

The Mayor's Center for Faith & Community Partnerships &  
The Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence



Hope in  
Faith





**Dear Faith Leader:**

**Thank you for partnering with the City and faith leaders of many cultures and traditions to raise awareness about IPV within the faith community. Your work with us will strengthen engagement from faith partners and support capacity to respond to victims and connect them to services.**

**The Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence (ENDGBV), established in 2001, oversees the citywide delivery of services for survivors of intimate partner violence (IPV), family violence, sexual violence, human trafficking, elder abuse and other forms of domestic and gender-based violence. This includes, but is not limited to: developing policies and innovative programs, working with diverse communities, City agencies, and community based organizations to raise awareness and strengthen safety of victims and children.**

**Intimate partner violence is a serious societal and spiritual concern. It hinders the dignity of human beings and basic moral principles of all religious faith traditions. Spiritual leaders are often the first person community members are compelled to turn to at times of distress or a crisis, and they are in positions to provide counsel, moral support, and safety. It is our goal to bring these issues to the forefront, educate community members about the prevalence of IPV and all forms of gender-based violence, take action, and alert survivors to the many service and resource options that are available to them.**

**This tool kit includes; information about the prevalence of IPV, including fact sheets and statistics, and guidance on addressing IPV in the community. It also includes resources for IPV including the Family Justice Centers (FJCs), hotlines and community based organizations (CBOs), clergy self-care, and training offerings and outreach options.**

**Thank you again for joining ENDGBV to support survivors throughout New York City.**

**Best regards,  
Cecile Noel, Commissioner,  
Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence**

## *What is Intimate Partner Violence?*

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a pattern of coercive and abusive behaviors used to gain and maintain power and control over an intimate partner. Intimate partners include current or former spouses or dating partners of any gender or sexual orientation and people with children in common. IPV can include many forms of abuse including physical, sexual, financial, psychological, and spiritual, as well as threats and intimidation.

The term domestic violence (DV) is often used interchangeably with intimate partner violence. However, DV is an umbrella term that can also refer to violence between other family members such as between a parent and child or between siblings.

IPV is incredibly prevalent; there were 111,917 IPV reports made to the NYPD in 2019 alone. (For more data, visit [NYC Open Data](#) or access our reports on [our website](#).) IPV is the third leading cause of homelessness and can affect people regardless of religion, race, gender identity, sexual orientation or socio-economic status.

It is imperative to remember when working with someone who you think may be a victim of IPV that their safety is a priority. The following guide is designed to make your interactions with potential victims of IPV as safe and helpful as possible.

## *How Members of the Faith Community can Support Victims of IPV*

### **Create a culture of safety and support**

- Be willing to see and acknowledge the problem
- Start by believing the person being abused
- Assist the person with their choices without being judgmental
- Have resources and information readily available and on display (brochures and other educational materials about the NYC Family Justice Centers, the [NYC HOPE Resource portal](#), and the City's 24/7 DV Hotline)
- Be proactive with individuals who may need your attention, while respecting their right to privacy and self-determination

## **Develop a protocol on how faith community members can support people experiencing IPV**

- Learn appropriate ways to respond to both people being abused and people using abuse
- Establish a policy for addressing disclosures within the faith community
- Set clear boundaries about acceptable and unacceptable behaviors within the faith community and place of worship

## **Know your community resources and post the information**

- Share domestic violence resources with the faith community
- **NYC's 24/7 Domestic Violence Hotline (1-800-621-HOPE / 4673; TTY: 1-866-604-5350)**
- Find community resources using the NYC HOPE Resource Directory at: [www.nyc.gov/NYCHOPE](http://www.nyc.gov/NYCHOPE)
- The **NYC Family Justice Centers** provide FREE and CONFIDENTIAL assistance to victims of GBV, including IPV, family violence, elder abuse, stalking, sexual assault, and human trafficking. Welcomes people of all ages, sexual orientations and gender identities, regardless of language spoken, immigration status or income. Open M-F 9-5pm, no appointment necessary:
  - o **Bronx FJC:** (718) 508-1220
  - o **Brooklyn FJC:** (718) 250-5113
  - o **Manhattan FJC:** (212)602-2800
  - o **Queens FJC:** (718) 575-4545
  - o **Staten Island FJC:** (718) 697-2800

## **Understand the dynamics of IPV**

- Consider effects of IPV beyond the individual being abused, particularly impacts on children, family members and the community
- Schedule trainings to learn more about IPV and other forms of domestic and gender-based violence
  - o Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence Training Team  
[training@endgbv.nyc.gov](mailto:training@endgbv.nyc.gov)  
[www.nyc.gov/endgbvtraining](http://www.nyc.gov/endgbvtraining)

- o **CONNECT:** is dedicated to preventing interpersonal violence and promoting gender justice. By building partnerships with individuals and communities, CONNECT strives to help change the beliefs, behaviors and institutions that perpetuate violence. Through legal empowerment, grassroots mobilization and transformative education, CONNECT seeks to create safe families and peaceful communities.

[www.connectnyc.org](http://www.connectnyc.org)

Rev. Dr. Sally MacNichol

212.683.0015 x 216

[smacnichol@connectnyc.org](mailto:smacnichol@connectnyc.org)

### **Promote an understanding of spiritual abuse within the context of IPV**

- Be aware that abusers will often misuse religious texts/scriptures to convince the victim that abuse is acceptable in their faith
- Let the victim know that breaking the marriage bond is not a sin within the context of domestic violence
- Let the person experiencing abuse know that it is not their fault and they do not have to stay with person abusing them for spiritual reasons

### **Create ongoing support network**

- Form a support group for survivors dedicated to raising awareness of and resources
- Post videos with hashtags on social media platforms to create a string of inspiring videos on these issues across faiths
- Educate and engage the youth community to help raise awareness

## *Working with People Experiencing Abuse*

**DO:** Offer supportive statements and remind the person experiencing abuse that it is not their fault.

**DO NOT:** Use victim blaming language. Stay away from the “Why?” or “Why didn’t you?”

**DO:** Understand and accept your role as a supportive guide.

**DO NOT:** Give orders to the person experiencing abuse about what they “should do”.

**DO:** Provide appropriate options.

**DO NOT:** Insist that the resources you’ve provided are utilized. Remember, disclosing the abuse does not mean the person experiencing abuse is ready to take action.

**DO:** Check your biases and listen nonjudgmentally. Avoid criticizing actions or behaviors.

**DO NOT:** Underestimate the importance of listening to the person experiencing harm.

**DO NOT:** React with disbelief, disgust, or anger at what the person experiencing abuse tells you.

**DO:** Prioritize the safety of the person experiencing abuse.

**DO NOT:** Inquire about the abuse in front of others.

**DO:** Protect confidentiality.

**DO NOT:** Ask about the abuse in front of other people, give information about the person experiencing abuse’s whereabouts to the abuser or to others who might pass information on to the abuser. Do not discuss with other people in your faith community ( e.g. the parish council/session/elders who might inadvertently pass information on to the abuser.)

**DO:** Help the person being abused with any religious or spiritual concerns.

**DO NOT:** Pressure the victim to forgive or to pray that the abuse goes away.

**DO:** Believe the person being abused. Their description of the violence is only the tip of the iceberg.

**DO NOT:** Recommend couples counseling or approach the abusive person and ask for their side of the story.” These actions could escalate the abuse.

**DO:** Support and respect the person being abused’s choices.

**DO NOT:** Recommend “marriage enrichment,” “mediation,” or a “communications workshop.” None of these will address the goals listed above, and are not effective when there is fear, or an imbalance of power and control in the relationship.

**DO:** Educate yourself and your faith community. None of these guidelines make a difference without understanding the tactics and dynamics of abuse.

### *Working with People who Use Abuse*

**DO:** Encourage and support behavior change while being clear that any type of abuse is unacceptable.

**DO NOT:** Suggest couple’s counseling. This may seriously jeopardize the safety of the person being abused.

**DO:** Hold the person using abuse accountable for their actions.

**DO NOT:** Let anxiety or fear prevent you from holding the abuser accountable.

**DO:** Get consent from the person experiencing abuse before speaking with the abusive partner.

**DO NOT:** Meet with the abuser alone (meet in a public area); conspire with the abuser in any way; or share in information about the victim’s location.

**For more information, visit us online**

[www.nyc.gov/endgbv](http://www.nyc.gov/endgbv)



## *Next Steps and How to Connect*

We invite you to take action against intimate partner violence during Domestic Violence awareness month and throughout the year. Here are some ways in which you can do that:

**Show your support:** Purple is the official color of DV Awareness. Purple is the official color of DV awareness, and each year one day of the month is designated as Go Purple Day. On this day we ask faith leaders and their members to wear purple in solidarity with DV survivors. Decorate your houses of worship with purple ribbons & decorations. Post videos of your sermons which denounce IPV and express support for victims. Take and post photos of your congregation wearing purple to social media, to share with the world your show of support. Use the hashtag **#NYCGoPurple** and **#NYCFaithInActionAgainstDV** Watch our social media feeds for updates on Go Purple Day, hashtags, and for more ways you can get involved.

**Sermons and messaging:** Carry messages within your sermons that denounce relationship abuse and promote healthy relationships, trust, equality and respect. Share messages of understanding and hope, and encourage members to respond supportively and non-judgmentally to those who may be experiencing abuse.

**Share information and resources:** Invite ENDGBV or DV partners to present to your congregation or table at a service or faith event so people can avail themselves of the materials and information the City has to offer.

**Build capacity:** Request training for you and your staff from the ENDGBV Policy & Training department or partners. Schedule a workshop or presentation for your congregants by the ENDGBV Outreach Team. Register for a workshop by the Healthy Relationship Training Academy for your youth, parents, or adults working with youth. Create a policy and procedure within your house of worship for how you will respond to and address disclosures of IPV within your congregation.

**Help spread the word:** Plan and organize an outreach event in your community to raise awareness about services and resources. Work with the ENDGBV outreach team to hand out flyers at a busy transit station, host a town hall, special event, or forum where the issue can be presented and discussed.

**Visit the Family Justice Center in your borough:** Connect with the center in your borough and meet the team and on-site partners so you understand the variety of comprehensive, holistic, and wrap-around services available. Become familiar with the people and experience members can expect when they reach out for help.

**Support:** Organize a donation drive to collect food, clothing, or supplies for a DV shelter or service center.

**Create your own way to engage with this topic using the strengths, skills, and resources within your faith community!**

As we seek to increase capacity, build trust and awareness, and engage with you and your faith communities, please feel free to contact the following ENDGBV departments and partners:

The New York City Family Justice Centers:

If someone you know is in a relationship that makes them feel scared, hurt or unsafe, refer them to one of the five New York City Family Justice Centers. The FJCs provide **FREE** and **CONFIDENTIAL** assistance to survivors of domestic and gender-based violence. We welcome people of all ages, sexual orientations and gender identities, regardless of what language you speak, your immigration status or your income. **All Centers are available by phone Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.** Interpretation is available in over 200+ languages.

At any New York City Family Justice Center, survivors of domestic and gender-based violence and their children can get connected to organizations that provide case management, economic empowerment, counseling, civil legal, and criminal justice assistance.

**The Centers offer free, confidential help to people of any:**

Age	Immigration Status	Sexual orientation	Income	Language spoken	Gender identity	Disability
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**Due to COVID-19, the NYC Family Justice Centers are currently available by phone only. Please call on Monday to Friday, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.**

**NYC Family Justice Center, Manhattan  
(212) 602-2800**

**NYC Family Justice Center, Brooklyn  
(718) 250-5113**

**NYC Family Justice Center, Queens  
(718) 575-4545**

**NYC Family Justice Center, Bronx  
(718) 508-1220**

**NYC Family Justice Center, Staten Island  
(718) 697-4300**



Telephonic interpretation is available in more than 240 languages.

**NYC** Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence

Awareness. Help. Hope.

If you are in immediate danger, call 911.  
If you can't talk, text 911.  
Learn more: [nyc.gov/text911](https://nyc.gov/text911)

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## **The Policy & Training Institute:**

ENDGBV's **Policy and Training Institute** ("the Institute") leads our training, prevention and policy work. The Institute, which comprises the policy team, the Training Team, and the NYC Healthy Relationship Training Academy, was created to enhance City agency and community-based organization (CBO) responses to domestic and gender based violence, identify key areas for policy change and development, and engage in primary prevention through work with young people throughout New York City.

The Training Team provides tailored trainings to City agencies and CBOs on topics across the spectrum of GBV, as well as providing technical assistance in the review and development of their policies and protocols.

**If you have questions, or would like to schedule training, please contact [training@endgbv.nyc.gov](mailto:training@endgbv.nyc.gov)**

**The NYC Healthy Relationship Training Academy** ("the Academy") is a prevention/education program that centers young people in their mission to end domestic and gender based violence. Community Educators provide free interactive, intersectional, and discussion-based workshops to young people ages 11-24. Workshop topics include teen dating violence, healthy relationships, and consent. The Academy also delivers skills-based workshops and trainings to parents and professionals working with young people on how to discuss relationships, spot warning signs of intimate partner violence, and be a resource and ally to young people.

**If you have questions, or would like to schedule a workshop, please contact [academy@endgbv.nyc.gov](mailto:academy@endgbv.nyc.gov)**

## **The Outreach Team:**

**ENDGBV's Outreach Team engages New York City communities through a wide variety of public engagement and education efforts, including: conducting workshops and organizing community events for community members and organizations; sharing information through tabling, resource fairs, and supporting community events, as well as through our partnerships with sister agencies and community-based organizations; and building the capacity of local communities to prevent, recognize, and respond to IPV, sex trafficking and elder abuse.**

**Our work is done in communities across the City, with a special focus on immigrant, youth, vulnerable, and other traditionally underserved communities. Through our myriad community partnerships and by facilitating conversations, art-based practices, and other methods of engagement, we increase community awareness for gender-based violence, and promote resources available to victims and survivors of gender-based violence throughout New York City—including ENDGBV's own education and prevention trainings and workshops.**

**If you would like to speak to a Community Coordinator about potential collaborations or engagement ideas, or if you would like to invite us to present to your community, organization, or group, please send us an email at [outreach@endgbv.nyc.gov](mailto:outreach@endgbv.nyc.gov).**

# Notes

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**Find ENDGBV on social media**

 [www.twitter.com/nycendgbv](https://www.twitter.com/nycendgbv)

 [www.facebook.com/nycendgbv](https://www.facebook.com/nycendgbv)

 [www.instagram.com/nycagainstabuse](https://www.instagram.com/nycagainstabuse)