



FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Meeting Segment Guide

Produced by the Policy and Advocacy Team
as part of the *Social Justice Stocktake*



Today we will be taking some time to look at the issue of family violence and spending some time in prayer for those who are affected.

The following resources have been created to assist you to run a 5-8 minute segment in your Corps' or mission expression Meeting, Team Meeting, ALT Meeting or any space where you gather with other people.

These resources are ready to print and use in your Meeting. Below you'll find:



TALKING POINTS



A PRAYER TIME GUIDE
(INCLUDING THREE WRITTEN PRAYERS)



EXTENDED SEGMENT OPTIONS



LINKS TO FURTHER RESOURCES

For further support in connecting with issues in your local community, contact us at policy.advocacy@salvationarmy.org.au



INTRODUCTION

Today we will be taking some time to look at the issue of family violence and spending some time in prayer for those who are affected. There may be sensitive themes discussed today, so if you feel that it would be helpful for you to talk to someone afterwards, please feel free to come and chat to us, or you can contact 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732) to chat through it with someone confidentially.

FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

» **Family and domestic violence can include anything** from physical abuse, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, psychological and emotional abuse, controlling someone's access to money and stalking, to controlling behaviours or technology-related abuse through texts, social media and more. Family and domestic violence occurs not only between married couples or within intimate personal relationships. It can also present in extended family relationships (including parent or child abuse such as violent teenagers or elder abuse) or informal care (especially affecting older people and people with disability).

» **This is an issue that has concerned The Salvation Army since** its very beginnings, and it's important to know exactly what we're dealing with today. On average, in Australia, one woman every week is murdered by her current or former partnerⁱ, an unacceptable statistic that creates no doubt that family and domestic violence is a national crisis.

» **In the last year, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic,** reports of domestic and family violence have hit record numbers and frontline services are being placed under unprecedented demand. Family violence has been exacerbated by job losses, financial insecurity and increased trauma, particularly within vulnerable populations. Family and domestic violence is also the leading driver of homelessness for women, with thousands of women a year becoming

homeless after escaping family and domestic violenceⁱⁱ. Many more do not leave abusive situations as they have nowhere else to go.

» **This is not an issue that is distant from us.**

Almost a quarter of Australian women have experienced violence from a current or former partnerⁱⁱⁱ. That's one in four women – an incredibly high and concerning number. The majority of people experiencing violence within relationships are women, and the majority of such violence is perpetrated by men. However, it's also very important to be aware that family and domestic violence can happen to anyone – including men and gender diverse people groups – in every socio-economic group, and both inside and outside the church. The prevalence of this issue in Australian society means that family violence could easily have affected someone you know – a colleague, a family member, a classmate, a friend, or a neighbour.

» **It's really important to recognise that the term 'violence' does not always mean physical violence.**

Coercive and controlling behaviours are at the core of family and domestic violence. Coercive control is more than just a single incident; it is a pattern of abusive behaviour over time. Underlying the abuse is the factor of control in compelling or forcing a person to do something they do not want to, or to refrain from doing something that they want to do. Perpetrators use tactics and behaviours to gain complete control over their victim, so that the victim-survivor loses their individual autonomy, self-esteem and independence. 'Violence' in a family context is as much about controlling another person and their choices as it is about physical violence.

» **We believe that all people are created in the image of God** and therefore have a unique and intrinsic value. Human life is sacred and all people should be treated with dignity and respect. Every

i. Bryant, W. and Bricknell, S. (2017). Homicide in Australia 2012-13 to 2013-14: National Homicide Monitoring Program report. AIC. <https://www.aic.gov.au/publications/sr/sr2>

ii. Equity Economics (2021). Nowhere to Go. <https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2021-07/apo-nid313135.pdf>

iii. ABS (2017). Personal Safety, Australia. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/personal-safety-australia/latest-release>



Talking Points



instance of violence in a relationship is contrary to God's plan for people and is unacceptable. Abuse in a relationship is damaging to everyone involved. In order for society to thrive, all people should have the right to feel safe at home and be recognised for who they are and what they bring to the world.

- » **The Bible teaches that all people are equal in value to God.** The New Testament provides a model for gender equity (Galatians 3:28) and mutual responsibility (Ephesians 4:1-5:2) that leaves no room for family and domestic violence. Family and domestic violence is unacceptable and an abuse of power, with the more powerful person abusing the vulnerable person. In contrast, the Bible offers a different model for relationships, characterised by self-sacrificing love and the flourishing of life (John 10:10).
- » **In the Bible, all violence is considered an offence against God and against humanity.** Scripture is full of condemnations of violence – time and again violence is associated with wickedness and condemned as “detestable to the Lord” (Psalm 11). Abuse and oppression of the vulnerable by the powerful is sadly prevalent in a fallen world and men's violence against women is well documented throughout Scripture. The Scriptures clearly express God's desire for a dramatic transformation of society for those who are burdened, marginalised, or unjustly treated (Proverbs 14:31).
- » **Throughout Scripture we consistently see that God cares deeply** for those who are hurt by others (Psalm 9:8-9). We see this in the way Jesus treated women during his time on Earth. Every woman who encountered Jesus was offered safe space, respect, compassion and wholeness. As his followers, we also care for those who are affected by violence and seek to bring healing to those who experience it (Isaiah 1:17).

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

- » **The Salvation Army believes that ending family and domestic violence** can be achieved in Australia and recognises that there is a role for government, the community and individuals to play in promoting equality, respect and safety for all.
- » **Since its very beginnings, The Salvation Army in many communities has worked hard** to provide safe spaces and support for people experiencing violence at home. This work continues today through family and domestic violence services, accommodation and specific programs which provide support to victims, and behavioural change programs for those who have been perpetrators. The Salvation Army is also concerned to ensure that the perpetrators of violence receive help to deal with those related matters expressed through violent behaviour, and receive support in working towards the development of new positive behaviours.
- » **The Salvation Army also advocates to government on a regular basis** to provide increased and ongoing funding support for family violence services, perpetrator intervention programs and research, and to ensure adequate social and affordable housing for people leaving violence or experiencing homelessness due to family violence.
- » **On a local level, all Salvationists should be ready to help those who are victims,** either directly or through referral and support. You can do this by being aware – keep your eyes open for indicators that someone may be in trouble, and be ready to listen to them, and believe them, if they share with you that they are experiencing violence. (At the end of this resource, you will find a 'How to support people experiencing Family Violence' Document that can be shared with your congregation/team if you wish.)



Prayer Time



Play one of the following songs, and ask people to spend some time in silent, individual prayer while the song plays. Ask them to pray for survivors of family and domestic violence, perpetrators of violence and the families that are impacted by it.

[Go Light Your World](#) – Chris Rice

The Salvation Army Songbook No. 1003 – O Lord, Whose Human Hands Were Quick ([lyrics](#))

The Salvation Army Songbook No. 938 – We Have Caught The Vision Splendid ([lyrics](#))

Following this time of individual prayer, you may like to have three different people lead the group in the below prayers. These prayers are on separate pages so that you can easily print and distribute them to participants.





Prayer Time



Prayer for our community

Dear Lord,

We come together today to remember that for many people in our communities, violence within their own families is all too real. This often silent suffering hurts us all. The Bible teaches us that all people are equal in value to you and should be treated with respect and dignity, so every instance of domestic violence is contrary to this and unacceptable to you.

May we today, and every day, have the courage to recognise, speak up and support those we know and love who are experiencing family violence. May we advocate on behalf of those who we don't know, but whose suffering causes pain to your heart. May we, as Salvationists, help to create safe places where people can come and be heard. And may we be a shining light in our communities for all those hurting to see and experience your love.

We ask that you help us to be like Jesus, recognising and cherishing your image within each person, and supporting them to the fullness of life, free from violence and fear.

We pray this in your name,

Amen.



Prayer Time



Prayer for Australia

Dear God,

As we take time to reflect on the damage being caused in our nation by violence, we pause to ask for help, transformation and forgiveness. We ask for help for those who, day after day, are living in homes where they don't feel safe; transformation for the perpetrators trying to find their way; and forgiveness for the times when we have missed signs or turned a blind eye to the trauma being experienced by others.

Lord God, as a nation, may we continually strive to do more to help families who are caught in cycles of violence and fear. We pray for all those in our country who are trying to make a difference – from government officials, elders, community groups and policy makers, to first responders and support workers – grant them peace and strength for this challenging work.

Lord, may we mourn for what makes you mourn, and work to make a difference together with unity and compassion, recognising that this issue is affecting all peoples of this land we call Australia.

Amen.



Prayer Time



Prayer for the world

Loving God,

As we join with people all over the world today and call for the elimination of family and domestic violence, we give thanks for each other and bring before you our shared desire for peace and freedom.

We recognise that there are countries in which gender, religion or social group mean some people are thought of as 'less than' others, leading to oppression, vilification and discrimination. We know this is not what you want for your world and we pray for intervention and safety in our world today.

Help us to work together as a global community to make this world more like you want it to be. Help us, as citizens of the world, to think globally and speak up for the oppressed wherever they may be, recognising that every individual is important to you.

In the name of the One who was sent to minister to all nations,

Amen.



For an extended segment



If you would like to present an extended segment (that goes for longer than 10 minutes), here are some ideas that may take people deeper:

- » Share the video – [‘Catherine Haven’](#) (3:16)
- » Read The Salvation Army Australia’s [Guideline for Salvationists on Family and Domestic Violence](#) for additional information and more ways to discuss the issue with others.
- » Invite a local social worker/community worker/police officer who works in the area of Family and Domestic Violence to share their insight on what this issue looks like in your local community. Alternatively, you could do some research into the prevalence of this issue in your local community and share your insights. Share information about how your Corps/mission expression/ALT is assisting society to better understand Gender Equity and Equality.

USEFUL SONGS:

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[The World for God](#) – Phil Laeger, Marty Mikles and Evangeline Booth
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[Go Light Your World](#) – Chris Rice
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[The Salvation Army Songbook No. 1003 – Whose Human Hands Were Quick](#) ([lyrics](#))
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[The Salvation Army Songbook No. 938 – We Have Caught The Vision Splendid](#) ([lyrics](#))
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[The Salvation Army Hallelujah Chorus No. 43 – Just One](#) ([lyrics](#))
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For kids:

Acknowledging that many groups, and in particular congregations, have people of all age groups, you may like to engage the children in your congregation while this segment is on. One idea is to provide paper and drawing materials, and ask kids to draw a picture of their family and pray for them as they listen.



Further Resources



For more information on this issue, and for further resources:

[The Salvation Army Australia's Positional Statement on Family and Domestic Violence](#)

[The Salvation Army Australia's Guideline for Salvationists on Family and Domestic Violence](#)

To find family and domestic violence services in your state or territory, visit The Salvation Army's ['Find help now' page](#).

[The Australian Government Report by The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2019](#)

Resources for culturally and linguistically diverse groups: [InTouch – Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence](#) provides family violence services for people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. Their 'Motivation for Change' program helps men reflect on their behaviours and learn ways to relate without using violence.

Resources for LGBTIQA+ community: [WithRespect](#) provides resources, tips and advice for LGBTIQA+ people on having and maintaining healthy relationships.

[1800RESPECT](#) – National family violence counselling service. Phone: 1800 737 732 | 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

[Daisy](#) – An app that connects women around Australia to domestic and family violence services.

[Sunny](#) – A free app that helps women to recognise, respond and get help if they are experiencing violence and abuse.

[Relationships Australia](#) – Provides relationship support services to enhance human and family relationships. Phone: 1300 364 277 | 9am–5pm

Every person can make a difference.

Together, we can make an even greater difference.





How to support people experiencing family violence:

- » Find a safe place and allow time for the person to talk
- » Listen to what they have to say and believe them - their description of the abuse is only the tip of the iceberg
- » Give priority to their immediate safety
- » Give them information about relevant support agencies and, if appropriate, offer to contact the agency for them
- » Consult with people who are properly trained in the matter
- » Empower them to make their own decisions
- » Support and respect their choices – even if they choose initially to return to the abuser
- » Let them know that what the abuser has done is wrong and completely unacceptable
- » Reassure them that this is not their fault, they don't deserve this treatment, and it is not God's will for them
- » Be patient
- » Protect their privacy
- » Love and support them

If you'd like any further information on this resource please contact the Policy and Advocacy Team at policy.advocacy@salvationarmy.org.au

