

Church Leader Training

# CREATING A SAFE CHURCH MINISTRY



FAMILY LEADERSHIP  
INITIATIVE

## SESSION OBJECTIVES

- 1 Acknowledge the importance of overcoming silence and denial.
- 2 Define sexual abuse.
- 3 Explain the impacts for children and adults.
- 4 Develop an awareness of abuse and predatory behaviors.
- 5 Implement an abuse response policy.



## **THE SHORT COURSE ON SEXUAL ABUSE**

Expect denial.

Understand, it's not about sex.

Abuse usually doesn't "just happen."

What is publicly known is usually just the tip of the iceberg.

Chaos breaks out.



**Sexual abuse is harmful and/or exploitive.**

**Sexual abuse is not consensual.**

### **TOUCH**

Inappropriate fondling, touching, and/or intercourse.

### **NON-TOUCH**

Sexual comments, pornography, and/or watching sexual activity.



**Consent** implies an equal power balance in a relationship and a shared understanding of an action's meaning.

VS



Adult > Child  
Teacher > Student  
Boss > Employee  
Doctor > Patient  
Pastor > Congregant

# CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

## Childhood Brain Development

**Cognitive Delays** Language development, intelligence, and/or trouble in school.

**Emotional Impairment** Attachment disorders, inability to form relationships, and/or isolation.

**Spiritual Formation** Inability to believe that God is good or that they are loved by God.

## Lifelong Effects

**Physical Health** Obesity, gastrointestinal problems, headaches, and/or diabetes.

**Psychological Health** Depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and/or addictive behaviors.

**Spiritual Impacts** Inability to trust and form relationships. Loss of faith and hope.



## Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

- Domestic violence
- Parental abandonment through separation or divorce.
- A parent with a mental health condition.
- Being the victim of abuse. (Physical, sexual and/or emotional)
- A member of the household being in prison.
- Growing up in a household in which there are adults experiencing alcohol and drug use problems.





**The unresolved trauma of abuse impacts the way a person feels about themselves, the way they relate to others, and their relationship with God—it affects everything!**







**An ounce of prevention is worth  
a pound of cure.”**

*Benjamin Franklin*

# GROOMING

## **ENGAGEMENT**

- Targeting the child.
- Gaining the child's and caregiver's trust.
- Filling a need.
- Isolating the child.

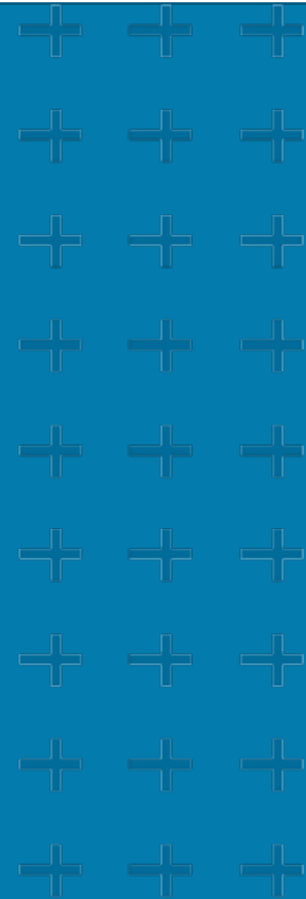
## **SEXUALIZING THE RELATIONSHIP**

- Desensitization.

## **SECRECY**

- Maintaining control.

**Sexual abusers come from  
all walks of life and cannot  
be picked out or identified  
by appearance.**



# IMPLEMENT A SCREENING PROCESS



**Written  
Application**

+



**Face-to-face  
Interview**

+



**Reference  
Check**

+



**Church  
Attendance**



BACKGROUND CHECK  
**RED FLAGS**

- Providing alcohol.
- Tobacco
- Pornography
- Contributing to delinquency or indecency.
- Exhibitionism.
- Voyeurism.
- Assault.



**Effective policies and procedures serve as a deterrent and make your church a less attractive target for an abuser.**





# ABUSE RESPONSE POLICY



Contact the authorities.



Care for the victim  
by placing the victim's  
needs first.



Assign someone to the victim  
and family, seeking outside  
expert help as needed.



Put measures in place to limit  
the exposure of the accused  
to the life of the church.\*