KEEPING GOD’S CHILDREN SAFE
Most Rev. Robert D. Gruss
Bishop of Rapid City

Creating a FAITH Environment
for Our Children

Diocese of Rapid City
Adult Safe Environment Training

Materials developed by Diocese of Grand Island used with permission
Our Catholic Faith Environment

• Models Christ and the Gospel message
• Follows Catholic Social Teaching
• Fosters faith development.
• Provides deliberately different messages than those encountered in society.
Modeling Christ and the Gospel Message
The Gospel Message of Christ

• The teachings of Jesus
  ▫ Who and how we are as Catholic Christians

• Largely about relationships
  ▫ God’s relationship with us
  ▫ Our relationship to God and the Church
  ▫ Our relationships with one another

• Wisdom about healthy relationships
  ▫ Beatitudes, the Golden Rule, Fruits of the Spirit

• Revolutionary view of children
  ▫ In an era when children were ‘seen, but not heard’, Jesus sent a clear message about the significance of children.
Matthew 18: 4-5

“And whoever receives one child such as this in my name receives me. Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.”
Modeling Christ

• Unconditional Love
• Forgiveness
• Focus on others versus self
• Empathy
• Dignity / Respect
Following Catholic Social Teaching
Catholic Social Teaching

- The Life and Dignity of the Human Person
- The Call to Family, Community, and Participation
- Solidarity
- The Dignity of Work
- Rights and Responsibilities
- The Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
- Caring for God’s Creation
The Life and Dignity of the Human Person

- All of our Catholic social teaching flows from this principle.
- People are more important than things.
- Every human person is created in the image and likeness of God and each person’s life and dignity must be respected.
- The measure of every institution is whether it protects and respects the life and dignity of the human person.

The Call to Family, Community, and Participation:

• The human person is not only sacred, but social.

• Marriage and family are central and serve as the foundations for social life.

• Every person has a right to participate and a corresponding duty to work for the advancement of the common good and the well-being of all.

—USCCB Administrative Committee, Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility, p. 13
Solidarity

• We are one human family.
• We are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers, wherever they may be.
• “We are all really responsible for all.” – Pope John Paul II
• At the core is the pursuit of justice and peace.
• The Gospel calls us to be “peacemakers.”

—USCCB Administrative Committee, Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility, p. 15
Preferential Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

The needs of others come first, especially;

- Those who have no voice
- Those whose human rights are violated
- Those whose dignity is not recognized
Rights and Responsibilities

• Every person has basic human rights, i.e.
  ▫ Access to food
  ▫ Affordable housing
  ▫ Decent healthcare
  ▫ Education
  ▫ Safety

• We have the responsibility to help maintain and to protect these rights, not just for ourselves, but for everyone.
Fostering Faith Development
Fostering Faith Development

• Safety is not only a human right, but considered one of our basic human needs.

• Safety, among other basic needs, is a necessary component for normal development.

• If we hope to foster the spiritual development of our children and youth; we must first meet their need for safety.
Safety in our Faith Environment

• To create a Catholic Faith Environment, we must first ensure that our environment is safe.

• Children and youth must not only be safe, but they must also feel safe. They must recognize that they are in a safe place.
Being Deliberately Different
“It Takes a Parish”

• Children and adolescents are safer and healthier – they ‘do better’ when they grow up in a community where ‘everyone is looking out for them.’

• Children are more resilient to adversity when they have positive, consistent adults in their lives.

• Our parish and school communities can be the sort of community where adults are “looking out for” young people and where young people can encounter positive adults.
Challenges to Our Faith Environment

- Urbanization
  - Less likely to grow up in a community where other adults know who they are and are looking out for them

- Normalization of sexual exploitation and violence
  - Desensitization

- Emphasis on personal rights / de-emphasis on responsibility to others

- Devaluation of marriage

- Rapid change
Challenge of the Century

- One of the greatest challenges the Church has faced this century has been the realization that the faith environments we provided for our children were not always safe.

- This past century we became aware that literally thousands of children and adolescents had been sexually abused by leaders in our Church.

- What were we missing in our faith environments that this was able to happen?
What We Were Missing

- Awareness of the problem.
- Understanding of the impact.
- Recognition of the signs.
- Effective response.
The Problem of Child Sexual Abuse

1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be abused by age 18.

Most sexual abuse occurs at the hands of family members or by someone that the child knows well.
The Impact of Child Sexual Abuse

The sexual abuse of a child impacts the child in virtually all areas of development.

Cognitive  Social
Emotional  Spiritual
Behavioral  Physical
Long Term Effects

If child sexual abuse is not effectively treated, long-term symptoms may persist into adulthood. These may include:

- PTSD and/or anxiety
- Depression and thoughts of suicide
- Sexual anxiety and disorders
- Poor body image and low self-esteem
- Use of unhealthy behaviors to mask emotional pain, (e.g., alcohol abuse, drug abuse, self-mutilation, or bingeing and purging)

A National Center for PTSD Fact Sheet
Jessica Hamblen, Ph.D.
U.S. Department of Veteran’s Affairs
The Long Term Effects of Abuse Vary by Individual

“In short, the ill effects of child sexual abuse are wide ranging. There is no one set of symptoms or outcomes that victims experience.”

APA Public Affairs
Resiliency

Positive outcomes for children who have been victimized by abuse have been found to be related to:

- The presence of a consistent positive relationship with an adult.
- A supportive, protective response to the child’s disclosure of abuse.
The Church’s Response to the Abuse of Children
USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and young people

- Document of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
- Not just legal principles
- Based on our calling as Catholic Christians
- Catholic social teaching
The Charter Directs Action in All of the Following Matters:

- Healing and reconciliation of victims and survivors;
- Making prompt and effective response to allegations;
- Cooperating with civil authorities;
- Disciplining offenders;
- Creating a safe environment for children and young people;
- Providing for means of accountability for the future to ensure the problem continues to be effectively dealt with through a national Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection and a National Review Board.

-USCCB Secretariat for the Protection of Children and Young People
The Charter Requires...

- The training of parents, ministers, educators, church personnel, volunteers and others regularly involved with minors as to the abuse of children, including sexual abuse.

- The training is to address the prevention, identification, response and reporting of such cases.

- In addition to those who regularly work with and who minister to children and youth, every effort will be made to provide training to and for parents and children.

- Codes of conduct will be formulated and presented for all who work with and who minister to children and youth as well as parents and children.
Since Implementation of the Charter...

• Annual audits of dioceses/eparchies have been conducted with results published and sent to the Holy See.

• Safe Environment training is taking place in all audited dioceses/eparchies of the country.

• Over 2 million employees and volunteers have been screened and trained in Safe Environment concepts.

• All audited dioceses/eparchies have Codes of Conduct.

• Over 5,341,000 children were educated in the signs of right relationships versus abusive ones and how to seek help.
The Charter Calls Us to Provide the Safest and Most Secure Setting Possible

“Churches, schools and youth organizations must ensure that children and youth who worship, study or participate in activities therein can do so in the safest and most secure setting possible. Parents and caretakers must have confidence in these institutions before they will allow their children to become involved with them.”

USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People
2002
We are going to talk about some strategies we can utilize in our Faith Environment to keep children safe. Most strategies were specifically designed to prevent the occurrence of sexual abuse, but as you will see, these strategies help prevent all sorts of abuse and relational aggression and help us create, not only a safe environment, but a Faith Environment that models Christ, and follows Catholic Social Teaching.
Safe Environment Strategies
Creating a Safe Environment Involves:

• **Reducing Risk** in the environment

• **Recognizing** signs of distress and warning signs in relationships

• **Responding** to distress

• **Reporting** concerns and suspicions of abuse
Definitions - Sexual Abuse

"Sexual exploitation of a child not developmentally capable of understanding or resisting the contact, or who may be psychologically or socially dependent on the offender."


"Any inappropriate suggested or actual sexual exposing or touch between an adult and a child. The activity is inappropriate because the child does not understand the nature of the request and/or is coerced into the activity through deceit, threat, or because the activity is offered under the guise of normal affection."

Sandord, 1980.
Types of Sexual Abuse

- **Physical**
  Inappropriate touching, oral or genital contact, etc.

- **Emotional**
  Viewing of sexual behavior / pornography, sexualized language, intrusive questions, etc.
Child Sexual Abuse
Four Preconditions: A Model

• Precondition I: Motivation to Sexually Abuse.
• Precondition II: Overcoming Internal Inhibitions.
• Precondition III: Overcoming External Inhibitions.
• Precondition IV: Overcoming the Resistance of the Child.

Conclusion

Abuse requires the presence of all four prior conditions.

Safe Environment Strategies for Prevention of Abuse

• To prevent abuse we can implement strategies to address any of the four preconditions of abuse.

• The following safe environment strategies address one or more precondition of abuse:
Precondition for Abuse

• Adult with a motivation to abuse

• Decreased Internal Inhibitions

• Absence of External / Social Inhibitions

• Breakdown in the Resistance of the Child

Safe Environment Principle

• References Background Checks Support of Vocations

• Codes of Conduct Supervision / Consultation Self-Care

• “Safety in Numbers” Accountability Boundaries Parent / Child Education

• Parent / Child Education
Precondition I
Addressing Motivation to Abuse

1. References and Background Checks

- There is no specific psychological test to rule out motivation.

- “The best predictor of future behavior is past behavior”

- “It is not the assumption that we are all would-be perpetrators, but rather that we all could be rescuers of a child.”

- If we all agree to the same guidelines it will be easier to identify when something is wrong.
Addressing Motivation to Abuse, continued

2. Support of vocations

- The vast majority of clergy are not abusive.
- Clergy are experiencing increased stress related to public perception.
- To maintain a healthy population of clergy / religious, we need to increase support to non-offending clergy and support the calling of healthy young men and women to religious life.
Precondition II
Keeping Internal Inhibitions Intact

1. Preserve your Ability to Exercise Good Judgment

- Seek supervision
  - “Seek supervision to remain focused on professional responsibilities and to hold firm to the sexual boundaries of the pastoral relationship.”
  - Sounding Board
  - Accountability
  - "Third Eye" perspective

- Avoid substance use
  - Use of drugs and alcohol serves to impair your judgment and decrease your normal inhibitions.
Keeping Internal Inhibitions Intact, continued

• Tend to your physical and emotional health.
  ▫ Know your own limitations / vulnerabilities.
  ▫ Recognize signs of impairment.
  ▫ Maintain a healthy lifestyle.
  ▫ Seek help when needed.

• When in doubt consult.
Most Types of Abuse Can be prevented by providing adequate supervision

- An adult with a motivation to sexually abuse children needs unsupervised access to children for abuse to occur.
- Adults are less likely to engage in physical or emotional abuse of children in the presence of others.
- Children who are being supervised by adults are likely to get their needs met, even if experiencing neglect by their caregiver.
- Children and youth are less likely to engage in relational aggression (e.g. bullying, cyber bullying, sexual harassment, assault) when an observant adult is present.
Precondition III
Maintaining External Inhibitions

1. “Safety in Numbers”
   - Implement a youth "Buddy System" for trips / events
     - Presence of a witness
     - Access to help (potential "rescuer")
     - Strengthened Resistance
Maintaining External Inhibitions
“Safety in Numbers”, continued

- Use a team approach in dealing with youth
  - Adequate supervision
    - both male and female chaperones for trips/events
    - high staff to youth ratio (one adult for every 8 - 10 youth)
  - Team decision-making
Maintaining External Inhibitions
“Safety in Numbers”, continued

• **Use caution in 1:1 contacts**
  - **Keep others informed**
  - **Avoid Isolation**
    - meet in areas that are visible and accessible (e.g., public area, open door, open room with window)
    - don't conduct 1:1 meetings in your residence
  - **Avoid driving alone with youth.**
Maintaining External Inhibitions

Power Differential, continued

• Clearly define rules / expectations.
  ▫ Provide written rules with pictorial cues for younger children.
  ▫ Be consistent in enforcing rules.
  ▫ Evaluate appropriateness of expectations.

• Avoid dual relationships (conflict of interest).
Maintaining External Inhibitions, continued

2. Acknowledge and respect the power differential in relationships.

• Recognize your role as a representative of God and the church.

• Do not use coercion, threats, or excessive flattery.

• Do use descriptive praise, unconditional positive regard, and logical consequences (when necessary).
Maintaining External Inhibitions, continued

3. Establish Clear Boundaries

• Avoid physical contact that might be misinterpreted / misconstrued.
  ▫ Avoid roughhousing, tickling, flirtatious behavior

• Avoid any covert or overt sexual behaviors
  ▫ Seductive speech or gestures.
  ▫ Physical contact.
  ▫ Exposure to inappropriate media, etc.

• Respect boundaries established by youth.
  ▫ Be aware of signs of discomfort.
  ▫ Respect each individual's need for personal space.
Maintaining External Inhibitions Boundaries, continued

• Respond to inappropriate boundaries clearly and with sensitivity.
  □ Clearly state that the contact is uncomfortable for you or inappropriate for the setting.
  □ Identify an appropriate boundary.
  □ Convey acceptance / unconditional positive regard.
Maintaining External Inhibitions Boundaries, continued

• Keep your focus on the purpose of your interactions with youth.
  ▫ Witnessing the faith.
  ▫ Fostering their spiritual growth.
  ▫ Serving their needs.

  ▫ Meet your own needs for affection, intimacy, attraction, and affirmation in your personal relationships.

• Be aware of your own and other's vulnerability in regard to sexuality.
Maintaining External Inhibitions, continued

4. Promote Open Communication

- Encourage youth to communicate their concerns.
  - Empathy
  - Active Listening
  - Unconditional Positive Regard

- Be considerate of topics others may find offensive.

- Utilize humor without offending others.
  - Don't tease / ridicule
Maintaining External Inhibitions
Open Communication, continued

• Respond actively when a child indicates discomfort / uneasiness.
  ▫ Acknowledge observed signs of discomfort.
  ▫ Empathize.
  ▫ Clarify intentions.
  ▫ Apologize if appropriate.
  ▫ Ask for input re: comfortable boundaries.
Maintaining External Inhibitions
Open Communication, continued

• Involve parents in discussion of difficult topics.

• Maintain confidentiality.
  ▫ Discuss limits of confidentiality
  ▫ Stress that confidentiality is a one-way street. (you will strive to maintain their privacy, but they are free to share anything that pertains to them with their parents or others in authority)
Maintaining External Inhibitions

Open Communication, continued

• Differentiate our human failings from the teachings of the church.
  ▫ Strive to exhibit behavior consistent with church doctrine.
  ▫ If our behavior falls short...
    ▪ Be empathic
    ▪ Take steps to repair the relationship
    ▪ Remind them of our imperfection as human beings
5. Establish Accountability

- Report any red flags in adult / child relationships or violations of the code of conduct they observe to your parish Director of Religious Education and Safe Environment Coordinator.

- Report suspicions of abuse.

- Utilize a team approach in decision-making and in the supervision of youth.
Maintaining External Inhibitions
Establish Accountability, continued

• The pastor requires access to references and legal history for all individuals who will be working with youth.

• The pastor contracts with employees and volunteers to follow code of conduct.

• The pastor encourages parents to support adherence to the codes of conduct.
Precondition IV
Building Resistance to Abuse
Educating Children and Parents

• Teach youth about the signs of a "right" relationship versus an "abusive" one.

• Discuss safe boundaries.
  ▫ “Okay" versus “not okay" touches
  ▫ Help youth identify their feelings
  ▫ Affirm children's right to set personal boundaries.
  ▫ Encourage communication when boundaries are violated

• Affirm children's right to say "no" to unwelcomed contact.
Maintaining External Inhibitions
Building Resistance, continued

- Inform parents, children, and staff of parish policies regarding safe environments, intervention, and reporting of abuse.
  - Review policies together.
  - Make written policy available
  - Contract for compliance

- Educate parents and staff regarding signs of abuse and steps to take if they suspect abuse of a child.
Precondition for Abuse

- Adult with a motivation to abuse
- Decreased Internal Inhibitions
- Absence of External / Social Inhibitions
- Breakdown in the Resistance of the Child

Safe Environment Principle

- References
- Background Checks
- Support of Vocations
- Codes of Conduct
- Supervision / Consultation
- Self-Care
- “Safety in Numbers” Accountability
- Boundaries
- Parent / Child Education
- Parent / Child Education
Recognizing Signs of Distress / Signs of Abuse
General Signs of Distress in Youth

- Fears and Anxieties
- Behavioral regression
- Loss of pleasure in enjoyable activities
- Withdrawal and constriction
- Difficulty concentrating
- Sleep related difficulties
- Personality changes
- Bodily aches and pains
- Behavioral acting-out / changes in behavior
In addition to general signs of distress, a child who has been the victim of sexual abuse may also struggle with:

- Unwanted images and thoughts
- Retelling and replaying of the abuse
- Poor body image
- Excessive sexualized play
- Self-blame / Guilt (misinterpretation of the cause and meaning of the abuse)
Points to Remember

• Children have a limited number of ways to express inner distress. Under the age of eleven, feelings of distress are most likely to be seen as changes in behavior.

• Behavioral changes often occur immediately.

Monahan, (1993)
Signs of Physical Abuse or Neglect

Protective Services

• Child abuse and neglect occurs when a child is mistreated, resulting in injury or risk of harm. Abuse can be physical, verbal, emotional or sexual. Below is the SD Department of Social Services website with a listing of some signs of child abuse and neglect.

• [http://dss.sd.gov/childprotection/signs.aspx](http://dss.sd.gov/childprotection/signs.aspx)

SD Department of Social Services website information
Red Flags
In Adult / Child Relationships

An adult who:
• Displays poor boundaries (hugging, patting, or touching youth more than is appropriate)
• Spends majority of social interactions with children vs. adults
• Shows great charm and charisma around young people, awkwardness with adults
• Singles out a child or group of children with special privileges, (gifts, trips, attention, affection, etc.)
• Isolates child from others
• Photographs or videotapes children and young people exclusively
• Has items at home or in a vehicle that are of interest to young people (e.g. videos, music, posters, alcohol / drugs)
• Manipulates young people easily

Diocese of Orange
Code of Conduct for Adults  
Working with Children and Youth

In my interactions with children and youth (face to face and via technology) I will:

• Treat everyone with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity and consideration.

• Avoid situations where I am alone with children and/or youth (i.e., avoiding isolation at Church activities, the development of outside personal relationships, and the initiation of personal communications with children and youth).

• Safeguard my use of technology so as to avoid personal / isolated communications with children and youth, the sharing of personal information regarding children and youth, and the public identification of children and youth.

• Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition or comparison when working with youth.
In my interactions with children and youth (face to face and via technology) I will:

- Refrain from giving or accepting expensive gifts to / from children and youth or their parents without prior written approval from the pastor or administrator.
- Report suspected abuse (including in person abuse and online solicitation, harassment or distribution of inappropriate materials) to the pastor, administrator, or appropriate supervisor and civil authorities.
  - South Dakota state law provides that some individuals or agencies are mandated to report instances where they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected. The failure to report abuse to authorities is, for these people, by law, a misdemeanor.
- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of children / youth.
In my interactions with children and youth (face to face and via technology) I will **NOT**: 

- Smoke or use tobacco products in the presence of children and youth.
- Use, possess or be under the influence of alcohol at any time while working with children and youth.
- Use, possess or be under the influence of illegal drugs at any time.
- Pose any health risk to children / youth (e.g., no fevers or other contagious situations).
- Strike, spank, shake, or slap children / youth.
Code of Conduct continued

In my interactions with children and youth (face to face and via technology) I will **NOT:**

- Humiliate, ridicule, threaten or degrade children / youth.
- Touch a child and/or youth in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- Engage in sexually suggestive or explicit conversation with children and youth.
- Use any discipline that frightens or humiliates children / youth.
- Use profanity in the presence of children / youth.
• I understand that as a volunteer working with children / youth, I am subject to a thorough background check including criminal history. I understand that any action inconsistent with this Code of Conduct or failure to take action mandated by this Code of Conduct may result in my removal as an employee working with children / youth.
Responding
Observation

- Signs and Symptoms

Response

- The observer, in the presence of the DRE, reports all signs and symptoms to parents
  - Clearly describe the behavior of concern
  - Don’t make inferences
  - Document (DRE)

- Signs and symptoms don’t confirm abuse, but do suggest a need for attention from a caregiver.
Observation

• Red Flags

Response

• Consult with immediate supervisor

• Document with date

• Continue to observe and watch for other concerns
Observation

• Code of Conduct Violations

Response

• Document concerns
  ▫ Complete “Incident Report”

• Consult with immediate supervisor and pastor who will:
  ▫ Assess seriousness of violation
  ▫ Warning and problem solving
  ▫ Direct supervision
  ▫ Release from duties if necessary
Observation

- Disclosures of Abuse
- Observation of Abuse / Neglect

Response

- Report verbally to immediate supervisor
- Call South Dakota Department of Social Services (see DRE) / or call 911
- Contact Diocesan Safe Environment Office (605)343-3541
- Direct any media inquiries to Chancellor
Reporting Abuse

• The state of South Dakota has laws regarding reporting abuse. These are outlined in the handout that every clergy member, church personnel, and volunteers will receive.

• In the handout, there is also information regarding reporting to the SD Department of Social Services and/or law enforcement.

• SD Codified Laws regarding abuse may be found at:

Response

At the Time Child Discloses Abuse:

- Believe the child.
- Remain calm.
- Go with the child to a place where you can talk without other children overhearing.
- Listen without interrupting.
- Reassure child that he or she is loved and cared for.
- Respond to child’s questions or feelings with calm, matter-of-fact attitude, but don’t pressure child to talk more.

Girls & Boys Town Center for Adolescent & Family Spirituality 2003
Response to Disclosure

Continued:

- If child expresses concerns for his safety or his family’s safety, tell him that all that can be done to keep him safe will be done.
- Reassure the child he/she did the right thing in telling you.
- Tell the child it is not his or her fault.
- Instruct child to tell you right away if offender attempts molestation again or bothers him or her in any way.
- Repeat appropriately.

Girls & Boys Town Center for Adolescent & Family Spirituality 2003
Do’s and Don'ts

- Don’t ask leading questions
- Do keep in mind your role is to listen and report your concerns — not to serve as investigator
- Do refer to an investigator as soon as possible
  - Multiple interviews following disclosure can actually interfere with the investigation.
Meeting the needs of others involved:

- Other children who may have overheard disclosure.
- Family and friends of abused child.
- Adult to whom disclosure was made.
- Other staff who are involved.

Source: Caring for Sexually Abused Children—A Handbook for Families & Churches, Dr. R. Timothy Kearney (2001)
Girls & Boys Town Center for Adolescent & Family Spirituality 2003
Procedure for Reporting Suspected Abuse

Disclosure of Abuse

Did incident occur during a parish/diocesan event or on church grounds? Was the accused clergy, staff, or volunteer?

YES to either

Report to Diocesan Safe Environment Coordinator 605-343-3541

NO to both

Allegation against parent/primary caregiver?

Contact Immediate Supervisor

Report to:
Daytime Hours:
Department of Social Services,
Child Protective Services.
If assistance is needed immediately, Dial 911

Chamberlain: 1-866-847-7335 (free)
Counties Served: Lyman, Buffalo, Brule

Deadwood: 1-866-847-7334 (free)
Counties Served: Lawrence

Eagle Butte: 1-866-442-2095 (free)
Counties Served: Ziebach, Dewey

Hot Springs: 1-866-847-7334 (free)
Counties Served: Fall River

Martin: 605-685-6521
Counties Served: Jackson, Bennett

Mission: 1-866-847-7339 (free)
Counties Served: Mellette, Todd

Mobridge: 845-2922 OR 1-866-442-2095 (free)
Counties Served: Perkins, Corson, Campbell, Walworth, Potter

Provide victim assistance

Pierre: 773-3521 OR 1-866-442-2095 (free)
Counties Served: Sully, Hyde, Hughes, Stanley, Jones, Haakon

Pine Ridge: 605-867-5752
Counties Served: Shannon

Rapid City: 394-2525
Counties Served: Pennington

Sturgis: 347-2559 OR 1-866-847-7334 (free)
Counties Served: Meade

Winner: 842-0195 OR 1-866-847-7339 (free)
Counties Served: Tripp, Gregory

Provide victim assistance information

Formal report to Diocesan Safe Environment Coordinator not necessary, but may call for support.
What happens after a reported allegation of sexual abuse not involving clergy or church personnel?

...all reports go to legal authorities

- Allegations are investigated by law enforcement
- If there is sufficient evidence, legal charges are filed by the County / District Attorney
- If the child is unsafe at home, he/she may be placed in an alternative family placement or foster home.
What happens after a report of alleged sexual abuse of a minor involving clergy?

..within our Diocese

• Make a report to legal authorities.
• Call is made to the Chancellor, followed by a written report to the Chancellor.
• When an allegation is received, the accused shall be placed on administrative leave pending results of investigation.
• Allegation will be investigated by an outside third party, if necessary.
• After the local diocese investigates and determines that an allegation has even a semblance of truth, the bishop will notify the Diocesan Review Board of the allegation.
• The case is referred to the Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith (CDF) at the Vatican.
What happens after a report of alleged sexual abuse of a minor involving church lay personnel or volunteer?

..within our Diocese

- Make a report to legal authorities
- Call is made to the Chancellor, followed by a written report to the Chancellor
- When an allegation is received, the accused shall be placed on administrative leave pending results of investigation
- Allegation will be investigated by an outside third party, if necessary.
Safe Environment Programs

Diocese of Rapid City
Safe Environment Coordinator
1-605-343-3541
http://www.rapidcitydiocese.org/WP/safe-environment-home
Email: msimonson@diorc.org