



Honor Thy Children

Archdiocese of Louisville continuing education for the awareness and prevention of child abuse

COULD YOU SPOT A CHILD ABUSER IF YOU SAW ONE?

If someone asked you "What does a child abuser look like?" What would you say? The truth is many child abusers can look just like everyone else. Child sexual abuse generally involves a trusted adult (neighbors, parents, step-parents, aunts, uncles, teachers, priests, deacons, and coaches) who is in a relationship of power to the child and uses that position to manipulate children in order to satisfy the adult's own sexual needs. Abusers manipulate situations in order to create an atmosphere where sexualized contact can occur, such as opportunities to be alone with the child. They then work to gradually reduce the child's inhibitions to sexualized touch, while simultaneously working to strengthen the child's trust. As the sexualized interaction between the adult and child becomes increasingly normalized,

the abuser pushes for more and more sexually gratifying interaction. The child is confused about the sexual violations because the adult abuser is someone that is in a position of trust, and others tend to hold him or her in high regard. Furthermore, children are often told not to disobey or disrespect adults, especially those who are in positions of care.

"I was a master of manipulating both the children I abused and their families. They trusted me whole heartedly with their child"

- A child molester (credit the Archdiocese of Louisville's "Honor Thy Children" Safe Environment Training)

The evolving sexually abusive relationship is maintained due to the power that the adult has in the relationship with the child. That power is utilized in making threats

that ensure the child's secrecy. Secrecy, then, is the key to keeping sexual abuse private. The child is afraid to talk about what is going on to others, in part for fear that the threats will be carried out. Remember, adults who sexually abuse children seek out vulnerable children - children that are easier to manipulate relative to other children. This means targeting children with whom they have ready access, as well as those who are left alone by adult caregivers and/or possess low self-esteem. Kentucky is a mandatory reporting state. If you suspect that child abuse is occurring, you are legally obligated to report it by calling 1.877. KYSAFE.1 or (1.877.597.2331)

Do you suspect abuse is happening to your child or someone else? Ask yourself some of these questions:

- Do they suddenly have more money than normal?
- Are they experiencing sudden mood swings (fear, anger, rage, etc.)
- Loss of appetite or trouble eating?
- Are you seeing signs of sexual activities with toys or other children?
- Show a fear of certain people or places (babysitter, friend or relative)?
- Do they have new words for body parts?
- Are they talking about an older friend?
- Refusing to talk about a "secret" they have with an adult or child

Archdiocese of Louisville

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If you need support or someone to talk to:

- ☺ Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky or Indiana: 800.CHILDREN/ 800.422.4453 www.pcaky.org www.pcaain.org
- ☺ Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline 800.4.A.CHILD 800.422.4453 www.childhelp.org

Are You Safe Environment Compliant?

Are you working regularly with children?

If so you must have attended an Archdiocese of Louisville Safe Environment Training.

You must also have a satisfactory background check not older than 5 years.

See your Safe Environment Coordinator today to verify your compliance!

LOOKING FOR HELP?

Are you a victim of abuse or know someone who is? There are several local resources available to help right now.

Center for Women and Families

Provides services to victims of sexual abuse and violence in the Kentucky counties of Bullitt, Henry, Jefferson, Oldham, Shelby, Spencer, and Trimble counties

844.237.2331
www.thecenteronline.org

Seven Counties

Treatment and counseling for victims and offenders

502.589.1100
www.centerstone.org

Family & Children's Place

Broad-based family counseling program serving child and adult victims of violence and families in which a child has been sexually abused by an adult family member or adolescent.

502.893.3900
www.familyandchildrensplace.org

Silverleaf Trauma Recovery Services

Provides services to victims of sexual abuse and rape, as well as to non-offending caregivers and families. Serving Breckinridge, Grayson, Hardin, Larue, Marion, Meade, Nelson, and Washington counties.

270.234.9236
www.silverleafky.org

Feel free to contact Martine Siegel, Archdiocese of Louisville Victim Assistance Coordinator for any additional questions you have on resources available.

502.636.1044
msiegel@archlou.org



UPCOMING TRAININGS

In accordance with local, state and federal guidance amid the Covid-19 outbreak, all Safe Environment Trainings continued to be limited to **25** people. If this changes we will get word out to all parish/school Safe Environment Coordinators as well as post to www.archlou.org/safe

Attendance is on a first come/ first served basis.

No one under 16 will be admitted to the training. This includes infants.

Masks are required and must be worn properly (over the nose and mouth) during the duration of the training

(We do have some extras, but participants are encouraged to bring their own)

2.4.21
St. Gabriel

2.8.21
Incarnation

2.16.21
St. Albert

2.23.21
St. Gabriel

3.8.21
St. Gabriel

3.18.21
Incarnation

3.23.21
St. Albert

3.28.21 - (2:15 PM)
(SPANISH SPEAKING ONLY)
St. Edward

More trainings will be scheduled moving forward and capacity could be increased once local authorities say it is safe to do so.

Keep checking
www.archlou.org/safe for updates



RISKS TO A CHILD WHEN THEY DISCLOSE ABUSE

There are genuine risks to the child when she or he discloses abuse, including the lack of protection for the child if he or she is not believed, or when removal of a child from an abusive situation does not take place in a timely fashion. Moreover, when children are protected and removed from the home, they feel punished, which serves to reinforce the shame and misplaced responsibility that the child feels for causing the abuse. To a child, being removed and placed with strangers (even with relatives) seems like punishment, further reinforcing the ideas that "I am bad," "I am to blame", and/or "I should have kept quiet."

Furthermore, when children are removed from their home, they are taken from their community. They no longer participate in any youth activities, club outings, sporting competitions, and other extracurricular activities. This is experienced as additional punishment for their disclosure. These feelings are compounded when adults are angry and children are silenced from talking about the very matter that caused them to be pulled from their community. Another risk for the child is the probable loss of the relationship to the abuser. Children who are abused usually have mixed feelings about their abuser. The child hates the offending actions but still cares for the person who is abusing him or her. There are cases where the abuser is the primary financial supporter of the family and disclosing may result in the family losing economic support. In such cases, the abused child often internalizes blame believing that "if I didn't tell, we wouldn't be in such a mess." Know that in general, a child who is being abused feels a desire to protect others in the home—including other siblings and the non-abusing

parent. If the abusing parent gets removed, the child may internalize the responsibility for the pain that the non-abusing parent feels. Family members vary in their responses to a child's disclosure. They have varying degrees of believing and supporting the child for many reasons, including the fact that the abuser is most often a relative or family friend. Coming to terms with the idea that someone we know and respect could sexually abuse a child is difficult for people. To the child, this ambivalence feels like he or she is not being believed. It is not uncommon for some family members to reject the child's

story and side with the abuser. This is particularly devastating to a child when a parent/guardian refuses to believe that the abuse actually happened.

This is why it's vitally important to invite the

child's disclosure though actively listening.

This is made difficult by the atrocity of what the child is claiming. Know that children who have been sexually abused often assume that they will be blamed for the abuse. Therefore, do all you can to maintain your poise as the child tells you what happened.

This and many other topics surrounding child abuse are covered in the Archdiocese of Louisville's "Honor Thy Children" training. This training is **MANDATORY** for any paid staff member (even if they don't work regularly with children) or volunteer working regularly with children.

The Archdiocese of Louisville is available to answer any questions you have should a child disclose to you they've been abused. Feel free to call Martine Siegel, Archdiocese of Louisville Victim Assistance Coordinator at 502.636.1044 or email (msiegel@archlou.org).



MONTHLY SAFE ENVIRONMENT TIP

Over time we field many questions regarding Safe Environment. Here are some of the more popular questions we receive on a regular basis. While we're always willing to answer any questions you have, hopefully this will help answer some.

Question 1

Can I sign up for the next training?

Answer

All trainings are on a first come first serve basis. There's no need to sign up. Prior to the pandemic there were no limits on the number of participants and it wasn't uncommon to have upwards of 250 people at a training.

Question 2

I took a Safe Environment Training in another diocese. Do I have to take this training?

Answer

Yes. We cannot accept another diocese's training as we cover the Archdiocese of Louisville specific code of conduct

Question 3

I'm employed at my local parish, but my position doesn't involve me working with children. Do I need to take the Safe Environment Training?

Answer

Yes, all paid staff regardless of their involvement with children MUST complete the Archdiocese of Louisville's Safe Environment Training.

Should you have further questions or concerns don't hesitate to reach out to:

Scott Fitzgerald

*Archdiocese of Louisville
Coordinator of
Safe Environment Services
sfitzgerald@archlou.org
502.471.2132*

**Archdiocese of Louisville
Office of Safe Environment**

Martine Bacci Siegel, MSN, RN, CNS
Maloney Center
1200 South Shelby Street
Louisville, KY 40220

Phone: 502.636.1044
Fax: 502.634.3381
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No child or adult should ever experience abuse by anyone, especially a church minister. We all have the right to be treated with dignity and to expect our church to reflect the goodness of God in all of its dealings.

We hope that this information is helpful to all in our communities who are working to prevent and respond to childhood sexual abuse. Please let us know if you need further assistance or information by calling or emailing our victim assistance coordinator, Ms. Martine Siegel, at 502/636-1044; victimassistance@archlou.org or the Pastoral Center at 502/585-3291.

We must heed God's call to care for the most vulnerable among us and to continue our efforts toward wholeness and health in dealing with sexual abuse.

PREVENTING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

There are many ways you can prevent child abuse, one of those is simply listening.

Listen to and honor children by giving them a voice. Teach them personal boundaries and respect for their bodies. Discuss with children what is appropriate and inappropriate touch. Explain to them that other people do not have the right to touch them in ways that make them uncomfortable. Help younger children identify "private parts," "bathing suit zones" with appropriate terminology for all parts of their body.

Communicate to children that there is nothing wrong with understanding their bodies and talking about their bodies. All bodies are beautiful, sacred, and holy. Adults often give mixed messages to children about their rights to have

a say in who touches them and how they are touched. It is not uncommon, for example, for adults to pressure children into kissing or hugging aunts or uncles whom they may be hesitant to approach. Give children the right to



decide who touches them, including family members. As an adult, listen to and trust your own intuition and instincts. If you sense something is not right or seems odd, it may well be. Do not leave children in the care of someone you do not have a good feeling about. Whether you're a parent, teacher or other responsible adult, there is

always something you can do that will encourage children to come to you should they experience abuse.

Create an environment of responsiveness and comfort so that children feel free to disclose.

Create an environment that makes it clearly known that children will be listened to and believed.

As youth workers (counselors, teachers, principals, catechists, priests, youth ministers, coaches), communicate the idea that children will be heard. Display posters, books, and pamphlets that indicate a level of sensitivity to child abuse. Intentionally raise the issues of "uncomfortable and confusing touches" with children. Invite them to tell you anything that may be bothering or troubling them. Most of all, be in tune with children that are in your care.