavior that one person uses to control another in an intimate relationship.

- At the root of all domestic abuse is one person's need for power and control over the other.
- Although every abusive situation is different, the common element in all abusive situations is fear of one's partner.
- Mental illness, substance abuse, and stress do not cause domestic violence; however, they may intensify abusive behaviors.

Domestic violence is an anger management issue.

Domestic violence is a small issue that only affects a few people.

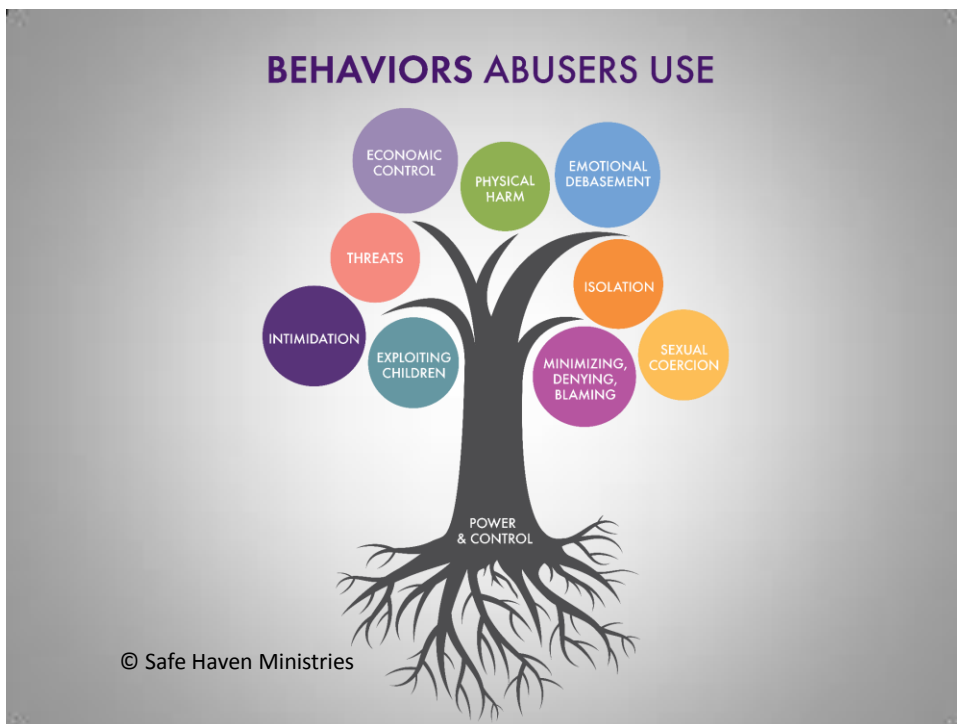
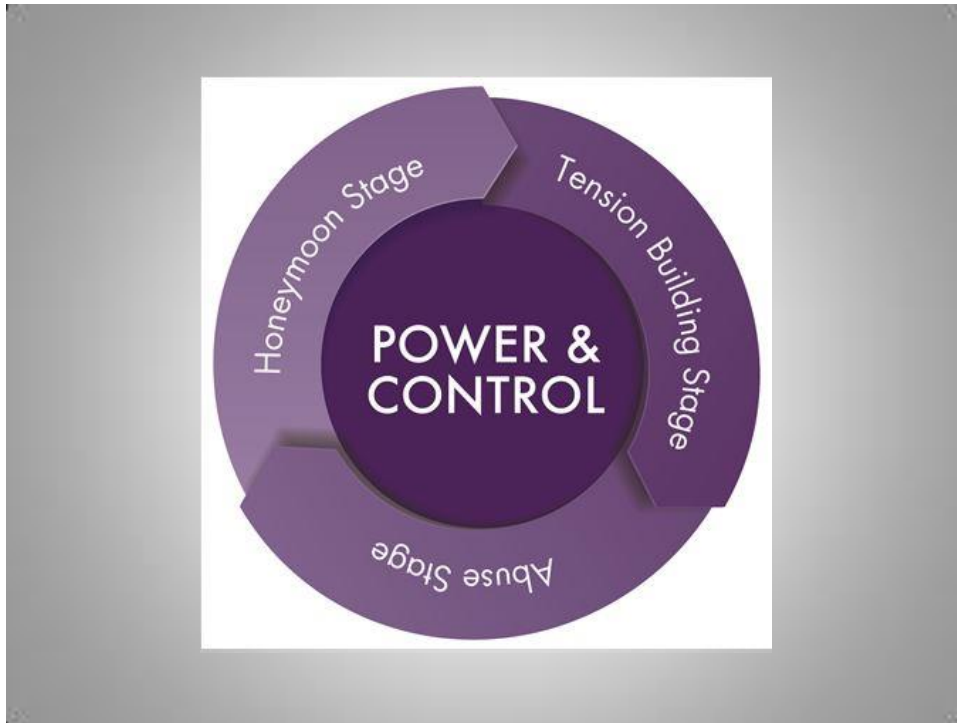
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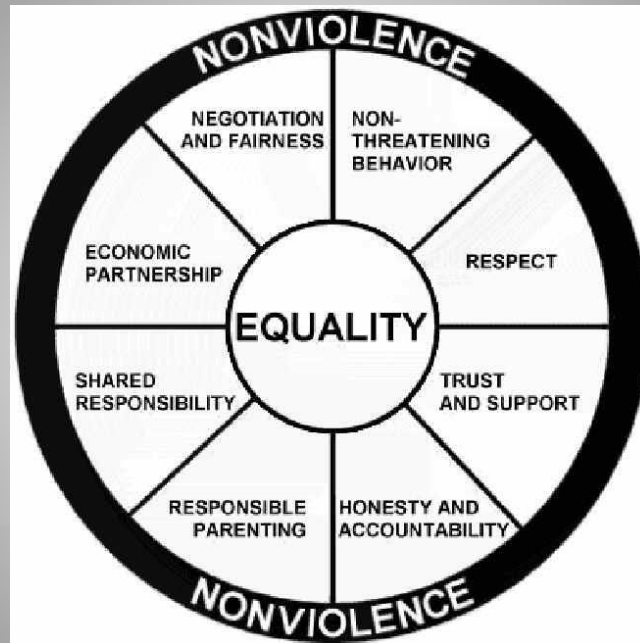
Domestic violence is caused by substance abuse.

DV doesn't happen in my church.

POWER & CONTROL

PHYSICAL	PSYCHOLOGICAL	SEXUAL	SPIRITUAL
Behaviors that can cause bodily harm to the victim or harm or destroy the victim's property.	Behaviors that cause the victim to suffer emotionally, including isolation from friends and family.	Forcing undesired sexual behavior onto the victim.	Using faith or religious beliefs to justify or perpetrate abuse, which often results in psychological trauma.





The Way of Our Lord

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves... In your relationships with one another, have the same attitude of mind Christ Jesus had: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing ... he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross! Philippians 2: 3- 11

Two Kinds of Power

The kingdoms of this world place their trust in whatever coercive power they can use over others ... The **“power of the sword”**

By CONTRAST, the kingdom of God refuses to use coercive power over others, choosing instead to rely on a power shown in humble, self-sacrificing love ... The **“power of the cross”**

Transforming, Ultimate Power = The Cross

Why Do Churches Care?

- **We are a light to the world**
 - We are not representing Christ well when abuse exists in our communities
 - Our marriages are a reflection of Christ and the Church
- **We are one body**
 - When one part hurts, it hurts the whole body
 - We are called to love and to care for one another



**Sunday school teacher,
coffee hour server,
domestic violence victim.**

**30% OF ALL WOMEN REPORT BEING ABUSED
IN THEIR LIFETIME.**
- U.S. DEPT. OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

**HAVE FAITH.
YOU CAN DO SOMETHING
ABOUT THIS AT YOUR CHURCH.**

OPENEYESOFFAITH.ORG

Recognizing the WARNING SIGNS of exposure to domestic violence in

- Young children (2-5 years)
- Elementary children
- Middle school children
- Teenagers
- Adults

WARNING SIGNS

Elementary School

- Difficulty paying attention
- Changes in attentiveness or performance
- Sense of shame & guilt
- This is the age when behaviors develop

Middle and High School

- Showing signs of aggression
- Engage in risky behavior
- Difficulty with rules
- Victimization or perpetration of violence within own dating relationships

LONG-TERM IMPACT ACROSS LIFESPAN

Warning Signs in Adults

- Unexplained bruises or injuries
- Absences from work or school
- Low self-esteem; lack of confidence
- Trouble identifying feelings and expressing needs
- Fear of conflict – gives in easily
- Self-blame
- Making excuses

DV Continuum of Care

LEVEL OF PHYSICAL DANGER	Guarded – General Risk	Elevated – Significant Risk	Extreme – Severe Risk
WARNING SIGNS	Occasional incidents of belittling, name calling, and truth twisting; may believe partner is caring, but feels like “walking on eggshells”.	Frequent incidents involving yelling, screaming, hitting, stalking, making threats; there is isolation from friends and family and fear of partner.	Frequent incidents of being beaten physically and verbally, threats with a knife, gun, or some other weapon, strangulation, or destroying property; fear of death from partner.
URGENCY OF IMMEDIATE CARE	Minimum to Moderate , but offering consistent support and care is essential	Moderate ; offering consistent support and care is essential	Maximum
GOAL OF CARE	Offer the one victimized advocacy and counseling resources so that they can learn about domestic violence and be proactive in thinking about safety.	Safety and risk reduction is a priority, as the situation is dangerous. Education about domestic violence and counseling/advocacy resources are needed, as well as a safety plan so the one victimized is empowered, knowing how to get safety.	Safety is the top priority. This is an extremely dangerous situation. Offer resources to help the one victimized get to a safe place like a shelter. Suggest involving police when leaving or returning to gather belongings.

← Respect and honor victim/survivor's decisions each step of the way →

What can we do?

Questions for Tara:

- What is Safe Haven Ministries?
- What are some of the needs that you see, and how can churches help meet those needs?
- What do you wish every pastor and church leader knew about relationship abuse?
- What are practical actions a church can take?

Top 10 Checklist for Churches

1. Do you offer a listening ear?
2. Is there abuse information in the restroom?
3. Do you partner with the local shelter?
4. Is abuse or dating violence discussed in youth group?
5. Do you make appropriate referrals?
6. Is abuse discussed in pre-marital counseling?
7. Do you realize the importance of spiritual resources?
8. Do you share the load? (We all need help at times)
9. Do you offer ministry opportunities for those who have received care to give back?
10. Do you hold those who abuse accountable?

Domestic Violence Resources

Listen to The Voices

When Love Hurts (RAVE website)

Dramatic Reading (our website)

Listening leads to understanding

www.theraveproject.com

www.crcna.org/safechurch

www.faithtrustinstitute.org

www.restoredrelationships.org

Questions?

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