



Models of Parish Ministry Responses to Domestic Violence (DV)

Parish domestic violence ministry activities are often a function of a ministry's stage of development, its human and financial resources, parish cultural norms and support from the pastoral staff. As a result, ministry missions and levels of activity will vary. The models presented here are not meant to be rigid or exhaustive. Be creative. Share your activities, successes and frustration with our outreach network. Please keep in mind that every ministry activity counts, something is better than nothing, and it is never too late to start or re-energize a ministry. Together we will make a difference.

Ministry Model 1: Awareness & Education

All parish ministries can carry out Model 1 activities with minimal time investment. In this model, the ministry team creates communications to raise awareness of domestic violence and provide education about available resources. Ministry tasks may include:

- Publishing domestic violence information in the parish bulletin: facts, hotlines and local support agencies and services with contact information. This can be the same information repeated weekly in the bulletin or different information can be provided monthly or quarterly about some aspect of DV.
- Providing DV support information **in women's restrooms only**.
- Providing DV informational and support signage around the parish campus.
- Requesting a prayer in the Prayers of the Faithful during Mass once a month or at least four times a year.
- Organizing special awareness activities during October, Domestic Violence Awareness Month (see list of suggestions on Archdiocesan website).
- Consulting and publishing the link to the Archdiocese of Chicago Domestic Violence Outreach information page: <http://www.DomesticViolenceOutreach.org>
- Organizing a resource table at parish events with information about resources to assist victims. Just having the table creates awareness. Posters and cards are available from various area resources at minimal or no cost.
- Supporting local DV agencies by organizing an annual contribution to a local DV agency, supporting its events and/or having its materials available in church lobby or public areas.

Administration: After initial ministry formation, meet at least once every three months (quarterly) to plan and implement the above.

Archdiocese of Chicago Domestic Violence Outreach, November 2015

National Domestic Violence Hotline 24 Hour Hotline: 1-800-799-7233 or TTY 1-800-787-3224

Visit www.usccb.org for the US Catholic Bishops' Response to Domestic Violence – *When I Call for Help*



Ministry Model 2: Awareness & Education + Referrals

This model requires commitments of additional time and training. Most parishes can implement this model within a year or two after startup. Model 1 activities are implemented in addition to all or some of the following:

- Partnering with a local domestic violence agency for referrals for counseling, support groups and possibly shelter.
- Referring callers (victims, concerned family members or others) to services of a national or local resource as applicable.
- Arranging training for members of the DV ministry and the parish staff on domestic violence issues. Staff should include but not be limited to priests, deacons, pastoral associates, other staff members and key personnel as well as school and religious education staffs. Training is available from a local DV agency, the Archdiocesan DV committee or Catholic Charities. Trainings can be 1.5 hours to 4 hours in duration.
- Encouraging one or two members of the committee to receive Certified Domestic Violence 40-hours training, provided through established DV agencies throughout the year. There is usually a cost associated with this training.
- Collaborating with parish leadership to coordinate homilies at least once or twice a year that highlight the impact and dynamics of domestic and dating violence.
- Providing Bulletin articles featuring various DV topics that are more substantive and appear at least quarterly.
- Organizing a parish or community event or events with speakers on topics related to DV, impact of DV on children, mentality of perpetrators, the law/courts and DV, sexual assault, child abuse, human trafficking, etc.

Administration: Conduct meetings as workload demands, at least every 4-6 weeks.



Ministry Model 3: Awareness & Education + Referrals + Support

This model requires substantial time, training, and cost. A DV ministry can be expanded to include this model 2-3 years after start-up. This model includes Model 1 and Model 2 activities plus:

- Establishing a budget for counseling services based on projected parish needs.
- Creating a confidential telephone line/protocol for callers seeking services.
- Engaging a certified domestic violence counselor to provide services, either on- or off-site of the parish campus, to include individual and/or group support.

Administration: Meet as workload demands; monthly meetings might be appropriate.

Ministry Models 4 & 5 – These models require substantial funding, professional staff and several years to accomplish. Additional information provided upon request.

Example: St. Pius V Parish in Chicago provides on-site counseling for victims, abusers and children in addition to providing extensive DV related services. The parish employs seven full time counselors.