

Resource Sharing Project:



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#SurvivorCare

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How do we get our congregations on board with an understanding of trauma and healing for domestic violence and sexual assault?

When I spoke at Brite Divinity September 2018, a Masters of Divinity student asked this question. It's a great question and here's a better answer than I could give her in the few moments we had for Question and Answer after the presentation.

1. Preach about it. For ideas see:
<https://www.faithtrustinstitute.org/resources/articles/sermons>
2. Put resources on your bulletins, bathroom doors, information tables, and more. Contact your local service provider for pamphlets.
3. From the pulpit say things like “Violence is never OK” or “Nothing you could ever do warrants being violated.”
4. Write policies about how you handle domestic violence and sexual assault allegations. Write out what you’ll do first, what you’ll do next, and so forth. Make a written plan.

5. Bring your local service providers in to do a training. If they're grant funded, they should be required to do community presentations at no cost to you.
6. Don't be afraid to wrestle with the difficult passages that show women being mistreated and used. For example, the rape of Tamar or the rape of Bathsheba. Call it out.
7. Be the kind of person where people know the risk of disclosing their secrets of being violated are worth the love they'll get from you.
8. When someone discloses their assault, hold the story with love and respect for the strength it took to confess. Make sure they feel their story is truly heard by you. Absorb it, even when it hurts, and carry the narrative with them.
9. When someone discloses their assault, find ways to show them how their strength and resilience came to light in their agony. Hold up a metaphorical mirror and show them what you see. Celebrate the strength.
10. Attend conferences, webinars, and events that focus on trauma, domestic violence, and sexual assault.