

Relational Awareness ~ Lesson 7 ~ Responding to Abuse

In our first lesson we learned how to practice agape love... Next, how husbands and wives submit to each other. Then we looked at God’s intentions for marriage. In our most recent lesson, we contrasted godly living with ungodly living, shining the light on the evil of domestic violence. We were asked one of the characteristics of godly living. Please share how this went.

In today’s lesson, we will discuss the signs of domestic abuse and how to respond.

1. Read *1 John 3:14-18 (CEV)*. Our love for others shows whether we are spiritually alive. How do we demonstrate our love for others?
2. Read *Proverbs 24:11-12 (CEV)*. What does this tell us about getting involved in situations we would rather ignore?
3. The two main types of domestic abuse are **physical** and **emotional**. In our last lesson, we discussed what **physical** abuse looks like. What do you think **emotional** abuse looks like?
4. Read these ways we can help a victim of abuse:

DO	DON'T
Talk to the victim alone.	DON'T confront the abuser. (There are exceptions)
Ask if something is wrong.	DON'T wait for the victim to come to you.
Express your concern. ("Wow, was that harsh!")	DON'T judge or blame. (either party)
Listen and validate. ("I believe you." "That is tough.")	DON'T pressure the victim to act.
Offer help. ("What are some things we can do?")	DON'T give advice. (The victim has been told what to do, too often!)
Be patient. (Some victims return to abuse 7 times or more.)	DON'T force a choice. (The victim needs to take the 1 st step.)
Support their decisions.	DON'T place conditions on your support.
Talk through several options.	DON'T tell an abused wife that she must stay with or be submissive to an abusive husband.

Adapted from the NY State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence

Do you have any suggestions of other ways to help a victim?

In many abuse cases, the victim may need to consider separation from a spouse in order to be truly safe physically and emotionally.

Read Malachi 2:13-16. The Hebrew word that is translated 'divorce' in Malachi 2:16 literally means 'send away.' The meaning here is not that God hates divorce but that He hates the treacherous act of sending away the loyal wife, often leaving her destitute. This was considered to be violence toward her.

5. Read Ezra 10:10-11 and Mark 2:27. Is God more concerned about the institution of marriage or about the well-being of the individuals? Why do you believe that?

God hates violence more than he hates divorce.

6. If the abuser has not shown a permanent change, is the victim safe to be with that person? What will happen if the victim returns to the abusive spouse?

7. If there are **minor children** in the home who have witnessed physical abuse, social services must be notified by mandated reporters. These children are considered victims of abuse if they have witnessed it, even if they themselves have not been physically harmed. You can be better prepared by keeping the phone number of your local social welfare office in your contact list. Write that number here:

8. Do you know who the mandated reporters of child abuse are in your state?

9. Read the **DK Role Play #1**. If you encounter a situation that seems to involve abuse, and you're not sure what to do, contact the **Domestic Kindness Action Team**. What is the name and number of your church's DKAT representative?

10. Read **How to Help a Friend or Family Member**. In the chart below, list some things you might see or hear that could be cause for concern and what you might do or say in response.

SIGNS OF ABUSE

MY RESPONSE

SIGNS OF ABUSE	MY RESPONSE

11. What will you do to be part of the solution to the epidemic of domestic abuse?

Would you like more information about joining the DK Action Team?



Your church's Domestic Kindness Action Team (DKAT) works:

- To equip the whole church with DK instruction in Godly living
- To connect the oppressed and the repentant controllers to expert help

If you can be anything, Choose to Be Kind