

# ESSENTIALS TO PREVENTION & PROTECTION



## **TRAIN**     **Proverbs 3:13-14**

Provide initial and ongoing training for staff, volunteers, and church members that raises awareness and shares effective actions to help prevent incidents of abuse in the church.

## **SCREEN**     **Ephesians 4:25**

Adopt a careful vetting process for all those working with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Screening should include an application, interview, references, social media review, and background checks.

## **PROTECT**     **Psalm 140:4**

Create and implement policies that protect children, youth, and vulnerable adults from grooming and abuse.

## **REPORT**     **Proverbs 31:8-9**

Have a written plan in place to communicate with both the church and appropriate government authorities in the event of an abuse allegation.

## **CARE**     **Psalm 147:3; 9:9**

Identify and offer resources that will provide victims, survivors and their families with options for on-going care.

# CHURCH ASSESSMENT

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- Do you require ongoing sexual abuse awareness training for all staff and volunteers working with children, youth, and vulnerable adults?
- Are you screening staff and volunteers using background checks, references, and personal interviews?
- Do you have written abuse protection policies in place to which staff and volunteers actively implement?
- Do all staff and volunteers know how to officially report abuse in your county or parish? Do you have a plan in place to respond to allegations?
- Are you aware of resources for trauma survivors and their families that can provide long-term care?

*If you answered 'no' to any of the above, see the reverse for five essentials of a safer church.*



SBC

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A close-up, high-angle photograph of a person's eye, looking slightly to the right. The eye is the central focus, with the iris and eyelashes clearly visible. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light color.

## WHY PREVENTING & RESPONDING TO SEX ABUSE IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE CHURCH?

### THE ANSWER

We have a clear gospel call to care well for children, teenagers, & vulnerable adults. We must not turn a blind eye or deaf ear since it may be difficult or hard. We must respond!

“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; ensure justice for those being crushed. Yes, speak up for the poor & helpless, & see that they get justice.” **Proverbs 31:8-9**

“He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you? But to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.” **Micah 6:8**

“But whoever causes the downfall of one of these little ones who believe in Me—it would be better for him if a heavy millstone were hung around his neck and he were drowned in the depths of the sea!” **Matthew 18:6**

### DID YOU KNOW?

- 93% of child abuse victims know their perpetrators. (DOJ)
- 1 in 4 girls & 1 in 6 boys are sexually abused before they turn 18. (D2L)
- Only 16% of child victims ever tell about their abuse. (NCAC)
- Out of every 1000 incidents of sexual abuse, only 25 ever face prison. (RAINN)

- A male abuser who molests boys has an average of 150 victims. A male abuser who molests girls has an average of 52 victims. (*Emory University*)
- The devastation of sexual abuse doesn't stop when the abuse ends. The physical, emotional, mental, & spiritual effects last for a lifetime.
- In many states, most adults, including clergy, are mandatory reporters of suspected or known child abuse.

## WHY DON'T CHURCHES DO MORE?

- They believe this couldn't or wouldn't happen at their church.
- They think criminal background checks alone are adequate.
- They minimize abuse as a "mistake", and it should be just forgiven & forgotten.
- They don't know how to recognize grooming behavior in potential offenders.
- They feel inadequate & overwhelmed; unsure of how to implement best practices regarding abuse prevention, response, and survivor care.

## WHAT CAN MY CHURCH DO?

Every Pastor & church can learn how to **Train, Screen, Protect, Report, and Care.**



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