



ABA Young Lawyers Division
Voices Against Violence

Roundtable Toolkit

Creating a dialogue on domestic violence prevention and education

For more information on *Voices Against Violence*, please visit
www.abanet.org/yld/dv



INTRODUCTION

The 2008-2009 American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division (ABA YLD) public service project, **Voices Against Violence** is a call to action for young lawyers around the country to join forces to end domestic violence. The program is designed to educate young lawyers about the epidemic of domestic violence, particularly among the teen population and to engage young lawyers in efforts to respond to and prevent domestic violence in their communities.

With these goals in mind, the ABA YLD sets out to provide, through a series of roundtable discussions, a forum for facilitating the collective work of advocates, organizations, and victims, with lawyers participating as their partners in prevention. A diverse group of leaders representing the legal profession, the judicial system, the education community, domestic violence victim services, faith-based, and other social-service organizations will be invited to the roundtables to network, discuss issues and challenges they are facing, explore new resources and partnerships, and establish working relationships to raise awareness and collaborate to help prevent domestic violence.

The ABA YLD recognizes the importance of establishing a dialogue among advocates and developed this guide to assist state and local bar organizations who wish to organize and host a roundtable in their community.

THE DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Collect information on what is already being done about domestic violence around the country and create an online clearinghouse;
- Exchange information about services, share programming ideas, and expand the network of advocates and those in the legal profession;
- Identify how lawyers can use their influence to improve public policy, court practices, education, awareness, and prevention campaigns, and legal representation in our judicial systems; and
- Explore how lawyers can use their time and legal expertise to propose enhancements in government policy to help prevent domestic violence.

THE PROCESS

1. **Establish a planning team and lead organizer.** Bring together interested members who can help give the process a good start. This group is a source for ideas and resources and will keep the planning process on track.
2. **Contact and partner with a state, local or national organization committed to fighting domestic violence.** These organizations are a vital resource for connecting advocates and lawyers, and are instrumental in obtaining a current directory and e-mail list of potential attendees.
3. **Determine a date, time, and place for the Roundtable Meeting.** Choose a convenient date and time for attendees and be aware of similar events taking place on or around the date of the roundtable meeting. Also, consider the location of the meeting and whether a local advocate has meeting space.
4. **Invite attendees to the roundtable meeting.** Invite leaders of national organizations and local programs committed to raising awareness about and preventing domestic violence, and to those in the legal, education and faith-based communities. State and/or local bar associations, local law firms and local domestic violence courts should also be solicited as partners.
5. **Host the meeting.** During the 2 to 3 hour discussion, attendees exchange information, broaden their knowledge of services in their community, and make new contacts. Attendees are asked to discuss the most urgent concerns of the domestic violence issue, focusing first on the local community and then on the national level. They also brainstorm about how lawyers can help meet these needs by developing policy, providing access to legal services, or otherwise focusing attention in a particular area of need.

The Roundtable Meeting organizer may choose to begin (or conclude) the meeting with light refreshments. Meetings may also be connected to larger events such as conferences or trainings. A moderator summarizes the ABA YLD Public Service Project, outlines the purpose of the Roundtable Meeting and facilitates introductions. The moderator also highlights particular national or local issues pertaining to domestic violence, and asks participants to acknowledge their role in addressing these and related issues. Participants take 3 to 5 minutes each to introduce themselves and to highlight the work of their organizations and its impact on various constituencies within the domestic violence arena.

Next, the moderator leads a discussion on issues surrounding domestic violence in the community and across the nation. Attendees are invited to brainstorm about how lawyers can help meet these needs by developing policy, providing access to legal services, or otherwise focusing attention in a particular area of need and possible next steps. Participants are encouraged to determine next steps locally, such as holding follow-up meetings among community members, working with the state, local and specialty bars on policy development, reports on developing partnerships, and otherwise maintaining this new network.

6. **Share the results of the meeting.** Send thank you correspondence to all participants within one week. Share contact information of all participants who attended (with their permission). Create a list serve for the roundtable so participants can share feedback, exchange information, and set up a date and time for the next meeting in their area.
7. **Contact ABA YLD.** We want to hear from you! Send us information about the roundtable including the number of attendees, location, agenda, handouts, participant feedback, and your affiliate's contact information so that we can add you to the ABA YLD web site. We hope this information can serve as a tool and assist others as they develop their own roundtable programs.

Send to:

Renee Lugo, Program Associate
ABA Young Lawyers Division
321 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL 60654
EMAIL: lugor@staff.abanet.org

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: How long should the Roundtable Meeting be scheduled?

A: While times vary, Roundtable Meetings (including time for meals) should probably last no less than 90 minutes and no more than 3 ½ hours.

Q: How many participants should we target?

A: We encourage quality over quantity. The number of participants often varies by location and by the resources available in different communities. A meeting group in a major urban area may have as many as 40 participants, while a small city or town may include as few as 10. Focus on enhancing diversity of perspectives, what organizations can attend, and the variety of resources and perspectives they can bring to the table.

Q: Where should the Roundtable Meeting take place?

A: Roundtable Meetings on Domestic Violence can be held at law firms, bar association and foundation offices, and in courthouses. The possibilities are endless. In the end, we suggest that the venue be centrally located and able to accommodate the number of guests invited.

Q: Who should lead the Roundtable Meeting?

A: Be sure to invite a seasoned moderator to facilitate the meeting. Bar association executives and judges often make great moderators. Whomever you choose, this person may or may not be an expert in the field, but should be a skilled leader who is comfortable facilitating discussions on often sensitive or hotly-debated issues pertaining to domestic violence. This person should also feel comfortable sticking to the agenda or going with the direction of the meeting room. Remember, your invitation list includes executives, program directors, or other top leaders who are professionals and who want to work collaboratively.

Q: Should we invite domestic violence survivors to join the discussion?

A: Invitations to survivors should be extended at the discretion of the organizers. It is important to include the voices of survivors and to engage them in these dialogues. It is equally important that they feel comfortable sharing their perspectives in this kind of forum. It should be facilitated in a way such that their experience is a positive one, and one that adds value to the conversation.

Q: Should there be handouts?

A: Encourage participants to bring enough handouts for the planned number of attendees. Handouts can include organization and/or program brochures, event announcements, research or annual reports. Handouts can be collected in advance and placed in a meeting folder, passed around the room during the meeting, or simply placed on a distribution table inside or outside the meeting room.

ABA Entity Support

ABA Young Lawyers Division | ABA Chicago Headquarters | 312.988.5626 | <http://www.abanet.org/yld/>

ABA Commission on Domestic Violence | ABA Washington DC Headquarters | www.abanet.org/domviol/

Sample Letter of Invitation

This letter (sent via U.S. mail or via email) should be modified to include the pertinent details of your own Roundtable Meeting.

Dear **[Community Leader, Counselor, Organizational Officer, etc.]**:

I am writing to invite you to a Roundtable Meeting on Domestic Violence. The Roundtable Meeting will take place at **[time]** on **[day, date]**. We will meet at **[location]**. For security purposes, please bring a photo I.D. for admission to the building. Moderating the Roundtable Meeting will be **[Name of moderator]**. **[Continental breakfast or lunch or light refreshments]** will be provided.

Roundtable Meetings on Domestic Violence bring together a diverse group of leaders that represent the legal profession, the judicial system, the education community, domestic violence victim services, faith-based organizations and many others, to talk about local domestic violence issues, to learn more about existing programs, and to identify ways that lawyers can support and help those "on the ground." We are aware of the work that you and your organization are involved in regarding domestic violence, and we hope you will join us to share information, exchange resources and broaden the network of professionals who are working to help the next generation.

The Domestic Violence Roundtable Series is a service project of the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division. The purpose of these meetings is to help "connect the dots" by facilitating the collective work of advocates, victim-serving organizations, and survivors themselves, along with lawyers as their partners in reform on a national level. In the process, the ABA YLD Public Service Team is gathering information and identifying programs that might be used as models for adoption nationwide. Ultimately, the ABA YLD hopes to meet the following goals:

- Collect information on what is already being done about domestic violence around the country and create an online clearinghouse;
- Exchange information about services, share programming ideas, and expand the network of advocates and those in the legal profession;
- Identify how lawyers can use their influence to improve public policy, court practices, education, awareness, and prevention campaigns, and legal representation in our judicial systems; and
- Explore how lawyers can use their time and legal expertise to propose enhancements in government policy to help prevent domestic violence.

Please contact me at **[phone and email address]** to RSVP by **[deadline]**. Meanwhile, to learn more about the ABA YLD Public Service Team's Domestic Violence initiative, please visit www.abanet.org/yld/dv/. We look forward to your positive reply. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[Organizer]

Reminder Email to Participants

Send 2- 5 days prior to event date

Greeting to all Roundtable Meeting Participants:

Thank you for agreeing to attend the Roundtable Meeting on Domestic Violence. A list of participants who agreed to participate is attached. **[Name of person]** will serve as our moderator. We will begin with an informal lunch, followed by an overview of the ABA YLD Public Service Team Domestic Violence initiative and participant introductions. We will ask each of you to take five minutes to describe your program and/or other involvement with the issue of domestic violence. Please feel free to bring handouts if they would be helpful.

The meeting will take place on **[date]**, from **[start time]** to **[end time]** at **[location]**. Please feel free to contact me by e-mail at **[email address]** or at **[phone number]** if you have questions or need additional information regarding Monday's proceedings.

We look forward to meeting each of you.

Regards,

Organizer

Additional information to consider including in your reminder email:

*Parking information
Directions to host location
Building security instructions*

Suggested List of Invitees

City or County Commission of Health and Human Services
College / university faculty (law, public policy, social service degree programs)
Domestic Violence judges, prosecutors, and defense attorneys
Domestic Violence organizations
Educators and counselors who work with domestic violence victims and/or their families
Faith-based organizations
Fraternities
Local bar association (city or county) and their Young Lawyers Division
Military authorities
Police and probation administrators
Psychologists / psychiatrists who work with domestic violence victims
Safe House programs
Social workers
Social service and/or advocacy organizations that serve women, African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and immigrants (e.g, *Local chapters of League of United Latin American Citizens, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the National Council of La Raza, League of Women Voters, National Urban League, NAACP*)
Sororities
State bar association and their Young Lawyers Division
Domestic violence victim advocacy and social service organizations

EVENT DAY

Recommended Supplies

Tent cards with name and organization
Name badges
Pens
Notepads
Light refreshments
Handouts Business cards
Flip Charts & Markers

Sample Agenda (2½ hours)

Welcome and introductions (10 minutes)

- Call meeting to order
- Moderator introduces her/himself and acknowledges dignitaries, event sponsors, and clarifies any general housekeeping rules (breaks, cell phones, respect for all meeting participants, etc.)
- Provide general overview of ABA YLD Public Service Team's initiative on domestic violence (*including initiatives*)
- Explain the Roundtable Series on Domestic Violence and outline general objectives (those of the Team and/or those specifically outlined for your particular Roundtable Meeting)

Participant introductions and program overviews (50 minutes)

- Participants around the table introduce themselves and the organization they represent, and discuss their roles with the issue of domestic violence
- Moderator encourages participants to collaborate, maintain the network, learn more about one another's work

What are the issues and how is the community addressing them? (45 minutes)

- What are key issues pertaining to domestic violence and how are participants involved in addressing these issues?
- Begin with local issues, then regional/state issues, then national concerns
- What programs are available for victims and the offenders and how are they delivered?
 - *Awareness education, prevention, support, etc.*
 - *Sexual, mental, and physical health*
 - *Sports activities, law-related civic education programs, after-school programs, weekend and membership programs*
- What are the funding issues, if any?
 - *Federal and private grants, corporate and law firm sponsorships, donations*
- What institutional resources are helpful?
 - *Federal and State Government*
 - *Judicial*
 - *National and local non-profit organizations*
 - *State/local bar associations (include activities among law students and young lawyers divisions)*

How can lawyers help? (45 minutes)

- How can those in the legal profession help to make a difference? How can the ABA assist across its membership, through its communications, or through policy initiatives?
 - *Defining help (mentoring, sponsorships, advocacy, policy development, pro bono representation, community volunteerism)*
 - *Institutional help from courts, law firms, law schools, bar associations*
 - *Individual help from lawyers, law students, board members*
 - *Specific policy recommendations for ABA to develop*
 - *Successful models already in place*

Final remarks, next steps (5 minutes)

- Solicit final thoughts from participants and challenge them to maintain the network
 - *Informally survey participant interest in meeting again in 6 to 12 months, or otherwise maintaining these new relationships*
 - *Summarize primary issues, best practices and other key points*
- Moderator thanks participants, sponsors, host and event organizer

