

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



Good News About the Fight to End Domestic Violence

Spring 2020

Fighting Domestic Violence During the Covid-19 Crisis

FREE, 24/7, CONFIDENTIAL
NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
HOTLINE
1(800) 799-7233

DV hotline calls have increased; check on those who may need help during this crisis

Experience and data teach us that financial crises, home confinement and prolonged stress exacerbate the frequency and intensity of domestic violence. It is no surprise that the Covid-19 pandemic has made life more dangerous for many already at risk in our country. The Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline reports that calls for help have increased 50% in March, from 60 to 90 a day. Some victims were about to leave their abuser, but now he is home all the time, and they have less opportunity to free themselves. Some are in counseling, and now in-person services are unavailable. Some abusers are more angry by loss of work or home quarantine and thus more threatening to their partners.

If you know or suspect someone is a victim, please check on them! If they are in immediate need, help them call 911, the National DV Hotline: 800-799-7233, the Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline: 877-863-6338, or another reputable DV resource to help them connect with support and services.

Survivor Breaks Silence and Strives to Help Victims

I was the mother of two young daughters and the wife of a man who became increasingly more violent. His control over our family was planned and complete. He beat me and made me cover the bruises, disconnected our phone, locked me in the basement, and worst of all, threatened to take my children away. I was desperate, but afraid to leave him.

For years I was too embarrassed and fearful to tell anyone — my brothers and sisters, my neighbors or coworkers. Then one day, after an argument, he took my daughters and told me I would never see them again. Not able to keep the secret any longer, I reported his mental and physical abuse to the police. An officer told me to calm down. He then called my husband, saying, "Your wife is worried about the children." My husband replied, "I don't know why, officer; they are my daughters, too, and I just took them for a ride." The officer told me there was nothing more the police could do and that abuse must be reported while it's happening. I drove home and waited. When my husband came home, he threatened, "If you ever do that again, I'll kill you." I believed him.

A month later during an argument, he pulled me off the couch, started choking me, and slammed my head against the concrete floor. He made me cover up the bruises and wouldn't let me leave or use my phone.

Later, I passed out at work. My co-workers took me to the hospital where doctors discovered my brain was full of blood. After five days in a coma, I woke up but couldn't remember anything. No one ever asked me if I had been abused. After two months in the hospital, they gave me 23 prescriptions and sent me home to the man who had nearly killed me.

Eventually, I left the relationship. During our recovery, my daughters helped me weed their father out of our lives. After two years, I convinced the court we should not have to be with a man who had destroyed us. My daughters' high school, Mother McAuley, helped us heal. Their guidance and services helped my girls find solace in God's love. Then I met Fr. Chuck Dahm, O.P. through Nancy Kennedy, a mom at Mother McAuley, and learned of his work with ACDVO. They and my parish have become my new safety net, and now I want to help other victims of domestic violence who suffer like I did. In October, I will run the Chicago Marathon to "Run Domestic Violence Out of Chicago." Please support this cause by contacting me at: tohmebibiana@gmail.com. Thank you. *Bibiana Tohme, ACDVO Executive Committee*



Bibiana Tohme leads a training session at St. Stanislaus Kostka parish



Building an Effective Domestic Violence Parish Ministry

The ACDVO mission is straightforward. Build **Awareness**. Connect victims to **Services**. Promote **Prevention**.

Compassion, commitment and persistence are foremost in building an effective ministry, which does not require a large team or a huge amount of time. Here are some “basics” your team can do to make your parish a supportive environment for victims of domestic and dating violence. Victims will soon learn that they are understood, loved and can find support.

- Schedule parish DV ministry training for your team.
- Schedule parish DV staff training. Priests and selected staff must know how to help.
- Provide bulletin information. Educate your parish and let victims know that they are not alone and where help is available.
- Link your parish website to the ACDVO website; our homilies and videos touch victims.
- Provide DV service support information to parish front desk staff.
- Encourage simple homily remarks that support victims.
- Utilize Prayers of the Faithful to publicly pray for victims, witnesses and abusers.
- Place DV support information in women’s restrooms.
- Conduct DV outreach public events in October for Domestic Violence Awareness Month.
- Conduct teen dating violence education and prevention events in February and summer.
- Follow ACDVO’s social media accounts on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).



Domestic violence and teen events may include presentations of the following:

- *The Hunting Ground*, addressing sexual assault on college campuses. Presentation instructions available; see Resource Manual - 4.3.5. Presentations in February or July are suggested. Click for [DVD trailer](#).
- *The Empowerment Project* promotes “can do attitudes” for girls and women. Girl Scouts love it. Presentation DVD is available through ACDVO. Click for [DVD trailer](#).
- *Healthy Dating Relationships Seminar* for teens explores healthy/unhealthy dating relationships. Great for Confirmation candidates. See video on the [ACDVO website](#).
- *The Dating Project* on dating and finding the “right one”. Click for [DVD trailer](#).

For more information, contact Jan Burdulis at jburdulis.acdvo@gmail.com.

4th Annual Gala Canceled, Raffle & Fundraising Go On

Because of the need to be safe in the midst of the Coronavirus outbreak, ACDVO canceled its benefit Gala scheduled for March 28th. We are deeply grateful to all who contributed to the event. If there is a need to request a refund for your donation, please contact ACDVO. We hope to hold our next benefit Gala in March 2021. In the meantime, we continue to raise indispensable funds to support our work. Thank you for your great generosity.

CONGRATULATIONS to the winners of the raffle which was to be held at the Gala:

\$100— Richard Danaher \$250— Barbara McGoldrick \$500— Joan Gall

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Parishes Promote Prevention



Addressing Teen Dating Violence

This year, the theme for Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month (TDVAM) was “Outrage into Action”, which celebrated 10 years since Congress designated February as TDVAM and honored youth actions and voices. The CDC reports that 1 in 5 female students and 1 in 10 male students who date have experienced some form of physical and/or sexual teen dating violence during the past 12 months, alarming statistics.

ACDVO’s February social media posts brought awareness to this epidemic by linking to other organizations and online tools, posting infographics on dating abuse statistics, and providing ways ministry groups can become involved. A series of 28 themed graphics dedicated to TDVAM for use in youth outreach or church bulletins can be downloaded by visiting our Online Resource Manual. Parish and community events related to TDVAM are added to our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/domesticviolenceoutreach and to our Website Calendar at www.domesticviolenceoutreach.org/calendar.

Alerting Engaged Couples to DV

Addressing domestic violence in marriage preparation is crucial. While every couple will have arguments, and healthy conflict resolution will involve the married partners working respectfully toward a solution that is fair to both, abuse spurred by desire for power can creep into a relationship.



Abusive relationships have a well-established pattern of behavior marked by control and manipulation. Couples in Pre-Cana programs need to be prepared to recognize abuse in

its early stages and seek trained professional domestic violence counseling when they see warning signs.

ACDVO has developed a 25-minute training module for engaged couples. This concise reflection will help them examine their relationship before or after the wedding. View it on the [ACDVO website](http://www.acdvo.org).

DV Prevention in Schools

After six years of research, development, and validation, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has published its *Dating Matters* curriculum for 6th to 8th grade students. The evidence-based *Dating Matters* Youth Programs provide middle school students with the knowledge and social-emotional skills they need to identify and engage in healthy, safe relationships.

ACDVO has anxiously awaited this curriculum and now will pilot it in two Chicago Catholic schools, St. Agnes of Bohemia in Little Village and St. Mary in Riverside, beginning in the fall of 2020. The principals and pastors enthusiastically embraced the opportunity to help their students learn about abuse and how to avoid it. The pilot will begin in sixth grade and add another grade in each following year. Our hope is that eventually all Catholic schools will incorporate *Dating Matters*.

Teen Dating Workshops



Jessica Caccavallo leads a teen dating workshop for St. Benedict and Queen of Angels parishes at the Sulzer Public Library

ACDVO has partnered with Jessica Caccavallo, MSW, LSW, a Social Worker and Prevention Educator, to offer educational sessions for parishes and community groups on teen dating violence and prevention. Educational workshops can be tailored to each groups’ needs by targeting specific age groups, involving parents, and offering flexible presentation days and times. To schedule a class or training, email Jessica at jessica.acdvo@gmail.com.

New ACDVO Posters Available for Your Parish - Contact Jan Burdulis

No one should live with domestic violence.
You can make a difference.



No one should live with domestic violence.
You can make a difference.



No one should live with domestic violence.
You can make a difference.



Nadie debe vivir con violencia doméstica.
Tu puedes hacer una diferencia.





Violence Prevention Initiative



*Phil Andrew, Director
Violence Prevention Initiative*

Cardinal Blase Cupich created the Violence Prevention Initiative (VPI) in 2018 and hired former FBI agent, Phil Andrew, as its director. VPI is guided by Pope Francis' call to be a field hospital – proximate to those trapped and suffering from wounds and trauma from all forms of violence. ACDVO partners with VPI to eliminate violence from our lives.

VPI strives to achieve these goals:

- To inspire and coordinate the Catholic community's collaborative response to violence in all its forms, including its root causes, such as racism, domestic violence, gun violence and economic injustice.
- To build safe and peaceful communities using a comprehensive safety model for parishes, schools, and communities, which incorporates:
 - Crisis planning and training
 - Encouraging social, emotional and trauma-informed practices with paths to services
 - Providing guides for school and church safety
 - Promoting training in nonviolence, restorative justice and conflict resolution
 - Creating spaces/times for community dialogue
 - Partnering with others to stem violence

Contact: pandrew@archchicago.org

Annulments and Domestic Violence

U.S. Catholic Bishops wrote in their pastoral letter, *When I Call for Help*, "We encourage abused persons who have divorced to investigate the possibility of seeking an annulment. An annulment, which determines that the marriage bond is not valid, can frequently open the door to healing."

An annulment is a decree of nullity by an ecclesiastical tribunal determining that a marriage, on the wedding day, lacked something essential; for example, freedom, maturity, openness to children, fidelity, honesty or sincerity, and was, therefore, invalid as a sacramental marriage.

Challenges often face victims of domestic violence when applying. Abuse may appear after years of marriage, so was not evident at the time of the wedding. Also, the tribunal must investigate the spouses' family and marriage history by asking detailed personal questions. Although the tribunal wants to support victims, victims sometimes abandon the application, feeling re-victimized by the process. ACDVO offers help for those applying for annulments; contact [Fr. Chuck Dahm, O.P.](#)



Fr. Chuck, left, talks about abusive marriages in an ecumenical panel at the 'Creating a Safer Lake County' conference

ACDVO Supports Victims' Shelters



The Seward Communication Academy Student Council collects donations for victims of domestic violence

In October, which is Domestic Violence Awareness Month in the U.S., 30 Chicago-area parishes collected essential items for victims and their children who are living in domestic violence shelters. The donations were distributed to 12 shelters by The Safe Haven Network. Also, \$2,707 was collected and ACDVO donated the funds to House of Peace (HOP) in North Chicago. HOP was started in Most Blessed Trinity parish and was the first parish where Fr. Chuck Dahm, O.P. preached about domestic violence. In 2019 HOP became part of Catholic Charities.

In January, the Student Council at Seward Communication Academy in the Back of the Yards neighborhood collected and then donated bags of items to ACDVO for domestic violence victims. Fr. Chuck spoke to the students about domestic and teenage dating violence and took their donations to the Family Rescue Shelter on Chicago's southeast side.