

Building Bridges Between the Steeple and the Shelter: Support for Transition House Workers

Violence against women is all around us. It exists in every country of the world, among all people groups. And it knows no socio-economic boundaries.

Rich women, poor women, black women, white women, educated women, illiterate women, beautiful women—all women can be potential targets of domestic violence. Abused religious women have particular spiritual concerns that need to be considered by both religious leaders and community agencies.

Are churches safe places for women to disclose that they have been violated?

Are shelters safe places for women to disclose that they are religious?



The RAVE Project
University of New Brunswick
2 Garland Court, Suite 205
Fredericton, NB, E3B 6C2
Canada

www.theraveproject.org
Phone: (506) 458-7283
Email: rave@unb.ca

The RAVE Project
Religion and Violence e-Learning

www.theraveproject.org

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.

Members of the RAVE Project Team

- Nancy Nason-Clark
- Barbara Fisher-Townsend
- Steve McMullin
- Cathy Holmann
- Michelle Soucy

As a shelter worker, have you ever:

- Felt frustrated dealing with women from diverse religious backgrounds?
- Wished you felt less like you are the only one trying to help abused women?
- Felt that clergy do not understand the special needs of abused women?
- Wished you had help in mobilizing community resources?

Some very interesting ideas on supporting the local shelter put into practice by specific congregations (*these ideas emerged through our fieldwork*):

- A Sunday School class that took new book-bags and school supplies to each child living in the shelter (just before the beginning of the school year);
- A women's Bible Study group that ensured that there were special food treats delivered to the shelter on Valentine's Day;
- A men's group that volunteered their pick-up trucks one Saturday morning a month for residents moving from the shelter to either second stage housing or their own apartment;

- A group of volunteers who painted several rooms at the shelter every spring;
- A quilting circle that donated a small quilt to every child who sought refuge at the local shelter;
- A banquet held by the women of the congregation just before Christmas with a focus on Mary, the mother of Jesus, as a single parent;
- A Sunday evening panel at church on community outreach where the shelter director outlined the shelter's most pressing needs;
- A women's "morning out" at the church where there was transportation provided to any woman resident of the shelter wishing to attend;
- Regular donations of food items to the shelter, in accordance with the shelter's needs and food policies;
- Specially prepared comfort kits (uniquely created bags with a selection of toiletry items) by a church women's group for women in the shelter.



How Can We Help?

We offer resources for transition house workers:

- Words of hope and awakening
- Women's Spirituality Circles
- Scripture passages that challenge abusive acts
- Prayers that bring comfort and assurance
- Information on domestic violence around the world
- Contact information for shelters throughout Canada and the United States
- A downloadable safety plan
- Washroom brochures
- Ways in which community agencies and churches can partner to stop violence

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Need Help Now?

Call: