

Anglican Diocese of Sydney

Responding to Domestic Abuse: Policy and Good Practice Guidelines

A Word from the Archbishop

God is love. The Bible reveals God as a fellowship of love among the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and a God who shares his love with all people. As the recipients of his love, he has called us to love him in return, with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our mind, and to love one another as ourselves. God has also designed marriage, as the proper place for sexual love wherein children might be born and brought up in the fear and knowledge of the Lord. Moreover, as the *Book of Common Prayer* reminds us, marriage signifies and represents ‘the spiritual marriage between Christ and his Church’.

Such a holy union is worthy of great honour and respect, especially by the husband and the wife, but also by society as a whole. As the love of God has joined us to himself, so the Bible instructs husbands to love their wives and wives to love their husbands. God’s word condemns unloving behaviour, and especially the misuse of power to control or exploit others. Abuse in all its forms is explicitly forbidden, as it is contrary to the nature of God and the love that he demands of us all. Yet sadly, not all husbands love their wives as Christ loved the Church, nor do all wives love their husbands as they should.

The effects of sin are ever present, and can cause great havoc to otherwise healthy relationships. For these reasons, we are concerned for those relationships where domestic abuse is present. We wish to address this issue honestly and transparently; we also wish to extend our care and compassion to those who suffer domestic abuse. This policy document is designed to assist us in this task, that we might strengthen existing marriages, but also assist those whose lives are at risk because of domestic abuse, with genuine options for godly responses. The recommendations made in this document include a framework for providing specialist support services which can be points of referral to ensure safety and protection for all. It also suggests how we might be better equipped and resourced in identifying and supporting victims of abuse in order to provide the pastoral care that is both appropriate and necessary.

This is a sensitive area for us to explore, but it must be explored and exposed, so that we might live as children of light, seeking to honour Christ as Lord and Saviour in every community, especially the family.



DR GLENN DAVIES
Archbishop of Sydney

Aim

This document sets out the Domestic Abuse Policy and Good Practice Guidelines of the Anglican Diocese of Sydney, as evidence and expression of the Church's commitment to address and respond effectively to domestic abuse both within its own community and in the wider society.

The aim of this policy and these guidelines is to inform, direct and equip people working at a local level so that they can offer the most appropriate care in circumstances of domestic abuse. This includes not only those in pastoral ministries, but also those who may be called upon by victims or alleged or known perpetrators to hear their story.

Scope

This policy applies to all parishes of the Diocese of Sydney, their clergy and church workers. It is also commended to all Anglican organisations associated with the Diocese of Sydney for their adoption as far as is applicable in their contexts.

It should be read in conjunction with *Faithfulness in Service*, our national Anglican code of conduct for clergy and church workers, as adopted by the Diocese of Sydney.

Outline

- Section 1 outlines the Policy on Responding to Domestic Abuse (the policy).
- Section 2 outlines the **Good Practice Guidelines** (guidelines) for responding to domestic abuse.

This is supported by 11 Appendices that provide reference material and templates on Good Practice. It is intended that links to additional resources that cover this subject from other angles will be published at a later date.

Where to find the Policy and Guidelines (with Appendices)

The Policy and Guidelines (with appendices) will be distributed via email:

- to all parish councils and organisations in the Diocese of Sydney, and
- to all licensed clergy and authorised lay ministers licensed in the Diocese of Sydney.

The most up-to-date version of the Policy and Guidelines will be available on the Safe Ministry website of the Professional Standards Unit (PSU). Hard copies of the policy and associated documents can be supplied via the PSU, on request.

On Terminology

We have chosen to use the expression **domestic abuse** rather than domestic violence in order to avoid the common misapprehension that only physical violence counts as domestic abuse. We make exceptions when quoting other literature, and when referring to official titles and terminology in common use in other professional circles, e.g., we sometimes refer to "domestic violence services".

We have also chosen to refer to **victims** of domestic abuse but acknowledge many victims go on to become survivors.

Section 1

Sydney Anglican Policy on Responding to Domestic Abuse

SECTION 1:

Sydney Anglican Policy on Responding to Domestic Abuse

1.1 We acknowledge domestic abuse exists and is wrong

- 1.1.1 All forms of domestic abuse are wrong and perpetrators must stop.
- 1.1.2 **Domestic abuse** includes but is not limited to emotional, verbal, social, economic, psychological, spiritual, physical and sexual abuse. Such behaviour often seeks to control, humiliate, dominate or instill fear in the victim. Please refer to Appendix 1 for an expansive description of domestic abuse.
- 1.1.3 The primary focus of this Policy is abusive or intimidating behaviour inflicted by an adult against a current or former spouse or partner. However, for a child to witness abuse between intimate partners is a form of child abuse. Any abuse involving children should follow child protection procedures.
- 1.1.4 Sometimes both spouses can be simultaneously perpetrators and victims of abuse, although neither is the pattern of abuse nor the impact generally symmetrical.

1.2 We are committed to safe places

The Anglican Diocese of Sydney is committed to promoting and supporting safer environments that:

- 1.2.1 Recognise equality between all people, including husbands and wives;
- 1.2.2 **Promote a culture of healthy relationships** of mutual responsibility and respect in marriages, families and congregations;
- 1.2.3 Ensure that all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse;
- 1.2.4 **Strive to follow good practice** in protecting those experiencing domestic abuse;
- 1.2.5 **Refuse to condone** any form of abuse; and
- 1.2.6 Enable concerns to be raised and responded to clearly and consistently.

1.3 We uphold Faithfulness in Service

We uphold *Faithfulness in Service* as our diocesan code of conduct for clergy and church workers, specifically its affirmations in section 6:

- 1.3.1 Abuse of power is at the heart of many relationship problems in the Church and in the community. In essence, abuse is one person's misuse of power over another. Sometimes abuse will be a one-off event and at other times it will be a pattern of behaviour (6.2);
- 1.3.2 It is important for clergy and church workers to be good citizens and to obey the laws of the community, except where those laws conflict with Christian convictions (6.4);
- 1.3.3 You are not to abuse your spouse, children or other members of your family (6.6);

1.4 Domestic abuse requires a serious and realistic response

- 1.4.1 All forms of domestic abuse cause damage to the victim and are wrong.
- 1.4.2 Domestic abuse can occur in all communities, including churches.
- 1.4.3 Domestic abuse, if witnessed or overheard by a child, is a form of child abuse by the perpetrator of the abusive behaviour.
- 1.4.4 Working in partnership with vulnerable adults and children, statutory authorities and specialist agencies is essential in promoting the welfare of any child or adult suffering abuse.
- 1.4.5 Clergy and lay ministers do not typically have professional expertise in the area of domestic abuse. They need to obtain advice from those with professional expertise when faced with situations of domestic abuse, as advised by *Faithfulness in Service* (4.12).
- 1.4.6 Where mistakes in caring for people in difficult situations are made, an apology should be offered and advice sought on how to address any harm caused.

1.5 We respect people who come to us for help

Our churches are to be places of safety. We shall respond to domestic abuse by:

- 1.5.1 Valuing, respecting and listening to victims of domestic abuse;
- 1.5.2 Valuing, respecting and listening to alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse;
- 1.5.3 Appreciating the need to ensure a distance is kept between the two; and
- 1.5.4 Refusing to condone the perpetration or continuation of any form of abuse.

1.6 We uphold Scripture and its abhorrence of abuse in our words and public statements

In our words and public statements, we will:

- 1.6.1 **Clearly teach that domestic abuse is wrong** and that the Bible should never be interpreted to justify or excuse any form of abuse. Rather a relationship between a husband and wife is to be characterised by love, care and kindness;
- 1.6.2 Clearly teach that the Bible does not condone abuse and should not be interpreted to demand a spouse tolerate or submit to domestic abuse; and
- 1.6.3 Raise awareness of domestic violence agencies, support services, crisis accommodation, resources and expertise.

1.7 We ensure safety first

- 1.7.1 **Safety First** – Ensure that those who have experienced domestic abuse can find safety and informed help as a first priority, and can continue to stay safe.
- 1.7.2 **Take it Seriously** – Ensure that any disclosures of abuse are taken seriously and not dismissed.

- 1.7.3 **Get help from outside authorities** – Work with the appropriate statutory authorities during an investigation into domestic abuse, including when allegations are made against a member of the church community.
- 1.7.4 **Keep it confidential** – Respect the need for confidentiality within the bounds of good Safe Ministry practice, noting that reporting requirements exist where there is an immediate danger, where a child is at risk of serious harm or where the matter involves a clergy person or church worker as an alleged offender.
- 1.7.5 **Challenge with Care** – Carefully challenge inappropriate behaviour, but only in a way that does not place any individual, especially a victim, at increased risk.

1.8 We offer pastoral support to those in our care

- 1.8.1 **Offer informed care** – Ensure that informed and appropriate pastoral care and professional help is offered to any adult, child or young person who has suffered domestic abuse.
- 1.8.2 **Be guided by the victim** – It is never appropriate to pressure any victim of domestic abuse to forgive, submit to, or restore a relationship with an offender.
- 1.8.3 **Understand that reconciliation comes with conditions** – Any possibility of reconciliation between victim and offender is dependent principally upon the genuine repentance and reformation of the offender.
- 1.8.4 **Coordinate the care** – Identify the appropriate relationships of those with pastoral care responsibilities for both victims and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.
- 1.8.5 **Ensure equal access to care** – Work to ensure that clergy, clergy spouses, lay ministers and their spouses all have the same access to support and resources as others who experience domestic abuse.

1.9 Thinking Theologically – 10 Statements about Domestic Abuse

- 1.9.1 All human beings, both male and female, are created equal in the image of God, and are precious to him. As such their value and dignity rightly commands our respect and protection and should be upheld by all (Genesis 1:27; Psalm 82:3-4; Matthew 22:37-40).
- 1.9.2 Marriage is given by God as a good part of his creation for human wellbeing and should be honoured by all. It is intended as a lifelong union of a man and a woman. Healthy Christian relationships are characterised by servanthood and sacrifice, supremely modeled by Jesus Christ. Within a marriage relationship both husband and wife are to respond to one another by building each other up, which includes mutual love, nurture and respect. Any attempt to justify abusive behaviour by the use of passages in the Bible which speak of headship and submission is intolerable (Mark 10:42-45; Ephesians 5:21-33; Hebrews 13:4).
- 1.9.3 The Bible rejects all abuse, whether physical, verbal, or otherwise expressed from one person towards another and always condemns the misuse of power to control or exploit others. Therefore domestic abuse is evil. Such sin is deceptive in its power and damaging in its effects (Psalm 7; Galatians 5:19-26; 2 Timothy 3:2-3).
- 1.9.4 When domestic abuse in marriage is reported, then separation of the spouses for the sake of the safety of a victim and any children is an appropriate step to be taken and should never be discouraged (Proverbs 27:12; 1 Corinthians 7:10-11)
- 1.9.5 Victims of domestic abuse should be encouraged to seek help from the Police, from child protection authorities and other relevant domestic violence services. Church leaders who

become aware of situations of domestic abuse should always ensure they meet their mandatory reporting obligations, and obtain professional advice (Romans 13:1-5).

- 1.9.6 When a wife or husband separates for the sake of their safety (or that of their children), such action should not mean the person is deemed to have deserted the marriage or have abandoned their responsibilities as a parent even though they may have physically left the common home. Church leaders should welcome and offer ongoing support to those who have separated for such reasons (Psalm 82:3-4).
- 1.9.7 The gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ flows from both justice and love. It calls for repentance and offers forgiveness. When domestic abuse has been indicated as a factor in separation, the perpetrator must be called upon to repent and take full responsibility for their actions. Genuine repentance is demonstrated over time and includes the person gaining an understanding of what led them to behave in an abusive manner, what was wrong with their behaviour, and how it has impacted the victim. (Luke 3:8-14; Romans 12:9; 2 Corinthians 7:8-11). True reformation in such cases takes considerable effort on the part of the perpetrator, may take many years, and, for some, may never be achieved.
- 1.9.8 Forgiveness is often an important part of a victim's healing journey. However any attempts made at reconciliation should only proceed slowly and cautiously, and after consultation with experienced domestic violence services. The caution of a victim in regards to being reconciled to an offender is appropriate, and should not be mistaken for 'unwillingness' to forgive or be reconciled.
- 1.9.9 The grace of the gospel extends to all sinners. Church leaders have an obligation to provide support, pastoral accountability and supervision to any person who remains within their church communities known to have been a perpetrator of domestic abuse. However such support should only be given in a manner that does not condone the abuse nor compromise the safety or pastoral care of victims of domestic abuse.
- 1.9.10 Christians with a genuine desire to be faithful to Scripture hold different views on the question of when divorce is appropriate. However such differences should not impact a Christian's support for a victim of domestic abuse separating from their spouse for the sake of safety. For a discussion of when divorce might be an appropriate action in the circumstances of domestic abuse please see the attached 1984 Doctrine Commission report extract, para. 4:13, Appendix 13.

1.10 What do you need to do in your church?

When a case of domestic abuse is reported in a parish or organisation of the Diocese of Sydney, it is right to act in accordance with the following priorities:

Safety first – for the victim(s)

Accountability – for the abuser

Healing – for the victim(s)

Repentance, reformation and healing – for the abuser

Define and clarify the state of the relationship

- 1.10.1 A victim's physical, emotional and spiritual safety must be our primary and ongoing concern. Other matters above may be considered according to the priorities suggested, although inevitably some stages may overlap or need to be revisited.
- 1.10.2 Further advice is available in our detailed **Good Practice Guidelines**, along with extensive information in the series of attached **Appendices**. All clergy and church workers should familiarise themselves with these guidelines.
- 1.10.3 We have also prepared a **Domestic Abuse Response Flow Chart** with the appropriate processes to follow when you become aware of an incident of domestic abuse. On the page following the flow chart we also list a number of key telephone numbers and websites, along with an app for smart phones and tablets.

1.11 Key steps for prevention and care

- 1.11.1 Clergy and church workers should cooperate with statutory authorities such as the Police, child protection services and domestic violence services.
- 1.11.2 Parish Councils should consider adopting and publishing a local domestic abuse policy (see Appendix 6 for the recommended parish version of the above policy).
- 1.11.3 Consider displaying the church's domestic abuse policy statement in an appropriate place alongside information about how to access advice and support from the Police, domestic violence helplines and diocesan services.
- 1.11.4 Clergy and church workers should follow diocesan procedures for responding to concerns about domestic abuse (see Flowchart and Good Practice Guidelines – if there is any doubt as to what action to take, refer to the Professional Standards Unit or the Anglicare Domestic Violence Adviser (see 1.13).
- 1.11.5 Clergy should ensure the training of those in leadership positions, safe ministry roles and other pastoral roles about domestic abuse.
- 1.11.6 Clergy should ensure domestic abuse is addressed in appropriate contexts such as preaching, Bible studies, prayers and church publications, as well as in marriage preparation, youth groups and ministry training activities.
- 1.11.7 In such teaching, clergy should consider how to prevent convictions regarding biblical teachings, on matters like the marriage covenant, gender relationships, forgiveness and sacrificial love, being distorted or used to justify domestic abuse.

1.12 Domestic Abuse Flowchart

At any time in this process you can seek advice from a domestic violence professional. Within 48 hours of a disclosure you should debrief with such a professional.

A person discloses domestic abuse:

RESPECT & LISTEN

- Listen with acceptance
- Don't ask for proof
- Assure the victim it's not their fault
- Be honest about your ability to help
- Reassure normal confidentiality will be maintained, but explain its limits

Is there an immediate risk of harm?

Yes

SAFETY FIRST

- Discuss with the victim, but call the Police 000
- Seek advice from the NSW Domestic Violence Line 1800 656 463

No

Are there children involved?

Yes

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

- Call the Child Protection Helpline 132 111
- Remember that witnessing domestic abuse harms children & may be reportable

No

Is the victim or accused in a ministry family?

Yes

KEEP PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS INFORMED

- Call the Professional Standards Unit (PSU) 9265 1604

No

Has further help been requested?

Yes

No

ACTION

- Advise that any intervention needs care and can heighten risk.
- Be guided by what the victim wants
- Outline realistic options: Police, AVDOs, DV services, safety planning, GP, counsellor, refuge...
- Supply appropriate information, phone numbers, websites, Daisy app (be careful of storage).
- Encourage the victim to consult a service, or make a referral on their behalf.
- Record what was disclosed and your safety concerns, note your actions, and from whom you received advice. Date the record and keep it confidential.

NO FORMAL ACTION

- Your time was well spent. A victim knows they have been believed, is not in the wrong, and can return to you for further help.
- You can't make a victim of domestic abuse take any action. The most you may be able to do is listen and provide information (note earlier obligations regarding immediate danger or if children are involved).
- You may be able to offer other chances to meet and talk.
- You may be able to suggest referring more generally to a GP, psychologist or counsellor.
- You could supply appropriate information, phone numbers, websites, Daisy app (be careful of storage).
- Record what was disclosed and your safety concerns, note your actions and/or advice. Date the record and keep it confidential.



1.13 Domestic Abuse – key telephone numbers and websites for help

AGENCY	CONTACT DETAILS
<p>1800 Respect national helpline 24 hour national number for sexual assault, family and domestic violence counseling and advice.</p>	<p>1800 737 732 1800respect.org.au</p>
<p>Anglicare Domestic Violence Adviser Advice to clergy and lay ministers in the Anglican Diocese of Sydney especially for domestic abuse in a church-related setting.</p>	<p>0438 826 556 (business hours)</p>
<p>Daisy App The Daisy App connects people who may experience violence or abuse to support services in their local area. It was developed by 1800RESPECT and is free to use and download. It includes some safety features to help protect the privacy of people using it.</p>	<p>Free to download from iPhone App Store & Android Google Play</p>
<p>Child Protection Helpline Contact this helpline if you think a child or young person is at risk of harm from abuse.</p>	<p>132 111 reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg</p>
<p>Lifeline 24 hour telephone crisis line.</p>	<p>131 114 www.lifeline.org.au/get-help</p>
<p>NSW Domestic Violence Line 24 hour number for comprehensive information and referrals to nearby support services, for all categories of domestic violence.</p>	<p>1800 65 64 63 domesticviolence.nsw.gov.au/get-help</p>
<p>NSW Rape Crisis Centre Counselling service for anyone in NSW – men and women – who has experienced or is at risk of sexual assault.</p>	<p>1800 424 017 www.nswrapecrisis.com.au</p>
<p>No To Violence: Men's Referral Service Telephone counselling, information and referral service for men using violence in families, male victims, and for their friends or relatives.</p>	<p>1300 766 491 ntv.org.au</p>
<p>Professional Standards Unit Advice about abuse involving clergy or church workers in the Anglican Diocese of Sydney.</p>	<p>9265 1604 safeministry.org.au</p>



N.B. Addresses for local refuges are generally not made public for security's sake.
Current as at May 2018.

*Section 2:
Addressing Domestic Abuse:
Good Practice Guidelines*

SECTION 2:

Addressing Domestic Abuse: Good Practice Guidelines

Preamble

For the purposes of these Guidelines, **domestic abuse** is defined as abusive or intimidating behaviour inflicted by an adult against a current or former spouse or partner. It includes, but is not limited to, emotional, verbal, social, economic, psychological, spiritual, physical and sexual abuse. Such behaviour often seeks to control, humiliate, dominate or instill fear in the victim.

A more extensive definition of the various forms which abuse can take is found in Appendix 1.

2.1 How to respond to victims

When you haven't personally experienced abuse, it's easy to listen with an attitude of assessing whether what is being reported is really abuse. 'Would I find that abusive? Doesn't everyone argue sometimes?' However, when a person has repeatedly been victimised and feels powerless, our response always needs to be to offer support, to listen and give those people the respect of being believed.

-Clinical psychologist and clergy wife

The guidance below aims to assist you in responding to people who disclose domestic abuse.

- 2.1.1 Those who respond to news of domestic abuse often feel ill-equipped. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between other types of marital dysfunction and domestic abuse, or it may be that concerns about abuse only emerge gradually. Clergy and church workers should acknowledge their professional limitations, and should consult the PSU, the Anglicare Domestic Violence Adviser or experienced domestic violence services for advice.
- 2.1.2 The safety of victims and any children is paramount. All actions should carefully consider the risk to their, and your, safety. Making telephone calls, possessing information about support services for domestic abuse, the use of texts and emails, and accessing relevant websites all create potential risks for those experiencing abuse.
- 2.1.3 For information on domestic abuse, its prevalence and effects, and how to recognise both victims and alleged perpetrators, please see Appendix 3. This also briefly notes other particular categories of domestic abuse.

2.2 Initial Disclosure

If a victim discloses or otherwise hints at abuse, the following factors are important:

- 2.2.1 **Ask after them** – Most victims want you to ask how they are doing. Your offer of help could be the first step in enabling them to seek help, e.g. 'How are things at home?' and if it becomes appropriate, 'Is anyone hurting you?' or 'Do you ever feel afraid?';
- 2.2.2 **Take time to listen** – Take plenty of time to listen and believe what they say. If they sense disbelief they may be discouraged from speaking again;
- 2.2.3 **Choose the place wisely** – If it is at all possible, speak with the victim in a safe, private place where you will not be interrupted, or arrange to talk again, keeping in mind that someone in distress may start talking anywhere. As is the case in other ministry situations

when speaking with a woman, male clergy should consider inviting her to bring a support person, or should conduct the discussion where there are others in the general vicinity; and

- 2.2.4 **The limits of confidentiality** – Make it clear that complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, depending on the nature of what is disclosed. For example, further disclosure may be needed when someone is being hurt or in serious danger, a serious criminal offence has been committed, or when children are involved.

2.3 Immediate action

- 2.3.1 **Dial 000** if you are witnessing a violent incident or if the person needs medical care.
- 2.3.2 **Call the Police** if the victim is in immediate danger. Also seek advice from the NSW Domestic Violence Line **1800 656 463**. Be aware that intervention may heighten risk, but it is important to explore how to ensure that people are safe.
- 2.3.3 **Are children involved?** If children are involved and there is a risk of significant harm, a referral to the child protection authorities needs to be made, in addition to calling the Police, and if possible, encourage the victim to make the referral themselves, perhaps supporting them through the process.
- 2.3.4 **Is a clergy person or church worker involved?** If the matter involves a clergy person or church worker as an alleged offender, the PSU will also need to be informed.
- 2.3.5 **Is there a threat of self harm?** Any threat to self-harm must be taken seriously as threats of self-harm made by a perpetrator of domestic abuse to their victim are usually part of their controlling and manipulative behaviour. If the victim reports this to you, and you believe there is a risk of serious harm, you should attempt, if possible, to get medical help for the alleged perpetrator.
- 2.3.6 **Keep their confidence** – Remember that the confidentiality of the victim must be maintained.

2.4 Your response to the disclosure

- 2.4.1 **You are brave** – Acknowledge the victim's strength and courage it takes to have endured abuse and now to talk about it.
- 2.4.2 **Here are some options** – Give the victim choice in what the next steps are and the timing of those steps unless there is imminent risk of physical harm or mandatory reporting obligations.
- 2.4.3 **Here is where to find help** – Encourage them to seek professional help from a local domestic violence service who will be able to offer practical safety planning advice, even if they do not want to leave their home. In addition give information about specialist helplines and websites, as required. (See Flow Chart and page following the flow chart.)
- 2.4.4 **Are you in danger?** – Express concern for their safety and immediate welfare. Do they have somewhere to stay?
- 2.4.5 **Are children in danger?** – Ask about the children and their safety and welfare. You may need to persuade them to report any concerns to the child protection authorities. You have no option but to do so if you have received information that a child is at serious risk of harm.
- 2.4.6 **Do you have support?** – Be sensitive to people's backgrounds and cultures. Ask them how cultural issues may affect them. Ask them about what support is available to them from friends and family.

- 2.4.7 **Take care of yourself** – Encourage them to focus on their own needs, something they may not have been able to do since the abuse began but which is critical in helping them to change their situation.
- 2.4.8 **It's not your fault** – Reassure them that whatever the circumstances, abuse is not justified and not their fault.
- 2.4.9 **How can our church best help you?** – Ask them what they want from you and the parish. Offer help which is in response to their needs and preferences and which lets them keep in control, as much as possible.

2.5 Record keeping and follow up re. victims

Please also see the guidance from *Faithfulness in Service* paragraphs 4.36 and 4.37 (noted in Appendix 5) which address the need to keep notes of individual pastoral activity, and also to be aware of relevant privacy legislation.

- 2.5.1 **What's the best way to contact you?** – Check if it is all right to contact the victim at home before doing so. Establish their preferred means of contact, and make sure that this is safe.
- 2.5.2 **Keep it confidential** – Keep information confidential and, as a general rule, only share it where appropriate and with informed consent of the victim.
- 2.5.3 **Tell authorities when appropriate and keep a record** – In some circumstance you will be required to share information with statutory authorities, for example, where the victim or others may be at risk. Always keep a record of your decision and the reasons why you decided to share (or not). If in doubt, contact the PSU, the Police or the child protection authorities.
- 2.5.4 **Take notes** – It is recommended that you make a brief objective note of dates, facts and context of what you have been told, but keep your opinions separate. This should be kept in strict confidence but could be useful in any future prosecution.
- 2.5.5 **First 48 hours – Within 48 hours of the disclosure you ought to share the incident with someone who is qualified** in the area of domestic abuse, who can support you and help you to think through the issues. This may be a Police Domestic Violence Liaison Officer, the Anglicare Domestic Violence Adviser or via the 1800 RESPECT national domestic violence helpline.
- 2.5.6 **Review church safety** – If the alleged perpetrator is in the same church as the victim, you will need to review the safety issues. There may need to be a risk assessment and memorandum of understanding (MOU) put in place. You are advised to consult with the PSU.
- 2.5.7 **Safety plan with a professional** – Victim safety planning should be conducted by a professional, ideally from a domestic violence service or the Police. But there may be an occasion when a victim wishes to discuss their safety with you. You should seek advice before entering into detailed safety planning discussions with the victim. However Appendix 7 gives an example of a safety planning format that normally guides such planning. Careful consideration should be given to where and how such information is provided and kept by the victim, to avoid the alleged perpetrator learning the details of the plan.
- 2.5.8 **When to go to the PSU** – If the alleged perpetrator is a clergy person or church worker you must report this to the PSU.
- 2.5.9 **Extreme discretion needed – Do not give information about the victim's whereabouts, contact details or personal circumstances to the alleged perpetrator or to others who might pass information on to the alleged perpetrator.** Do not discuss with the parish council or any other members of a congregation or anyone who might inadvertently pass information on to the perpetrator.

- 2.5.10 **Offer practical help** – When victims are leaving a controlling perpetrator, they often have to leave with nothing and have access to very limited financial support. Consider how your church can provide practical support for victims.

2.6 Responding to alleged or known perpetrators

Every church has an important role to play in challenging inappropriate behaviour among its members. This can, however, lead to increased risks for both the victim and the person who challenges an alleged or known perpetrator. This needs to be done in an extremely careful way that does not place a victim at increased risk.

Factors to consider when responding to perpetrators:

- 2.6.1 **The victim comes first** – Ensure that the victim is at the highest priority in terms of safety and wellbeing, and that any action is centred on the victim. Action here includes giving the victim choice in what the next steps are and the timing of those steps unless there is imminent risk of physical harm or mandatory reporting obligations;
- 2.6.2 **Strength in numbers** – If meeting an alleged perpetrator, ensure that it is in a public place, and that there are others in the meeting;
- 2.6.3 **Be safe** – Maintaining an awareness of the danger that the alleged perpetrator may pose to you, and ensuring that you and others are safe;
- 2.6.4 **First 48 hours – Within 48 hours of the disclosure you ought to share the incident with someone who is qualified** in the area of domestic abuse, who can support you and help you to think through the issues. This may be a Police Domestic Violence Liaison Officer, the Anglicare Domestic Violence Adviser or via the 1800 RESPECT national domestic violence helpline;
- 2.6.5 **Get help** – If the alleged perpetrator threatens self-harm while talking with you, then they may require urgent support. Dial 000 if you are witnessing a violent incident or if the person needs urgent medical care. Otherwise you could refer them to their GP;
- 2.6.6 If the alleged perpetrator is in the same Church as the victim, you will need to review the safety issues. There may need to be a risk assessment and ‘memorandum of understanding’ (MOU) put in place. You are advised to consult the Safe Ministry website (safeministry.org.au/for-parishes/safe-ministry-journey/safe-ministry-map/4-0/) or contact the PSU;
- 2.6.7 **When to contact the PSU** – If the **alleged perpetrator is a clergy person or church worker** you must report this to the PSU;
- 2.6.8 **Extreme discretion needed** – Ensure that information concerning the victim is only given to statutory authorities and not to the alleged perpetrator. This includes keeping all contact details and personal circumstances confidential; and
- 2.6.9 **Where to get help** – Share information about helplines and accountability programs.
- 2.6.10 **Be alert** – Understand the possibility that you are being or may have been groomed by a perpetrator.

2.7 Record keeping and follow up re. perpetrators

Please see the previous section on 'record keeping and follow up' in regards to a victim. What follows is additional guidance in relation to responding to alleged or known perpetrators.

- 2.7.1 **You can't promise confidentiality** – While you might respect an individual's right to confidentiality this cannot be guaranteed. In some circumstances you will be required to share information with statutory authorities, for example, when someone is being hurt, a serious criminal offence has been committed or a child or adult is at risk.
- 2.7.2 **Keep a record** – Always keep a record of your decision and the reasons why you decided to share or withhold information. If in doubt, contact the PSU, the Police or the child protection authorities.
- 2.7.3 In following up alleged or known perpetrators:
- Do not collude with, excuse or minimise their behaviour;
 - Do not meet with them alone and in private. Meet in a public place or in the church with several other people around; and
 - Do not try to offer/provide treatment. Only those with professional training should discuss such issues formally with them.
- 2.7.4 In relation to any investigations or legal proceedings for domestic violence:
- Cooperate fully with requests from the police;
 - In the event that the alleged perpetrator requests you to produce documents or give oral evidence in any proceedings, insist that a subpoena is issued;
 - A church leader should exercise extreme caution and seek advice before acting as a character witness or advocating for an alleged perpetrator; and
 - A church leader may arrange for the alleged perpetrator to be provided with pastoral care throughout the investigation or proceedings, but should contact the PSU for further advice and not provide this care themselves.

2.8 Additional guidance for clergy and licensed lay ministers – responding to victims

- 2.8.1 **Help** – Help the victim with any spiritual concerns.
- 2.8.2 **Be patient** – Accept that victims may choose to stay in their situation for a variety of reasons, including genuine spiritual concerns regarding a desire to keep promises and for reconciliation.
- 2.8.3 **Abuse is always wrong** – Emphasise that violence or other domestic abuse is always unacceptable in a marriage, whether Christian or otherwise.
- 2.8.4 **Remember the Lord** – Assure them of God's love and presence and pray with them.
- 2.8.5 **Don't rush to reconcile** – Do not encourage them to forgive the alleged perpetrator or take them back in the absence of persistent evidence of repentant attitudes and behaviour, especially without obtaining professional advice.
- 2.8.6 **Do not pursue couples' counseling/mediation with them and their partner if you are aware that there is abuse in the relationship.**
- 2.8.7 **Seek advice** – Where couples' counseling has been commenced for general marital difficulties and concern about abuse emerges, seek advice about whether it should be discontinued.

2.9 Responding spiritually to perpetrators

- 2.9.1 **Be clear** – Address any spiritual rationalisations they may offer or questions they may have.
- 2.9.2 **No excuse** – Do not allow them to use theological excuses for their behaviour.
- 2.9.3 **Name the sin** – Name the abuse as *their* sin, not the victim’s sin. Tell them that only they can stop it and that they need to seek help.
- 2.9.4 **Do not be easily swayed** – Do not be taken in by the perpetrator’s remorse or “conversion” experience. If it is genuine, it will be a tremendous resource as they proceed with accountability. If it is not genuine, it is only another way to groom or manipulate you, so as to maintain control of the process and to avoid accountability.
- 2.9.5 **Pray** – Pray with them.
- 2.9.6 **Remorse** – Be aware that remorse expressed may or may not be genuine. Be particularly careful of an alleged perpetrator expressing remorse without any accompanying signs of real and visible repentance.
- 2.9.7 **Repentance must be real, visible and enduring** – A perpetrator may ask for forgiveness from God and seek to live a repentant life. Look for actions of repentance, not just words of repentance. What has the perpetrator done, for how long, with what kinds of accountability, to show evidence of change, such as engaging in a long term behaviour change program?
- 2.9.8 **Care** – Assure them of your pastoral care in this endeavour.
- 2.9.9 **Do not pursue couples’ counselling/mediation with them and their partner if you are aware that there is abuse in the relationship.**

2.10 Perpetrator programs

The attitudes that underpin domestic abuse often have deep roots and are difficult to change. Some success has been achieved through Men’s Behaviour Change programs for alleged or known perpetrators. These programs are conducted over an extended period of time and include one-on-one support as well as a group work program. Participation in such programs should not be linked to suggestions of reconciliation or discussions of postponing separation or divorce.

NSW has minimum standards for accredited Men’s Behaviour Change Programs. Information on who is accredited and where programs are conducted can be found at the Men’s Behaviour Change Network website: <https://www.mbcn-nsw.net/>. Accredited programs in NSW are strongly underpinned by victim support.

Anglicare is accredited to run Men’s Behaviour Change Programs in Nowra and Parramatta. Contact the Anglicare Domestic Violence Adviser for further information.

Participation in a Men’s Behaviour Change Program may be mandated by a court but self-referral to community-run programs is possible. Contact the Men’s Referral Service (MRS) on 1800 065 973.

There is currently not a female equivalent to accredited Men’s Behaviour Change Programs. If a female perpetrator was willing to seek assistance, a referral to a specific domestic violence service would be an appropriate option. Be aware that female perpetration often occurs in the context of self-protection, and needs to be thoroughly assessed.

2.11 Pastoral issues

- 2.11.1 **Consult the PSU** – There are complex issues for parishes where both parties continue to attend church. Parishes need to be aware of any legal restrictions around those accused of perpetrating abuse and ensure these are not undermined. As stated earlier (2.5.6), a risk assessment and MOU put in place may also need to be put in place. You are advised to consult with the PSU regarding any instance of a victim and an abuser (known or alleged) remaining in the same church. If a MOU cannot be agreed, the PSU can provide further advice about options. Remember that safety for the victim is paramount.
- 2.11.2 **Is a clergy person involved?** If the victim or alleged perpetrator is a member of the clergy, please talk urgently to the PSU to review the action required to ensure the victim's safety and the appropriate response (see section 2.12.2 below).
- 2.11.3 **Division of care** – Congregational leaders will need to consider how to provide pastoral care to both parties safely, noting that a clergy person or church worker cannot do this for both individuals. If they need further advice in relation to providing support they should contact the PSU or the Anglicare Domestic Violence Adviser.
- 2.11.4 **Long-term care for victims** – There may also be a need to provide long-term pastoral support for victims of domestic abuse, including support to couples when one or both parties have experienced abuse in a previous relationship.
- 2.11.5 **Caring for carers** – Likewise those responsible for caring for victims, or for perpetrators, also need emotional and pastoral support, along with others indirectly impacted; for example, friends or family within the parish.
- 2.11.6 **Dissatisfaction with care is possible** – There may be times that either victim or perpetrator, or both, may be dissatisfied with pastoral care provided in such difficult situations, even with significant efforts by congregational leaders to follow good practice guidelines.

2.12 Clergy and Domestic Abuse – Victims

- 2.12.1 **Care for victims** – If an ordained person, or the spouse of an ordained person, discloses abuse, they must be treated similarly to any other victim. Clergy and their spouses must have the same access to support and resources as others who are experiencing domestic abuse.
- 2.12.2 **Bishops to listen with acceptance** – Clergy or their spouses should expect a bishop to listen with acceptance when disclosing abuse, and be supported should they wish to separate.
- 2.12.3 **Safety of the vulnerable is paramount** – In addition to the seriousness of marriage vows, the significance of ordination promises, or issues regarding housing security may make clergy or their spouses particularly vulnerable to staying in abusive relationships. In such situations, our diocese should not put fear of scandal above the safety of vulnerable people.
- 2.12.4 **Development of Bishop protocol** – Our bishops have developed a protocol for support. This protocol includes the provision of a designated support person for a clergy person or their spouse who is a victim of abuse. Such support persons will need to be well trained in understanding domestic abuse and will also need a good understanding of the support and care structures that exist within the diocese (e.g. the Clergy Assistance Program) as well as in the community. Counseling should be made available if requested for the victim and any children.
- 2.12.5 **Interim Support Arrangements** – Preparation of legal and administrative arrangements can be made regarding the payment of stipends and living arrangements in cases where a clergy

person is alleged to have committed domestic abuse, which ensure that sufficient arrangements are made for housing and financial support of the spouse and any children affected.

- 2.12.6 **Ministry Support Fund** – Acknowledging that clergy and other ministry couples and families are in a unique situation (often with housing and other family arrangements attached to a parish), a Ministry Spouse Support Fund is being established to assist the spouse and family (if any) re-establish their lives when there has been a determination of misconduct by the church worker through domestic abuse.

2.13 Clergy and Domestic Abuse – Alleged perpetrator

- 2.13.1 Clergy who are suspected of perpetrating domestic abuse must be treated in a similar way to any other alleged perpetrator (see section 2.6).
- 2.13.2 Bishops may consider appointing someone to offer pastoral support to an alleged perpetrator who is a member of the clergy.
- 2.13.3 Any allegations of domestic abuse committed against a member of the clergy should also be referred to the PSU (see section 2.12).
- 2.13.4 Domestic abuse may result in proceedings under our ministry standards and disciplinary ordinances (which can be found under the Ordinances on the SDS website – www.sds.asn.au) if:
- it involves sexual abuse of an adult, or
 - conviction for an offence punishable by imprisonment for 12 months or more, or
 - may otherwise call into question the fitness of the person to hold a role or position or to remain in holy orders.

2.14 Mediation

- 2.14.1 **Get professional help** – Mediation is a specialist activity that in the context of domestic abuse must be undertaken by trained professionals. In order for mediation to be effective any imbalances in power in the relationship need to be addressed.
- 2.14.2 **Safety first** – In the context of family and domestic abuse, mediation (or ‘family dispute resolution’ as it is known when parenting arrangements are being discussed) can be an empowering process for a victim. However, this can only occur if safety needs are managed and both parties are well-prepared for the mediation process.
- 2.14.3 **Legal advice** – Where children or property matters are concerned, it is also important that both parties have received legal advice. Government-funded Family Relationship Centres (FRCs) are a good referral option for family dispute resolution and have designated processes to ensure the safety of all concerned. Anglicare currently operates FRCs at Nowra and Parramatta.

A Case Study: Andrew and Jody

Andrew is separated from his wife, Jody. She had called the Police and Andrew was arrested after an incident of domestic abuse. Charges were pressed and he was found guilty. An Apprehended Domestic Violence Order (ADVO) has been issued, with Jody and the children listed as protected parties.

Andrew is living apart from Jody. The couple have two children aged 6 and 8, both of whom live with Jody. Andrew wants to be reconciled with his wife and with the church of which they are both long-standing members. He has come to the rector's home in order to discuss with the rector how he can achieve reconciliation with Jody. He is currently not attending church. But Andrew appears to be remorseful and says how sorry he is and how desperate he is to be back in church fellowship and back with his family.

Considerations in responding

The rector needs to seek advice and support from the PSU or Anglicare Domestic Violence Adviser in how best to respond.

The conditions in the ADVO need to be understood to ensure that any contact Andrew has with Jody and the children does not breach the conditions of the ADVO.

The rector needs to be aware and cautious of Andrew's motives. In approaching the rector, who knows them both, Andrew might be seen as manipulating or grooming the rector to support him, with the prime motive of reconciliation with his wife. What evidence is there of his repentance, and the steps he has taken to change his behaviour? How are his spiritual needs currently being met?

Consideration of Andrew's desire for reconciliation with Jody must be made in the context of assessing risk to her and risk to their children, and can only be considered if Jody is also willing to consider a conciliation process, and the conditions of the ADVO allow for contact.

However, the rector should not get involved in any conciliation between them as this is specialist work and needs to be undertaken by an independent agency equipped for the purpose. The rector can signpost Andrew to such agencies.

The rector can discuss with Andrew the marks of true repentance and forgiveness by God, and arrange for him to receive pastoral care. This would be most appropriately offered by someone not known to either of them.

The rector needs to be aware of boundaries of confidentiality and should not be passing information from Andrew to Jody or vice versa. If he were to do so not only may he lose the trust of one or the other, but he may be putting Jody and her children at further risk.

In conclusion, the rector should be careful to give priority to the safety of the victim and her children who are the vulnerable people in this circumstance.

Section 3: Appendices

Please note that these appendices do **not** form part of the Policy or Guidelines, but are provided as additional resources.

1. An expansive description of Domestic Abuse
2. The Duluth 'Power and Control' Wheel
3. Domestic Abuse Facts
 - 1) Who experiences domestic abuse?
 - 2) Domestic Abuse Statistics for Australia
 - 3) Challenging misconceptions about domestic abuse
 - 4) Recognising domestic abuse in adult victims
 - 5) Recognising domestic abuse in children
 - 6) Who are the perpetrators of domestic abuse?
 - 7) Recognising perpetrators of domestic abuse
 - 8) Particular Types of Domestic abuse
4. Legal Framework
5. Domestic Abuse: Policy Guidance from *Faithfulness in Service*
6. Suggested Parish Policy on Domestic Abuse
7. Draft Safety and Exit plan
8. Marriage Preparation: Recommended good practice
9. Synod Resolutions related to Domestic Abuse
10. Timeline of Public Statements by Diocesan Leadership addressing Domestic Abuse
11. "A Letter Made Me Think"
12. "Walking Through It: A Family Violence Survivor's Reflection"
13. Doctrine Commission on Divorce and Remarriage
14. Doctrine Commission on The Use and Misuse of Scripture with Regard to Domestic Abuse

Appendix 1: An expansive description of Domestic Abuse

This Australian Parliamentary Library Research Publication¹ makes clear that domestic abuse or domestic violence includes far more than just physical violence.

Domestic violence refers to acts of violence that occur between people who have, or have had, an intimate relationship in domestic settings. These acts include physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse. Defining forms of violence, its perpetrators and their victims, is complicated by the many different kinds of intimate and family relationships and living arrangements present in Australian communities. Domestic violence is most commonly perpetrated by males against their female partners, but it also includes violence against men by their female partners and violence within same-sex relationships.

The traditional associations of domestic violence are with acts of physical violence within relationships occurring in the home. This understanding fails to grasp the complexity of the phenomenon. The National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and Children (NCRVWC) found that –

... a central element of domestic violence is that of an ongoing pattern of behaviour aimed at controlling one's partner through fear (for example, by using violent or threatening behaviour)
... the violent behaviour is part of a range of tactics used by the perpetrator to exercise power and control ... and can be both criminal and non-criminal in nature.

Domestic violence includes:

- **Emotional Abuse** – blaming the victim for all problems in the relationship, undermining the victim's self-esteem and self-worth through comparisons with others, withdrawing interest and engagement and emotional blackmail;
- **Verbal Abuse** – swearing and humiliation in private and public, focusing on intelligence, sexuality, body image or the victim's capacity as a parent or spouse;
- **Social Abuse**—systematic isolation from family and friends, instigating and controlling relocations to a place where the victim has no social circle or employment opportunities and preventing the victim from going out to meet people;
- **Economic Abuse** – controlling all money, forbidding access to bank accounts, providing an inadequate 'allowance', preventing the victim seeking or holding employment and taking wages earned by the victim;
- **Psychological Abuse** – making threats regarding custody of children, asserting the justice system will not believe or support the victim, destroying property, abusing pets and driving dangerously;
- **Spiritual Abuse** – denial and/or misuse of religious beliefs or practices to force victims into subordinate roles and misusing religious or spiritual traditions to justify physical violence or other abuse;
- **Physical Abuse** – direct assaults on the body, use of weapons (including objects), assault of children, locking the victim out of the house, sleep and food deprivation; and
- **Sexual Abuse** – any form of pressured/unwanted sex or sexual degradation, causing pain during sex, coercive sex without protection against pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease, making the victim perform sexual acts unwillingly and criticising or using degrading insults.

Family violence is a broader term referring to violence between family members as well as violence between intimate partners. This term also covers a complexity of behaviours beyond that of direct physical violence. The Australian and New South Wales Law Reform Commission's review of family violence law in Australia recommended that state and territory legislation 'should provide that family violence is violent or threatening behaviour, or any other form of behaviour, that coerces or controls a family member or causes that family member to be fearful'.

¹ Source: "Domestic violence in Australia – an overview of the issues"

By Liesl Mitchell, Social Policy Section, Parliamentary Library Research Publications, 22 November 2011, Parliament of Australia http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/BN/2011-2012/DVAustralia (accessed 15/8/2017)

Appendix 2: The Duluth ‘Power and Control’ Wheel

Many victims have found a visual representation of the signs or symptoms of domestic abuse helpful in identifying and understanding their own situation. The Duluth ‘Power and Control’ Wheel is one such resource. The Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs, based in Duluth, MN, USA, which developed the diagram, invites people to use it in their efforts to inform and educate others.



DOMESTIC ABUSE INTERVENTION PROGRAMS
202 East Superior Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55802
218-722-2781
www.theduluthmodel.org

Appendix 3: Domestic Abuse Facts

1. Who experiences domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse can occur to anyone regardless of age, race, disability, sexuality, class, or income.

Most domestic abuse is perpetrated by men against women, but the perpetrator of domestic abuse can be of either sex, and the victim can be of either sex.

Victims can be male, although the majority are female. Abuse can also occur in same sex relationships, between siblings or by adult children against a parent.

Sometimes both spouses can be simultaneously perpetrators and victims of abuse, although the pattern of abuse is not always symmetrical.

Many victims will only disclose that a partner was violent and abusive after leaving a relationship. Things to keep in mind:

- Women are particularly vulnerable to abuse when pregnant or seeking to leave a relationship;
- Older people and disabled people can be vulnerable to domestic abuse;
- Children experience domestic abuse in many ways, including through directly intervening to protect one of their parents, being forced to join the adult perpetrator, and hearing or witnessing violent attacks or verbal abuse;
- Coercive and controlling behaviour in a domestic abuse situation can be exerted over the whole family so any children suffer as well as the victim;
- Many women come to Australia to work and improve their lives, and many can then become trapped in relationships characterised by abuse with no avenue to seek safety and support; and
- Domestic abuse happens within the Church. Church leaders, members of the clergy, and spouses of clergy have been found to be victims of domestic abuse.

2. Domestic Abuse Statistics for Australia

Note: Statistics do not tell the whole story, as they do not identify patterns of control and abuse in relationships. They do not capture level of fear, or the severity of injury or impact, for the victim.

Prevalence of Domestic Violence in Australia¹

- 1 in 6 women (17%) and 1 in 16 men (6%) had experienced threatened or actual physical or sexual violence by a partner they had lived with.²
- 23% of women and 16% of men have experienced emotional abuse by a partner since the age of 15.

Who experiences Domestic Violence and Abuse?³

- Most (69%) of domestic assault victims are women, but almost one-third involved a male victim.
- Most (81%) of the domestic assault perpetrators are men.
- Most victims are between the ages of 20 and 39.⁴ Women aged 20–29 years had the highest rate of DV-related assault, and were 3.3 times more likely than men in the same age group to be a victim.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, (2017) *Personal Safety Survey 2016*, accessed 31 May 2018 at <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4906.0>. The survey collected information about the nature and extent of violence experienced by men and women since the age of 15, including their experience of violence in the 12 months prior to the survey.

² This means that approximately 1.6 million women have experienced at least one incident of actual or threatened physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner (since the age of 15). Note that this excludes broader forms of domestic abuse, such as emotional or spiritual abuse.

³ Domestic abuse is not restricted to any one demographic. It occurs across ages, socioeconomic groups, cultures, races, and geographic regions. However, there are variations in occurrence.

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, (2013) *Personal Safety Survey 2012*, accessed 4 August 2017 at <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4906.0>.

- Indigenous women and girls were 35 times more likely than the wider female population to be hospitalised due to family violence.⁵
- 25% of children in Australia have been witnesses to domestic violence.⁶

Reported incidents of Domestic Violence in NSW⁷

- Every week NSW Police deal with over 1,250 domestic violence related incidents.⁸
- The NSW Domestic Violence Death Review Team, convened by the state Coroner reports that between 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2014 there were 204 cases where a person was killed by a current or former intimate partner in a context of domestic violence (162 females and 42 males).
 - 79% of intimate partner homicide victims were women. 98% of women killed by an intimate partner had been the primary domestic violence victim in the relationship.
 - Almost two-thirds of women killed by a former intimate partner had ended the intimate relationship with the domestic violence abuser within three months of being killed.
 - 89% of men killed by a female intimate partner had been the primary domestic violence abuser in the relationship.⁹
- NSW Police record about 26,000 cases of domestic assaults annually, which represent about one third of all recorded assaults. In 2015, there were 18,959 incidents of DV-related assault in which police proceeded against a person of interest (perpetrator). The majority of these incidents involved male perpetrators.
- More than one-third of the domestic assault incidents recorded in NSW in 2004 were alcohol-related.¹⁰

3. Challenging misconceptions about domestic abuse

Many people will have misconceptions and attitudes about domestic abuse which are incorrect. Here are some common myths about what domestic abuse is and who it affects:

Myth 1: It happens to certain types of people

It can be thought that domestic abuse happens to a certain type of person – based on socio-economic status, religious or cultural backgrounds, or a perception of strength and resilience. This is not the case. Domestic abuse and violence can happen to anyone at any time.

Myth 2: It happens because of...

Domestic abuse is complex, and is not necessarily explained by a single theory. It is sometimes claimed that domestic abuse happens primarily because of worldview factors regarding gender or religion, or because of alcohol or drug abuse, unemployment, abuse as a child, mental or physical ill health, or other environmental factors.

Although these may be contributory factors, abuse happens because an abusive person chooses to behave in a way that enables them to assert power and control over another person – excuses and reasons are given to justify abusive behaviour.

Myth 3: A victim can cause a perpetrator to become abusive

Often a perpetrator will tell a victim that they caused them to do it. But a victim is never to blame if a perpetrator chooses to behave in an abusive and controlling way.

⁵ White Ribbon Australia, "Domestic Violence Statistics", accessed 2 August 2017 at <https://www.whiteribbon.org.au/understand-domestic-violence/facts-violence-women/domestic-violence-statistics/>

⁶ Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, *Children affected by domestic violence: a literature review*, Report produced for The Benevolent Society, Sydney, 2011. Accessed 26 July 2017 at <http://earlytraumagrief.anu.edu.au/files/ImpactofDVonChildren.pdf>

⁷ Much domestic violence goes unreported – usually because the victim does not consider an incident serious, is too ashamed, fears the offender, or thinks police cannot or will not act.

⁸ NSW Police Force (2013), *Code of Practice for the NSW Police Force Response to Domestic and Family Violence*, accessed 4 August 2017 at <http://www.police.nsw.gov.au/>

⁹ NSW Domestic Violence Death Review Team (2017), *NSW Domestic Violence Death Review Team Report 2015-2017*, pp. xi-xii.

¹⁰ Australian Bureau of Statistics, (2013) *Personal Safety Survey 2012*, accessed 4 August 2017 at <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4906.0>.

Myth 4: A victim can fully understand what is happening to them

When someone is in a relationship in which they are subject to abuse they will often feel very confused about what is happening, and they are sometimes not sure that what they are experiencing is abuse.

Myth 5: A victim can choose to leave and if they don't, they are choosing to stay

People ask why victims stay in a situation where they are suffering abuse, and assume that it is easy to leave, to escape the situation and to start a new life. This is not the case, either on a practical or an emotional level. A perpetrator of abuse will work to ensure that the victim feels that they cannot cope on their own.

Leaving a physically violent relationship is often the most dangerous time for women and children. It may also be financially impossible to leave the situation, particularly when there are children. Victims often do not have a choice in leaving and may feel, or be, threatened that if they leave they will be in danger. It may feel safer to stay than to leave.

Myth 6: Domestic abuse is all about anger

Domestic abuse is not all about being angry or losing control. Although not always a calculated action, a central element is the choice to act in a controlling way..

Myth 7: Domestic abuse doesn't happen in our church

Domestic abuse happens in every community, including within the Church. The ABS's 2016 Personal Safety Survey suggested that 1 in 6 Australian women and 1 in 16 Australian men have, since the age of 15, experienced physical or sexual violence from a partner they have lived with. So it is extremely likely that there will be those in your church who have been affected by domestic abuse.

4. Recognising domestic abuse in adult victims

It is very difficult to create a definitive list of signs that domestic abuse is happening because abuse can occur on many levels and both victims and alleged or known perpetrators can behave and respond in a range of different ways. The following list of signs of behaviour for victims is not exhaustive, and should not be used as a definitive list but should be used as guidance:

- Has unexplained bruises or injuries;
- Shows signs of feeling suicidal;
- Becomes unusually quiet or withdrawn;
- Has panic attacks;
- Has frequent absences from work or other commitments;
- Wears clothes that conceal even on warm days;
- Stops talking about her/his partner;
- Is anxious about being out or rushes away;
- May never be seen alone, and is always accompanied by their partner;
- May become more isolated, possibly moving away from home, withdrawing from friends and family;
- Goes along with everything their partner says and does;
- Checks in often with their partner to report where they are and what they're doing;
- Receives frequent, harassing phone calls from their partner; and/or
- May have unexplained injuries, and may give other reasons for the injuries which refer to them being accidental.

Survivor View

The abuse went on for six years before I realised that what I was experiencing wasn't just a bad marriage. Everyone says marriage is difficult so at first I thought it was that – our adjustment to married life.

There was pressure to make marriage work and to sacrifice yourself. After all the church says 'till death us do part'. I bent over backwards to make it work.

From the outside most people thought we were the perfect happy couple. But I was walking on eggshells in my own home, never knowing what mood he would be in when he came home.

It was such a lonely time. I didn't think anyone would believe me if I told them what it was really like at home. I was desperate for some hope.

5. Recognising domestic abuse in children

Living in a home where there's domestic abuse is harmful. It can have a serious impact on a child's behaviour and wellbeing. Parents or carers may underestimate the effects of the abuse on their children because they don't see what's happening.

Indeed, a child who witnesses or overhears domestic abuse is generally considered to be the victim of indirect child abuse by the perpetrator of the abusive behaviour. If children are involved this way, a referral to the child protection authorities will need to be considered.

Domestic abuse can also be a sign that children are suffering another type of abuse or neglect. The effects can last into adulthood. However, once they're in a safer and more stable environment, most children are able to move on from the effects of witnessing domestic abuse.

Younger children who experience and witness domestic abuse may:

- Become aggressive;
- Display anti-social behaviour;
- Become anxious;
- Complain of tummy aches and start to wet the bed;
- They may find it difficult to sleep, have temper tantrums and start to behave as if they are much younger than they are;
- They may also find it difficult to separate from their abused parent when they start nursery or school; and/or
- Children may be clingy, have behavioural difficulties, may be tired and lethargic, and struggle in social settings and at school.

Older children/young people who experience and witness domestic abuse react differently:

- Boys seem to express their distress much more outwardly, for example by becoming aggressive and disobedient. Sometimes, they start to use violence to try and solve problems, and may copy the behaviour they see within the family;
- Older boys may play truant and start to use alcohol or drugs (both of which are a common way of trying to block out disturbing experiences and memories);
- Girls are more likely to keep their distress inside. They may become withdrawn from other people, and become anxious or depressed;
- Girls may think badly of themselves and complain of vague physical symptoms. They are more likely to have an eating disorder, or to harm themselves by taking overdoses or cutting themselves;
- Girls are also more likely to choose an abusive partner themselves; and/or
- Suffer from depression or anxiety.

Children of any age can develop symptoms of what is called 'Post-traumatic Stress Disorder'. They may get nightmares, flashbacks, become very jumpy, and have headaches and physical pains. Children dealing with domestic violence and abuse often do badly at school. Their frightening experiences at home make it difficult to concentrate in school, and if they are worried about their abused parent, they may refuse to go to school.

Long-term impact on children and young people

As adults, children who have witnessed violence and abuse are more likely to become involved in a violent and abusive relationship themselves. Children tend to copy the behaviour of their parents.

However, children don't always repeat the same pattern when they grow up. Many children don't like what they see, and try very hard not to make the same mistakes as their parents.

Even so, children from violent and abusive families may grow up feeling anxious and depressed, and find it difficult to get on with other people.

6. Who are the perpetrators of domestic abuse?

Most known perpetrators of domestic abuse are men.

- Anyone across the social spectrum can perpetrate domestic abuse – a perpetrator's outward appearance may be outgoing and friendly, and/or very confident, whilst the victim may be withdrawn and considered by many as unfriendly. However a disclosure of domestic abuse by any individual should always be taken seriously.
- There is no excuse for abuse. People who abuse their partners make a choice to do so. Often alcohol, drugs, childhood problems (such as a violent/abusive childhood), and mental health and psychological disorders are cited as causes of domestic abuse. Whatever the contributors in any given case, domestic abuse always involves a misuse of power by one person over another. Individuals who perpetrate domestic abuse generally do so to get what they want and to gain control.
- Domestic abuse happens within the Church; church leaders, members of the clergy, spouses of clergy, and prominent lay members have all been found to be perpetrators of domestic abuse.
- Seeing change in perpetrators is a long-term process. Perpetrator programs are long-term groups or one to one interventions which challenge the underlying attitudes and beliefs that drive domestic abuse. For more information on where accredited programs are conducted can be found at the Men's Behaviour Change Network website: <https://www.mbcn-nsw.net/>

7. Recognising perpetrators of domestic abuse

Perpetrators are very good at hiding their behaviour. The following list of signs of perpetrator behaviour is not exhaustive, and should not be used as a definitive list but should be used as guidance:

- Presents confidently;
- Focuses on themselves and has no empathy with partner;
- Assertively claims victim status;
- Finds no fault in themselves;
- Makes unfounded accusations;
- Puts partner down and portrays partner often as unreasonable or unstable;
- Does not consider the children's experiences;
- Makes disparaging remarks about their partner in public;
- Uses their wedding vows as leverage to keep their partner tied to them – "you promised...";
- Expresses suspicion about legitimate activities of partner;
- Restricts access to partner's family and friends;
- Controls financial access and activity;
- Recruit others to back them up against their partner;
- Uses inappropriate humour, especially about compliance;
- Tries to engender pity in order to manipulate and recruit colluders;
- Shows changeable behaviour in order to hold onto control; and
- Uses Scripture to justify behaviour, demands or requests.

8. Particular Types of Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can occur in many contexts. For example, there is abuse within indigenous communities, and in same-sex relationships; there is also child or adolescent to parent abuse, and abuse of elders.

Awareness of the wide variety of culturally specific forms of abuse will also help in identifying abuse and responding appropriately. For example, these can include so-called 'honour' crimes and killings, forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

Some forms of abuse are justified by religious and cultural beliefs as a way of maintaining patriarchal power and control. Often the violence or abuse is perpetrated by members of the extended family, with the collusion of others in the community.

The need to protect remains the main imperative, irrespective of the cultural context in which domestic abuse occurs.

Appendix 4: Legal Framework

A range of legal measures exist to protect people in Australia who have experienced domestic violence and to prevent further violence.

The following legislation governs responses to incidents of domestic and family violence in NSW:

- Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007;
- Crimes Act 1900;
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998;
- Young Offenders Act 1997;
- Criminal Procedure Act 1986; and
- Family Law Act 1975.

NSW Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007¹

The primary piece of legislation governing domestic violence matters in NSW, is the *Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007* (the “Crimes DPV Act”).

The Crimes DPV Act has the following **aims**²:

- a. to ensure the safety and protection of all persons, including children, who experience or witness domestic violence;
- b. to reduce and prevent violence by a person against another person where a domestic relationship exists between those persons; ;
- c. to enact provisions that are consistent with certain principles underlying the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women; and
- d. to enact provisions that are consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Crimes DPV Act sets out a framework for applications to be made to the Magistrate’s Court for Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders (ADVOs) for the protection of a person against another person with whom he or she has or has had a **domestic relationship**. Further detail about ADVOs is set out below.

According to Section 5 of The Crimes DPV Act, a person has a **domestic relationship** with another person if the person is or has been married to an offender (s5a), has or is in a de facto relationship (s5b) or an intimate personal relationship (s5c). However, the Crimes DPV Act also includes:

- a. A person who is living or has lived in the same household or other residential facility as the person who commits the offence;
- b. A person who has or has had a relationship involving his or her dependence on the ongoing paid or unpaid care of the person who commits the offence; or
- c. A person who is or has been a relative of the person who commits the offence.

Section 5 of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 explicitly recognises **domestic violence can also occur between two persons if the victim:**

- ‘is living or has lived in the same household as the other person’ (Section 5 (d)) (such as co-residents);
- ‘is living or has lived as a long-term resident in the same residential facility as the other person and at the same time as the other person’ (Section 5 (e)), (such as co-residents); or
- ‘has or has had a relationship involving his or her dependence on the ongoing paid or unpaid care of the other person’ (Section 5 (f)), (such as staff of licensed boarding houses).

The Crimes DPV Act extends upon the personal violence offences set out in the Criminal Code. Under Section 11, **a domestic violence offence** includes not only personal physical and sexual violence but also those offences that intend to coerce or control a person and cause them to be intimidated and/or fearful.

¹ NSW Government, *Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007*, accessed 4 August 2017 at <https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/2007/80>

² Section 9

Section 13 also makes it an offence to stalk or intimidate another person with the intention of causing the other person to fear physical or mental harm.

Legislation introduced in 2015 now enables domestic violence victims to give their evidence in chief through a recorded video or audio statement.

Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders (ADVOs)

The *Crimes DPV Act* provides the legislative framework for the issue of Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders (ADVOs). An ADVO is a civil matter and does not result in a criminal offence unless the ADVO is breached. The aim of an ADVO is to protect a person from future violence. Restrictions are placed on persons against whom an order is made. These restrictions may include not harassing or not approaching the person.

In 2016, NSW amended laws regarding ADVOs to enable³:

- the recognition of inter-state ADVOs and foreign orders;
- a change to the meaning of domestic relationships order to widen the criteria for those who can apply for an Apprehended Domestic Violence Order (ADVO);
- Police to apply for a provisional ADVO if they suspect or believe that domestic violence has happened or is likely to happen, even if the victim is not willing to make a complaint;
- Police to direct or detain offenders while applying for a provisional ADVO;
- Senior Police Officers to determine applications for provisional ADVOs. This new process will provide faster and immediate access to provisional ADVOs for victims at risk of violence; and
- Courts to have the power to issue an ADVO if it is satisfied that a person (applicant) has reasonable grounds to fear that a domestic violence offence will be committed against them. This removes the previous requirement that in addition to having reasonable grounds to fear, the court also had to be satisfied that the person actually did fear an offence.

Section 48 of the Crimes DPV Act, enables police to apply for an ADVO on behalf a person experiencing domestic violence, sometimes referred to as a *person in need of protection* ('PINOP').

If the PINOP is an adult, that person may also apply for an ADVO on their own at the Local Court of NSW. Police are the only authority mandated to apply for ADVOs on behalf of a child under section 48 (3) of the Crimes DPV Act.⁴

More information is available from the NSW Government Domestic Violence website⁵, Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Scheme or a local Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service.⁶ An individual who wishes to hire a lawyer may contact Legal Aid NSW.

Protection of Children

There are both Federal and State laws which govern the protection of children. The *Family Law Act 1975* governs the resolution of private disputes about the parenting of all children in Australia. In comparison, NSW 'child protection laws' aim to protect children from abuse and neglect.

Due to the substantial overlap between Federal and State Laws in regards to domestic violence and protection of children, there have been calls for the institution of one court to deal with domestic violence, including protection orders, child protection, family law, perhaps even criminal issues.⁷

³ NSW Police, *Police Issued ADVOs: Summary of Changes to the Crimes (Domestic & Personal Violence Act)*, accessed 4 August 2017 at http://www.police.nsw.gov.au/community_issues/domestic_and_family_violence

⁴ NSW Government, *Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007*, accessed 4 August 2017 at <https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/2007/80>

⁵ NSW Government, "Apprehended Violence Orders (ADVOs)", *Domestic Violence* [website] accessed 2 August 2017 at <http://www.domesticviolence.nsw.gov.au/get-help/apprehended-violence-orders-avos>

⁶ Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service, accessed 4 August 2017 at <http://www.wdvcasnsw.org.au/>

⁷ Australian Law Reform Commission (2010), *Family Violence: A National Legal Response*, ALRC AReport 114, accessed 4 August 2017 at <http://www.alrc.gov.au/publications/family-violence-national-legal-response-alrc-report-114>

Federal Family Law Act 1975⁸

In 2006, the Australian Government introduced legislative changes to the Family Law Act 1975, in order to increase parental cooperation and responsibility in the separation process and increase the focus on the child's best interests.⁹ However, in 2011 amendments were made after research suggested that the co-operative parenting changes made in 2006 may have contributed to increasing rates of reports of family violence and child abuse around relationship breakdown. The main changes to the *Family Law Act* were as follows:

- Section 4AB, now provides that family violence is violent, threatening or other behaviour by a person that coerces or controls a member of the person's family (the family member), or causes the family member to be fearful. For clarity, a new sub-section 4AB(2) provides an open list of the types of circumstances that may constitute family violence under the Act;
- The definition of child abuse has been extended to include two new categories of behaviour. The new definition, at sub-section 4(1) provides that child abuse is physical or sexual assault, serious neglect, and now action causing a child 'serious psychological harm' and expressly including *subjection or exposure to family violence*. Exposure to family violence is explained further by example at sub-sections 4AB(3) and (4);
- Ensuring that the 'need to protect a child from harm' carries more weight than the 'relationship with parents' consideration;
- New provisions requiring the court, in every child-related case, to expressly ask the parties about whether they have any 'concerns' about family violence or child abuse;
- In section 60CG, courts must ensure that parenting orders are consistent with any family violence order; and do not expose a person to an unacceptable risk of family violence; and
- Courts must be advised of any ADVOs or other State investigations into domestic violence.

Mandatory Reporting of Children at Risk of Significant Harm in NSW

The *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*¹⁰ (The Care and Protection Act) provides the legislative framework for the reporting of domestic violence incidents which put children at significant risk of harm. Section 23 (d), states the circumstances which constitute a reportable incident include:

*the child or young person is living in a household where there have been incidents of domestic violence and, as a consequence, the child or young person is at risk of serious¹¹ physical or psychological harm.*¹²

A **mandatory reporter** is an individual required by law to report to government authorities when they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is at risk of significant harm. Mandatory reporters are defined under section 27 of the Care and Protection Act, as people who deliver the following services to children as part of their paid or professional work:¹³

- Health care (e.g. registered medical practitioners, nurses government and other allied health professionals working in sole practice or in public or private health practices);
- Welfare (e.g. psychologists, social workers, caseworkers and youth workers);
- Education (e.g. teachers, counsellors, principals);
- Children's services (e.g. child care workers, family day carers and home-based carers);
- Residential services (e.g. refuge workers); and
- Law enforcement (e.g. police).

⁸ Australian Parliament, *The Family Law Act 1975*, accessed 2 August 2017 at <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2016C01106>

⁹ Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, *Children affected by domestic violence: a literature review*, Report produced for The Benevolent Society, Sydney, 2011. Accessed 26 July 2017 at <http://earlytraumagrief.anu.edu.au/files/ImpactofDVonChildren.pdf>

¹⁰ NSW Government, *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*, accessed 4 August 2017 at <https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/1998/157/full>

¹¹ Here, "serious" means sufficient to warrant a response by a statutory authority irrespective of a family's consent

¹² NSW Police Force, *Domestic and Family Violence Policy 2012*, accessed 4 August 2017 at https://www.police.nsw.gov.au/community_issues/domestic_and_family_violence/policy

¹³ NSW Government, *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*, accessed 4 August 2017 at <https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/1998/157/chap3/part2/sec27>

Members of the community and mandatory reporters who suspect that a child or young person is at “risk of significant harm” should report their concerns to the Child Protection Helpline. To help reporters decide whether a case needs to be reported to the Child Protection Helpline, reporters can use the online Mandatory Reporter Guide.¹⁴

The Domestic Violence Death Review Team (DVDRT) was established in 2010 under the Coroners Act 2009 (NSW) to review deaths occurring in the context of domestic violence in New South Wales.

¹⁴ Childstory Reporter, *Welcome to the ChildStory Reporter Community*, accessed 4 August 2017 at <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/>

Appendix 5: Domestic Abuse: Policy Guidance from Faithfulness in Service

All clergy and church workers (whether paid or volunteer leaders) in the Anglican Diocese of Sydney are bound by our national code of conduct, *Faithfulness in Service*, as adopted in the Anglican Diocese of Sydney.

Section 6 of *Faithfulness in Service* addresses **Personal Behaviour**.

In its **Preamble**, it states that *misuse of power* is at the heart of abuse. This includes domestic abuse.

6.1 *The personal behaviour and relationships of **clergy** and **church workers** have a significant impact on the **Church** and the community because they are a model to others. In a context where their responsibility is to care for others, people will especially observe the way in which clergy and church workers exercise power.*

6.2 *Abuse of power is at the heart of many relationship problems in the Church and the community. In essence, abuse is one person's misuse of power over another. Sometimes abuse will be a one off event and at other times it will be a pattern of behaviour.*

6.3 ***Abuse** can take any of several overlapping forms: **bullying, emotional abuse, harassment, physical abuse, sexual abuse** or **spiritual abuse**. Abuse in a family or domestic context is commonly known as "family and domestic violence".¹*

6.4 *It is important for clergy and church workers to be good citizens and obey the laws of the community, except where those laws conflict with Christian convictions.*

The section entitled "**Standards for clergy and church workers**" states the Church's expectations for personal behaviour and the practice of pastoral ministry. This section **unequivocally rules out any domestic abuse** from clergy and church workers.

6.5 *You are not to engage in:*
bullying;
emotional abuse;
harassment;
physical abuse;
sexual abuse; or
spiritual abuse.

6.6 *You are not to **abuse** your spouse, children or other members of your family.*

This section also insists that **church leaders must observe** the law of the land, which obviously includes **laws regarding domestic abuse**.

6.14 *You are to observe the law, other than any law that:*
is contrary to the Holy Scriptures;
unjustly prohibits the practice of religion; or
prohibits civil disobedience.

Section 4 of *Faithfulness in Service* addresses **Pastoral Relationships**.

In its **Guidelines** section, it gives the following guidance regarding **Boundaries** in pastoral ministry.

4.12 *Recognise the limits of your skills and experience. Do not undertake any ministry (such as relationship counselling, counselling for abuse or addictions, or an exorcism) that is beyond your competence or the role for which you have been employed or trained. If in doubt seek advice. A person who requires specialised help should be referred to an appropriately qualified person or agency.*

¹ The full definitions of these forms of abuse within *Faithfulness in Service* can be read at the end of this Appendix. It should be noted that these definitions overlap to a significant extent with common secular definitions of domestic abuse, such as those adopted by the diocesan Policy.

4.13 *Where ministry responsibilities overlap, be aware of the activities, function and style of other clergy and church workers. Consult with these colleagues and co-operate wherever possible.*

4.14 *Where your ministry responsibility to one person may conflict with your responsibility to another person to whom you are ministering, or with your own needs, you should seek advice from a colleague or supervisor. Consider the possibility of transferring ministry responsibility for one or both of these to another minister.*

This supports our good practice guidelines, which **require church workers to obtain specialised help** from persons or agencies appropriately qualified in responding to situations where domestic abuse is indicated or alleged.

It also notes the difficulty clergy and church workers can have from the expectations of multiple roles, for example in:

- providing pastoral care both to victim and alleged perpetrator;
- making some kind of investigation of the allegations; and
- being responsible for the adjudication and implementation of some aspects of church discipline should an offender have been or continue in the life of the church.

Also note the following provisions regarding **record keeping and privacy**, which can be especially crucial for safety in situations involving domestic abuse.

4.36 *If you are engaged in individual pastoral ministry, consider keeping a factual record of your daily pastoral activity. Record details such as the date, time, place, participants, subject, and any proposed action arising from each activity. Record personal remarks accurately.*

4.37 *You need to know the relevant principles of the applicable privacy legislation in relation to the collection, use, disclosure and management of personal information. These have implications for:*

- *the publication of personal information in church directories, newsletters, rosters and websites;*
- *the recording and publication of voices and images of individuals; and*
- *the use and security of all personal information, and especially sensitive information, held by clergy and church workers or in church offices.*

Section 3 of *Faithfulness in Service* speaks of **Putting this Code into Practice**.

Its **Guidelines** section make it clear that where you have reason to believe that a clergy person or church worker has perpetrated domestic abuse (breaching standards of the Code at 6.5 and 6.6), then **you have a reporting obligation**, since the threat of domestic abuse certainly creates the risk of harm.

3.9 *If you know or have reason to believe that another member of the clergy or another church worker has failed to meet a standard of this Code, other than for **child abuse**, (the reporting of child abuse is addressed in paragraphs 5.14 and 5.15), you should:*

- *where you believe that a person has not suffered harm or is not at the risk of harm, approach the member of the clergy or church worker and identify the concern; or*
- *where you believe that a person has suffered harm or is at the risk of harm, report this to the **church authority** having responsibility for the member of the clergy or church worker or the **Director of Professional Standards**.*

If in doubt seek advice from a colleague or supervisor or the Director of Professional Standards without identifying the member of the clergy or church worker.

3.10 *If you know or have reason to believe that another member of the clergy or another church worker has not followed a guideline of this Code, you should approach the member of the clergy or church worker and identify the concern. If you consider that the member of the clergy or church worker is persisting in disregarding the guideline without good reason and a person has suffered harm or is at the risk of harm, you should seriously consider reporting this to the church authority with responsibility for the member of the clergy or church worker or the Director of Professional Standards. If in doubt seek advice from a colleague or supervisor or the Director of Professional Standards without identifying the member of the clergy or church worker.*

Section 3's Preamble makes it clear that domestic abuse or a failure to observe the law could result in clergy or church workers facing formal disciplinary action. Likewise negligence of guidelines in pastoral counselling regarding domestic abuse might result in the requirement to receive specialised help.

3.4 Failure to meet the standards of this Code will indicate an area where clergy and church workers require guidance and specialised help. Such failures may result in formal disciplinary action if the conduct infringes an applicable disciplinary rule of the Church or is a breach of an employment contract.

3.5 Clergy and church workers are encouraged to follow the guidelines of this Code. Where this is impractical, the exercise of judgement will be required to ensure the safety of those to whom they minister and themselves. Wilful disregard of the guidelines may indicate an area where clergy and church workers require guidance and specialised help.

Definitions

Please note the following definitions of abuse from *Faithfulness in Service*, Section 2, the **glossary of terms**.

abuse in relation to an adult means the following conduct:

- bullying;
- emotional abuse;
- harassment;
- physical abuse;
- sexual abuse; or
- spiritual abuse.

bullying means repeated and unreasonable behaviour directed to a person or persons which, having regard to all the circumstances, would be expected to victimise, humiliate, undermine or threaten the person or persons, and which creates a risk to their health and safety. Where it involves the use of information and communication technologies, it is often called cyberbullying. It can include:

- making derogatory, demeaning or belittling comments or jokes about someone's appearance, lifestyle, background, or capability;
- communicating in an abusive manner;
- spreading rumours or innuendo about someone or undermining in other ways their performance or reputation;
- dismissing or minimising someone's legitimate concerns or needs;
- inappropriately ignoring or excluding someone from information or activities;
- touching someone threateningly or inappropriately
- invading someone's personal space or interfering with their personal property;
- teasing, or making someone the brunt of pranks or practical jokes;
- displaying or distributing written or visual material that degrades or offends.

emotional abuse means acts or omissions that have caused, or could cause emotional harm or lead to serious behavioural or cognitive disorders. It includes:

- subjecting a person to excessive and repeated personal criticism;
- ridiculing a person, including the use of insulting or derogatory terms to refer to them;
- threatening or intimidating a person;
- ignoring a person openly and pointedly; and
- behaving in a hostile manner or in any way that could reasonably result in another person feeling isolated or rejected.

harassment means unwelcome conduct, whether intended or not, in relation to another person where the person feels with good reason in all the circumstances offended, belittled or threatened. Such behaviour may consist of a single incident or several incidents over a period of time. It includes:

- making unwelcome physical contact with a person;

- making gestures or using language that could reasonably give offence including continual and unwarranted shouting;
- making unjustified or unnecessary comments about a person's capacities or attributes;
- putting on open display pictures, posters, graffiti or written materials that could reasonably give offence;
- making unwelcome communication with a person in any form (for example, phone calls, email, text messages) ; and
- stalking a person.

physical abuse means any intentional or reckless act, use of force or threat to use force causing injury to, or involving unwelcome physical contact with, another person. This may take the form of slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving or grabbing. An injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures. It does not include lawful discipline by a parent or guardian.

sexual abuse of an adult means sexual assault, sexual exploitation or sexual harassment of an adult. [Note: these terms are further defined in the same section]

spiritual abuse means the mistreatment of a person by actions or threats when justified by appeal to God, faith or religion. It includes:

- using a position of spiritual authority to dominate or manipulate another person or group;
- using a position of spiritual authority to seek inappropriate deference from others;
- isolating a person from friends and family members; and
- using biblical or religious terminology to justify abuse.

Appendix 6: Suggested Parish Policy on Domestic Abuse

Parish of Policy for Responding to Domestic Abuse

All forms of domestic abuse are wrong. Perpetrators must stop.

1. The primary focus of this Policy is abusive or intimidating behaviour inflicted by an adult against a current or former spouse or partner. (Abuse involving children should follow child protection procedures.) **Domestic abuse** includes but is not limited to emotional, verbal, social, economic, psychological, spiritual, physical and sexual abuse. Such behaviour often seeks to control, humiliate, dominate or instill fear in the victim.

2. We are committed to safe places which –

- Recognise equality amongst people,
- Promote a culture of healthy relationships of mutual responsibility in marriages, families and congregations,
- Ensure that all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse,
- Strive to follow good practice in protecting those experiencing domestic abuse,
- Refuse to condone any form of abuse, and
- Enable concerns to be raised and responded to clearly and consistently

3. We uphold *Faithfulness in Service* as our national code of conduct for clergy and church workers, specifically its affirmations that –

- Abuse of power is at the heart of many relationship problems in the Church and in the community. In essence, abuse is one person's misuse of power over another. Sometimes abuse will be a one-off event and at other times it will be a pattern of behaviour, (6.2)
- It is important for clergy and church workers to be good citizens and to obey the laws of the community, except where those laws conflict with Christian convictions, (6.4) and
- You are not to abuse your spouse, children or other members of your family (6.6).

4. We recognise that Domestic abuse requires a serious and realistic response –

- All forms of domestic abuse cause damage to the victim and are wrong,
- Domestic abuse can occur in all communities, including churches,
- Domestic abuse, if witnessed or overheard by a child, is a form of child abuse by the perpetrator of the abusive behaviour,
- Working in partnership with vulnerable adults and children, statutory authorities and specialist agencies is essential in promoting the welfare of any child or adult suffering abuse,
- Clergy and lay ministers need to obtain advice from those with professional expertise when faced with situations of domestic abuse, and
- Where mistakes in caring for people in difficult situations are made, an apology should be offered and advice sought on how to address any harm caused.

5. We respect people who come to us for help by –

- Valuing, respecting and listening to victims of domestic abuse;
- Valuing, respecting and listening to alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse;
- Appreciating the need to ensure a distance is kept between the two; and
- Refusing to condone the perpetration or continuation of any form of abuse.

6. We uphold Scripture and its abhorrence of abuse in our words and public statements by –

- Clearly teaching that domestic abuse is wrong and that the Bible should never be interpreted to justify or excuse any form of abuse. Rather a relationship between a husband and wife is to be characterised by love, care and kindness;
- Clearly teaching that the Bible does not condone abuse and should not be interpreted to demand a spouse tolerate or submit to domestic abuse; and

- Raising awareness of domestic violence agencies, support services, crisis accommodation, resources and expertise.

7. We ensure safety first by –

- Ensuring that those who have experienced domestic abuse can find safety and informed help as a first priority, and can continue to stay safe,
- Taking it Seriously – Ensuring that any disclosures of abuse are taken seriously and not dismissed,
- Getting help from outside – Working with the appropriate statutory authorities during an investigation into domestic abuse, including when allegations are made against a member of the church community,
- Keeping it confidential – Respecting the need for confidentiality within the bounds of good Safe Ministry practice, noting that reporting requirements exist where there is an immediate danger, where a child is at risk of serious harm or where the matter involves a clergy person or church worker as an alleged offender, and
- Challenging with Care – Carefully challenging inappropriate behaviour, but only in a way that does not place any individual, especially a victim, at increased risk.

8. We offer pastoral support to those in our care by –

- Offering informed care – Ensuring that informed and appropriate pastoral care and professional help is offered to any adult, child or young person who has suffered domestic abuse,
- Being guided by the victim – Never pressuring any victim of domestic abuse to forgive, submit to, or restore a relationship with an offender,
- Understanding that reconciliation comes with conditions – Understanding that any reconciliation between victim and offender is dependent principally upon genuine repentance and reformation of the offender, and
- Coordinating the care – Identifying the appropriate relationships of those with pastoral care responsibilities for both victims and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

If you have any concerns or need to talk to anyone please contact...

- The Police: dial **000**
 - 24/7 in emergencies where safety is at risk.
- 1800 Respect national helpline: **1800 737 732** or 1800respect.org.au
 - 24/7 for sexual assault, & domestic violence counselling and advice.
- Child Protection Helpline: **132 111** or reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg
 - If you think a child or young person is at risk of harm from abuse.
- Lifeline: **131 114** or www.lifeline.org.au/get-help
 - 24 hour telephone crisis line.
- Professional Standards Unit: **9265 1604** or safeministry.org.au
 - Advice about abuse involving Anglican clergy or church workers

Appendix 7: Draft Safety and Exit plan

Ordinarily safety planning would be done with an experienced professional in the field of responding to domestic abuse. However this sample gives a sense of the wide range of issues that would have to be considered.

Step 1: I CAN USE SOME OR ALL OF THE FOLLOWING STRATEGIES:

- A. If I decide to leave, I will _____ . (Practice how to get out safely. What doors, windows, stairwells or fire escapes would you use?)
- B. I can keep my purse and car keys ready and put them _____ (place) in order to leave quickly.
- C. I can tell _____ about the abuse and request they call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from my house.
- D. I can teach my children how to use the telephone to contact the police and the fire department.
- E. I will use _____ as my code for my children or my friends so they can call for help.
- F. If I have to leave my home, I will go _____ (Decide this even if you don't think there will be a next time). If I cannot go to the location above, then I can go to _____ or _____ .
- G. I can also teach some of these strategies to some/all of my children.
- H. When I expect we are going to have an argument, I will try to move to a space that is lowest risk, such as _____ . (Try to avoid arguments in the bathroom, garage, kitchen, near weapons or in rooms without access to an outside door).
- I. I will use my judgment and intuition. If the situation is very serious, I may be able to give my partner what he/she wants to calm him/her down. I have to protect myself until I/we are out of danger.

...over

Step 2: SAFETY WHEN PREPARING TO LEAVE

Leaving must be done with a careful plan in order to increase safety. Perpetrators often strike back when they believe that the person they are abusing is leaving the relationship.

I can use some or all the following safety strategies:

- A. I will leave money and an extra set of keys with _____ so that I can leave quickly.

- B. I will keep copies of important papers and documents or an extra set of keys at _____.

- C. I will open a savings account by _____, to increase my independence.

- D. Other things I can do to increase my independence include:

- E. The domestic violence program's hot line telephone number is _____ and I can seek shelter by calling this hot line.

- F. I can keep change for phone calls on me at all times. I understand that if I use my mobile, the following month the telephone bill will tell my perpetrator the numbers that I called after I left. I could get a 'pay as you go' phone. There are no bills and all communication would be confidential.

- G. I will check with _____ and _____ to see who would be able to let me stay with them or lend me some money in an emergency.

- H. I can leave extra clothes with _____.

- I. I will sit down and review my safety plan every _____ in order to plan the safest way to leave the residence.

- J. _____ (domestic violence advocate or friend) has agreed to help me review this plan.

- K. I will rehearse my escape plan and, as appropriate, practice it with my children.

...over

Step 3: SAFETY IN MY OWN RESIDENCE

There are many things that a person can do to increase her safety in her own residence. It may be impossible to do everything at once, but safety measures can be added step by step.

Safety measures I can use include:

- A. I can change the locks on my doors and windows as soon as possible.
- B. I can replace wooden doors with steel/metal doors.
- C. I can install security systems including additional locks, window bars, poles to wedge against doors, an electronic system, etc.
- D. I can purchase rope ladders to be used for escape from second floor windows.
- E. I can install smoke detectors and purchase fire extinguishers for each floor in my house/apartment.
- F. I can install an outside lighting system that lights up when a person is coming close to my house.
- G. I will teach my children how to use the telephone to make a reverse charge call to me and to _____ (friend/ other) or get them a mobile phone in the event that my partner takes the children.
- H. I will tell people who take care of my children which people have permission to pick up my children and that my partner is not permitted to do so. The people I will inform about pick-up permission include:
 - a. _____ (school)
 - b. _____ (day care staff)
 - c. _____ (Sunday School teacher)

Appendix 8: Marriage Preparation: Recommended good practice

Marriage preparation offers an opportunity to challenge inappropriate behaviour and assumptions about domination, control or abuse, while making it clear that some degree of conflict within an intimate relationship is natural and healthy, if dealt with appropriately.

The principles of understanding humanity (female and male) as made in God's image and of equal worth; of equality amongst people and within relationships; and of not condoning any form of abuse, should underpin any marriage preparation offered by the Church.

Care must be taken if the biblical themes of a wife's submission or a husband's role as 'head' are to be expressed in the marriage vows or other parts of the marriage service, or in marriage preparation more generally. Please spell out what such ideas **do not and must not** involve to avoid any misunderstanding or twisting of Scripture.

For example, any wife's submission must only ever be voluntary. It ought not to involve submitting to disobedience to God or to illegal activity. No wife is spiritually obligated to submit to domestic abuse from her husband.

Likewise husbands are never told to assert authority over their wife. In particular, they are never told to make their wife submit. Any manipulation or hint of coercion of her towards such ends is sin.

Given the high incidence of domestic abuse within marriage, we recommend that clergy and lay people who offer marriage and wedding preparation should have attended some training on issues of domestic abuse. It is important that there is a clear understanding amongst those who offer marriage preparation that domestic abuse is always unacceptable and that domestic abuse breaks the sanctity of marriage.

The subjects regularly dealt with when preparing couples for marriage, e.g. communication, conflict and in particular "How do you deal with your anger?" offer an opportunity for couples to discuss together how their parents dealt with anger, rows and conflict, or how the couple might have dealt with these in previous relationships. Sometimes those who have experienced domestic abuse as children have a very idealised view of marriage.

It is possible that those working with couples hoping to marry may become aware or suspect that abuse is taking place or may take place between the partners. This is always a difficult area to deal with and illustrates the need for training for people involved in this work, but one or more of the following ideas might help in such a situation.

The facilitator might include a statement at the beginning of the 'course' or conversation and again before dealing with a subject such as 'marital conflict' or anger. The following, which may need amending depending on the circumstances, is an example of a form of words that might be appropriate:

"When we think about relationships in general and our own in particular, there is always a chance that issues may be raised that touch us in a way that leaves us feeling disturbed, uncomfortable or anxious. If this happens you may wish to speak to one of us today more privately or to seek help from a counsellor or other helping organisation."

If a domestic abuse issue is raised directly or indirectly by one of the couple, the facilitator should not pursue it in the presence of the other: this could be highly dangerous. They may need to find a way to give the person a chance to say more in private, with the object of encouraging them to get one-to-one help from a competent person or organisation.

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Because the Prepare-Enrich questionnaires are so widely used among Anglican churches for marriage preparation and marriage enrichment, it is worth reporting briefly on research published by the Prepare-Enrich organisation, entitled, "Spouse Abuse & Marital System based on Enrich" by Shuji G. Asai and David H. Olson, both of the University of Minnesota¹.

This was research based in the United States from a national sample of over 20,000 couples taking the Enrich questionnaire.

¹ Source: <https://www.prepare-enrich.com/pe/pdf/research/abuse.pdf>, viewed 1 August 2017

Its literature review noted that one's background (e.g. family abuse in one's own past) and context (e.g. unemployment) can be correlated with higher rates of abuse. It noted that individual traits and behaviour can be significant with victims tending to have low self esteem and to be higher on avoidance. It also showed features of couple interaction, such as good communication and conflict resolution, can be associated with higher relational quality. Conversely, there is an association between family violence and unequal decision making power, with levels of violence higher for wives among husband-dominating patriarchal couples.

Based on self-reporting to the inventory question, "Have you ever been abused (verbally, emotionally, physically, or sexually) by your partner?", over 61% of couples in the study were classified as non-abusing, 16.8% as having the husband abusing, 13.4% having both partners abusing, and 8% having the wife abusing.

Using the Enrich Couple typology, 95% of Vitalised couple types, 88% of Harmonious couple types, and almost 80% of Traditional couple types were classified as non-abusing.

Conversely, less than 28% of Devitalised couple types were non-abusive.

In the middle, 52% of Conflicted couples types were non-abusive. So it was noted that about half of conflicted couples could maintain non-abusive relationships, even when there were significant difficulties reported. That is, unresolved conflict does not always make a marriage abusive.

Of the various Couple scales, the most significant predictors of abuse were lower scores for Positive Couple Agreement in the categories of 'Family and Friends', 'Personality Issues', 'Communications', and 'Conflict Resolution', along with lower rating of 'Couple Closeness'. Lack of 'Couple Flexibility' was also significant.

Couples with a more Egalitarian² approach to Role Relationships appeared to be less likely to experience abuse of the wife.

On individual Personality scales, non-abusive couples tended to display both partners scoring higher in self-confidence and assertiveness, and lower in partner dominance and avoidance.

Unsurprisingly, abusive couples have the abused partner tending to be high in avoidance and partner dominance and lower in assertiveness and self-confidence (although not so much with self-confidence in the case where husbands report abuse).

A strength of the research was its broad definition of abuse, including verbal, emotional, physical and sexual. A limit is its self-reporting nature, especially given the likelihood that abuse is underreported. The study sample group was predominantly Caucasian (85%), so results may be different in other ethnic groups.

Another limit would be in applying this to marriage *preparation* since the study only measured those who had already been married for some time, and were engaging in the Enrich inventory. So some caution would be needed in extrapolating findings of correlations to results of those doing the Prepare inventory, although there is intuitive expectation that similar correlations might be found.

Nevertheless, this research may give those engaged in marriage preparation some idea of particular measures to focus on as possible correlates for abuse being more likely as a possibility, especially where domestic abuse is expressed or suspected as a concern.

Steps taken to increase an individual's assertiveness and self-confidence and to develop skills in communication and conflict resolution may be worth considering in this context. But where a proneness to abuse or other serious relational difficulty is suspected, clergy and church workers should carefully consider referrals to trained counsellors or other professionals.

² Note that 'Egalitarian' here in Prepare/Enrich is not defined primarily in theological terms.

Appendix 9: Synod Resolutions related to Domestic Abuse

Please note the following resolutions of the Anglican Diocese of Sydney. Synod is the 'parliament of the local churches' (made up largely by the senior minister and two elected member representatives of each local church, with some additional representation from various Anglican leadership and organisations within the Diocese).

Any resolutions of Synod, although not carrying the force of denominational law, express our peak representative 'position statements' on particular issues at particular points of time.

37/07 Biblical pattern of marriage

Synod –

- (a) affirms that the relationship of loving, sacrificial leadership of a husband and the intelligent, voluntary submission of a wife is the Biblical pattern of marriage, and
- (b) totally rejects the use of this Biblical pattern to justify any form of domestic abuse, and
- (c) totally rejects all forms of domestic abuse, and
- (d) expresses its concern for those children, women and men, who are victims of domestic abuse, and
- (e) calls on Christian husbands and wives to use their God-given responsibilities for the good of their families, and
- (f) calls on ministers to teach congregations the Biblical model for marriage and also to teach against domestic abuse.

(Mrs Lesley Ramsay 25/09/07)

33/13 Domestic violence and educating clergy

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.

(Canon Sandy Grant 16/10/2013)

24/16 Domestic Violence

Synod –

- (a) acknowledges that domestic abuse continues to be a significant social problem both inside and outside the church;
- (b) gives thanks for the work of the Domestic Violence Response Task Force and calls on them to continue their work – in particular that of developing policy and pastoral guidelines to recommend to Standing Committee and make recommendations about education – as expeditiously as possible;
- (c) calls on Standing Committee to consider providing funding for the Task Force sufficient to expedite its work and particularly the work of interviewing and caring for victims;
- (d) calls upon all clergy, church workers and parish councils to read the Task Force's 2016 progress report to Synod and to familiarise themselves with the headline definition and expansive description of domestic violence adopted by the Task Force;
- (e) notes that clergy and church workers who are domestic abusers are in breach of standards expressed in Faithfulness in Service;
- (f) encourages victims of domestic abuse by clergy or church workers to speak to the Professional Standards Unit;
- (g) asks the Task Force, and the Discipline Ordinance 2006 Review Committee, to consider changes to the necessary ordinances which would allow victims of domestic abuse, who have brought the abuse

to the attention of church-workers who have their pastoral oversight and who feel that they have received negligent, callous or otherwise improper advice or treatment by those with pastoral oversight, to have complaints referred to the Professional Standards Unit;

- (h) looks forward to the inclusion of education in the area of domestic violence in 2017 via the PSU's compulsory Faithfulness in Service training sessions for clergy and paid church workers, and while the Task Force's pastoral guidelines are being developed encourages ministers, whenever they receive an allegation of domestic abuse, to consider contacting the PSU for advice on the best practices for pastoral care;
- (i) encourages clergy and church workers to preach and speak against domestic violence, again rejecting the twisting of Scripture to justify abuse of any kind, and to make pastoral enquiries when meeting with married people;
- (j) requests the Task Force to report again, no later than next Synod; and
- (k) expects that the diocesan response to domestic violence will go beyond the ambit and life of the Task Force,

and prays for the protection, healing and support of victims and survivors of domestic violence within our churches; for wisdom and insight, courage and compassion for clergy and church workers in providing pastoral responses to people in such situations; and for the continued work of the Task Force.

(Canon Sandy Grant 12/10/2016)

17/17 Grief and apology in regards to domestic abuse

That this Synod grieves with victims and survivors of domestic abuse, and prays for their healing and recovery. We give thanks to God for those women and men, clergy and lay people, who have faithfully supported, cared for and protected such victims in our churches and communities.

We grieve that God's good gift of marriage can be distorted and dishonoured through the sin of perpetrators. We pray for their repentance and restoration to faithful living under Christ.

We also deeply regret that domestic abuse has occurred among those who attend our churches, and even among some in leadership. We apologise for those times our teaching and pastoral care have failed adequately to support victims and call perpetrators to account.

(Canon Sandy Grant 10/10/2017)

32/17 Assistance for spouses and families of clergy and lay stipendiary workers where separation has occurred due to domestic violence

In light of its wholehearted acceptance of the Provisional Sydney Anglican Policy on Responding to Domestic Abuse, and its deeply sincere expression on 10 October 2017 of grief, regret and sorrow to victims and survivors of domestic abuse, Synod –

- (i) acknowledges the responsibility of the Anglican Church of Australia to examine its ordination candidates to ensure that they are fit to enter Holy Orders,
- (ii) acknowledges the responsibility of the Anglican Church of Australia to ensure that its clergy are fit to remain in Holy Orders,
- (iii) acknowledges the responsibility of the Anglican Church of Australia to ensure that its lay stipendiary workers are fit to be licenced to work in churches and to remain in this work,
- (iv) accepts the theological statements in the Provisional Sydney Anglican Policy on Responding to Domestic Abuse that speak of the circumstances when it is right for the victims of domestic abuse to separate from their spouses and not be reconciled,
- (v) acknowledges that a key reason why domestic abuse victims might find it difficult to separate from their spouses is because of potential financial hardship (especially where children are involved),
- (vi) acknowledges that the family of clergy and lay stipendiary workers live in locations where the relevant ministry worker is licenced to minister, rather than around their natural support networks (e.g. family and close friends), and that this can make it even more difficult for victims of domestic abuse to separate from their spouses,

and therefore requests –

- (a) that Standing Committee, as a matter of urgency and in consultation with the Professional Standards Unit, create a generously provisioned long-term operating fund which has the purpose of assisting spouses of clergy and lay stipendiary workers who have been or will be left in financial hardship as a result of their need to separate from their spouse due to domestic abuse,
- (b) that the policy which is created to administer the fund proposed in paragraph (a) provide a way for funds to be distributed quickly to those who are in need,
- (c) that Anglican Schools Corporation schools have short to medium term bursaries available to assist the families of clergy and lay stipendiary workers where separation has occurred due to domestic abuse, and
- (d) that Anglicare give priority for emergency assistance to the families of clergy and lay stipendiary workers where separation has occurred due to domestic abuse.

(The Rev Mark Tough 16/10/2017)

Appendix 10: Timeline of Public Statements by Diocesan Leadership addressing Domestic Abuse

Extract: Archbishop's Presidential Address to Synod 2012

At the heart of family is marriage, understood as the union of two persons of the opposite sex from different families by way of promises of permanence and exclusion. If the promises reflect, as they do in the *Book of Common Prayer*, the differences between man and woman as well as the equality, it is always to be understood that the headship of the man brings with it the awesome responsibility to nurture and cherish as Christ loved and cherished his church. To use this, as some have, as an excuse to demand slave like servility, or even to engage in physical and emotional bullying is to misuse it utterly and no wife should feel spiritually obliged to accept such treatment. Here too sin takes and distorts what is for our good in its own evil interests. Likewise, however, to treat husband and wife as two simply interchangeable 'partners' is to court damage to the fabric of the family itself. Even more damaging, of course, is the modern habit of living together without the benefit of the public promises – an inherently unstable relationship. Still more damaging is the current encouragement to casual promiscuity.

(Most Rev Dr Peter Jensen, Archbishop of Sydney until 2012)

Extract: Archbishop's Presidential Address to Synod 2015

Domestic Violence

If it were not enough that marriage was under threat by the advocates of 'same-sex marriage', the recent heightened awareness of domestic violence within marriage is another wake-up call for our society. Two years ago our Synod raised this question as a matter of concern. Since then, considerable work has been done in addressing the issue, including Moore College and Ministry Training & Development in their education of prospective and recently ordained ministers, though there is still more to be accomplished. I am particularly grateful for Canon Sandy Grant's having raised this matter on a number of occasions both at Synod and Standing Committee and for his initiative in persuading Standing Committee to establish a Task Force to develop a diocesan response to domestic violence. The Task Force has been asked to consult with domestic violence victims or their representatives and report back with recommendations on the following:

- (a) developing, adopting and communicating a diocesan domestic violence policy statement, along with advice for good pastoral practice;
- (b) facilitating education of lay membership of our churches on the issue (e.g., via preparation of suitable resources);
- (c) educating our youth in regards to the recognition and prevention of domestic violence; and
- (d) encouraging further developments in our education of clergy and church workers in this area (e.g., recognising warning signs in marriage preparation).

While I welcome this Task Force, it grieves me that we need it. It is a salutary reminder of the corrosive effects of sin even in the believer, that men who profess Christ should treat their wives with such contempt, inflicting either verbal or physical abuse upon those whom they have promised 'to love and to cherish, till death us do part.'

This is not the way of Christ. It should not characterise the bride of Christ. It does not reflect, despite the accusations of some, the inevitable consequences of the doctrine of headship in marriage. What it does demonstrate, regrettably, is that in the words of the Thirty-nine Articles: 'in the visible Church the evil be ever mingled with the good' (Article xxvi). If even Satan can use the words of Holy Scripture to tempt our Lord, it is not difficult to concede that the Evil One can twist good doctrines to his own evil purposes. That Christian women are caught in such a vulnerable situation at the hands of those who abuse their responsibilities as husbands is both horrendous and inexcusable. It is therefore important that we address this issue with honesty, compassion and resolve, so that we may protect those who suffer any form of domestic abuse and find ways to prevent its reoccurrence, especially in the household of God.

(Most Rev Dr Glenn Davies, Archbishop of Sydney from 2013)

Extract: "For Christians who missed the memo: the Bible abhors all domestic abuse", Sydney Morning Herald, March 4, 2015

So let's be clear for any Christians who missed the memo. The Bible says any abuse or aggression from one spouse to another, whether physical or verbal, is wrong.

For example, Colossians 3:19 says, "Husbands, love your wives and **do not be harsh with them**".

St Peter says we're never to exploit those with less power.

What about a passage that sounds foreign to modern western ears, like Ephesians 5? This section asks a wife to "submit" to her husband and says he is the "head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church". Christians who take the Bible at face value immediately notice how it continues that 'headship' is expressed by "loving your wife, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her". And we know 'submission' cannot be bad in and of itself, since Jesus is said to submit to his heavenly father. And all Christians are to submit to the lawful governing authorities (not least in regards to domestic violence laws). We also remember that mutual consent is the standard for decision-making in things like sexual activity (1 Corinthians 7:5).

What does it mean in practice? I think such headship is only properly expressed in loving sacrifice and a concern to nurture, provide and protect (Eph 5:28-29). And loving submission is a loyalty that respects and leaves room for a husband's initiative in the above (Eph 5:33). Many people find this is good and workable.

Of course, domestic abuse can occur whether the theory you espouse is 'traditional', 'egalitarian' or 'feminist'. But whatever you understand when the Bible talks of 'submission' or being the "head in a marriage", it's crystal clear that **husbands are never told to make their wives submit**.

The American pastor John Piper was wrong when he suggested a wife might "endure perhaps being smacked one night", before seeking help "from the church". Victims of domestic violence should be encouraged to seek help from the Police and others too, and to get to a safe place.

The church should support that.

(Canon Sandy Grant, Senior Minister, St Michael's Cathedral, Wollongong, chair of the Domestic Violence Task Force)

Extract: "The Christian and Submission" (keynote address) Priscilla & Aquila Conference 1 February 2016

4. Equality, order and love

We began, at the beginning of the first session, by recognising that in recent days attempts have been made to draw a causal connection between the biblical teaching about a wife's submission to her husband and the scourge of domestic violence. The charge has been made that this doctrine encourages the subjugation of women and allows a justification for abuse in all its forms. I said back then that there is nothing in Scripture which justifies the use of violence towards women or the abuse of women in any way whatsoever, and whenever an appeal is made to Scripture in attempt to justify such behaviour it is not only a perversion of Scripture, but a dishonouring of the God whose word it is. There is not and can never be any justification for domination, bullying and mental, emotional or physical abuse of women, least of all by their husbands. The teaching of the New Testament speaks of relationships characterised by profound equality, genuine order and other-centred love. As in the submission of the Son to the Father, the submission of a wife to her husband has nothing to do with value and it has nothing to do with power. It is not something coerced or demanded but something freely, willingly given. It is a relationship of two human beings of equal value, both created in the image of God, both redeemed by the blood of Christ. And in this asymmetrical relation of equals the common element is true other-centred love.

I mentioned one of the articles in the Herald last year I found most helpful amidst the attempt to draw a link between the biblical teaching about submission and domestic violence. It was written by a Christian woman, Sarah, and one of the explanations she gave for delighting with her friends in the Bible's teaching on this subject was this: such women

do not connect submission with personal worth, because they already know that they are infinitely precious to God and, in good marriages, to their believing husbands. Instead, they see submission — where one person trusts another to lead them, and honours them for exercising that responsibility selflessly — helps two people grow closer together and enables them both to flourish as individuals.¹

Far from being an embarrassment to Christian men and women at the beginning of the twenty-first century, this biblical teaching is something we should rejoice in, because it is God's word to us and God is good and always provides for the welfare of his people. We need to speak out in the loudest possible voices against domestic violence and do all in our power to protect those who have been subjected to it — women and men — I hope we will all do that and continue to do that. But biblical headship and submission is not the cause, in fact quite the opposite.

(Rev Dr Mark Thompson, Principal Moore College, Chair of the Doctrine Commission of the Diocese of Sydney)

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Extract: Domestic Violence – A Starting Point for Answers²

Is domestic violence an issue in our churches?

Of course. Where there are people there is sin. Even as Christians we know we still sin. Domestic violence is an extreme expression of sin and sadly is present even in our churches. We mustn't be naïve about this. But at the same time, as we take steps to address this evil in our churches, we need to be careful not to make it *the* pastoral issue. There is a fine line we walk: the majority issues for marriage and family life will be more everyday struggles and strains, while at the same time there will be particular and more significant crises facing some couples and families, including infidelity, violence, and sickness. These must be handled with great care, and may require significant investment of time.

Passages like Ephesians 5 encourage women to submit to their husbands, is there a risk these passages can be used to excuse domestic violence?

Yes they may be used to justify sinful behaviour like domestic violence. Yet we must be clear, the instruction for women to submit to their husbands does not give license to men to exploit or abuse their wives. In fact, the wife's submission is voluntary. The truth is that as women are called to submit in Ephesians 5, husbands are instructed to love their wives as they love their own bodies, and in Colossians 3:19 Paul forbids them from being harsh with them. There is no place in Scripture for a husband exercising his biblical headship in a dominating, exploitive or self-serving manner. As the husband's role is modelled on Christ's loving, sacrificial leadership, so he lives that out for the benefit of his wife.

There is a lot of discussion at the moment suggesting there is a link between biblical teaching on submission and headship with the prevalence of DV in church. Some argue the existence of this teaching leads to domestic violence.

I believe this is mistaken for two reasons. Firstly, to create cause and effect at this point suggests that God's good word to us is wrong or mistaken. Also, taken to its logical conclusion, it would assume that churches that deny this teaching are free from DV which we know is untrue. Secondly, by making this the reason for DV means we fail to fully explore and understand the issue and that, I think, is an injustice to those involved.

Church leaders have a responsibility to teach this doctrine correctly, call out inappropriate and sinful misapplications, and care for those who have suffered at the hands of those who have (wickedly) twisted God's word to satisfy their own sinful behaviour.

What are some helpful things to do if we think someone is a victim of domestic abuse?

First and foremost: listen and believe. Then assess whether it is safe for the victim to return to the home. If there is evidence that a crime has taken place, then a report must be made to the police. If not, there are

¹ S. Colyer, "Submission" to my husband allows us both to flourish in our marriage', Sydney Morning Herald 8 March 2015 online at <http://www.smh.com.au/comment/submission-to-my-husband-allows-us-both-to-flourish-in-our-marriage-20150308-13y83i.html> (accessed 23/12/15).

² Source: <http://www.australianchurchrecord.net/domestic-violence-a-starting-point-for-answers/>

several avenues to explore to care and support the abused. It might be that you actually do nothing straight away as the victim might not be ready to leave the situation or report to the police. If the victim asks you not to tell anyone, honour their wishes (as hard as this is) because they must be able to trust you. As a church, have a plan of how you care for people in these circumstances and make sure leaders are aware of it. If the abuse is disclosed by a child, leaders of course have mandatory reporting responsibilities.

(The Venerable Kara Hartley, Archdeacon for Women's Ministry)

Appendix 11: A Letter Made Me Think

By Kate Bradford

I minister and write as a chaplain. Last night I had an interesting experience that highlighted for me an important difference between chaplaincy and parish ministry: chaplains know that a person is in some sort of crisis – whereas ministers may have no reason to suspect a problem.

Chaplains like social workers, GPs, psychologists, counsellors, and psychiatrists initially meet people at times of crisis, illness or trauma. We usually have no prior relationship or social connection with the people to whom we minister and people disclose things that they have not told their family or minister. This allows for greater objectivity for chaplains as we listen to their story, while hearing their emotion and pain, the way in which they construct their meaning.

With these fragmentary clues to meaning, we hear of people's faith and beliefs, but we also catch glimpses of their default 'faith' settings exposing the things that they *really* depend upon when everything else is in flux. We also hear where they belong in their web of relationships – family, church, community, culture and society and whether they experience healthy relationships or alienation and isolation. We see hints that point to loving relationships and clues to destructive relationships. We also look for clues as they express their desires and dreams, or fears and dreads, to see the role hope has in their thinking, with the aim of knowing how best to share Christ's love and message of hope with them.

I am very conscious chaplaincy ministry is different from parish ministry in many ways, most particularly because it is a ministry offered in the public space to people of many different religious and faith positions.

I was contacted by someone last night who has been abused by their spouse. They are a couple that I have known for a number of years and at one stage we were part of the same church community. The abusive spouse has been involved in ministry in a number of congregations and is considered a leader in the ministries in which they are involved. I was shocked as I read the email, not comprehending what the letter was saying, until the abuser's name was spelt out in print in the sentence. This was a most massive 'aha' experience for me. As I read the letter again, I remembered particular incidents and instances that jarred but I had never put these things together. I always thought their family just did things differently from us, but as soon as I read the letter I knew that it was true.

I suddenly realised what it must be like for clergy who know people in their congregation, who are on ministry teams and seem to have happy stable families and on the surface appear to be the 'model' Christian couple or family.

My reflection on this is: as people ministering among our congregations, we sincerely think that we know people, who are the model of a lively Christian faith in the parts of their life that we see. We forgive their idiosyncrasies, because we know their good works and believe that they mean well. The victim may act to keep the peace and might smooth things over for lots of reasons, including fear of shame or blame.

Kate is a hospital chaplain, and she is also part of Anglicare's Chaplaincy Training and Development. Kate is married to Steve, and together they were CMS missionaries at a remote rural hospital in Tanzania. Kate is also a chaplain at Moore College, from where she also has a BTh and an MA.

*This article was originally published by The Bible Society, 11 May 2015:
<https://www.ternitynews.com.au/archive/a-letter-made-me-think/>*

Appendix 12: Walking Through It: A Family Violence Survivor's Reflection

The author of this article has asked that her name be withheld.

(Used by permission, courtesy of The Gospel Coalition, Australia¹)

I recently wrote a letter to ministers, entitled "Things I wish you understood: An open letter to ministers from a family violence survivor." The response has been humbling. I'm glad it resonated with the experience of many, because it reminds me that I'm not alone, and that nor am I crazy because sometimes I have to fight with my emotions and body to get control again. Thank you to the sisters and brothers who have said "that's me, too." May God bless, comfort and heal you also.

I'm also more glad than I can say for the people who said it would help them to love their flock better. That's what I was praying for. My experience won't speak to everyone, and won't be applicable to everyone, but if it starts a conversation or raises awareness, then I thank God for that. If it means that I or someone else might have a better chance of hearing and understanding what the Bible says on some of those more difficult passages, so much the better. That was my heart—I want to hear and learn, and sometimes I can't because of what I've been through. I'm not alone in that.

I've been encouraged privately to reflect and share on the experience of coming forward in the church. I am profoundly grateful for the godly men and women who walked through it with me. My experiences were generally positive but there were moments that weren't so positive as well, and moments which might have gone much, much worse but for the grace of God. I am somewhat unusual, from what I can gather, in that I didn't meet with *anyone* (outside of my then-husband) who treated me with harshness or ungraciousness. Even those who weren't helpful still tried to treat me with love. My heart aches for those who have not been met with grace and love.

Here are some things that I've been reflecting on about my own experience:

1. Listening to me, and believing me were the biggest gifts anyone could give me.

Those who listened and believed will have my everlasting gratitude and love. The first person I shared with was not a minister, but a friend who by the grace of God had walked this journey before. I didn't realise that at the time because I didn't actually know what was happening to me. I just knew my life was suddenly spinning out of control, and I was scared. She knew the value of listening and believing. She'd had experience. She knew what to do on every level: emotional, spiritual, practical. She validated what I told her—the first tentative forays into shattering the illusion I had been so carefully maintaining. I didn't tell her the whole picture, just the part that was upsetting me the most at the time. She treated me with respect, grace and dignity. That led me to go further, to bring deeper wounds forward to see if perhaps—breathtakingly—they might meet with tenderness too. *She believed me, and she told me she believed me.*

2. It was an incredibly scary thing to bring the leadership of my church into the picture.

I knew them to be men of gentleness and compassion, but I had seen what I thought was gentleness and compassion turn into harshness and anger before. I was terrified of being dismissed. I was petrified of being told that I was in sin, that I needed to go back. I didn't know what I would do if they did. The weight of that possibility made it difficult to breathe. I thought I was going to have a heart attack from the mere thought of having to choose between going back or defying the leadership of my church. The choice *felt* like one between my life and sanity, and my very salvation. My salvation was never actually on the line but, battered and broken as I was, that is what it felt like. It was agony.

3. Common sense isn't really enough in these situations.

The norms of relationships don't apply. The nature of abuse makes all sorts of things impossible. I couldn't do counselling with my then-husband. Any attempts to discuss the issues led to an escalation of abuse. When my pastor accidentally broke my confidence in discussion with my then-husband, I was placed in harm's way, and again received a tirade of abuse that left me trembling

¹ Source: <https://australia.thegospelcoalition.org/article/walking-through-it-a-family-violence-survivors-reflection>

and sobbing. Thankfully, my pastor learned from that and was very careful not to inadvertently break my confidence again. **He was also willing to listen to the advice of those who had more training in abuse than he did.** It is an area which requires knowledge and understanding, and I know that his willingness to listen and learn from his mistakes had positive outcomes for me.

4. **I needed professional help to recover.**

I drew near to God, and dug deep into my Bible, but I am indebted to the Christian counsellor I worked with for many years, and still work with today. Romans 12:2 talks of not being conformed any longer to the world, but renewing our minds, so that we can work out what God's will is. God used my counsellor mightily in that. So much in my thinking had been warped by abuse that I needed to re-evaluate everything I had ever learned or thought I knew about marriage, submission and headship. The process of sorting through what the Bible actually said and what had been twisted was long and arduous. The process still continues, and probably always will.

5. **I needed, and still need, clear and unambiguous teaching on these points.**

In renewing my mind, I didn't and don't want secular views to form the basis of my understanding. I don't want to abandon biblical teachings on headship, respect, submission or divorce. I want my views and understanding to be rooted in the Bible and nothing else. Marriage is God's good plan, and His intention and design for it are what I want and need to understand. Abuse is not part of His plan, and it has warped my understanding. My last letter was a plea for ministers to understand that they can help immensely in this. I want to hear from preachers who've thought, prayed and read deeply about abuse and marriage, and can steer me past the rocks and the pitfalls that abuse created, and for which my often faulty prior understanding laid the groundwork. The best help I have in my recovery is understanding what God actually says about me, about the way I was treated and about marriage in general.

6. **It was the compassionate and faithful teaching of a pastor which God used to begin open my eyes to the truth of my situation.**

I had no idea I was being abused, but I was hurting over what was happening in my marriage, and desperately wondering if the problem really was me. I wondered if I really was being called to submit to this, and what if anything, I could do to make things better. I wondered if this was normal. Over the years and months before I finally left my marriage, this pastor preached through various books of the Bible. Every single time something about marriage or the roles of men and women came up, he took the time to gently and compassionately point out what those passages *didn't* mean, as well as what they did. His was the sole voice of hope I heard, and it was powerful because he was an authority figure. Abuse is isolating. I was afraid to discuss my marriage with anyone else and afraid to read or research on the subject. God used the voice of this pastor to remind me that the way I was being treated wasn't His will, even though I was a long way from leaving or even understanding that it was abuse. His voice called me back to God, back to prayer and reading the Bible, rather than hardening me against God in my pain.

7. **The people who truly comforted me were okay with the mess and didn't try to fix it.**

My life was in tatters. My mental and physical health was breaking under the strain of what was happening, and the torrent of abuse that leaving unleashed. The people who truly gave me comfort loved me in the midst of that. They sat with me, they looked after me. They let me cry when I needed to, and listened to my doubts and fears and anger. They didn't see my anxiety and depression as a spiritual failure on my part, but as the direct and natural result of my experience. They encouraged me to seek help. They prayed with me, for strength and courage and reliance on God in the midst of the mess. They never gave me platitudes, and their faith was not rocked by my suffering. When they offered the occasional Bible verse, it was because it was something they had *lived*, and had helped them. In the manner of 2 Corinthians 1:3—4, they comforted me with the comfort they had been given and continually drew my eyes to the God of all comfort.

8. **Some people were really uncomfortable with my suffering and wanted to offer quick fixes.**

One woman listened sympathetically, and then told me that Romans 8:28 meant that God would put my marriage back together again. She couldn't conceive that the "good" God was working for was to make me more like Christ, and that didn't necessarily come with a fairy-tale ending. Another implied that I was giving way to negative thinking and outlined what I needed to do to win the battle of my

mind. The hearts of both were in the right place, and I loved them for their intent, but it wasn't at all helpful. I didn't need to be offered false promises that were a distortion of God's Word. I didn't need to feel blamed for my mental health crumbling under the strain, and feel like it was being attributed to some lack of discipline or sin on my part. The reality was, I was walking with God more closely than I ever had before, and I believed that the "good" Romans 8:28 promised could only be defined by God, not dictated human desires. I was clinging to that verse, but trusting God for what it would look like.

9. I equally distrusted those who were willing to rewrite the Bible so that I wouldn't be hurt, and those who applied it rigidly and legalistically, without compassion.

It was a very long time before I asked my leadership team if I could seek divorce. They never pushed me about it one way or another, but gave me space to ask when and if I was ready. I watched, and listened to everything they said, and every sermon they preached. I'd seen the way that they took care to show compassion while still preaching the truth. I didn't ask the question until I was certain that their desire for obedience to God was as strong as their compassion for His flock. I needed them to have both qualities in equal measure to feel safe asking. If they had told me I had to remain unmarried, I would have submitted to that, but I needed to know that they would understand what they were actually asking of me, and understood the pain it would cause. I needed to know they would be there if I had to live out that path. When I did ask, they gave me clear, reasoned answers from the Bible; answers that I will not detail here, as to do so would require more detail of my circumstances than is safe to give.

10. The decision to walk away from my marriage was the most painful one I have ever made.

I had prayed so hard over the years, and done everything I could do to have the quiet and gentle spirit that 1 Peter 3 talks about. I had wrestled with God over injustices and hurts, begged for change and railed at Him over the circumstances. I was repeatedly brought lovingly to my knees in repentance as He chose to deal with MY heart within the marriage. At the point when it became untenable and I left physically, I had long since learned that in my particular case God was going to deal with MY sinfulness with me, regardless of what my spouse was doing. He was going to make me like Christ, and I would need to trust Him in the journey, because He loved me. He would deal with my spouse in His time, not mine. It was hard, and I struggled with it often. When the crisis point came, I was taken by surprise.

11. God is incredibly faithful.

The more I reflect on my journey, the more I see His merciful provision to me, both in practical supports and emotional and spiritual ones. He drew close to me, and when I feared that I would lose absolutely everything I held dear, I learned that He is truly enough, and that His gift of salvation is the one thing that cannot be taken from me. Much in my life looks different than I had hoped, but the deep knowledge of His faithfulness and love is a gift beyond words.

Appendix 13: Doctrine Commission on Divorce and Remarriage

There are various views among Bible-based Christians about divorce and remarriage, ranging through the options listed in paragraph 4.14 below. To aid Sydney Anglicans in their consideration of these matters, we note the 1984 Doctrine Commission report "21/82 The Remarriage of Divorced Persons (1984)".

Specifically we reprint these paragraphs from the "Synthesis and Application of Biblical Evidence" section of the 1984 report, which represented the majority position at the time:

4.12 In 1 Corinthians 7:11 Paul recognises that the Christian may separate from his or her spouse (though he urges that person to remain single or else be reconciled). However, this separation is distinguished from that described in v. 15 because it is a separation designed to promote reconciliation rather than a separation designed to end the relationship. We must consider the sort of grounds in our situation today which may make such a separation legitimate. These would include:

- (a) Sexual infidelity.*
- (b) Mental or physical cruelty.*
- (c) Religious persecution.*

4.13 Although it is true that Paul urges the separated partner to remain single in such a case, we must ask whether this command is to be understood in absolute terms. The purpose of Paul's exhortation is that opportunity for reconciliation be maintained. When this fails, either because the other partner refuses in the long term to take steps leading to reconciliation, or because actions are taken that make reconciliation impossible, the believer is not bound to remain single, according to the principle of 7:15. In such a case the relationship has been abandoned by one who is, or is acting as, an unbeliever.

The test for "fault" is not so much past actions as a present unwillingness to be reconciled.

4.14 In paragraph 1.3, the Commission listed the possible approaches to the problem of divorce and the remarriage of divorced persons.

- (a) No divorce.*
- (b) No remarriage after divorce.*
- (c) Remarriage by the innocent party after divorce on the ground of adultery.*
- (d) Remarriage by the innocent party after divorce on the grounds of adultery or desertion.*
- (e) Remarriage after irretrievable breakdown of marriage demonstrated by the fact that reconciliation is impossible, but any party standing in the way of reconciliation ought not to be so married.*
- (f) Remarriage on the grounds of irretrievable breakdown of marriage without fault being considered as relevant.*

The Commission believes that options (a), (b) and (c) are more strict than Scripture allows, although it appreciates the concerns of those who adopt such views in order to safeguard marriage. The Commission regards the last option, (f), as being more liberal than the Scriptures allow. In our view the concept of fault cannot be abandoned, although emphasis needs to be laid on the reconciliation of the parties.

4.15 In considering the relative merits of (d) and (e) in paragraph 4.14 the Commission concluded that (d) is a true interpretation of Scripture, but that it is capable of being understood in too rigid a way. If it is read in terms of (e), the emphasis will fall on reconciliation. In this case the test for fault will be an unwillingness to be reconciled. It remains permissible for a partner to leave an impossible situation, but not permissible to remarry until the situation is resolved with finality from the other side. Options (d) and (e) are not to be seen as alternatives. The latter views the Biblical teaching on divorce and remarriage in the light of the gospel imperative to express and seek reconciliation. This gives some flexibility in the pastoral context, and paves the way for counselling which is not directed by legal motives.

Appendix 14: Doctrine Commission on The Use and Misuse of Scripture with Regard to Domestic Abuse

Some people use Bible verses as an excuse to abuse their wife, husband, or children. This is always wrong. Others think that the Bible tells them to put up with abuse. This is also wrong. Here are some important Bible verses that are sometimes used in this way. For each verse, there are wrong meanings and correct meanings. There are many more things to say about these verses, but these are the most important points for domestic abuse. These points do not explain the verses fully. To understand them more fully, we must do three things together:

- a) Read the whole chapter or section in which the verse or verses are found.
- b) Understand how the verse or verses fits into the chapter or section.
- c) Think about how the Bible’s teaching applies to your situation.

Please note: If you think you might be a victim of domestic abuse, we suggest you read this document with a supportive friend or counsellor.

Key Words and their Meanings

Helper

Bible verses: Genesis 2:18, 21

¹⁸ The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him.” ... ²¹ So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man was sleeping, the LORD God took out one of the man's ribs. He closed up the opening that was in his side.

Wrong meaning: The woman is below the man.	
	A “helper” is a servant. God made the woman to be the servant of the man. The woman is less important than the man.
Correct meaning: The woman and the man are equal.	
	The word “helper” does not mean below or less. This word is mostly used in the Bible to describe God. God is Israel’s “helper” when he comes to rescue them (e.g. Deuteronomy 33:26; Psalm 22:19; Psalm 121:1-2). The words “just right for him” mean that the woman and the man are a perfect match. Each one needs the other. In Genesis 2:21 God made the woman out of the man’s rib. She was not taken from his head, to be over him, or from his foot, to be under him. She came from his side to be his equal partner.

Submit

Bible verses: Ephesians 5:22-23

²² Wives, submit to your own husbands as you submit to the Lord. ²³ The husband is the head of the wife, just as Christ is the head of the church. The church is Christ’s body. He is its Saviour.

Wrong meaning (verse 22): The wife must always submit to her husband no matter what.	
	A wife must not ask questions or think for herself. She must always do what her husband tells her to do, even if he asks her to sin or submit to abuse. If she does not submit to him, then he is allowed to punish her.

Correct meaning (verse 22): A wife chooses to submit. Her husband must not force, pressure or punish her.	
	The Bible teaches that a wife should freely choose to submit to her husband. It is a gift she gives. A husband must never force or pressure his wife to submit. He must never punish her if she does not submit. If a wife cannot say no, then her submission cannot be free. Sometimes a wife should not submit. She must be free to say no to sin. She should not submit to abuse.
Wrong meaning (verse 23): The husband may do anything he likes.	
	The husband has all the power, because he is the head. He can do what he wants. He can make all the decisions. He can tell his wife what to do, but she can never tell him what to do. For example, he may demand sex whenever he wants, and she has no right to refuse.
Correct meaning (verse 23): The husband's responsibility is to serve his wife.	
	"Christ is the head of the Church." This means that he loved us and sacrificed himself for us. A husband must be the head of his wife in the same way. He must do all he can to love and protect her. He must encourage and care for his wife like his own body (Ephesians 5:28-29). Loving and caring means putting his wife's needs first.

Bible verses: 1 Peter 3:1, 5-6

¹ Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands in the same way. Suppose some of them don't believe God's word. Then let them be won to Christ without words by seeing how their wives behave... ⁵ This is how the holy women of the past used to make themselves beautiful. They put their hope in God. And they submitted themselves to their own husbands. ⁶ Sarah was like that. She obeyed Abraham. She called him her master. Do you want to be like her? Then do what is right. And don't give in to fear.

Wrong meaning: Endure abuse to show your husband what Jesus is like.	
	In the same way that Christ endured suffering (1 Peter 2:21-23), and slaves are to endure mistreatment from unjust masters (2:20), a wife should also endure abuse at the hands of her husband. A wife should be like Jesus. If her husband beats her, she should suffer the beating quietly. She should not be afraid. This will show her husband what Jesus is like.
Correct meaning: Respect your husband, even if he is hostile to your faith.	
	1 Peter 3 continues the argument of 1 Peter 2. "In the same way" (3:1) means that Peter is continuing his discussion of respect. Out of respect, slaves should submit to their masters (2:18). Out of respect, wives should submit to their husbands (3:1). Out of respect, husbands should be considerate of their wives (3:7). However, it is important to understand the difference between the examples given in 1 Peter 2 and 1 Peter 3. Peter told slaves to suffer beatings patiently, like Jesus did. But he does not tell wives to suffer beatings. Wives are not slaves. Even the laws of the Romans did not permit wives to be beaten. The hardship the wife must endure in 1 Peter 3 is the hardship of being married to an unbelieving husband, not to an abusive husband. The passage does not teach wives to submit to domestic abuse.

Sex

Bible verses: 1 Corinthians 7:3-5

³ A husband should satisfy his wife's sexual needs. And a wife should satisfy her husband's sexual needs. ⁴ The wife's body does not belong only to her. It also belongs to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong only to him. It also belongs to his wife. ⁵ You shouldn't stop giving yourselves to each other except when you both agree to do so. And that should be only to give yourselves time to pray for a while. Then you should come together again. In that way, Satan will not tempt you when you can't control yourselves.

Wrong meaning: You must always have sex when your spouse wants to.	
	It is always wrong to say no to your spouse. If you say no to your spouse, they will fall into sexual temptation. This will be your fault.
Correct meaning: Sex is a gift which a husband and a wife freely give to each other.	
	Sex is a gift your spouse gives to you. You do not take it from them. It is their free gift. It is a normal part of married life. It helps to avoid temptation. When you are free to give sex, then you should give sex, unless you both agree to stop for some time, so you can pray (verse 5). But your spouse is not always free to give and receive sex. They may be sick, or in pain, or tired, or sad, or bearing a child, or having sexual problems. The bodies of husbands and wives belong to each other (verse 4). This means you must care for each other's bodies. You should wait until they are ready to give and receive sex. You must not pressure them. A gift that you demand is not a true gift, and a gift you force upon someone is not a true gift. You must be patient and kind with each other.

Forgive

Bible verse: Matthew 6:15

But if you do not forgive the sins of other people, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Wrong meaning: Forget the sin and start again.	
	If you forgive someone, then you must forget what they did. Everything can be the same as it was before. The other person does not need to change their behaviour.
Correct meaning: Forgive others as God has forgiven you.	
	This passage does not say everything that the Bible teaches about forgiveness. The basic point of Matthew 6:15 is that we should forgive as we have been forgiven. If we genuinely repent and turn from our sin, then God forgives us. In the same way, when an abuser genuinely repents and tries to change, we also should forgive them. This may be a difficult and long process. Sometimes we will come back together with a person we have forgiven. Sometimes this will not be possible. Separation may be necessary and may even become permanent. Forgiveness does not mean that we take sin lightly. If an abuser continues to abuse, they must be stopped. You do not need to endure abuse in the name of forgiveness.

Trust

Bible verse: Deuteronomy 19:15

Every matter must be proved by the words of two or three witnesses.

Wrong meaning: Doubt the victim's testimony.	
	When someone says, "I was abused!", you should not believe them. You should only believe them if other people saw the abuse and agree to be witnesses.
Correct meaning: Trust the victim's testimony.	
	Moses gave this law for crimes that other people witnessed. When nobody saw a crime, Moses did not expect witnesses. Deuteronomy 22:25-27 shows that we may believe the word of an abused person when there are no witnesses.

Conclusion

The Bible is the good Word of a good God. Sadly, we can twist and misuse this good gift. So it is very important that the Bible is rightly understood and rightly applied to our lives. When it is wrongly understood and wrongly applied, it can damage people, destroy relationships and dishonour God. Rightly understood, the Bible condemns all forms of domestic abuse.

Mark D. Thompson

On behalf of the Diocesan Doctrine Commission

6 September, 2018