

Domestic Violence Fact Sheet

≡ Possible Solutions ≡

The National Advisory Council on Violence Against Women was created in July 1995 and was co-chaired by Attorney General Janet Reno and Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna E. Shalala. Its goals were 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. In 1996, the Council distributed a booklet containing important steps communities can take to end violence against women.¹ Some of these suggestions are presented below to give those in the Prince William community ways to address the growing problem of domestic violence.

→ FOR THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY ←

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 that include the telephone numbers 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).

Speak Out. Speak out about domestic violence and sexual assault from the pulpit. As a faith leader, you can have a powerful impact on peoples' attitudes and beliefs.

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.

→ FOR THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMUNITY ←

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.

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.

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 criminal justice community. Solicit suggestions for improving the criminal justice system's response to these crimes.

→ FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS ←

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 require physicians and nurses to allocate Continuing Medical Education (CME) hours to violence against women related issues for re-licensure purposes.

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 are identified

→ FOR THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY ←

Get Leadership Involved. Encourage management teams to establish a workplace that is intolerant of domestic violence and aids victims in obtaining assistance and protection.

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 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 work.

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 doesn't, contact the appropriate manager about 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 abuse.

¹ *A Community Checklist: Important Steps to End Violence Against Women.* Taken from the U.S. Department of Justice web site at (<http://www.usdoj.gov/vawo/cheklist.htm>).