applicable beyond that region.

If you know of someone who has been in an abusive situation, volunteers are being sought to share their stories. For more information, please e-mail rdrumm@southern.edu.


*Percentages from total population of studies 1 and 2.

*Not all social scientists would identify all the items in this list as abuse. These behaviors, however, are generally recognized by professionals in the field as serious indicators that abuse may be present in a relationship, if not abusive acts in themselves.

*Some experts note that abuse is a pattern of behavior almost impossible to change. The more severe the category of abuse, the less likely it is that it will change, especially within the relationship. As difficult as it may be to do this, the victim needs to find enough external support from the community, and internal support from God, to leave the abusive situation and find a safe place for the children and herself or himself. If, however, the abuse has happened only once in a lifetime, then perhaps the pattern has not become established and external intervention may be enough to stop the behavior.


**What Has Been Done?**

**Compiled by Ron and Karen Flowers**

The Adventist world church has developed programs and taken the following actions regarding the issue of abuse:

**Since 1989**, five major studies on abuse and violence have been funded by church administration at various levels, providing “windows” on the nature and extent of abuse in Adventist families in various regions of seven world divisions.

**In 1994** an educational conference was convened for world church administrators on the issue of abuse and violence at the General Conference headquarters. Since then, three meetings of an international Abuse and Family Violence Taskforce have been convened at the church’s world headquarters to set the agenda for three progressive phases of world church response.

**In 1995** at the General Conference session in Utrecht, the Netherlands, domestic abuse was listed as one of six most pressing issues confronting the church. Since then, three official statements have been voted by the General Conference Administrative Committee on family violence and child sexual abuse.

**Since 1995**, guidelines, policies, and protocols for screening of volunteers, reporting of employee sexual misconduct/sexual harassment, convicted sexual-offender tracking, negligent hiring prevention, and processes for dealing appropriately with complaints have been developed in at least three world divisions. Work also has begun to establish mandatory pastoral training with annual updates in vanguard conferences and divisions. Educational brochures are now available for ongoing education within congregations.

**In 1997** a Family Ministries Planbook, *Making Homes Abuse Free*, was devoted to the issue of abuse, with seminar and worship resources for breaking silence and educating local church leaders and congregations about an appropriate church response. A supplementary practical kit of resources for pastors and church leaders has since been released and distributed to some 100 union conferences worldwide. A Quick Reference Guide for pastors has also been produced.

**In 2001** the General Conference Executive Committee designated Abuse Prevention Day in August in the world church calendar. Materials are provided annually to local churches worldwide.

Note: For more information about available resources, go to familyministries.gc.adventist.org.

Ron and Karen Flowers are codirectors of the General Conference Family Ministries Department.