

## The RAVE Project

(Religion and Violence e-Learning)

### Team Mission

*There is no place like home; when abuse strikes, there is no home.*

**RAVE** seeks to equip religious leaders to respond to domestic violence ways that are compassionate, practical, and informed by the latest research and best practices for professionals;

**RAVE** seeks to build bridges between the steeple and the shelter;

**RAVE** seeks to walk alongside victims and survivors on their journey towards healing and wholeness; and

**RAVE** seeks to hold abusers accountable for their actions, while offering hope for a transformed life.



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## Marriage Preparation: Why Engaged Couples Needs to Consider Abuse

Deciding to get married is an important decision in the journey of a relationship.



Intentionally discussing the things you find important and getting to know better your partner's needs and thoughts can prevent any surprises or indicate potential dilemmas down the road. There will likely be issues you will disagree on or opinions that differ from one another. Learning to deal with differences is a necessary part of being in a committed relationship. Couples cannot imagine that violence or abuse is going to erupt in their marriage, yet it happens.

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**Domestic violence** includes abusive behaviors that may be exhibited by one or both partners in a relationship. The abuse can develop prior to the relationship, during the relationship and/or after the relationship has ended.

**Physical violence** is the easiest to recognize because of the cuts, bruises, burns, broken bones and other injuries that it causes.

**Sexual violence** includes sexual harassment, sexual exploitation or forcing the victim to participate in sexual activities that s/he do not want to do. It is degrading, humiliating and an aggressive way the perpetrator abuses the victim.

**Psychological violence** includes verbally attacking, criticizing, intimidating, exploiting and socially isolating the victim. The abuser may also threaten to hurt an individual close to the victim, her/his pet, or damaging the victim's possessions. It is a way that the abuser wants to demonstrate his/her dominance and be able to control his/her partner.

**Economic violence** includes refusing access to any of the family money or financial resources as well as refusing to allow her/his partner to work.

**Spiritual violence** includes using religious teachings to manipulate, dominate and control a partner. It may also include making fun of her/his partner's different religious or spiritual beliefs.

## The Cycle of Violence:

Often intimate partner violence increases in severity and escalates over time. It can take months or years before the violence becomes severe. Domestic violence is often repeated through a cycle which is not immediately apparent to the victim. Victims can suffer many abusive situations or violent episodes before they recognize the pattern and are able to get help.

### Warning signs in a relationship:

- your accomplishments are belittled;
- your opinions count for nothing;
- your partner is always right;
- your likes and dislikes are disregarded;
- you are kept away from family and friends;
- your partner always decides what to do and where to go;
- your family, work, church and friends are disrespected;
- your faith is ridiculed;
- your every move is monitored;
- you are forced to have sex when you do

not want to;

- you are denied access to food, money or other resources;
- you are blamed for all the problems.

If you find your relationship has signs of abuse or potential violence, marriage is not the cure. Many people in an abusive relationship feel trapped after getting married and often stay for the following reasons:

- shame or guilt;
- belief that things will change;
- fear of breaking wedding vows;
- fear of being judged by others;
- fear that nobody will believe abuse is taking place;
- financial dependence on the abuser.

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**Need Help Now?**

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