

Practical Guidelines for Pastors and Volunteers
Identifying Child Abuse



North American Division
YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES

NADYouthSafety.org

As leaders, we have been called by God to take care of His flock. Therefore, we have the responsibility to take the necessary measures to protect the ministries of our church and establish a sense of security for our members and their children.

How can we make the church a safe place for children and young people?

Children may experience multiple forms of abuse and/or neglect, therefore, it is important to understand:

1. What is Child Abuse
2. Types of Child Abuse
3. The Facts About Child Abuse
4. How to Identify Child Abuse
5. Recognize the signs about pedophiles

#1

What Is Child Abuse?

Resources:

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/can/defining/federal/>
<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childmaltreatment/definitions.html>

What is Child Abuse?

Child Abuse has been defined as an act, or failure to act, on the part of a parent, a caretaker (e.g. clergy, coach, teacher) or another child that results in the death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation of a child, or which places the child in an imminent risk of serious harm.

Child Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse or molestation is a form of abuse in which an adult or older adolescent uses another person or child for sexual stimulation. Examples of sexual abuse include:

- ✓ Engaging in sexual activities with another person or minor, indecent exposure, and involving another person in pornography.
- ✓ Sexual contact between minors.
- ✓ Lovingly caress, intercourse, penetration into the vagina or anus, or oral/genital contact.
- ✓ Expose children to pornography or use them to make pornography.
- ✓ Any form of inappropriate sexual situation.

“The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child, provided the child is **four years older** than the victim”

(National Resource Center on Child Sexual Abuse)

#2

Types of Child Abuse

What are the 4 Types of Abuse

1. **PHYSICAL** – Physical damage caused to a child that is not accidental.
2. **MENTAL/EMOTIONAL** – Threats, rejection, insults and/or sexual abuse. (THIS CAN BE THE HARDEST FORM OF ABUSE TO IDENTIFY)
 1. **NEGLECT** – When a child's basic needs are not met. Including food, clothing, adequate shelter.
 2. **SEXUAL** – Touching or non-touching. Sexual exploitation.

What Are the Types of Abuse that Involve TOUCHING

Include:

- ✓ Fondling
- ✓ Oral, genital & anal penetration
- ✓ Intercourse
- ✓ Forcible Rape

What Are the Types of Abuse that **Do Not** Involve Touching

Include:

- ✓ Verbal comments
- ✓ Pornographic videos
- ✓ Obscene phone calls – Texting
- ✓ Exhibitionism
- ✓ Allowing the child to witness sexual activity

#3

Learn The Facts About Child Abuse

Some Facts On Child Abuse

- 1 in 10 children experience child sexual abuse before their 18th birthday
- Sex offenders commit an average of 260 sexual crimes before they are caught.
- 1 of 5 children are sexually solicited through the internet.
- Near 70% of the allegations of sexual assaults occur to children aged 17 and under.

Cont...Some Facts On Child Abuse

- The average age of allegations of sexual assaults are 9 years of age.
- Most victims do not report abuse
- 30% are abused by a family member, and as many as 60% are abused by people who are known and trusted by the family.
- About 40% are abused by older or larger children.

Cont...Some Facts On Child Abuse

- About 35% of victims are 11 years old or younger
- Children with disabilities are four times more likely to be attacked physically and three times more likely to be attacked sexually.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/17/health/policy/children-with-disabilities-are-victimized-more-often.html>
- It is estimated that 90% of all sexual abuse of minors will never be reported.

#4

How to Identify Child Abuse

Ministry Workers and Staff Members

- Ministry workers and staff members should be alert to the physical signs of abuse and molestation, as well as to the behavioral and verbal signs a victim may exhibit.
- Also, should be aware of the legal requirements for reporting suspected cases of abuse.

Some Physical Signs

- Lacerations, bruises, fractures
- Cuts, scratches, or burns
- Nightmares
- Irritation, pain, or injury to the genital area
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothing
- Difficulty when sitting or walking
- Unusual or foul odor
- Has poor hygiene
- Lacks of consistent supervision

Some Behavioral Signs

- Anxiety when approaching someone
- Nervous or hostile behavior toward adults
- Sexual self-consciousness
- Is afraid to go home
- Changes in behavior or sudden mood swings, more withdrawn-absent-distant, insecurities, depression, anxiety, panic attacks, sadness, fear, anger, or uncontrolled rage.

Cont... Some Behavioral Signs

- School problems, difficulties with partners, crying and/or depressed excessively.
- "Escape" behavior – excessive drug abuse, alcohol.
- Knowledge about sex, inappropriate for your age.
- Inappropriate and/or persistent sexual behavior.
- Suddenly he has money, toys or other gifts for no apparent reason.

Cont... Some Behavioral Signs

- Fear of touching a certain person.
- Cruelty to animals, they start fires.
- Self-destructive behaviors such as cutting, suicidal thoughts or suicide attempts.
- Speech disorders
- Poor appetite

Cont... Some Behavioral Signs

- Daytime toilet accidents
- Sucking, biting or rocking
- Shows poor social skills
- Begs or steals food
- Shows constant fatigue

#5

Recognize the signs about
pedophiles

Pedophiles

<https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pedofilia>

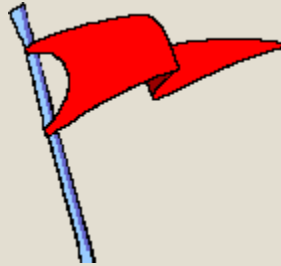
From a medical standpoint, pedophilia is a pattern of sexual behavior that consists of arousal or sexual pleasure that is obtained, mainly through activities or sexual fantasies with children of, usually, between 8 and 12 years. Pedophilia or pedophilia is a psychiatric disorder in which an adult or older teenager experiences a primary or exclusive sexual attraction to children.

According to Darkness to Light

<https://www.d2l.org/education/5-steps/step-1/>

“Research shows that the greatest risk to children doesn’t come from strangers, but from friends and family. People who abuse children look and act just like everyone else. In fact, they often go out of their way to appear trustworthy, seeking out settings where they can gain easy access to children, such as sports leagues, faith centers, clubs, and schools.”

Anyone who has been convicted or accused of abusing or sexually offending a minor should never be alone with children.



Warning Signs

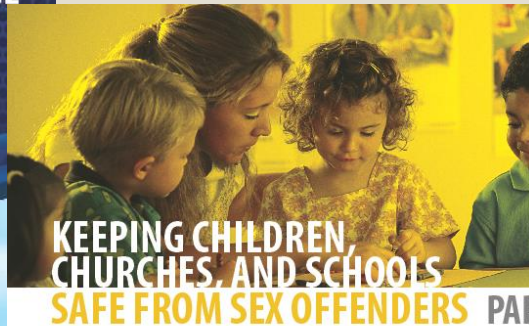
- They buy gifts from children without a special reason.
- They want to take the kids to rides that involve being alone with the kids.
- They infiltrate in family and social functions or are always available to care for children.
- They seem to know about "treating children too well" or simply "too good to Believe".



Aggressors Choose Children “At Risk”

- Because they are less credible
- They have less adult supervision
- They seek the attention and affection of adults
- They may have been abused before
- They are less likely to betray a teacher, coach, minister, parent/uncle
- Are manipulated more easily

Resources for Ministry to Sex Offenders Within the Church



"Jay" was the president of a local college and an elder in the church. His wife volunteered as a teacher for children's ministries and the couple's teenage daughters were active in the youth group. When the family agreed to host a foreign exchange student, everyone at church welcomed the high school girl with open arms.

Six months later, the student disclosed to a school counselor that Jay had been sexually abusing her. When police interviewed Jay's daughters, one of them acknowledged that Jay had been abusing her as well. Jay adamantly denied that he "would never hurt a child," but when the allegations became public, another young woman said Jay had behaved inappropriately toward her during a church outing several years earlier.

As the criminal case went forward, people took sides. Some said they'd known Jay for years and refused to believe that he could have done any of the things the girls said he did. Other people supported Jay's wife and daughters and were angry that Jay's supporters were further victimizing the girls by accusing them of lying. Jay was eventually convicted and sentenced to prison but the church was left to deal with the aftermath of what he'd done and how people had reacted to the allegations. It took years for the church to get past the damage and just as the wounds were healing, Jay was released from prison.

Upon his release, Jay asked the pastor if he could return to church. The pastor told Jay he'd have to consult with the elders. Jay's family still attended the church and people had strong feelings about what he'd done and how they should respond to his request. No one knew how to handle the situation. Jay eventually opted to join a church that was not aware of his past, and perhaps, less prepared to deal with him.

Sex offenders can impact churches in a variety of ways. Even if the offenses didn't occur on church property or during a church-related

activity, the consequence can be disastrous. If the offender was a church leader, Pathfinder or Adventurer volunteer, teacher or if the repercussions are socially worse, especially if the offender "groomed" the victim and her/his family at church. Granted, if any policies that will completely guarantee safety but there are things churches and schools can do to decrease risk and send the right message: "we are doing everything we can to protect children and will not tolerate abuse!"

Several years after "Jay" participated in sex offender treatment clinic, I treated a teacher who'd offended numerous boys in S-Adventist schools. His crimes were eventually discovered, but he'd molested dozens of boys in the North American Division. He was released from prison, he was referred to sex offender in Oregon and told me he'd purposefully targeted schools he thought were "glibble and naive" and would "fall for my grooming tactics."

He said he determined which schools were the "easiest targets": pre-employment interviews and was usually able to see which windows in doors and classrooms that were "more secluded" at the schools. He was such an outstanding teacher and always his office. In those days schools didn't conduct thorough reference checks they do now.

What I concluded from working with this particular offender was background checks, the "no person rule," windows in classrooms and rules about appropriate boundaries between students were all important, but that in-service training about behavior was probably most important. Background checks are protection because, as mentioned in previous articles, only if offenders are ever reported and prosecuted for their crimes.

Training helps everyone understand what's expected, reinforces the "no



SEX OFFENDERS IN THE CHURCH: A LEGAL GUIDE

Karnik Doukmetzian
Robert Burrow
Victor Elliot

12501 Old Columbia Pike | Silver Spring, MD 20904

Video - Predator at the Door (Child Predators) - NADYouthSafety.org

For more information on “How to Respond and How to Report Child Abuse, visit:

The NAD Youth & Young Adult Ministries Safety Website at:

<http://adventistyouthministries.org/safety-guidelines>

Adventist Risk Management

<https://adventistrisk.org/en-us/safety-resources/pathfinder-safety>



Contact Staff

Youth & Young Adult Ministries

North American Division



Pastor Tracy Wood
Director



Pastor Armando Miranda Jr.
Associate Director



Angelina Wood
Safety Consultant



Pastor Vandeon Griffin
Associate Director