

# THESE SAFETY SUGGESTIONS

have been compiled from safety plans distributed by state domestic violence coalitions from around the country. Following these suggestions is not a guarantee of safety, but could help to improve your safety situation.

## Personal Safety with an Abuser

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- ❖ Identify your partner's use and level of force so that you can assess danger to you and your children before it occurs.
- ❖ Try to avoid an abusive situation by leaving.
- ❖ Identify safe areas of the house where there are no weapons and where there are always ways to escape. If arguments occur, try to move to those areas.
- ❖ Don't run to where the children are as your partner may hurt them as well.
- ❖ If violence is unavoidable, make yourself a small target; dive into a corner and curl up into a ball with your face protected and arms around each side of your head, fingers entwined.
- ❖ If possible, have a phone accessible at all times and know the numbers to call for help. Know where the nearest pay phone is located. Know your local battered women's shelter number. Don't be afraid to call the police.
- ❖ Let trusted friends and neighbors know of your situation and develop a plan and visual signal for when you need help.
- ❖ Teach your children how to get help. Instruct them not to get involved in the violence between you and your partner. Plan a code word to signal to them that they should get help or leave the house.
- ❖ Tell your children that violence is never right, even when someone they love is being violent. Tell them that neither you nor they are at fault or cause the violence, and that when anyone is being violent, it is important to keep safe.
- ❖ Practice how to get out safely. Practice with your children.
- ❖ Plan for what you will do if your children tell your partner of your plan or if your partner otherwise finds out about your plan.
- ❖ Keep weapons like guns and knives locked up and as inaccessible as possible.
- ❖ Make a habit of backing the car into the driveway and keeping it fueled. Keep the driver's door unlocked and others locked -- for a quick escape.
- ❖ Try not to wear scarves or long jewelry that could be used to strangle you.
- ❖ Create several plausible reasons for leaving the house at different times of the day or night. Call a domestic violence hotline periodically to assess your options and get a supportive understanding ear.

## Getting Ready to Leave

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- ❖ Keep any evidence of physical abuse, such as pictures, etc.
- ❖ Know where you can go to get help; tell someone what is happening to you.
- ❖ If you are injured, go to a doctor or an emergency room and report what happened to you. Ask that they document your visit.
- ❖ Plan with your children and identify a safe place for them (for example, a room with a lock or a friend's house where they can go for help). Reassure them that their job is to stay safe, not to protect you.
- ❖ Contact your local battered women's shelter and find out about laws and other resources available to you before you have to use them during a crisis.
- ❖ Keep a journal of all violent incidences, noting dates, events and threats made if possible.
- ❖ Acquire job skills as you can, such as learning to type or taking courses at a community college.
- ❖ Try to set money aside or ask friends or family members to hold money for you.

## General Guidelines for Leaving an Abusive Relationship

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- ❖ You may request a police stand-by or escort while you leave;
- ❖ If you need to sneak away, be prepared;
- ❖ Make a plan for how and where you will escape;
- ❖ Plan for a quick escape;
- ❖ Put aside emergency money as you can;
- ❖ Hide an extra set of car keys;
- ❖ Pack an extra set of clothes for yourself and your children and store them at a trusted friend or neighbor's house. Try to avoid using next-door neighbors, close family members and mutual friends;
- ❖ Take with you important phone numbers of friends, relatives, doctors, schools, etc., as well as other important items, including:
  - Driver's license;
  - Regularly needed medication;
  - List of credit cards held by self or jointly or the credit cards themselves if you have access to them;
  - Pay stubs;
  - and checkbooks and information about bank accounts and other assets.

### **If time is available, also take:**

- ❖ Citizenship documents (such as your passport, greencard, etc.);
- ❖ Titles, deeds, and other property information;
- ❖ Medical records;
- ❖ Children's school and immunization records;
- ❖ Insurance information;
- ❖ Copy of marriage license, birth certificates, will, and other legal documents;
- ❖ Verification of social security numbers;
- ❖ Welfare identification; and
- ❖ Valued pictures, jewelry, or personal possessions.
- ❖ Create a false trail. Call motels, real estate agencies, and schools in a town at least six hours away from where you plan to relocate. Ask questions that require a call back to your house in order to leave phone numbers on record.

## After Leaving the Abusive Relationship

### **If getting a restraining order and the offender is leaving:**

- ❖ Change locks and phone number;
- ❖ Change work hours and route taken to work;
- ❖ Change route taken to transport children to school;
- ❖ Keep a certified copy of your restraining order with you at all times;
- ❖ Inform friends, neighbors and employers that you have a restraining order in effect;
- ❖ Give copies of restraining order to employers, neighbors, and schools along with a picture of the offender.
- ❖ Call law enforcement to enforce the order.

### **If you leave:**

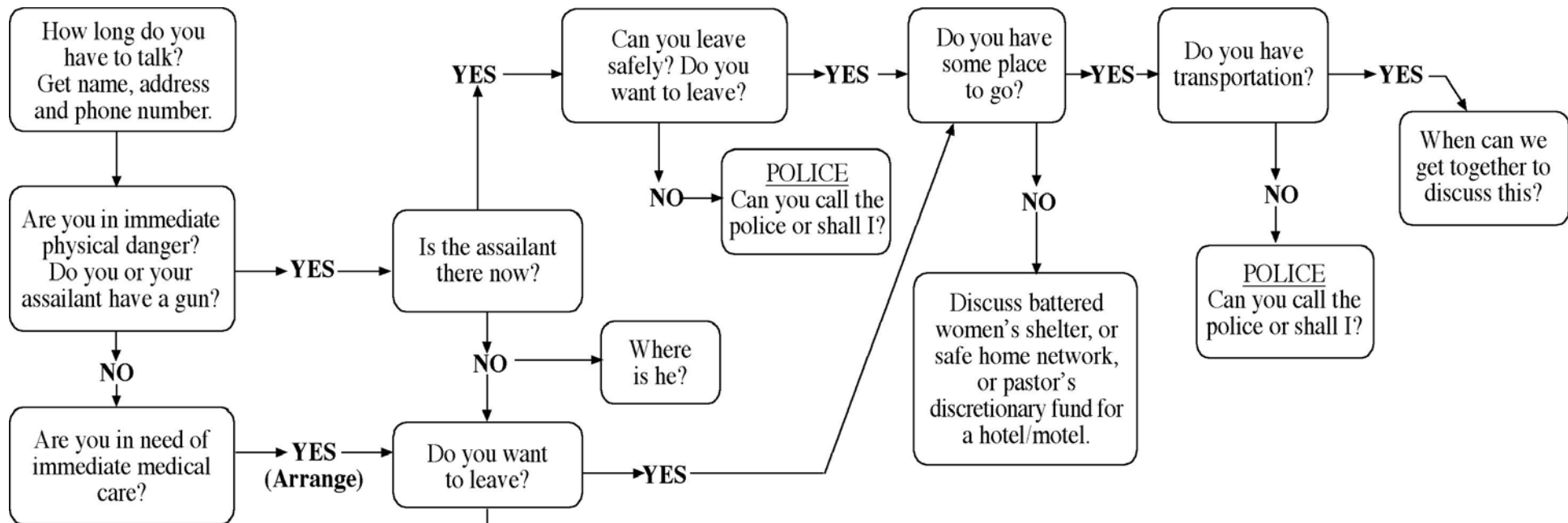
- ❖ Consider renting a post office box or using the address of a friend for your mail;
- ❖ Be aware that addresses are on restraining orders and police reports;
- ❖ Be careful to whom you give your new address and phone number;
- ❖ Change your work hours if possible;
- ❖ Alert school authorities of situation;
- ❖ Consider changing your children's schools;
- ❖ Reschedule appointments that offender is aware of;

- ❖ Use different stores and frequent different social spots;
- ❖ Alert neighbors and request that they call the police if they feel you may be in danger;
- ❖ Talk to trusted people about the violence;
- ❖ Replace wooden doors with steel or metal doors. Install security systems if possible;
- ❖ Install a lighting system that lights up when a person is coming close to the house (motion sensitive lights);
- ❖ Tell people you work with about the situation and have your calls screened by one receptionist if possible;
- ❖ Tell people who take care of your children which individuals are allowed to pick up your children. Explain your situation to them and provide them with a copy of the restraining order;
- ❖ Call the telephone company to request caller ID. Ask that your phone be blocked so that if you call, neither your partner nor anyone else will be able to get your new, unlisted phone number.

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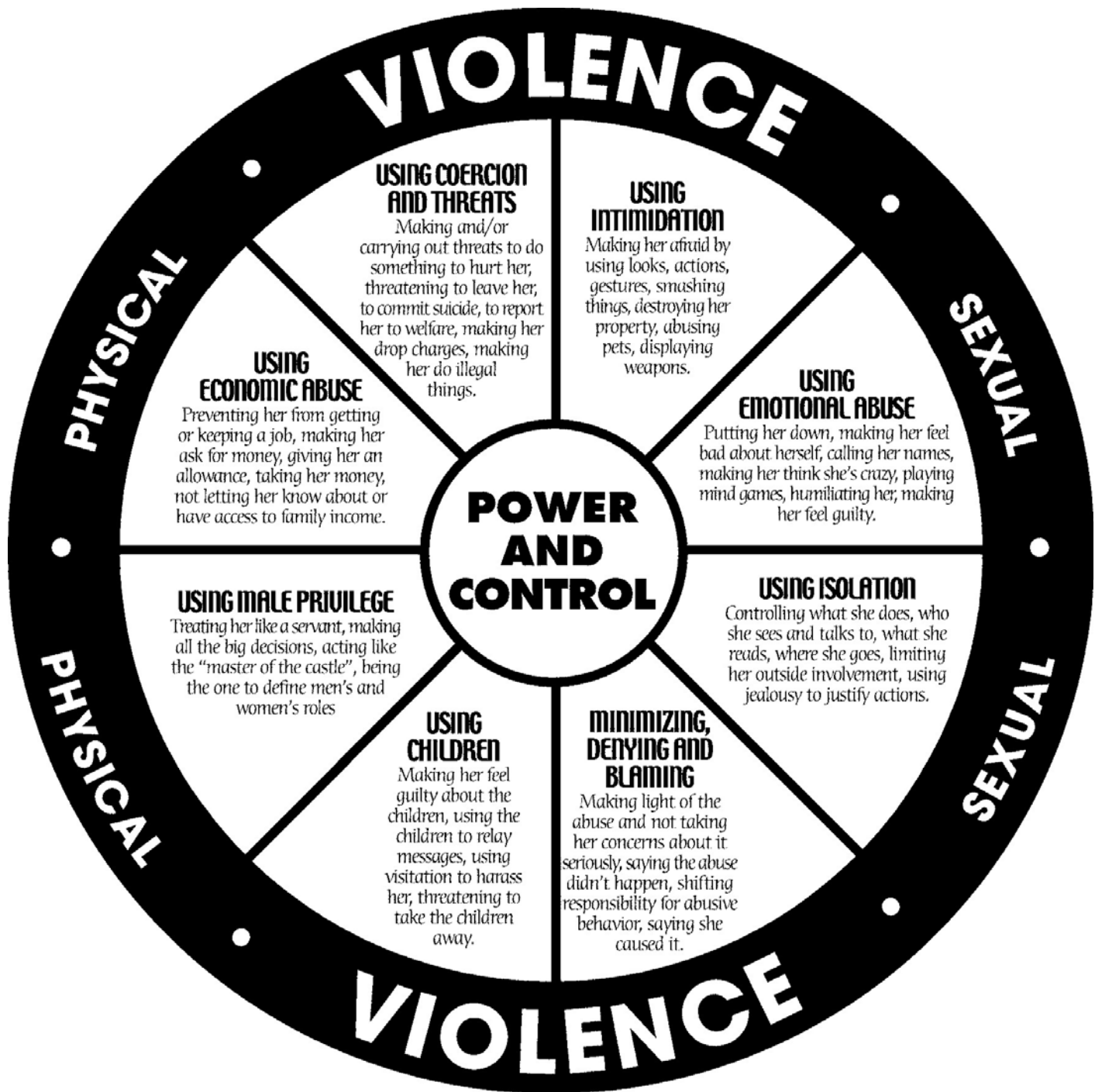
## FLOW CHART for **CRISIS CALLS**

### IF YOU RECEIVE AN EMERGENCY CALL . . .

You may be called by someone who is in an abusive situation. That call may be made following or during an episode and you need to respond quickly to establish what the needs are and to respond appropriately. The “Flow Chart for Emergency Calls” can help you through that call. The chart will help direct the conversation, allows the victim to decide what options they have and assesses what actions you need to take.

- Do not go to the home unless accompanied by the police. Domestic violence calls are the most dangerous calls that police officers face.
- Be calm as you listen, gather information and respond.
- If the phone call is interrupted by the abuser’s violent entry or the phone goes dead, call 911.
- Remember to address immediate safety needs facing the victim and children. This is not the time to address any long-term decisions that may lie ahead.
- If the victim chooses to stay, encourage her/him to contact the local shelter or program to learn about resources.
- Do not assume that you know what is best for the person. Individuals and congregations need to partner with the experts in the community.

NO - Call 911



## **Am I my Sister's (or Brother's) Keeper?**

*Choose life so that you and your descendants may live*  
(Deuteronomy 30:19b)

Domestic Violence will rob children of their childhood.  
It will deprive women of their spirit.  
It will strip men of their place in a peaceful world.  
— from the City of Phoenix government Web site

## **What is Abusive Behavior?**

It is a pattern of behavior that establishes power and control over another person through fear and intimidation, often including the treat of violence. Not all domestic violence is physical. It can be emotional abuse, economic abuse, sexual abuse, threats, use of male privilege, intimidation, isolation, and a variety of other behaviors used to maintain fear, intimidation and power.

## **Are you worried about a friend?**

- ✓ Is your friend withdrawn, worried or depressed?
- ✓ Has your friend begun to limit the times she can talk on the phone?
- ✓ Does she make excuses for not going places together?
- ✓ Does she have bruises and/or other injuries?
- ✓ Does she wear clothing, sunglasses or make-up in an attempt to cover up injuries?
- ✓ Does his partner/spouse make all the decisions in their relationship?
- ✓ Is her partner possessive or jealous?
- ✓ Does his spouse put him down in front of other people?

## **It may be hard for her to talk and for you to listen...**

- ✓ She may deny the violence or make excuses for his behavior.
- ✓ He may be embarrassed, ashamed or afraid to talk about it.
- ✓ She may believe that the abuse will stop or that she deserves it.
- ✓ You need to believe her and validate her feelings.
- ✓ You need to listen without judgment of her choices or actions.
- ✓ You need to be patient and understand that she needs to be in control of her decisions.

## **How else can I help?**

- ✓ Share what you have learned and pass on any materials you have.
- ✓ Encourage her to get help from a local shelter or domestic violence agency.
- ✓ Assure him that he is not to blame and that he is not alone.
- ✓ Help her make a safety plan if she chooses to stay or an escape plan if she chooses to leave the abuse. \*\*\*Remember: 75% of the DV deaths occur at the time of leaving or after.
- ✓ Be clear what you can do and what you cannot do. Don't put yourself in danger.

## Religious Community Checklist

*The religious communities provide a safe haven for women and families in need. In addition, they exhort 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.*

- 4 ***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).
- 4 ***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.
- 4 ***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.
- 4 ***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.
- 4 ***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.
- 4 ***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.
- 4 ***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.
- 4 ***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.
- 4 ***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.
- 4 ***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 FaithTrust Institute, Seattle, WA. Used with permission.)



# COMMUNITY RESOURCES

## and National Hotlines

COMMUNITY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE:

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SHELTERS IN YOUR COMMUNITY:

\_\_\_\_\_

POLICE:

(LOCAL) \_\_\_\_\_

(COUNTY) \_\_\_\_\_

(STATE) \_\_\_\_\_

HOSPITALS:

*Emergency Room* — *Social Workers* —

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RAPE CRISIS CENTERS:

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ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES: \_\_\_\_\_

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES: \_\_\_\_\_

STATE PROTECTIVE SERVICES: \_\_\_\_\_

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT: \_\_\_\_\_

ALCOHOL ABUSE SERVICES: \_\_\_\_\_

DISABILITY SERVICES: \_\_\_\_\_

DRUG ABUSE SERVICES: \_\_\_\_\_

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES: \_\_\_\_\_

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: \_\_\_\_\_

LEGAL ASSISTANCE: \_\_\_\_\_

SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICE: \_\_\_\_\_

UNEMPLOYMENT OFFICE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADULT DAY CARE CENTERS:

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RESPIRE CARE CENTERS:

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COUNSELORS: PASTORS:

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THERAPISTS:

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SUPPORT GROUPS:

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**NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE:**  
**1-800-799-7233, 1-800-787-3224(TTY)**

**NATIONAL POISON HOTLINE: 1-800-222-1222**

**NATIONAL RUNAWAY SWITCHBOARD: 1-800-621-4000**  
*(This network is intended for teens who have left home and need help).*

# A Congregational Domestic Violence Training Plan Black Mountain Presbyterian Church

*Black Mountain, NC*

After researching a variety of training materials we decided on utilizing several pieces of curriculum from the FaithTrust Institute (formerly the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence) of Seattle, Washington. We applied to the Presbytery of Western North Carolina's Peace and Justice Committee for a grant to fund the purchase of curriculum and received half the cost of the curriculum. The other half came from the 25 % of an annual Peacemaking Offering designated to stay with the local congregation. The training was organized into four categories.

**Orientation of the Session** to the issues and the reason for the church's involvement. We used the video, *Broken Vows: Religious Perspectives on Domestic Violence*. We also reviewed the theological statement, statistics and other information compiled by the church's Domestic Violence Awareness Task Force.

**Training of the Church Programmatic Staff and Key Volunteers...** An 18-hour training program for five members of the church staff and three volunteers focused on the impact of domestic violence on families and our society: ministering to victims and families, addressing the needs of children and confronting and ministering to the perpetrator.

**Thematic Overview for all adult Church School Classes...** All adult classes have had three class sessions of training using the *Broken Vows* video and an introduction to the church policy statement. In addition, parents of children and teens have had an additional three sessions reviewing the curriculum to be used with their children.

**Curriculum Plan...** All curricula used with the children and youth classes are available through the Faith Trust Institute.

1. Ages 5-8: In the fall of 2004 we will present a three to five session course drawing from material in the book, *Preventing Child Sexual Abuse: Ages 5-8*.
2. Ages 9-12: In the fall of 2004 we will present a three to five session course drawing from material in the book, *Preventing Child Sexual Abuse: Ages 9-12*.
3. Ages 13-18: Two resources will be used: *Sexual Abuse Prevention: A Course Study for Teenagers* and *Love: All That and More: Healthy Relationships for Teens and Young Adults*. Both teenage classes will have an eight to ten session study utilizing these materials.
4. Approximately thirty children from the Presbyterian Home for Children attend our congregation. The children of the Home have been placed there by the court system because they were either been neglected or abused. Because of the special needs of these children, the children between ages 5 and 12 will be taught separately by home staff and professional counselors. The teenagers at the Home will be included in the Sunday school class with the other teens. Materials for Victims of Family Violence on hand: *Wings Like a Dove: Healing for the Abused Christian Woman*. (Video and study guide.) *Hear Their Cries: Religious Responses to Child Abuse*. (Video and Study guide) *Bless Our Children: Preventing Sexual Abuse*. (Video and study guide) *Keeping the Faith: Guidance for Christian Women Facing Abuse*. (book)

*The Rev. Kevin Frederick is the Associate Pastor of Black Mountain Presbyterian Church. Resources from the FaithTrust Institute can be obtained by calling 1-877-860-2255 or by visiting [www.faithtrustinstitute.org](http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org). Some of these resources can be borrowed from the PHEWA office: 1-888-728-7228 ext. 8100; [tgilmore@ctr.pcusa.org](mailto:tgilmore@ctr.pcusa.org). "Anguished Hearts" training package that contains a CD of the Black Mountain Implementation Plan can be ordered by calling 1-800-524-2612 or [www.pcusa.org/marketplace](http://www.pcusa.org/marketplace).*