

Facilitation Guide

Domestic Violence and the Bahá'í Community

An Assembly Development Module Workshop



“The evolution of local and national Bahá’í Assemblies at this time calls for a new state of mind on the part of their members as well as on the part of those who elect them, for the Bahá’í community is engaged in an immense historical process that is entering a critical stage. Bahá’u’lláh has given to the world institutions to operate in an Order designed to canalize the forces of a new civilization.”

The Universal House of Justice, Ridván message to the Bahá’ís of the world, 1996

“As humanity passes through the age of transition in its evolution to a world civilization which will be illumined by spiritual values and will be distinguished by its justice and its unity, the role of the Bahá’í community is clear: it must accomplish a spiritual transformation of its members, and must offer to the world a model of the society destined to come into being through the power of the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh. Membership in the Bahá’í community is open to all who accept Bahá’u’lláh as the Manifestation of God, and who thereupon embark on the process of changing their conduct and refining their character. It is inevitable that this community will, at times, be subject to delinquent behavior of members whose actions do not conform to the standards of the Teachings. At such times, the institutions of the Faith will not hesitate to apply Bahá’í law with justice and fairness in full confidence that this Divine Law is the means for the true happiness of all concerned.”

On behalf of the Universal House of Justice, letter dated January 24, 1993



Domestic Violence and the Bahá'í Community

OVERVIEW FOR FACILITATOR

Purpose

- ★ To provide familiarity with what constitutes domestic violence
- ★ To explore guidance concerning violence and abuse
- ★ To clarify the difference in roles between the Assembly and the individual
- ★ To become familiar with appropriate courses of action open to individuals who experience or become aware of domestic violence within the Bahá'í community

Note: You will also want to obtain a copy of the Participant Handouts.

This workshop, targeted to individuals and the Bahá'í community as a whole, explores Bahá'í guidance concerning violence and abuse. Participants will become familiar with appropriate courses of action open to individuals who experience or become aware of domestic violence within the Bahá'í community. A companion workshop, “Advanced Practice in Administering Justice – Focus on Domestic Violence,” is designed for use by Local Spiritual Assemblies.

When facilitated with a group of 9-12 participants from the same community, this workshop will require approximately 3 1/2 hours for the core material plus additional time for each optional extension. A larger or more diverse group will require extra time for group discussion and reporting back.

What you will find inside your Facilitation Guide:

- ★ **Frontispiece with key quotations.** A one-page sheet containing quotations from a letter of the Universal House of Justice that provides the foundation of the workshop. (p. 2)
- ★ **Overview for Facilitators.** This two-page guide you are reading now (pp. 3-4)
- ★ **The Assembly Development Process.** A one-page description of the process of Assembly development, the role of these workshops within that process, and how to request an Assembly Development Representative to facilitate the workshops. (p. 5)
- ★ **Guidance for Facilitators.** A four-page collection of suggestions for preparation before the session, tips for facilitating during the session, ideas for closing the session, and guidance on what to do with the workshop report form and evaluation forms after the session. (pp. 6-9)
- ★ **Highlights of this workshop.** A two-page listing of the workshop objectives, an agenda outline with times of each segment of the workshop, and a listing of materials needed. (pp. 10-11)
- ★ **Facilitator's instructions for segments of this workshop.** A series of pages that provide the purpose and instructions for each section of the workshop. (pp. 12-23)
- ★ **Description of the Office of Assembly Development.** A two-page overview of the vision and mission of this office and the

OVERVIEW FOR FACILITATORS, CONTINUED

services it can provide. (unnumbered pages at the end of the Facilitation Guide)

- ★ **Evaluation forms.** A two-page evaluation form for the facilitator to complete and return to the Office of Assembly Development and a two-page evaluation form for the Assembly to complete two months after the workshop. (unnumbered pages at the end of the Guide)

Note: Facilitators should read through *Guidelines for Spiritual Assemblies on Domestic Violence: A Supplement to Developing Distinctive Bahá'í Communities* prior to facilitating this workshop. Copies of the *Supplement* are available online at the administrative website www.usbnc.org and are also available for purchase from the Bahá'í Distribution Service. If participants raise questions about domestic violence that you do not feel prepared to answer, please refer them to their Assembly, which will be familiar with the detailed guidance in this *Supplement*. Facilitators should ask the sponsoring Local Spiritual Assembly to provide copies of sections of the *Supplement* as detailed on page 11.

Note: These materials may stir strong emotions in those who have had experiences with domestic violence, but this workshop is not designed to be a therapeutic setting. You may need to remind participants that this is an opportunity to familiarize the community as a whole with guidance in the Faith rather than a venue for sharing personal stories or seeking guidance for a specific situation. If a participant has a strong need to talk about his or her experiences, you may want to suggest that he/she speak with the Assembly, an Auxiliary Board member, or a counselor trained to work with domestic violence situations.

The Assembly Development Process

“ . . .enabling Assemblies to rise to a ‘new stage in the exercise of their responsibilities’. . . .”

The National Spiritual Assembly focuses its Assembly Development initiatives towards facilitating the development of “a new state of mind” on the part of Assembly members and the community, thereby enabling Assemblies to rise to the “new stage in the exercise of their responsibilities” envisioned by the Universal House of Justice.

The development process is designed to be furthered by presentation of a variety of module workshops, each module covering a distinct topic or function. Use of these workshops will help Assemblies to understand more clearly the spiritual nature of their institution, to improve their performance, and to attain an ever advancing level of maturity as the primary institutions of the World Order of Bahá’u’lláh. When used with the general community, the workshops will heighten appreciation for the station and responsibilities of local Assemblies and deepen the desire to support and assist these institutions in their growth process.

The National Spiritual Assembly highly recommends that each workshop be studied with a Bahá’í facilitator who resides outside the particular Bahá’í community, although these materials may be used by Assemblies on their own. A list of Bahá’ís who serve as facilitators, called Assembly Development Representatives, is available from the Office of Assembly Development of the Bahá’í National Center at (847) 733-3490 or by e-mail to OAD@usbnc.org.

Assemblies may choose to study these workshops as an institution, may invite other Assemblies in their area to study together, or may invite their community to join them in exploring the modules. Workshops may also be used at Bahá’í schools or Institutes. If they are used with both Assembly members and other community members, Assemblies are encouraged to set aside follow-up time at one of their future meetings to consider the impact and implications of what was learned on their collective functioning.

Workshops in this program range from two to five hours in length with the majority averaging about four hours. They are, however, adaptable to different timing needs. Workshops are divided into separate segments which can be selectively deleted if timing needs require this. Optional supplemental materials are also included for use if more time is available.

Guidance for Facilitators

Before the Session

Personal preparation

- ★ Take time to prepare yourself spiritually and materially to facilitate this workshop. Meditate on your role in facilitating the friends' thoughtful study and consultation.
- ★ Read through the workshop and its handouts in advance of the session and ponder the themes in them.
- ★ Pray for assistance. Feel confident that the Blessed Beauty will guide and confirm you as you endeavor to serve the Faith.

Preparation of the course and its materials

- ★ Become familiar with the workshop and its options and extensions. Feel free to duplicate the handouts on colored paper and interleaf them in the Facilitation Guide if this would make facilitation easier for you.
- ★ The amount of time suggested for each segment of the workshop is a minimum only. If the number of participants in a workshop is large and many small groups will be reporting back, you will need to allow more time than the minimum to complete some segments.
- ★ If some of the participants are not proficient in English, consider ways to meet their needs. For instance, those who understand spoken English but do not read it easily could be paired with those who can read quotations aloud. These adjustments may affect the amount of time necessary to complete an activity or exercise.
- ★ Material which appears in italics is provided to supplement and extend the session if more time is available. Determine in advance how many expansions to the module, if any, are appropriate. Some factors to consider are available time, general level of experience and deepening of the participants, and local interest in a particular topic.
- ★ Have materials (such as a few extra handouts, art supplies, extra pens and pencils, small gift item) ready for each participant. It is wise to have slightly more of everything than you anticipate needing in case a larger than expected group of friends attend.
- ★ If the workshop segments you will be using require cards for games or exercises, prepare these beforehand. If workshop

Guidance for Facilitators, continued

segments have demonstrations, practice these once or twice beforehand.

- ★ Select devotional readings, prayers, and music you will want to use and make sure you have the equipment to play any music you might have.

Preparation of the meeting room

- ★ If possible, ask to see the meeting room in advance. Arrive early to set up. Adapt the room set-up to meet your needs, if possible.
- ★ Create an inviting atmosphere of beauty, dignity, and warmth to welcome participants. Possibilities include photographs of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, holy places or great teachers, heroines and heroes; framed quotations, decorating the walls with objects of beauty, tablecloths, arrangements of fresh or dried flowers, lighting, candles, music from diverse cultural backgrounds, bowls of potpourri or drops of rose oil, seating arrangements, and refreshments.

Creating and maintaining a spiritual environment

- ★ Warmly greet the participants. Be sure that the spirit of the Faith permeates the room. While conveying the content of the workshop is important, it is equally important that the style of interaction does not feel harsh, nervous, or rushed. Be a bringer of light to the hearts of the group.

Facilitating discussion

- ★ These workshops ask facilitators to raise several questions to the group for possible consultation. If one question fails to elicit much response, move on to another one.
- ★ Express appreciation for each participant’s contribution.
- ★ Be mindful of who has spoken and try to give everyone an opportunity to offer a first comment before giving time for individuals to offer second or third comments. Depending on the size of your group, you may want to go around the room, inviting each person to comment briefly in turn.
- ★ As groups are consulting on quotations and focus questions, go from group to group and listen in, without interrupting the consultative process. You may want to note comments or

**During the
Session**

Guidance for Facilitators, continued

questions that arise and bring them up when the groups reassemble.

Using time

- ★ When small groups are asked to consult or work on an art project in a certain amount of time, give each group a “5-minute warning” when their time is nearly finished. This could be done either by going from group to group as a reminder or by ringing a small bell.
- ★ Be flexible and sensitive to the needs and understanding of the participants. If a particular question or point engages the group in lengthy but topic-related discussion, it may be preferable to allow participants to continue to pursue an area that intrigues them rather than to cut off discussion and move on to another point or exercise. Participants often experience exploring less material but in greater depth as more satisfying than a hurried look at many aspects of a topic.
- ★ You may choose to make the decision yourself about whether to let a group spend more time on one area and skip later exercises or activities. You may also choose to involve the group as a whole in the decision: “Since this topic is generating a lot of interest, do we want to 1) spend more time here and not explore a later topic, 2) extend the time of our session and not skip any segments, or 3) move on from this topic, go through all the following segments, and end at our original agreed-upon time?”

Dividing participants into small groups

- ★ Put stickers on participants name cards or leave cards with stickers at their place and have them group themselves according to sticker design.
- ★ Divide into groups by the month/season in which one’s birthday falls.
- ★ In theater/auditorium seating, form groups around where participants are sitting.
- ★ Create funny groupings and ask people to choose the group that best describes them (Example: people who love apples are group A; if your favorite color is blue, join group B; if Casablanca is your favorite movie, join group C.)

Guidance for Facilitators, continued

Closing the Session

- If you have Assembly members from several communities attending a session, you may wish to have them work together as an Assembly or work in groups composed of different Assemblies, depending on the exercise.
- If you have a combination of Assembly and community members attending, you may wish to mix the groups together for some exercises and separate Assembly members from community members for other exercises.

- ★ Provide verbal instructions on how to turn the evaluation forms in.
- ★ You may want to give a gift to each participant of a card with a beautifully lettered quotation that pertains to the workshop.
- ★ Encourage Assemblies that went through this workshop in a group larger than their own membership to have a follow-up period at an up-coming meeting to consult on what was learned and how it can be applied to their own functioning.
- ★ Suggest choosing a date and picking a topic for the next Assembly development workshop.

Please note: Have the participant evaluation forms turned in to you and return them with your evaluation form. Be sure to use the machine readable forms. Give participants their Bahá'í Locality Code and explain how to fill in the forms.

After the Session

- ★ Complete the workshop report form and mail it with the participant evaluations to:

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the
United States

Office of Assembly Development

1233 Central St.

Evanston, IL 60201

OAD@USBNC.ORG

fax. (847) 733-3486

phone (847) 733-3490

- ★ Send a follow up letter to the Assembly(ies) to thank them for participation and include a copy of their evaluation form to fill out two months after the workshop.

Thank you for serving the Cause by facilitating this Assembly development workshop!

Highlights of Domestic Violence and the Bahá'í Community

Objectives:

Participants will:

- ★ explore aspects of “a new state of mind”
- ★ become familiar with guidance concerning violence and abuse
- ★ learn where to take concerns about domestic violence

Extension sessions for use if more time is available:

Agenda outline: (total time: 3 1/2 hours)

- ★ **Introduction** (10 minutes), p. 12
An opportunity to familiarize participants with the objectives of this workshop and present an outline of topics and activities.
- ★ **The call to “a new state of mind”** (10 minutes), pp. 13-14
A guided discussion to help participants grasp some of the implications of moving toward “a new state of mind.”
- ★ **Guidance from the Universal House of Justice** (70 minutes), pp. 15-16
Small group research of guidance on violence and abuse.
- ★ **Policy statement of the National Spiritual Assembly** (30 minutes), p. 17
Study in pairs of guidance on violence and abuse.
- ★ **The individual, the Assembly, and domestic violence** (60 minutes), pp. 19-20
Small group research using the *Supplement to Developing Distinctive Bahá'í Communities* to gain awareness of how individuals should handle their concerns about violence.
- ★ **What would I do?** (20 minutes), pp. 21-22
A practical application activity in which participants are given a domestic violence scenario and asked what they would do.
- ★ **Closing** (10 minutes), p. 23
Quotations to provide assurance of divine confirmation in all efforts to eradicate domestic violence.
- ★ **Further consideration of the call to “a new state of mind”** (variable amount of time), pp. 13-14
A guided discussion examining existing assumptions and conceptions about domestic violence.
- ★ **Understanding domestic violence** (60 minutes), p. 18
Small group research using the “*Supplement to Developing Distinctive Bahá'í Communities*” in order to gain awareness of the roots and dynamics of domestic violence.
- ★ **Further examples of “What would I do?”** (variable time), p. 21
Participants continue work with domestic violence scenarios.

Highlights, continued

Times given above are minimums based on a group of 9-12 participants. A larger group will require extra time for group discussion and reporting back. Material that appears in italics is provided to supplement and extend the session if more time is available. If less time is available, you can skip whatever section seems to be less relevant to the needs of the group.

Materials needed

- ★ Highlighters
- ★ Pens or pencils
- ★ Container for holding scenario slips
- ★ *Optional: A beautiful card or calligraphy rendition of a quotation on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to give as a gift to each participant (an example suitable for photocopying is at the end of the Facilitation Guide)*

Notes

You will need to inform the sponsoring Assembly that Participant Handouts for each participant should be ordered directly from the Bahá'í Distribution Service prior to the workshop.

In addition, the Assembly should be asked to bring to the workshop its copy of *Guidelines for Spiritual Assemblies on Domestic Violence: A Supplement to Developing Distinctive Bahá'í Communities* and additional copies of the following pages of the *Supplement* for participants:

pp. 24-25 – one copy for each participant

pp. 25-31 – copies for half of the participants

pp. 31-34 – copies for half of the participants

Copies of the *Supplement* can be obtained by photocopying or downloading from the administrative website www.usbnc.org. and are also available for purchase from the Bahá'í Distribution Service 1-800-999-9019.

If the Assembly chooses to use the optional extension session “Understanding Domestic Violence,” it should bring to the workshop copies of the following pages of the *Supplement*:

pp. 3-6 – copies for one quarter of the participants

pp. 6-10 – copies for one quarter of the participants

pp. 10-14 – copies for one quarter of the participants

pp. 14-17 – copies for one quarter of the participants

Introduction and Objectives (10 minutes)

Purpose

- ★ To familiarize participants with the objectives of this workshop
- ★ To present an agenda outline of topics and activities

Activities

1. Brief devotions

- ★ Open with devotions, using the prayer of Bahá'u'lláh which begins “My God, my Adored One, my King, my Desire! What tongue can voice my thanks. . . .” (*Bahá'í Prayers*, pp. 19-20)
- ★ **Optional:** *If participants do not know each other, allow time for introductions.*

2. Introduction (1-2 minutes)

- ★ Explain that this workshop is part of a series developed by the Office of Assembly Development.
- ★ Highlight that the purpose of the workshops in the Assembly development series is to train the friends in the principles and processes of Bahá'í administration with the overarching goal of facilitating the development of a “new state of mind” on the part of Assembly members and the community.
- ★ Note that a primary focus of this particular workshop is to educate the community about guidance concerning domestic violence. It is not a venue to explore personal issues related to this topic but rather an opportunity to learn to which institutions individuals can take their concerns.

3. Overview of objectives (1 minute)

- ★ Read aloud the objectives of this workshop and post them.
- ★ See page 10 of the Facilitation Guide for a list of objectives. Make adjustments for any sections that are removed for timing considerations or optional extension sessions that are added.

4. Review agenda (3 minutes)

- ★ Go through the agenda for the session, writing an outline of topics to be covered on a whiteboard or previously prepared flip chart.
- ★ See pages 10-11 for an agenda. Make adjustments for any sections that are removed for timing considerations or optional extension sessions that are added.

5. Sharing questions (3-5 minutes)

- ★ Invite participants to share questions about this topic.
- ★ Make a list of these and, at the end of class, check to make sure that all have been answered or that the questioner has been referred to information elsewhere.

The Call to “a New State of Mind” (10 minutes)

Purpose

- ★ To grasp some of the implications of moving toward “a new state of mind”

Activities:

1. Discussion of quotations (10 minutes)

- ★ Have a participant read aloud the first quotation on the handout “The call to a new state of mind” (see Participant Handouts, pp. 3-4.)
- ★ Invite participants to share thoughts and feelings about “a new state of mind” and the process of moving toward it.
- ★ Offer the thought that one implication is the need for all of us to listen to “old” quotations with “new” ears in order to find new insights in familiar quotations.
- ★ *You may also choose to share two other thoughts:*
 - *First, a new state of mind is not a one-time paradigm shift – a condition of once we “get it,” we will necessarily “have it” forever – as much as a continuing process of reorienting our minds from what is to the vision of what the possibilities are, as described in the Writings and Ridván messages.*
 - *Second, it is normal to slide back into “old” states of mind – especially under stress – for quite a while. States of mind are habits, or default settings, which take conscious, deliberate effort and time to change.*
- ★ Ask for volunteers to read aloud the remaining **bolded** quotations.

2. *Optional extension: Further discussion of quotations*

The following questions can be asked in any order, and you have the option to ask them after the paragraph in question or after all quotations are read.

- ★ *Ask the group as a whole:*
 - *What “present-day conceptions of what is natural and appropriate in relationships” might we have to change in relation to domestic violence? (par. 4)*
 - *Where do these assumptions and conceptions come from? (par. 4)*
 - *How do we “clear the ground for new conceptions of social organization”? (par. 3)*

Correlating handout:

- ★ “The Call to a New State of Mind” pp. 3-4

The Call to “a New State of Mind,” continued

- *Is resisting or hiding from this “onrushing” and “quickenning wind” an option for us? for humanity as a whole? (par. 3)*
- ★ *Ask for thoughts on the process of “experiencing the rigorous effects” of an “onrushing” and “quickenning wind” ventilating “the modes of thought of us all, renewing, clarifying, and amplifying our perspectives.” (par. 3)*
- ★ *Ask for one word descriptions of the feelings that being part of such a process evokes. Acknowledge as a normal part of the change process all the feelings, whether they express excitement or reservations.*

Guidance from the Universal House of Justice (70 minutes)

Purpose:

- ★ To become familiar with guidance from the Universal House of Justice

Setting up the activities

- ★ Explain that participants will be studying a letter of the Universal House of Justice.
- ★ Mention that while the letter of the House of Justice was written in response to questions pertaining to violence and abuse directed towards women and children, its guidance contains many broad statements about violence and the use of force, using both gender specific and gender neutral nouns, such as “parent” and “spouse.”
- ★ Suggest that these statements indicate that the teachings of the Faith on this subject have relevance to the treatment of a wide variety of human beings, such as abuse directed towards men or the elderly, for instance.

Activities:

1. Small group research (45 minutes)

- ★ Divide participants into three groups.
- ★ Refer participants to the handouts “Guidance from the Universal House of Justice” (Participant Handouts, pp. 5-11 and “Focus Questions for Guidance from the Universal House of Justice” (Participant Handouts, pp. 12-13).
- ★ Call attention to the length of the letter of the Universal House of Justice and the number of focus questions.
 - Point out that while all groups will answer the first focus question from paragraph 2, each group will also be responsible for studying different parts of the letter and answering the corresponding focus questions.
 - Assign each group its questions:
 - Group 1 will answer questions from paragraphs 3-8
 - Group 2 will answer questions from paragraphs 9-15
 - Group 3 will answer questions from paragraphs 16-22
- ★ Ask each group to highlight or underline key points, answer its focus questions, and prepare a 3-5 minute report of the guidance in its section.
- ★ Depending on available time, tell groups whether or not they should answer the optional extension questions.

Correlating handouts:

- ★ “Guidance from the Universal House of Justice” pp. 5-11
- ★ “Focus Questions for Guidance from the Universal House of Justice” pp. 12-13

Guidance from the Universal House of Justice, continued

Optional break: A short break could be taken at this point. If a break is not taken, it may be desirable to have participants stand and stretch in place

2. Groups report back (25 minutes)

- ★ Reconvene the group as a whole.
- ★ Ask for the answer to the first focus question on the House of Justice’s letter: “What is an intrinsic human right of every individual?” [answer: “to be treated with consideration and respect”]
- ★ Share the following comments:
 - One implication of this passage is that even those who engage in behavior denounced by the Universal House of Justice in such strong language as “disgraceful,” “reprehensible,” or “perversion,” must be treated by the institutions administering justice in a way that fully respects this “intrinsic human right.”
 - Since the Bahá’í community contains within it both victims and perpetrators, the institution of the Local Spiritual Assembly must minister to the spiritual needs of both, providing support and challenge during the process of transformation.
- ★ Ask each group that studied a portion of the House of Justice’s letter to share, in turn, its report on the guidance in its section. Allow time for questions or comments from other participants, to be answered by the group that studied the relevant section.

Policy Statement of the National Spiritual Assembly (30 minutes)

Purpose:

- ★ To become familiar with guidance from the National Spiritual Assembly

Materials needed:

- ★ One copy of “*Guidelines for Spiritual Assemblies on Domestic Violence: A Supplement to Developing Distinctive Bahá’í Communities*”

Correlating handouts:

- ★ “Summary Policy Statement on Domestic Violence of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States” pp. 14-15

Activities:

1. Discussion in pairs (15 minutes)

- ★ Refer participants to the National Assembly’s policy statement (Participant Handouts, pp. 14-15).
- ★ Ask participants to choose a partner.
- ★ Ask partners to read through the statement silently, underlining or highlighting key points, and then discuss the three questions at the end of the policy statement.

2. Pairs share observations (10 minutes)

- ★ Invite volunteers to share points mentioned in their discussion of the National Spiritual Assembly’s policy statement.

3. Facilitator comments (2 minutes)

- ★ Comment that the National Spiritual Assembly has multiple strategies for eradicating domestic violence:
 - Provide community education through workshops and articles to raise awareness of domestic violence.
 - Support Local Assemblies in two ways:
 - a training workshop which uses case studies to provide practice in administering justice
 - detailed written guidance
- ★ Mention that all Assemblies have received a supplement to *Developing Distinctive Bahá’í Communities* that:
 - provides detailed guidance on recognizing and addressing situations of domestic violence within the community
 - can be purchased by interested individuals from the Bahá’í Distribution Service or downloaded from the administrative web site www.usbnc.org.
- ★ Read through the subject headings in the table of contents of the *Supplement* to familiarize participants with the range of material covered in the supplement.
- ★ If you will be doing the optional extension session “Understanding Domestic Violence,” please do so at this time. If not, suggest that participants may want to read the first three sections of the *Supplement* as a homework assignment, since this is the material covered in the extension.

Optional Extension Session: Understanding Domestic Violence (60 minutes)

Purpose:

- ★ To provide familiarity with the *Supplement to Developing Distinctive Bahá'í Communities* on domestic violence
- ★ To gain awareness of the roots and dynamics of domestic violence

Materials needed:

- ★ One copy of the supplement readings for each participant
- ★ Paper and pencils or pens

Activity:

1. Small group research (30 minutes)

- ★ Divide participants into four groups.
- ★ Refer participants to the *Supplement to Developing Distinctive Bahá'í Communities* on domestic violence.
- ★ Assign each group a portion of the supplement to read, as indicated below.
- ★ Pass out a copy of the relevant sections to each participant. The Assembly should have made these copies previously, when it decided to include this optional extension.
- ★ Ask each group to prepare a brief (5 minute) outline of key points from its portion of the supplement.

Group 1

- ★ Addressing Domestic Violence in the Context of Bahá'í Beliefs, pp. 3-6

Group 2

- ★ Definition of Domestic Violence – first part, through “Early Intervention is Protective Measure,” pp. 6-10

Group 3

- ★ Definition of Domestic Violence – second part, starting with “Harmful Effects of Abusive Behavior are Well-Established,” pp. 10-14

Note: This portion of readings includes references to corporeal punishment of children. If this topic becomes a source of controversy, let participants know that further guidance on this subject can be requested from the Office of Community Administration at the Bahá'í National Center.

Group 4

- ★ Relationship of Gender Inequality to Domestic Violence, pp. 14-17

2. Groups share reports (30 minutes)

- ★ Have each group share its outline.
- ★ Allow time for the other groups to ask any questions raised by the points mentioned.

The Individual, the Assembly, and Domestic Violence (60 minutes)

Purpose

- ★ To provide familiarity with the *Supplement to Developing Distinctive Bahá'í Communities on domestic violence*
- ★ To learn how individuals should handle their concerns about domestic violence

Materials needed:

- ★ One copy of the supplement readings for each participant
- ★ Paper and pencils or pens

Correlating handout:

- ★ “The Individual, The Assembly, and Domestic Violence” p. 16

Activity:

1. Small group research (40 minutes)

- ★ Divide participants in half. Form a number of small groups of 3-4 participants each within each half. Depending on the number of participants, there may be several small groups within “Group 1” or “Group 2.”
- ★ Refer participants to “The Individual, the Assembly, and Domestic Violence” (Participant Handouts, p. 16).
- ★ Explain that each group will be given a domestic violence scenario and assigned a portion of the *Supplement to Developing Distinctive Bahá'í Communities* to read. All groups will read the short section entitled “Contrast between Role of Individual and Role of Assembly,” as well as a portion of the section “Role of Individual.”
- ★ Each group should prepare advice for the individual in the scenario using guidance found in its readings.
- ★ Pass out a copy of the relevant sections of the *Supplement* to each participant. The Assembly should have made these copies previously.

Note: If you have a large number of small groups and want to use additional scenarios, the first scenario on p. 22 (Facilitation Guide) could be assigned to “Group 1” and the second scenario to “Group 2.”

Group 1

Assigned Scenario: “A friend approaches you and says she was forced into sexual activity by her date, who is a member of the Assembly. What do you do?”

Pages to read

- ★ Contrast between Role of Individual and Role of Assembly, pp. 24-25
- ★ Role of Individual: General Considerations, pp. 25-31

Group 2

Assigned Scenario: “A friend said she had to talk to you but made you promise to keep the conversation confidential. She said her temper got away from her and she hit her child so hard the

The Individual, the Assembly, and Domestic Violence, continued

child had to be taken to the emergency room. You did not report the matter to the Assembly or to civil authorities because you had given your word, but a hospital worker reported a suspected case of abuse. You have now been summoned by civil authorities for questioning in the matter. What do you do?"

Pages to read

- ★ "Contrast between Role of Individual and Role of Assembly," pp. 24-25
- ★ "Role of Individual: Considerations for Individuals Pertaining to Confidentiality," pp. 31-34

2. Groups share reports (20 minutes)

- ★ Have each small group share its scenario and advice, starting with "Group 1" participants.
- ★ Allow time for the other group to ask any questions raised by points mentioned.

What Would I Do? (20 minutes)

Purpose

- ★ To practice thinking through how to respond to domestic violence scenarios

Prepare in advance

- ★ Duplicate the following page, which contains domestic violence scenarios, and cut the scenarios into strips. Put the strips in some type of container.
- ★ Read through each of the scenarios in advance and locate passages in the pages of the *Supplement* just read (pp. 24-34) that contain relevant principles. These steps will prepare you to facilitate the consultation below. You are not expected to be an authority on the subject, but it will be helpful if you can point to relevant passages and invite comments on how that guidance or principle applies to the scenario under discussion.

Setting up the activity

- ★ Mention that it is easy for even knowledgeable people to feel caught by surprise and at a loss when encountering domestic violence situations.
- ★ The next activity will help consolidate what has been learned during this workshop by providing opportunities for practical application.

Activity:

1. Scenario selection and consideration (20 minutes)

- ★ Explain that the container has slips with different domestic violence scenarios.
- ★ Ask a volunteer to
 - reach in and draw out a slip
 - read the scenario aloud
 - give an initial response of what he/she feels one should do
- ★ Invite the rest of the group to expand on the answer, surface any questions, suggest other possibilities, or offer corrections, based on the guidance they have just read in the *Supplement*.
- ★ Repeat the scenario selection and consideration with another volunteer.

2. *Optional extension: Further examples of “What would I do?”*

- ★ *Select and consider as many scenarios as time and interest allow.*

Materials needed:

- ★ Strips with domestic violence scenarios
- ★ Container

Domestic Violence Scenarios

You see a friend with a black eye. She says she fell down the stairs, but she looks scared. What do you do?

You are a mandated reporter of suspected child abuse. You have overheard a conversation that is very troubling to you, but you have not actually seen evidence of abuse. The alleged abuser is an active, well-known Bahá'í. What do you do?

Your spouse's anger escalates from yelling to slapping. You can't believe this is happening, but you are afraid things might get even worse. What do you do?

You experienced abuse as a child within your family. You are now at a point in your life where you would really like to talk to a counselor about these experiences, since they weigh on you more, rather than less, as time goes by. Your family feels very strongly that what happened was in the past and should be left there. They say that bringing up all these old matters will just make the family look bad and damage its reputation, both within the Baha'i community and in the larger community. What do you do?

You have been asked by the Assembly to provide information about a possible episode of domestic violence. You are furious that someone would smear your good name by suggesting that you would abuse your spouse. You are tempted to refuse to meet with the Assembly's representative and dignify these accusations. What do you do?

You have been asked by the Assembly to provide information about a possible episode of domestic violence. You have seen the individual involved lose his temper with his children, but he is always regretful and tries to make things up to the children later. You would hate to get him in trouble or do something to get his children taken away from him. What do you do?

Closing (10 minutes)

Purpose

- ★ To provide assurance of divine confirmation in all efforts to eradicate domestic violence

1. Review of initial questions (3-5 minutes)

- ★ Check to see that all questions raised at the beginning have been answered or that the questioner has been referred elsewhere.
- ★ If the question is raised, “What can we or should we do as a result of what we have learned here?” suggest that this topic would be a good one to discuss during the consultative portion of Feast or with the Assembly.

2. Referral to supplemental readings (1 minute)

- ★ Refer participants to the section of supplemental readings at the end of their handouts (Participant's Handouts, pp. 18-38). Mention that these materials are included to provide additional helpful perspectives on domestic violence.

3. Share quotations to close the session (3 minutes)

- ★ Choose four participants to each read aloud one of the closing quotations (Participant Handouts, p. 17).

Optional:

Give each participant a beautiful card or calligraphy version of a passage on behalf of the Universal House of Justice (example suitable for photocopying onto attractive paper as follows).

Correlating handouts:

- ★ “Closing Quotations” p. 17

“As humanity passes through the age of transition in its evolution to a world civilization which will be illumined by spiritual values and will be distinguished by its justice and its unity, the role of the Bahá’í community is clear: it must accomplish a spiritual transformation of its members, and must offer to the world a model of the society destined to come into being through the power of the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh.”

Letter written on behalf of the
Universal House of Justice