

## Questions to ask yourself when responding to an abused woman

These pastoral questions are from *No Place for Abuse: Biblical & Practical Resources to Counteract Domestic Violence* by Catherine Clark Kroeger and Nancy Nason-Clark. The authors suggest keeping this reference guide in your top desk drawer or in the file you use when making notes during an interview session. You can glance at it to ensure that all the critical areas have been addressed in your response to a victim of domestic abuse.

- ✦ Am I sure it is safe for this woman to return home?
- ✦ Have I presented guidelines for what to do if her home is unsafe at any time?
- ✦ Have I helped her develop a safety plan?
- ✦ Have I validated her pain without being a judge?
- ✦ Have I offered therapeutic options?
- ✦ Have I made it clear that the church wants to be a safe place to disclose abuse?
- ✦ Have I made it clear what resources are available in our church?
- ✦ Have I made it clear what resources are available in our local community?
- ✦ Have I condemned the abuse she has suffered using spiritual language?
- ✦ Have I offered some spiritual help that is grounded in Scripture?
- ✦ Have I prayed with her in a way that does not suggest that being a victim is her fault?
- ✦ Have I offered practical help and support by seeking to understand what she needs at this point in her life?
- ✦ Have I made it crystal clear that she is welcome to come back, whether or not she takes my advice?
- ✦ Have I talked about what confidentiality means? Am I committed to keeping it?
- ✦ Have I discussed the limits of pastoral confidentiality (for example, mandatory reporting of child abuse)?
- ✦ Have I determined whether the children are at risk? Whether the abuser is at risk?
- ✦ Have I determined whether I, the pastoral counsellor, am at risk?

Checklist from *No Place for Abuse: Biblical & Practical Resources To Counteract Domestic Violence* by Catherine Clark Kroeger and Nancy Nason-Clark (2nd edition, 2010)