

Diocese of Dallas
Safe Environment Program for Schools and
Parishes

St. Gabriel the Archangel Catholic Community
Adult Continuing Education
Yearly Training Renewal

Please note:

This is a training renewal option. If you have not already attended the Family of Faith Safe Environment Training session held at the parish center or another parish you must attend the session. You can then use this option to renew for next year. Please refer to our bulletin or our web site www.stgabriel.org for session dates and times.

Option 7 Domestic/Family Violence

2009

Instructions

1. Read this document.
2. Fill out the self assessment form at the end of this document.
3. Fill out and sign the signature form at the end of this document. (In order to receive credit, be sure to print your name **legibly**.)
4. Return the self assessment and signature forms to the church office (mail or drop off) to the attention of the Safety Officer.

By doing so, you will have *fulfilled your annual training requirement* that is mandated by our parish's Safe Environment Program.

St. Gabriel's is a Stewardship parish. This program is made possible by the generous stewardship contributions of many parishioners. Our parish relies on these contributions, given in thankful response to God's generosity, to fund parish ministries and activities like this.

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Note to Volunteers and Employees

As you know, you previously completed the initial core training requirements of our Safe Environment Program when you attended an awareness session as part of being screened and cleared for service. This packet provides you with additional information related to child safety and protection issues, as well as expands upon and/or updates information that you learned about or received when you attended the Safe Environment Awareness session.

Our Mandate

As you learned when you attended the awareness session, our Diocese and parish have each accepted that as Christian adults, we all have a moral and legal responsibility and are entrusted by God with the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of children. As they participate in activities within or sponsored by our Diocese and parish, it is our responsibility and commitment to provide an environment that is safe and nurturing.

Our Parish's Commitment

We are committed to assuring that all clergy, employees, and volunteers who serve in our church or school receive appropriate ongoing training to help them meet their responsibilities for providing an environment that is safe for children. We hope you will find this information helpful for increasing your knowledge and awareness of these issues. If there is anything in these materials about which you have questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact the Safety Officer at 972-542-7170

Mandate to report under the policy of the Diocese of Dallas:

The Diocese, through its schools, institutions, agencies, and organizations, has numerous daily contacts with many children. It is, therefore, most important that all persons responsible for the care of children, particularly all staff members of parishes, schools, and agencies in the Diocese of Dallas, protect the rights of children and be alert to the possibility for child abuse. It is the policy of the Diocese of Dallas not only to fulfill the reporting law but to cooperate fully with the investigating civil authorities. Individuals must report incident or suspicions of sexual misconduct or sexual harassment. Situations involving minor children must be reported to Texas Child Protection Services at 1-800-252-5400 or in emergency to the appropriate police authority, usually by calling 911. Individuals with knowledge about violations of Diocesan policy should call the Chancellor or the Director of Safe Environment of the Diocese at 214-528-2240, or they may write to them at:

Diocese of Dallas
P.O. Box 190507
Dallas, TX 75219.

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Let the husband render unto his wife due benevolence and likewise also the wife unto the husband.” *1 Corinthians 7:*

Domestic Violence & Communities of Faith

Statistics indicate that victims of domestic violence are everywhere – even in your faith community. Seventy-four percent of all Texans have either been a victim of domestic violence or know someone who has (according to a quantitative study conducted for Texas Council on Family Violence). Each year, thousands of American Children witness domestic violence within their families. Witnessing violence is a risk factor for long term physical and mental health problems, including alcohol and substance abuse, or becoming a victim or perpetrator of abuse. Because there is a need for outreach and education in faith communities, the faith family can be a critical resource for spiritual renewal and guidance.

As a member of a faith community, you can provide an informed and supportive environment for victims, survivors and perpetrators of domestic violence. Safety should be the priority for victims, survivors and their children.

The Role of Religion

Religious teachings can be misinterpreted, taken out of context or used as a tool by some batterers to further their control.

Victims and survivors may struggle to understand the abuse in light of their religious beliefs. As a faith community, you can help victims recognize and acknowledge the challenge of their inner conflict, and be clear that the responsibility for the abuse lies with the abusive partner.

Speak Out

Speaking out against abuse sends a message to the victim and survivor, as well as the batterer, that domestic violence is unacceptable and contrary to religious teachings.

What You Should Know

- Domestic violence is physical, sexual, emotional, economic or psychological actions or threats of action that are used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner. It is rarely a one-time occurrence and usually escalates in frequency and severity over time.
- Domestic violence can happen to anyone of any race, age, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status or gender. It can happen to couples who are married, living together, estranged or who are dating.
- Victims of domestic violence often remain in abusive relationships because of fear –for their lives, the safety of their children and homelessness. A victim may feel strong emotional ties to their batterer. The reality of family violence-related injuries and deaths, which occur after a victim has left their abuser, means that leaving doesn’t always mean safety.
- Religious or cultural values can inadvertently pressure a victim to keep the family together at all costs.

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- Marriage and couples counseling when domestic violence is present or suspected can endanger the life of the victim. Counseling the couple individually or referring them individually to domestic violence and Batterer Intervention and Prevention Program counseling is a priority for the safety of the victim and their children.
- Batterers may use faith and religion to exert control over their victim through the misinterpretation of scripture and teachings.
- Domestic violence is not a private family matter. It is a crime with serious repercussions for the victim, their family and community. Keeping quiet about what you observe could be very dangerous for your faith member.
- Batterers may make excuses for their violence, claiming loss of control due to alcohol or drug use or extreme stress. External factors like these do not cause domestic violence, although they may intensify already existing violent behavior. Batterers choose to use violence in order to control their partner.

Warning signs that a “potential partner” may be a “potential batterer:”

If you recognize a pattern of behavior that is threatening, it is time to seek help!

- Gets too close, too fast. Comes on strong. Abusers pressure for an exclusive commitment almost immediately.
- Is excessively possessive. Calls constantly or visits unexpectedly; prevents you from going to work because “you might meet someone.”
- Is controlling. Interrogates you, especially if you’re late, asking “Where were you and who did you talk to?”
- Has unrealistic expectations. Expects you to be perfect all the time and to meet every need, regardless of how unreasonable it may seem.
- Isolates you. Tries to cut you off from family and friends and accuses your supporters of “causing trouble.”
- Blames others for problems and mistakes. Whether it’s the boss, a teacher, a coach, your friends or you – it’s always someone else’s fault.
- Refuses to take personal responsibility for feelings. Says things like, “You make me angry.” Instead of, “I am angry.” Or, “You’re hurting me by not doing what I tell you.”
- Is hypersensitive. Is easily insulted claiming “You hurt my feelings,” when anger is the real emotion.
- Is cruel to animals and pets. Has violent tendencies towards animals, like excessive punishing, hurting or killing.
- Displays “playful” use of force. Enjoys throwing or holding you down against your will, or forces you to kiss and doesn’t accept “no” for an answer.
- Verbally assaults you. Constantly criticizes you or says cruel, hurtful things; degrades you, curses and insults you.
- Insists on rigid roles. Expects you to serve and obey because “You belong to me.”
- Displays sudden mood swings. Quickly switches from sweet and loving to explosive and violent.
- Has battered in the past. Admits to being abusive in the past, but blames it on someone or something else.
- Threatens you with physical violence. Says things like, “I’ll break your neck,” or “I’ll kill you,” followed by “Everybody talks that way,” or “I didn’t really mean it.”

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Domestic Violence and the Faith Community

More than 800 Texas women were killed by their current or former husbands or boyfriends from 1998 to 2004. Domestic violence shelters in Texas housed more than 170,000 adults and children between 1999 and 2004. All too often, domestic violence goes unreported so the actual number of victims is probably much higher.

In times of crisis, faith leaders and their communities are often the first to be contacted by an abused woman or a concerned family member.

Domestic Violence in Texas

In the state of Texas, “domestic violence” is synonymous with “family violence.” The Texas Family Code defines family violence as: “an act by a member of a family or household against another member of the family or household that is intended to result in physical harm, bodily injury, assault, or sexual assault, or that is a threat that reasonably places the member in fear of imminent physical harm, bodily injury, assault, or sexual assault, but does not include defensive measures to protect oneself.” Studies indicate that more than 85 percent of domestic violence victims are women.

Families that experience abuse – especially women who have been abused – have special needs. They need to know that help – accurate information, resources and trustworthy people to confide in – is available to them 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Children need help dealing with their fears and confusion as well.

Signs that someone may be a victim of abuse:

- Does the victim have visible injuries, such as black eyes, bruises or broken bones?
- Does the victim tend to miss work or services because of frequent “accidents?”
- Does the victim’s partner exert an unusual amount of control over their activities? Do you notice the partner controlling family finances, the way the victim acts or dresses or the victim’s contact with friends or family members?
- Does the partner ridicule the victim publicly?
- Do members of your faith community ignore this behavior, even though they sense the volatile nature of the comments?
- Have you noticed changes in the victim’s or the children’s behavior?
- Do they appear frightened, exhausted or on edge?
- Do the children seem to be easily upset? Are they experiencing sudden problems in school or other activities?

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When Religion is Used to Justify Abuse

Religious teachings can be misinterpreted, taken out of context or used as a tool by some batterers to further their control.

Victims who have been abused may struggle to understand the abuse in light of their religious beliefs. Christian victims may believe that they deserve the punishment because of original sin or that suffering may be a way to salvation. Jewish victims may fear they are not maintaining “shalom bayit,” or peace in the home. As a faith leader, it is vital that you recognize and acknowledge the challenge of a victim’s inner conflict. Address their guilt, empathize with them, but be clear that the responsibility for the abuse lies with the abuser.

Speaking out against domestic violence sends a message that it is unacceptable and contrary to religious teachings.



“Indeed, I have singled him (Abraham) out that he may direct his sons and his posterity to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just...” Genesis 18:19

RECOGNIZING THE EARLY WARNING SIGNS FOR VICTIMS

As adolescents, boys and girls are forming their first conclusions about what to expect and accept in intimate relationships. Teenagers may be predisposed to accept physical violence because of their exposure to it in homes (either as victims or witnesses) or in the media. Given this early learning, it is critical for adults to recognize and respond to the early warning signs. The following are common clues that a youth may be experiencing family violence or dating violence:

Physical bruises of other signs of injury

Bear in mind that victims will often attempt to hide their injuries due to embarrassment. Be alert to sudden changes in dress or make-up, as well as the explanation of injuries that seem out of character.

Truancy, failing, withdrawal from activities, dropping out of school

An abusive relationship usually drains the victim of energy. The energy he/she still has may be spent trying to make things right for the abuser.

Sudden or increased social isolation

Due to shame or jealous accusations on the part of his/her dating partner, the victim may withdraw from friends and become increasingly isolated.

Difficulty making decisions

A victim may appear anxious about making independent decisions because he/she may usually have to “get permission” from his/her abuser. Another sign is the victim's avoidance of eye contact.

Sudden changes in mood or personality

These changes may include depression, withdrawal, acting out, secretiveness, increased insecurity or feelings of inadequacy, anxiousness or preoccupation with dating partners.

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Use of alcohol or drugs

This may be in response to direct pressure from his/her abuser or an attempt to numb his/her pain or emotional ambivalence about the relationship.

Pregnancy

Many teenage girls feel pregnancy will help them get out of a bad situation. More than 70% of pregnant or parenting teens are beaten by their boyfriends/husbands. Pregnancy significantly increases the risk of violence in teenage relationships.

Crying easily; getting “hysterical” or overreacting to minor incidents

The victim who lives in fear of another incident is living under extreme tension. He/she is constantly trying to second guess his/her abuser’s moods in their attempt to avoid violence. Reacting to this stress, he/she may explode or become hysterical in response to something minor (for example, screaming when asked why he/she is late for class).



“Husbands, love your wives, and avoid bitterness toward them. Children obey your parents in everything for this is pleasing to the Lord. Fathers do not provoke you children, so they may not become discouraged.” Colossians 3:18-21

Signs that a member of your faith community may be abusing his/her intimate partner:

- Misinterpret religious beliefs, practices, teachings and traditions
- Call them bad names or put them down in public
- Shout and curse at them
- Control access to finances
- Actual or threatened physical harm
- Destroy property, personal possessions or keepsakes
- Act jealous and suspicious
- Isolate them from family and friends
- Throw things around the house
- Forced sexual contact or denied intimacy
- Control what their partner wears, who they talk to or where they go
- Mistreat their children and/or pets
- Attribute abusive behavior to cultural traditions or male superiority

These behaviors can happen all at once or periodically over time and are known to escalate in frequency and severity

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Myths and Facts about Domestic Violence

MYTH	FACT
Domestic violence occurs when men and women assault each other. Women are just as violent as men.	Abuse occurs in a relationship when one person coerces, intimidates or dominates another. The National Crime Victimization Survey of the Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that 85 percent of serious spousal assaults are perpetrated by men against women. Domestic violence can't be assessed by asking, "Who hit whom how many times?" You must ask, "Who is terrified, hurt repeatedly or afraid to speak out?"
Stress causes abusive behaviors.	Most people who are living under severe stress do not abuse. Stress may be a contributing factor, but reducing stress will not necessarily reduce violence in the family. Psychological, physical and financial control of an intimate partner is a problem, not a symptom of stress.
Drugs and alcohol cause batterers to abuse their intimate partners.	Domestic violence and substance abuse are two separate problems; however, they may occur simultaneously. Elimination of substance abuse doesn't necessarily eliminate physical, emotional or sexual abuse. Substance abuse is not an excuse for battering, but society often views it as a reason for the abuse
Survivors and victims of domestic violence (especially women) are masochistic; they provoke the violence	Abused women are not a personality type. They don't enjoy being assaulted. Women may act in ways that their husbands or partners don't like. This should not be confused with provocation. Disagreement doesn't justify assault.
Victims of domestic violence do not seek help and will not use it when offered	A study of women in Texas family violence shelters found that most shelter residents had repeatedly sought various forms of help before entering the shelter. In many cases, women found that friends, family, the medical community or police often discounted their abuse, sided with their batterers or did not believe their stories.
What goes on within a family is a private matter.	Domestic violence is a community problem. The harmful, hurtful and dangerous behavior that we have outlawed in public places should not be tolerated in our homes. Victims of domestic violence need support and assistance, and abusive people should be held accountable for violating criminal laws
Some religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam sanction violence or ill treatment of women.	According to scriptures in these religions, a woman should be respected and never ever abused.

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Do you know how to support a family member or friend experiencing violence?

Get Educated!

- Learn what family violence is and how it harms children and families.
- Seek information from your local family violence center and other resources.
- Assess your behaviors and relationships. Is there something you could change to benefit your children, family, and yourself?

Be a positive role model and teacher with your children!

- Teach your children that bullying and violence are not acceptable.
- Practice positive discipline that excludes hitting and negative verbal messages.
- Model for your children how to express anger and resolve problems without using violence.
- Treat children and others with respect and dignity.
- Seek help when having family or personal problems. Everyone needs help sometime.

Be a good friend and neighbor!

- Immediately call 911 if family violence is occurring.
- Help child and adult victims make a safety plan.
- Listen.
- Help find resources to deal with the family violence and negative family life.
- Access what help you may personally be able to offer.
- 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) is the National Domestic Violence Hotline (ndvh.org).
- Callers can receive crisis intervention assistance and information about local resources for women's shelters, social services, legal assistance, and other programs. The hotline is open 24 hours with English and Spanish speaking attendants. Interpreters are available to translate another 139 languages.
- 1-800-98-YOUTH is the Texas Youth Hotline. This 24-hour hotline provides prevention services for youths and their families.

Advocate for safe and healthy families in your neighborhood and community.

- Support programs that teach children and youth the social skills they need for healthy, nonviolent relationships.
- Advocate for more organized after school programs that offer children and youth the opportunities to have healthy, interpersonal relationships and constructive activities.
- Support your community's family violence prevention and intervention programs.
- Support your local family violence centers and their programs. Learn their needs and how you can donate your time and resources.

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FAMILY VIOLENCE STATISTICS FOR TEXAS

	2006	2004	2002
Family violence incidents	186,868	182,087	183,440
Women killed by intimate Partners (husbands, ex-husbands, Common-law husbands, boyfriends, and ex-boyfriends. More than 800 Texas women were killed by an intimate partner from 1998 – 2006.)	120	116	117
Adults sheltered	12,356	11,983	11,257
Children sheltered	16,968	17,619	17,629
Hotline calls answered	182,459	179,394	184,245

(From Texas Department of Public Safety and Texas Health and Human Services Commission)

SOME NATIONAL FAMILY VIOLENCE STATISTICS

33% of female homicide victims were killed by their husbands or boyfriends and 2.7% of male victims were killed by their wives or girlfriends in 2004. (Uniform Crime Report, FBI)

A child’s exposure to the father (or male authority figure) abusing the mother is strongest risk factor for transmitting violent behavior from one generation to the next. (American Psychological Assn.)



“You [wives] are her [Sarah] children when you do what is good and fear no intimidation. Likewise, you husbands should live with your wives in understanding, showing honor to [them], since we are joint heirs of the gift of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.” 1 Peter 3:6-7

Some Questions to Consider

Before YOU initiate contact with a domestic violence victim, survivor or perpetrator to provide advocacy or faith-based counseling, ask yourself these questions:

1. What qualifications do I have for helping victims, survivors, or perpetrators of domestic violence?
2. What are my limitations?
3. What information and resources can I offer to help victims, survivors and perpetrators of domestic violence in my community?

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Local Resources and References:

THE FAMILY PLACE CRISIS HOTLINE (English and Spanish)
214-941-1991 www.familyplace.org

GENESIS WOMEN'S SHELTER HOTLINE (English and Spanish)
214-946-HELP (4357) www.genissshelter.org

COLLIN COUNTY WOMEN'S SHELTER HOTLINE
(214 or 972)-422-7233

COUNSELING CONSIDERATIONS:

Only those with sufficient professional training should undertake the job of “counseling” anyone involved in a domestic violence situation.

A non-professional can be a good listener when a victim or survivor decides to tell their story. Encourage the victim by believing the victim, assuring the victim that the abuse is the responsibility of the abuser and by urging the victim to seek escape from the situation and good professional assistance – legal, physical, and psychological. Know where to find qualified assistance such as local shelters and/or service organizations.

The trauma a victim experiences may make it difficult to make decisions. You may be able to help by asking the victim to assess personal strength, resources and support systems without making decisions on the victim's behalf. By presenting information and options and allowing the victim to make his/her own decisions, you will strengthen the victim's self esteem. Let the victim know that you support the decisions they make, whether it means leaving the abusive relationship or even returning to the abuser. Everyone's safety must be secured before work to preserve the family can begin. The victim may feel that their safest option is to stay in the relationship. In this scenario, faith leaders can provide options, support and safety planning by believing that the victim is the expert in his/her own situation.

Safety should be the priority for the victims of domestic violence and their children. Victims should develop a safety plan by identifying a safe place to go in the event of an emergency. (The National Domestic Violence Hotline or your local domestic violence shelter can help). Talk to the victim about setting aside money, keys, medication, important papers, clothes and whatever else is needed in an emergency. Provide the victim with resources if the abuse occurs again. Family Violence Programs may include shelter, a crisis hotline, referral to emergency medical care, counseling services, emergency transportation, legal assistance, employment assistance and more. A directory of Texas programs for domestic violence victims can be found at www.tcfv.org or by calling the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233). Local shelters include The Family Place in Dallas (214-692-8295) and Hope's Door in Plano (972-472-2911). Planning a victim's safety and the safety of their children may help ease feelings of guilt and betrayal of family loyalty.

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Help for Batterers

A batterer can present one face to the community and another at home. They may be outwardly charming, congenial and an active member in their religious community. However, in the privacy of their home, they could be controlling, cruel and violent. They often blame others for their violence and deny responsibility for their behavior. Working with batterers can be complex and difficult. Faith communities can hold batterers accountable and provide intervention that does not place a victim in danger. When there is violence in a relationship, the safety of the victim and their children should be the main concern.

Some group counseling has been found to be effective with batterers through Batterer Intervention and Prevention Programs. The Texas Council on Family Violence can provide information and referrals.

WAYS ANY ADULT CAN HELP END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Cultivate a respectful attitude toward everyone in your family and at your workplace, especially the women.

Avoid behaviors that are demeaning or controlling.

When circumstances make you angry with your partner or children, respond without hurting or humiliating them. Model a non-violent, respectful response to resolving conflicts. Seek out a domestic violence or child abuse prevention program if outside assistance is needed. If you have a friend or co-worker who is afraid of his/her partner or who is being hurt, offer support and refer to the 24-hour, toll free, National Domestic Violence Hotline (1-800-799- SAFE (7233)).

Call the police (911) if you see or hear violence in progress.

Do not be afraid to speak up if friends or neighbors belittle women, make jokes about violence, or ignore a battered woman.

Do not patronize music producers, movie companies, internet businesses, video game producers, etc who are purveyors of domestic violence AND be sure to communicate with these companies why you have chosen not to spend your money on their products.

Try to live a violence-free life. Remember that those around you, especially children, learn much more from watching your actions than from all the words ever spoken.

Domestic Violence Self Assessment Form

Printed Name _____

1. What is the definition of "domestic violence"?

2. What are the 3 types of domestic abuse?

3. What is one of the signs that someone is being abused?

4. What is one of the signs that indicate someone may be an abuser of his/her partner?

5. How can you help end domestic violence?

6. What is one of the signs that someone may be a victim of domestic violence?

7. What is one of the myths about domestic violence?

8. Why does a victim sometimes stay in an abusive relationship?

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Last Name _____ First Name _____ Middle Initial _____

SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM
ANNUAL TRAINING UPDATE
SIGNATURE FORM

Please print legibly or you may not receive credit. Please print first, middle (name or initial), and last name. Also include a suffix (e.g. Jr., Sr., etc.), if applicable.

Address:

Daytime Phone: _____

Email _____

Please print email carefully

I have read the materials provided to me in the Safe Environment Program Training Update on **Domestic Violence**. The topics covered in this material included:

- What is domestic violence
- Signs of abuse
- Texas statistics on domestic violence
- How to help end domestic violence

I filled out the "Self Assessment Form" on this topic and it is attached to this form.

I understand that by doing so I have met the annual training requirements under our parish's Safe Environment Program. If there is anything I do not understand or if I have any questions about anything I read in these materials I will contact the Safety Officer at the church office 972-542-7170 or via email at pscott@stgabriel.org for more information.

My Signature: _____ Date: _____

The date 12-months from today's date is _____. I know I must complete my next annual training no later than this date if I wish to remain eligible to serve.

**Please drop this form and assessment off at or mail it to your church office,
Attention Safety Director**

St. Gabriel's is a Stewardship parish. This (program is made possible by the generous stewardship contributions of many parishioners. Our parish relies on these contributions, given in thankful response to God's generosity, to fund parish ministries and activities like