

SMALL GROUP LEADER ABUSE Q&A HANDOUT

Jeff Ballard & Ryan Berg
June 24, 2020

QUESTION: As a Small Group Leader, how should I respond if someone in my group discloses abuse in their marriage or dating relationship?

1. **Listen.** Hear the concerns the victim is sharing. Learn to read between the lines. The person might not identify as a victim or see their abuser as abusive, but they might share information that provides you with the opportunity to recognize red flags.
2. **Believe.** Don't begin with a posture of skepticism but of belief. Avoid asking questions that could lead the person to think that you doubt what they are sharing is true. Ask how you and/or the church can support them.
3. **Consider the victim's safety.** Do not disclose confidential information to the victim's spouse or someone else who might share it with their spouse.
4. **Reach out for help.** Don't try to handle this situation alone. Reach out for help from your Small Group Coach, who can also involve a Pastor and/or Elder if needed.
5. **Stay connected.** Be intentional about the ways you check in with the victim and their family. Continue to offer support, spiritual care, and practical help as needed.
6. **Keep learning.** Keep listening to the victim with a posture to learn and understand. Avail yourself of the many good resources that are available to understand domestic abuse and how to respond with wisdom (see next page).

QUESTION: How do I recognize abuse?

1. **Not abuse:** If your spouse complains about how you fold the laundry
Abuse: If your spouse routinely tells others in your presence how you fail at simple chores...using sarcasm, humiliating terms, and then saying, "I was just kidding"
2. **Not abuse:** If your spouse gets frustrated sometimes and slams a cabinet door or curses
Abuse: If your spouse uses anger to control or hurt you emotionally or physically

3. **Not abuse:** If your spouse calls to check on why you aren't home when you've been delayed
Abuse: If your spouse routinely requires you to prove your whereabouts and/or tracks your whereabouts electronically
4. **Not abuse:** If your spouse decides frequently not to attend church with you.
Abuse: If your spouse refuses to allow you to attend church or church functions because he is jealous of your friendships
5. **Not abuse:** If your spouse gets hurt or upset when you don't do what he asked you to do
Abuse: If your spouse demands that you submit, citing Scripture and stating that your role as his wife is to bring him pleasure, satisfy his needs, and make him feel important
6. **Not abuse:** If your spouse expresses frustration periodically over your excessive spending.
Abuse: If your spouse gives you a small allowance which barely covers household needs, refuses to give you access to the bank account, and doesn't tell you where all the rest of the income is going.

Recommended Resources

- Booklet: Darby Strickland, [Domestic Abuse: Recognize, Respond, Rescue](#) (P&R Publishing, 2018)
- Booklet: Darby Strickland, [Domestic Abuse: Help For the Sufferer](#) (P&R Publishing, 2018)
- Book: Justin and Lindsey Holcomb, [Is It My Fault? Hope and Healing for Those Suffering Domestic Violence](#) (Moody, 2014)
- Website: CCEF: ccef.org
- Website: Chris Moles website: www.chrismoles.org