



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF VIRGINIA

The Prevention of Sexual Abuse and Misconduct: Handouts for the Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Workshop

Training: Objectives and Documentation

Training is a crucial deterrent to child sexual abuse. Training

1. educates clergy and laypeople on what types of behaviors can foster an environment where abuse can take place;
2. equips ministers to recognize warning signs of abuse;
3. sets out best practices for abuse prevention;
4. and provides a framework for response in the tragic event that abuse does happen.

To show you've completed the requirement, you will be given a copy of the certificate of completion at the end of this workshop. Consider:

1. **Clergy must keep a copy of their certificate** in their own files and submit copies to the diocese and to the parish or other institution they serve.
2. **Laypersons must keep a copy of their certificate** for their files and submit a copy to their parish.
3. Those unable to present documentation when requested must complete another workshop. Workshop attendees are responsible for obtaining and keeping documentation of workshop completion.
4. Training must be renewed after 10 years by taking the appropriate abbreviated in-person workshop or online courses. Parishes may require more frequent renewals at the discretion of the rector or his/her designate.

Defining Child Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse of a child is a criminal offense in every state in the United States. Virginia law defines an abused child as a child less than 18 years of age whose parents or other persons responsible for his or her care:

Commit or allow to be committed any illegal sexual act upon a child, including rape, incest, indecent exposure, and prostitution, or allow a child to be used in any sexually explicit visual material.

Child abuse that takes place within the family or where the child is in the care of another adult is the responsibility of Child Protective Services. In other situations where the child is abused by a non-caretaker whether that person is known to the child or not, the police are responsible for the investigation.

The law also defines child neglect or abuse as:

1. Causing, or threatening to cause, a non-accidental physical or mental injury, or creating a substantial risk of impairment of bodily or mental function.
2. Neglecting or refusing to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, emotional nurturing or health care.
3. Neglecting or refusing to provide adequate supervision in relation to a child's age and level of development.
4. Abandoning the child.

Sexual abuse encompasses acts of sexual assault and sexual exploitation by a parent or other caregiver. It includes a broad range of behaviors, such as fondling; oral, vaginal, or anal intercourse; indecent exposure; voyeurism and sexual exploitation. It may consist of a single incident or of many incidents over a long period of time. Victims range in age from infants to teenagers.

Safe Practices for Congregations for Preventing Child Abuse

1. The **best way to prevent child sexual abuse** in the church is to make sure that there are always two or more unrelated adults with children at all times.
2. **Watch** for physical, behavioral, and emotional boundary violations.
3. These safe practices are not meant to inconvenience adult employees and volunteers but to protect children. They can also help protect adults from unfounded accusations. Here are some **behaviors that can lead to false allegations**:
 - a) Meeting alone in isolated places.
 - b) Wearing provocative or revealing attire.
 - c) Meeting in homes and in bedrooms without others present.
 - d) Giving special or secret gifts.
 - e) Keeping secrets about the relationship.
 - f) Failing to adhere to uniform or accepted standards of affection.
4. **Team Teaching and Chaperoning**
 - a) Concerted effort should be made to recruit sufficient volunteer teachers to permit two unrelated teachers in every class. At least two unrelated adults should be present in the parish nursery as well.
 - b) Youth activities both on and off the church grounds should have two or more adult leaders who are known to the church and unrelated. If there are both boys and girls participating in the activity then both male and female leaders should be present.
 - c) Community organizations using the church facilities should follow the same guidelines.
5. **Open Doors:** Parents of the children being served as well as the clergy, and professional staff of the church have the right to visit and observe the program at any time, unannounced.
6. **Driving**
 - a) Drivers should never be alone with a child other than their own.
 - b) Drivers going to or from the church for a church activity must be at least 18 years old and must have a valid state driver's license.
 - c) Drivers must have no record of convictions for the past five years for drunken driving, driving under the influence, driving with a suspended or revoked license, or reckless endangerment.
7. **Individual Pastoral Care**
 - a) While one-on-one pastoral care is a fundamental part of ministry, care must be taken to see that it is conducted in an environment that provides visibility by other adults.
 - b) Another adult should know the volunteer's or staff member's whereabouts and whom he or she is meeting with.
 - c) No one should engage in secretive and private relationships with children or young people.

- d) As a general rule, there should be no more than 3 to 5 private meetings with any one child or young person per year.
8. **Pornography** – It is the policy of the Diocese of Virginia that no church computers or other technology may ever be used to access pornography.

Personal Precautions

1. No **clergy person shall meet a parishioner for more than six sessions** in regard to a particular pastoral episode or life issue. After three to six sessions, a parishioner or counselee is to be referred to an appropriate professional.
2. No clergy person shall provide spiritual direction to parishioners or others unless he/she is also under spiritual direction.
3. **Clergy and other lay ministers should not visit or contact** parishioners at times of day that might create an awkward appearance or signal a degree of privacy that is inappropriate. Exercise discretion and good judgment so as not to create occasions when misconduct might occur or might appear to be occurring. Clergy should not call in the homes of single parishioners of the opposite sex in the evening. Meetings should be scheduled during business hours when others are present. A person in a ministerial position should discuss any meeting or visit that could appear awkward with his/her spouse and with a colleague, supervisor, therapist or spiritual director.
4. **Meetings with individuals** should, to the extent possible and practicable, occur during normal business hours and when someone else is nearby in the building.
5. **Consult with a supervisor** or a colleague when a meeting is needed that might appear to others as inappropriate. If married, speak with your spouse. While appropriate standards of confidentiality ought to be observed, being open about nonstandard meetings protects all who are involved.
6. **Be cautious when traveling** to conferences, retreats, and other out-of-town meetings with only one other person when that association might have the appearance of impropriety.
7. **Be careful about social occasions** with only one other person that can lead to sexual misconduct or the appearance of sexual misconduct. Be especially careful about the use of alcohol when in the company of only one other person.
8. **Touch or hug appropriately.** It may be appropriate, when one is comforting a grieving parishioner, for example, to embrace that parishioner in a reassuring manner that communicates acceptance/inclusion in the loving community of faith. However, an identical embrace might be inappropriate when a parishioner shares about his/her dysfunctional marriage and the embrace unintentionally conveys an alternate form of intimacy. Sensitivity and discretion are necessary and it is proper to ask first before offering a physical embrace. It is always safer to hug side to side, instead of face to

face. (A pat on the shoulder may be most appropriate when you want to express concern and keep some emotional distance at the same time.)

None of these precautions are meant to inhibit appropriate pastoral intimacy. They are illustrations of the prudent limits mature clergy and lay leaders accept for effective ministry.

How to Report Sexual Misconduct or Suspected Sexual Misconduct

All misconduct or suspected misconduct must be reported to the appropriate person (see below) as soon as possible.

Reporting Misconduct Committed by a Clergy person:

Notify an Intake Officer by phone or e-mail. The Intake Officers are:

The Rev. Randall Prior
E-mail: rprio45@gmail.com
Business phone: (703) 903-9696
Cell phone: (703) 477-0001

The Rev. Caroline Parkinson
E-mail: csp@activated.com
Business phone: (804) 232-6867
Cell phone: (540) 270-0879

Reporting Misconduct Committed by a Layperson:

Notify the rector or other clergy person on staff of the layperson's church or of the church of the offended person. The clergy person should then call the bishop's or canon's office at (800) 346-2373 to plan the appropriate response in the particular context.

Appropriate responses to a report may include one or more of the following:

1. **If the report regards suspected child abuse or child sexual abuse**, the layperson will be placed on administrative leave from all ministries involving children or teens, or which bring the layperson into proximity with children or teens until the matter is appropriately resolved.
2. **If the report regards suspected abuse or sexual misconduct toward an adult**, the layperson will be placed on administrative leave from all ministries in which there is one-on-one contact with adults, including Eucharistic visits and pastoral visits, until the matter is appropriately resolved.
3. **If formal charges of sexual misconduct or abuse are brought against a layperson who is in a position of leadership**, for example, a warden, member of the vestry, Diocesan Council delegate, Standing Committee member, Executive Board member or Deputy to General Convention, that person will be placed on administrative leave from the leadership position until the investigation or legal proceedings are complete.

These actions are not intended to imply guilt, but are intended to create a safe space for all during a difficult time. Decisions about when and how to place a layperson on administrative leave are made on a case by case basis in a conversation between the rector of the church and the bishop or canon.

Pastoral care for all involved, including the person reported, the person(s) making the report, the victim(s) and the congregation, is vitally important. A plan for pastoral care for all will be developed in consultation with the bishop or canon.

Required Reporting:

All suspected child abuse or sexual misconduct must be reported to Child Protective Services. Call the statewide toll-free hotline (800) 552-7096 to make the initial report or call the local Social Services office.

In reporting to Child Protective Services, it is helpful for the reporter to provide as much of the following as possible: the name and address of the child and the parent or person responsible for his/her care; the child's age, sex, and race; a description of the alleged abuse and neglect, including how long it may have been happening; the name of the school the child attends; the names of other people, especially children, in the home; the reporter's relationship to the child. Report even if you are unable to provide all of the information. The person reporting abuse to Child Protective Services is not required to give his or her name.

If you suspect abuse, neglect or exploitation of an adult over age 60, or an incapacitated adult over the age of 18, call the Adult Protective Services hotline of the Virginia Department of Social Services at (888) 832-3858.