



Catholic Charities, Diocese of Camden, Inc

Strengthening Families

Responding to Domestic Violence

A Resource for
Parishes

Strengthening Families

Introduction

Violence is a scourge on families. The outcomes of domestic violence and child abuse can be catastrophic for individuals and have far reaching consequences in communities and society. Violence, however, is entirely preventable. With appropriate supports, families can thrive.

Members of the church are viewed by victims of violence as safe and trusted individuals to which to turn when they need help. This guide is intended to provide representatives of the Church with an array of tools to help them respond professionally and compassionately.

Strengthening Families

Table of Contents

1. What is domestic violence	4
2. Power and Control Wheel	5
3. Risk and Protective Factors	6
4. Four tools for responding to domestic violence	8
A. Educate	
i. Educate Families	10
a) Family Strengthening Workshop Components	12
b) Sample Workshop Topics	13
ii. Educate Clergy and Religious	14
B. Talk About It	15
i. Counseling	15
ii. Homily Talking Points	16
C. Challenge it	18
D. Create Opportunity	19
5. USCCB Letter on Domestic Violence	20
6. Domestic Violence Resources	21
7. Catholic Charities Contact Information	22

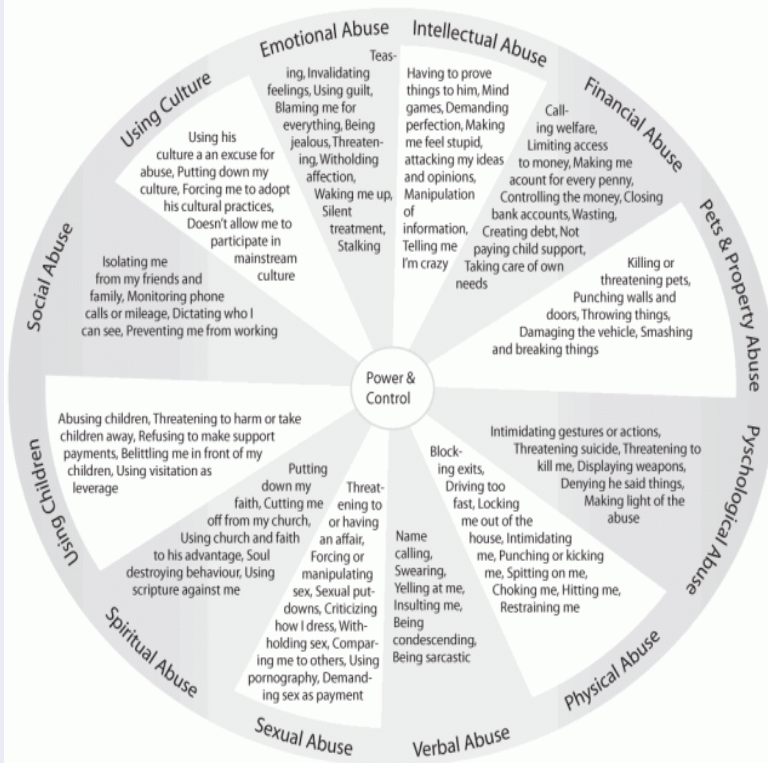
Domestic Violence

- Is a pattern of abusive behavior
- Is not just physical abuse
- Is an attempt to gain power and control
- Is not an anger problem
- Often worsens over time
- Can have a devastating impact on the children

Strengthening Families

Power and Control Wheel

The Power and Control Wheel



Strengthening Families

Bringing an end to violence is easier when we know the factors that contribute to it. As with any issue, there are certain factors that protect against it and others that are correlated with it. These are known as Protective and Risk Factors.

Protective Factors

These positive influences in families increase the potential that a family and/or any of its individual members will not use violence and will thrive.

Family Connectedness, Clear Family Rules and Expectations, the Development of Social Skills, and the Development of Problem Solving Skills are all protective factors that can keep family members safe.

Risk Factors

Although, not a direct cause of violence, a risk factor increases the potential that a family member will become a victim or perpetrator of violence.

Poverty, Substance Abuse, Witnessing Domestic Violence, Trauma, Social Rejection, Lack of Parental Involvement or Negative Parental Involvement are all risk factors for violent behavior.

Strengthening Families

Four ways to Respond to Domestic Violence

1. Educate

- Teach families the alternatives to violence to create healthy homes
- Learn to recognize the signs and symptoms and how to respond
- Help victims understand what the church teaches and how to be safe

3. Challenge It

Although it may be scary to say something when we know there has been domestic violence, challenging the behavior is a way to make it stop. Men, especially, have the ability to influence the behavior of other men by letting a batterer know his behavior is unacceptable.

Strengthening Families

Four ways to Respond to Domestic Violence

2. Talk about it

Keeping silent about violence of any kind creates a breeding ground for it. Talking about it sets the tone and lets victims and batterers know that violence is not acceptable. Homilies, public speaking engagements, and private conversations are all appropriate venues to talk about this evil.

4. Create Opportunity

Victims of violence often stay with their abuser because they have no other financial options. Increased opportunity to employment, education, or transportation can provide an avenue to safety.

Educate Families

Catholic Charities offers multiple educational options to help families and those in ministry. Among the ways we educate are:

- **Family Strengthening Workshops**
Because domestic violence is often a secret, victims may hesitate to expose themselves by attending a presentation specifically on domestic violence. They may, however, be motivated by a desire to be good parents.

Catholic Charities is able to provide an individual or a series of educational workshops that seek to address both the risk and protective factors for violence.

Strengthening Families

- **LISTEN, BELIEVE AND REFER:** As a Catholic Faith Community, we are called to hope, help, and healing to all harmed by domestic abuse and violence. Abuse is not God's will.
- **Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline: 800-799-SAFE (7233) - 24 hours, toll free www.ndvh.org**

The workshops, which are fully interactive, offer participants the opportunity to ask questions in a safe, non-judgmental atmosphere.

For More Details on workshops and presentations turn to the next page.

Strengthening Families

Family Strengthening Workshop Components

Presentations between 45 and 90 minutes focus on various aspects of family life including the impact violence has on children and families. Each session will focus on both the risk and protective factors necessary to end violence.



Strengthening Families

Sample Workshop Topics

- Three Keys to a Healthy Pregnancy
- All Babies Cry
- Why Read?
- Good Touch/Bad Touch
- Look What I Can Do: Child Development
- When Love Hurts
- Helping Children do Well in School
- Create a Stable Financial Future
- Creating an Envelope of Security Around your Children
- Social and Emotional Competence

To request
a full list of
workshops,
contact

Sylvia
Loumeau at
856-342-
4162.

For a full list of presentations or to request a
customized workshop contact

Sylvia Loumeau at 856-342-4162

Strengthening Families

Educate Clergy and Religious

- **Presentations to those in ministry**

Catholic Charities is able to provide presentations of all lengths to priests, sisters, deacons, and lay ministers that will help them learn how to recognize the warning signs of domestic violence, breakdown the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' statement on domestic violence, and share information and resources that can help to provide a professional and compassionate response to victims and batterers.

To request information on any of these Educational options, contact
Sylvia Loumeau at 856-342-4162

Strengthening Families

Talk About It

- **Counseling Services**

The counselors at **Catholic Charities** recognize the hidden nature of domestic violence, so rather than waiting for victims to share that they have been abused, our counselors know to ask. Every new request for individual, couple, or family counseling includes an assessment for domestic violence, and we often meet with spouses separately in order to give victims the freedom to disclose abuse without fear of reprisal from the abuser.

Victims are given the opportunity to process their experiences and to rebuild self-esteem, while abusers are given the opportunity to discuss

Talk About It (continued)

the early life experiences that shaped their behavior while still being held accountable.

- **Homily Talking Points**

Priests and deacons hold an especially powerful role in ending domestic violence if they talk about it and educate their congregation from the pulpit. Batterers and victims alike respond when they know and understand the Church's teaching on violence.

Catholic Charities is able to assist clergy in the development of their homilies by sharing a number of talking points.

Strengthening Families

- The Church does not encourage victims to remain in dangerous situations and while sad, divorce is sometimes a necessary option.
- The Gospels should never be used to support abusive behavior in any form
 - Wives be subordinate to your husbands...(Col 3:18)
 - When someone strikes you on your right cheek...(Mat 5:39)
- In homilies, include a reference to domestic violence when appropriate. Just a mention of domestic violence lets abused women know that someone cares. Describe what abuse is so that women begin to recognize and name what is happening to them.
- Include intercessions for victims of abuse, people who abuse people, and those who work with them.
- Domestic violence is not God's punishment for some other wrong.

To request more information on homily talking points, contact

Challenge It

When we see domestic violence and say nothing, we collude in its perpetuation. Here are a few ways to challenge it:

- Post anti-violence materials in vestibules, waiting rooms, and other easily visible places
- Call the police when hearing or witnessing an incident
- Do not laugh when others make jokes about violence and let them know it is not funny

Catholic Charities is able to challenge domestic violence in a therapy group setting. While still recognizing their dignity, batterers are challenged by professional counselors and their peers to end the use of violence as a means of dealing with frustration and powerlessness.

Strengthening Families

Create Opportunity

Women often remain in violent relationships when they do not have the resources to leave. Lack of money, information, an inability to speak English, or fear around immigration status can be significant barriers. Parishes can create opportunity for victims of violence by:

- Offering ESL classes
- Making domestic violence materials available around the parish
- Know the services **Catholic Charities** provides

Catholic Charities may have short-term funding to help relocate a victim. We can also determine whether a victim might be eligible for participation in a matched savings program that might qualify her to pursue an education or purchase a house of her own.

Strengthening Families

USCCB Letter on Domestic Violence

In 1992, The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, issued their first letter on domestic violence: When I Call For Help, A Pastoral Response to Domestic Violence. In it, they tell us that this issue is a priority to be addressed and that we must work to end the cycle of violence. Ministers are often first responders following an incident of violence, and must be prepared to respond appropriately.

[Click here](#) for a copy of the Bishops' letter.

Strengthening Families

Domestic Violence Resources

NJ Statewide Hotline—1 (800) 572-SAFE (7233)

Atlantic County

Atlantic County Women's Center

Toll free: 1-800-286-4184

TTY: (609) 645-2909

Cumberland County

Center for Family Services

1(886) 295-SERV (7378)

1-800-286-4353

Camden County

Camden County Women's Center

(856) 227-1234

TTY: (856) 227-9264

Gloucester County

Center for Family Services

(856) 881-3335

Cape May County

CARA, Inc. (Coalition
Against Rape & Abuse, Inc.)

Toll free: 1-877-294-CARA
[2272]

TTY: (609) 463-0818

Salem County

Salem County Women's
Services

Emergency Shelter 24-Hr.

Hotline: (856) 935-6655

Toll free: 1-888-632-9511

TTY: (856) 935-7118

Catholic Charities Counseling Services—1-866-682-2166

Catholic Charities, Diocese of Camden, Inc.

Atlantic City	609-345-3446
Bridgeton	856-200-0654
Camden	856-342-4100
Penns Grove	856-299-1296
Rio Grande	609-886-2662
Salem	856-339-4102
Vineland	856-691-1841
Westville	856-845-9200

Outpatient Counseling Services

1-866-862-2166

Website for Domestic Violence information:

<https://catholiccharitiescamden.org/our-services/>

To schedule a Strengthening Families Series at your parish, contact Sylvia Loumeau, Director of Clinical Services at 856-342-4162.

