

33/13 Domestic violence and educating clergy

(Reports from Moore Theological College and Ministry Training and Development.)

Key points

- In late 2013 and early 2014 Moore Theological College conducted modules for first and third year students on understanding and responding to domestic violence and will review and further develop these modules in the next year.
- In 2014 Ministry Training and Development ran a session focused on domestic violence as part of the training of newly ordained clergy. This is seen as the beginning of a more detailed treatment of this important pastoral issue.
- In May 2015 Moore Theological College approved a Domestic Violence Policy to protect and promote the safety of all members of the College community.

Purpose

1. To provide progress reports from Moore Theological College and Ministry Training and Development about the approach taken in educating ordinands and clergy about domestic violence and how to respond when domestic violence comes up as an issue in marriage (and other relationships).

Recommendation

2. Synod receive this report.

Background

3. At its session in October 2013, the Synod passed resolution 33/13 –

“Synod requests Moore College and Ministry Training and Development, in consultation with the Safe Ministry Board and appropriate experts as required, having reviewed the input they already provide, to investigate and, if needed, develop an effective approach to educating ordinands and clergy in regards to domestic violence and how to respond when it comes up as an issue in marriage (and other relationships).

In such training, consideration ought to be given to ensuring that upholding the Bible’s good teaching on submission and sacrificial love – both in preaching and teaching, and in marriage education and counselling – is not easily twisted as a cover for abuse.

Synod requests that Moore College and Ministry Training and Development report back with a progress report by the next session of Synod.”

4. Set out in Schedules 1 and 2 are the respective progress reports from Moore Theological College and Ministry Training and Development in response to resolution 33/13.

For and on behalf of the Standing Committee.

ROBERT WICKS
Diocesan Secretary

1 May 2015



Schedule 1

Report from Moore Theological College

Background

A progress report of investigations and actions at Moore College follows. It has been updated from that which was submitted too late to be included in the Synod papers in 2014.

The Present Situation

An investigation into the College’s teaching on understanding and dealing with domestic violence revealed the following –

- Over the years there has been input on domestic violence in ministry courses but in recent times this topic has not been part of the formal program in ministry or theology subjects.

- There is no program for formally engaging on the matter of domestic violence in the pastoral care setting of chaplaincy groups.
- Both the Christian Thought and Ministry Departments teach modules on the relationships between men and women, expressly calling upon men to surrender their lives in the service of their wives.
- Questions concerning domestic violence have occasionally been asked of chaplains by students and these have been answered on a case-by-case basis.
- Domestic violence has been addressed in some of the electives and seminars run by the Priscilla & Aquila Centre.
- The responsibility of husbands to sacrificially love their wives is addressed in some of the marriage enrichment seminars run for students and spouses at College.

Steps Undertaken as a result of Synod Resolution 33/13

- In late 2013 and early 2014 the Ministry Department sought advice and input from psychologists and clergy with some expertise in relation to domestic violence.
- An introductory module on understanding the prevalence, consequences and hidden nature of domestic violence was conducted by Genevieve Cribb, a psychologist and concerned practitioner in this area, for first year students.
- A module on understanding domestic violence and ministering to victims and perpetrators was conducted with year 3 students by Nicola Lock, a practicing psychologist with expertise in this area.
- A policy on domestic violence for the Moore College Community has been developed (see Appendix).

Further steps to be taken by Moore College in the next year

- Review and further develop the input on domestic violence to 1st and 3rd year students to ensure that students are well prepared to deal with matters of domestic violence.
- Consider whether a resource on domestic violence should be developed for chaplains to use with individuals and chaplaincy groups.
- Review of the Ministry Department modules on complementarianism and explore whether they may be enhanced to uphold the Bible's good teaching on submission and sacrificial love.

For and on behalf of Moore Theological College.

ARCHIE POULOS
Head of the Department of Ministry

19 May 2015

Appendix



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE POLICY

Responsible Officer	Dean of Students			
Superseded Documents	None			
Review Date	Review commencement date 19 May 2018			
Associated Documents	Moore College Vision, Mission & Values; Domestic Violence Procedure; Faculty Handbook; Student Handbook			
Version	Endorsed By	Approved By	Approval Date	Effective Date
1.0	Principal	Governing Board	19 May 2015	19 May 2015

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect and promote the safety of all members of the College community. Domestic violence is contrary to the biblical pattern of mutual love and care of each other in marriage, anchored in the example of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is also contrary to the College's published values of integrity and community. For this reason a policy that seeks to strengthen healthy marriages and family life, denounces domestic violence, and provides help, support and the possibility of a way out of the situation

for victims (while acting with concern for the one who has acted violently as well) is entirely consistent with the College's Vision, Mission and Values.¹

Background

The College is a Christian academic community which seeks to promote the welfare, safety and flourishing of each member. As a community made up of many families, one means to this end is to promote and strengthen marriage and family life. It is particularly important that the College seeks to ensure that our homes be places of safety, encouragement and a generous treatment of each other. Domestic violence of any kind is inexcusable. It is a violation of the love that God expects to characterize the relationship of husbands and wives, and is harmful to children. Furthermore, some types of domestic violence, such as stalking and physical and sexual assault, are crimes.

Domestic violence is commonly hidden and it is often a reflection of serious dysfunction in a marriage relationship. Many victims feel intense shame and see no way of escape. In a tight-knit community like that of the College, it is not always easy to identify those who can provide help and assistance, and, if appropriate, the encouragement and support to approach the police or other relevant authorities. A published and easily accessible policy which makes clear the College's absolute refusal to tolerate violence in any form and in any context, particularly in the home, and which provides a means of getting help and support when faced with domestic violence, assists in promoting an atmosphere of safety and encouraging the freedom to speak out.

Scope

This policy applies to all Faculty (including Emeritus and Visiting Faculty), Chaplains, and students.

Policy Statement

1. The College seeks to promote healthy and flourishing marriages and families within its communal life.
2. Every person associated with the College has a right to expect to live in a context of safety and care which is free of domestic violence.
3. No form of domestic violence is ever justified. Such behaviour is contrary to the standards of conduct required of disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, the College's published Values, the Sydney diocesan code of conduct (*Faithfulness in Service*). It may also be against the law of New South Wales.
4. The College does not tolerate, overlook or conceal any instance of domestic violence within the families which make up the College community.
5. Where the College becomes aware of domestic violence within the College community:
 - a. the victim(s) will be encouraged to seek help and support. This assistance will not be limited to pastoral care channels that exist within the College community. Where appropriate the victim will be encouraged and supported to seek professional help. Where the domestic violence constitutes criminal conduct, the victim(s) will also be encouraged to report the matter to the police.
 - b. the person who has acted violently will be required to meet with the Dean of Students (if a student) or the Principal (if a member of the faculty or a chaplain) in the first instance to discuss the appropriate course of action and may be required to show cause to the Principal why he or she should be allowed to continue as a member of the College community, complete their studies, or continue in their role as a member of the Faculty or a chaplain. Such a person will also be encouraged to seek professional help and support as necessary.
6. The College will publish this policy, along with contact details for professional assistance regarding domestic violence, on its website and in orientation materials provided to all students at the commencement of their studies and to faculty members and chaplains when they are appointed. This will be done in a way which ensures, as far as possible, that spouses are made aware of the policy and this provision as well. This is intended to provide an avenue for professional help outside the authority structures of the College and the Diocese for those who seek it.
7. Those with pastoral oversight in the College community (Faculty and Chaplains) are to be trained in recognising and responding to domestic violence. This training will be offered to others (e.g. faculty spouses) who may find it useful.

¹ The Vision and Mission and Values of the College can be located at <http://www.moore.edu.au/vision-mission-values>

8. Those studying at the College for Diplomas or Bachelor Degrees will be trained in recognising and responding to Domestic Violence, since the majority of these students will exercise some form of pastoral ministry upon graduating.
9. The Dean of Students is responsible for ensuring that this policy is publicised throughout the College community and that the published contact details provided remain current.
10. The Dean of Students is also responsible for providing pastoral care within the College community, coordinating the training mentioned in (8) above and ensuring professional help is provided where necessary.

Legal and Policy Framework

Faithfulness in Service: A national code for personal behaviour and the practice of pastoral ministry by clergy and church workers, 2012.

Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 (NSW).

Definitions

Term	Definition
Domestic Violence	Domestic violence is violence, abuse or intimidating behaviour by an adult against a current or former spouse or partner, to control and dominate them. It can include (but is not limited to) intimidation, harassment, emotional/psychological abuse, financial abuse, stalking, social and geographical isolation, physical assault and sexual assault.
Member of the College	Faculty, chaplains and students comprise the membership of the College.

Implementation

The Dean of Students is responsible for the development, implementation and review of this policy.

Acknowledgements

Hot Topics: Domestic Violence, Issue 87, 2013, Legal Information Access Centre, State Library of NSW
Youthworks SAFE MINISTRY Essentials, Version 3.0, 2015.

Schedule 2

Report from Ministry Training and Development

Background

The current mission statement of Ministry Training and Development is –

“Ministry Training & Development exists to help multiply the number of well-trained persons (be they ordained, lay, full-time, part-time and voluntary) who are lovingly dedicated to the creation and development of ministries be they parishes, congregations and fellowships by proclaiming the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Our work involves recruiting, selecting and training gospel ministers. In the training component, the primary focus is on training new ordinands in their first three years of full-time ministry in our Ministry Development Program, though we also provide some training opportunities for all church workers including the Ministry Intensive, Marriage Enrichment Weekends and Prepare/Enrich marriage preparation training.

Our Ministry Development Program consists of seven training days each year and one live in conference. The program seeks to help integrate theological understanding and best ministry practice and has recently focused on topics like evangelism, edification, people/social issues, prayer, safe ministry, proclamation and equipping.

In January this year we commenced a review of our work to ensure it continues to serve the mission of our church as well as it can.

A Preliminary Response

In the Ministry Development Program each year one or two of the seven training days focuses on how we conduct safe ministry in our churches and how we respond to important social issues theologically and pastorally. Last year we ran a session focused on domestic violence with a presentation from Canon Sandy Grant. Sandy outlined the problem of domestic violence, provided some helpful guidelines for those with

pastoral responsibility in responding to a person who is experiencing violence, looked at some relevant scriptures and discussed how we might teach on marriage in a way that could not be twisted to sanction domestic violence.

This is seen as the beginning of a more detailed treatment of this important pastoral issue that affects people in our churches and local communities. We are currently talking with clergy, psychologists, counsellors and lawyers who have expertise in dealing with domestic violence and its impacts on people. In the future we hope to have this issue addressed as a vital part of our program for all participants. In particular we will seek to –

- Highlight the extent of the problem, look at the complex issues involved including some of the reasons why it occurs and the environments in which it can flourish
- Outline the far reaching and profound effects domestic violence has particularly on family members but also on friends, churches and the community
- Give clear instruction on the biblical teaching on marriage and family life including headship and submission in marriage (making it clear that this in no way ever justifies domestic violence)
- Discuss how the biblical pattern can be taught in a parish context in a way that is not susceptible to being used to sanction violence in any way
- Discuss together how a church worker can listen sensitively and respond appropriately to complaints of domestic violence, providing a process of dealing with the issue
- Make available a list of people, resources and services that can provide help and advice in dealing with this complex problem

We would seek to provide this training using well qualified professional people and hope to make it more widely available to church workers across the Diocese.

For and on behalf of Ministry Training and Development.

GARY O'BRIEN
Director

9 April 2015