

PREVENTING RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE: A MUSLIM RESPONSE

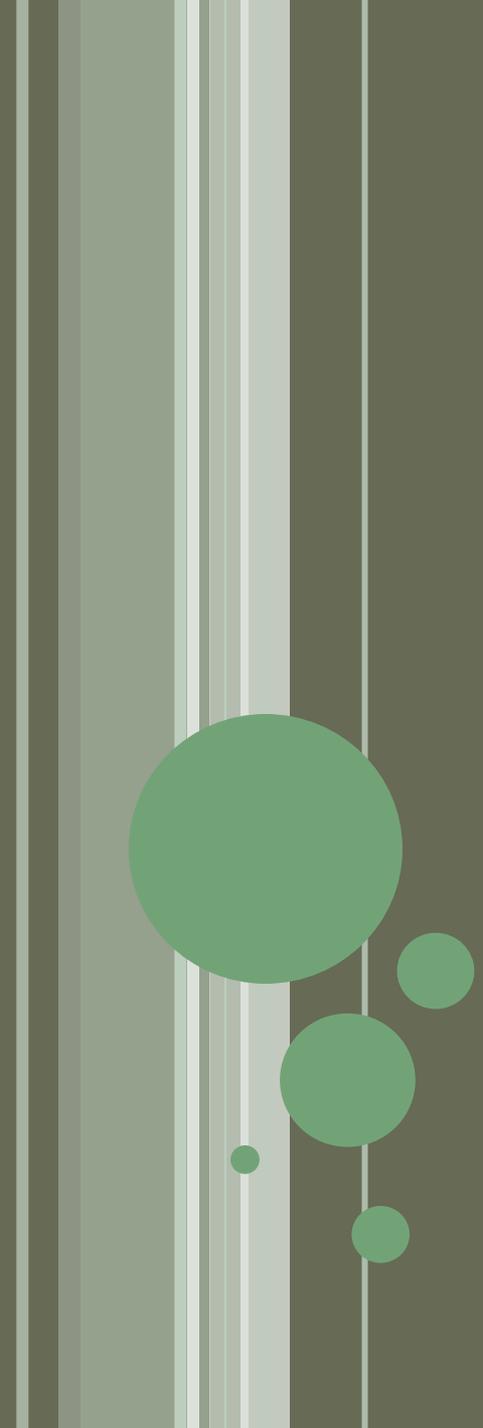
**Salma Elkadi Abugideiri, LPC
Co-Director, Peaceful Families Project**

**Islamic Center of Boston
March 26, 2011**

BEFORE WE BEGIN

- ▶ **Self-care:** This subject matter may trigger memories of personal experiences if you have ever witnessed or experienced any kind of domestic violence or other forms of abuse or torture
- ▶ **Please Silence Your Cell Phone** 
- ▶ **Confidentiality**
 - Sometimes people share personal experiences. All personal material shared **MUST** remain in this room and **NOT** be shared
- ▶ **Non-judgmental attitude**
 - Listen with the goal of increasing understanding. Keep an open mind when people share or ask questions.





ISLAMIC MODEL OF A HEALTH FAMILY

ISLAM: A PREVENTIVE MODEL

- Applying Qur'anic teachings & following model of the Prophet (pbuh) prevents major problems
- Important to analyze cultural practices in light of Islamic teachings
- Many cultural practices are un-Islamic
- Important to recognize that marriage requires *jihad* (struggle) of the *nafs* (self)—thus it is half of our *deen* (religion)



Core Values

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ
مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ
عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا

Taqwa (God-
Consciousness)

Equality

Mutuality

O mankind! reverence your Guardian-Lord, who created you from a single person, created, of like nature, His mate, and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women;- reverence Allah, through whom ye demand your mutual (rights), and (reverence) the wombs (That bore you): for Allah ever watches over you. (4:1)

Men & Women

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا
وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ
خَبِيرٌ

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, *that ye may know each other* (not that ye may despise (each other)). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things). (49:13)

Different by design

Must get to know each other

Only superiority is in degree of *taqwa*

Allah is watching over all

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ
الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

The Believers, men and women, are protectors one of another: they enjoin what is just, and forbid what is evil: they observe regular prayers, practice regular charity, and obey Allah and His Messenger. On them will Allah pour His mercy: for Allah is Exalted in power, Wise. (9:71)

Relationship Between Men & Women

Mutual
responsibility to
take care of each
other

Mutual
responsibility to
advise each other

Obedience to
Allah

- Marriage is mutual relationship between two equal partners designed to meet both spouses' needs & to provide foundation for healthy family

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا
 وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ
 يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

- “And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily in that are Signs for those who reflect.” (30:21)

Spouses
 created for one
 another

Sakeenah
 (Tranquility)

Mawaddah
 (Love)

Rahmah
 (Mercy)

Broader than
 rights &
 responsibilities

How Spouses Relate to Each Other

- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَرِثُوا النِّسَاءَ كَرِهًا وَلَا تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ لِتَذْهَبُوا بِبَعْضِ مَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُبَيِّنَةٍ وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا
- “....nor should you treat them with harshness.... live with them on a footing of kindness and equity...” (4:19)
- وَالَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ
- “[The believers are] those who (conduct) their affairs by mutual Consultation....” (42:38)

Mutual care-taking,
loving, nurturing

Mutual
consultation for
making decisions

Respect

Kindness

Mercy

Humility

CREATE A CARE LABEL

هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَهُنَّ

“....They are your garments and you are their garments...” (2:187)

What is a garment? And how do you care for it?

- How do you need to be treated...
 - To feel loved?
 - When you are down?
 - When you have accomplished something?
- How does your spouse need to be treated?

Gender Roles

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى
بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَانِتَاتٌ
حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ وَاللَّاتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ
فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاضْرِبُوهُنَّ فَإِنِ
أَطَعْنَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا

Men are the protectors & maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means....(4:34)

Allah (swt) is the Creator of both spouses

Each spouse accountable to Allah

Allah gave men an added *responsibility* of financial support

This is NOT a right to be a dictator or tyrant, which is oppression

Obedience

فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَانِتَاتٌ حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ

“...Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient (*qanitaat*), and guard in (the husband’s absence) what Allah would have them guard...” (4:34)

Each spouse must obey Allah

Qanitaat refers to obedience to Allah, not the husband

Obedience to the husband is within the context of obedience to Allah. His leadership should follow model of Prophet (pbuh)

A Special Verse for a Specific Case

وَاللَّاتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي
الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاضْرِبُوهُنَّ فَإِنْ أَطَعْنَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ
سَبِيلًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا

“...As to those women on whose part you fear disloyalty and ill-conduct (nushuz), admonish them first, then refuse to share their beds, and lastly wadribuhunna, but if they return to obedience, seek not against them means of annoyance, for Allah is Most High, Great” (4:34)

For *specific* situation involving immoral behavior

Must begin with communication

Separate beds emphasizes severity

Daraba has multiple meanings including to leave, separate, strike, tap

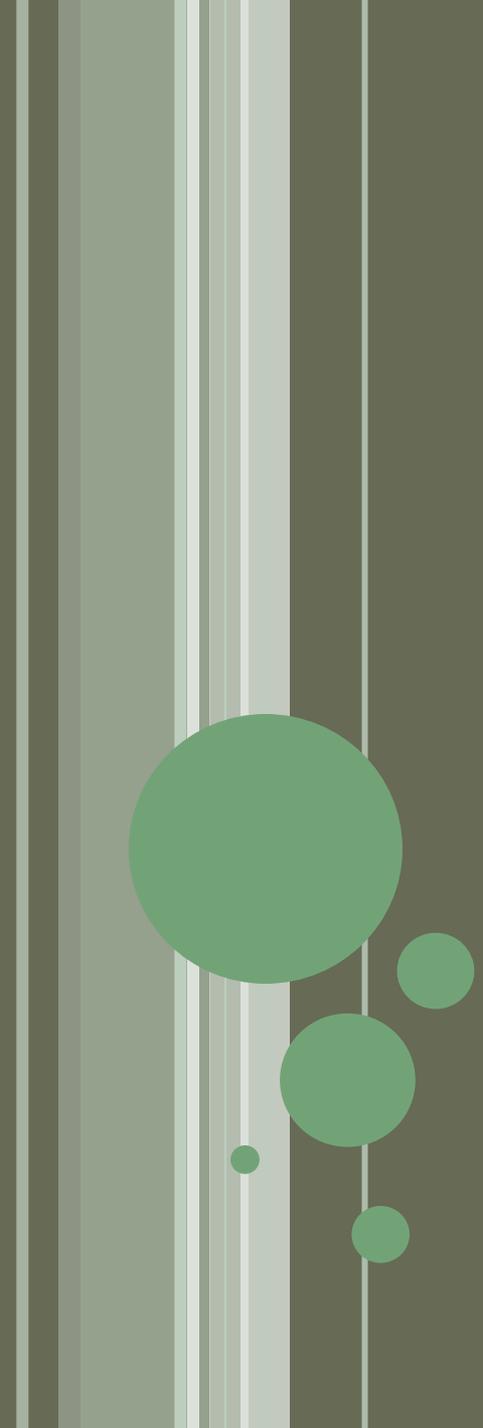
The Prophet (pbuh) was known to never hit a woman or child

THE HUSBAND'S NUSHUZ

وَإِنْ امْرَأَةٌ خَافَتْ مِنْ بَعْلِهَا نُشُوزًا أَوْ إِعْرَاضًا فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا أَنْ يُصْلِحَا بَيْنَهُمَا صُلْحًا وَالصُّلْحُ خَيْرٌ وَأُحْضِرَتِ الْأَنْفُسُ الشُّحَّ وَإِنْ تُحْسِنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا

If a wife fears cruelty or desertion on her husband's part, there is no blame on them if they arrange an amicable settlement between themselves; and such settlement is best; even though men's souls are swayed by greed. But if you do good and practice self-restraint, Allah is well-acquainted with all that you do. (4:128)





WHAT IS ABUSE?

Understanding Domestic Violence
from an Islamic Perspective

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: A FORM OF OPPRESSION (*ZULM*)

- Identified in the Qur'an as aggression, wrongdoing, harsh treatment, harm or injury
- Violates Qur'anic injunctions to treat each other with compassion, justice & respect
- The Qur'an & Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) frequently remind men to be kind to women & children, and warns them about abusing their authority as head of the household.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

A **pattern** of physically,
sexually, and/or emotionally
abusive behaviors used by one
individual to maintain **power**
over, or control, a partner in the
context of an intimate or
family relationship



ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR IS PROHIBITED

- Contradicts the model of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in his treatment of his family members

"The Muslim is he from whose tongue and hand a Muslim is safe..." (Bukhari & Muslim)

"The most perfect of the believers is the best of you in character, and the best of you are those among you who are best to their wives." (Tirmidhi)

*"The blame is only against those who oppress people with wrong-doing & insolently transgress beyond bounds through the land, defying right & justice...."
(42:42)*

“NOT A MUSLIM PROBLEM”

- Domestic Violence occurs in ALL ethnic, religious, socio-economic groups
- 1993 survey of Muslims found that 1 in 10 Muslims experienced physical abuse*
- 2007 study of Muslims seeking counseling found almost 50% had experienced some type of abuse at home**
- 2009 Soundvision study: 12-18% reported physical abuse; 30-40% reported emotional abuse

*Sharifa Alkhateeb, National survey of 63 Muslim leaders and community members

**Salma Abugideiri, *Change from Within: Diverse Perspectives on Domestic Violence in Muslim Communities*, Peaceful Families Project, 2007



WHO CAN BE INVOLVED IN ABUSE?

Perpetrators

- Can be anyone in the family who has power
 - Spouse
 - Parent
 - Adult or teenage child
 - In-law
 - Other relative
- Can be anyone trusted by the family
 - Household help
 - Tutors
 - Close family friends

Victims

- Women & children most at risk
- 85% of victims of domestic violence are female
- Occurs when authority of perpetrator is challenged (victims steps out of designated submissive role)



PHYSICAL ABUSE

- Neglecting physical needs
 - Food, shelter, medical care, etc
- Pinching, hitting, pushing, slapping, kicking
- Pulling hair
- Using a weapon (knife, belt, electric cord, hanger, rod, etc)
- Throwing objects, using physical restraint
- Forced tickling (often used with children)



VERBAL ABUSE

Insults
Name-Calling
Mocking

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرُونَ قَوْمًا مِّن قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ
وَلَا نِسَاءً مِّن نِّسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلَا
تَنَابَزُوا بِاللِّقَابِ بَشَسِ الْأَسْمَاءِ الْفُسُوقِ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ وَمَن لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ
هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿١١﴾



JUST AS HORRIBLE, BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO SUFFER IN SILENCE. CALL THE AUTHOR HELPING FOR ADVICE AND SUPPORT. MONDAY TO FRIDAY FROM 10PM TO 8.30

“...Let not some men among you laugh at others...nor let some women laugh at others....nor defame nor be sarcastic to each other, nor call each other by offensive nicknames.....” (49:11)

MORE FORMS OF ABUSE

○ Financial

- Confiscating her paycheck
- Making her feel guilty that he provides for her
- No access to financial information
- Not providing for her even if he has the means
- Depriving her & children of basic needs (food, clothing, shelter)

○ Sexual

- Forced sexual relations
- Sexual deprivation,
- Sex during prohibited times, or in uncomfortable manner
- Forced to watch pornography



“INVISIBLE” FORMS OF ABUSE

Emotional Abuse

- Ignoring
- Withholding affection
- Offensive jokes
- Humiliation
- Threats
 - to injure, to take kids, to deport, to ruin reputation, to divorce her

Emotional Abuse

- Restrictive Behavior
 - Limiting access to education, mosque, family, etc
 - Monitoring
 - Whereabouts, phone, email
 - Not providing a house key
 - Not allowing her to drive
 - No access to money

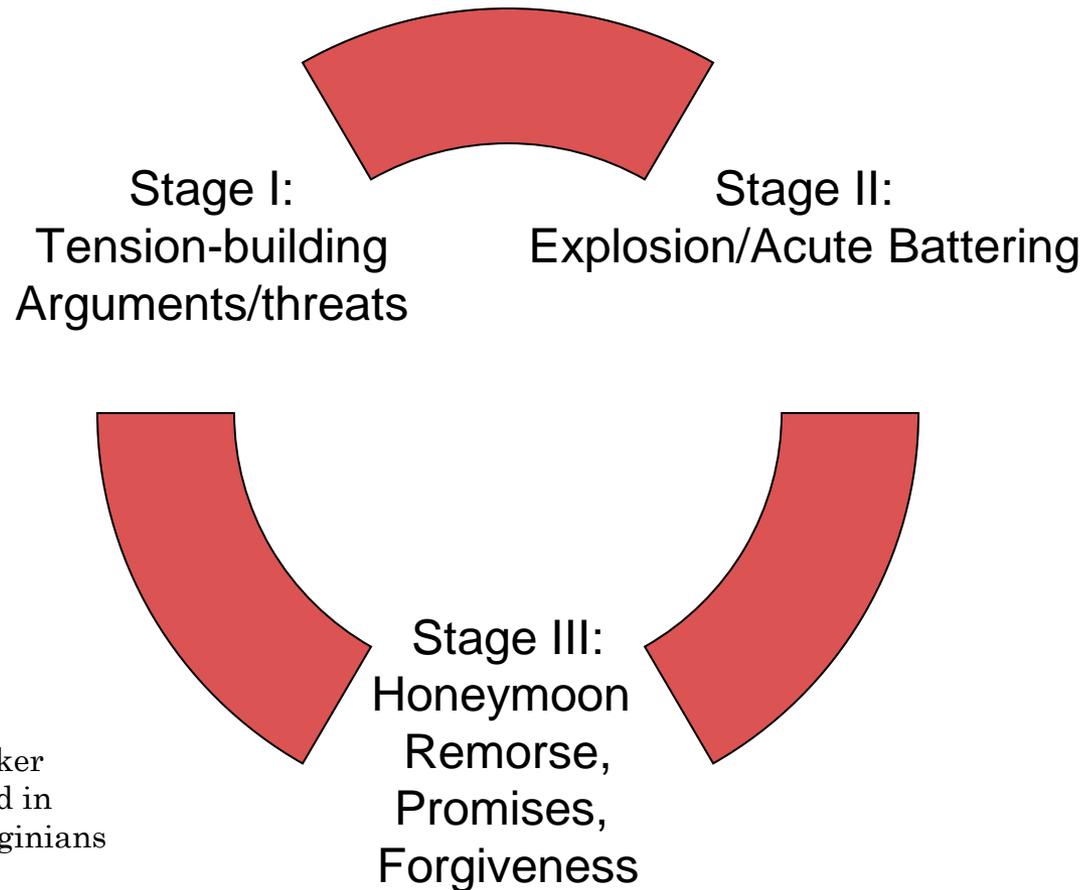


SPIRITUAL ABUSE

- Labeling her as bad Muslim if she has a different opinion, telling her she is going to hell for correcting him or asserting herself
- Misuse of hadith or Qur'an to manipulate spouse or child
 - Concept of *qiwaamah* to keep her subservient & submissive
 - Concept of obedient wife to take away her freedom
- Forcing or interfering with *`ibaadah* (worship)
- Imposing ethical dilemma
 - Ordering her to do something (obedience) that conflicts with Islam (intimacy while fasting, intimacy after pronouncing *talaaq*)



CYCLE OF VIOLENCE



Adapted from Lenore Walker
The Battered Woman, cited in
*Training for Trainers, Virginians
Against
Domestic Violence*, 2002.



ICE

- Intent: What is the goal of the behavior? Was it used to establish control over someone else?
- Context: What is the relationship context? What has been happening in the relationship over time?
- Effect: Is someone being controlled, manipulated, coerced, exploited, or hurt?



WHAT CAUSES DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

- Learned through observation
- Learned through experience & reinforcement
 - In the family
 - In the community
 - In the mosque
 - In the media (tv, movies, music, etc)
- Perpetuated because it is tolerated
 - Denial that it exists; minimization of impact
 - No one wants to get involved



EXACERBATING FACTORS: NOT AN EXCUSE

- Stressors (loss of job, financial strain, etc)
- Circumstances of immigration (refugees may have been tortured; experienced harsh living conditions: malnutrition, inadequate shelter, living in the wild; loss of family members)
- Depression, anxiety, or post-traumatic stress disorder
- Living under oppressive regime

MUST GET TREATMENT



IMPACT OF ABUSE ON THE FAMILY

- Tense, hostile environment
- Climate of fear
- Secrecy & Isolation
- Departure from Qur'anic model
- Anger & resentment instead of peace & tranquility
- Psychological symptoms:
 - Depression
 - Anxiety
 - Suicidality
 - Lack of focus
 - Decreased spirituality
 - Impaired parenting skills

IMPACT OF ABUSE ON KIDS

- Unhealthy model of relationships
- May be caught in cross-fire
- Kids in homes where a parent is abused are more likely to be abused than other kids
- Psychological problems
 - Low self-esteem
 - Self-blame
 - Lower grades
 - Anxiety
 - Nightmares
 - Bed-wetting
 - Drugs, gangs, running away

LONG-TERM EFFECTS ON COMMUNITY

- Intergenerational cycle of violence
 - Tendency to re-create familiar relationships
- Resources drained to provide support services to victims & treatment to abusers
- Family units are destroyed, weakening foundation of the community
- Violence spreads from the home to the society



PREVENTION

- ▶ Speak about domestic violence in *khutbahs* (sermons) & *halaqahs* (study circles)
- ▶ Provide workshops on healthy relationships
- ▶ Address commonly misunderstood concepts
 - *Qiwaamah*, obedience, keeping problems private
- ▶ Convey attitude of zero tolerance for violence
- ▶ Distribute information about domestic violence & available resources
- ▶ Offer premarital counseling

PRIMARY GOAL: SAFETY

- Assess risks
 - Weapons, threats to harm or kill, previous injuries
- Maintain confidentiality
 - Sharing information can lead to fatality
- Develop safety plan
 - What documents to have accessible
 - Money
 - Exit plan

INTERVENTION

- ▶ Make the community a safe place for victims to come forward
 - ▶ Listen & Believe
 - ▶ Emphasize safety of the victim
- ▶ Hold abusers accountable
 - Regardless of their position & status
- ▶ Be aware of resources & utilize referrals
- ▶ Work collaboratively with other organizations & professionals

DIVORCE: A PEACEFUL SOLUTION WHEN SAFETY CANNOT BE ENSURED

- A legitimate option after exhausting all other means
- Divorce is regulated to prevent injustice to either side, but especially to women
- “...the husbands should either retain their wives on equitable terms or let them go with kindness.” (2:229)

الطَّلَاقُ مَرَّتَانٍ فَإِمْسَاكٌ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ تَسْرِيحٌ بِإِحْسَانٍ وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ
تَأْخُذُوا مِمَّا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ شَيْئًا إِلَّا أَنْ يَخَافَا أَلَّا يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ
أَلَّا يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا فِيمَا افْتَدَتْ بِهِ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ
اللَّهِ فَلَا تَعْتَدُوهَا وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ