

# Diocese of Lubbock Safe Environment Program

## **PROGRAM TO REDUCE THE RISK OF CHILD ABUSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **PURPOSE**

The Catholic Community of Diocese of Lubbock has implemented a Safe Environment Program to reduce the risk of child abuse in order to:

- Provide a safe and secure environment for the children of our faith community
- Reduce the possibility of false accusations against clergy, staff or a minister/volunteer
- Reduce the legal risk and liability of the Diocese of Lubbock
- Provide a procedure for due process

### **WHO WILL BE SCREENED?**

Screening at Diocese of Lubbock will include (but may not be limited to) the following people, who participate in the public use of Diocese of Lubbock facilities:

- All Clergy
- Pastoral Advisory Council, Finance Administration Council, and School Advisory Council
- All paid staff members
- All Ministers/volunteers who work with children and youth, using the Diocese of Lubbock name and/or facilities

All ministers/volunteers must be at least 18 years old. However, teen aides (youth 13 -17 yrs. of age) will be permitted to assist in-group activities. These teen aides do not satisfy this policy's two (2) adult rule and the teens will be supervised at all times, by a CLEARED minister/volunteer. Therefore, teen aides may not supervise a child or children alone.

“Diocese” or “diocesan” includes the Diocese of Lubbock, Texas, all parishes in the Diocese, all diocesan schools, and all retreat centers.

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### **PROCESS OF SCREENING**

The screening process should be renewed every five (5) years.

#### **Application Process**

- A copy of the policies will be given to all prospective staff members and volunteers who will be participating in an activity where there is an opportunity for child or youth contact.
- The policies and procedures should be read, all forms and acceptance agreements completed, signed and returned to the appropriate ministry office.

#### **Safe Environment Training Class**

- All prospective employees or volunteers must attend the first-available mandatory Safe Environment Training Class presented by Diocese of Lubbock.

#### **Interview**

- All prospective staff members or volunteers will be interviewed by the appropriate staff member or designated leader.
- All information will be held in confidence.

#### **Reference Checks**

- All information gathered through reference checks will be held in confidence.

#### **Criminal Background Check**

- Criminal background checks shall be performed for each volunteer and staff member. The result of the criminal background check shall be reported by the independent agent as CLEAR or NOT CLEAR (as opposed to reporting such results in terms of delineated disqualifying offenses).
- The results of the criminal background check will be reported to the ministry director, in writing, by the Pastor. All information gathered through such checks will be held in confidence.

#### **Fingerprinting**

- All schoolteachers and volunteer coaches will be fingerprinted and information gathered will be held in confidence.
- Others will be fingerprinted as deemed necessary by parish/organizational discretion, or by Diocesan policy.

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### **REQUIREMENTS FOR MINISTER/VOLUNTEER**

In order to be considered for a minister/volunteer position, a person must complete all of the following requirements:

1. A minister/volunteer must be a registered member in a parish in the Diocese of Lubbock, in order to serve with children or youth.
2. Must attend the first-available mandatory Diocese of Lubbock Safe Environment Program training class.
3. Complete a minister/volunteer application including a signed acknowledgment that the Code of Conduct and the Policies and Procedures, which are both adherent to this program, have been read, understood, and accepted.
4. Have references checked.
5. Complete the interview process.
6. Undergo and receive a CLEAR Criminal Background Check through and in depend agency.

### **ACCEPTANCE/RELEASE OF A MINISTER/ VOLUNTEER**

The decision as to whether a minister / volunteer is accepted or not accepted shall be based on information from the application, interview, references, criminal background check, and the discretion of the Pastor/Bishop.

Anyone who has been accepted to work with children or youth must adhere to the Code of Conduct as well as the Policies and Procedures of this program. Failure to do so shall result in the individual's immediate release as an approved minister/volunteer.

### **Disqualifying Offenses**

No person may serve, with youth or children, who has ever been convicted of any disqualifying offense, been on probation or received deferred adjudication for any disqualifying offense (whether or not the terms of the probation or the deferred adjudication were met), or has presently pending any criminal charges of any disqualifying offense before a determination of guilt is made. Disqualifying offenses include, but are not limited to:

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- A felony or misdemeanor classified as an offense against the person or family, or involving an offense against the person or family
- A felony or misdemeanor classified as an offense against public order or indecency
- A felony or misdemeanor involving the possession, manufacture, distribution, or intent to distribute any controlled substance
- A moral perpetuate

### **THE APPEAL PROCESS**

Any person who applies and is not accepted or is released as a minister/volunteer for any reason will have a right of appeal as set forth in the Appeal Process.

If non - acceptance is based on the criminal background check:

- The applicant shall be given the name and address of the contractor reporting the criminal history of such applicant, such that he or she will have the opportunity to obtain a similar report from such contractor. In the event that such report is obtained by the applicant, then, upon written request by the applicant, a second criminal background check shall be obtained and the application may, at the discretion of the Bishop, be reconsidered.

If non - acceptance is based upon the interview process or other factors:

- The applicant, upon written request, shall have the right to have a second interview and reconsideration of his or her application by an Appeals Committee within 3 months after the date of the rejection. The Appeals Committee will be composed of three (3) persons appointed by the Bishop or his delegate.

If a successful applicant is later released for failure to follow the Code of Conduct or these Policies and Procedures:

- The individual, upon written request, shall have the right to be reconsidered as a minister/volunteer/staff member by the Diocesan Appeals Committee within 3 months after the date of release

All reconsideration decisions shall be made by a majority vote of the Diocesan Appeals Committee and are FINAL.

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### **TWO-CLEARED-ADULTS RULE**

It is the policy of children's and youth ministries that for all scheduled events, there will be a minimum of two (2) cleared adults present with children and youth **at all times.** These adults are ministers/volunteers who must have been screened and cleared through the procedure outlined in the Safe Environment Program. If, for reasons due to absence, illness, or emergency circumstances, both of the two cleared adults are not present at the beginning of the event, backup measures must be implemented, and this must be documented. Other available staff members may be called in case of emergency. As a last resort, parents may be on call for each class or small group. In some instances, two groups may be combined to make the minimum of two cleared adults available. If any of the adults is not cleared, the DOCUMENTATION OF NON-COMPLIANCE WITH THE TWO-CLEARED-ADULTS RULE Form must be completed.

Any event may be cancelled at the discretion of the CCE or Youth Ministry Directors.

The Two-Cleared-Adults Rule **does not apply** to personnel in the following situations:

- a) Catholic school classroom teaching
- b) Confessions
- c) Counseling (however, it should be done privately, in a building where other people are present)
- d) Day Care (Minimum Standards for Day Care Centers, Standard 7100 states: "Adults who are with children must at all times be able to be observed by another adult.")

### **DOCUMENTATION OF NON-COMPLIANCE WITH THE TWO-CLEARED-ADULTS RULE:**

The minister/volunteer who is with a group of children or youth must notify the coordinator or director in charge of supervision of the event as soon as non-compliance is known. Anytime that two cleared adults are not in attendance with a group for a regularly scheduled event, written records must indicate and explain: the event, date, time, and circumstances leading up to non-compliance, and the measures taken for the event. The DOCUMENTATION OF NON-COMPLIANCE WITH TWO-CLEARED-ADULTS RULE Form will be available in all meeting rooms and ministry offices. The minister/volunteer may initiate the completion of the form, however, final responsibility for documenting non-compliance rests with the ministry director or event coordinator. This report must be signed by the minister/volunteer and the director or coordinator supervising the event. The report is turned-in immediately to the appropriate office for the director of the ministry. The form is filed in the ministry office with copies to both the Safety Officer and the Bishop of Diocese of Lubbock.

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## DOCUMENTATION OF NON-COMPLIANCE WITH TWO-CLEARED-ADULTS RULE\*

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Ministry \_\_\_\_\_

Event \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ Room \_\_\_\_\_

Minister/Volunteer in attendance at the event \_\_\_\_\_

Director/Coordinator in charge of event \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for non-compliance with the Two -Cleared Adult Rule \_\_\_\_\_

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What measures were taken? (i.e., Office aide was sent into the class or small group, staff person was recruited to cover, event went on with a volunteer parent, and only one adult remained with the group) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of Minister/Volunteer in attendance at the event \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Ministry Director/Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_

\* Original filed with Ministry Director

\* Copies to Safety Officer and Bishop of Diocese of Lubbock

TURN FORM IN TO THE MINISTRY OFFICE IMMEDIATELY  
(Can attach to attendance sheet.)

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### **BEHAVIORAL GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN OR YOUTH**

All clergy, staff and volunteers of the Lubbock Diocese will observe the following guidelines for dealing with minors:

- No minor child or youth may reside or spend the night in any church rectory or other living quarters of priests.
- Do not provide alcoholic beverage, tobacco, drugs or anything that is prohibited by law.
- Do not serve as chaperone for activities that conflict with curfew laws pertaining to minors.
- Touching should be age-appropriate and based on the need of the minor, and not on the need of the adult. Avoid physical contact when alone with a minor. If a minor initiates physical contact, an appropriate, limited response is proper.
- Do not engage in the physical discipline of a minor. Discipline problems should be handled in coordination with your supervisor and/or the parents of the minor.
- Do not be alone with a minor in a residence, sleeping facility, locker room, rest room, dressing facility, or other closed room or isolated area that is inappropriate to a ministry relationship.
- Do not take an overnight trip alone with a minor who is not a member of your immediate family.
- Do not sleep in the same bed with a minor who is not a member of your immediate family.
- Only discuss topics, vocabulary, words, recordings, films, games computer software or any forms of personal interaction or entertainment that is tasteful, wholesome, and in conformity with church doctrine should be used with children and youth. Sexually-explicit or pornographic material is never appropriate.
- Do not administer medication of any kind without written parental permission.

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## Reporting and Response

### Reporting

#### Legal Obligation

#### Who?

Any person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect by any person is required by law to file a report with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services at 1-800-252-5400, or use the secure web site: <https://www.txabusehotline.org>. The applicable law is Section 261.00, et. Seq., of the Texas Family Code. This report must be made within **48 hours** of observation of abuse or suspected abuse. Failure to report has serious legal consequences.

#### What?

For the purposes of these guidelines, "child abuse" is defined to include the acts or omissions listed in the document sections titled "Definition of Child Abuse" and "Types of Child Abuse".

#### How?

- Call Texas Department of Family and Protective Services at (800) 252-5400 (Abuse Hotline) or web site: <https://www.txabusehotline.org>.
- The state of Texas permits the reporter of suspected abuse to remain anonymous.
- However, the reporter should report the suspected abuse to the staff person or ministry director of the program or other appropriate authorities.

#### **Reporting of abuse discovered or arising from within the Diocese of Lubbock**

Suspected child or youth abuse or neglect arising from or discovered within the church community must be reported. This includes incidents related to:

- Church activities, church-related activities, church-sponsored activities, and non-church activities conducted on church premises (for example: religious education, youth retreats, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, basketball practice, working with youth, etc.), and
- Any contact of a church member, volunteer, staff member or clergy with a child or youth who is or has been a participant in any church activity, church-related activity or church-sponsored activity, notwithstanding the location where the suspected abuse occurred.



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### **Who reports? What is reported?**

A church member, volunteer, staff member, or any other person engaged in activity conducted on church premises, who has cause to believe that a child or youth's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by child abuse or neglect, shall make a non-accusatory report reflecting that person's belief that a child or youth has been or will be abused. Oral and written reporting to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services specifically include:

1. The name of any person or persons from whom information was obtained
2. How the reporter obtained the information
3. Details of conversations with parents, students, coordinators and others
4. Name and address of the child or youth
5. Name and address of the person responsible for the care of the child/youth
6. Any other pertinent information detailing the suspected abuse

Oral reports to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services shall be made by telephone to 1-800-252-5400 or e-mail <https://www.txabusehotline.org>.

Written reports shall be addressed to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, 113 Industrial Boulevard, Suite. C, McKinney, Texas 75069.

### **How are reports to be made?**

Volunteers shall report to the lay staff person or the lay director of the ministry in charge of the activity, and persons in charge of non-church activities shall report to the lay staff contact person for that activity. In the event that this individual is unknown to the volunteer or person in charge, the report is to be made to the Diocese of Lubbock Safety Officer or Bishop's Office. The lay staff person in charge or lay staff contact person, if not the director, shall report to the director of the ministry. The Diocese of Lubbock Safety Officer or Pastor is mandated to submit an oral report on learning of the abuse or likelihood of abuse not later than **48 hours** after the Parish Safety Officer or Bishop's Office first suspects that a child has or may be abused and further, to make and submit a written report within 5 days.

The oral and written reports shall be submitted to these three entities:

- Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS)
- The Director of the ministry
- The Bishop of the Diocese of Lubbock

*Failure to report is a Class B criminal offense, punishable by a \$2,000 fine and/or imprisonment for up to 180 days. Failure to report also could subject you to considerable monetary liability in a civil rights action.*

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When reporting the incident, be sure to note the following, in writing:

- a) Name of child/youth alleging abuse
- b) Date and place of alleged incident of abuse
- c) Circumstances under which alleged abuse took place
- d) Source of information (e.g., parent, teacher, classmate)
- e) Date, time and place where report was made to TDFPS and name of TDFPS staff member to whom complaint was made

If possible, have the TDFPS representative sign a prepared statement, such as the one that follows:

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The undersigned representative of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, on this date, received a report alleging abuse of a child named:

This report was given to me by: \_\_\_\_\_

of \_\_\_\_\_, Diocese of Lubbock

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Response**

The Diocese of Lubbock response plan recognizes the following underlying principles:

- All allegations need to be taken seriously
- Adequate care must be shown for the well being of victims
- Situations must be handled forthrightly with due respect for people's privacy and confidentiality
- Full cooperation must be given to civil authorities, under the guidance of the Diocesan Safety Officer
- Statements to the press will be released only by the Bishop's office or his designated spokesperson
- Upon commencement of any investigation, the pastor is obligated to notify the Diocesan Risk Manager

### **Legal Responsibility**

- Statements of position or actions of the diocese are the responsibility of the Bishop and designated spokesperson, and are not to be undertaken by any staff member or volunteer
- The state law protects individuals from liability when they, in good faith, report actual or suspected abuse, as long as they do not act maliciously
- Required investigation, if any, will be conducted by professionals

### **Moral responsibility**

- Care and safety of the victim is the first priority
- Do not confront the accused
- The proper authorities will notify the parents
- Do not prejudge the situation - take the allegations seriously and reach out to the victim and victim's family
- Treat the accused with dignity and support
- Every effort will be taken to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of all involved
- Denial, minimization or blame are inappropriate responses

### **Suspension**

Procedure to implement in case of an allegation of child abuse:

- The Diocese of Lubbock will be notified along with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
- The accused person will be suspended from all volunteer activities during the investigation procedure
- Paid employees will be suspended from all duties of employment, with pay up to 30 days, during the investigation

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## CODE OF CONDUCT

### INTRODUCTION

I understand that this Code of Conduct is intended as a statement of the values and behaviors to be observed in all aspects of children and youth ministry and in all work and interaction with children and adolescents (all minors).

#### I

**I COMMIT** myself to respecting and protecting the inherent human dignity of each of the young people with whom I have the privilege to work. I will strive to treat all with the respect due children of God.

**THEREFORE, I SHALL** never discriminate among children and youth.

#### II

**I COMMIT** myself to serving as a model of mature Catholic Christian witness by my speech and actions as well as by the presentation I give to the Catholic faith, in solidarity with the particular expression given by our Bishop and the Pastor of our community.

#### **THEREFORE, I SHALL**

- a. Give witness by my example, opportunities and attentiveness to the centrality of worship in the life of the Catholic Church.
- b. Never depart from the designated goals and objectives of the curriculum, as agreed upon by the coordinator and program director and facilitated by the curriculum materials.
- c. Never impart theories, teachings or personal beliefs to young people, nor encourage their acting in ways that are contrary to the recognized teaching of the Catholic Church.
- d. Never introduce doctrinal materials, pamphlets, devotional articles or materials that are not provided or are not specifically approved by ministry directors, as delegated by the Pastor.

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### III

**I COMMIT** myself to interaction which is affirming of the goodness of the young people and adds to their positive self image and which enables mutual acceptance among themselves.

**THEREFORE, I SHALL**

- a. Never touch inappropriately in a disciplinary fashion.
- b. Never encourage or permit teasing or bullying of one young person by another.
- c. Never verbally abuse or deride.
- d. Never raise my voice inappropriately or use language that is demeaning, crude or derisive.

### IV

**I COMMIT** myself to affirming the Church's positive teaching on the role of human sexuality and the grace of human relationships.

**THEREFORE, I SHALL**

- a. Never touch inappropriately in a sexual manner.
- b. Never make inappropriate sexual comments using innuendo, jokes, inference or solicitations.
- c. Never act in a fashion that could be easily interpreted by a child or adolescent to be a sexual advance or threat.
- d. Never demean the beauty and holiness of human sexuality, marriage or human physical and sexual interaction.
- e. Never forget the vulnerability of young people to misinterpreting sexual information or references.
- f. Never forget that sexual abuse is not only in the intention of the perpetrator but also in the perception of the receiver.

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V

**I COMMIT** myself to the building up of this community as a sign of God's presence and God's Kingdom in which all may feel secure and valued.

**THEREFORE, I SHALL**

- a. Make every effort to adhere to the two-cleared-adult rule in all applicable cases.
- b. Never fail to keep the safety of young people as a priority in all situations, including classroom activities, retreats, recreation, excursions and transportation.
- c. Never fail to respect the students and fellow ministers with whom I have the privilege to serve by gossiping about or deriding students, staff, fellow ministers or the clergy.
- d. Never break the confidence, intimacy and trust of the small group or of a particular student except in such cases where the health or safety of the student is genuinely threatened.

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### **TRAINING INFORMATION FOR THE PROGRAM TO REDUCE THE RISK OF CHILD ABUSE**

#### **DEFINITION OF CHILD ABUSE**

For purposes of this written policy, "child abuse" shall be defined to include the following acts or omissions by any person:

1. Mental or emotional injury to a child that results in an observable and material impairment to the child's growth, development, or psychological functioning;
2. Causing or permitting the child to be in a situation in which the child sustains a mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in the child's growth, development, or psychological functioning;
3. Physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child, including an injury that is at variance with the history or explanation given.
4. Failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent an action by another person that results in physical injury, resulting in substantial harm to the child;
5. Any of the following acts which are inflicted on, shown to, or intentionally practiced in the presence of the child, if the child is present only to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of any person:
  - a. Contact between the genitals of one person and the mouth or anus of another person;
  - b. Touching of the anus, breast, or any part of the genitals of another person with intent to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of any person;
  - c. Sexual contact with any person;
  - d. Penetration of the female sex organ by the male sex organ;
  - e. Sexual penetration with a foreign object;
  - f. Incest;
  - g. Sexual assault;
  - h. Sodomy.



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6. Failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent the occurrence of any of the acts set out in paragraph 5 above, from being inflicted on or shown to a child by another person, or intentionally practiced in the presence of a child by another person if the child is present only to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of any person;
7. Compelling or encouraging the child to engage in any contact between the genitals of one person and the mouth or anus of another person, penetration of the female sex organ by the male sex organ, or any other kind of sexual contact;
8. Causing, permitting, encouraging, engaging in, or allowing the photographing, filming, or depicting of the child if the person knows or should have known that the resulting photograph, film, or depiction of the child is obscene, pornographic or self gratifying;
9. Placing the child in or failing to remove the child from a situation that a reasonable person would realize requires judgment or actions beyond the child's level of maturity, physical condition, or mental abilities and that result in bodily injury or a substantial risk of immediate harm to the child;
10. The failure to seek, obtain, or follow through with medical care for the child, with the failure resulting in or presenting a substantial risk of death, disfigurement, or bodily injury or with the failure resulting in an observable and material impairment to the growth, development, or functioning of the child.

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### **TYPES OF CHILD ABUSE**

There are four types of child abuse. They are defined as:

- Physical:* An injury or pattern of injuries that happen to a child that is not accidental. These injuries may include beatings, burns, bruises, bites, welts, strangulation, broken bones or death.
- Neglect:* Neglect occurs when adults responsible for the well being of a child fail to provide for the child. Neglect may include not giving food, clothing, shelter, failure to keep children clean, lack of supervision and withholding medical care.
- Emotional:* Any chronic and persistent act by an adult that endangers the mental health or emotional development of a child including rejection, ignoring, terrorizing, corrupting, constant criticism, mean remarks, insults, and giving little or no love, guidance and support.
- Sexual:* Sexual abuse is the sexual assault or sexual exploitation of children. Sexual abuse may consist of numerous acts over a long period of time or a single incident. Children can be victimized from infancy through adolescence. Sexual abuse includes rape, incest, sodomy, fondling, exposing oneself, oral copulation, penetration of the genital or anal openings, as well as forcing children to view or appear in pornography. The perpetrator keeps the child from disclosing through intimidation, threats and rewards.

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### PROFILE OF A CHILD ABUSER

*CAUTION:* A profile list, such as this, can be misleading because many of the characteristics here following can describe men/women who do not molest. Having more than one or even all of these items does not necessarily increase the odds of that person being a molester. Although this profile has some value in pointing out particular needs of people and risks associated with them, great caution should be used when assigning this profile to any one individual. Few molesters ever self-report the characteristics listed here. Neither are interviewers trained to properly elicit this information. Individuals with abusive personalities are often more subtle and skillfully manipulative in their approach to their employers, as well as their approach to children. This makes it essential for those responsible for hiring, paid employees and or volunteers, to gain information from collateral resources such as past employers, friends, families and criminal background checks.

### SEXUAL ABUSE

#### **MEN 18-38**

- Low self esteem
- Need for power and control
- Poor family relationships
- Difficulty in interpersonal relationships--relates to others immaturely both socially and emotionally--may not be involved with peers or engage in adult group recreational activities
- Difficulty with impulse control
- History of past physical/sexual victimization...80%-95% of child molesters were themselves molested as children
- Primary interests are in children
- May be involved in youth activities such as group leaders or coaches
- May be married or single...if married they are often experiencing marital difficulties...they have difficulty in developing satisfying, supportive, intimate relationships with adults
- May have a specific age of children they prefer to work with
- May be of any sexual orientation or preference
- Tend not to have substance abuse problems
- May have been insecure in childhood, with frequent moves, early physical illness, and marital difficulties between parents
- Less of a team player
- Difficult time asking for help with his/her problems
- Don't admit to stress or recognize a need to have a plan to deal with it

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- Use children to fulfill their needs or validate their sense of competence and well being
- Highly skilled at gaining the trust and confidence of children
- Sensitive to children's needs and have a way of putting children at ease
- Moves frequently and unexpectedly
- Seeks opportunities to be alone with children
- Has an idealistic perspective of children...may refer to them as objects

### **ADOLESCENT**

- Lack of contact with peers
- Few or no extracurricular activities
- Generally feels powerless and inadequate
- May feel more comfortable with children younger than themselves
- Males, in particular, may be frequently chosen to baby-sit because they make themselves available and relate well to young children
- May come from a family where there has been physical or sexual abuse
- May seem socially immature for their age
- May lack a close relationship with a father figure

### **WOMEN**

- Married young
- Reared in a very strict home
- Her family was/is very religious
- Her husband is gone frequently and is not very supportive
- Is sexually naive and immature
- Frequently the victim of physical abuse
- Has low self esteem
- The husband exaggerates his masculinity in dress, work, and with peers and usually has drug or alcohol problems that affect his sexual performance
- Is lonely
- Does not have much tenderness in her life

### **PHYSICAL ABUSE**

- Negative attitude about life and people
- Labeled as having a "hot" temper
- Blames others "he made me", "it was her fault"
- History of abuse as a child
- Uses harsh, age-inappropriate discipline
- Offers illogical or unconvincing excuses for what occurred
- Exhibits out of control behavior

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## **EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

- Blames and belittles children
- Cold and rejecting
- Withholds love

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### POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF ABUSE

Note: These indicators can also be indicative of emotional dysfunctions that merit investigation for emotional problems and/or being the victims of abuse.

#### SEXUAL ABUSE

##### BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS

1. Is reluctant to change clothes in front of others
2. Is withdrawn
3. Exhibits unusual sexual behavior and/or has venereal disease knowledge beyond that which is common for his/her development stage
4. Has poor peer relationships
5. Either avoids or seeks out adults
6. Is pseudo-mature
7. Is manipulative
8. Is self-conscious
9. Has problems with authority and rules
10. Exhibits eating disorders.
11. Is self-mutilating
12. Is obsessively clean
13. Uses or abuses alcohol and/or other drugs
14. Exhibits delinquent behavior such as running away from home
15. Exhibits extreme compliance or defiance
16. Is fearful or anxious
17. Exhibits suicidal gestures and/or attempts suicide
18. Is promiscuous
19. Engages in fantasy or infantile behavior
20. Is not willing to participate in sports activities
21. Has school difficulties

##### PHYSICAL INDICATORS

1. Has pain and/or itching in the genital area
2. Has bruises or bleeding in genital area
3. Has venereal disease
4. Has swollen private parts
5. Has difficulty walking or sitting
6. Has torn, bloody, and/or stained underclothing
7. Experiences pain when urinating
8. Is pregnant
9. Has vaginal or penile discharge
10. Wets the bed

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## POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF ABUSE

### PHYSICAL ABUSE

#### BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS

1. Is wary of adults
2. Is either extremely aggressive or withdrawn
3. Is dependent and indiscriminate in his/her attachments
4. Is uncomfortable when other children cry
5. Generally controls his/her own crying
6. Exhibits a drastic behavior change when not with parents or caregivers
7. Is manipulative
8. Has poor self-concept
9. Exhibits delinquent behavior, such as running away from home.
10. Uses or abuses alcohol and/or other drugs
11. Is self-mutilating
12. Is frightened of parents, of going home
13. Is overprotective of or feels responsible for parents
14. Exhibits suicidal gestures and/or attempts suicide
15. Has behavior problems at school

#### PHYSICAL INDICATORS

1. Has unexplained bruises or welts, often clustered or in pattern
2. Has unexplained and/or unusual burns (cigarettes, doughnut-shaped, immersion lines, object-patterned)
3. Has unexplained bite marks
4. Has unexplained fractures or dislocations
5. Has unexplained abrasions or lacerations
6. Wets the bed (or explanation is inconsistent or improbable)

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## POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF ABUSE

### EMOTIONAL ABUSE

#### BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS

1. Is overly eager to please
2. Seeks out adult contact
3. Views abuse as being warranted
4. Exhibits changes in behavior
5. Is excessively anxious
6. Is depressed
7. Is unwilling to discuss problems
8. Exhibits aggressive or bizarre behavior
9. Is withdrawn
10. Is apathetic
11. Is passive
12. Has unprovoked fits of yelling or screaming
13. Exhibits inconsistent behavior at home and school
14. Feels responsible for the abuser
15. Runs away from home
16. Attempts suicide
17. Has low self-esteem
18. Exhibits a gradual impairment of health or personality
19. Has difficulty sustaining relationships
20. Has unrealistic goal-setting
21. Is impatient
22. Is unable to communicate or express his/her feelings, needs, or desires
23. Sabotages his/her chances of success
24. Lacks self confidence
25. Is self-deprecating and has a negative self image

#### PHYSICAL INDICATORS

1. Has a sleep disorder (nightmares or restlessness).
2. Wets the bed
3. Exhibited developmental lag (stunting his/her physical, emotional, and/or mental growth).
4. Is hyperactive
5. Exhibits eating disorders



# Diocese of Lubbock Safe Environment Program

## POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF ABUSE

### NEGLECT

#### BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS

1. Is truant or tardy to school often, or arrives early and stays late
2. Begg or steals food
3. Attempts suicide
4. Uses or abuses alcohol and/or drugs
5. Is extremely dependent or detached
6. Engages in delinquent behavior, such as prostitution or stealing

#### PHYSICAL INDICATORS

1. Frequently is dirty, unwashed, hungry, inappropriately dressed
2. Engages in dangerous activities possibly because he/she generally is unsupervised
3. Is tired and listless
4. Has unattended physical problems
5. May appear to be over-worked and/or exploited

### FAMILY INDICATORS

1. Extreme paternal dominance, restrictiveness, and/or over-protectiveness
2. Family isolated from community and support systems
3. Marked role reversal between mother and child
4. History of sexual abuse for either parent
5. Substance abuse by either parent or by children
6. Other types of violence in the home
7. Absent spouse (through chronic illness, depression, divorce or separation)
8. Severe overcrowding
9. Complaints about a "seductive" child
10. Extreme objection to implementation of child sexual abuse curriculum

Material taken from pages 191-193 of *For Their Sake, Recognizing, Responding to and Reporting Child Abuse*, Becca Cowan Johnson, American Camping Association, 1992.

Family Indicators from Committee for Children

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## Safe Environment Program

### **DISCLOSURE**

Children may disclose abuse in a variety of ways. They may come to you in private, and tell you directly and specifically what is going on: unfortunately, this is one of the less common ways for children to disclose. Ways that are more common include:

- **INDIRECT HINTS**
  - ▶ "My brother wouldn't let me sleep last night."
  - ▶ "Mr. Jones wears funny underwear"
  - ▶ "Daddy doesn't like me."
  - ▶ "My baby-sitter keeps bothering me."

A child may talk in these terms because she/he hasn't learned more specific vocabulary, feels too ashamed or embarrassed to talk more directly, has promised not to tell, or for a combination of these reasons. Gently encourage the child to be more specific, within the limits of her/his vocabulary, but bear in mind that in order to make a report you do not need to know exactly what form the abuse has taken.

- **DISGUISED DISCLOSURE**
  - ▶ "My brother wouldn't let me sleep last night."
  - ▶ "I know someone who is being touched in a bad way."
  - ▶ "What would happen if a girl told her mother she was being molested but her mother doesn't believe her?"

Here the child might be talking about a friend or sibling, but is just as likely to be talking about her/himself. Encourage the child to tell you what she knows about the "other child" - it is probable that the child will eventually tell you about whom they are talking.

- **DISCLOSURE WITH STRINGS ATTACHED**
  - ▶ "I have a problem but if I tell you about it you have to promise not to tell anyone else."

Most children are all too aware that some negative consequences will result if they break the secret of abuse; if the child discloses abuse, often the offender uses the threat of these consequences to prevent a report. Assure the child you will respect her/his need for confidentiality by not discussing the abuse with anyone other than those directly involved with the legal process, who might include the school nurse or counselor, school principal, and/or the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

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Some suggestions for responding to disclosure:

- Find a private place to talk with the child \*
- Do not panic or express shock.
- Express your belief that the child is telling the truth
- Use the child's vocabulary
- Reassure the child that it is good to tell
- Reassure the child that it is not her/his fault, that she/he is not bad
- Determine the child's immediate need for safety
- Let the child know that you will do your best to protect and support him/her
- Let the child know what you will do
- Report to the proper authorities

If the child discloses during a lesson (activity where others children are involved), acknowledge the child's disclosure and continue the lesson/activity. Afterwards, find a place where you can talk with the child alone. \*

Remember, your role is not to investigate the situation. It is your responsibility to report the abuse, set in motion the process of getting help for the child, and be supportive of the child.

\* Although it recognizes how difficult it is for a child to disclose abuse, the Catholic Community of Diocese of Lubbock Catholic Church feels that staff or volunteers should not be alone with the child or where they cannot be observed by others during this time. For clarification, refer to the preceding section on TWO-CLEARED-ADULTS RULE.

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## Safe Environment Program

### **A Guide to Responding to the Abused Child:**

Feelings of anger, guilt, denial, confusion are normal reactions to have. The way we respond to children will affect them. The best response is to go slowly, not to ask for too much information too quickly and to keep focus on the child's needs. This means that the adult responding should not focus on revenge toward the abuser or his/her own guilt. Such a response will only frighten the child.

### **Believe the Child**

Experience in treatment and reporting indicates that children seldom make up stories about abuse. Even if the story is false or exaggerated, there may still be serious family problems.

### **Be a Good Listener**

Allow the child an opportunity to talk freely with you if he/she is comfortable, but also remember to respect the child's right to silence.

### **Reassure the Child**

Let the child know that sharing this information with you was the right thing to do. Let the child know that you will try to keep him/her safe and to help the family. Be honest with the child regarding your responsibility to report the incident. **DO NOT PROMISE NOT TO TELL.** Be careful not to make any promises about what may or may not happen.

### **Help Relieve the Child of Guilt**

Children often believe they are to blame for the abuse. Explain that what happened was the responsibility of the adult, or the bigger child.

### **Be Available to the Child**

For some children, the abuse may not have been traumatic, but the subsequent intervention was. The child may need your support and understanding during this family crisis.

### **Protect the Child's Right to Privacy**

You may assume the special role of advocate for the child by reminding his/her peers or staff about the child's right to privacy.

### **Follow-up**

Mandated reporting sources usually wonder about the results of having made a report. They can call Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and find out if the case has been opened, the name of the assigned worker and if the child has been placed in a foster home. They can also ask for a report on the child's progress. However, because the family's right to privacy is very important, there may be information that the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services worker will not be able to give.

## Diocese of Lubbock Safe Environment Program

The ways in which adults respond to the abused child influences the level of anxiety felt by the child. Our goal is to lessen the trauma for the child. The decision to report may pose personal and family conflicts. Regardless of the situation, failing to report allows the problem to continue. By reporting suspected child abuse, we not only protect the child, but it may mean the difference between a lifetime of guilt and one of healthy family relationship.

Adapted from St. Pius X Parish Community, Dallas Texas, and from handout development by Child Abuse Prevention Services, Inc., Lansing, Michigan