



Memphis Area  
**WOMEN'S COUNCIL**  
 CONVENE COLLABORATE COMMUNICATE  CHANGE

Domestic crime remains a persistent and devastating social ill in our community. It takes place in homes across Memphis and Shelby County every day.

## HOW FAITH COMMUNITIES CAN RESPOND

You can help if you suspect that someone you know is living in an abusive relationship.

Your support of someone who is being abused can make a critical difference. If she feels supported and encouraged, she may feel stronger and more able to make decisions. If she feels judged or criticized, she could be afraid to tell anyone else about the abuse again. *Remember the goals:*

**SAFETY** for the woman and children

**ACCOUNTABILITY** for the abuser

**RESTORATION** of individuals and if possible, relationship

-OR-

**MOURNING** the loss of the relationship

Faith communities can respond with encouragement and connection to resources that help victims and their children become safe, assist with their healing and support them as they make healthy changes in their lives.

Faith communities also can respond by providing trained counselors and/or advocates, equipped with specialized understanding of the complex dynamics of domestic violence and the resources available in our criminal justice system. Faith communities also can be providers of supportive housing, New Start funds and other support victims need in order to become survivors. For information on how, go to [erasedomesticcrime.com](http://erasedomesticcrime.com)

You can help a battered woman:

**DO –**

**BELIEVE** her. Her description of the violence is only the tip of the iceberg.

**REASSURE** her that this is not her fault, she doesn't deserve this treatment; it is *not* God's will for her.

**REFER** her to the Memphis YWCA battered women's services at 725-4277; Shelby County Crime Victim Center or shelters and National Hotline 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) OR 1-800-787-3224 (TDD).

**SUPPORT** and respect her choices. Even if she is aware of the risks and chooses initially to return to the abuser, it is her choice. She has the most information about how to survive.

**ENCOURAGE** her to think about a safety plan: to set aside some money and copies of important papers for her and children and a change of clothes, hidden or in care of a friend if she decides to go to a shelter. Plan how to exit the house the next time the abuser is violent. Plan what to do about the children if they are at school, asleep, etc.

**PROTECT** her confidentiality. DO NOT give information about her or her whereabouts to the abuser or to others who might pass information on to the abuser. DO NOT discuss with the parish council/session/elders who might inadvertently pass information on to the abuser.

**EMPHASIZE** that the marriage covenant is broken by the violence from her partner. DO assure her of God's love and presence, of your commitment to walk with her through this valley of the shadow of death.

**SUPPORT HER** if she decides to separate and divorce and help her to mourn the loss to herself and her children.

**PRAY** with her. If she is Christian, give her a copy of KEEPING THE FAITH: GUIDANCE FOR CHRISTIAN WOMEN FACING ABUSE. Refer to [www.faithtrustinstitute.org](http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org) for copies of this book and other helpful info.

**DO NOT –**

**TELL** her what to do. Give information and support.

**REACT** with disbelief, disgust or anger at what she tells you and do not react passively either. Let her know that you are concerned and that what the abuser has done to her is wrong and not deserved by her.

**BLAME** her for his violence. If she is blaming herself, try to reframe: "I don't care if you did have supper late or forget to water the lawn, that is no reason for him to be violent with you. This is his problem."

**RECOMMEND** couples counseling or approach her husband and ask for "his side of the story." These actions will endanger her. Do not give information about her to the abuser or discuss with elders/parish council/session who might inadvertently pass information on to the abuser.

**RECOMMEND** "marriage enrichment," "mediation" or a "communications workshop." None of these will address the goals listed above.

**SEND** her home with a prayer and directive to submit to her husband and bring him to worship services.

**ENCOURAGE** her to forgive him and take him back.

**ENCOURAGE** her dependence on you OR BECOME EMOTIONALLY OR SEXUALLY INVOLVED WITH HER.

**FAIL** to act.

You can help an abusive partner:

**DO –**

**URGE** him to be accountable and to deal with his violence, if he has been arrested.

**ADDRESS** any religious rationalizations he may offer or questions he may have.

**NAME** the violence as his problem, not hers. Tell him that only HE can stop it and you are willing to help.

**REFER** to a program that specifically addresses abusers.

**ASSESS** him for suicide or threats of homicide.

**PRAY** with the abuser.

**FIND** ways to collaborate with community agencies and law enforcement to hold him accountable. For information addressing religion and abuse refer to [www.faithtrustinstitute.org](http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org), [erasedomesticcrime.com](http://erasedomesticcrime.com) or contact the Faith Trust Institute at (206) 634-1903.

**DO NOT –**

**APPROACH** him or let him know that you know about his violence unless a) you have the victim's permission, b) she is aware that you plan to talk to him and c) you are certain that his partner is safely separated from him. Do not go to the abuser to confirm the victim's story.

**MEET** with him alone and in private. Meet in a public place or in the church with several other people around.

**ALLOW** him to use religious excuses for his behavior.

**PURSUE** couples' counseling with him and his partner if you are aware that there is violence in the relationship.

**BE TAKEN** in by his minimization, denial or lying about his violence. DON'T accept his blaming her or other rationalizations for his behavior. Do not advocate for the abuser to avoid the legal consequences of his violence or provide a character witness in any legal proceedings.

**SEND** him home with just a prayer. Work with others in the community to hold him accountable.

Circle of Inspiration Outreach Program  
Inspirational Faith Lutheran Church  
*Semi-monthly Christian support group; victim advocacy*  
(901) 359-8516  
3595 N. Thomas Street

Cocaine Alcohol Awareness Program  
*Serves disadvantaged domestic violence victims; 24-hour crisis line*  
(901) 367-7550  
4023 Knight Arnold Road

Community Legal Center  
*Legal assistance*  
(901) 543-3395  
910 Vance Avenue

Department of Children's Services  
*Social services, child protection*  
(901) 578-4371  
170 N. Main Street, 4th floor

Exchange Club Family Center  
*Comprehensive services for victims, perpetrators and children; lethality assessments, custodial evaluations*  
(901) 276-2200 8:30 a.m. -5:00 p.m.  
2180 Union Avenue

Family Safety Center\*  
*Comprehensive services for families who are victims of domestic violence*  
(901) 864-2081  
1750 Madison Avenue\*

The Healing Word Counseling Center  
*Counseling and various services*  
(901) 370-4673  
3910 Tchulahoma Road

Memphis Area Legal Services  
*Comprehensive legal services to domestic violence victims*  
(901) 523-8822 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.  
109 N. Main St., 2<sup>nd</sup> floor

Memphis Area Women's Council /  
Erase Domestic Crime Collaborative  
*Community awareness and education; system coordination, change and support; prevention*  
(901) 378-3866  
2574 Sam Cooper Blvd.

Memphis Child Advocacy Center  
*Counseling for child victims of sexual and severe physical abuse; houses Child Protection Investigation Team*  
(901) 525-2377  
1085 Poplar Avenue

Memphis Police Department Domestic Violence Unit\*  
*Assault investigation, transport to victim services*  
(901) 636-3741  
1750 Madison Avenue\*

Midsouth Sexual Assault Resource Center\*  
*Services 24/7 to victims of sexual assault and abuse*  
(901) 272-2020 8:30 am -5:00 pm  
1750 Madison Avenue\*

Shelby County Citizens Dispute\*  
*Assists victims obtaining orders/warrants*  
(901) 545-2520 8:00 a.m. -4:30 p.m.  
1750 Madison Avenue\*

Shelby County Crime Victims Center\*  
*Court assistance, counseling, support groups, other services*  
(901) 545-4357 or (901) 545-5164 8:00 a.m. -4:30 p.m.  
1750 Madison Avenue\*

Shelby County District Attorney General's DV Unit\*  
*Prosecution of DV cases; victim advocacy and links to services*  
(901) 545-5900  
1750 Madison Avenue\* and 201 Poplar Avenue

Sophia's House  
*Shelter; other services for women and children victims*  
(901) 728-4229 or (901) 722-4700

Victims to Victory Incorporated  
*Support groups for victims of homicide; court advocacy*  
(901) 274-6828 9:00 a.m. -5:00 p.m.  
1548 Poplar Avenue

YWCA of Greater Memphis  
*Shelter for abused women, children under 12 ; counseling, court advocacy, Immigrant Women's Services*  
24-Hour Hotline (901) 725-4277

\*Agencies moving to 1750 Madison fall 2011 - see website for updated info.

\*\*Family Safety Center opening late 2011 with multiple co-located partner agencies.

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