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# THE BARNABAS

# 2021

Crisis Care  
Training International

A Ministry of

WEC International

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VOLUME: 18 NO.6  
NOVEMBER 2021

DATE ISSUED:  
11/29/2021

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## IN FOCUS

Domestic Violence and Abuse have so many facets to consider. To what extent is the family in danger who has had to flee? Are there children involved? What type of physical, mental, social, and emotional support does the family need? What can the church do to minimize the trauma and bring restoration back into the family's lives?

All these questions, as well as many more, have to be considered. There is no perfect church, just as no one does anything perfectly. We can, however, learn from others and see how we can improve to be more effective for those who need us in the future.

We pray that this issue of the Barnabas Letter helps individuals and the church look for ways to better respond to those involved in Domestic Abuse, the adults and the children. As always, our goal is to enrich, equip and encourage as we walk this journey together to bring His love and healing to His people ultimately!

Serving Him Together,

[Amy Wilson](#)

[Director of Education, CCTI](#)





# THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE TO MY STORY OF DOMESTIC ABUSE PART 3 OF THE SERIES

...continued

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## Heightened Domestic Abuse

My husband's controlling behavior began increasing throughout this time, including monitoring of my locations, spending, phone calls, texts, etc. He would also leave for weeks at a time to go hunting or see friends, despite owning a business. If I did not agree to his terms, threats were made for more restrictions. Through all of this, I continued to talk with the counselor when I could on the Marco Polo app. Beginning in the fall of 2020, I started feeling more in danger and told the church counselor. She then pulled out the [Power and Control Wheel](#) to ask me questions to help me determine if I was in a domestic abuse situation. This conversation was my first realization of what I was experiencing because I had previously believed you were in a domestic abuse situation only if you were physically harmed, which had not occurred. It would have been so helpful if this wheel had been discussed earlier in my journey!

The church then put me in touch with the [Called to Peace](#) ministry, which helped me develop my Safety Plan (which the church did not have). I waited for an advocate to help me walk through my escape day. The advocate had lined up a family from the church for my kids and me to stay with (all the women's shelters were full due to COVID-19). I was able to flee on December 4, 2020. Some counties offer great programs like [Interact](#). However, I live in a low-income county, and these resources are not available unless you live within the county to access the programs.

## What was helpful from the church:

- Having counselors on staff
- Having a Pastor "assigned" to my case to work as a mediator between my husband and me
- Offering the Called to Peace classes at church
- Providing a food pantry and household items to set up my safe house
- Providing the rent to pay for the safe house
- The prayer and support of the church and many of its members who have learned of my story



Continued...

## THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE TO MY STORY OF DOMESTIC ABUSE PART 3 OF THE SERIES

...continued

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### But What Would Have Been Helpful from the Church:

- Having a counselor trained in Domestic Abuse to help me identify earlier
- Development of a program to walk alongside me from beginning to end towards independence
- Legal, tax, and physical health advisors who volunteer to help me navigate these issues
- Childcare for counseling sessions
- Trauma therapy for the kids
- Not to have "Need Help" boxes in open public restrooms, but inside individual stalls for privacy
- CARE teams
- Follow-up Bible Studies and a Single Mom's Adult Bible Fellowship

Although my church is still relatively new at developing programs and plans to help women of Domestic Abuse, I am grateful to hear they have been able to help about 20 women in the last few years. Unfortunately, MANY churches have nothing in place. Churches need to create action plans and CARE teams to help address the increased demand and reach these ladies and children with the love of Christ. Thank you for hearing my story and praying for my four kids and me over these three issues of the Barnabas Letter.

**Author:** Anonymous

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## Practical Tools for Helping Victims of Domestic Violence

By Joy Forrest from [Called to Peace Ministries](#)

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***Do you have a heart for helping victims of Domestic Abuse but do not know where to start? Read this practical advice from the Founder and Director of Called to Peace Ministries, Joy Forrest, for practical tips!***

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### When someone mentions domestic violence, what is the first thing that comes to your mind?



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For most people, this terminology conjures up images of bruises, broken bones, and black eyes. However, the reality is that many domestic abuse incidents do not involve physical harm or injury. In fact, in recent years, experts in the field have begun to use the phrase coercive control to describe behavior that was once called battering. The bottom line is that one person[1] within an intimate relationship exerts power and control through a pattern of abusive behaviors. Their actions may include emotional, physical, sexual, economic, or psychological abuse, and can include any behaviors that intimidate, manipulate, humiliate, isolate, frighten, terrorize, coerce, threaten, blame, hurt, injure, or wound someone. In biblical terms, we could call it oppression, and those who experience it are traumatized.

### How do Domestic Abuse Survivors deal with the aftermath?

The overwhelming majority of domestic abuse survivors (80% or more), [2] along with their children, exhibit all the signs of post-traumatic stress. Even situations of extreme oppression without physical injury often lead to stress-related medical issues, such as autoimmune disorders, high blood pressure, gastric maladies, migraine headaches, and much more.

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## Practical Tools for Helping Victims of Domestic Violence

By Joy Forrest

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Traumatized people may appear irritable, angry, scattered, anxiety-ridden, and unstable. In addition, those who experience ongoing, complex trauma often exhibit “feelings of hopelessness, and even loss of their basic beliefs about the meaning of life, including their faith in God.”[3] They are highly reactive and easily triggered. These responses are somatic, because trauma is held in the body and impacts the entire person (Job 3:25-26, Ps. 55:5). These trauma responses are one of the reasons domestic abuse is so counterintuitive. Victims often seem unstable while their oppressors can look calm, cool, and collected. Most victims find it difficult to articulate what is happening in their home, and oddly enough most do not identify it as abuse.

### How, then, can we help those struggling under the oppression of coercive control, especially when they do not recognize the weight of what is happening?

The Do's & Don'ts for helping Victims of Domestic Abuse listed below are not exhaustive but will help you provide wise support to victims of domestic abuse.

#### DO'S for Helping Victims of Domestic Abuse

- Listen to her story and believe her. Keep an open mind and give her an opportunity to share. If she is brave enough to come forward, there is likely something terribly wrong at home. Statistics indicate that false reports are very rare. Ask wise questions and be attentive as the story unfolds and know that false reports are very rare.
- Listen for themes of fear, control, misuse of power, and patterns of oppression. Domestic abuse is characterized by a pattern of abusive behaviors that are intended to gain and maintain power and control over an intimate partner.
- Be aware that many victims may not see themselves as abused. They discount physical intimidation, harassment, threats, insults, damage to personal property, screaming, false imprisonment, isolation, stalking behaviors, and control as forms of abuse.
- Refer her to an advocate and counselor/therapist well-trained in domestic violence, and a support agency like CTPM and local DV agencies that can provide her with more information and resources.
- Do encourage her with the Word of God and support groups. Make affirming statements, such as “God does not condone abuse,” “You are not responsible for his behavior,” “Abuse is wrong. It is not your fault.” Encourage her to protect herself and her children. Always put the well-being of the victim and children over the marriage.
- Create a network of advocates, counselors, support groups, attorneys and other helpers specifically trained in domestic violence to assist you in making a plan to help. It takes many sets of eyes on these situations to provide effective help.

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## Practical Tools for Helping Victims of Domestic Violence

By Joy Forrest

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### DON'T'S for Helping Victims of Domestic Abuse

- Do not minimize or doubt her experience because you know her spouse and he does not present that way in public. Most abusers are completely different in the home than in public. Do not ask her what she did to provoke his anger. Just listen.
- Do not put the blame for the abuse on the victim. The abusive behavior must be challenged not the one telling her story. However, do not confront him until she is ready and gives you permission. This could endanger her more!
- Do not minimize the impact of other forms of abuse. Remember that most victims do not share the whole story upfront but give little bits of information to see how you will respond. They also tend to make excuses for their abusers.
- Do not refer her to marriage counseling. Do not counsel the victim and abuser together. Domestic abuse is not a marital problem. Treat it as you would any other individual issue such as drug abuse.
- Do not tell the victim what to do or try to fix it. Many women who have been abused have not been allowed to make decisions for many years and need to learn to think for themselves again. Help them explore their options, encourage them to learn to make their own.
- Do not try to do this on your own! Refer out to the appropriate resources. Even though you may mean well in providing continual counseling, without proper knowledge, you may do more harm than good.

### In Conclusion

God's heart for the oppressed and His mandate for His people to "loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and... break every yoke" (Is. 58:6). That is our calling, and we need many voices if we are ever to overcome this awful plight.

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### References:

[1] Studies show that when it comes to domestic abuse, over 85% of victims are female and perpetrators are the primary aggressors. See <https://www.domesticshelters.org/resources/statistics/demographics-and-domestic-violence>, accessed October 23, 2021.

[2] Edward S. Kubany, Mari A. McCaig and Janet Laconsay, *Healing the Trauma of Domestic Violence: A Workbook for Women* (Oakland: New Haringer Publications, 2004),

[3] Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 121-122.

[4] Called to Peace Ministries (CTPM) is a nondenominational, nonprofit, 501 (c)(3) ministry dedicated to offering hope and healing to victims of domestic violence, emotionally destructive relationships, and sexual assault. Learn more at [www.calledtopeace.org](http://www.calledtopeace.org).





January 17:

Module 1: Trauma and Crisis Care

Module 7: Restoring Hope to Children with Disabilities

January 24:

Module 2: Street Children

Module 6: Counseling Children and Youth in Crisis



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