

EVANA Network Guidelines for Safe Church Practices

Covenant of Safe Church Practices

EVANA Network believes safeguarding from abuse in our congregations is essential in God's mission of ministering to the needs of all attendees. As a reflection of God's heart, each congregation is encouraged to act toward cultivating places in which each person's value is honored, and they are free to worship and free from abuse. Where abuse has occurred, the response holds accountable those who disregard this protection from abuse. The answer for all involved demonstrates compassion that fosters healing in those who are wounded. Response to abuse complies with state guidelines.

Core Beliefs for Establishing Safe Church Practices

- A. God stands against abuse of any form, and Christians seek to reflect God's heart.
- B. Screening procedures facilitate a safe church environment by not hiring or allowing known offenders to have an official role or volunteer position, especially those involving children or vulnerable adults.
- C. Education on prevention, identification, and reporting provides clarity for staff and volunteers.
- D. Clear expectations for conduct and promote a safe church atmosphere.
- E. A well-defined method to report inappropriate behavior or policy violations can expedite the reporting process.
- F. Violators of safe church practices are held accountable to ensure they have no power or access to do further harm.
- G. Caring for survivors of abuse in trauma-informed ways and resisting re-traumatizing survivors through blame or by pushing quick forgiveness or reconciliation assists their healing journey.
- H. A good policy establishes due diligence while satisfying possible requirements from insurance companies or legal counsel.

EVANA Administrative Policy

EVANA Network will help each church in the Network establish safe church practices by assisting them to process critical issues and by providing resources. These may include but are not limited to the following:

- A. Anyone seeking credentials through EVANA Network will go through the standard screening process established by EVANA Network.
- B. EVANA Network church leaders will have access to the document "Our Church's Guidelines for Safe Church Practices" (see the following pages).
- C. When requested, the regional pastor, within their abilities and limitations, will assist churches to adopt a policy of safe church practices.
- D. After notifying the appropriate authorities, the church may seek additional support in responding to an alleged violation of safe church practices. The Regional Pastor will help within their capabilities and availability. This assistance may include helping leadership follow the due process of state guidelines, process the next response steps, or consult with experts.
- E. If a credentialed church leader is an alleged violator, EVANA will follow due process of state guidelines and will support the healing process of all involved.
- F. If an EVANA Network church demonstrates a refusal to respond to an allegation of abuse, the church may receive probationary status.

Glossary

Church: A building used for public or Christian worship, an organization of religious believers

Vulnerable: Individuals 17 and younger, sick, elderly, disabled, student, intern, or person under authority. Children are classified as vulnerable because of their size and development. Adults, too, have various vulnerabilities, such as disabilities, life situations, or cultural differences.

Note from netgrace.org (Godly Response to Abuse in a Christian Environment): "Matthew 18 is a guide for responding to abuse of power or crimes. Jesus' words in John 10 are a more direct response to abuse of power or crimes."

Statements related to this policy and approved by Evana Delegates in 6/2023. These are part of the Personal Covenant for full partner church pastors and elders and for affiliate partner church lead pastor and lead elder:

- Embrace sexual wholeness and reserve sexual activity for holy matrimony, a covenant between one male and one female for life, and refrain from supporting other sexual activity or practice.
- Support the implementation of church policies to protect against abuse and also the development of processes on how to care for those who have experienced harm.
- Practice self-control by refraining from destructive and addictive behaviors and help others to find healing and freedom from the same.

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- Implement church policies to protect against abuse and also develop processes on how to care for those who have experienced harm.

Our Church's Guidelines for Safe Church Practices

(This is a general sample policy, not comprehensive. Each church should develop an approach for its organization based on its congregation, facility design, and needs. Churches utilizing annual training and having a safe church policy should note that on their website.)

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Our Church's Administrative Policy

Safe Church Practices: Make our church's safe practices available for all attendees (See Appendix A: Safe Church Practices).

A. Screening Process

1. Credentialed Leaders
 - a. EVANA Network credentialed leaders will follow the Network's screening process.
 - b. They will sign that they have read and affirm our church's safe practices.
2. Administrative staff and leadership staff
 - a. Administrative staff and leadership staff will have a background check. Additional screening may include but is not limited to 1) an internet and social media search and 2) a national sex offender registry check.
 - b. They will sign that they have read and affirm our church's safe practices.
3. Employees and Volunteers Working with Vulnerable Individuals
 - a. Other employees and volunteers who work with vulnerable individuals will have a background check. (*Vulnerable individuals* refers to children who are 17 & younger, someone who is sick, elderly, disabled, student, intern, or a person under authority.)
 - b. Additional screening may include but is not limited to 1) an internet and social media search and 2) a national sex offender registry check.
 - c. The Care Team will provide an education/training session for employees and volunteers working with vulnerable individuals. Trainees will sign that they have read and affirm our church's safe practices.
4. Members
 - a. Leadership will inform Members about our church's safe church practices. The Care Team will provide an education/training session when introduced. After that, it will be part of the "new member" class curriculum.
 - b. Further screening may include but may not be limited to internet and social media search and the national sex offender registry.
 - c. They will sign that they have read and affirm our church's safe practices.
5. NOTE: If the screening process yields information that an individual abused a child or others in any way or has been convicted of a violent and/or sexual crime, that individual may not work with children or vulnerable adults in any capacity. If any potentially concerning information comes to light OR if the screening process shows that a candidate has ever been accused or convicted of any crime, our church may consult with a person or organization with experience and expertise to help assess the situation.

B. Prevention and Responding to Abuse

1. Equip for Effective Education and Prevention
 - a. Establish the person(s) responsible for equipping church attendees and new members for effective abuse prevention. The staff, board members, volunteers, and members shall receive annual and regular educational briefings on our policy.
2. Designate Person(s) Who Will Respond to Abuse
 - a. Establish the person(s) responsible for receiving, documenting, reporting, and responding to policy violations or concerning behavior, such as a Care Team with 2 - 6 members. At least 50% of the Team should be women.
3. Duties of the Care Team
 - a. Be familiar with the Safe Church Practices policy and state guidelines of abuse.
 - b. Educate congregants about our church's Safe Church Practices.
 - c. Receive and document all concerns or policy violations.
4. Follow state guidelines to report any sexual abuse allegation.

- a. DO NOT try to thoroughly investigate matter before filing a report. Any delay in reporting could result in loss of critical evidence, potentially violate laws, and enable the continued abuse of vulnerable children or adults. (See Resources below.)
- b. Inform the Church Council and/or Board of Elders of abuse allegations. If a church leader has violated the policy, inform the regional pastor.
- c. Document ongoing relevant actions and information related to the case.
- d. Use appropriate strategies that foster healing for the victim(s) and/or refer them to someone skilled in ministering to these needs.

C. Response Protocols

1. Our church takes all policy violations and concerns about respect and safety seriously.
 - a. Any person who witnesses or learns of a violation of our church's Safe Church Practices is encouraged to document that information (see Appendix B Report of Boundary Violations, Abuse, or Harassment) and inform a member of the Care Team as soon as possible.
 - b. In responding to abuse, our church will always prioritize the safety and needs of the victim(s) and other vulnerable persons. The victim will receive no blame for struggling to come forward, delaying disclosure, or other common behaviors around avoiding disclosure due to trauma.
 - c. The Mayo Clinic offers a resource for identifying possible physical and sexual abuse of children. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/child-abuse>.
 - d. Abuse Protocols are often activated by one or more of three common scenarios.
 - i. Disclosure: immediately report with no investigative role for the church.
 - ii. Hard Evidence: Texts/Photos/etc. have been discovered and/or witnessed. Reporters may require more information, but the church should not investigate beyond being sure of evidence to report.
 - iii. Reasonable suspicion of abuse: Signs or indicators have appeared and can be hard to navigate. Churches must train workers on appropriate thresholds and directions on who to talk to. If the concerned party is unsure, report.
2. Immediate Response Protocols
 - a. If there is a reasonable belief that a person is in immediate danger, call 911.
 - b. If there is a disclosure of abuse, any evidence or knowledge of abuse, against a minor (age 17 or younger), verbally report this to a member of the Care Team and call the state's Child Protection Services immediately.
 - c. If there is a disclosure of abuse, any evidence or knowledge of abuse against a vulnerable adult (e.g., elder abuse or abuse against an adult with an intellectual disability), verbally report this to a member of the Care Team and call the state's Adult Protective Services.
 - d. If the victim is now an adult, but the abuse occurred when they were a minor, our church will support them and respect their freedom to control the reporting. An exception may be if the Care Team feels conscious-bound to report information about a potential crime against an adult. When reporting is in the best interest of the community's safety, the Care Team shall report it to the authorities. The Care Team will communicate the reason for the report as sensitively as possible to the victim.
 - e. Suppose the alleged perpetrator is within our church, upon recommendation from the Care Team. In that case, the leadership shall immediately place the alleged offender on administrative leave or draw other appropriate boundaries until the completion of any investigations and/or our church has sufficient information to discern concerning any personnel decisions and/or additional accountability. The Care Team shall coordinate any immediate steps required to protect the vulnerable and the community and inform the Church Council and/or Elder Board. Any person connected to an allegation, including a family member or mentor, must recuse themselves from the

response, whether a member of the Care Team or Church Council and/or Elder Board.

- f. Those found to have abused as defined by this policy shall never again serve in any teaching/leadership role within our church.
3. Further Response Protocols
 - a. Refer victims to local expert help, whenever possible and where available, and/or national organizations such as
 - i. National Domestic Violence Hotline (800-799-SAFE)
 - ii. Rape, Abuse, & Incest National Network Hotline-RAINN (800-656-4673)
 - iii. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (800-662-HELP)
 - iv. Local child abuse prevention chapters or advocacy centers in our area.
 - b. Determine a timely communication strategy to safeguard church members and allow any other potential victims to come forward.
 - c. Cooperate with investigations that assess the possibility of other victims.
 - d. Reach out to qualified experts with questions or, when necessary, pursue an independent consultation or investigation.
4. If the Care Team recommends having an independent consultation or investigation and church leadership declines, the Team and the leadership shall document that decision.
5. If church leadership decides to engage in an independent investigation, the assisting organization must
 - a. be entirely separate from our church,
 - b. be trained in best practice investigative standards,
 - c. have significant experience investigating a range of misconduct and/or abuse cases,
 - d. utilize trauma-informed practices in their investigations,
 - e. submit findings & recommendations to church leadership (Council, Elders, etc.).
6. The church is NOT an investigative body. The church reports suspicions and cares for the wounded. It is the task of local experts to investigate.
7. Independent consultation or investigation is needed when:
 - a. Authorities decline to investigate a report of abuse with evidence of wrongdoing.
 - b. An adult victim is not ready to report allegations of a criminal nature to authorities.
 - c. The authorities do not charge the alleged offender with criminal wrongdoing after an investigation. Still, concerns remain about whether the alleged offender engaged in wrongful conduct that may disqualify them from continued participation in the organization. (i.e., A Child Protective Services unsubstantiated report does not mean that an abuse did not occur, but instead, there was not enough evidence to continue with legal proceedings.)
 - d. The alleged perpetrator denies a pattern of misconduct or insufficient information related to the allegation.
 - e. The alleged offender is a member of leadership or the Care Team.
 - f. The alleged victim(s) requests an investigation, or there may be other victims.
 - g. The organization wants to investigate and assess a potential systemic issue related to how it responded to prior allegations of abuse to understand how to improve future responses.

D. Policy Regarding Retaliation

1. Our church prohibits retaliation against any individual or group involved in any activity in this policy, such as reporting concerns, potential evidence, or cooperation in a criminal or independent investigation.
2. Retaliation can take many forms, including, but not limited to, shunning, violence, abuse, threats, or intimidation that would discourage some persons from engaging in activity required or encouraged by this policy.

3. Actions in response to a good faith report or response under this policy are retaliatory if they could reasonably harm the well-being of an individual or if they impact their ability to participate in church activities, including compliance with this policy.
 4. Reports, concerns, or questions regarding retaliation will be immediately reported to the Care Team, who will notify the Church Council and/or Elder Board. All individuals and groups engaging in retaliation will be held accountable under this policy.
- E. Additional information on the predatory nature of abusers
1. Congregations should be aware that abuse in all its forms is almost always perpetrated by someone known to the victim. Abusers utilize a variety of tactics to gain trust, deceive both victims and others within a community, and keep the abuse secret.
 2. Targets of abuse often report feeling flattered and then later confused, upset, guilty, ashamed, and like it is all their fault. Victims should know that although it is normal to feel this way, abuse is never their fault.
 3. Those in positions of power and trust are responsible and can respect appropriate boundaries. Our community includes interaction with vulnerable children and adults. Predatory individuals often seek environments with vulnerable people, congregations being among the most accessible.
- F. Reporting Protocol for Individual States
1. Brotherhood Mutual has a website listing each state's guidelines for reporting abuse. <https://www.brotherhoodmutual.com/resources/safety-library/risk-management-articles/children-and-youth/abuse-prevention/child-abuse-mandatory-reporting/>
 2. State Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Numbers and other resources are here: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/responding/reporting/how/>
- G. Communicate with Your Insurance Company
1. Each church should be in communication with its insurance company for any relevant policies or processes that need to be in place for continued coverage.
 2. See Mennonite Mutual's "Child & Youth Protection Manual" booklet on abuse prevention. https://www.mennonitemutual.com/upload/documents/child_and_youth_protection_manual_08-2022.pdf
 3. Brotherhood Mutual has an extensive free database on security and safety resources, including a training materials packet available for a fee. <https://www.brotherhoodmutual.com/resources/church-security/>

Appendix A:

Safe Church Practices

At all times, our community will demonstrate healthy boundaries.

- A. Show respect in physical touch, space, and visibility:
 - 1. Appropriate touch, whether administered toward an adult or child, maybe a handshake, a high five, a fist bump, a hand on the shoulder, or a hug (If you are not sure, ask - e.g., May I hug you? May I put my hand on your shoulder when I pray for you?) Inappropriate touch includes tickling someone's child other than your own.
 - 2. Children who need assistance in the restroom outside of the children's ministry receive help from their parent or guardian. Within the children's ministry, all diapering or bathroom assistance must be observable by two screened adults or done by a parent.
 - 3. Be considerate of others and give them appropriate space. Notice the body language of others and be aware of one's physical impact on others (proximity, height, movement, etc.)
 - 4. Stay in visible and accountable spaces, i.e., no one should be alone with a child who is not their child (including giving rides)
 - 5. Do not offer to hold a child in lap without permission from the parent or legal guardian.
- B. Show respect in your words:
 - 1. Always use words that convey respect to others.
 - 2. Avoid any language that belittles, shames, or threatens.
 - 3. Avoid sexualized or objectifying comments, including inappropriate jokes or stories or sharing sexualized content.
 - 4. Show respect in action and personal boundaries:
 - 5. Healthy people do not seek to control others but rather encourage and empower others to take beneficial actions in their own lives (e.g., "Where would you be comfortable meeting up?")
 - 6. Avoid volunteering inappropriately intimate information or asking someone to reveal intimate details or personal information when person is not ready or comfortable doing so.
 - 7. Always respect the "no" of others in setting personal boundaries.
- C. Show respect in the position of greater power:
 - 1. People with greater power (older staff members, leaders, etc.) must maintain appropriate boundaries with others.
 - 2. The following behaviors do not show respect and are unacceptable:
 - a. Any abuse, as defined by this policy,
 - b. Sexual harassment of any kind, including unwanted sexual attention, comments, or unwanted physical touch,
 - c. Behavior or words that discriminate against anyone based on age, race, sex, ethnicity, national origin, religion, language, disability, health conditions, socioeconomic status, marital status, domestic status, or parental status,
 - d. Any words that belittle or threaten.
- D. Anyone who experiences or has information regarding inappropriate behavior, abuse, or harassment should verbally report it to a Care Team member and then document the incident. If the victim is in immediate danger, call 911 first.

Definitions of Boundary Violations, Abuse, and/or Harassment

- A. *General Definition of Abuse:* In general, abuse occurs when a person in a position of power and/or trust (e.g., pastor, elder, boss, mentor, supervisor, parent, adult, older child, etc.) uses that position to exploit or violate someone more vulnerable (e.g., a child, someone who is sick, elderly, or disabled, student, intern, a person under authority, etc.). Exploitation or violation can take many forms: emotional, physical, spiritual, sexual, financial, etc.
- B. *Emotional Abuse:* A pattern of controlling behaviors such as shaming, insulting, degrading, intimidating, threatening, humiliating, and/or domineering. Bullying is a common term for acts that typically constitute emotional abuse.
- C. *Physical Abuse:* Non-accidental physical injury (ranging from bruises to severe fractures or death) by way of bodily contact (such as slapping, punching, pushing, beating, kicking, shaking, or striking with an object) or non-injurious contact with the goal or effect of intimidating, threatening, or controlling.
- D. *Spiritual Abuse:* A form of emotional abuse, meaning a pattern of coercive or domineering behaviors using religion. Acts of abuse in a religious environment often have a spiritual dimension. Examples include:
4. Use religious ideology, precepts, tradition, or sacred texts to harm.
 5. Compelling a person to engage in religious acts against their will.
 6. Abuse that occurs in a religious context or by a religious leader.
 7. Invoking divine authority to manipulate a person into meeting the abuser's needs.
 8. Using spirituality or spiritual authority to dismiss a person's perspective, will, or value.
 9. Attempts to use the divine, sacred texts, sacred tradition, theology, or spirituality, placing their leadership or decisions beyond questioning or accountability.
 10. Attempts to spiritualize or justify harm through divine language, sacred texts, sacred tradition, theology, or spirituality.
- H. *Sexual Abuse:* Children, certain vulnerable adults (based on functioning related to factors such as intellectual disabilities, age, mental health, or other vulnerabilities), or those within a power differential (e.g., with a religious leader, mentor, teacher, or supervisor) are unable to consent to sexual activity.
1. Even when both people are adults, and the contact is not forcible, crossing sexual boundaries within a power structure is not an "affair" or a "relationship" but an egregious abuse of power.
 2. When a person in a place of power and/or trust engages in sexual behavior with a child or an adult under their supervision, authority, mentoring, or spiritual care, including:
 3. Sexual Penetration: Any act or attempted act of vaginal or anal penetration, however slight, by a person's penis, finger, other body part, or an object, and/or any oral-genital contact.
- I. *Sexual Contact:*
1. Any intentional touching of breasts, buttocks, groin, genitals, or other intimate parts.
 2. Touching may be over or under clothing and may include making the victim feel their body.
 3. Sexual contact also includes contact with non-sexual areas of the body for the sexual gratification of the perpetrator (such as with certain paraphilic disorders).
- J. *Non-Contact Sexual Acts:*
1. Observing a person's nudity or sexual activity or allowing a person to observe sexual activity.
 2. Recording, photographing, transmitting, showing, viewing, streaming, or distributing intimate or sexual images, audio recordings, or sexual information of persons; or
 3. Exposing one's genitals or inducing a person to expose their genitals.
 4. Communicating sexual desire or sexually stimulating content toward a person within a power dynamic (boss-employee, doctor-patient, teacher-student, pastor-congregant, adult-child).

- K. *Sexual Assault*: Sexual contact or behavior without victim's consent. Sexual consent is words or overt actions indicating a freely given agreement to a sexual act or contact. Silence or absence of an explicit "no" does not equal consent. Physical submission by a victim - such as "freezing" or "fawning" - does not equal consent. Consent also implies the ability to say no in a mutual relationship. Other circumstances, such as intoxication or unconsciousness, also render a person unable to consent to sexual activity. Deception or manipulation of a person that causes them to be unable to consent. Sexual assault usually refers to criminal acts. Forms of sexual assault include:
1. Penetration of the victim's body, also known as rape.
 2. Attempted rape.
 3. Forcing a victim to perform sexual acts, i.e. oral sex or penetration of perpetrator's body.
 4. Fondling or unwanted sexual touching.
- L. *Harassment*:
1. The legal definition of Sexual Harassment by the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (1980) is "Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:
 - a. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment.
 - b. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual
 - c. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment."
 2. Beyond legal definitions, harassment can also occur in a community, conference, or event when the people involved are not church employees. In alignment with our values, sexual harassment is not restricted to what is defined as sexual harassment under the law. Our church considers any unwanted sexualized behavior or sexualized behavior within a power differential as harassment (including unwanted touch or communication, other unwanted sexual attention, or any objectifying/degrading behavior).
 3. Other common forms of harassment include bullying and acts of discrimination. Harassment can consist of discrimination against a specific group based on age, race, sex, ethnicity, national origin, religion, language, disability, health conditions, socioeconomic status, marital status, domestic status, or parental status.
- M. *Intimate Partner Violence (Domestic Violence)*: A pattern of behavior where a person in or who has been in an intimate relationship uses tactics of control, belittling, isolation, fear, stalking, and/or intimidation to dominate, harm, degrade, or otherwise undermine the worth and agency of their partner. Intimate partner violence can be physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, social, or financial.
- N. *Financial Abuse*: The illegal or improper use of a vulnerable person or his/her financial resources for another's profit or advantage. Some examples of financial abuse may include taking money or property; forging a signature; getting a person to sign a deed, will, or power of attorney through deception; coercion or undue influence; or illegally or improperly adding names to bank accounts or safety deposit boxes. Older people, in particular, are often targeted for financial abuse.
- O. *Stalking*: A pattern of unwanted, fixated, and obsessive behavior that is intrusive and causes fear of violence, alarm, or distress. Stalking is a terrifying reality and is a crime in all fifty states. Examples of stalking include (from The Justice Department's Stalking Victimization Survey):
1. Making unwanted phone calls/texts or sending unwanted messages or emails
 2. Following or spying on the victim
 3. Showing up or waiting at places without a legitimate reason
 4. Leaving unwanted items, presents, or flowers
 5. Posting or spreading false or confidential information about a person or victim on the Internet, in a public place, or by word of mouth.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

Suppose any staff person or church leadership wishes to pursue a consensual romantic relationship with someone under their spiritual care/power hierarchy. In that case, they must contact the Church Council and/or Elder Board for transparency and discernment of appropriate boundaries.

I have read and will support our Safe Church Practices (version 20231130).

(Name)

(Date)

Appendix B

Sample Suspected Abuse or Neglect Report Form

Your Information

Name:

Title/Position:

Address:

Phone & supervisor (when applicable):

Injured Person:

Name & Age:

Parents/Guardians (if a minor):

Suspected Perpetrator

Name & Age:

Description:

Relationship to the suspected victim:

Address or location of suspected abuse:

Date of Incident: _____ / _____ / _____ Time of Incident: _____

Reason for Report/Details of Incident:

Witnesses

Name:

Address:

Name:

Address

Report Submitted to

Name & Phone:

Address:

Date & Time:

Did you notify any authorities regarding suspected abuse/sexual misconduct? Yes ___ No ___

If yes, list the agency name & phone:

Name of contact:

Date of call: ____/____/____ Time of call: _____

Signature: _____

Date of report: ____/____/____ Time of report: _____

PRIVACY DISCLAIMER: This form should not be available to co-workers or other volunteers. Submit the form to your supervisor, law enforcement, or other reporting agency. Note that mandatory reporting laws may apply, and you may be required to report this information to local authorities.

Appendix C Caring for Survivors

Receiving an abuse disclosure is an honor, not a burden; it is a sign of trust. Survivors should have control over sharing their stories. When survivors choose to disclose their stories, they need our utmost support. Survivors often decide to share their abuse story years, even decades, after it occurred. Our church encourages anyone receiving an adult's abuse disclosure to be guided by the following responses:

A. Responses When Listening to an Abuse Story

<u>DO Say</u>	<u>DON'T Say</u>
Thank you for telling me.	Why are you telling me this?
I believe you.	Why didn't you _____ (run/scream/stop him etc.)
I'm so sorry this happened to you. How can I help?	What do you mean when you say he abused you? What exactly did he do?
Take as much time as you need.	You need to forgive and move on.
I am here.	It'll take some time, but you'll get over it.
<i>The following should only be said if the victim indicates these concerns are on his/her mind.</i>	It was so long ago. Why are you still letting your abuser win by hanging on to it? Let it go.
It is okay to be angry.	Try to be strong.
Understandably, you're feeling that way.	Out of tragedies, good things happen.
Your reaction is not an uncommon response.	You're lucky that _____ didn't happen.
You're not going crazy. These are normal responses following abuse.	I know how you feel.
It wasn't your fault.	Perhaps you misunderstood...

A. Support Survivors by the following actions

1. Listen and stay calm.
2. Affirm without judgment.
3. Validate strong emotions (such as anger, betrayal, and confusion).
4. Respect their privacy.
5. Offer personal support and empower their control over the narrative.
6. Encourage them to seek professional trauma-informed medical or mental health care.
 - a. Recognize limitations. Do not offer therapeutic, legal, or other professional advice.
 - b. When appropriate, with careful attention to protecting the privacy of any victims, offer public support and/or oppose harmful narratives toward victims.

B. Avoid Causing Further Harm

1. Do not place any portion of blame for the abuse on the victim, even when the abuse is alleged and not proven.
2. Do not probe for intimate details of the abuse.
3. Do not express disbelief.
4. Do not attempt to silence the victim.
5. Do not encourage noncompliance with the law.
6. Do not express support for the perpetrator.
7. Do not urge meeting with, reconciliation with, or forgiveness of the perpetrator.

Appendix D Potential Indicators of Child Abuse

Consider the possibility of sexual abuse if a child has:

- Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing.
- Difficulty, pain, or blood in the genital area when walking, sitting, or using the bathroom.
- Discharge from the penis or vagina.
- Injuries (e.g., bruises, tearing, bleeding), itching, or swelling in the genital, vaginal, or anal area.
- Urinary tract infections, yeast infections, sexually transmitted diseases.
- Pregnancy.

It is atypical for children to engage in the following sexual behaviors:

- Placing mouth on the sex part.
- Asking others to engage in sexual acts.
- Trying to have intercourse or imitating intercourse.
- Undressing others, especially if done forcefully.
- Imitating sexual positions with dolls.
- Inserting an object into the vagina or anus, especially if the child continues to do so despite pain.
- Manually stimulating or having oral or genital contact with pets.
- Making sexual sounds.
- Inserting tongue in the mouth when kissing.

Consider the possibility of physical abuse if you notice:

- Frequent injuries (e.g., bruises, cuts, fractures, burns).
- Especially if the child is unable to provide an adequate explanation of the cause of injury.
- These injuries may appear in distinctive patterns such as grab marks, human bite marks, cigarette burns, or impressions of other instruments.
- Pay particular attention to injuries on both sides of the head or body, as accidental injuries typically only affect one side of the body.

Consider the possibility of neglect if a child:

- Is malnourished, listless, or tired?
- Begs, steals, or hoards food or complains frequently of hunger.
- It is consistently dirty or has severe body odor.
- Lacks sufficient clothing for the weather.
- Untreated illness, injuries, health (e.g., unfilled cavities), or educational needs.
- Broken or missing eyeglasses, hearing aids, or other necessary aids or equipment.
- Has an untreated need for glasses, dental care, or additional medical attention.
- Stays at school outside of school hours.
- Frequently absent or significant academic struggles.
- Is inappropriately left unsupervised.
- Abuses alcohol or other drugs.

Appendix E

Ministry for Known Sex Offenders or Abusers

Consultants to Evana Network from GRACE (Godly Response to Abuse in Christian Environments) have advised churches to avoid integrating known sex offenders into worship gatherings and general church events. This caution is due primarily to churches not doing their due diligence in vetting individuals, training workers, and implementing protective and accountability measures. Should a church integrate known offenders, we encourage churches to demonstrate high attention to safeguarding the vulnerable.

Any church that feels called to engage in this ministry should work with specialists. There must be a high standard of accountability for these individuals, as well as assessments and clear safeguards put in place for the benefit of everyone. These individuals may benefit by being given referrals to churches with existing programs or churches developing a program with experts in the abuse field.

Appendix F

Sample Social Media Policy

(This sample policy is from shrm.org and may be modified for use in churches/non-profits.)

At [Employer], we understand that social media can be a fun and rewarding way to share your life and opinions with family, friends, and co-workers worldwide. However, using social media also presents certain risks and carries with it specific responsibilities. To assist you in making responsible decisions about your use of social media, we have established these guidelines for the appropriate use of social media.

This policy applies to all associates who work for [Employer]. Managers and supervisors should use the supplemental Social Media Management Guidelines for additional guidance in administering the policy.

Guidelines

In the rapidly expanding world of electronic communication, "social media" can mean many things. Social media includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to your own or someone else's weblog or blog, journal or diary, personal website, social networking or affinity website, web bulletin board or a chat room, whether associated or affiliated with [Employer], as well as any other form of electronic communication.

The same principles and guidelines in [Employer] policies and three fundamental beliefs apply to your online activities. Ultimately, you are solely responsible for what you post online. Before creating online content, consider some of the risks and rewards involved. Keep in mind that any of your conduct that adversely affects your job performance, the performance of fellow associates, or otherwise adversely affects members, customers, suppliers, or people who work on behalf of [Employer] or [Employer's] legitimate business interests may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Know and follow the rules

Carefully read these guidelines, the [Employer] Statement of Ethics Policy, the [Employer] Information Policy, and the Discrimination & Harassment Prevention Policy, and ensure your postings are consistent with these policies. Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, threats of violence, or similar indecent or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may subject you to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Be respectful

Always be fair and courteous to fellow associates, customers, members, suppliers, or people who work on behalf of [Employer]. Also, remember that you are more likely to resolve work-related complaints by speaking directly with your co-workers or utilizing our Open Door Policy than by posting complaints to a social media outlet. Nevertheless, if you decide to post complaints or criticism, avoid using statements, photographs, video, or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening, intimidating, or disparaging to customers, members, associates, or suppliers or that might constitute harassment or bullying. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment based on race, sex, disability, religion, or any other status protected by law or company policy.

Be honest and accurate

Make sure you are always honest and accurate when posting information or news, and correct it quickly if you make a mistake. Be open about any previous posts you have altered. Remember that the Internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. Never post any information or rumors that you know to be false about [Employer], fellow associates, members, customers, suppliers, people working on behalf of [Employer], or competitors.

Post only appropriate and respectful content

Maintain the confidentiality of [Employer] trade secrets and private or confidential information. Trade secrets may include information regarding systems, processes, products, know-how, and technology development. Do not post internal reports, policies, procedures, or other internal business-related confidential communications.

Do not create a link from your blog, website, or other social networking site to a [Employer] website without identifying yourself as a [Employer] associate.

Express only your personal opinions. Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for [Employer]. If [Employer] is a subject of the content you are creating, be clear and open about the fact that you are an associate and make it clear that your views do not represent those of [Employer], fellow associates, members, customers, suppliers, or people working on behalf of [Employer]. If you publish a blog or post online related to your work or subjects associated with [Employer], make it clear that you are not speaking on behalf of [Employer]. It is best to include a disclaimer such as "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of [Employer]."

Using social media at work

Refrain from using social media while on work time or equipment we provide unless it is work-related as authorized by your manager or consistent with our Equipment Policy. Do not use [Employer] email addresses to register on social networks, blogs, or other online tools utilized for personal use.

Retaliation is prohibited

[Employer] prohibits taking adverse action against any associate for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or cooperating in an investigation. Any associate who retaliates against another associate for reporting a possible departure from this policy or cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action, including termination.

Media contacts

Associates should not speak to the media on [Employer's] behalf without contacting [the appropriate designated person}. All media inquiries should be directed to the same contact.

For more information

Please contact your church board chair or pastor if you have questions or need further guidance.