



# WHAT HELPS PEOPLE WHO USE ABUSE TO CHANGE THEIR BEHAVIOR?

Christauria Welland, Psy.D.

Pax in Familia

Carlos López, M.A.

Resurrection Project



CCUSA-CFFP WEBINAR  
SERIES

May 19, 2021



# **VIOLENCE AND ABUSE IN CATHOLIC & CHRISTIAN FAMILIES: PREPARING AN EFFECTIVE AND COMPASSIONATE PASTORAL RESPONSE**



A 40 hour online course  
leading to a Pastoral  
Certificate issued by Pax in  
Familia

## **Your Instructor:**

Dr. Christauria Welland  
Founder, Pax in Familia  
Clinical Psychologist  
Specialist in Intimate Partner  
Violence





# WHY WE DO THIS TRAINING

Families are called to live in love and respect, like Jesus, Mary and Joseph, the Holy Family

Not all Catholic families know how to live in love.

By learning this material we will be able to share with them how to live in love and respect, and what the Church is teaching today.

We will also learn:

- How to respond when there is abuse and violence

- How to offer effective help, and avoid the unhelpful

- How to teach them skills that will prevent future violence.



## THE MATERIAL FOR THIS COURSE IS FROM PAX IN FAMILIA

- Pax in Familia is an international Catholic ministry dedicated to peace, and to the prevention of violence and abuse in Catholic families. Pax in Familia offers trainings internationally to Episcopal Conferences, Dioceses, Religious, seminaries, parishes, catechists and family life ministers on effective pastoral responses to and prevention of family violence, and how to educate Catholic youth and couples for peace.

Mike Akong & Christauria Welland-Akong





# WHAT WE HOPE FOR

- The hope and goal of Pax in Familia is that those who complete this course will
  - Share this information widely in their dioceses, parishes, schools, and seminaries
  - Spread this knowledge about family violence, violence prevention skills, respect for all people, and healthy relationship skills, so that they come to permeate our society, in fulfillment of Christ's command to love one another as He has loved us.
- This new course is for all English-speaking pastoral agents who work with families, and is especially designed for low and middle-income English-speaking countries in Africa, South Asia and Asia.
- The material is also fully applicable to higher-income countries, although they usually have more resources available. However, they may not have heard much of what is specifically directed to Catholic Christians.



# PARTICIPANTS: PASTORAL AGENTS

Bishops

Priests

Religious Congregations

Seminarians

Directors of Catholic Education

Directors of Religious Education

Directors of Family Life

Members of the Parish or Ministry, etc.





# GENERAL OUTLINE OF THIS COURSE

## **THIS IS A TRAIN-THE-TRAINERS COURSE!**

Basic knowledge on domestic violence

Scripture & Magisterium on marriage and family

Magisterium on domestic violence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

Effects of domestic violence on victims, aggressors and children

Effective pastoral responses to domestic violence

Healthy relationship and prevention skills

Prevention of domestic violence module





## LEARNING OBJECTIVES OF COURSE

1. Educate participants on the causes of intimate partner violence and its effects on victims, perpetrators and children.
2. Equip participants with the knowledge, skills and tools to provide effective pastoral responses to and prevent further intimate partner violence in culturally-appropriate ways.
3. Enable participants to educate others on the causes and effects of intimate partner violence and to equip others with the knowledge, skills and tools effectively respond to and prevent further intimate partner violence.



## WHY A COURSE FOR CATHOLICS & CHRISTIANS? ISN'T VIOLENCE EVERYWHERE?

This course is directed to Catholic and Christian pastoral agents/ministers, not because there is violence **only** in these communities, but because sometimes there is **too little awareness** of existing violence in these communities, and a lack of preparation to respond effectively and compassionately when confronted with this tragic reality, in line with **current Church teaching**.

Members of Christ's Body may mistakenly believe that domestic violence does not happen in Catholic & Christian families, so it is neglected.

Also, there are certain beliefs often specific to people of faith that we explore more fully in this course.



# LENGTH OF COURSE

8 modules, 5 hours each, with online learning and studying, including brief questionnaires and a final exam, leading to a Pastoral Certificate provided by Pax in Familia

Total Time: 40 Hours: 32 hours online learning; 8 hours reading/study.

Students may work online at their own pace

Module 1 - 5 already available.

March 24, 2021 full course will be online. French & Spanish by May 31, 2021.

Students may also meet as a group in person or on Zoom, etc. to study together and to engage in group discussions. This method is preferred, due to fellowship and learning through the discussions, but may not always be possible.



# COST OF COURSE

USD \$149.00 one time cost. This may be paid online at registration via Stripe. Students can also set up 4 monthly payments of USD \$37.25.

Individual or group discounts of 20% (\$119 each) will be considered upon request.

Full scholarships for the course may be obtained through certain Dioceses or Episcopal Conferences (in process). Scholarships are mostly reserved for our students in Africa, South Asia and Latin America who have much less access to funds or credit. Your fees help to fund their studies.

Please contact the instructor at [paxinfamiliatraining@gmail.com](mailto:paxinfamiliatraining@gmail.com).



# IF AN ENEMY HAD REVILED ME,





# CONTACTS

## COURSE REGISTRATION

<https://health-transformations.learnworlds.com>

Pax in Familia website with free downloads of Dr. Welland's Catholic books

<http://paxinfamilia.org>

Email me:

[drchristauriawelland@gmail.com](mailto:drchristauriawelland@gmail.com)

[paxinfamiliatraining@gmail.com](mailto:paxinfamiliatraining@gmail.com)



# JESUS, MARY, & JOSEPH, HOLY FAMILY,



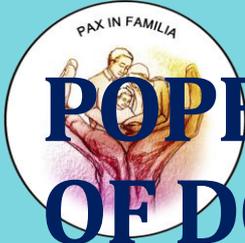


# ST. JOHN PAUL II

Whenever a man is responsible for offending a woman's personal dignity and vocation, he acts contrary to his own personal dignity and his own vocation.

*On the Dignity of Women,  
1988, #10*





# POPE FRANCIS'S CLEAR DENUNCIATION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Unacceptable customs still need to be eliminated. I think particularly of the shameful ill-treatment to which women are sometimes subjected, domestic violence and various forms of enslavement which, rather than a show of masculine power, are craven acts of cowardice. The verbal, physical, and sexual violence that women endure in some marriages contradicts the very nature of the conjugal union.

*Amoris Laetitia 2016, #54*



# WHY SHOULD WE TREAT THE PERSON WHO ABUSES?

- ❖ To protect the rights, safety, and well being of the abused and the children in the family
- ❖ To rehabilitate and heal the abuser
- ❖ To prevent the intergenerational cycle of violence
- ❖ The person with the problem is the one who needs to change if there is to be real change in the family



# TREATMENT OF THE ABUSE

## **BALANCE:**

The recognition that many abusers are past victims as well as current perpetrators.

**This never includes excusing their present behavior.**

Not to recognize and empathize with their past is to risk never building rapport with these men.

Thus we lose the opportunity to **make a profound difference in their lives and in the lives of their families.**

Welland, C. & Ribner, N., 2007



# TREATMENT OF THE ABUSE

Retraining is inadequate as a means to change abusers. Abusers need healing and recovery, like any other victim, before they can stop using the coping patterns affected by their own victimization.

Welland, 2007



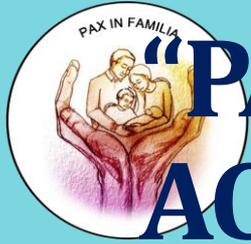
# LENS OF RESPECT & COMPASSION

When interacting with those who find themselves facing the consequences of their past partner abuse, and becoming motivated to change their life's path.



# YOUR CLIENT WILL LEARN EMPATHY & CARING ...

- If you model it to him/her personally.
- If the group you lead is reliably respectful to all.
- If you teach empathy skills and rehearse them in the group and as homework.
- If you give him/her a reason to change his behavior.
- If he/she is willing/able to learn to be empathic and caring.



# “PACING AND LEADING”/ ACCOMPANIMENT

Pacing & leading is an Ericksonian therapeutic technique.

You get on the same path with the client by listening to his/her narrative closely and showing care and understanding of his/her point of view or experience.

When you have established that connection through “accompaniment”, you can then mention the “lead”, where you perceive he or she needs to go, based on your program/method.



# PREFERRED THERAPIST BEHAVIORS

- ✓ Clinical style: Self-confident, friendly, personal touch, patient, open
- ✓ Therapeutic skills: Self-disclosure, attention, sense of humor, pacing with the client, positive reinforcement

Welland, 1999, 2007



# INEFFECTIVE TECNIQUE

She would criticize us a lot, we debated *machismo* a lot. I think she could have used a better strategy to make us think and debate, instead of the way she did it. Because the way it is, the men just see her as a feminist. And it shouldn't be like that. It's better if we can focus on that we are equal.

*Ceferino*



# APPROACHES TO WORKING WITH LATINO MEN WHO ABUSE

- ✓ Effective Teaching Style: Clarity & Structure
- ✓ Ineffective Teaching Style: Authoritarian & Unfocused
- ✓ Effective Therapeutic Style : Friendliness & Empathy
- ✓ Ineffective Therapeutic Style : Confrontational & Blaming
- ✓ Ethnic Group of Therapist

Welland, 1999, 2007



# DOES THE TREATMENT WORK?

Programs differ in content and process

Therapists differ in level of effectiveness and approachability.

Clients differ in motivation, flexibility and desire to heal

In my judgement and experience it works very well with most, but not all, clients.

Research is ongoing, but not well-funded.



# THOSE WHO ABUSE ARE NOT ALL THE SAME!

Understanding abuser typologies will assist those who take on this work in adjusting their expectations and increasing their success in therapeutic work with this often-difficult population.

Treatment efficacy differs based on the personality, cognitive structure, and life experience of those who abuse, as well as on the therapist and the tone of the group.



# TOUCHING ON TYPOLOGIES

Generally violent, antisocial personality

Family only

Low-level antisocial

Dysphoric-borderline personality



# TREATMENT GOALS : THOSE WHO ABUSE

- ✓ Eradicate violent, abusive, coercive and intimidating behavior towards the partner.
- ✓ Learn to take responsibility for one's own behavior.
- ✓ Model and create empathy in the client.
- ✓ Teach anger management.
- ✓ Increase self-esteem through mastery of skills.
- ✓ Replace maladaptive conflict resolution skills with constructive, non-violent skills.
- ✓ Learn "a new way of being a man".
- ✓ Address substance abuse effectively.
- ✓ Prevent the intergenerational cycle of violence.



# LESSONS FROM THE FIELD



If your client is still drinking in a problematic way, he will not benefit from therapy and the violence is likely to continue, if not during his treatment, than in subsequent months or years.

Take the time to verify his behavior with his partner.

All of the men in our pilot program who relapsed, even though the number was small, did so under the influence of alcohol.



# THE GROUP: A SAFE PLACE TO HEAL AND CHANGE

*Leonardo understood that an important part of his personal change came in making a contribution to other men.*

So I said to him, “If you don't talk we can't help you. That's what we're here for; we're members of the same group.” First he said one word, then he began to tell all his problems, and he began to cry. Everyone was listening and people got really surprised and quiet. The other guys helped him, to know how to solve his problem. And after a while you could see he was really relieved and he started to laugh with the others.



# GRADUATES FROM THE GROUP HAVE A LOT TO SHARE

I talk a lot with my brothers and sisters, I'm teaching them, like how to talk and how to listen to someone. I would encourage them to talk about their problems and then find a way to help them. I really feel like I have a lot of valuable information to share. I am proud of myself, of what I am doing. I'm keeping my resolutions and changing my life. So I feel proud of myself as a person.

*Rogelio*



# BECOMING AGENTS OF CHANGE

Being in the group can empower violent men to change themselves and to be agents of change in their social circle.

“Normalizing” the violence they have grown up with, not justifying it, can be a step toward recognition that they can help break the cycle of intergenerational violence in their families.

They can model adaptive skills to their partners and children, and intervene or share their knowledge with relatives and friends.



# SELF-REPORTED TREATMENT OUTCOMES FOR LATINO MEN WHO ABUSE

Learning to be nurturing fathers

Improved communication skills

Ability to manage anger

Greater flexibility in gender roles; understanding and  
“trying on” gender equality

Overcoming addiction to alcohol

Learning to be “a different kind of man”

Welland, 1999, 2007



# WHO DO I WANT TO BE?

- As myself
- As a man
- As a husband
- As a father
- As a son of God?



# MOTIVATION:

**Understanding the causes of behavior and motivating factors is key to changing or improving outcomes.**

## **Intrinsic Motivation**

Intrinsic = internal. You pursue a course or skill development solely for the satisfaction of learning, and you are determined to strive inwardly in order to be competent. There is no external inducement.

E.g., a person who abuses comes to the realization that he/she has to change and be a better person/spouse/parent.



# EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION

Extrinsic = external. Society provides us with many examples of extrinsic motivation. You are motivated to behave, achieve, learn or do based on a desired outcome, or to avoid undesirable outcomes.

E.g., a person who abuses goes to treatment so as not to go to jail, or seeks help so that he/she will be able to stay with or have contact with his/her partner and children.



# \*THE STAGES OF CHANGE

## 1. Precontemplation:

The person is unaware of the need to change and/or has no intention of changing.

## 2. Contemplation:

The person has the intention to change soon, but ambivalence about changing can cause them to keep putting off taking action.



# \*THE STAGES OF CHANGE

3. Preparation
4. Action
5. Maintenance
6. [Relapse]

Prochaska & DiClemente, 1984



# INTERVIEW FINDINGS: THE DECISION TO CHANGE

Maybe you just realize for yourself, and take responsibility and decide to change, if you want to change. Because a lot of us think that we're fine, we don't need this, but in reality we do. The need to change, that decision you take yourself. Not because of anyone else. It's the need to be different. You have to decide for yourself.

*Ignacio*





# MOTIVATION! BEING A BETTER FATHER

*Ceferino brightened as he described his relationship to his children:*

I love them very much. I want them to live in a healthy environment, to grow up in a different world from the one I lived in. I want the best for them in every way. I'm not rich, but whatever I have in my pocket I give them. I try to give my family now, my children, what my own family never gave me.



# MOTIVATION FOR TREATMENT AMONG PARTNER-ABUSIVE MEN

*What types of incentives or coercion were used to motivate men to attend the treatment groups?*

First, they were motivated by the ruling imposed by the judge.

Later, it was the welcome and the understanding of the therapist and the group.

Finally, they were motivated by seeing that they really had changed their interpersonal relationships, especially with their spouse and children.

Report, State of Durango, Mexico, 2013



# PROGRAM CONTENT FOR THOSE WHO ABUSE THEIR PARTNER

First-line interventions: Motivation/Time out/ ID  
substance abuse

Self-regulation skills

Cognitive-behavioral skills

Knowledge of human rights

Changing masculinities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

Relationship skills, especially empathy

Parenting skills



# CULTURAL COMPONENTS FOR LATINO PARTNER-ABUSIVE MEN

Learning parenting skills to break the cycle of neglect & violence,  
and as motivation for treatment

Adapting to changing gender roles and trying on gender equality

Acknowledgement of discrimination in their own life & bridge to  
their partner's experience

Discussion of difficulties and resources related to immigration

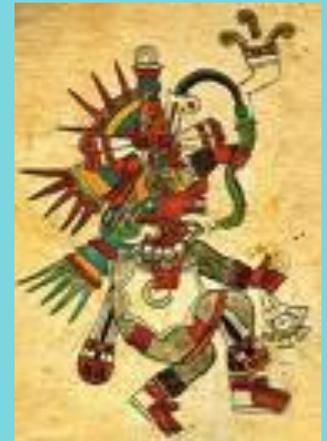
Acknowledging sexual abuse in marital relationships

Integration of spiritual beliefs and practice to promote lasting  
change and prevent future violence.

Welland, 1999



# \*QUETZALCÓATL: THE HERO'S JOURNEY, THE PILGRIMAGE



“The treatment program we begin today is like a journey that we are going to take together. Maybe you would never have chosen to take this journey, but now that you are on it, you can decide to get something good out of the experience.

We can also see our whole life as a journey, a voyage of development and growth towards physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual maturity. This process usually calls for personal sacrifice, because that is how we bring to light a new way of being.”

*Sin Golpes, session 1*



# THERAPY GROUPS FOR MEN

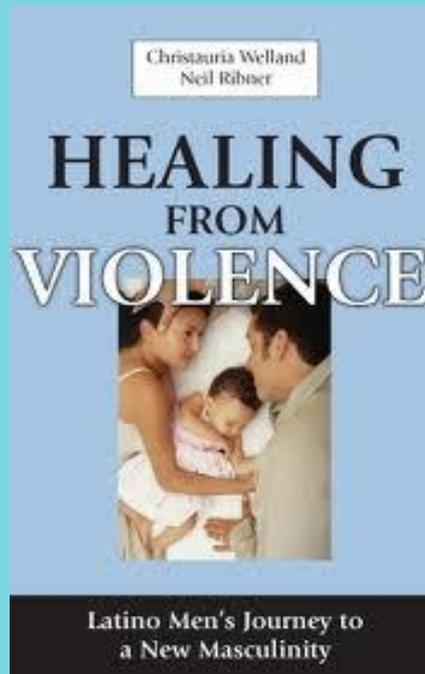


- ✓ With a respectful and well-trained group leader,
- ✓ A cohesive and supportive group of their peers,
- ✓ and a research-based program designed to focus on the main objectives of IPV treatment,
- ✓ The therapy will “do its magic” for many, if not all, of the members.



# HEALING FROM VIOLENCE: LATINO MEN'S JOURNEY TO A NEW MASCULINITY

Welland & Ribner, 2007

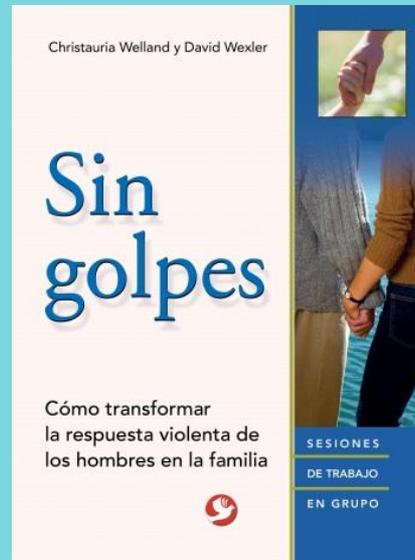




# SIN GOLPES

Cómo transformar la respuesta violenta de los hombres en la pareja y la familia

A Cultural Treatment Model for Latin American Partner-Abusive Men

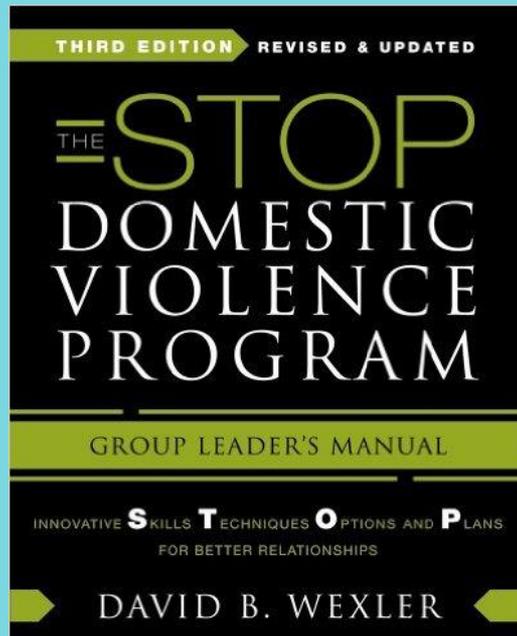


*Welland & Wexler*  
*Editorial Pax, México, 2007*



# CONTENT AND PROCESS

An evidence-based program using cognitive-behavioral and client-centered theories & process





# SIN GOLPES

## CULTURAL TREATMENT MODEL FOR LATINO MEN IN TREATMENT FOR IPV

### COGNITIVE-BEHAVIORAL APPROACH

- ✓ Self-management deficits
- ✓ Communication skills deficits
- ✓ Distorted Cognitions
- ✓ Negative Attributions
- ✓ Pessimism & Rumination
- ✓ Maladaptive stress management, e.g., substance abuse





# \*WHY A COGNITIVE-BEHAVIORAL APPROACH?

Once relationship skills such as open communication and assertiveness are taught, and cognitive distortions that perpetuate negative thinking and behavior have been explored and replaced, **violence becomes one option among many**, instead of the sole coping mechanism available when faced with conflict.



# WHY A CLIENT-CENTERED/ATTACHMENT APPROACH?

Those who abuse often experience:

- Damaged Identity
- Helplessness & Powerlessness
- Fragmentation of the Self
- Narcissistic Injury
- A Longing for the Experience of Closeness & Cohesion
- Displaced Shame & Rage



# COMMUNICATING RESPECT

The men (or women) in our programs deserve respect – not for the actions they have taken – but rather for the individual stories that have led them to act desperately and destructively. Many of the men in our groups, *like all of us*, have become overwhelmed by emotions they had difficulty handling. And they lacked the skills to handle them in a constructive and proactive manner.

*David Wexler, 2013*



# HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

- ✓ Universal human rights of men, women and children
- ✓ Focus on mutual respect
- ✓ Opposition to discrimination
- ✓ Tolerance for change
- ✓ Spiritual life and Respect
- ✓ Non-violent discipline of children



# APPROACHING DIFFICULT TOPICS

Discussing gender roles in the group is a delicate balancing act, requiring experience and knowledge of the clients' resistance.

The men in our study resented the *macho* stereotypes that they felt some therapists imposed on them. Yet, they frequently admitted that *machismo* was a pervasive problem in their relationship and culture.

Our technique is to let them talk about it among themselves, and to use the quotations from the men in our study to introduce the topic and stimulate changes in perception.



# \*PASSING THE CLIENTS' TESTS

Clients often have the expectation that their therapist feels contempt for their *machista* beliefs. Thus it is important to “pass their tests” and not fall into stereotyping.

Sometimes we use a paradoxical intervention, taking the side of the *machista* man in a discussion and allowing the men to argue against it.

A grave therapeutic error is to appear to be an angry ‘feminista,’ which will cause the group to shut down self-disclosure out of fear of saying the wrong thing. We prefer to let them challenge each other.



# RESPECT & EQUALITY

You're selling a product they didn't know they wanted or needed.

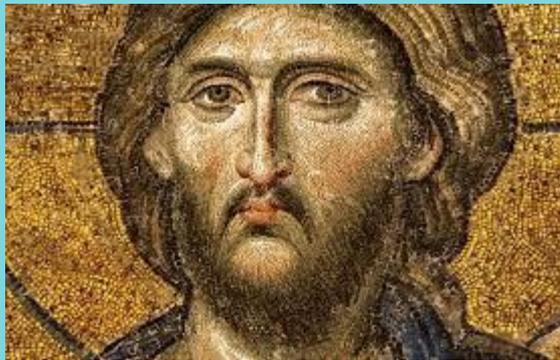
Make it attractive!

Once they experience the benefits, they will want more, learn more, & practice more.

By opening the door for the client, we can pave the way for the healing of many families.



# SPIRITUALITY IN THE *SIN GOLPES* MODEL: A CULTURAL INNOVATION





# EXPLORATION OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

Sharing the teaching, practices and fellowship that are available to Catholic and Christian populations

Reinforces that violence against women is unacceptable to Christ and the Church

Can deepen their experience of change and healing

Offers an additional path to relapse prevention

Introduces them to healthy male relationships and provides lasting friendship with God and with others



# SPIRITUALITY



I would have liked us to talk about some religion. Because when you're going to make a change you need to hold onto something. You have to have a solid foundation, whatever it is. Whether it's the program or something else. It would be helpful to bring in some religion, to talk about the spiritual side. Our therapist never talked about religion. I felt like he wasn't very open to that, that he wasn't very respectful about that. I think it would be very useful to talk about what we believe as human beings.

*Rogelio*



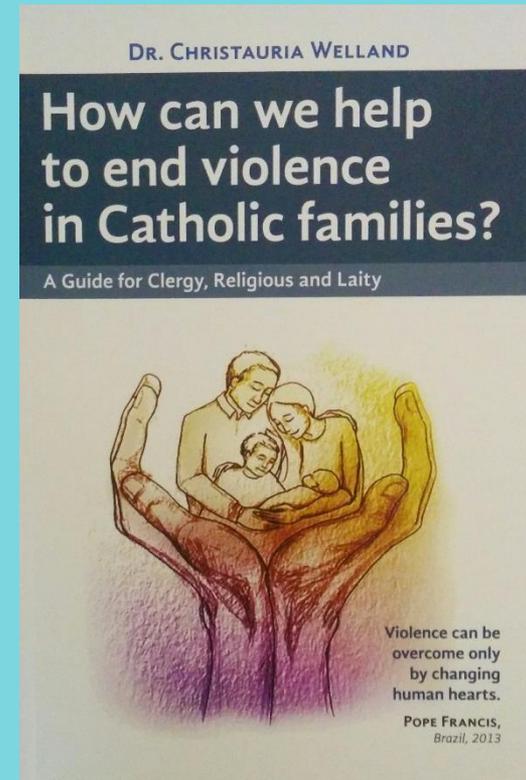
# SPIRITUALITY

- ✓ *Decision to Change*
- ✓ *The Hero's Journey: Quetzalcóatl*
- ✓ *Current Perspectives of Judeo-Christian Religions on IPV, especially the teaching of Pope Francis*
- ✓ *Spiritual Resources in their community*
- ✓ *Learning to Forgive others*
- ✓ *Asking Forgiveness from the family*



# CATHOLIC TEACHINGS APPLIED TO TREATMENT

- ✦ Sacred Scripture
- ✦ Papal teaching on Christian married love
- ✦ Specific Papal teaching on domestic violence
- ✦ USCCB: *When I Call for Help*





# CATHOLIC TEACHINGS APPLIED TO TREATMENT

Catholic teaching on marriage as a communion of life and love

Living the reality of the sacredness of the human person and the human body

How to live with spouse and children as a disciple of Christ

Living the dignity and equality of a Catholic couple

Incorporating spiritual strengths into relationship skills

Developing a life of prayer and closeness to Jesus, and to become more like him



# \*20 SESSIONS FROM *SIN GOLPES* THAT CAN BE USED FOR CHURCH-BASED VOLUNTARY PROGRAMS

1. **p. xxiii** Quetzalcóatl
2. The House of Abuse
  3. Time Out
  4. Anger & Aggression
  5. Alcohol & Violence
  6. Self-Talk
  7. Put Downs
  8. Responsibility
  9. Masculinity Traps
  10. Masculinity Traps (continued)

Welland & Wexler, 2007; Wexler, 2013



# **\*20 SESSIONS FROM *SIN GOLPES* THAT CAN BE USED FOR CHURCH-BASED VOLUNTARY PROGRAMS, p. xxiii**

11. Jealousy and Misinterpretations
12. Sex
13. Children
14. What Kind of Father do I Want to Be?
15. Expressing Feelings
16. Empathy Training
17. Conflict with Respect
18. The 4 Horsemen of the Apocalypse
19. Spiritual Life
20. Forgiveness is a Decision



# PAX IN FAMILIA

An international Catholic ministry dedicated to peace, and to the prevention of violence and abuse in Catholic families.

[www.paxinfamilia.org](http://www.paxinfamilia.org)

Contact: [drchristauriawelland@gmail.com](mailto:drchristauriawelland@gmail.com)



# PAX IN FAMILIA ONLINE

New online course for pastoral agents to learn to respond to violence in Catholic/Christian families, available now:

VIOLENCE & ABUSE IN CATHOLIC & CHRISTIAN FAMILIES: PREPARING AN EFFECTIVE & COMPASSIONATE PASTORAL RESPONSE

Course for Catholic men's groups, coming 2022

<https://health-transformations.learnworlds.com>

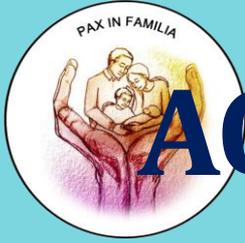


# BOOKS AVAILABLE: CONTACT DR. WELLAND DIRECTLY [drchristauriawelland@gmail.com](mailto:drchristauriawelland@gmail.com)

Welland, C. (2018). Second edition, with quotations from Amoris Laetitia. *How Can we Help to End Violence in Catholic Families? A Guide for Clergy, Religious and Laity*. San Diego: Health Transformations. Available in English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Tagalog, Korean and Tamil. [Free downloads at http://paxinfamilia.org](http://paxinfamilia.org)

Welland, C. & Ribner, N. (2007). *Healing from Violence: Latino Men's Journey to a New Masculinity*. New York: Springer Publications.

Welland, C. & Wexler, D. (2007). *Sin Golpes: Como transformar la respuesta violenta de los hombres en la pareja y la familia*. Therapist manual & client workbook. Mexico City: Editorial Pax.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ben Wortham, Catholic Charities- USA

Sharon O'Brien, Catholics for Family Peace