

Resources for particular populations

- **Rural battered women**
- **Resources for racial ethnic communities**
Looking for resources that are culturally sensitive to various communities? Begin here.
- **What if you visit an elderly member and see signs of abuse**

RURAL BATTERED WOMEN

Battered women living in rural areas have many of the same experiences as battered women everywhere. But rural battered women have certain experiences and face certain barriers that are unique to rural settings.

Batterers commonly isolate their victims as one tactic of maintaining power and control over their victims. They frequently:

- Refuse access to family vehicles or prevent a woman from getting a driver's license;
- Ridicule her in front of friends and family so that she's reluctant to have them come to her home;
- Accuse her of flirting or having affairs and because of this suspicion, beating her from even limited contact with another person;
- Remove the telephone when leaving the home or calling her every hour to monitor her whereabouts;
- Threaten or beat her when she returns from an outing with women friends;
- Threaten to kill her if she tells anyone about the abuse.

A woman isolated in these ways has a difficult time escaping from a violent partner. She fears leaving. She fears asking someone for help. Battered women everywhere experience some form of isolation as controlled by their partner, but for rural battered women the isolation becomes magnified by geographical isolation. Other rural factors can have an impact on a rural battered woman's isolation and changes of safe shelter. Consider that:

- A rural battered woman may not have phone service;
- Usually no public transportation exists, so if she leaves she must use a family vehicle;
- Police and medical response to a call may be a long time in arriving;
- Rural areas have fewer resources available to women—jobs, childcare, housing, and health care. Easy access to these resources is limited by distance;
- Extreme weather conditions often exaggerate isolation—cold, snow, and mud regularly affect life in rural areas and may extend periods of isolation with an abuser;
- Poor roads thwart transportation;
- Seasonal work may mean months of unemployment on a regular basis and result in women being trapped with an abuser for long periods of time;
- Hunting weapons are common to rural homes and everyday tools like axes, chains, mauls, and pitchforks are also potential weapons;
- Alcohol (and drug) use, which often increases in winter months when rural people are underemployed and isolated in their homes, usually affects the frequency and severity of abuse;
- Traveling to the “big city” can be intimidating to rural battered women and city attitudes may seem strange and unaccepting of her ways;
- A woman's bruises may fade or heal before she sees a neighbor, and working with farm tools and equipment can provide an easy explanation of her injuries;
- Farm families are often one-income families and a woman frequently has no money of her own to support herself and her children;

- A family's finances are often tied up in land or equipment, so a woman thinking of ending a relationship may face the agonizing reality that she and her partner may lose the family farm or her partner will be left with no means of income;
- Court orders restraining an abuser from having a contact with a woman are less viable for rural women because their partners cannot be kept away from the farm if it is their only source of income;
- Rural women frequently have strong emotional ties to the land and to farm animals and if she has an attachment to her animals, who may fear that her animals will be neglected or harmed if she leaves;
- Rural battered women have unique problems, but alternatives to living without abuse do exist. A battered women's program can provide person support, safety planning for you and your children, information about o-options available to you, transportation, legal information, safe shelter, and referrals to financial assistance, job training, and education options.

Information from the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women – www.mcbw.org. Used with permission.

For more study...

An excellent article on rural abuse can be found in *Violence in the Family: A workshop Curriculum for Clergy and Other Helpers*. Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press.

Resources for Racial Ethnic Communities

Although the rates of abuse are consistent across racial and ethnic groups, it is sometimes more difficult to find culturally sensitive materials and help. Below are some websites and other resources for specific racial and ethnic communities or are resources that present materials in a culturally sensitive method.

National Hotline (800) 799-7233; (800) 787-3224 (TTY)
The hotline provides information on shelters and service providers
24 hours a day in 150 languages.

Asian/ Asian American/ Pacific Islander

Shimtuh: Korean Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Program

www.kceeb.org

Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence

www.apiahf.org/apidvinstitute

Black/ African Descent/ African American:

The Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community

www.dvinstitute.org

Hispanic/ Latina, Latino

The National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence
Para Erradicarla Violencia Domestica

www.dvalianza.org

Immigrant/ Refugee

National Network to End Violence Against Immigrant Women

www.immigrantwomennetwork.org

Native American and Alaska Native/ First Nations/ American Indian

Mending the Sacred Hoop, S.T.O.P. Violence Against Indian Women

www.msh-ta.org

Printed Materials

Balm for Gilead: Pastoral Care for African American Families Experiencing Abuse, Toinette M. Eugene and James N. Poling (Abingdon Press, 1998)

Called to Make Justice is a collection of the keynote speeches from the first bi-national meeting of advocates, workers and leaders from religious communities who work to prevent sexual and domestic violence. FaithTrust Institute, www.faithtrustinstitute.org, 206-634-1903

The Speaking Profits Us: Violence in the Lives of Women of Color. Essays on American Indian, Asian, black, and Latina violence. FaithTrust Institute, www.faithtrustinstitute.org, 206-634-1903

Understanding Male Violence: Pastoral Care Issues, James N. Poling (Chalice Press). The book contains chapters on African American and Central America violence.

Walking Together: Working with Women from Diverse Religious and Spiritual Traditions
This is a guide for domestic violence advocates. FaithTrust Institute, www.faithtrustinstitute.org, 206-634-1903

Simulation

In Her Steps, a simulation “game,” that leads the participants through real life domestic violence situations, is in both English and Spanish. The featured women are from diverse racial ethnic populations. This resource can be borrowed from the PHEWA office, 1-888-728-7228, extension 5794; ntroy@ctr.pcusa.org. This simulation is produced by the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, www.wscadv.org.

Videos

Domestic Violence: What Churches Can Do is a 20-minute video that can be used in an educational setting (1 hour). Resource can be ordered for the FaithTrust Institute or borrowed from the PHEWA office (see above)

Pastoral Care for Domestic Violence: Case Studies for Clergy is a 9-part training course on pastoral care. The vignettes are culturally diverse. FaithTrust Institute, www.faithtrustinstitute.org, 206-634-1903

"WHAT IF..."

WHAT IF YOU VISIT AN ELDERLY MEMBER AND SEE SIGNS OF ABUSE?

The indicators of elder abuse are similar to those for spousal/partner abuse and child abuse. In addition to physical, sexual, emotional or psychological and financial abuse, there is one other aspect of elder abuse. Elder abuse may also involve neglect – passive, active or self-neglect. Neglect accounts for the largest percentage of elder abuse, 48.6% according to the Administration on Aging (1998). Stress is often a catalyst for neglect of the elderly.

Passive neglect is a failure or the refusal to carry out care taking obligations. This may include forgetting to check on or take care of someone, not researching all the community resources available to the person (i.e. meals for the elderly, day care, homecare aides).

Active neglect is the intentional withholding of the person's daily needs, food, clothing, toileting needs or keeping a person in restraints.

Self-neglect occurs when the elderly person does not take care of himself or herself, either intentionally or because they are unable to financially, physically or mentally.

Theological/Scriptural Response

In the book of Sirah, located in the Deuterocanonical Apocryphal, we read in Chapter 3:12-17, "My child, help your father in his old age, and do not grieve him as long as he lives, even if his mind fails, be patient with him, because you have all your faculties do not despise him. For kindness to a father will not be forgotten, and will be credited to you against your sins; in the day of your distress, it will be remembered in your favor, like frost in fair weather, your sins will melt away. Whoever forsakes a father is like a blasphemer and whoever angers a mother is cursed by the Lord. My child, perform your tasks with humility; then you will be loved by those whom God accepts."

Community/Congregational Response

List the agencies in your community that work with the elderly and summarize what they do. Make this resource list available to the entire congregation.

Identify the elders in your congregation and develop a plan to have them visited often. When you visit, offer to be a friend, to listen without judging, and to be a contact person if they need you. If a personal visit is not possible, arrange for telephone contact weekly. A simple "Hello, how are you?" telephone call can make all the difference in the world to someone who is lonely.

Talk to your church session and consider forming a health ministry team to address the problem of persons who are alone, lonely or vulnerable.

Legal Response

Mandates for reporting elder abuse vary by state. Reporting elder abuse is the moral and ethical thing to do. The policy of the PC(USA) recommends that "...all clergy, elders, church members, other church staff, and volunteers to always report to the appropriate authority the abuse of children, the elderly, and those disabled in ways that prevent them from reporting the abuse themselves; and after appropriate training, discuss with all victims/survivors their risk and safety options, and refer the victims/survivors to appropriate resources." Many times the elderly are aware of the abuse and prefer to stay in the situation because the alternatives may seem less attractive to them. When a referral is made, Adult Protective Services will conduct an investigation.

Pastoral Response

Talk about the issue. Encourage your session to discuss and take on the issue in your congregation. Preach and pray about elder abuse. But be prepared! If you talk about it, they will come. Know what the church can do and when, where, and to whom to refer. Use the community resources; they are the experts. The church is the expert in being a witness to the continuing presence of the love and care of God in their lives.

Educational Response

Use *Anguished Hearts* (see resources) as a study in your church. *Anguished Hearts* covers all the different areas of domestic violence including elder abuse. Consider training the entire church, from children to adults.

Invite a speaker, who works with the elderly, to talk about elder abuse and neglect and about what the congregation/community might do to become involved.