



The First Visit

A Checklist for Rural Service Providers Reaching Out to Faith-Based Organizations Regarding Sexual and Domestic Violence

- ❖ Call to request an appointment. Be aware of holidays and when the community gathers. If available, check the community's website for information.
- ❖ Learn appropriate etiquette for visit.
 - ❖ Cover your head and/or arms?
 - ❖ Women wear skirts?
 - ❖ Wash your feet upon entrance?
 - ❖ Take off your shoes?
 - ❖ Men enter one door, women another?
 - ❖ Usual mode of greeting (bow, handshake, etc.)?
 - ❖ Other critical considerations?
- ❖ Call to confirm time and location of the meeting. Be prompt. Show that you honor their time. Bring resources (and symbolic gift, if you have one) to share.
- ❖ State your reason for the visit: many victims, survivors, and family members turn to their faith communities for help. So, faith community members and leaders are often "first responders." You need their support in order to keep victims and survivors as safe as possible. Faith community leadership is critical in preventing and responding to domestic and sexual violence.
- ❖ Briefly explain what domestic and sexual violence are. Explain that these issues affect all religions and that many faith communities are learning how to respond.
- ❖ Ask about their experiences. Have congregants talked to them about sexual and domestic violence? Listen. Ask follow-up questions.
- ❖ Briefly explain your agency's interest in strengthening its response to victims and survivors as well as the services provided. Provide brochures with hotline and agency contact information.
- ❖ Suggest ways that a partnership between your agency and the congregation could strengthen the community's response to sexual and domestic violence. Listen. Discuss options.
- ❖ Ask for concerns, questions, ideas about what a partnership might look like, and ways in which domestic and sexual violence might be relevant to the congregation. Listen.
- ❖ Plan a next step. Suggestions include:
 - ❖ Ask for their ideas on next steps.
 - ❖ If you have a Community Roundtable, invite this contact to participate.
 - ❖ Plan another visit or a meeting with additional participants to talk further about how your agency and their faith community could collaborate.
 - ❖ Invite this contact or other members to a training or event.
 - ❖ Other suggestions.
- ❖ Send thank you note and follow up.

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