Safe Havens was founded in 1991 by a group of faithful women to strengthen the capacity of diverse faith communities to play a role in a community-wide effort to respond to victims of domestic violence. We dream of and work toward a world in which faith leaders respond compassionately and effectively to people who experience domestic violence and elder abuse. Together, we can build communities where all people are safe with faith.
OUR MISSION

Safe Havens is an interfaith organization that promotes hope and justice for victims and survivors of domestic violence and elder abuse. Working as a bridge, Safe Havens strengthens the capacity of diverse faith communities to work with local domestic and sexual violence service providers to support survivors of abuse and their families.
Our Vision

No one should have to choose between faith and safety. This is why we work to build a world in which all people are treated with dignity and respect, and in which domestic and sexual violence and elder abuse no longer exist. We envision a time when every religious and spiritual community can fully embrace their unique and vital role to support survivors, provide prevention education, help to hold those who abuse accountable, and speak out with moral authority against abuse and the systemic oppressions and inequities that undergird abuse.
"More than ever in this time of national emergency, faith leaders and faith communities have a critical role to play in helping to keep those who are experiencing abuse safer."

We build bridges between faith leaders and service providers so all people who experience abuse can reach safety.

**Local Work** – In Greater Boston, we conduct outreach, provide awareness building materials, and facilitate partnerships between faith leaders and service providers.

**National Work** – In partnership with the Office on Violence Against Women, we provide technical assistance, develop and distribute resources, and train faith leaders and service providers nationally.

**COVID-19 Response** – We provided information and resources about the dire need for faith communities to be ready to respond to people experiencing abuse augmented by COVID-19 isolation.

**Faith-Based University Campus Awareness** – We partnered with Casa de Esperanza to create a sexual violence resource to assist faith-based campuses in their response to survivors.
Nationally, through our partnership with the Office on Violence Against Women, Safe Havens conducts Catalyst Trainings for diverse congregations and their local service providers to help build a coherent coordinated community response for faithful survivors of abuse. We also provide technical assistance, create and present webinars, and develop and distribute educational resources.

In 2020, we adapted our services to develop and provide our first-ever online Catalyst Trainings to diverse faith leaders and their local service providers in Ohio and Oklahoma. To date, we have provided Catalyst Trainings in 38 locations across the United States.
Safe Havens is proud to share our impact as we continued to provide services virtually despite the onset of the pandemic.

- Faith leaders and community members trained: 33
- Total training hours: 18
- Total hours of technical assistance (TA) provided: 28
- Number of people who received TA: 65
- Total number of people reached nationally in 2020: 4,950

ADAPTING TO COVID-19

Despite the challenges posed by the onset of the global pandemic, Safe Havens showed our ability to adapt to uncertain circumstances. We transitioned our programming and Catalyst Trainings to an online format so that we could continue to connect diverse faith leaders with their local service providers on a national scale.
Safe Havens is proud to share that in 2020 we advanced our local work in Greater Boston, despite the obstacles we faced due to COVID-19. Our hallmark local program, Safe with Faith, engages local congregations by empowering volunteers within diverse faith communities to partner with Safe Havens and local service providers. We provide our eight (8) long-standing partner congregations tailored training, technical assistance, and awareness building resources on domestic violence, sexual assault, and elder abuse.

In 2020, we continued to engage our eight (8) Safe with Faith congregations. We also built upon our connections with local faith communities to encourage support for survivors, because faith communities are one place where people experiencing abuse continued to connect during these times of isolation and uncertainty.
"Survivors of intimate partner violence and elder abuse need your support, connections, and referrals now more than ever, because they are isolated with their abuser and have fewer opportunities to reach out for help. Faith communities are one of the few places where people are continuing to connect during the pandemic."

- Faith leaders and community members trained: 95
- Total in-person trainings: 2
- Total online trainings, seminars, and partnership building events: 5
- Number of congregations that received outreach and education building materials: 18
- Total number of people reached locally in 2020: 4,750
NOW MORE THAN EVER

If you are a faith leader or a faithful person, we need your help now more than ever due to the pandemic. Here are some action steps to consider.

1. **Break the silence** about abuse - in your congregation’s newsletters, in corporate prayers, and in other communications. Break the taboo, and make this something we can talk about.

2. **Reach out** to family members, friends, and fellow congregants. Ask how they are doing, and listen carefully to their answer, keeping the “red flags” of abuse firmly in mind. (Need to brush up on the red flags? Check out https://bit.ly/2Uv0MZe.) If possible, ask questions privately if you are concerned about someone, and make referrals to services. Stay in touch.

3. **Spread the word.** Now that many congregations have gone virtual, make sure that the national hotline (800-799-7233) as well as your local hotline and domestic violence services (you can get this from the national hotline) are readily available on your congregation’s website. Put the hotline in the footer of every newsletter, under your email signature, and on your congregation’s Facebook page.

4. **Refer.** Most faithful people are not experts on domestic violence, and we don’t have to be. We just need to know how to call the experts on the hotline for help. For people who can’t reach out for themselves during this crisis, your ability to share information from the hotline or local services could make a life-changing difference. The hotline is free, anonymous, and anyone can call.

5. You can also **provide material support** to victims of abuse by mailing gift cards for groceries, gas, or pharmacies to the office address of your local service provider. They will give them to people experiencing abuse and their children.
Safe Havens partnered with Casa de Esperanza to conduct focused conversations with OVW Grant Project Managers on faith-based college campuses responding to sexual violence.

While it can be difficult to talk about sexual violence, faithful people are already talking about healing, justice, and peace, which are all critical to victims and survivors of sexual violence.

In the aftermath of sexual violence, survivors can find healing if they can talk about what happened, find support and safety on their campuses and in their communities, receive referrals to sexual violence services, connect to their spiritual resources, and feel empowered to move forward with their lives.

In October and November of 2020, in partnership with Casa de Esperanza, Safe Havens conducted focused conversations with faith-based college and university campuses working to respond to people who experience sexual violence. While we only spoke with Christian campuses during our initial conversations, we learned that campuses could benefit from a resource that demonstrates the importance of the intersection of faith and healing from sexual violence. As a result, we developed a resource for faith-based campuses dealing with sexual violence that you can access here.
OUR STAFF AND BOARD

Alyson Morse Katzman, MPA
Associate Director
she/her

Rev. Dr. Anne Marie Hunter
Director
she/her

Catherine Oidtman, MPP
Program and Evaluation Specialist
she/her

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FUNDERS

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If you are interested in getting involved in our local program in Greater Boston or in our national work, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. We look forward to collaborating with you!

WWW.INTERFAITHPARTNERS.ORG

INFO@INTERFAITHPARTNERS.ORG

(617) 951-3980

89 SOUTH STREET
SUITE 603
BOSTON, MA 02111