

## Relational Awareness ~ Lesson 7 ~ Responding to Abuse

Read all parts of the lesson (in black print) aloud in the group. Don't read answers in red unless there are no other appropriate answers given by group members. Start with question numbers circled in red.

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?

*Give our lives for each other; have pity on those in need; truly helping, not just in words*

2. Read *Proverbs 24:11-12 (CEV)*. What does this tell us about getting involved in situations we would rather ignore? *If we see someone being destroyed, we are responsible to do what we can to help*

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?

*Spouse is critical, controlling, condescending, blaming, accusing, ignoring, sarcastic, deceptive; humiliates, devalues spouse*

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 <b>we</b> can do?")	DON'T give advice. (The victim has been <b>told</b> what to do, too often!)
Be patient. (Some victims return to abuse 7 times or more.)	DON'T force a choice. ( <b>The victim</b> needs to take the 1 <sup>st</sup> 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?

*Don't give expert advice if you're not sure about comments or questions. Say you'll get back to them. Ask someone from DK to give you the appropriate information.*

***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? *Well-being of people* Why do you believe that?  
*God created rules for people, not people for rules.*

**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? *no*  
 What will happen if the victim returns to the abusive spouse?  
*The abuse will escalate; the victim may attempt suicide or murder, feeling that there is no other way out.*
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?  
*Look up the information for your state (possibly members of the clergy, medical personnel, mental health providers, social workers, childcare providers, school employees, and law enforcement).*
9. Read the **DK Role Play #1. (Assign 2 women to read the Role Play.)** 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?  
*Have the name and number ready.*
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
<i>Long sleeves in summer</i>	<i>Notice</i>
<i>A black eye or bruises</i>	<i>"Are you okay?"</i>
<i>Weak excuses</i>	<i>Suggest meeting together</i>
<i>Financial restrictions</i>	<i>"Do you feel financially free in your marriage?"</i>
<i>Unexpected absences</i>	<i>"I'm concerned about you"</i>
<i>Self-dismissive (low self-worth)</i>	<i>"You have great value and God would never want anyone to devalue you"</i>
<i>Haughty put downs by spouse</i>	<i>Confidentially offer DV info</i>
<i>Unable to express feelings</i>	<i>"I'm here if you want to talk"</i>

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

*Read the following:*

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

*Ask for a show of hands – Have the DKAT contact them within a week.*



**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*