One in Spirit
Domestic Violence Advocates and Faith and Spiritual Leaders Working in Partnership to End Domestic Violence

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Where Did the Content of This Publication Come From?

This publication strives to capture the rich dialogue, successes, lessons learned and strategic questions from Transforming Communities: Technical Assistance, Training and Resource Center’s (TC-TAT) involvement in over 8 years of domestic violence (DV) prevention in faith and spiritual communities. In November 2010 many of those involved in these efforts convened for a Transfer of Knowledge (ToK) Gathering, which is also documented here. The intent of this publication is to honor the wisdom of those who have contributed to this area of domestic violence prevention and share it with others in our ongoing work to create safe, just and respectful communities.

Content for this publication was drawn from a variety of sources, including:

- *Historical knowledge and tools from TC-TAT’s eight years of leadership in interfaith collaborations and national training programs;*
- *From the ToK Gathering:*
  - Notes, video and graphic documentation;
  - Evaluations from participants;
  - Reflections from facilitators.
How to Use This Resource

This publication is designed to address diverse learning needs by providing the following components that will help faith leaders and DV advocates begin or strengthen their collaborative efforts:

- **Community-based experiences** highlighting 8 years of successes, challenges and lessons learned by faith and DV prevention teams in both urban and rural settings;

- **Exercises and activities** that can be easily tailored and replicated in your own community. Look for the ☀️ symbol throughout the publication to locate these resources;

- Listing of organizational contacts who have expertise in DV prevention efforts in faith communities, including opportunities to connect and participate in continued peer learning;

- **Downloadable tools and resources**, including training materials and methods of measuring and sharing the impact of your efforts.
Laying the Groundwork

Why Is This Work Important?

Faith communities represent sanctuaries of trust, safety, and guidance. Families and individuals frequently reach out to their spiritual advisors or faith leaders for comfort and guidance when domestic violence occurs, placing these leaders in an ideal position to identify and intervene with families experiencing domestic violence. The world’s major faiths all promote healthy relationships and condemn injustice, abuse and oppression. However, misinterpretation of religious text and concepts, texts taken out of context, and beliefs that are passed down by word of mouth have been used to justify domestic violence. Therefore, faith and spiritual leaders are in a position to perpetuate those negative conditions or serve as valuable resources to local agencies that provide services to individuals and families impacted by DV. More importantly, their participation in local violence prevention efforts sends a powerful message to the community about the responsibility we all share to end domestic violence.

But how do we go about addressing and preventing domestic violence in diverse faith communities? How do we honor culture, history, and unique spiritual traditions as we strive to create communities of safety and respect? How do we move
faith communities towards prevention while still addressing the need for direct services and batterer accountability? How do we build strong interfaith networks that respect differences and work collaboratively towards a common vision of peace? And how do we best describe our work to community members and funders who are interested in joining and supporting these efforts? These are just some of the questions that participants explored at the ToK Gathering.

What Inspired the Transfer of Knowledge Gathering?

For the past eight years, TC-TAT has sought to address “How can we best partner with faith leaders to end domestic violence?” in partnership with interfaith leaders, domestic violence advocates, and funders across the country. Through a variety of training and support programs, TC-TAT created a learning community to engage in dialogue and action to build a faith-based community response through partnerships with domestic violence (DV) advocates and to promote its eradication through changes in policies and social norms.

From 2002 – 2006, TC-TAT provided training and support to more than 950 faith and DV leaders to build their skills in producing community-based change. Also during those four years, TC-TAT led a two-year national training program with faith and domestic violence leaders focused on effecting systems level change. Over the next two years from 2008 – 2010, TC-TAT worked in-depth with 21 teams (each comprised of one faith leader and one DV practitioner) to develop and implement prevention action plans in their faith communities. Over the two-year grant term, TC-TAT selected teams based on capacity and commitment, provided a comprehensive training institute, supported the development and implementation of action plans, and provided over 200 hours of technical assistance and
10 webinars to leadership teams. These action plans have included community assessments, awareness building, networking with other faith institutions, and the development of policies and practices to prevent domestic violence. Several new tools and articles were developed by TC-TAT as a result of this project, sharing the rich successes, challenges and learnings from these community partnerships:

- **Faith Spectrum Tool** ([Download](#))
- **Faith Roadmap** ([Download](#))
- **Collaboratives for Community Change Case Studies** ([Download](#))

### What Do We Mean by Prevention?

Prevention is about stopping a problem before it starts—in this case, domestic violence. Part of how this is accomplished is by working so that the problem is no longer tolerated by *individuals* as well as no longer tolerated by *communities*. Collaborative efforts can exist along a wide range of levels of prevention. Thinking about the following means of prevention—adapted from Contra Costa Health Services’ *Prevention Spectrum*—helps groups to identify ways to collaborate and plan their efforts in a way that meets their community needs.

- Influencing policy and legislation;
- Changing organizational practices;
- Mobilizing community neighborhoods;
- Fostering coalitions and networks;
- Educating providers;
- Promoting community education;
- Strengthening individual knowledge and skills.
Over a two year time period, these 21 teams have achieved notable success in carrying out primary prevention work that extends beyond awareness building toward policy change in diverse faith communities. They built strong partnerships between faith leaders and DV organizations; established model faith institutions that are committed to preventing DV; and created powerful strategies to sustain their efforts even in the midst of opposition and lack of resources.

TC-TAT recognizes the importance of bringing leaders together to share lessons learned, increase our connections with each other, and generate collective wisdom. Thus, with the support of the Blue Shield Foundation of California, the California Department of Public Health, and the Marin Community Foundation, TC-TAT convened the Transfer of Knowledge (ToK) Gathering from November 1-3, 2010, in Tiburon, California. The main purposes of this gathering were to lift up and share the remarkable social change work being done in faith communities throughout California and to strengthen a coordinated network, going forward, of DV advocates and faith leaders working collaboratively to end domestic violence.
What Do We Mean when We Say Interfaith?

At the most basic level, interfaith efforts involve cooperation among people or communities representing diverse faith traditions and/or spiritual beliefs. Over the years that TC-TAT has engaged in prevention efforts among faith and spiritual communities, project participants have been drawn together for a common cause, responding to and preventing domestic violence.

Those involved have observed many inherent opportunities and challenges in interfaith work. Building multi-faith efforts requires a commitment to think, respond and act in a manner that is inclusive and sensitive, not unlike the commitment required to foster multicultural alliances. The simple act of spending time in fellowship with one another, when done within a framework of “multi-faith inclusion,” has served to build relationships and promote understanding among our communities. This is an unintended benefit in addition to the efforts to prevent domestic violence.

When challenges occur, it is important it evoke the principles of faith traditions, such as tolerance, peace and compassion. These elements bind groups committed to social justice, in this case, those committed to the prevention of domestic violence.

“There is purpose in our coming together and spending time with people from other faith traditions and realizing what everyone has something to contribute to our understanding of prevention efforts in faith communities. But the other thing that sometimes happens is that we all pretend to get along without addressing the actual differences.” – Naomi

How do we create an authentic and equally-shared interfaith experience as we pursue our goal of preventing domestic violence? Carrying out prevention work in a truly interfaith way means being aware of the ways in which differences in beliefs can impact the way individuals perceive accountability for perpetrating violence, and how institutions respond to the needs of victims. Differences can also impact which religions experience greater social acceptance over others, and which traditions are more widely understood, accepted and celebrated. Difference can also result in the way individuals interact with each other, experience acceptance and inclusion, or not.

Participating in interfaith alliance building calls upon each and every one of us to consider being “mindful” of the faith we align with (if we do), and to examine how to bridge the strength of our traditions with others so that we are inclusive and welcoming. When considerations of multi-faith inclusion are not made, we are also called upon to acknowledge those situations and name it as such.

Being a part of any community, especially a dominant one that experiences greater acceptance and power, requires a commitment to cultural humility and seeing this commitment as a constant process of examining oneself and holding oneself accountable to addressing power imbalances that are impacting individuals in the group. More interfaith best practices can be found on page 52.
Key Themes and Questions

To help prepare for the ToK Gathering, TC-TAT surveyed people who had participated in faith-based DV prevention efforts over the past 8 years as to the key themes and questions that were emerging in their work. These themes and questions then informed and inspired the discussions that took place at the ToK Gathering.

Celebrating Community-Specific Strategies

- What have been the greatest successes, challenges and lessons learned in doing this work in our particular community context?
- How do culture, history, politics, and cultural humility influence how we do this work?
- How are we engaging our communities, including a special focus on women’s and girls’ leadership and engaging boys and men?

Preventing Domestic Violence

- How are we moving faith communities towards prevention while still addressing awareness-building and the need for intervention services and batterer accountability?

Changing Policies and Practices

- How are we institutionalizing our efforts through changes in policies, protocols, procedures and practices? What has changed?

Engaging Young People in Faith Communities

- What are some ways that communities are supporting youth leadership and modeling strong, intergenerational partnerships to prevent DV?

Collaborations

- What works in establishing and maintaining effective interfaith collaborations?
- What are the key components for effective partnerships between DV agencies and faith leaders?
- What are ways to develop a shared vision and action among different partners?
Scriptural Issues and Challenges

- What are the scriptural messages or “spiritual content” that resonate and move people to action in different faith communities?

Sustaining our Efforts

- How can we replenish ourselves and “refill our buckets?”
- How are we engaging our communities to learn, document and evaluate our efforts? What are some promising practices around sharing success stories and developing tools from those successes?
- What are promising strategies for building our base of supporters and volunteers committed to this issue?
- How are we cultivating ongoing funding streams for our work?
Transferring the Knowledge

Goals of the ToK Gathering

- Lift up, share and catalyze learnings around addressing and preventing domestic violence in diverse faith and spiritual communities.
- Actively strengthen an ongoing, statewide peer learning community.
- Generate collective wisdom and contribute to documentation of the gathering in a dynamic, online publication.
- Strengthen our skills and creativity in how we share the impact of our work with others.

Who Participated in the ToK Gathering?

The ToK Gathering sought to bring together faith leaders and advocates from throughout California who have been actively working to address and prevent domestic violence in diverse faith communities. Because many of these leaders are volunteers, we are grateful to the Gathering’s financial sponsors for providing resources for participant travel and accommodations.

Thirty-seven participants came together for the ToK Gathering representing diverse faith and spiritual organizations and domestic violence agencies. Participants arrived by plane, car and ferries from over 20 urban and rural communities across the state of California. Some had been engaged with this work for 1-2 years, while others more than 8 years. Participants represented communities from a range of faith, spiritual and cultural traditions. For a full list of organizations and communities represented, see the Appendix, page 53.

Creating New Partnerships

Many of the teams working in faith communities are actively working with young people – whether through youth groups, religious education in places of worship, or in schools – to support the development of healthy relationships. Because of this interest in working with youth, TC-TAT invited Youth Radio, a youth-led nonprofit organization based in Oakland, California to participate in the ToK Gathering, even though
they had not worked directly with faith communities prior to the event. Because of Youth Radio’s vast experience supporting youth leadership and youth-adult partnerships to address teen dating violence, especially through their “Boss of Me” (BOM) campaign, they were able to offer up valuable ideas about how to partner with youth and use social media to create long-term change.

Youth leaders from Youth Radio offered their expertise and modeled youth leadership by facilitating a discussion around youth engagement, interviewing ToK participants, and capturing their stories in video format. In turn, these youth leaders had the opportunity to learn from the other participants about organizing to prevent DV in diverse faith communities. Partnering with Youth Radio was a powerful way to creatively document the stories of faith leaders and DV advocates while modeling youth leadership for social change.

Click here to see Youth Radio’s video of the event:

What Does It Look Like To Prevent Domestic Violence In Faith and Spiritual Communities?

YOUTH RADIO YOUTUBE VIDEO

What is the most important learning for us as a field?

How do the authentic voices of local faith and DV advocates get expressed in that learning?
Youth Radio and the Boss of Me (BOM) Campaign

Youth Radio’s mission is to promote young people's intellectual, creative, and professional growth through education and access to media. Youth Radio’s media education, broadcast journalism, technical training and production activities provide unique opportunities in social, professional and leadership development for youth, ages 14-24. Youth Radio cultivates the natural resilience and strength of young people. By connecting youth with their communities through media literacy and professional development, they become active partners in civic engagement. Youth Radio’s youth-produced investigative news features and compelling personal narratives air nationally and touch the lives of millions of listeners each month.

Click here to go to the Youth Radio website: [www.youthradio.org](http://www.youthradio.org).

BOM stands for “Boss of Me.” This means that individuals are in control of their own actions and behaviors. This is particularly important when it comes to youth, as they often get the message that they can’t really make a difference until they “grow up.” BOM believes that there are many young people making a difference in their communities, particularly when it comes to teen dating violence (TDV) prevention. In fact, BOM believes that TDV prevention cannot be fully realized without the leadership of teens themselves. BOM provides tools for youth to dial down the drama in their own relationships and a space for youth to discuss TDV realities and solutions in their lives. Using the BOM website and social media sites as outlets for faith communities’ youth content will bring us closer to deepening the voice of youth leadership in TDV prevention.

Click here to go to the BOM website: [www.bom411.com](http://www.bom411.com).
How Does Knowledge Transfer?

The intent of the ToK Gathering was to catalyze existing learning to generate deeper learning, to lift up our collective wisdom and spark ongoing inquiry for participants and others doing this work. Through this process, participants were asked to engage deeply with themselves and one other – each person present was an essential part of contributing to this wisdom and learning. We structured the gathering so that knowledge could be shared in three directions:

**Participant to Participant**

This knowledge was documented through recording discussions and video interviews.

**Participant to Facilitator**

The focus of the event was learning from participants. This was documented by participants in small and large group discussions, and written and spoken evaluation.

**Facilitator to Participant**

The event did not focus as much on this direction in order to make room for other directions to happen.

“In lifting up our collective wisdom, we are creating a work of art together, a large canvas that each of us paints upon to produce a beautiful painting of our experiences and learnings. There is magic in the exchange and synergy of ideas. Together we will strengthen our peer learning community and hold up some amazing learnings to share.”

— Lisa Hoffman, TC-TAT
Activities That Foster Connection

Continuing the Journey: Community Art Wall

Those involved with domestic violence prevention work in faith communities know that this work can be both enriching and isolating. Finding connection and staying in connection with others engaged in similar efforts is key to remaining energized and passionate about prevention. Participants at the ToK Gathering created Continuing the Journey: Community Art Wall as a means of describing their personal connection with this work and their vision for what it would look like to have faith and spiritual communities support healthy relationships. The result was a beautiful and powerful image of our collective work. If you are interested in doing something similar in your community, see the above photos for reference.
**Bicycle Activity**

Another example of an activity that helps maintain connection with prevention efforts and the broader community engaged in this work is included below. Using the metaphor of a bicycle, participants at the ToK Gathering answered the following questions individually and then discussed as a larger group. This exercise is easy to replicate and can help bring focus to a meeting and strengthen peer support among those present. For a printable version of the handout, see the Appendix page 53.

During this activity, participants reflected on:

- “Some things I’m already doing to prevent DV in my faith community;”
- “Things I’d like to learn more about at this Gathering;” and
- “Actions I can take to get me there.”

During this activity, participants at the ToK Gathering shared:

“I work at the Arab Cultural and Community Center with new immigrants. I have both Christian and Muslim domestic violence clients. Sometimes women from both religions will say ‘my religion says I shouldn’t break my family up—to be a good mother and wife I should put up with the hardship in order to keep the family together. Even if there’s domestic violence it is important to keep the family unit together for the sake of the kids.’ I’m here to learn from other participants, to listen, to ask questions. How do you connect with your community to address these fundamental issues? How do you use scriptural verses to support and strengthen women going through tough times?”

—Vera, Arab Cultural & Community Center

“We’re seeing a lot of young people being recruited early on into negative behaviors, including violence in their dating relationships. We give them lots of love and straight street talk to enable a spiritual transformation rather than just ‘behavior modification.’”

—Pastor Dextral Alexander, Holy Tabernacle of God Baptist Church
Creating Light Together

Sharing a ritual in an interfaith way can be a powerful means of strengthening relationships and building connection. What follows is an example of a Ritual of Light, drawn from the Jewish faith.

The purpose of this ritual is to help participants become grounded and connected with one another in a sacred and safe space. This activity requires a tray of candles (one main candle surrounded by many smaller candles) and a basket of scarves, enough for each person.

- **The facilitator begins by inviting one person to light a main candle.** Draw a connection between our seasonal change from darkness to light and our prevention work. Suggest the darkness is an opportunity to come inward, reflect, and see the hidden sparks of divine light around us, letting each small spark in us glow brightly.

- **The facilitator then encourages participants to each light one of the smaller candles from the main candle, representing how from the darkness we make light, and how many more lights are kindled from that initial spark.**

- **Each person then chooses a brightly colored scarf provided by the facilitator, joins together in a circle, wrapped in the scarves and holding hands, creating a large circle of warmth and light.**

- **The facilitator invites each person to share a way they bring light into the world.**

- **The activity can close with an interfaith prayer or meditation.**

- **For best practices around the inclusion of interfaith elements at an event, see page 51.**

Woven throughout the Gathering were opportunities for participants and facilitators to share pieces of their own faith tradition. These prayers, rituals and spoken words were intended as examples of ways to integrate these elements with DV prevention in ways that are interfaith and accepting of all faith traditions. Tailoring in this way involves some additional planning and intention and is an effective tool toward creating a space that is both inclusive and respectful of other traditions and beliefs.
Catalyzing Our Efforts

What are inherent challenges and opportunities in doing this collaborative work?

The following participants served as “catalysts” at the ToK Gathering by sharing their challenges and successes about their work to address and prevent DV in faith communities. Below are some highlights from what they shared.

“In entering into our partnership to create change in the Catholic community, we had to have some very difficult discussions among the staff of our DV agency, and we came to an agreement with our faith-based partners. In the end, we were able to strengthen our 40-hour training by including a panel on faith and spiritual traditions and making sure that it was relevant to all of our constituents. This was very positive for us as a DV agency.” - Jill Zawisza, WOMAN, Inc.

“We need to accept our role as a member of the team. Even when I don’t like my role, I’ve stayed ready. By doing so, we have been able to sustain our base of support among various faith institutions in Marin County.” - Bill Eichhorn, Marin Interfaith Council

“In the beginning, I sent out 50 invitations to pastors to come to an event and got NO responses. That was frustrating. But we kept going, and today we have trained members from 14 churches that are dedicated to being a “healthy
relationships church.” Eight churches have signed charge [commitment] statements, and we continue to work with the others to break the silence in our places of worship. Recently, I was at a church and they were reading the healthy relationships statement to the congregation. A community member said, ‘we move that this statement be accepted in our congregation’ And the entire congregation stood up!” - Pastor Juanita Mason, Antelope Upper Room Ministry

“We started with a community survey asking people ‘what are the needs in our community around issues of domestic violence? Where do survivors turn to?’ We learned that faith leaders are the first point of contact for many survivors. Over the years, we have developed multi-layered trainings, materials in Korean, community events, monthly meetings of faith leaders, education for seminary students, and a new Bible study curriculum. Emerging young people have gotten really excited and engaged in looking at those deeper meanings, implications of the Scripture, and have many questions they are able to address in our group. The designated two hours for the discussion never seems to be enough!” - Isabel Kang, Shimtuh

“We are working both within a Christian context as well as the Hmong clan system. We have been working to gain the support of General Vang Pao, a Hmong leader. Through all the advocacy work, we finally got his blessings and support. While there has been some resistance, ultimately, he has stated publicly: ‘DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HAS TO STOP IN OUR COMMUNITY.’ He agreed to make a public service
announcement and invited women to be part of the 18-clan council for the first time.” - Paula Yang, Hmong Sisterhood of Fresno

Sharing What We Know

Based on the themes and questions raised at the beginning of the ToK Gathering, participants suggested their own topics and self-selected for group discussion. Following are brief summaries of these discussion groups:

- Tool Shed: Sharing Practical Curricula and Strategies for Prevention
- What Does Social Justice Look Like for Survivors?
- Engaging Youth Using Media and Digital Technology
- Challenging Cultural Expectations
- Engaging Men and Boys
- Engaging Faith Leaders and Community Members
- How Do We Include Perspectives About Same-Sex Relationships?

Tool Shed: Sharing Practical Curricula and Strategies for Prevention

Members of this discussion group shared what they were looking for in terms of tools and resources for prevention.

“I would like resources for educating around healthy relationships that I can use in mosques, religious schools, and in training DV service providers around the unique needs that Muslim families face. I’ve been working for several years with imams and have found that it works best when I hand them something tangible like an already written sermon. We need to think outside the box to reach people. We’ve found it more
helpful, for example, to talk about “domestic peace” or “healthy families” rather than talking about “domestic violence.” – Zaria Tiffany Horton, Bridges of Family Harmony Coalition

“I agree with Zaria. We only have one booklet in the Korean language that we can give to pastors. We sometimes use videos from Korea, but there are cultural differences between Korea and Korean immigrant communities in the United States. It’s helpful for us to have local statistics that we can share with faith leaders to demonstrate that DV is a real problem in their congregations.” – Susan Ha, Do-WooRe Korean American Support Network for Domestic Violence in the South Bay

“I’m also looking for effective healthy relationships curricula that we can adapt and use with young people. We have been developing a pilot three-part series of classes at a private Catholic middle school. We started out thinking that we would choose a curriculum, but after being here and talking with others, I’m realizing that we need to focus more on how we will frame this so we can create lasting changes in the school culture. I want to explore how to enlist the support of adults at the school to create this culture shift, including a gender analysis. If we can do it well, we can then extend it into the 89 parishes.” – S. Marisela Sookraj, Mission Dolores/Ministers of Light

“Over the past 40 years, Hmong people have come to the U.S. from Laos and Thailand. This has created vast generational differences between parents, who have a lot of beliefs from our home country, and
youth, who are more Americanized. One aspect of this cultural shift is that we are transitioning from seeing the family as a very private space where men are allowed and supported to be violent and women and children are supposed to keep the family secret to a culture where we are more open-minded. The economy has made things worse. There is more DV and fewer people are willing to talk about it. We need to bring more community members into this conversation. Maybe we could have stipends for youth to lead discussion groups on this topic? We need to find ways to sustain the message over time.” — Mor Yang, Hmong Sisterhood of Fresno

Ultimately, the Tool Shed group ended up focusing on two key questions:

- How can we adapt existing healthy relationship resources to resonate more with our faith and cultural communities?
- How can we redefine our strategy from one-time presentations to transformation of a school or faith community culture?

Members spent time discussing participatory action research as a way to involve young people and adults in defining what healthy relationships mean to them, documenting what abuse is actually happening in the community, and using the surveys as a way to open up more conversations and build commitment and action around DV. We explored how to identify and gain the support of “gatekeepers” and “champions” in religious schools who could help lay a foundation for ongoing work to shift norms within the community. We also shared ideas of existing curricula and resources for creating safe and inclusive school communities.
What Does Social Justice Look Like for Survivors?

Highlights from this discussion included the **important role of faith communities to promote values such as safety, healing, justice, validation, protection and prevention.** It was important to participants that these communities hold perpetrators accountable for their abuse, including **not allowing abusers to hold a leadership role** or receive any honors. Under circumstances when violence does occur, the group emphasized that any intervention with survivors and/or abusers by faith leaders be done separately. In addition to the community’s role in intervening and responding to DV, the group held the importance of **faith leaders openly stating that they will not tolerate violent behavior.** It included faith and spiritual communities actively working to change the thinking and norms of their community in terms of how men look at women and how women view their own roles.

For survivors, group members envisioned them tapping into their own strength and creating the justice they want to see. This justice would include **survivors feeling the support of faith leaders “standing behind them,” believing them and not blaming them.**

How are we moving faith communities towards prevention while still addressing awareness building and the need for intervention services and batterer accountability?

**Engaging Youth Using Media and Digital Technology**

Youth Radio is an Oakland, California based organization that promotes young people’s intellectual, creative, and professional growth through education and access to media.
Youth Radio staff members began by sharing some examples of youth engagement strategies they have used, such as hosting open mic sessions for youth. Youth Radio staff has found great success in partnering with youth to host these events as uncensored spaces, emphasizing the importance of a venue for youth to speak honestly about their feelings and experiences. In this setting, the entire group establishes ground rules, including that the adults respect the judgment and decisions of the youth event organizers about the selection of the content of their open mic sessions (e.g. cursing).

Outside of the importance of creating a sense of ownership for youth for their activities and allowing them to self-police their environment, Youth Radio staff shared some additional guiding principles from their youth engagement work:

- 70% of urban youth are experiencing some form of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), higher than rates experienced by veterans returning from Iraq; offering activities for “self-mastery” is a form of healing and allows youth to build self-esteem, trust, expression; etc. Examples: poetry writing, art/painting, music.

- Framing is critical; adult allies need to use accessible, non-clinical language; youth don’t want to attend “gender specific support groups” but will attend a “re-mix your life” event that allows them to talk about their experience and the changes/remixes that they want to make.

- With social media like Facebook, respect their privacy. Rather than becoming personal friends with youth, consider creating a profile for the organization instead of yourself—this will clarify the relationship parameters for youth.

**Quick Tips from Youth Radio for Working with Youth:**

- Meet them where they are.
- Be yourself and be authentic.
- Use youth-friendly (accessible) language.
- Cultivate youth ownership of the space and culture where everyone has the responsibility to maintain respect, appreciation and accountability.
- Mix it up – do art, create events, make products together. Be interactive.
- Youth want to feel part of something bigger than they are.
- Give them the benefit of the doubt because youth are supposed to make mistakes and learn from their experience.
- Always turn an issue/challenge back to the group and ask them how they want to handle it.

**Challenging Cultural Expectations**

This group explored three intertwining threads about culture and domestic violence. First, it explored the long-standing
presence of domestic violence within all of our cultures of origin. In this thread members discussed how there are different rationales and practices to explain and enforce gender hierarchies. Second, the group discussed how cultures can be labeled “good” or “bad” with respect to gender and gender violence. In this discussion members reflected that all of our cultures carry histories of resistance, equality, and justice around the issue of gender. Participants also discussed that while sexism may have existed for thousands of years, a more recent historical understanding of colonization, imperial or neo-liberal economics, and wars of domination have a direct and current role in shaping each community’s resistance to and use of domestic violence. The third thread was to explore the ways in which cultural work (religion, peer group norms, music, language, history art, etc.) could promote positive relationships, family peace and community resilience.

In terms of key “takeaways” for our DV prevention and faith work, the group thought it was critical that we:

• Lift up, encourage and bring forward positive aspects of culture to encourage an environment of domestic peace;

• Identify ways in which we can challenge cultural expectations through:
  o Culturally-relevant community education;
  o Early intervention (working with youth);
  o Batterer intervention and perpetrator accountability;
  o Survivor intervention, support and safety;
  o Compassion, or as one member put it, “a lot of love.”

“Culture is a mindset and influence that others have on each other. As such, DV is a culture that is passed on to us from birth – it’s how we grow up learning how to deal with people. We also live in a culture of media and multiple forms of oppression. We need to be very aware of historical context as we develop a root cause analysis of what causes DV.” – ToK Participants

Engaging Men and Boys

Group members focused on how faith communities are well-positioned to: 1) **hold batterers accountable** for their violence; 2) **engage and prepare men to be allies** in preventing violence
against women; 3) more definitively establish their role in responding to violence when it happens.

The group discussed potential resources and materials that could be utilized by batterer intervention groups such as manalive, My Strength, scriptural texts and Safe, Strong and Free. There was consensus that men’s progress toward ending their violence should be celebrated while stressing accountability. The work should include a frame of restorative justice: accounting for the violence, the impact they had on the victim, acknowledging the unhealthy behavior, agreement to end unhealthy behavior and learn new, health behavior. Faith communities should be sure to engage even those men who have not yet been court ordered to a batterer’s group but who are abusive.

In terms in recruiting male allies in prevention work, the group emphasized the importance of not putting all men in the same category as abusive men. Men who have graduated from the batterer intervention groups could serve in a volunteer capacity as allies.

Survivors should be able to talk with their faith leaders about abuse and receive a clear message from leaders that the violence is not okay! Faith communities must create an environment that’s safe to discuss the violence, so survivors can trust that they will be heard.

“The MyStrength program invites men and boys to ‘be a hero’ and save someone else’s life. We share the story of some young men who overheard some guys talking about what they would do to a girl in a hotel room after a party – the young men stepped in and saved that girl’s life.”
—Eddie Zacapa, The Center For Violence Free Relationships
Engaging Faith Leaders and Community Members

This group discussion centered around how to best meet leaders and community members “where they are” and determine strategies for shifting their attitudes to be more supportive of domestic violence prevention efforts. Based on their collective experiences, the group shared the following strategies:

- Think creatively about “points of entry” within a faith community. Start small, such as with a women’s study group rather than the entire community.
- Display a willingness to develop a meaningful connection.
- Be persistent.
- Show up to events regularly.
- Speak up.
- Build a base with allies. If the leader is “too busy,” consider building relationships with others in the community who can champion the cause.
- Frame your message to the community, so that it is accessible to the audience.
- Consider making your case through a cost effectiveness framework.
- See TC-TAT’s resource: “USER’S GUIDE: Making the Case for DV Prevention Using A Cost Effective Framework” (Download)
- Celebrate and track your successes, even the small ones.

How Do We Include Perspectives About Same-Sex Relationships?

Several participants engaged in a fireside chat discussion of lesbian, gay, bisexual transgender and queer (LGBTQ) communities in DV prevention and faith work. Group members
shared experiences of LGBTQ survivors from their faith communities who reached out for support and were met with stereotypes and discrimination. Participants also discussed fearing that addressing the needs of LGBTQ survivors might make it harder to collaborate with faith communities who are reluctant enough to discuss the issue of domestic violence. They also identified community specific advocacy groups with whom they could create/strengthen partnerships.

One participant recounted a case where a survivor was forced into a male batterer’s intervention group based on stereotype rather than an assessment. Experiences like these decrease the likelihood of individuals reaching out for support, including support from their faith communities.

Participants noted the importance of a strong relationship with any local LGBTQ community centers, as these centers are often the first points of contact related to domestic violence. The group drew a connection between who we are taught to hate and gender violence. They identified that faith communities are in an excellent position to promote messaging counter to hate.

Some recommended resources include:

- GroundSpark (www.groundspark.org);
- Queens Pride House- a multicultural, multiethnic, multilingual queer space in Queens, New York that used to offer Christian services on Sundays (http://www.queenspridehouse.org/);
- Article with Richard Kim (http://www.democracynow.org/2010/10/13/while_celebrating_halt_to_dont_ask);
- Community United Against Violence (CUAV)’s website (www.cuav.org) and strategic plan (http://www.cuav.org/media/docs/2411_CUAV_StrategicPlan2009.pdf).

“I walked into a training with a bias [related to the LGBTQ community] and my trainer called me out on it. God dealt with me on my bias during that training. It was so awakening for me. When you “hate the sin, and love the sinner” you are still judging. I’m glad I experienced that so I wouldn’t be ignorant to helping.”

– Tuesday Nolan, Antelope Upper Room
Healing Circle

Many advocates recognize that the work to address and prevent DV is inherently healing work. This work attempts to heal generational wounds of violence and the effects of structural oppression. Those doing this work also need personal healing, whether they are survivors or are experiencing secondary trauma. Thus, there was an intentional “Spirit Space” created at the ToK Gathering created where people could go to meditate and find healing. This space was lovingly created with symbols from diverse faith and spiritual traditions.

A small group met at the ToK Gathering to convene a healing circle. Below are examples of texts that could easily be used in your own community to conduct a healing circle.

The Traveler’s Prayer:

May we be blessed as we go on our way.
May we be guided in peace.
May we be blessed with health and joy.
May this be our blessing, Amen.
May we be sheltered by wings of peace.
May we be kept in safety and in love.
May grace and compassion find their way to every soul.
May this be our blessing, Amen.

--Tefillat HaDerech

Those doing this work also need personal healing, whether they are survivors or are experiencing secondary trauma.
Healing circle prayer

This place where you are right now
God circled on a map for you.

Wherever your eyes and arms and heart can move
Against the earth and sky,
The Beloved has bowed there –

Our Beloved has bowed there knowing
You were coming

I could tell you a priceless secret about
Your real worth, dear pilgrim,

But any unkindness to yourself,
Any confusion about others,

Will keep one
From accepting the grace, the love,

The sublime freedom
Divine knowledge always offers to you.

Never mind, Hafiz, about
The great requirements this path demands
Of the wayfarers,

For your soul is too full of wine tonight
To withhold the wondrous Truth from this world.

But because I am so clever and generous,
I have already clearly woven a resplendent lock
Of His tresses

As a remarkable truth and gift
In this poem for you.

-- Hafiz, The Subject Tonight is Love
Prayer from the First “Interfaith Breakfast: A Call to End Violence Against Women”

We gather in sorrow as we recall so many women among us who have suffered rape, battering, harassment and abuse. We gather in anger that these things continue with no end in sight. We gather in hope that our commitment and our actions will matter. We come acknowledging that we have not always heard; we have not always acted; sometimes we have turned away rather than stand beside a woman who has been victimized.

Hear the cries of those who have been harmed, O God. We are here today and in every religious assembly throughout our land. Call to account those who have caused harm. Rebuke their careless and exploitive acts. Help us to teach them a better way. Enlighten those who are called upon to help—judges, police officers, doctors, clergy, legislators, therapists and others—so that their decisions and actions will bring forth justice and healing.

Send us forth as witnesses, renewed in our commitment to stand in solidarity with everyone who has been harmed by abuse and violence, encouraged in our efforts to comfort the afflicted and confront the assailants, and emboldened to speak out in or own communities so that silence may no more mask the injustice of violence against women.

We pray for God’s love and justice to heal our hurt and to bring us to that day when women no longer live in fear in their homes, their workplaces, their religious assemblies, or their communities.

Amen.

Prayer used at the first Interfaith Breakfast: A Call to End Violence Against Women, sponsored by the Center for Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, the National Council of Churches of Christ of the USA, and the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, October 11, 1996, Washington, DC.
Sharing Back Key Learnings

Participants shared back the essence of what they discussed through entertaining and humorous skits. A few video highlights can be found below.

Engaging Faith Leaders Video

Participants share their views on engaging faith leaders to help prevent domestic violence.

“Social justice won’t happen by itself. DV is everybody’s business – we need to step in as humans and as members of our community.”

“Shifting someone from a point of resistance to buy-in without losing face is essential. We need to give our ‘opponent’ – the person we are trying to convince -- the chance to do the right thing.”

“We need strategies that build on community strengths and create multi-layered approaches to shift the social norms around DV.”

“It’s about prevention and intervention and a lot of love!”

– ToK Participants
Participants speak on the importance of engaging young men early and seeing them as allies in preventing violence.

Participants explore the intersection of culture and domestic violence.
Summarizing Our Lessons Learned

Making Meaning and Sustaining Our Efforts

In an effort to create some collective meaning around the overall lessons learned at the ToK Gathering, facilitators determined that a small discussion process based on the World Café concept would accomplish this. The premise of a World Café process aligned with the overall assumptions of this event, that:

- The knowledge and wisdom we need are already present and accessible.
- Intelligence emerges as the system connects to itself in creative ways.
- Collective insight evolves from:
  - Honoring unique contributions;
  - Connecting ideas;
  - Listening into the middle;
  - Noticing deeper patterns and questions.

Small discussion groups formed to answer the following six questions. There were three progressive rounds where participants moved to a different table and different question with each round. This process allowed for ideas to build on one another and “cross-pollinate.” Below are the summaries of those discussion, three summarized through notes and three summarized by graphic recordings.
What Still Needs to Be Heard?

Participants responded to this question in two ways. They first identified specific voices or content areas that needed to be more present in DV prevention and faith work. Namely, *the voice and perspective from survivors* themselves was recognized as something to strengthen. Additionally, participants felt that a *focus on root causes of domestic violence* has been lacking in conversation. Faith leaders and advocates commented that their efforts often feel like “we are only dealing with certain branches of the problem.” They emphasized the importance of building connections between DV and other forms of violence such as war. Extending from this idea, participants highlighted the importance of understanding that we need to be accountable to any role we may play in perpetuating violence and move toward becoming peacemakers.

Second, the group identified what needs to be heard by different audiences:

**FAITH LEADERS:**

DV should not be tolerated in any community. We need you to be champions for respectful relationships and practice what you preach. There is a problem in your faith community. We’re going to keep coming! We’re here to help you so you can serve your community better. You don’t have to know everything; we can work together.

**FUNDERS:**

Funding prevention saves money in a big way! People working on domestic violence issues need more opportunities like this event to share their successes and challenges. We need space to remove ourselves from daily activities to reflect on why we do the work and how to do it better.

**POLICY MAKERS:**

Policymakers need to understand the impact of DV on all of society—it is a social problem, not an individual one. DV has severe economic costs for society: hospitals, police, mental health, etc. We need to focus and support healthy families through prevention. We need funding and policies that bring healthy relationships training into schools and elsewhere.
How Can We Keep the Fire Going?

Many group members referenced not choosing to do this work, but being chosen to do this work as something that helps to maintain their fire. However, even after an energizing and inspiring event, keeping the fire going once you are back in your community can sometimes be tough. The group acknowledged this complexity and strategized different ways to stay connected—both with the work and one another:

- Sometimes our work can begin to feel narrow. This has a tendency to decrease our connectedness and lead to burn out. Therefore it’s critical that we continue to integrate our work and infuse it with new ideas from each other.

- To promote connectedness, it can help to create a commitment with a group of people to stay connected. The group can establish the preferred means of communication (phone, email, etc.) and can collectively “give each other permission” to reach out at any time—even if you are worried about “bothering” someone else who is very busy.

- Establish a smaller local or regional network and commit to meeting in person on a regular basis.

- “Keep the fire going” by inspiring others with what you were inspired by at the event.

- When you are feeling low on fuel, look outside of the work to reground—this could include maintaining connection with family and friends, prayer, inspirational reading, taking a hike, etc.

“I’m going to make a plug for self-care and everyone being realistic about what they can do. I also think it’s important that we don’t feel bad about the things we can’t do, because we lack the training or due to capacity issues. I encourage us all to stay connected with social networks and systems of support. Without a life outside of our stressful work, I don’t know how you can keep a fire going.” - Jill Zawisza, WOMAN, Inc
What Is Your Greatest Challenge Going Back Into Your Community?

Group members shared a variety of challenges they foresee in returning to their communities, many of which they had in common. One of the primary challenges identified was in conveying to their broader community that DV prevention should be a shared priority. Often DV prevention seems to get lost among a myriad of other community needs. There was consensus that one key to overcoming this challenge is identifying the “hook” or framing the message specific to the community being addressed.

A challenge stemming from these efforts is to be patient and truly listen to those you are outreaching to without criticizing their response (or lack of response). Group members emphasized the importance of the community breaking through resistances together and finding common ground.

More specifically, some discussion focused on engaging youth. Youth were identified as an asset in terms of being able to “pass the message up to the parents’ generation.” However it felt challenging for participants to figure out how best to make the issue relevant to youth, “using the right language,” and supporting young people to have the confidence to move forward and realize they have a voice.

“Sometimes DV prevention can get lost. There’s so much other oppression that we’re responding to in the Muslim community.”

Often, DV prevention work in faith communities is very complicated and difficult to explain. What follows are visual recordings of discussions among faith leaders and DV advocates. These interactive recordings illustrate some of those concepts that are difficult to describe or summarize in words. By clicking on each recording, you can explore the various elements close up. Consider using one or all of them as resources to spark or share ideas within your organization, community partners or funders. These recordings were created by Karen Perkins, Leslie Salmon-Zhu and Susan Kelly, respectively.
How can you build on what you learned here to take concrete next steps in your community? (Click here to see enlarged and interactive image for more detail)

If your success were completely guaranteed, what bold steps might you choose? (Click here to see enlarged and interactive image for more detail)
How has your work made it easier for the next generation to keep this work going forward? (Click here to see enlarged and interactive image for more detail)

What are your overall reflections on the ToK Gathering? (Click here to see enlarged and interactive image for more detail)
How Do We Talk About Our Impact?
Measurements of Success

Through the long-term, collaborative work of faith leaders and DV advocates, positive changes in how faith communities acknowledge, respond to and prevent domestic violence are taking place across California. Yet, we all still struggle with how to best describe our impact. Changing social norms takes time. How do we describe the impact of planting or watering seeds to change deeply-held religious and social norms related to gender roles and domestic violence?

Based on learnings over the past 8 years, TC-TAT developed the Spectrums of Faith Community Change Tool. This tool expands on Contra Costa Health Services’ Spectrum of Prevention and provides real-life faith partnership examples related to each of the eight levels of change.

Additionally, TC-TAT has found the 5 Indicators of Social Change, developed by the Women’s Funding Network, to be a helpful tool for describing our impact. This tool helps us to articulate changes in definition, behavior, engagement, policies, and sustainability related to domestic violence and its prevention.

“We are seeing changes at so many levels – definition, behavior, engagement, policies. We led prevention activities at our church that culminated in a skit about the different types of abuse. Members came up and said, ‘you’re talking about me.’ We invited Pastor Mason to deliver a sermon on DV. She then presented our church with a plaque saying we are a ‘healthy relationships church.’ I cried when that happened because I understood what it meant. As a result of that sermon, we now have a group of church members who are committed to participate in a 40-hour training at our local DV agency and now, at the bottom of the church website, we have a tag line that says: ‘We support healthy and equal relationships.’

– Nancy Johnson, Cornerstone Community Church of God in Christ with Marin Faith Project
Stories of Social Change

Adapted and drawn from the 5 Indicators of Social Change, here are some examples of each of these indicators drawn from work in faith communities.

In sharing our stories, we honor the complexity and long-term nature of social change work while demonstrating that we are, indeed, achieving real impact in our communities. Sharing our stories can be a powerful way to articulate our collective social change impact. Using the five indicators of social change can help us to demonstrate to funders and other leaders that our work has tangible results. As a way to encourage all of us to deepen our evaluation skills and ability to describe our impact, TC-TAT introduced the five indicators of social change at the ToK Gathering and gathered stories from participants about changes in each of the five areas. (If you are interested in collecting stories in your community, see the Appendix page 53 for a link to printable cards.) Following are some of these stories shared at the ToK Gathering.

Title View of the Creating Healthy Relationships Graphic Recorder’s capture of the ToK Strategic Reflections and Core Lessons
License to Freedom, a DV prevention organization working with refugee communities in San Diego, partnered with the Al Salaam Mosque. Through this partnership, License to Freedom overcame initial resistance from the imam, faith leaders, staff and other members of the Mosque community to cultivate an understanding that DV is not acceptable and is preventable.

“For ten years, I facilitated classes for a batterer intervention program. Through the curriculum and the participants' experience, I helped men shift their definition of violence from "punching someone" to an understanding of physical, emotional, economic, verbal, sexual and spiritual abuse.”
– Bill Eichhorn, Marin Interfaith Council

“We want to clarify the misconception that if a survivor uses violence to fight back, they are a batterer themselves. Many survivors, after continued abuse, finally react or defend themselves violently. It is important that we, as advocates, provide clarity and don't perpetuate the blame the survivor has experienced from the batterer, law enforcement and themselves.”  –Jill Zawiza, WOMAN, Inc.

“We are shifting definitions in the Korean-American immigrant faith community from not talking about DV to talking about how the Bible does not support DV. We are also shifting from the idea that marriage means being the property of someone to the idea that God wants people to live as happy children of God regardless of gender”  – Do Woo Ree Team

“We are breaking the silence. DV happens in Jewish communities, too. Jewish texts, traditions and rituals can create POSITIVE CHANGE rather than perpetuate the problem. We are understanding power (and its misuses) in new ways.”  – Naomi Tucker, Shalom Bayit

“Domestic Peace is such an uplifting way of stating our vision—the move from reducing victimization to creating healthy relationships. The ultimate vision is still the same but now we are crafting it as a positive vs. a reaction to violence.”  –ToK Participant
**Shift in Behavior**

Through a collaboration between Survivor’s International, a Thai temple, and Ven. Siddhipon, (the abbot of WatBuddhapradeep), temple leaders not only distributed new informational materials and resources about DV, but also began to practice the sharing of a *Dharma*—or teaching from the Buddha—for women who experienced violence.

“For the first time that I can remember, faith leaders are reaching out to our organization and asking for training around healthy relationships and domestic violence. The pastor that called our office is a voice in the community with influence that reaches other faith leaders in the community. This is a step in the right direction.” – *Claudia Humphrey*, LIFT 3 Support Group

“We need to reframe the question ‘Why does she stay?’ as it is victim-blaming. Instead, we should ask ‘Why does a batterer feel it is appropriate to intentionally hurt someone they claim to love?’ Or ‘What are the obstacles that a survivor faces in trying to leave an abusive relationship? And how can I help to empower the survivor in this process?’”

– *Jill Zawiza*, WOMAN, Inc.

“We are asking: What is the norm in this group? What is acceptable or unacceptable behavior? Who is the leader? Do you want to work in peace and harmony or with hostility?” – *ToK Participant*

“It's personal. My shift in behavior blossomed out of my shift in definition. First, my definition of Domestic Violence changed with the knowledge that DV is not only physical. Secondly, I learned that I was a victim of DV and my pain led me to stop permitting myself to endure it and to change my behavior. This change has propelled me into survivorship mode, giving me a more fruitful lifestyle. I feel liberated.” — *Sheryl*, Choice Domestic Violence/The Bible Way Ministry

“More rabbis now believe battered women and respond positively to them.” – *Naomi Tucker*, Shalom Bayit
“I approached a group of leaders at our church regarding our response to the victimization of women members being afraid to disclose. We created a task force made of women and men to respond to incidents of violence.” – Rev. Eunice Shaw, Allen Temple Health and Social Ministries

“We are seeing more men in the movement. They have the courage to speak out in communities with cultural biases that make it dangerous to be an "outlier."’’ – ToK Participant

“My peers often use derogatory terms and call women disrespectful words. When I am around them, I tell them that’s not healthy and is inappropriate. They often laugh and say I sound like a square. Then I take it and reverse it on them and be like what if someone was doing the same thing to a woman that you really care about, whether your girlfriend/mother/sister/etc. This lets them experience it differently.” – ToK Participant
Shift in Engagement

Shimtuh, the first Korean-American DV program in the Bay Area, has successfully engaged Korean-American faith leaders representing Christian, Catholic and Buddhist communities. This was the first time that diverse Korean-American faith communities worked together towards the collective goal of preventing DV.

“Our agency has gotten one of the local police departments to work with us by giving a spreadsheet of DV incidents every month. When we first made contact with the police department, they said ‘there is no DV in our city.’ We were able to show them a number of all the clients for that city that we assisted that made them realize that DV was actually happening there.” –ToK Participant

“A Catholic middle school recently offered three 45-minute religion classes to talk about teen abuse and healthy relationships – the first time this is happening. My ministry is attempting to effectively respond to this incredible offer.” – S. Marisela Sookraj, Mission Dolores/Minsters of Light

“We now have a DV sermon and are able to provide workshops for Muslim and non-Muslim communities.” –ToK Participant

“I am glad that I had an opportunity to connect with Youth Radio in order to better engage the youth in my community on the issue of healthy relationships. I believe that youth in public schools are interested, but my barrier in the past has been selling the idea to teachers, principals, etc. who are the gatekeepers to youth in the public school system. My engagement will be to set aside time to brainstorm my strategy and approach with Youth Radio before re-engaging with the school system. – Claudia Humphrey, LIFT 3 Support Group

"We developed a group of sisters in ministry to discuss issues of Domestic Violence and develop sermon outlines. We made a commitment to preach one sermon on the issue of Domestic Violence every year." - Rev. Eunice Shaw, Allen Temple Health and Social Ministries

“From the early days of recruiting leaders from faith communities, we now have those leaders taking ownership to outreach and educate their communities, even doing interventions. Faith leaders are now taking the issue of DV to pulpits and setting the tone. We also have seen faith leaders who protected and advocated for
survivors who were shunned from seeking leadership positions because of the stigma of being a divorced woman due to domestic violence.” — Isabel Kang, Shimtuh Korean Community Center of the East Bay

Shift in Policies and Practices

The Marin Faith Communities Nonviolence Project launched a countywide campaign during the Season of Nonviolence to raise DV awareness. Through a collaborative partnership between Community Congregational Church of Tiburon, Marin Abused Women’s Services, and Marin Interfaith Council, one of the participating churches implemented a Safe Church Policy that includes zero tolerance for domestic violence as well as protocols for responding to abuse.

“The archdiocese now has domestic violence outreach to 89 parishes.” — S. Marisela Sookraj, Mission Dolores/Minsters of Light

“A shift in policy that occurred at Green Valley Church consisted in the church deciding to do a sermon during domestic violence awareness month. The church also partnered with the Center for Violence-Free Relationships and committed to allow us to have booths at all their services for that month. The booth consisted of resources on domestic violence and someone who could answer questions. Green Valley Church also committed to a DV training for leadership every year.” — Eddie Zacapa – The Center for Violence-Free Relationships

“With a new executive director who is passionate about domestic violence work in the Arab community, she shifted gears for the center to be proactive in the field. She recruited volunteers to take DV trainings, and started a program with the volunteers to work in the field. Our DV work is now an established program at the center with a full-time case manager serving many clients in the Bay Area.” — Vera, Arab Cultural and Community Centre

“Our church made a formal statement denouncing DV, established a DV advocacy program, a 24-hour hotline, and an intervention team for immediate response. In the area of prevention, we established a prevention program with middle school and high school students.” —ToK Participant

“We were able to make a policy shift in our Hmong community – after all of our work raising awareness of DV issues, Hmong women were to sit on the 18-clan council of men that is culturally regulated in our community.” — ToK Participant
Sustaining Our Efforts

SafeQuest Solano and the Christian Body Life Church partnered to operate a MyStrength program for its faith-based youth groups to prevent teen dating violence. Despite challenges in locating funding to support this program, the project’s leaders have continued to engage youth in these activities and to offer a safe space for group members to become aware about domestic violence, increase their self-confidence and develop their leadership/mentoring skills.

“We created a survivor steering committee and a strong community of allies. Our sustainability strategy includes building our volunteer power strategically and effectively – there’s no substitute for empowering community volunteers and building sustainability by constantly growing. We are also working to gain support; it’s not just about money, but we do need to learn how to fundraise effectively. We will create a blog with clergy leaders as allies using community organizing model to get buy-in and build ongoing relationships. We also plan to cultivate ongoing relationships with clergy and leader allies with training and regular engagement.” – S. Marisela Sookraj, Mission Dolores/Minsters of Light

“For me, the key to sustaining my work for about 15 years is healthy relationships in my own professional and personal life. I have boundaries (after learning from times when I didn't). I apply them to all aspects of work and my interactions—clients, staff and bosses. I work hard, but I go home and work isn't allowed to come with me. If it does, I'm compensated for it. Work, clients, staff, bosses aren't allowed to take time away from my family, my dog, my friends—and vice versa.” –ToK Participant
Best Practices for Interfaith Efforts

Over time, TC-TAT has endeavored to hold an interfaith space that allows the expertise and traditions of participants to transcend any divergent faith or spiritual traditions. Often this involves inviting participants from diverse faith traditions to share inspirational prayers and rituals throughout an event. This is a way to demonstrate how elements of specific faiths can be tailored and integrated with DV prevention efforts in an interfaith way. A quiet room at an event space can be designated as a “Spirit Space.” Modeled after the “Safe Spaces” frequently used at anti-violence gatherings, this space allows participants a place to decompress from and reflect on the often difficult content shared at the event. It can include candles, music and be decorated by inspirational items by participants.

Creating interfaith spaces requires intentional planning and at times can be challenging. Participants have relayed experiences when they had to defend or were expected to serve as an ambassador for their respective faith. At times, participants have suggested more inclusive language when referring to a place of worship, for example: “not talking about ‘church’ all the time” and felt as though such requests were not respected by all. In some instances, participants have reported others making broad assumptions about non-dominant faiths that felt isolating.

Through these experiences and incorporating feedback from participants, what follows are some suggestions for working toward true interfaith collaboration.

- In scheduling, do everything possible to ensure you avoid major faith events.
- Intentionally recruit those from non-dominant faith groups for leadership roles.
- Ahead of an event, be clear about the interfaith nature of the gathering, defining what that means for both participants and presenters.
- At the event, establish group agreements, including standards around language. Provide examples and explain why this is important to garner group support.
- Bring in faith-specific traditions yet be aware and inclusive of inter-faith context. Be transparent in how these pieces are shared.
  - “I'm going to share with you a piece of my tradition to show you an example of how you can incorporate it into your DV prevention. It's up to you if you want to participate. There is no expectation for you to repeat or believe in something you don't—just to look at it as an example.”
- Create active support for those who might experience marginalizing and/or offensive comments/questioning.
- Name and talk about the often unspoken oppression of non-dominant groups.
  - “Does the issue (DV) matter more than our differences do?”
  - “What are the ways that division exists in our group?”
  - “How do we talk about resistance that may exist for some as we work toward interfaith efforts?”
Faith leaders and DV advocates engaged in this work repeatedly express an interest in sustaining their efforts and utilizing one another as a peer support network. Outside of resources included in this publication, in the Appendix on page 53 you will find a listing of organizations and communities with solid commitments and evolving expertise in preventing domestic violence in faith communities. We encourage you to reach out to one another and strengthen the network of this growing community. You can also join the Collaboratives for Community Change Faith Ning Community (CLICK HERE) – an interactive website where you can be inspired by, pose questions to, and dialogue with others engaged in this work.
Online Appendices / Links

- **About Transforming Communities: Technical Assistance, Training and Resource Center** ([LINK](#))

- **Spectrum of Faith Community Change** ([Download](#))
  - Provides real-life examples of DV prevention projects implemented by local teams of faith leaders and advocates across California, including success stories, lessons learned, and referrals to resources and materials.

- **Collaboratives for Community Change Outcomes and Evaluation Tool**
  - Briefly describes DV prevention activities happening in faith and spiritual community across California and provides a tool for evaluating these efforts.
    - Cohort 1 (2008-2009) ([LINK](#))
    - Cohort 2 (2009-2010) ([LINK](#))
    - Evaluation Plan Template ([LINK](#))

- **Case Studies** ([LINK](#))

- **Faith Roadmap** ([Download](#))
  - A guide for faith leaders and advocates to help build prevention partnerships in their communities with critical questions related to partnership building and joint strategic planning.

- **Faith in Violence-Free Families Work Book** ([LINK](#))

- **“Practicing Transformation: Keeping the Spirit of Prevention Alive”** ([LINK](#))
  - An article from TC-TAT’s Summer 2010 *Catalyst* resource newsletter.

- **List of Participants at the ToK Gathering** ([printable](#))

- **Bicycle Activity** ([printable](#))

- **5 Indicators of Social Change Cards** ([printable](#))
# List of Participants

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<td>Antelope Upper Room Ministry</td>
<td>Antelope</td>
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<td>Arab Cultural &amp; Community Centre (ACCC)</td>
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