

A COMMUNITY CHECKLIST:

IMPORTANT STEPS TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

“... what can we do about it?”





On July 13, 1995 we created the Advisory Council on Violence Against Women to help promote greater awareness of the problem of violence against women and its victims, to help devise solutions to the problem, and to advise the federal government on implementing the 1994 Violence Against Women Act. From police to doctors to clergy, the Advisory Council's 47 members draw on the many different professions that can help fight violence against women and assist victims.

Members of the Advisory Council have created working groups that focus on different segments of the community and what they might do to address the problem of violence against women. At the third meeting of the Advisory Council, held on July 18, 1996, each subgroup created a checklist of important steps communities can take to end violence against women. We are grateful for their input and for the commitment of each member to this issue.

This checklist identifies actions that can be taken by the religious community, colleges and universities, law enforcement, health care professionals, the sports industry, through the media, and in the workplace. We also recognize that there are many other facets of the community that can have a significant effect in this effort. The initial distribution of this booklet is taking place during October 1996 in recognition of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list but is meant to offer some straightforward, practical suggestions that we believe can make a difference in communities across the country. By coming together as a community, exchanging ideas, and coordinating efforts, we can begin to end this violence which destroys so many American lives.

- ✓ **Intervene.** If you suspect violence is occurring in a relationship, speak to each member of the couple separately. Help the victim plan for safety. Let both individuals know of the community resources available to assist them. Do not attempt couples counseling.
- ✓ **Support Professional Training.** Encourage and support training and education for clergy and lay leaders, hospital chaplains, and seminary students to increase awareness about sexual and domestic violence.
- ✓ **Address Internal Issues.** Encourage continued efforts by religious institutions to address allegations of abuse by religious leaders to insure that religious leaders are a safe resource for victims and their children.

[Adapted in part from the Nebraska Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coalition and the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, Seattle, WA. Used with permission.]



Religious Community

The religious community provides a safe haven for women and families in need. In addition, it exhorts society to share compassion and comfort with those afflicted by the tragedy of domestic violence. Leaders of the religious community have identified actions to create a unified response to violence against women.

- ✓ **Become a Safe Place.** Make your church, temple, mosque or synagogue a safe place where victims of domestic violence can come for help. Display brochures and posters which include the telephone number of the domestic violence and sexual assault programs in your area. Publicize the National Domestic Violence Hotline number, 1-800-799-SAFE(7233) or 1-800-787-3224(TDD).
- ✓ **Educate the Congregation.** Provide ways for members of the congregation to learn as much as they can about domestic and sexual violence. Routinely include information in monthly newsletters, on bulletin boards, and in marriage preparation classes. Sponsor educational seminars on violence against women in your congregation.
- ✓ **Speak Out.** Speak out about domestic violence and sexual assault from the pulpit. As a faith leader, you can have a powerful impact on people's attitudes and beliefs.
- ✓ **Lead by Example.** Volunteer to serve on the board of directors at the local domestic violence/sexual assault program or attend a training to become a crisis volunteer.
- ✓ **Offer Space.** Offer meeting space for educational seminars or weekly support groups or serve as a supervised visitation site when parents need to safely visit their children.
- ✓ **Partner with Existing Resources.** Include your local domestic violence or sexual assault program in donations and community service projects. Adopt a shelter for which your church, temple, mosque or synagogue provides material support, or provide similar support to families as they rebuild their lives following a shelter stay.
- ✓ **Prepare to be a Resource.** Do the theological and scriptural homework necessary to better understand and respond to family violence and receive training from professionals in the fields of sexual and domestic violence.



Colleges & Universities

Colleges and universities offer important opportunities to educate young men and women about violence against women. Experiences on campuses will be carried forth to everyday life and will influence future actions. Therefore, every effort to inform students may mean one less victim abused or one less crime committed. Leaders in higher education have identified the following strategies to assist educators across the country in reaching out to students and communities, and to make campuses safe places for women

- ✓ **Make Campus a Safe Place.** Evaluate the safety and security of the campus environment and the quality and availability of resources to insure safety. For example, establish campus escort services through campus security and student government programs.
- ✓ **Increase Awareness.** Educate your students, faculty, and staff about the problem of sexual assault and dating violence on college campuses. Provide adequate training on the signs that often accompany abuse, on victims' legal rights and on available resources.
- ✓ **Target Specific Groups.** Identify target groups (e.g. new students, fraternities, sororities, and athletes) on your campus and develop specialized training and resources for them.
- ✓ **Coordinate Resources.** Identify resources addressing violence against women on your campus and bring together local community and university service providers.
- ✓ **Encourage Reporting of Violence.** Through orientation and awareness programs on campus, encourage students, faculty and staff to report incidents of violence. Develop effective linkages between campus and community law enforcement personnel.
- ✓ **Provide Services to the Campus Community.** Support a coordinated community response to violence against women; ensure that services are comprehensive and appropriate for the entire campus community.
- ✓ **Develop an Administration Response to Violence on Campus.** Establish protocols to manage complaints of violence on your campus with care for the victim as the first priority. Your protocol should include a clearly defined process for providing assistance to victims and holding the perpetrators accountable.
- ✓ **Review and Revise the Student Code of Conduct and Policies.** Review your campus policies and disciplinary sanctions to assess that violence against women is treated as seriously as other crimes, with equally severe punishments.

- ✓ **Provide a Voice for Women on Campus.** Provide support for students and faculty to establish victim advocacy groups on campus.
- ✓ **Get the Message Out to the Campus Community.** Speak out against domestic violence and sexual assault in your position of leadership on campus. Communicate expectations about appropriate conduct, include them in student policy statements. Post information about available resources in dining halls, health facilities, dormitories, locker rooms, and other places students are likely to see it



Law Enforcement

Across the country, law enforcement is developing innovative and effective strategies to prevent and prosecute violence against women more effectively. Law enforcement leaders have identified several of these strategies that, if used consistently, may go a long way toward reducing incidents of violence against women.

- ✓ **Create a Community Roundtable.** Convene a community roundtable bringing together police, prosecutors, judges, child protection agencies, survivors, religious leaders, health professionals, business leaders, educators, defense attorneys and victim advocate groups, and meet regularly. Create specific plans for needed change, and develop policies among law enforcement, prosecutors, and others that will result in coordinated, consistent responses to domestic violence.
- ✓ **Record Domestic Violence.** To help understand and respond to the dimensions of violence against women, develop and require the use of a uniform domestic violence reporting form. It should include an investigative checklist for use in all domestic violence incidents or responses.
- ✓ **Continue to Educate.** Create informational brochures on domestic violence and sexual assault, which include safety plans and a list of referral services, for distribution in all court houses, police stations, and prosecutors offices AND in non-legal settings such as grocery stores, libraries, laundromats, schools, and health centers.
- ✓ **Provide Clear Guidance on Responding to Domestic Violence.** Write new or adapt existing protocol policies for police, courts, and prosecutors regarding domestic violence and sexual assault incidents, and train all employees to follow them. Policies should specify that domestic violence and sexual assault cases must be treated with the highest priority, regardless of the severity of the offense charged or injuries inflicted.
- ✓ **Ensure Law Enforcement is Well-Informed.** Designate at least one staff member to serve as your agency's domestic violence and sexual assault contact, with responsibility for keeping current on legal developments, training resources, availability of services and grant funds. Wherever possible, create a unit of employees with special expertise to handle domestic violence and sexual assault cases in prosecutor's offices, police departments, and probation/parole agencies, and ensure that these employees are well trained regarding their responsibilities.
- ✓ **Reach Out to Front Lines.** Identify and meet with staff and residents from local battered women's shelters and rape crisis centers to discuss their perceptions of current needs from the law enforcement community. Solicit suggestions for improving the law enforcement response to these crimes.

- ✓ **Improve Enforcement by Implementing a Registry of Restraining Orders and a Uniform Order for Protection.** Implement a statewide registry of restraining orders designed to provide accurate, up-to-date, and easily accessible information on current and prior restraining orders for use by law enforcement and judicial personnel. Develop a uniform statewide protection order for more effective and efficient enforcement.
- ✓ **Support and Pursue Legislative Initiatives.** Develop and support legislative initiatives to address issues regarding domestic violence and sexual assault including: a)stalking, b)death review teams, c)sentencing guidelines, d)indefinite restraining orders, and e)batterers intervention programs.
- ✓ **Conduct Training.** Conduct on-going multi-disciplinary domestic violence and sexual assault training for police, prosecutors, judges, advocates, defenders, service providers, child protection workers, educators and others. Training should include the victim's perspective and an emphasis on safety planning.
- ✓ **Structure Courts to Respond to Domestic Violence/Create Specialized Domestic Violence Courts.** Develop specialized courts that deal exclusively with domestic violence cases in a coordinated, comprehensive manner, where community and court resources can be utilized together to address domestic violence effectively. At a minimum, all court personnel involved with domestic violence cases, including judges, prosecutors, public defenders, probation officers, and corrections and parole officers should receive relevant and practical domestic violence training and have an understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence.



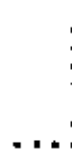
Health Care Professionals

Health care professionals are in the critical position of providing services to victims of violence as the first contact point for many of these victims. It is crucial that health care professionals recognize their potential to intervene appropriately. Immediate recognition of the problem and the provision of medical care and referrals to appropriate resources within the community can make all the difference. Leaders in the field have identified the following strategies to make interventions by health care professionals more effective.

- ✓ ***Incorporate Training into Curricula.*** Support the incorporation of domestic violence and sexual assault training in medical, nursing, and allied health care professional education curricula.
- ✓ ***Make Resources Available to Patients.*** Make resource materials available in waiting rooms and restrooms. Include the National Domestic Violence Hotline number 1-800-799-SAFE(7233) or 1-800-787-3224(TOD).
- ✓ ***Support Incorporation of Protocols into Accreditation Process.*** Support efforts to ensure that domestic violence and sexual assault protocols are addressed through the National Commission for Quality Assurance and the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals.
- ✓ ***Encourage Continuing Education on Violence Against Women Issues.*** Encourage your state licensing boards and various specialty groups to encourage physicians and nurses to allocate Continuing Medical Education (CME) hours to violence against women related issues for relicensure requirements.
- ✓ ***Involve Medical Organizations and Societies in Increasing Awareness.*** Collaborate with health care professional organizations and societies in your area to increase medical school and health care professional involvement in addressing violence against women.
- ✓ ***Feature Violence Against Women on Meeting Agendas.*** Arrange presentations and symposiums on violence against women at various health care specialty annual, regional and local meetings.
- ✓ ***Highlight Commitment to Violence Against Women Issues.*** Give awards, citations, and certificates to exceptional organizations and individuals for their continued commitment to addressing violence against women.
- ✓ ***Develop a Standard Intake Form.*** Develop a standardized Intake assessment form for health care professionals who interact with victims of domestic or sexual violence. This assessment form would ensure that certain information regarding these incidents is identified and proper resources are utilized.

- ✓ **Ensure Employee Assistance Programs are Responsive to Victims of Domestic Violence.** Determine whether your health care facility's employee assistance program (EAP) includes domestic violence services or referrals. If it does not, speak with your human resources director or the appropriate manager about the possibility of expanding the program to address the needs of employees facing violence in their homes. All EAP personnel should receive domestic violence training and have an understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence.

- ✓ **Volunteer.** Provide a health care series on a volunteer basis to community organizations that serve victims of domestic and sexual violence.



Sports

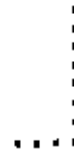
Today, more than ever, our sports players and organizations have an enormous capacity to influence the minds and behaviors of Americans, both young and old. The reason is simple. For many Americans, professional, college and olympic athletes are today's heroes. We must utilize this outlet to send a positive message to all Americans about preventing domestic violence and sexual assault. Following are a number of ways communities can work with the local sports industry to help stop the violence.

- ✓ **Bring Sports Leagues Together in a Common Cause.** Encourage local sports teams to come together in a joint effort to combat violence against women through joint awareness campaigns and public appearances.
- ✓ **Create Strict Disciplinary Policies.** Encourage the creation of disciplinary policies for players on domestic violence and violence against women similar to drug policies. These policies should include stiff sanctions and penalties for committling domestic violence and sexual assault.
- ✓ **Push for PSAs During Broadcast of Sporting Events.** Write or call sports leagues in support of PSAs about violence against women during the broadcast of major sporting events, including NCAA games.
- ✓ **Promote the Distribution of Educational Materials.** Promote the distribution of educational materials from local shelters and programs to players by offering the materials to the teams.
- ✓ **Involve Local Sports Heroes in Community Activities.** Involve local sports heroes in rallies and events which bring attention to the problem of violence against women.
- ✓ **Reach Out to Potential Sponsors.** If there are businesses in the area that are known for making or selling sporting equipment or clothing, approach them for sponsorship of community awareness activities.

Media

The media industry represents much more than television and film stars. It is the most influential source of information for millions of Americans. Before we can change people's attitudes about violence against women and prevent violent behavior, we must not only change the way violence is portrayed in the media, but also educate members of the media who report on domestic violence and sexual assault crime. Leaders in the media industry have identified ways in which communities can work with their local media to encourage responsible reporting of violence against women.

- ✓ **Use the Power of Communication.** Contact local television, radio, and newspapers urging thoughtful and accurate coverage of violence against women, and the provision of educational messages about the problem when possible.
- ✓ **Urge Action Through the Local Paper.** Through community organizations, distribute model op-ed pieces and letters to the editor and urge community action for placement of these pieces.
- ✓ **Link Media with Experts.** Provide media outlets with a list of well-known experts available for interviews, as well as a packet of materials with information on a variety of related subject areas, such as local shelters and programs.
- ✓ **Organize Public Events.** Plan a public event, such as a community education forum on violence against women, and solicit local media coverage.
- ✓ **Encourage Employee Awareness.** Encourage the development of domestic violence awareness programs for employees of media outlets.
- ✓ **Build a Bridge Between Media and Law Enforcement.** Urge police chiefs and commissioners to go on air locally to discuss domestic violence and violence against women.
- ✓ **Provide a Forum for Community Leaders.** Encourage community leaders to speak to media about issues of violence against women.
- ✓ **Publicize Local Resources During Reporting.** Encourage local media to include the National Domestic Violence Hotline number, 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or 1-800-787-3224 (TD1), during reporting on incidents of domestic violence.



The Workplace

Men and women spend more and more of their daily lives in the workplace. Domestic violence is a workplace issue which affects the safety, health, and productivity of America's workers. Business and labor leaders have identified several strategies that can be used to create safer and more supportive workplaces.

- ✓ **Start with the Top and Get Corporate Leadership on Board.** Encourage CEOs or the management team to establish a workplace which is intolerant of domestic violence and aids a victim to obtaining assistance and protection.
- ✓ **Establish Employee Policies that Meet the Needs of Victims of Domestic Violence.** Work with your management and unions to develop and negotiate paid leave and benefit policies which recognize and are responsive to the particular needs of your employees who are victims of domestic violence.
- ✓ **Ensure Employee Assistance Programs are Responsive to Victims of Domestic Violence.** Determine whether your company's employee assistance program (EAP) includes domestic violence services or referrals. If it does not, speak with your human resources director or the appropriate manager about the possibility of expanding the program to address the needs of employees facing violence in their homes. All EAP personnel should receive domestic violence training and have an understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence.
- ✓ **Provide Management with the Tools to Respond to Domestic Violence.** Establish a training program for all supervisors and managers at your workplace to give them guidance on how to respond when an employee is a victim or perpetrator of domestic violence.
- ✓ **Educate Employees About Domestic Violence.** Sponsor a workshop or series of workshops at your workplace on domestic violence. Invite a domestic violence survivor to speak about her experiences and to discuss the impact of violence on her life and her work.
- ✓ **Share Materials About Domestic Violence.** Distribute educational materials about domestic violence to all employees in your workplace and display posters and brochures in public places which explain the issue. Send the message that there is no excuse for domestic violence. Make victim safety information available in private places such as restrooms or in paycheck envelopes. All information should include the National Domestic Violence Hotline number, 1-800-799-SAFE(7233) or 1-800-787-3224(TDD).

- ✓ **Increase Safety At the Workplace.** Find out whether security guards at your workplace have been trained to handle the special safety needs of battered women, who may be stalked at work. If they have not, speak with the appropriate manager to arrange training and help security personnel develop safety procedures.
- ✓ **Coordinate with Local Law Enforcement.** Arrange a meeting between security personnel at your workplace and local law enforcement agencies to facilitate appropriate information sharing and the development of collaborative working relationships.
- ✓ **Join in Local Community Efforts to Combat Domestic Violence.** Conduct a drive in your workplace to collect items for local domestic violence shelters. Be sure to contact the programs first to find out what they want, but common needs for shelters are toys, clothing, furniture, office equipment, office supplies and food. Alternatively, make a contribution of company products.
- ✓ **Donate Time and Resources.** Adopt a local domestic violence shelter by collecting money from coworkers for a joint donation or getting a group of coworkers to make a commitment of volunteer hours. For example, raise money to pay for a new roof for a shelter, organize groups of volunteers to paint a shelter, do yard work around the shelter, assist with a special event, or provide other specialized skills.



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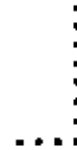
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Judy Rex, *Coordinator, Vermont Network Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (Montpelier, VT)*



A Community Checklist

Jerome R. Rossi. *President and Chief Operating Officer, Marshalls, Inc. (Andover, MA)*

Susan Schechter. *Clinical Professor, University of Iowa School of Social Work (Iowa City, IA)*

Está Soler. *Executive Director, Family Violence Prevention Fund (San Francisco, CA)*

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Diane Stuart. *Domestic Violence State Coordinator, Department of Human Services (Salt Lake City, UT)*

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