September 12, 2019: National Webinar – Intersection of Faith and Domestic Violence

Oliver Williams, professor and leading expert in domestic violence in the African American community, explains the historical challenges of domestic violence in faith communities and highlights tangible action steps to more holistically address domestic violence in contexts of faith. Williams co-presents with Dr. Andy Johnson from Bethel University in St. Paul Minnesota, co-author of Religion and Men's Violence Against Women; Mrs. Elizabeth Petersen, MSW Executive Director of SAFFI (South African Faith and Family Institute-Cape Town South Africa); and Minister LaDonna Combs, Director of Prevention Sisters in Detroit, Michigan. This panel of faith leaders dives into how to debunk gender roles and address domestic violence within communities of faith.

The objectives of this webinar are to:

1. Educate service providers on the intersections of faith and domestic violence

2. Expand on how faith communities can be proponents of the intervention and prevention of domestic violence

3. Explain how to interpret religious texts that center around gender and equality

About the Presenters

Doctor Oliver J. Williams is the Professor of School of Social Work at the University of Minnesota in St. Paul. He was the Executive Director of the Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community from June 1994 to September 2016 and he served as the Director of the Safe Return Initiative that addressed prisoner reentry and domestic violence from 2003-2016. Dr. Williams Directed the African American Domestic Peace Project (AADPP) that works with community leaders in 12 cities across the United States from 2010 to present. He has worked in the field of domestic violence for more than thirty-five years. Dr. Williams is a clinical practitioner; working in mental health, family therapy, substance abuse, child welfare, delinquency, domestic violence and sexual assault programs. He has worked in battered women's shelters, developed curricula for batterers' intervention programs and facilitated counseling groups. He has provided training across the United States and abroad on research and service-delivery surrounding partner abuse.

Elizabeth Petersen is a PhD candidate at the Department of Religion and Theology at the University of the Western Cape and she holds a Master's Degree in Social Work. Her journey within the VAW sector dates back to 1993 as a social worker at St. Anne's Homes in Cape Town, a century old Anglican shelter caring for abused and homeless women and children, and then she became their Director in 1997 until 2008. She is passionate about women's issues and the plight of the marginalized and has addressed various local and international audiences to help bring about gender & racial sensitivity and equality. She established the South African Faith and Family Institute in 2008 with the intention of creating a coordinated restorative justice response to domestic violence with particular focus on strengthening the capacity in the faith sector.

Doctor Andy J. Johnson teaches at Bethel University in the undergraduate program in psychology. His research interests are in the intersections of gender-based violence

with religion, culture, race, national origin, immigration status, sexual orientation, and gender identity. He earned an MA and Ph.D. in counseling psychology from the University of Notre Dame. Andy is on the Board for the National Partnership to End Interpersonal Violence, where he currently serves as Co-Chair Elect of the Education and Mentoring Action Team. Recently, Andy served as a member of the Olmstead Specialty Committee for the State of Minnesota which addressed interpersonal violence against persons with disabilities.

La Donna Marie Combs is a highly trained international educator, counselor, and advocate for victims and survivors of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Teen Dating Violence, Stalking, and Human Trafficking in Michigan. She is the President and CEO of the *Sisters Against Abuse Society,* a nonprofit organization bringing hope, help, and healing to victims of domestic & sexual violence in the black and African American Community. She is an Adjunct Professor of Psychology at Spring Arbor University in Spring Arbor, MI and a former curriculum writer for the *Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community* at the University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN. She is the recipient of the Phenomenal Woman's Award given by the AWARE Shelter in Jackson, MI, the Phoenix Award from HAVEN the mainstream domestic violence service provider of Oakland County, and the "Survivor Award" given by Sara's Place in Oak Park, MI. In May of 2019 she was voted the Women of Year by the Michigan Chronicle newspaper for her superlative and passionate work in the City of Detroit. La Donna has a Master's Degree in Organization Management. She has been a licensed minister of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (PAW) for more than 30 years.

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Intersection of Faith and Domestic Violence

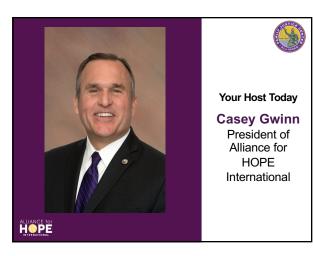
Oliver Williams, Elizabeth Petersen, Andy Johnson, and La Donna Marie Combs

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- This webinar presentation is being **recorded**.
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- Please submit your written questions early.

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Domestic Violence and Faith Communities: How to be a Resources

Presenters:

- Dr. Oliver Williams, University of Minnesota,
- Dr. Andy Johnson Bethel University,
- Minister, La Donna Combs, Ph.D. Candidate, Prevention Sisters,
- Mrs. Elizabeth Petersen, MSW, Ph.D, Theology Candidate Executive Director with the South African Faith and Family Institute (SAFFI)

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Presentation Agenda

- Why consider Faith in addressing Intimate Partner Violence/Gender Based Violence?
- · What is the rationale of some Faith Leaders about including IPV/GBV among part of their ministries?
- What does the literature tell us about Faith and IPV/GBV
- Story about a women of Faith in shelter and IPV/GBV
- Working with multiple Faith Leaders about IPV/GBV

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Considerations of Faith as a part of a ministry

Observation of the churches that include DV among their church ministries: They have reviewed their Faith text and

- interpretations about partner relationships and abuse They see the contradiction of Faith interpretations in Faith text
- They preach about it during Faith sermon
- They have been trained on how to understand and respond to domestic violence
- They train lay leaders on how to hear, respond and to refer members to the proper supports for Intimate Partner Violence

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What is the rationale of some Faith Leaders about including domestic violence among part of their ministries?

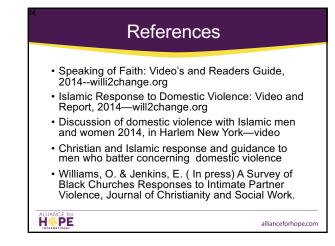
- Some faith leaders interpret their faith text with more accuracy about what is stated and the direction it offers and they see violence and abuse as not the will of their faith tradition
- Some faith leaders hear the voice of those that suffer from Intimate Partner Violence
- Some grew-up in household where they witnessed it occurring and understand the consequences of abuse
- Some faith leaders are called to action on this issue among others

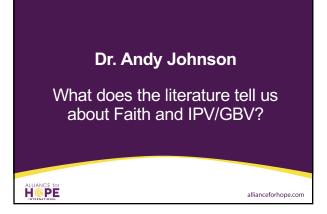
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What is the rationale of some Faith Leaders about including domestic violence among part of their ministries? · Some faith leaders believe that if you have a social service component to your ministries and you ask the question "is there something that troubles you" you have to be willing to respond to the problem · Some faith leaders are called to action on this issue in their ministries among others HOPE allianceforhope.com





Dr. Andy Johnson What does the literature tell us about Faith and IPV/GBV? H PE allianceforhope.com

Examples of why it is important to consider religion and spirituality

- Unanticipated Barriers: Religious cultural beliefs surrounding burial is one of the primary reasons Hmong women tend to remain in abusive marriages. (Vang, 2015)
 Why is it surprising to me? Role of context, personal experience.
- Minimizing Abuse: Just one example of abuse in Orthodox Jewish relationships often overlooked by therapists--Forcing wife to violate *tznius* (modesty)
- The System does not work well for everyone: Churches fill the gap African Americans: The legacy of lynching and the effects on IPV Help seeking behavior within African congregations (Muhovich & Geddes, 2015)

 - IPV in Latino American churches (Ames & Ware, 2015): Often more willing to use informal networks and the church
- Even Clergy Misunderstand Scriptures: Misconceptions about Islam and IPV are common: Verse 4:34

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Higher Levels of Spirituality and Religious Involvement (DV Survivors)

- · Fewer depressive symptoms (Watlington & Murphy, 2006; Gillum, Sullivan, & Bybee, 2006)
- Fewer PTSD symptoms (Watlington & Murphy, 2006)
- Greater levels of social support (Watlington & Murphy, 2006; Katerndahl, & Obregon, 2007).
- Increased psychological well being (Gillum, Sullivan, & Bybee, 2006)
- · Spiritual well-being second only to hopefulness in terms of predicting suicide nonattempter status (Meadows, Kaslow, Thompson, & Jurkovic, 2005).

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Negative Effects of Spirituality and Religion

- Potter (2007) African American DV Survivors
- · Contradictory effects
- 1) abuse against women by their intimate partners is often excused if not condoned by clergy
- 2) proof texting -- use of religious texts out of context to support one's position
- 3) use of religion and spirituality for resilience

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Results (Potter, 2007)

Vast majority of the women relied on spirituality to help them get through and get out of the abusive relationships Many spoke of how they sensed that the spirit or their God, was watching over them and that they continued to rely on their faith Unsupportive Christian cleric assistance – most did not seek out assistance from clergy and others in their religious communities but 20% did seek help · Being told to remain in the relationship and work things out were common Women who sought help from their pastors became disheartened with their churches during their abusive relationships Many reported feeling derailed from their religious track during their abusive relationships—they always had faith but the practice of many waned **H**[®]PE allianceforhope.com

Help Clergy to Take Steps

- Ludy Green (2015): follow her recommendations on developing a domestic violence policy for a religious congregation.
- Encourage systematic opportunities for ongoing education and training for staff on IPV.
- Remind clergy research has shown most Christian women want to receive help first and foremost from their pastor or their church community (Nason-Clark et al., 2018). Unfortunately, this same research has also shown the church usually is rated as the least helpful resource by abused women.
- Do not refer persons affected by domestic violence to marriage or family therapy. Clergy serious about saving marriages should take steps to make your congregation safe for abused women to report abuse so they will do so early in the cycle when the abusive behavior of the man is more amenable to treatment.

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Steps, Continued

· Reframe low rates of IPV reported in congregation: "Given that violence against women is so prevalent, if there are no reports of domestic violence in the church the question is why is this the case? Domestic violence is pervasive. If your church community is such a safe and supportive environment for abused women, then why isn't your church flooded with abused women and their children?"

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Creating a Policy (Green, 2015)

- · Policy should serve as a guideline for behavior
- 1. Establish a committee of experts
 - Can include experts on IPV, on the religious cultural group, and on issues related to women, men, and children
- 2. Choose champion congregants
 - These adults will represent the religious institution's membership, be well known and respected in the church, and will have knowledge of other members
- 3. Prevent cover-up in the congregation
 - Can be accomplished by integrating the need for domestic violence prevention and intervention with the religious beliefs and values of the group
 - Observe symptoms, avoid the role of counselor, and do not judge

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Creating a Policy, Continued

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- Train champion congregants on action plan Champions need to be trained on how to refer survivors to local community resources
 - Champions' tasks include: seeking expert assistance, holding the abuser accountable, and if reconciliation is to occur, considering it only after the above steps have taken place
- 5. Ensure the victim's safety
 - Champion or congregant member should not pressure victim to make decisions about returning home, etc.
 - Help to secure a place that is safe for the victim and the children

6. Assure confidentiality

"Only information necessary for the victim's safety and the safety of others will be shared on a need to know basis" (Liz Claiborne, Inc. 2003, p. 6)

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References

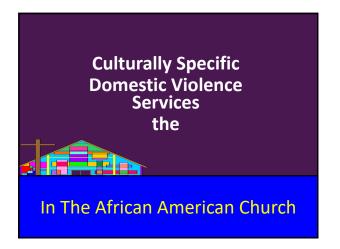
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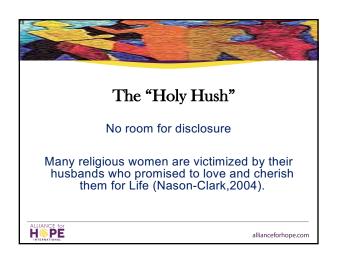
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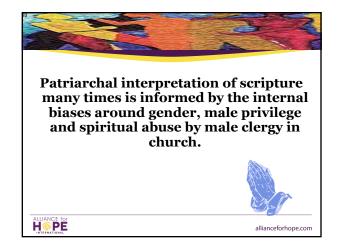


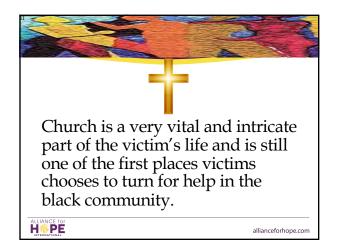


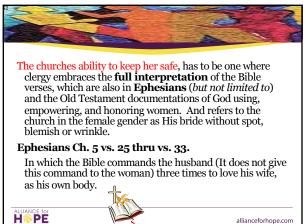


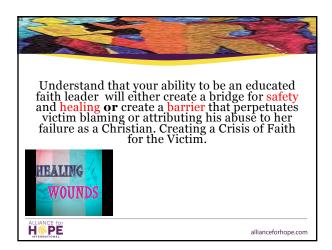


As a minister and evangelist, I began praying in secret with Christian women fleeing abuse in shelter while receiving services (Kelley, 2003).

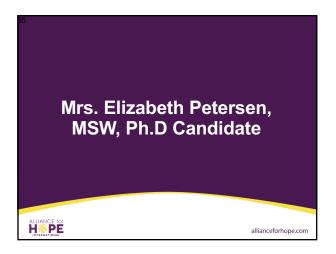














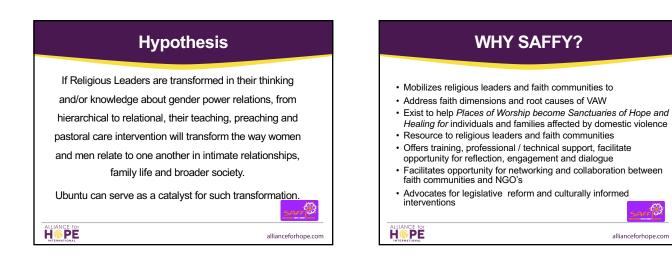
Introduction and Context	
Intimate Partner Abuse (IPA) is flagged as the most prevalent form of violence against women irrespective of country, culture, religion, ethnicity and socio-economic status (Abrahams et al 2006; Chibber & Krishnan 2011; Slater 2013)	
South African women live in one of the most religious – yet most violent - societies in the world.	
Albeit reliable because of underreporting, it is estimated that one in four South African women finds herself in an abusive relationship (Jewkes & Abrahams 2002); and that a 2004 study found that a woman is killed by her inlimate partner every six hours (Mathews et al 2004) and every 26 seconds a woman is being raped by a man in SA (Medical Research Council)	
It is estimated that 90% of the South African population subscribe to religious belief and practice (WIN/Gallup international 2015),	
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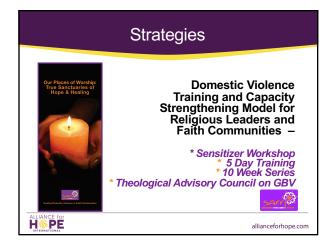
Introduction and Context, Continued

- □ Given that in African societies, religion permeates every aspects of life (Mbiti 1999), it is imperative to explore the intersections between religion/ faith and IPA.
- Research indicates that many IPA victims/survivors use faith as a coping mechanism and they often approach their religious leaders and faith communities for help
- IPA perpetrators often use easily misinterpreted scriptures, religious teachings and cultural practices to justify their abusive behaviour.
- Research confirms that faith leaders are not adequately equipped by their theological training to address IPA
- While the 'rights' discourse is an essential democratic value, it is not in itself a plausible intervention strategy in contexts where religion (embedded in culture) is a social determinant of hierarchical gender power-relations (Pillay 2013; Petersen 2016).

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TACGBV Objectives
 Offer Theological Guidance and advice around easily misinterpreted Scriptures and Religious & Ancient Teachings Meets from time to time to time in sacred conversation and dialogue about pertinent themes that emerge during preaching and IPA pastoral care / support services Provide sound faith-based input to the development of resource material, denomination specific statements, policies and procedures in the quest to advance theologically sound prevention, intervention and aftercare programs Be available to SAFFI and GBV service providers when faith-based guidance is sought to better assist victims/survivors, perpetrators and their families Participate in various campaigns and advocacy initiatives
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Publications by the TACGBV















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Certificate of Participation

Webinar Training

Oliver Williams, Elizabeth Petersen, Andy Johnson, and LaDonna Intersection of Faith and Domestic Violence Marie Combs

1.5 Hours

September 12, 2019

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Gael Strack, J.D. Co-Founder and CEO Alliance for HOPE, International

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