



# Honor Thy Children

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

## And They're Off...



Over 200 volunteers and/or employees of the Archdiocese of Louisville were on hand at Holy Family for the first Safe Environment Training of the fall season.



## REMEMBER

**Anyone working with children must have the following:**

- Attended an (in-person) Archdiocese of Louisville Safe Environment Training session
- Have an Archdiocese of Louisville issued background check NOT OLDER THAN FIVE YEARS
- If it's been five years since your last training, a refresher training must be completed either on-line or at any scheduled in-person training.

**Each parish/school has appointed a Safe Environment Coordinator. Please see them to verify your compliance!**

Archdiocese of Louisville

July 2024

**If you need support or someone to talk to:**

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

Has it been 5 years since your initial in person training? You must complete your 5 year refresher training

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

See your Safe Environment Coordinator today to verify your compliance!

# WHAT IS CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE?

Child abuse, including child sexual abuse, is widespread. It cuts across all cultures, religions, and socioeconomic groups. It is estimated that approximately one in four girls and one in six boys are sexually abused by the time they are 18 years of age. Many people are well into adulthood before something triggers in them a need to reveal childhood sexual abuse. Because childhood sexual abuse is traumatic, many will suppress these memories out of pain and survival, only to recall later what happened. This is a common scenario in post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Many, out of shame, will unfortunately never report the abuse. It

is estimated that only 10% of victims report their abuse, which is a fraction of the sexual abuse that occurs. Simply stated, child sexual abuse is defined as any adult interaction with a child to meet the sexual needs of an adult. Sexual abuse can be physical, verbal, auditory, or visual and therefore, does not necessarily require physical contact between the abuser and the child. For example, watching a child undress, take a shower, or go to the bathroom to create sexual arousal would be child sexual abuse. Other non-physical behaviors include an adult exposing his or her sexual organs to a child and speaking to a

child about things of a sexual nature that are inappropriate for the child's age. Viewing, possessing, or distributing child pornography is criminal and is a form of sexual abuse that is becoming an increasing problem in our society. In addition to acknowledging what child sexual abuse is, it is important to dispel myths concerning child sexual abuse. Below are some examples.

## MYTH vs. FACT

**MYTH** Strangers are responsible for most child abuse.

**FACT** Most child abuse, including sexual abuse, is perpetrated by someone known to the child.

**MYTH** Most sexual abusers are homosexuals.

**FACT** Most sexual abusers are male, and the vast majority are heterosexual.

**MYTH** The rate of false reporting, or lying, about sexual abuse is the same as the incidence of false reporting of any other type of crime.

**FACT** The rate of false reporting, or lying, about sexual abuse is the same as the incidence of false reporting of any other type of crime.



Should you have any questions concerning child sexual abuse myths or what you might have heard, feel free to reach out to Archdiocese of Louisville Victim Assistance Coordinator Martine Siegel (502) 636.1044

### UPCOMING TRAININGS

8.6.24  
St. Gabriel

8.10.24  
St. Peter the Apostle  
**(SPANISH SPEAKING ONLY)**

8.12.24  
Flaget

8.13.24  
St. Joseph (Bardstown)

8.19.24  
St. Bernard

8.20.24  
St. James (E-Town)

8.26.24  
St. Patrick

9.10.24  
St. Aloysius-Pewee Valley

9.18.24  
St. Dominic

10.7.24  
St. Athanasius

10.21.24  
St. Raphael

10.28.24  
Flaget

11.5.24  
St. Margaret Mary

The fall training schedule is set with multiple August dates and present a great opportunity for you to check that box even if you're not immediately serving your parish or school.

**It is strongly advised that you not wait to attend a scheduled in person training if required to do so as trainings are subject to cancellation or postponement due to inclement weather.**

Be sure to bookmark [www.archlou.org/safe](http://www.archlou.org/safe) for the latest status or changes in any training

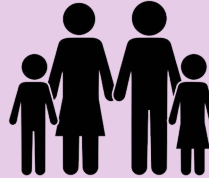
# UNDERSTANDING HOW AN ABUSER WORKS

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.

Abusers gain a child's cooperation through manipulation, threats, and bribery. The initial stages of abuse involve subtle, seemingly innocent actions that prey upon a child's lack of knowledge and maturity to violate normal boundaries. This process of manipulating children to become increasingly comfortable with the violations of their boundaries is termed "grooming." Grooming begins with indirect violations that are difficult to identify as preludes to sexual abuse. Such things as tickling a child, hugging a child, or patting the child's backside may not be abusive but could serve as the beginning of the

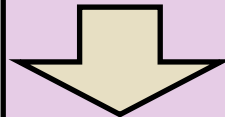
grooming process. For the adult abuser, these interactions are sexually charged. Children, having no experience with the notion of "sexually charged" experiences, are unable to put words to what is happening. They only know that something is a "little weird." This awkward experience is called an "uh-oh" feeling and is often described in safe-touch programs for children. The "uh-oh" feeling is confusing, because of the trust that the child feels for the adult. Children also tend to discount their own "uh-oh" feelings because the abuser uses minimization to justify his or her violations. As the grooming process evolves, sexually violating behaviors become seemingly normal so that each progressive, intrusive step is experienced as only a slight violation of the previously established boundary.

## GROOMING OF FAMILY MEMBERS



Family members and caregivers of children also must be groomed as the child is being targeted.

When the adult abuser resides outside the family, trust must be earned from the child's guardians in order to gain private access to the child.



*The closer the relationship of the child to the abuser, the larger the impact on the child*

*Bribery can be both subtle and overt. Bribery may include seeking special time with a child and/ or providing gifts such as money and candy. Accepting these bribes create guilt, shame, and a sense of responsibility for the child's sexual abuse. Abusers also rely on the child's inherent narcissism in that they accept responsibility for the abusive relations. The child's feelings of complicity assist in maintaining the child's silence, which in turn, reinforces the child's experience that he or she is responsible for the abuse.*

*A child's shame and embarrassment at having "allowed" the abuse reinforces the secrecy. Soon after the onset of the abuse, children begin to feel complicit in their own abuse. They accept responsibility for causing it and feel as though they deserved it or that they should have stopped it.*

## Why Children Wait to Disclose

The barriers to disclosing make it improbable that children will purposely and immediately disclose during their childhood. Only when the abuser is no longer perceived to be a threat does the abused individual feel free to disclose. Once abusers no longer pose a threat (such as when they move away, die, or when the abused individual has emotionally overcome fears) the barriers to disclosure dissipate. For some, however, the disclosure risks remain throughout their lifetime, keeping them silent.

Some people have memories of their abuse triggered when their child reaches the age at which their abuse occurred, and memories come flooding back. Others have suppressed or ignored the abuse but begin having nightmares, difficulty sleeping, physical ailments, and depression. Others have difficulty with relationships with friends, family, spouses, and co-workers, all stemming from the inability to trust.

Many will seek professional help to understand the abuse and its effect on their lives; others will choose never to disclose.

**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  
E-mail: [msiegel@archlou.org](mailto:msiegel@archlou.org)

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](mailto:victimassistance@archlou.org)

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.

With school getting back into session, allow us to introduce you to Childhelp's Speak Up Be Safe program that is taught in all Archdiocese of Louisville Schools through a generous grant from Kosair For Kids "Face It" grant.

Speak Up/Be Safe is the only evidence-based comprehensive child abuse prevention education curriculum that covers various types of abuse, with age-appropriate lessons for pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. It is used with confidence by schools, districts, advocacy centers, faith-based organizations, and other groups throughout the United States and over a dozen other nations. The program designed to build safety skills to prevent and interrupt various types of abuse - physical, emotional, sexual, neglect, bullying, and cyber abuse. It also focuses on enhancing the child's overall sense of confidence about safety. It promotes respect for self and peers that can be applied to general as well as potentially harmful situations.

The overarching goal of this curriculum is to provide students the skills to identify and approach a safe adult about unsafe situations.

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES



### Grades Pre-K - 2

A primary focus for the earliest age groups is emphasizing that adults are responsible to keep children safe. Students learn basic concepts of personal safety and how to identify safe adults in their lives.

### Grades 3 - 5

Lessons emphasize that adults are responsible for child safety and that, by learning and using a few key safety rules, children can help those adults keep them safe. Students learn how to recognize potentially unsafe situations. They identify their safe adults and practice using the safety rules.

### Grades 6 - 8

While adults continue to be responsible for child safety, lessons acknowledge the growing responsibilities and privileges of students in this age group that can present opportunities for potentially unsafe situations. Students learn to recognize possible risks and practice resistance strategies they can use until they can talk to a safe adult.

