

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OUTREACH — ARCHDIOCESE of CHICAGO — AWARENESS - SERVICES - PREVENTION



Good News About the Fight to End Domestic Violence

Summer 2022

ACDVO Supporters Gather for 5th Annual Benefit Gala

On Sunday, May 1, 2022, ACDVO held its 5th Annual Benefit Gala. Original plans to hold the event in March were scuttled when fears of Covid-19 convinced leaders to change the date and rework the event from an evening banquet to a Sunday brunch. Responses were very positive; two hundred people participated, a crowd well beyond original expectations, and many expressed a preference for a daytime brunch over an evening banquet because of Chicago traffic and fears about going out at night. ACDVO cleared \$30,000 in donations.

Fr. Chuck Dahm, O.P., Director of ACDVO, reported on the organization's work, which unfortunately has been greatly reduced in parishes because of Covid-19 and the mergers of parishes in the Archdiocese of Chicago. And yet, many parish committees continue their ministries, albeit often online.

The program included a video of an interview with nationally recognized authority on men who cause harm, Lundy Bancroft. His most famous book is *Why Does He Do That?* He emphasized that those who abuse do so because of learned behavior and their interest in power and control over their

partner. For them to change, Lundy said, they must commit to work on their view of themselves and learn a whole new way of relating to others.

Bancroft also spoke about how to address children who grow up in an environment of domestic violence. They, as well as their parents, are victims directly affected by the abuse. He underscored the importance of helping children recognize they do not cause the abuse and neither do their mothers. We must help them resist perpetrators' efforts to convince them that their mothers are the cause of family problems and even the breakup of the marriage.

Dr. Alicen McGowan, a licensed psychotherapist and active member of the domestic violence ministry at Holy Cross Parish in Deerfield, also spoke about the importance of recognizing the trauma so many children experience and carry throughout their lives because of witnessing or experiencing domestic violence. She stressed the need for all to speak out when we see or suspect abuse in a home in order to protect the children.

John Monaco, ACDVO's Chief Operating Officer, reported on ACDVO's work to implement the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's curriculum, Dating Matters®, in both Catholic and public schools. ACDVO plans that this pilot implementation in 6th, 7th and 8th grades will eventually be adopted in all Catholic schools in the archdiocese and recommended for all public schools in Illinois.



St. Pius V parishioners gather with Fr. Chuck, Fr. Brendan Curran, O.P., former pastor, and Pedro Martinez, CEO of Chicago Public Schools and former St. Pius V parishioner.



Longtime friends of Fr. Chuck enjoy getting together to share, celebrate his 85th birthday and support ACDVO.



Francesca Mary Maddock enthusiastically accepted the grand prize of \$1000, hugged Fr. Chuck and donated it back to ACDVO. She stole the show.



Seminarians Prepared on Domestic Violence

In May, Fr. Chuck Dahm, O.P., taught a 90-minute class on domestic violence to all 31 seminarians at St. Mary of the Lake University in Mundelein to be ordained to the priesthood this June. Only six of the students are destined for the Archdiocese of Chicago. Thanks to the excellent leadership of Melanie Barrett, professor of the class on the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church, a unit on domestic violence will be covered each year shortly before seminarians' ordination.

The students had read the pastoral letter from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, "When I Call for Help," before the class. They responded very positively to the class, with many questions about how to recognize and then relate to victims of domestic violence, their children and those who cause harm. Their interest in responding as sensitive pastoral ministers was evident and encouraging. Unfortunately, few seminaries or schools of theology preparing men for priestly ministry in the United States provide any teaching on domestic violence, a major family problem in every parish.

No Need To Push for Forgiveness - It Takes Time

Many people, notably some priests, urge victims of domestic violence to forgive those who caused them harm. Most victims understand the importance of forgiving but are confused by what happened and are upset by the abuse they received. Coming to forgiveness is a difficult and slow process. The wounds are deep.

Generally, survivors feel guilty for having permitted someone to harm them. Perhaps they feel ashamed for not responding appropriately in the relationship or maybe for breaking up the marriage. But victims do not cause the abuse. Their first step is to forgive themselves.

Survivors need not feel guilty for not being able to forgive those who caused them harm. It takes much time. It is important to recognize that forgiveness does not mean forgetting hurtful behavior or eliminating the need for accountability or moving toward reconciliation. Survivors may think abusive persons don't deserve forgiveness or to forgive them is letting them off the hook.

But they don't forgive because their offenders deserve it. The initial focus of forgiving is to free victims from bitterness, anger and resentment. It is an effort to live in the present, rather than dwelling on memories of the past. It is something to aspire to with the grace of God. Learning to make and achieve personal goals of love and happiness helps survivors gradually stop reflecting on the hurt experienced and embrace a healthy future.

Survivors will be helped by being reminded that God is with them and help is available. Offering information to guide them as they refresh their self-esteem and find resources to understand the dynamics of DV will lead them on the way to forgiveness. Concentrating on themselves rather than focusing on the memories of abuse will support their healing.

One way to address the challenge of forgiveness is to encourage survivors to give their whole experience to God. God will provide the appropriate consequences, including justice for those who cause harm. (*Excerpts from You Are Not Alone, available from ACDVO.*)



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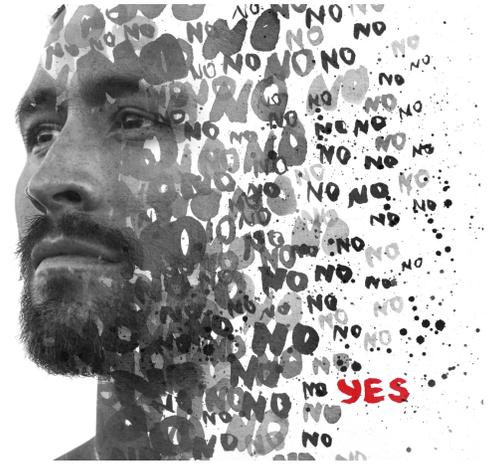
The Need To Provide Services To Those Who Cause Harm

Traditionally, much less attention in the area of domestic violence has been given to those who cause harm, the majority of whom are men, than to victims, most of whom are women. In the 1990s and 2000s, most DV agencies did not offer services to those who cause harm; in fact, some criticized those agencies that did. Women DV activists thought those who cause harm could and should fund their own services, which are usually developed and/or approved by the state.

In the last ten years in Illinois, however, DV agencies have become more involved in offering PAIP (Partner Abuse Intervention Program), an Illinois state-approved 27-week curriculum for those who cause harm. Perpetrators (now more appropriately called “those who cause harm”) summoned to court for alleged criminal abuse of their spouses may be mandated to take these classes. The classes are costly, much as DUI-mandated classes, and agencies offering them benefit from those funds as a source of income.

Many people involved in addressing DV, including counselors and judges, see most PAIP programs as minimally effective in changing behavior of those who cause harm and thus preventing domestic violence. This view is supported by numerous scientific studies. Many who cause harm are never mandated to the classes for various reasons. For those mandated, many never attend classes or drop out, often with no consequence. A growing body of research on the low percentage of men finishing the course suggests that few actually change their abusive behavior.

The good news is that more DV activists are recognizing the need to pay attention to PAIP or programs like it. The State of Illinois allotted an additional \$50 million to DV work in its 2023 budget, and some DV agencies want part of those funds to support PAIP-type programs. Still, the important question remains: what works best to change abusive behavior? An evidence-based response is needed to effectively prevent domestic violence. *(Co-authored by Dr. Maxine Davis, Rutgers University Professor)*



HOPE Family Services: An Effective Men’s Program

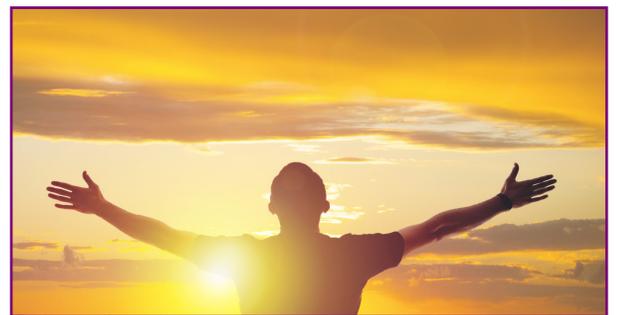
Many approaches to intimate partner violence (IPV) intervention reflect a hybrid integration of challenging patriarchal socialization and implementing elements of cognitive-behavioral therapy. These approaches maintain that IPV is associated with cognitive distortions and faulty attitudes largely acquired from the environment (e.g., culture) and unique personal experiences, such as childhood trauma.

HOPE Family Services, a program developed at St. Pius V parish and now part of The Resurrection Project, offers men who cause harm one of the state’s few volunteer programs. Although participants may be mandated by a court to participate in PAIP, at HOPE they attend counseling and a supportive educational group voluntarily because they want to receive help, not to receive a certificate for court.

Most men arrive at the program because their wives have threatened to leave if the men don’t find help. Some are brought by a friend. After their initial participation, most men recognize the program is helping them to grow personally through a journey of self-discovery. This model has a future because it resonates with those who cause harm. Why?

A program offering help must be welcoming and affirming; it does not confront the men with hostility, accusations, or tell them how they should change. Rather it listens to them, affirms their dignity, and helps them understand their past formation and present behavior. It challenges them to discover why they act the way they do and helps them become aware of behavior and attitudes they may have overlooked. The group is not pejoratively labeled, but simply called the Men’s Group.

HOPE’s Men’s Group, consisting of about 30 men, meets weekly for two hours. All participants can receive individual counseling if they wish. The group follows the PAIP curriculum, but diverges when participants want to explore special topics they identify, such as faith, resilience, jealousy, or divorce, etc. Each session includes a prayer, a check-in on how participants are doing, teaching with videos, and small group sharing of ideas and experiences. *Continued on back page.*





What's New with ACDVO

Teaching Healthy Relationships in More Schools

Good news! ACDVO is happy to report our Dating Matters® pilot will expand from three to at least ten schools for the 2022–2023 school year. At this writing, we have St. Agnes of Bohemia, St. Benedict the African, St. Catherine-St. Lucy, and St. Paul of the Cross confirmed and three additional archdiocesan schools pending for the fall. Six Chicago public schools from the Englewood area will also join our pilot for the coming academic year: Seward, Henderson, Earle, Evers, Green and Kershaw.



During our school recruiting process, we found that school staff have been impressed by Dating Matters® efficacy. Data show that the curriculum is effective in reducing teen dating violence. The CDC also found that students in middle school who participated in Dating Matters® reported lower levels of bullying, cyberbullying, physical violence, weapon carrying, alcohol and substance use, delinquency, sexual violence, and sexual harassment.

School administrators and teachers also appreciated the need to begin instruction before high school. Dating Matters® instruction begins in the 6th grade before most children form what we often understand to be dating relationships. When instruction is delayed until high school and beyond, it is often much more difficult for children to set aside their feelings and to clearly assess the healthy or unhealthy nature of their relationships. Early instruction is key to recognizing and developing healthy relationships and avoiding unhealthy relationships.

ACDVO's plan is that the Dating Matters® curriculum will eventually be incorporated in every archdiocesan middle school. In addition, we will work to continue to introduce Dating Matters® to Chicago public schools. Our hope is that someday all schools in Illinois will teach Dating Matters®. This would be a major step toward reducing violence in families and communities.

Schools interested in participating should contact John Monaco at jmonaco.acdvo@gmail.com. In addition, ACDVO gives virtual talks on teen dating violence for parishes.

HOPE Family Services (*continued from p. 3*): At the request of participants, each session incorporates a faith perspective, much as Alcoholics Anonymous includes reference to a "Higher Power." Participants are urged to continue their self-reflection during the week. They are provided sections of books to read on their phones as well as prayers they can use.

An initial study of the Men's Group found it yields positive outcomes, with a high rate of retention and positive evaluation by participants, who note they felt respected and part of a family. While research continues, many make sufficient personal changes to reunite or stay with their partners and commit to non-violent living. (*Contact HOPE Family Services at 312-421-7647.*)

Archdiocesan Mass in October for Victims of Domestic Violence

ACDVO will host a Mass for Victims of Domestic Violence in October. The date and time will be published soon on our website: www.domesticviolenceoutreach.org.

Save the Date for ACDVO Network Meeting - September 17, 2022 - 9:30 AM

ACDVO's Network Meeting gathers participants online to experience one another's efforts to address domestic violence in their respective parishes. The meeting will include a report on ACDVO's programs, teaching with reflection, and sharing from participants about successes and challenges in their parishes. Please plan to attend!

Thank You So Much for Your Generous Support

Thanks to all who donate so generously to support our ministry. We appreciate anything you might share at this time. We still hope to soon be back to full and normal participation in our parishes and communities. Our work is moving forward; help us reduce if not eliminate domestic violence from our midst. May God bless you with good health, love and peace. Contact Charles W. Dahm, O.P., ACDVO Director, cdahm13@gmail.com, 312-371-7752, 1914 S. Ashland Avenue, Chicago, IL 60608.