



TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES
Creating Safety, Justice & Equality

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, TRAINING & RESOURCE CENTER

Collaboratives for Community Change: **Road Map for Domestic Violence Prevention in Faith Communities**

Introduction

Faith communities are sanctuaries of trust, safety, and guidance with the potential to impact the well-being of their members as well as the broader community. While faith and spiritual leaders are in an ideal position to support families experiencing or at risk of domestic violence (DV), many faith leaders lack information and training to appropriately respond. Moreover, faith traditions, beliefs, and practices are often at best complacent about the gender inequality that enables DV, and at worst, they perpetuate it.

For the past eight years, Transforming Communities: Technical Assistance, Training and Resource Center (TC-TAT) has been bringing together interfaith leaders and DV advocates from throughout California to build a faith-based community response to DV. During the first six years of the project, TC-TAT provided training and support to more than 950 faith and DV leaders; during the last two years, we have worked in-depth with 24 teams to implement long-term changes in policies and practices within faith institutions. TC-TAT's work to support these collaborations were funded by the California Department of Public Health, Violence Prevention Unit (CDPH/VPU) from 2003-2008 and the Blue Shield of California Foundation from 2008-2010. CDPH/VPU provided additional support through mini-grants.

As Reverend Bill Eichhorn, a senior trainer with the faith project, says, "This is an opportunity to engage faith and religious leaders in gaining a new understanding of how belief systems can challenge the system of superiority and point the way to equality."

Changing these belief systems requires strong partnerships between faith and DV leaders, a common vision for promoting strong and healthy families free from violence, and a road map for carrying out this new vision. Drawing upon the stories, successes, and challenges of faith and DV partnerships, TC-TAT has developed the *Road Map for Domestic Violence Prevention in Faith Communities* to guide faith communities and their partners through a series of questions and steps to implement their vision for DV prevention.

Road Map for Domestic Violence Prevention in Faith Communities
Mission & Goals
Engaging Community Members
Building Relationships with Allies
Your Action Steps
How Will You Know You are Making a Difference?
Sustainability

Road Map for Domestic Violence Prevention in Faith Communities

This tool includes a real life example from a partnership between **License to Freedom**, a nonprofit organization working on DV prevention in refugee communities in the San Diego area, and the Al Salaam Mosque. License to Freedom and the Al Salaam Mosque worked collaboratively to educate and build trust with local Muslim faith leaders about how to become a resource and center of support for DV prevention in their communities. The vision and steps for building this partnership are described in this Road Map.



Dilkhwaz Ahmend from License to Freedom and Imam Amir Bajelori of Al Salaam Mosque attend a leadership training hosted by TC-TAT.

Instructions for Using this Roadmap

This is a flexible tool that can be adapted and used by faith leaders and DV advocates working as a team. We encourage you to:

- Read through the entire tool and example first on page one.
- Then, brainstorm with your team to fill in the blank Road Map on page two.
- Type your ideas directly into the Road Map and revisit it regularly – this will become your “go-to” document that continues to evolve and tell your story.

Acknowledgments

We honor all the advocates and faith leaders who continue to work for change in their faith and spiritual communities. This sample “road map” was developed by TC-TAT based on materials provided by Dilkhwaz Ahmed and Imam Amir Bajelori of Al Salaam Mosque. TC-TAT’s work to support collaborations between DV advocates and faith leaders was funded by the California Department of Public Health, Violence Prevention Unit (CDPH/VPU) from 2003-2008 and the Blue Shield of California Foundation from 2008-2010. CDPH/VPU provided additional support through mini-grants.

Mission & Goals

1. What is your long-term mission?

Example:

License to Freedom partners with Al Salaam Mosque to create a model mosque and increase its institutional ability to address and prevent domestic violence (DV) by introducing prevention policies and practices and emphasizing healthy and equitable family relationships.

2. What are your goals/desired outcomes?

Example:

We are seeking changes in the following areas:

- *Definition:* Mosque leaders, staff and congregation members have increased recognition that DV is not acceptable and that the entire community bears responsibility to address and prevent it.
- *Behavior:* Demonstrated commitment by leaders, staff, and members of the mosque to address and prevent DV.
- *Engagement:* Increased number and deepened involvement of leaders, staff and members, especially female and youth members, in DV prevention activities.
- *Policies and Practices:* A DV prevention policy is adopted by mosque leadership and supported by members.
- *Sustainability:* DV prevention activities, messages and practices are integrated into ongoing mosque activities and larger community life.

Engaging Community Members

1. How are you going to deeply engage community members to create this change? Who is doing the planning & implementing, and how can this be further shared with the community itself?

2. What steps will you take to make sure that your strategy is appropriate for your specific community?

Examples:

- Cultivate strong relationship with the Imam (faith leader) of the central mosque to promote strong and violence free families.
- Make personal contact with faith leaders and find common interests to establish initial rapport and trust, e.g. a population census project for immigrant/refugee communities.
- Extend outreach through the community networks and affiliations of the mosque leaders, staff and members.
- Launch an awareness and resource campaign “Pursuing Justice and Happiness through Faith” with Al Salaam Mosque and the wider community to recruit supporters.

Building Relationships With Allies

1. Who are some of the strategic allies who could help achieve your action plan?

- Who is in support of your plan (your allies)?
- Who are neutral parties or possible opposition? Could they be won over?

Examples:

- The Imam leader of Al Salaam Mosque is an ally who can provide leadership and influence to the other members. Support from the Imam will strengthen the credibility of License to Freedom and the overall effort.
- Members of the Mosque Women's Association and youth programs are likely allies.
- Some of the board members may be hesitant or reluctant to accept DV as an issue to be addressed in the mosque. It will be important to deepen their understanding of healthy family relationships and how DV negatively impacts the well-being of family members.

Your Action Steps

1. If you want to achieve your goal in 1 year, what needs to happen within one year? 6 months? 3 months? One month?

2. Who, what, when, where? What steps will you take?

Examples:

- License to Freedom (LTF) will reach out to mosque leaders to get their commitment. (First 2 months)
- LTF will work with the Mosque Imam and mosque leaders and members to launch "Pursuing Justice and Happiness through Faith" community campaign. (First 6 months)
- LTF will create a Peace Families Committee, a core group of faith leaders and community members dedicated to DV prevention (First 3 months). Provide DV prevention education and training for committee members (6 months).
- LTF and the Peace Families Committee will prioritize changes in policies and practices within Al Salaam Mosque, including:
 - 1) Regular distribution of DV educational resources to members (One year);
 - 2) Raising DV issues on a weekly basis during prayer time (One year);
 - 3) Increasing number of female Board members (Ongoing);
 - 4) Including DV prevention education in mosque's women's association, youth programs, men's classes, and pre-marital counseling (6 – 9 months).

How Will You Know You Are Making a Difference?

For each activity, think of how you will gather information that will show that you are progressing towards your goals.

- 1. What will you measure? (Think about changes in definition, behavior, engagement, policies, and sustainability)**
- 2. How will you keep track of activities and the results of your work?**
- 3. What is “the story” that you want to share with others about the difference you are making in your community?**

Examples:

- Conduct a baseline and follow-up survey regarding how mosque leaders and members define and understand DV; what they believe are appropriate responses; their willingness to become involved in DV prevention; how it can be prevented; and what policies or practices currently exist.
- Discuss survey results and brainstorm with mosque leaders and members on what changes are important to the community.
- Create a journal or binder to keep track of prevention activities, events, meetings, testimonies, etc.
- Document prevention activities through photos, personal stories, interviews, etc. and invite mosque members to participate in the process.
- Report on evaluation results and outcomes with mosque leadership, membership, and local faith council.

Sustainability

- 1. How will you continue to build the skills and capacity of your team and community to support DV prevention?**
- 2. How will you ensure that your prevention efforts and progress continue and are integrated into the life of your community?**

Examples:

- Regular communication among prevention committee members and supporters to identify opportunities to increase our DV prevention knowledge, e.g. work with TC-TAT, Faith Trust Institute for new tools/resources.
- Consider replicating “Model Mosque” program at other local mosques.
- Bring new faith leaders and advocates on board to help with project replication in their communities.
- Look into other sources of funding to continue this work.

Road Map for Domestic Violence Prevention in Faith Communities

Your Prevention Team Members:

Date:

Mission & Goals

- 1. What is your long-term mission?**
- 2. What are your goals/desired outcomes?**

Engaging Community Members

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For additional information, including technical assistance support and resources, please contact Transforming Communities: Technical Assistance, Training and Resource Center (TC-TAT) at (415) 457-2421 or www.transformcommunities.org.