Why Women Don't Tell Clergy About Abuse

1. **Fear of retribution if the batterer learns that she has disclosed.**
   - She may not know that information told to her clergy/rabbi/imam or religious leader is confidential.
   - She may fear that her clergy/rabbi/imam or religious leader will report the abuse and that a police report will escalate the violence and further endanger herself and her children.
   - She may be isolated and not able to see her clergy/rabbi/imam or religious leader without her batterer being present.
   - Her batterer may have told her if she tells anyone she and/or the children will be killed.

2. **Shame and humiliation**
   - She may believe that she is the only one in a situation like this.
   - She may feel that she is responsible for the abuse; therefore, she deserves it.
   - She doesn't think she is good enough to be helped.
   - Her cultural, ethnic, and/or religious background influences her response to the abuse.

3. **She feels protective of her batterer.**
   - He is her and the children's sole support.
   - She still loves him; he is not always abusive.
   - Her batterer may be well respected, or in a position of authority within the church or social community.
   - She hopes that he will change; wants to believe that the violence won't happen again.

4. **She may believe that her clergy/rabbi/imam or religious leader:**
   - Is naïve about abuse and fearful of getting involved.
   - Doesn't have time to ask questions or listen.
   - She may have told in the past and got no response, or a blaming response.
   - Doesn't know that her clergy/rabbi/imam or religious leader may have information that can link her to community resources.

5. **She may believe that her faith or religious beliefs condone the batterer's violence (i.e. "Wives submit to your husband", "God wants me to suffer … this is my cross to bear", "I have to forgive and forget", "Divorce is a sin", "Shalom bayit is her responsibility")**