

Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas

Office of Marriage & Family Life

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FIRST RESPONDERS: PRIESTS, DEACONS, AND LAY MINISTERS

"Many church ministers want to help abused women but worry that they are not experts on domestic violence. Clergy may hesitate to preach about domestic violence because they are unsure what to do if an abused woman approaches them for help."

WHEN I CALL FOR HELP:
A PASTORAL RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN | USCCB

DO

Listen and believe the victim's story with empathy—you are the face of the Church to them.

Correct any misunderstandings the victim may have about Church teaching.

Express concern for their safety and that of their children. Empower the victim with information and resources that can increase their choices.

Refer the victim to appropriate resources.

DON'T

Put pressure on yourself to be an expert or a counselor, or to solve the situation.

Ask the victim why they stay, or express disappointment if they do. This insinuates that the victim is at fault. Leaving does not always solve the problem and can be more complicated and dangerous than it seems.

Recommend couple counseling. It is never appropriate in an abusive situation.



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