



## **Hearts and Hands**

Piecing Together Faith and Safety  
for Rural Victims of Sexual and Domestic Violence

**Rural Partnership Guide:  
Building Partnerships  
Between Rural Service Providers  
and Faith Communities to Support  
Domestic and Sexual Violence  
Victims and Survivors**



Dear Office on Violence Against Women  
Rural Grantees, Advocates, Colleagues, and Friends,

Welcome to what we hope is an ongoing conversation about how you can build partnerships with local faith leaders that will support rural victims and survivors. Safe Havens' staff has worked locally and nationally since 1991 to build service provider/faith leader partnerships. Two of our three staff members are clergy, and our staff and Board include representatives of the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim traditions. We come to this conversation as faith-based people who are deeply concerned about safety and justice for rural victims of sexual and domestic violence.

Since 2009, Safe Havens has provided technical assistance to the Office on Violence Against Women's Rural Program grantees on building partnerships with local faith communities and faith leaders. We started by talking to rural service providers and faith leaders.<sup>i</sup> We heard first hand about the great work you are doing, the struggle for funding, and the geographic isolation. We learned that outreach to faith communities is often "episodic," "haphazard," and "inconsistent." We also heard the hope: that faith communities "can be huge in addressing violence," and that faith can be a resource for rural victims and survivors.

Using what we learned, we created a toolkit to provide strategies and resources that will help you work with local faith communities to better address the needs of rural victims. The toolkit, [Hearts and Hands: Piecing Together Faith and Safety for Rural Victims of Sexual and Domestic Violence](#), includes resources for you and for your local faith community leaders.<sup>ii</sup>

This [Rural Partnership Guide: Building Partnerships Between Rural Service Providers and Faith Communities to Support Domestic and Sexual Violence Victims and Survivors](#), complements and works with the toolkit. We hope it will help you:

- ❖ learn more about the importance of faith in the lives of victims of sexual and domestic violence,
- ❖ learn how faith community/service provider partnerships could help victims,
- ❖ learn how to find out more about faith communities in your local setting,
- ❖ reflect on some of the barriers to partnership,
- ❖ consider ways to address some of these barriers,
- ❖ identify effective strategies to nurture partnerships,
- ❖ and draw inspiration from examples of partnerships across the U.S. that are working to keep rural victims of sexual and domestic violence safer.

Sincerely,



Anne Marie Hunter



Alyson Morse Katzman



Traci Jackson Antoine

Safe Havens Interfaith Partnership Against Domestic Violence





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## SUMMARY

At the beginning of this project, when Safe Havens staff talked to rural service providers and faith leaders, we asked, “would rural victims and survivors of sexual and domestic violence be safer if faith community leaders and service providers worked together as partners, as trusted colleagues”? The answer to this question was a resounding, “yes”!

At the same time, we heard stories of heroic faith leaders who acted decisively to help victims find safety, as well as stories of faith leaders who denied the problem, silenced victims, and discouraged anyone in the community from accessing services. For rural victims and survivors who are religious, spiritual, or affiliated with a faith community, faith can be both a resource and a barrier.

In addition, we have heard repeatedly from victims of all ages that abuse affects them in body, mind, AND spirit. Their faith communities and leaders are sometimes the most important element in their understanding of their situation and their responses to it.

We also know that victims and survivors often turn to their faith communities for help. Even in cases in which a victim does not disclose to anyone, a faith community may be an avenue for accessing resources or information (for example, from a poster in the restroom or a brochure in the library). As trusted leaders in the community, faith leaders are uniquely located to respond to victims of sexual and domestic violence.

A partnership with local domestic and sexual violence service providers can help to ensure that the responses of faith leaders to victims of sexual and domestic violence are safe, empowering, and consistent with other community-based services. This [Rural Partnership Guide](#) is intended to dig deeper into this notion of partnership, to name barriers and challenges that we have heard from advocates and seen ourselves, and to explore how advocates and faith leaders can build and strengthen trusting partnerships. The goal of any partnership is to minimize the ways in which faith is a barrier to safety and maximize the ways in which faith is a resource.

Faith communities can play a vital role in responding to sexual and domestic violence, referring victims of all ages to services, providing information, support, and spiritual guidance, and, where safe, supporting accountability. In addition, faith community leaders can proactively talk to their congregations about prevention and can address the wider social norms that support violence, and particularly violence against women. Working together, sexual and domestic violence service providers and faith leaders can help to keep rural victims safe.

*To receive copies of Safe Havens' [Rural Partnership Guide](#) or Safe Havens' rural toolkit, [Hearts and Hands: Piecing Together Faith and Safety for Rural Victims of Sexual and Domestic Violence](#), please call Safe Havens at 617-951-3980 or email us at [info@interfaithpartners.org](mailto:info@interfaithpartners.org).*

*You can also download all these resources for free from our website at [www.interfaithpartners.org](http://www.interfaithpartners.org).*







## INTRODUCTION

*“Shellie” is a 38-year-old wife and mother who has experienced abuse at the hands of her husband, “Greg,” for 20 years. Shellie and Greg grew up in the rural community where they now live. Greg was the captain of the high school basketball team and Shellie was a popular cheerleader. Everyone thought they were destined for great things. When Shellie got pregnant during their senior year, they put their dreams on hold and got married. The entire community attended their wedding, and everyone thought they would live happily ever after.*

*The abuse started before their son was born. By the time their daughter arrived, Greg’s abuse dominated Shellie’s everyday life. But since everyone in the community knew them and had such high expectations, Shellie was afraid to tell anyone.*

**She felt violated and betrayed, and she wondered if a married woman could be raped by her husband.**

*As hard as it was to talk about Greg’s physical violence and verbal assaults, it was even more difficult for Shellie to name and talk about the sexual abuse Greg was perpetrating against her. She felt violated and betrayed, and she wondered if a married woman could be raped by her husband.*

*As Greg became more abusive, Shellie considered what to do. She felt like she was going crazy, and even considered suicide. She had been taught in church to forgive, to turn the other cheek, but things were just getting worse. She had no idea where to turn except to her faith, which gave her strength during the toughest times. In desperation, she hinted to her pastor that things weren’t so good at home.*

You may already be working with a case like Shellie’s in which social and familial relationships affect a victim’s willingness to discuss sexual and domestic violence or access services.<sup>iii</sup> Like Shellie, victims often turn to friends and family in their congregations and communities for help. The 2009 Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review comments, “Victims, survivors, and surviving family members consistently turn to their faith communities for support and safety, whether they disclose the abuse or not.”<sup>iv</sup> This study also found that, “in the cases we reviewed, victims of domestic violence are more likely to disclose the abuse to someone in their faith community than they are to seek help from the police.”<sup>v</sup>

*Shellie’s faith leader, “Pastor James,” had attended several meetings with the local domestic and sexual violence service provider. He had learned that domestic and sexual violence are more prevalent and more dangerous than he had thought. He also realized that he brought*

**Sacred texts are sometimes misinterpreted or misused, by perpetrators, by faith leaders, and even by survivors themselves, to support abuse, to silence the survivor, or to avoid accountability for the person who perpetrates sexual or domestic violence.**

Survivors of sexual and domestic violence often talk to clergy about their experiences, at least initially, in vague terms. This is because:

1) they fear that if they tell the whole story, they won't be believed, or the response will be, "if it's that bad, why don't you leave?" or "why didn't you just say 'no'?"

2) most people don't use the ugly, often profane language of sexual and domestic violence to talk to their faith leader and/or in sacred space (the faith leader's study, for example) so they "sanitize" the story,

3) they are trying to decide whether it is safe to talk to the faith leader before they disclose too much.

*important skills and knowledge to the table. He had known Shellie and her family for many years and had married Shellie and Greg. Shellie trusted him.*

*It was hard for Pastor James to believe what Shellie said about Greg, but he had learned that abusers can be charming to people outside the relationship. He was sympathetic and supportive. In response, Shellie told him a few more details and conveyed her anguish about what to do. Pastor James told Shellie that he was no expert on abuse, but he was learning more. He told her about one of the advocates he had met, and together they called the advocate for help. Shellie soon began to attend weekly support groups. She also went to the advocate several times for counseling and safety planning.*

A faith community or congregation can be an effective resource for victims of sexual and domestic violence in rural communities. For Shellie, as for many rural women, faith is a critical resource, a pillar of identity and community, and an essential element in decision-making and healing.

*As Shellie learned more from others in her support group, she realized that she and her children were in danger. Still, she couldn't decide what to do. She worried that leaving Greg would be a terrible mistake. Her marriage vows said, "for better, for worse." Her advocate was supportive, but not an expert in Shellie's faith. She*

*suggested that Pastor James might be able to help Shellie with her faith questions.*

*Shellie was able to tell Pastor James a little more about what was going on, even hinting about the sexual abuse. She stated that she had made a vow before God, and that she didn't see any way out. Pastor James listened carefully as Shellie described her dilemma. Finally, he said that he believed that Greg's abuse had already broken the marriage covenant. In Pastor James' eyes, Shellie was not to blame.*

**Greg's abuse had already broken the marriage covenant.**





*Shellie said later that the moment Pastor James said that, she “felt like a weight was lifted off her shoulders.” It took a while, but eventually Shellie began to plan for a life without Greg. Fifteen months later, she had moved into an apartment and was living in safety with her children.*

Shellie found safety because her pastor and her advocate were able to work together, honor each other’s areas of expertise, and provide options and services. This teamwork strengthened Shellie’s safety net and addressed all the affects of the abuse—physical, emotional, and spiritual. With her faith questions answered, Shellie could move forward.

Some of you may be thinking that you’ve seen a story like Greg and Shellie’s unfold in your own community. You may be wondering, *how can I find a faith leader like Pastor James in my neighborhood?* You may be thinking that Shellie’s story would have had a very different outcome if it happened where you live. No matter where your community is in its response to a situation like Shellie’s, we hope this [Rural Partnership Guide](#) will help you develop partnerships with your own faith leaders in order to better meet the needs of rural victims and survivors.

After Shellie was safe, and with her permission to talk to Greg, Pastor James referred Greg to a batterers’ intervention program. Greg resisted, but when his new girlfriend called the police after Greg hit her, Greg was ordered by a court to attend. Pastor James encouraged him, but it was more than a year before Greg completed the 40-week program. Greg still struggles with power and control issues within intimate relationships, but he is making progress. Your local faith leaders need your help to know where and how to refer batterers to services.

## **PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN FAITH LEADERS AND VICTIM SERVICE PROVIDERS**

When we talked at the beginning of this project to rural service providers and faith leaders, we asked, “would rural victims and survivors be safer if faith community leaders and service providers worked together as partners, as trusted colleagues”? The answer to this question was a resounding, “yes”! At the same time, we heard both stories of heroic faith leaders who acted decisively to help victims find safety, as well as stories of faith leaders who denied the problem, silenced victims, and discouraged anyone in the community from accessing services.

This [Rural Partnership Guide](#) is intended to dig deeper into this notion of partnership, to name barriers and challenges that we have heard from you and seen ourselves, and to explore how you and your local faith leaders can build and strengthen trusting partnerships.



There are many resources online and in print about collaboration as a broad topic, and we hope you will look at those as well. Our goal here is to look at partnership specifically as it relates to partnerships between rural advocates and faith leaders. One “first step” is to consider how faith affects a victim of sexual or domestic violence.

## LOOKING AT SEXUAL AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE THROUGH THE EYES OF A FAITHFUL VICTIM

Domestic and sexual violence are heinous crimes that affect women, men, and children. For rural victims and survivors who are religious, spiritual, or affiliated with a faith community, like Shellie, faith can be both a resource and a barrier.

**Faith as a barrier to safety** - Some rural survivors may remain in abusive situations or decide not to report sexual assault due to particular teachings of their faith. The silence within faith communities on these issues can shame and isolate victims. Expectations within faith communities can curtail a victim’s choices. Rural advocates have also told us that faith leaders’ responses to sexual and domestic violence are uneven and sometimes dangerous. Faith leaders may look for “quick fixes” for those who perpetrate sexual or domestic violence, rush victims to forgiveness, or encourage couple’s counseling. In addition, faith leaders have a difficult time talking about sexual assault and abuse. Here, the silence speaks volumes about the lack of training, understanding, and resources. This leaves faith-based victims in a difficult and dangerous bind and can undermine accountability for those who perpetrate sexual and domestic violence.

**Faith leaders’ responses to sexual and domestic violence are uneven and sometimes dangerous. “Quick fixes,” glib forgiveness, and couple’s counseling are never helpful.**

**Faith as a resource** - At the same time, we heard from rural service providers, and we know from speaking with victims, that faith can be a tremendous resource. A victim’s faith community may be an island of respite, a place of support, and a source of strength. In the midst of the isolation, faith may help victims stay connected to their country and language of origin, family, traditions, culture, and values. In the midst of the losses, faith may be one resource a victim can hold on to. In the midst of the confusion, faith may help a victim regain her balance. In the midst of desolation, faith may give a victim hope. Some victims may return to their faith or explore becoming involved in a faith community as part of their healing process.

**The goal of any partnership with rural faith leaders is to minimize the ways in which faith is a barrier to safety and maximize the ways in which faith is a resource.**







Some signs of abuse may be subtle, including using Scripture or faith traditions to control another.

Because faith may be central to a victim’s understanding of the situation and decisions about what to do, a victim’s needs may not be fully met if faith is not addressed. Victims tell us they are uncomfortable when they go to a sexual and/or domestic violence services agency and “have to check their faith at the door.”

The goal of any partnership with rural faith leaders is to minimize the ways in which faith is a barrier to safety and maximize the ways in which faith is a resource.

## LOOKING AT SEXUAL AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE THROUGH THE EYES OF A FAITH COMMUNITY

There are many ways that sexual and domestic violence emerge as issues within a congregation, and it is important that you consider the full range of possibilities when working with your local faith leaders. Sexual and/or domestic violence may be present in any of these situations:

- ❖ a married or dating couple (adults or teens), with or without children,
- ❖ children who are sexually abused at home by a parent, step-parent, boyfriend, or other caretaker,
- ❖ adults who abuse substances or exhibit mental illnesses due to an underlying history of sexual abuse or sexual assault,
- ❖ teens who respond to current or past sexual assault or abuse or dating violence through substance abuse, delinquency, pregnancy, or poor school performance,
- ❖ newcomers to a faith community who are seeking healing or relief from the pain of past sexual or domestic violence,
- ❖ someone (including a faith leader) who has abused or sexually assaulted adults or children in the past,
- ❖ faith leaders who themselves are victims of sexual and/or domestic violence, who will need to commit time and energy to their own healing, or
- ❖ perpetrators of child abuse or child sexual abuse who see faith communities as an easy avenue for access to children or teens.

For faith-based resources that address keeping children safe within congregations, see Appendix B.

For information about your state’s mandatory reporting of child abuse, see [www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws\\_policies/statutes/manda.cfm](http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/manda.cfm). For information about your state’s mandatory reporting of abuse of older adults and/or adults with disabilities, see [www.ncea.aoa.gov](http://www.ncea.aoa.gov).

Your local faith leaders will need your help in gathering resources, providing referrals to the breadth of local services (sexual and domestic violence service providers, health care, mental health, substance abuse, law enforcement, etc.), and knowing about and complying with your state's mandatory reporting requirements regarding abuse of children, older adults, or adults with disabilities. In addition, you can help faith leaders develop policies and procedures for responding to perpetrators both within and outside of the congregation. A partnership with you can help to ensure that the response of faith leaders to victims of sexual and domestic violence is safe, empowering, and consistent with other community-based services.

## **WHY FAITH COMMUNITIES AND LEADERS ARE IMPORTANT**

We interviewed rural advocates by phone in 2010, and have continued our outreach since then. Many of you forcefully described the centrality of faith in your local settings. Faith may be particularly important for rural victims who are low-income, immigrants or refugees, older, or members of a racial, religious, or ethnic minority community, where faith is often especially vibrant.

Victims have told us repeatedly that abuse affects them in body, mind, AND spirit. Their faith communities and leaders are sometimes the most important element in their understanding of their situation and their responses to it.

In addition, faith leaders are uniquely located to respond to sexual and domestic violence. They are trusted confidantes who have supported families through other crises. They know individuals and families across generations. They are often involved during life-changing events (births, deaths, marriages) when violence may begin or escalate. They are often the point of first disclosure.

Faith leaders can help you understand the norms, languages, values, or customs of a community. Partnerships with faith communities can be a helpful component of your ongoing work to meet the needs of your clients and strengthen community access to your services.

## **LEARNING MORE ABOUT FAITH COMMUNITIES AND FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS**

Faith communities can play a vital role in responding to sexual and domestic violence, referring victims of all ages to services, providing information, support, and spiritual guidance, and, where safe, supporting accountability. In addition, faith community leaders can proactively talk to their congregations about prevention and can address the wider social norms that support violence, and particularly violence against women.

At the same time, the complexity and diversity of faith communities are daunting. One rural service provider called it "so overwhelming"! Building a partnership with faith communities begins with knowing more about them.







## Who are my local faith communities?

At Safe Havens, we sometimes use the plural “faith communities” or “faith-based organizations” to reflect the diversity of beliefs and organizational structures that are present in your local community. From independent storefront congregations to hierarchical organizations linked locally and globally; from a few like-minded believers to diverse interfaith gatherings; from local congregations to missionaries in far-flung areas of the world, faith communities and faith-based organizations are nothing if not diverse.

This diversity can be daunting to anyone engaged in faith community outreach and collaboration. To help with basic information about the religious institutions in a local area, we use a book called [How to Be a Perfect Stranger: The Essential Religious Etiquette Handbook](#), edited by Stuart M. Matlins and Arthur J. Magida. Also helpful is Jean Anton’s book, [Walking Together: Working with Women from Diverse Religious and Spiritual Traditions](#). In addition, many faiths and denominations maintain websites that will tell you more about who they are and what they do.

Your background research can help you answer some of the basic questions. When does the community meet? What do they call their leaders? What are their basic beliefs that may affect an adherent who is a victim of sexual and/or domestic violence? For more tips on what to do before you begin outreach, please see the resources in our toolkit, [Hearts and Hands: Piecing Together Faith and Safety for Rural Victims of Sexual and Domestic Violence](#). Look especially at the “Before You Start” and “The First Visit” checklists, as well as the “Guide for Service Providers Reaching Out to Rural Faith-Based Organizations Regarding Domestic and Sexual Violence.” All these resources are available at [www.interfaithpartners.org](http://www.interfaithpartners.org).

Because victims and survivors may disclose to an ordained or official leader, someone sitting next to them in the choir or the pew, or the administrative assistant, it is important to empower as many people as possible within a congregation to respond to victims and survivors. We like to think of everyone in the congregation as a potential “first responder,” someone who can listen with sympathy, provide support, and refer victims to your services. Take a broad approach to working with your local congregations. Include as many people and as many facets of the congregation as possible.

Throughout this [Rural Partnership Guide](#), we have used the term “faith leaders” to include both ordained and official leaders as well as those within the community who are recognized and respected leaders. Faith leaders could include imams, rabbis, pastors, and priests, as well as cantors, bishops, deacons, the choir director, the religious school leader, as well as congregants.

## What do faith communities do?

What faith communities do is as diverse as who they are. They may gather for worship, prayer, healing, education, spiritual growth, social justice and change, mission, outreach, community organizing, evangelism, for all these reasons, or for many others. In addition,

faith communities are often a community of people who care for, visit, and support one another. This gives faith leaders unique access to individuals and families.

Faith community leaders and members (clergy and lay) are often trusted and respected. As a result, victims may reach out to a faith leader, however guardedly, when faced with sexual assault or domestic abuse. (In fact, faith leaders tell us that more people in their congregations disclose after the faith leader takes steps to learn more and begins to talk about sexual and domestic violence.) This makes faith leaders important gatekeepers. If faith leaders in your community recommend your agency and refer victims to your services, this will increase access to and the effectiveness of your services.

In addition, congregations often house community organizations such as Scouts, AA and Al Anon meetings, exercise classes, computer literacy classes, supervised visitation, community re-entry programs, nursery school or adult day care, a free medical or dental clinic, homeless shelter, food pantry, and so on. Any materials about your programs and services that are made available within a faith community's building have the potential to reach many segments of your community.

### **What is the faith community's role in helping victims of sexual and domestic violence?**

Victims of sexual and domestic violence may ask faith leaders for help. We ask the faith leaders we work with to:


- ❖ listen with compassion and without blame or judgment,
- ❖ respond to faith-based questions and reassure the victim that their faith does not condone sexual or domestic violence or support ongoing victimization,
- ❖ empower victims by providing options and respecting their decisions,
- ❖ offer ongoing spiritual, emotional, and material support,
- ❖ refer the victim to sexual and domestic violence service providers, and
- ❖ where required, and ideally in partnership with a service provider or advocate, report abuse of children, older adults, or adults with disabilities.

See the [Hearts and Hands](#) toolkit for bathroom flyers (for victims and survivors) and bulletin board flyers (for first responders) on domestic and sexual violence that are appropriate for faith communities.

See the [Hearts and Hands](#) toolkit for more about how faith communities can respond to domestic and sexual violence.







Faith leaders will respond to victims more safely and effectively if they have learned more about sexual and domestic violence and built partnerships with you BEFORE a victim or survivor turns to them for help. In addition, faith leaders need forums in which to carefully consider their scriptures and traditions and how these can be resources for victims.

Please see Appendix C for some of the things that faith leaders might want to know about you and your services.

## LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN FAITH LEADERS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

While the benefits of partnership are significant, there are also potential challenges. Not every faith community and victim service provider will find it easy to work together. These relationships can be helpful, but they can also be uneven and complicated.

We named some of the challenges you may encounter when you reach out to faith leaders in [A Guide for Service Providers: Reaching Out to Rural Faith-Based Organizations Regarding Domestic and Sexual Violence](#).<sup>vi</sup> These include time constraints, over-commitment, minimizing, etc. For each challenge, the Outreach Guide suggests corresponding strategies that may be helpful.

Our conversations with rural service providers and faith leaders revealed additional challenges that may arise as partnerships develop, including the following.


- ✦ Language is a challenge on many levels.
  - ❖ Both service providers and faith leaders need to avoid jargon. For example, refer to a “restraining order” rather than the statute number, or use “district attorney” instead of “DA.” Faith leaders must avoid the “alphabet soup” of faith community hierarchies and committees as well as any language that may not be understood by those outside the community.
  - ❖ Survivors may “sanitize” what they say to faith leaders because the language of abuse is ugly, harsh, and often profane. At the same time, survivors may leave out faith when reporting to you. If you are not on the same page with a faith leader, ask yourself if the victim might be adapting his or her language to fit these different settings.

**Sometimes, the unease that advocates may feel translates into an unspoken message to victims that they should not talk about their faith, even though faith may be the one thing keeping them from making a change or acting on a safety plan.**

- ❖ It is challenging to support victims and survivors who are wrestling with faith-based questions around forgiveness, healing, divorce, sexuality, gender roles, marriage, and so forth. Many of you said that you just don't have the expertise for this. Some of you reported that you struggle with your own faith, and aren't prepared to talk to someone else about theirs. Others believe that if the agency receives government funding of any kind, there should be no discussion of faith. Some of you struggle with fellow staff members who proselytize (try to convert others), so you don't want to begin a discussion about faith. Others see faith exclusively as a barrier to safety and have a hard time understanding how faith can be a resource as well. One rural service provider said that she and her agency would need to do some cross-training and internal work to be fully prepared to support women of faith, and would need "a culture change in the agency" to do this. Sometimes, the unease that advocates may feel translates into an unspoken message to victims that they should not talk about their faith, even though faith may be the one thing keeping them from making a change or acting on a safety plan.
- ❖ When both the victim and the perpetrator are in the congregation, faith leaders struggle. Their mandate is to care for everyone, and supporting the victim while holding the perpetrator accountable feels to some like "taking sides." To avoid this, some faith leaders try not to get involved, although many recognize that inaction is ultimately acquiescence to the abuse. If they partner with you, faith leaders may feel better able to meet the needs of both parties.
- ❖ Faith leaders and service providers have different areas of expertise. Working together they can enhance safety and support for faith-based survivors.
  - ❖ Faith leaders are generalists, and can benefit from your in-depth expertise on: 1) sexual and domestic violence, 2) effective responses, 3) mandatory reporting, 4) confidentiality, 5) how to safely hold perpetrators accountable, and 6) other community agencies that can help.
  - ❖ You are a specialist in domestic and/or sexual violence, and you might be able to benefit from a faith leader's knowledge of: 1) cultural competency and the culture of the community, 2) faith-based concerns that a victim from the congregation might experience, and 3) how to support faith-based victims and survivors.
- ❖ Funding, staff turnover, and limited staff capacity in rural communities are extremely challenging. Advocates are often doing multiple jobs and have trouble taking on one more thing. Rural clergy are often stretched thin, serving multiple congregations, or working second jobs. In addition, faith leaders are not paid to sit in on roundtables, attend task force meetings, etc. Rural service providers and rural faith leaders may need additional funding and capacity to support this work.
- ❖ Many victim service providers are women while many faith leaders are men. This may create a "disconnect" or difference in priorities between faith communities and service providers. Keeping conversations concrete and victim-focused can be effective in creating common ground.





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- ❖ You and your agency focus on victim empowerment, while some religious communities uphold traditions of male decision making and dominance. A trusting relationship and a focus on victim safety may help move the conversation forward.
  - ❖ There may be “turf issues.”
    - ❖ Faith leaders may feel defensive or embarrassed if they did not know about or respond effectively to a victim. They may struggle to accept the fact that sexual and domestic violence are present in their congregation. Faith leaders may see the intervention of a service provider as a challenge to their professional skills or an unwelcome intrusion in their work.
    - ❖ You may feel uncomfortable asking about a victim’s faith or referring to a faith leader to address faith-related needs. Also, some rural service providers reported that interventions offered by well-meaning faith leaders sometimes challenge their professional skills or judgment.
  - ❖ There may be “trust issues” as well.
    - ❖ Faith leaders don’t always trust service providers. They may think you “break up families” or represent the federal or state government. Faith leaders may also disagree with you on critical issues such as sexual orientation, gender roles, and gender equality. Faith community leaders may be concerned that you do not understand the family, its history, or its faith. Faith leaders may be concerned that you will undermine the faith of congregants who seek services.
    - ❖ Advocates don’t always trust faith communities. You may have encountered well-intended faith leaders who responded in a haphazard, unsafe way. You may have experienced faith leaders who “keep families together at all costs.” You may have seen faith leaders who undermined a victim’s ability to name, heal from, or prosecute a sexual assault, or to take the necessary steps to seek safety for herself and her family.
  - ❖ Faith leaders are often unfamiliar with a team approach, and may not automatically turn to you or your agency for help.
  - ❖ National trainings are great, but everyone needs practice and opportunities to integrate new skills and protocols at the local level. Several rural advocates reported that they are looking for ways to integrate questions about faith (e.g., in asking about a client’s existing support network) in hotline and volunteer trainings, intake, and work with individual clients.
  - ❖ There may be faith leaders that you simply cannot work with, either because they do not respond to your outreach, or because they consistently compromise victim safety. In these cases, it is best to move on. You have planted seeds that may come to fruition at another time. Also remember that other faith leaders in the community with whom you have built partnerships may be your best allies and ambassadors and may be able to reach faith leaders whom you cannot reach.

## GETTING FROM HERE TO THERE

### Facing challenges

You may have seen some or all of these challenges at work in your own community. Because each community is different, cookie cutter strategies are not effective – there is no one recipe that leads to universal success. However, we have identified some principles that seem to help communities move forward.

- ❖ Faith leaders and service providers cannot wait for full agreement on every issue before they begin to work together. Rather, despite their differences, they must take a “leap of faith,” dive in, and commit to working with and learning from one another while learning together about how to better meet the needs of victims.


In areas where there is disagreement, we have sometimes found it effective to focus not on the disagreement itself, but on the impact on the victim. For example, we sometimes say to faith leaders: “no matter where you stand on wider immigration issues, if a victim feels that she cannot call the police or ask for help, we can agree that this compounds her isolation and prolongs the trauma.” Or: “no matter what you believe about sexual orientation, if the victim is afraid to ask for help for fear of being ‘outed,’ we can agree that this compounds his shame and deepens the trauma.” Sometimes, focusing on the impact on the victim helps to open a door for discussion.

- ❖ Both faith leaders and service providers speak of justice and peace. Both strive to better their communities. Both stand on heartfelt values. Both care deeply about the wellbeing of community members. Agreeing that everyone should be safe and free from violence and assault in their homes and faith communities, at school, and in the streets may be a good place to begin to build common ground. Ask faith leaders with whom you are already working to help you frame your work in terms that their colleagues will most readily understand.
- ❖ Partnership is a two-way street: everyone has valuable information and skills to bring to the table. Partnership requires that both faith leaders and service providers acknowledge each other’s expertise, welcome each other as colleagues, and work together toward a common goal.

**Agreeing that everyone should be safe and free from violence and assault in their homes and faith communities, at school, and in the streets may be a good place to begin to build common ground.**





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- ❖ Building partnerships is time- and labor-intensive. Funders, advocates, and faith leaders must commit for the long haul. The people you serve will reap the rewards when they know more about sexual and domestic violence, when they have better access to your services, and when their work with you is supported by their faith communities. In addition, both faith leaders and service providers ultimately save time if they are able to rely on and refer to each other. One service provider said, “Payoff for the faith-based outreach and training we have done has been phenomenal . . . .”

### **Moving forward**

Healthy partnerships begin with mutual respect. We must listen to each other, build trust, and take time to develop a shared vision of communities where people are safe and victims are heard and supported. Often we have more shared goals than disagreements. It is crucial to ask questions and create a conversation that honors everyone’s knowledge, experience, and expertise.

**Developing mutual, trusting partnerships will be an ongoing, long-term effort, and not a one-time event.**

As you begin to overcome challenges and build a trusting partnership, consider the following questions, which are adapted from Michael McCampbell’s “The Collaboration Toolkit for Community Organization.”<sup>vii</sup>

- ❖ What perceptions do victim service providers and faith community leaders have of each other?
- ❖ Where did these perceptions start?
- ❖ Are any of these perceptions inaccurate or founded on myths rather than facts?
- ❖ What results/outcomes do we BOTH want for our community?
- ❖ What can we agree upon?

While the challenges are daunting, there is hope. There are rural communities where faith community leaders and victim service providers are working effectively together. So, we know it can be done!

### **Establishing trust**

Trust is the foundation of any partnership, but building trust takes time and patience. Start from the assumption that developing mutual, trusting partnerships will be an ongoing, long-term effort, and not a one-time event. The movement toward trust often begins with a one-on-one meeting or a site visit.

In addition, consider these elements of trusting partnerships, which are adapted from Michael McCampbell’s “The Collaboration Toolkit for Community Organization.”<sup>viii</sup>

✦ **Listen respectfully.**

When a victim service provider or faith leader shares his or her perspective, don't judge what he or she is saying. Instead, keep an open mind. Try to understand. Don't try to persuade him or her to agree with you.

✦ **Follow up.**

After an initial meeting, follow up and plan a next step together. Communicate regularly, in person if possible. Answer questions, and ask your own.

✦ **Establish ground rules.**

Ground rules help to ensure basic courtesy, and encourage everyone to ask questions, offer opinions, and listen to others. Ground rules can also establish a space in which people of all faiths and people who do not subscribe to any faith are welcome. Some questions to ask are below.

- ❖ What agreements can we make that will help us work together? Possible answers, which are adapted from "Authentic Dialogue Principles" by BluOpal Consulting, include:
  - ◇ We will keep our conversations confidential.
  - ◇ We will participate, not dominate.
  - ◇ We will be curious and ask questions to understand.
  - ◇ We will speak for ourselves and from our own experience.
  - ◇ We will respect and learn from differences.
  - ◇ We will be "self-aware as we listen and speak."
  - ◇ "No one gets to be wrong . . . Everyone is right, but only partially."<sup>ix</sup>
- ❖ What do we need to know about each other to work together most effectively? Answers from faith leaders could include: "I follow certain dietary laws," "I greet people with something other than a handshake or hug," or "I can't meet on certain days of the week or religious holidays." Your answers could include any of the above, as well as a reminder that you prioritize safety and confidentiality.
- ❖ How can we honor the faiths and traditions of everyone in the room?
  - ◇ Offer kosher, vegetarian, halal, or other food as necessary, or no food during times when particular communities are fasting.
  - ◇ When speaking of your own experience, use words that fit (Qur'an, church, rabbi, etc.). But when speaking of the wider faith community, use more general terms that include everyone (scripture, sanctuary, faith leader, etc.).
  - ◇ Avoid Holy Days, holidays, and other special celebrations when scheduling meetings and events.







❖ **Face and discuss challenges.**

You will not agree with all faith leaders on all topics. Faith leaders don't even agree with each other on all topics! Try to understand the faith leader's position and why it is important. "Agree to disagree," stay victim focused, and emphasize the common goal: working together to keep victims safer.

### **Building a team**

Both within your agency and within a local faith community, think in terms of teams of people who can support the partnership. For example, anyone within a congregation, from the choir leader to the administrative assistant, could be called upon to respond to a survivor. Cast the net as widely as possible (music program, religious education, women's and men's groups). Teach as many people as possible the warning signs and how to respond. The support of those in leadership is also important to making sure that resources and energy are committed to the partnership. This provides depth and breadth for the effort and brings in multiple perspectives.

At the same time, your agency's team should include community outreach, support group leaders, and advocates, among others. All of these could contribute to the effort to build long-term partnerships with faith communities.

Within both faith communities and victim service providers, think about people who are "bridges." For example, does the congregation include people who work for a service provider? Does the service provider include people who attend a local faith community? These may be people who can help catalyze effective partnerships.

**Remember that the ultimate goal is an ongoing, mutual partnership that will improve the safety of rural victims.**

These questions, which are adapted from Michael McCampbell's "The Collaboration Toolkit for Community Organization,"<sup>x</sup> may help you identify additional partners.

- ❖ Who cares if sexual and domestic violence are addressed in our community?
- ❖ Who is affected?
- ❖ Who can help?
- ❖ How can we honor the diverse knowledge and skills that we bring to the table?

An annual event may help focus efforts and build your team. Perhaps you could ask faith leaders to help you plan and host a "Day of Remembrance" or vigil that memorializes and honors those whose lives have been affected. Alternatively, you might plan an annual event that honors Sexual Violence Awareness Month (April), Elder Abuse Awareness Day (June 15), Domestic Violence Awareness Month (October), or Victim of Homicide Month (November 20 – December 20). A used cell phone drive or other collection (coats, toiletries, duffel bags) that supports your agency is another good way to engage faith communities and build partnerships.

## Envisioning A New Future

One-time events (see above) can be helpful, but don't be too short-sighted! Think in terms of annual events! Set your sights on a partnership that endures. Take the time to name your long-term hopes and dreams. With this in mind, think about both short-term and longer-term goals. One-time events can be great for raising awareness and generating energy, but it is also important to build trusting relationships with one another that bear fruit in shared work and mutual referrals over time. Remember that the ultimate goal is an ongoing, mutual partnership that will improve the safety of rural victims.

## DRAWING INSPIRATION FROM EXISTING PARTNERSHIPS

The domestic violence and sexual assault movements are only 35 years old. So, partnerships between faith communities and service providers that address domestic and sexual violence are relatively new. There is no set model for what these partnerships might look like. Although there are too many to discuss individually, a review of three partnerships from various parts of the country may inspire us all to think broadly and creatively about partnerships in our own local communities. Despite the diversity represented by these partnerships, they hold this in common: they are all focused on safety and dedicated to empowering victims and survivors.

### Rural New York

**"It is important to build the relationship [between advocates and faith leaders] before you need the relationship!"**

**Karen Bigelow-Varney  
Outreach and Training Coordinator  
New York State Coalition Against  
Domestic Violence**

The New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, which was founded in 1978, hired an Outreach Coordinator to bring together various organizations in the state that serve victims and survivors. At a coalition meeting, a member of the Minority Disparities Group approached the Outreach Coordinator with questions about connecting with the faith community. The thinking was that faith-based organizations play an integral part in the

community, especially in rural areas and in minority communities, so it seemed like a good idea to distribute information to faith leaders about domestic and sexual violence. The Outreach Coordinator decided that she would reach out to faith leaders, and she began to put together and distribute information for them.

Several months later, the Outreach Coordinator convened the first of several meetings with faith leaders to discuss domestic and sexual violence. She describes this process as evolutionary and says "it continues to evolve." For the Outreach Coordinator, there were many challenges around the use of scripture and how in some instances it could be used to paralyze victims. She was also challenged to work with faith leaders around couple's counseling and its ineffectiveness (and dangerousness) when there isn't a balance of power in the relationship. The Outreach Coordinator learned over time that working with a







few clergy in the community resulted in a group of supporters that could help her engage other clergy. She learned that clergy listen to and learn from other clergy, and that training clergy to train others was more effective than clergy being trained by a service provider.

The clergy group decided to start with small steps, like setting up a quiet space in their buildings for victims to make phone calls or read through resources. They agreed to help victims set up email accounts that could be used when away from home to seek employment or other information.

The diversity of faith, race, and culture makes the clergy group especially powerful. They learned early on that domestic and sexual violence are not limited to any particular faith, but are present in every congregation. Ultimately, the Outreach Coordinator would like to see this group of faith leaders reach out to additional colleagues in their own communities to grow the group further. She would like to see them develop an evaluation tool that they can use to gauge the success of their collective work. She continues to work with them and looks forward to their collective success.

### **Rural Massachusetts**

“Clergy are not always sure how to address the issues of domestic or sexual violence with the members of their congregations. Having a service provider offer them resources and work with them to help introduce the topic can often be really helpful.”

Amy Waldman, LICSW  
Project Director  
MA Rural Domestic and Sexual Violence  
Project, MA Department of Public Health

Massachusetts’ Rural Domestic and Sexual Violence Project is a partnership program between the New England Learning Center for Women in Transition, the Everywoman’s Center of the University of Massachusetts, the Elizabeth Freeman Center, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, and Jane Doe Inc. The project provides comprehensive counseling and advocacy to adult and adolescent survivors of domestic and dating violence as well as extensive domestic and sexual violence community education, engagement, and outreach in

84 rural jurisdictions in Berkshire, Franklin, Hampshire, Hampden, and Worcester Counties.

The Executive Director says, “the majority of my staff is committed to working with the faith community, although some staff admitted feelings of being uncomfortable.” Collectively, they decided that the importance of engaging the faith community outweighed other concerns, so they forged ahead. They were encouraged when funders included language in Requests for Proposals about faith community outreach and how it can be used to strengthen the work of service providers. The Executive Director and her staff decided that it was a good time to reach out to local faith community leaders. After meeting extensively with 14 members of her staff to talk about a multi-faith initiative, the Executive Director earmarked a small sum of money to invite a national faith-based trainer to come to the community to work with them.

The staff members used one-on-one site visits and meetings to reach out personally to diverse faith leaders and clergy in the community. The outreach and engagement process revealed important concerns. Many clergy stated that “they tried to deal with these issues in-house.” Others expressed concern about holding perpetrators accountable, or struggled with issues related to forgiveness. Meeting with various faith leaders in the community made it apparent to the Executive Director and her staff that they “didn’t know a lot about working with faith communities, and that they have and will continue to have a lot of learning to do.”

The Executive Director continues to express strong concerns about some faith leaders who do not appreciate safety issues, the importance of referrals, and the need for community teamwork. She has also learned more about the barriers that keep clergy from participating. For example, clergy are not compensated for sitting on a community-based domestic or sexual violence task force, and this is not seen by their congregants as part of their job. In addition, clergy often don’t feel welcome in these settings and generally don’t speak the language used by service providers, so they don’t feel that they can contribute to the discussion.

The Executive Director and her staff continue in their outreach efforts to faith leaders, to the degree that their existing funding supports this work. They’ve learned that these efforts must be ongoing to establish trust, and to support faith leaders as they support the victims and survivors in their congregations.

### **Rural South Dakota**



In South Dakota, there are 16 Rural Outreach Advocates across the state. They cover 62 of the 66 counties and offer services for both domestic and sexual violence. They describe the faith leaders they’ve worked with as “forward thinking.” They have even been contacted by faith leaders who were new to the community and looking for assistance for congregants.

Most of the faith leaders admitted having not had prior domestic or sexual violence training. Some faith leaders stated that in the past they were told to “keep the family together at all costs.” The Rural Outreach Advocates, with the supervision of their Executive Director, have worked to build relationships with all faith leaders, and have provided training and education as needed.

The Rural Outreach Advocates recently made a presentation about their work to the South Dakota Ministerial Alliance. This helped the advocates build and strengthen relationships with local faith leaders. In a recent incident, a victim ran from her home to a church for





safety during a crisis. The pastor helped her call an advocate and sat with her until the advocate arrived. The pastor and the advocate worked together with the victim to discuss her concerns and a plan of action.

The Rural Outreach Advocates have distributed domestic and sexual violence posters to the local faith leaders and have received requests for additional posters. One advocate stated that when called to a victim's home, she asks if the victim would like her to contact a faith leader.

Over time, a diverse group of faith leaders has emerged that the Outreach Advocates depend on to provide leadership on issues around faith and sexual and domestic violence. These clergy have volunteered to meet with victims and survivors when this is requested by the victim.

The advocates have learned that "clergy can have a real impact in prevention by including sexual and domestic violence prevention education in their work with youth within the congregation. Clergy also have the ability to raise awareness in women's groups in their congregations. It is imperative that the congregations see them play a proactive role on the subject." The faith leaders are clear that "a person's presence in the pew doesn't mean that they can't abuse."

The advocates have also learned that outreach is most effective when someone from the faith community speaks to others in the faith community. This is particularly true if the clergy presenter and the participants share the same faith and culture. For example, one domestic violence support group is being led by nuns in the Hispanic Center. This supplements the work already being done by domestic violence advocates at the Hispanic Center who are themselves immigrants.

The Outreach Advocates have developed resources that are specific for faith communities, including information about the roles of law enforcement and various service providers. They address couple's counseling and court mediation. They also encourage clergy to build a team of trained congregants who can respond effectively to victims and survivors.

## **CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

A rural victim of sexual and domestic violence reached out to a service provider. She felt that she should leave her home and marriage for her own safety and for the safety of her children. However, her faith leader was counseling her to "give the marriage another try." For many months, this woman carried books, brochures, and other resources about sexual and domestic violence to her faith leader. She told him everything she was learning in her support group. She shared her own experiences. She lent him videos that she borrowed from the service provider's library. She worked hard to "bridge the gap" between her faith community and the domestic and sexual violence service provider.



In the end, her faith leader came to agree with her that, for her own safety and the safety of her children, she had to leave the marriage. With his support, she left and found safety.

While we rejoice in the ultimate outcome of this story, it also is heartbreaking. Victims and survivors, and particularly rural victims and survivors, have enough on their plates without taking on the job of “liaison” between faith leaders and service providers. This is just one of the many victims we have heard about over the years who has fueled our passion to bring together faith leaders and service providers. Because, ultimately, victims deserve the very best that we both have to offer.

Victims are safer when we work together. Victims are more likely to access services, implement safety plans, hold perpetrators accountable, and heal if both advocates and faith leaders support their efforts. Perpetrators are more likely to be held accountable if faith leaders, service providers, and law enforcement can talk about accountability. And domestic and sexual violence are more likely to end if we can come together, face the issues together, and work as partners to build a more just and peaceful world.

## **APPENDIX A: RESOURCES ON SEXUAL AND/OR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND FAITH**

There are additional resources about sexual and domestic violence and faith online. Please check out these websites:

Faith Trust Institute

[www.faithtrustinstitute.org](http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org)

Jewish Women International

[www.jwi.org](http://www.jwi.org)

National Sexual Violence Resource Center

[www.nsvrc.org/publications/collaborative-responses/faith-based-responses](http://www.nsvrc.org/publications/collaborative-responses/faith-based-responses)

Peaceful Families Project

[www.peacefulfamilies.org](http://www.peacefulfamilies.org)

Safe Havens Interfaith Partnership Against Domestic Violence

[www.interfaithpartners.org](http://www.interfaithpartners.org)

You can learn more about the intersection of domestic and sexual violence and faith through videos such as FaithTrust Institute’s “Broken Vows” (interfaith) or “To Save a Life” (Jewish). For domestic violence within the Muslim community, see Peaceful Families’ video “Garments for One Another.” These videos are excellent training tools and are available from [www.faithtrustinstitute.org](http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org). For faith-based teen dating/sexual violence resources, please see [www.jwi.org](http://www.jwi.org) or [www.faithtrustinstitute.org](http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org). For videos about elder abuse in which victims mention their faith and its importance to them, see “In Their Own Words: Domestic Abuse in Later Life,” available from the National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life at [www.ncall.us](http://www.ncall.us).





## APPENDIX B: FAITH-BASED RESOURCES ON “SAFE CONGREGATION” PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN

Denominational resources for keeping children safe within a congregation:

Southern Baptist Convention

<http://www.sbc.net/localchurches/ministryhelp.asp>

Unitarian Universalist Association on Congregations

<http://www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/balancingacts/index.shtml>

United Methodist Church’s “Safe Sanctuary Policy”

<http://www.gbod.org/lead-your-church/safe-sanctuaries>

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Secretariat for Child and Youth Protection

<http://www.usccb.org/ocyp/>

For additional interfaith resources on clergy sexual abuse, child abuse, and/or child sexual abuse, please see FaithTrust Institute’s website at [www.faithtrustinstitute.org](http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org).

## APPENDIX C: WHAT FAITH LEADERS MIGHT WANT TO KNOW ABOUT VICTIM SERVICE PROVIDERS

The services provided by domestic violence shelters, rape crisis centers, or sexual and/or domestic violence service providers can be critical in helping victims. Often, these services are not well known within the faith community. You can help by openly describing your services and how you work. Here are some ideas for places to start.

### **What are local victim service providers?**

Faith leaders may know little about victim service providers, and the diversity of models and services may be confusing. Take the time to explain whether you provide services for only sexual assault or only domestic violence victims, or whether your agency addresses both these different but related issues. Explain whether you also serve those who abuse, and if you don’t, make sure faith leaders in your area know where batterers’ intervention services are available. Be clear about your structure and whether you are an independent, stand alone nonprofit or part of a larger agency. Identify the geographic area you serve, but explain that you often serve people from outside that area who are not safe in their own communities.

There are some things faith leaders can do to get to know your agency better. For example, if you offer trainings to community members who want to volunteer, faith leaders could attend these trainings. This is a great way for faith leaders to learn more about domestic and sexual violence and your services.

There are also opportunities that don’t involve training, such as helping with a fun run, community gala, or other fundraising event. Or, faith leaders could ask what you are

particularly in need of (toiletries? duffel bags? clothes? toys for the children?) and organize a drive to collect and deliver these items.

Faith leaders can also do some background research. Refer them to your website to learn more about your services and current collaborations and how you can be contacted. Arrange to send cards, posters, brochures, or other information that faith leaders can make available in their congregations. Offer to make a presentation to their congregation or leadership team. Sit down for lunch or a cup of coffee.

### **What do victim service providers do?**

There is considerable diversity among agencies, so let your faith leaders know which services your agency offers: a 24/7 hotline; shelter (short-term or “emergency” and/or long-term or “transitional”); support groups; individual and group counseling; court advocacy; hospital accompaniment; community outreach and education; prevention programs; advocacy with law enforcement, housing, or other systems; safety planning; lethality assessment; case management; and analysis of the power and control dynamic that drives domestic and sexual violence.

Explain that services for victims are available free of charge, whether or not a victim is actually housed or sheltered at your agency. Although a victim may not need shelter, she may benefit from free counseling and a support group.

Explain that advocates give victims information and options and allow victims to make up their own minds about how they want to move forward because this empowers victims and allows them to re-assert control over their own lives. Because of this empowerment model, you never tell victims what to do. Reassure faith leaders that you will NEVER say to a victim, “you have to get a divorce,” or “you have to prosecute this sexual assault,” or “you have to leave your home.”

### **What is the victim service provider’s role in helping victims?**

Let faith leaders know that your agency’s primary goal is to keep people safe, although “safe” is defined many different ways by many different victims. Any of the services mentioned above could help a victim stay safe.

By working from a victim-centered, empowerment model (be sure to explain what “victim-centered” and “empowerment” mean), your agency helps victims regain control over their lives, control that has been usurped by someone who has attempted to dominate and abuse them.

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For more information please visit [www.interfaithpartners.org](http://www.interfaithpartners.org).





## ENDNOTES

<sup>i</sup> Throughout this Rural Partnership Guide, we have used the term “faith leaders” to include both ordained and official leaders as well as those within the community who are recognized and respected leaders. Faith leaders could include imams, rabbis, pastors, and priests, as well as cantors, bishops, deacons, the choir director, the religious school leader, as well as congregants.

<sup>ii</sup> You can download all the toolkit resources for free at [www.interfaithpartners.org](http://www.interfaithpartners.org). Or, you can call Safe Havens at 617-951-3980 or email us at [info@interfaithpartners.org](mailto:info@interfaithpartners.org); we would be happy to send you printed copies of the complete toolkit, or folders that include just the faith community resources that you can distribute to faith leaders in your community.

<sup>iii</sup> National Sexual Violence Resource Center, 2003; Sims, 1998; Weisheit, Wells and Falcome, 1994; Weisheit, Wells, and Falcome, 1995.

<sup>iv</sup> Georgia Commission on Family Violence and Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2009 Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review, p. 15.

<sup>v</sup> Georgia Commission on Family Violence and Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2009 Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review, p. 5.

<sup>vi</sup> You can download this outreach guide and all the toolkit resources for free at [www.interfaithpartners.org](http://www.interfaithpartners.org). Or, you can call Safe Havens at 617-951-3980 or email us at [info@interfaithpartners.org](mailto:info@interfaithpartners.org); we would be happy to send you printed copies of the complete toolkit, or folders that include just the faith community resources that you can distribute to the faith leaders in your community.

<sup>vii</sup> Adapted from Michael S. McCampbell, “The Collaboration Toolkit for Community Organizations: Effective Strategies to Partner with Law Enforcement,” Community Oriented Policing Services, US Department of Justice, September 2010, p. 29.

<sup>viii</sup> Michael S. McCampbell, “The Collaboration Toolkit for Community Organizations: Effective Strategies to Partner with Law Enforcement,” Community Oriented Policing Services, US Department of Justice, September 2010, pp. 34 – 35.

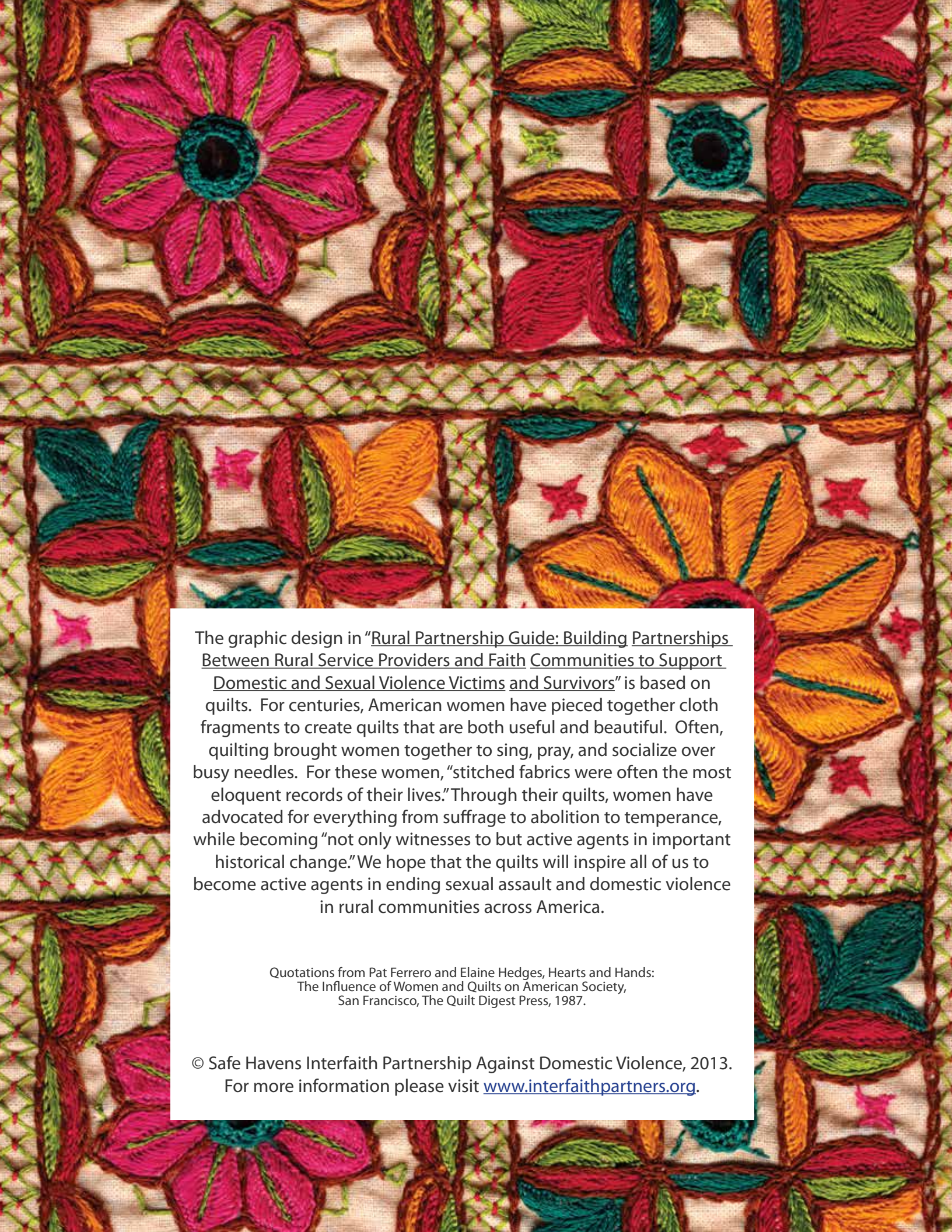
<sup>ix</sup> Adapted from “Authentic Dialogue Principles,” by BluOpal Consulting. For more information, contact: Michele Roden at [michele.roden@bluopal.com](mailto:michele.roden@bluopal.com).

<sup>x</sup> Michael S. McCampbell, “The Collaboration Toolkit for Community Organizations: Effective Strategies to Partner with Law Enforcement,” Community Oriented Policing Services, US Department of Justice, September 2010, p. 39.

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The graphic design in "Rural Partnership Guide: Building Partnerships Between Rural Service Providers and Faith Communities to Support Domestic and Sexual Violence Victims and Survivors" is based on quilts. For centuries, American women have pieced together cloth fragments to create quilts that are both useful and beautiful. Often, quilting brought women together to sing, pray, and socialize over busy needles. For these women, "stitched fabrics were often the most eloquent records of their lives." Through their quilts, women have advocated for everything from suffrage to abolition to temperance, while becoming "not only witnesses to but active agents in important historical change." We hope that the quilts will inspire all of us to become active agents in ending sexual assault and domestic violence in rural communities across America.

Quotations from Pat Ferrero and Elaine Hedges, *Hearts and Hands: The Influence of Women and Quilts on American Society*, San Francisco, The Quilt Digest Press, 1987.

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