



Healthy Boundaries

Shenandoah Presbytery



Introductions

Open with prayer

Scripture John 10: 7-10

Topics Covered:

Healthy Boundaries
Abuse/Misconduct
Prevention
Responding to an
Allegation



Shenandoah Presbytery is a covenant body where:

CONGREGATIONS are empowered to be centers for mission;

PEOPLE OF GOD are equipped to be disciples of Christ in a challenging world;

CHURCH LEADERS and members are nurtured & strengthened for service;

OPEN COMMUNICATION and information are used constructively & creatively to keep us connected.



Goals of Training

1. To increase awareness of the need for healthy and appropriate boundaries in church relationships



Goals of Training

2. To know the impact of appropriate vs. inappropriate boundaries in promoting effective ministry and teaching



Goals of Training

3. To learn guidelines, suggestions, and policy ideas for developing appropriate boundaries



Goals of Training

Even though mandatory...

All are welcome here!

Hostages

- Cynics
- Tourists
- Explorers
- Survivors

- Ministers

- Elders

- Members/Volunteers



As we begin...

- Respect for all
- Respect confidentiality
- Use wisdom (and good boundaries!) when choosing to share





Rev. Luis A. Carriere
Everitt Free Methodist Church

Boundaries...what do you think?

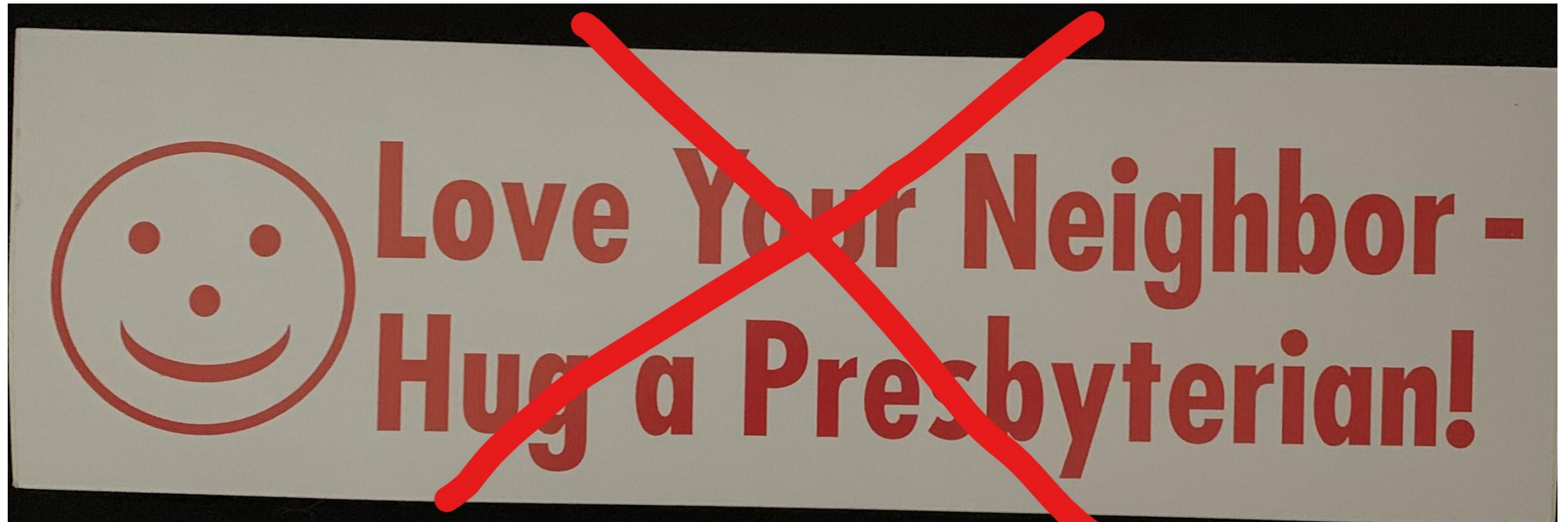
- A gift?
- An act of grace?
- Create safety?
- As developmental milestone?
- Rude?
- Withholding?
- Barrier to relationships?
- Culturally shaped?

???



**Love Your Neighbor -
Hug a Presbyterian!**

Boundaries? Consent? Cultural Practice?



Boundaries
are the distance
at which I can
love you and me
simultaneously.

Book of Order G-2.0104a

- “To those called to exercise special functions in the church—deacons, ruling elders, and Ministers of Word and Sacrament...Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel in the church and in the world.”
- Healthy boundaries helps us in this manner of life.

Nature of Boundaries

A fence defines the boundary where one area of land ends and another begins

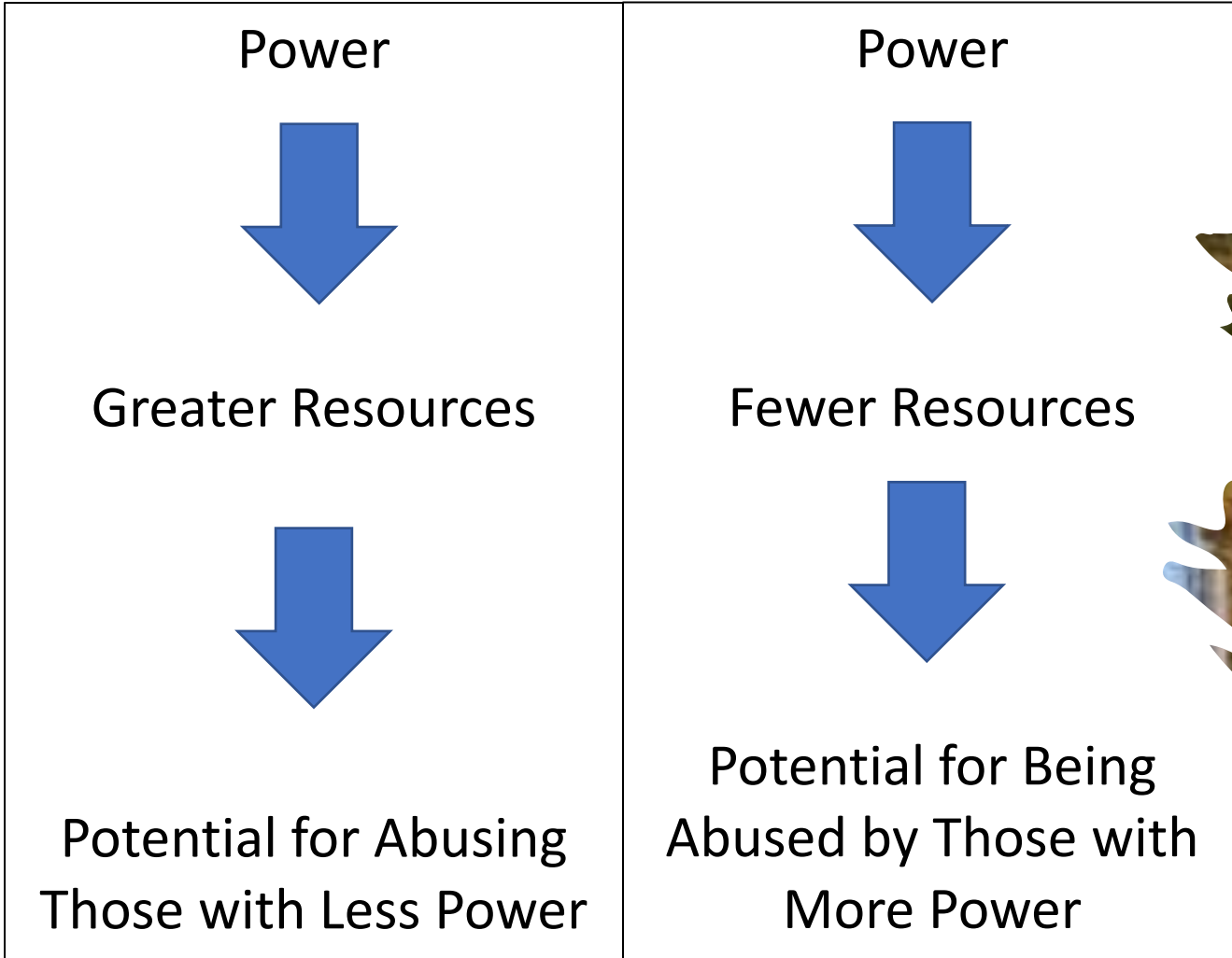
Boundaries in ministry relationships define the separateness between the pastoral leader and the congregant

↓
more power

↓
less power



Nature of Boundaries



Nature of Boundaries

What boundaries are:

1. They help us maintain clear professional relationships
2. They are guidelines (usually unwritten) that help us know when and when not to participate in a given activity, especially if we have more power
3. They are not intended to shackle us but to free us in our work as spiritual leaders
4. They help us keep perspective when people's problems seem overwhelming
5. They signal to others that it is safe to trust us
6. They protect from abuses of power



Nature of Boundaries

What boundaries are NOT:

1. They are NOT clear rules about where and when we can be friendly
2. They are NOT blocks to authenticity and friendliness

Boundaries are like a fence, not the Berlin Wall



Boundary Crossing

VS

Boundary Violation

Ministry sometimes involves boundary crossing but never requires a boundary violation



Boundary Crossing
vs
Boundary Violation

Bottom Line:

Is this in the best interests of
the congregant
and the congregation?



Sexual Misconduct

It is misconduct when any person in a ministerial role of leadership or pastoral counseling engages in sexual contact or sexualized behavior with a congregant, client, employee, student, staff member, etc. of any age in a professional, pastoral relationship.



Ethical Analysis

When a pastoral leader engages in sexualized behavior with a congregant, client, employee, student, or staff member:

1. It is a violation of role
2. It is a misuse of authority and power
3. It is taking advantage of vulnerability
4. It is an absence of meaningful consent
5. It is damaging to the church



Meaningful Consent

Is two adults who are able to consent to the relationship.

NOT applicable in employer/employee, pastoral leader/congregation members, etc., due to imbalance of power



Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is unwanted sexual activity, with perpetrators using force, making threats or taking advantage of victims not able to give consent. Most victims and perpetrators know each other. Immediate reactions to sexual abuse include shock, fear or disbelief.

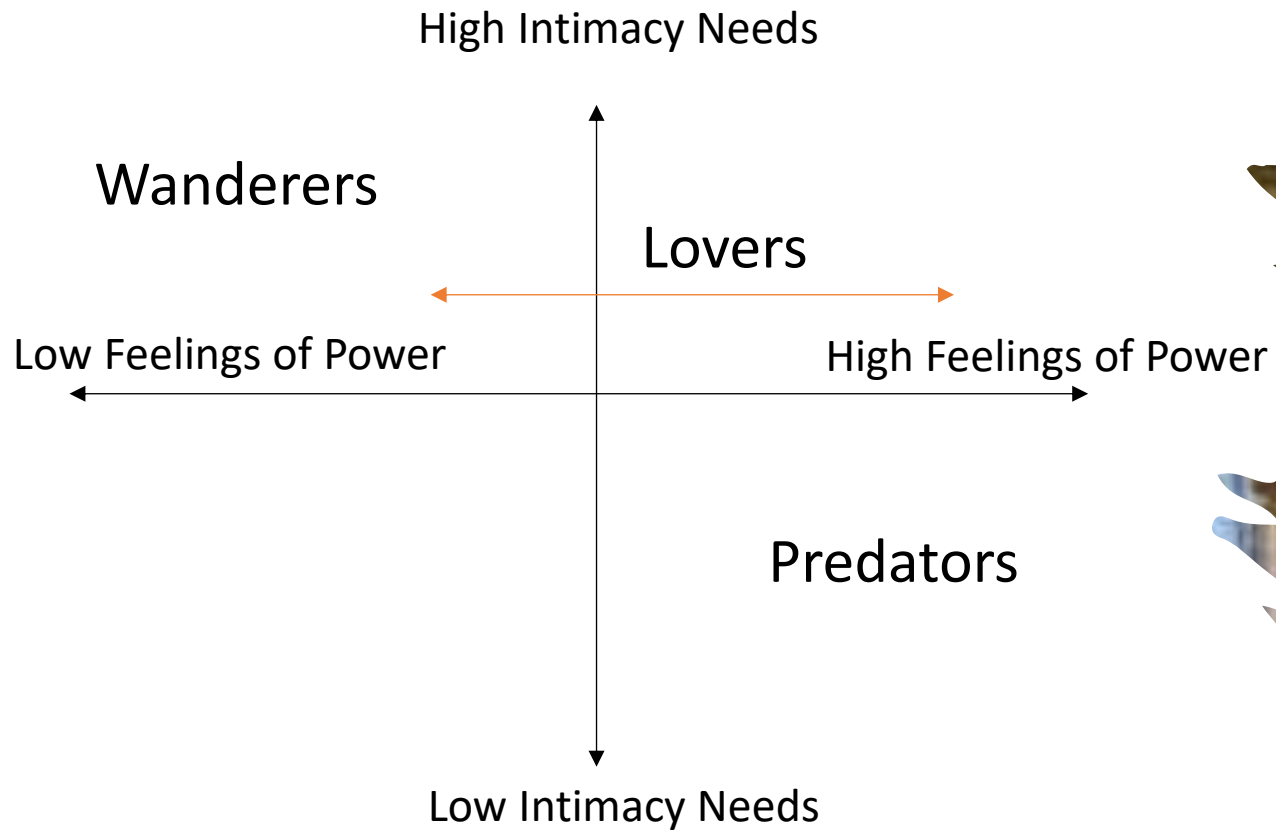


Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is behavior characterized by the making of unwelcome and inappropriate sexual remarks or physical advances in a workplace or other professional or social situation



Predators, Wanderers, and Lovers



Predators, Wanderers, and Lovers

Prevention and healthy boundaries
can stop many wanderers and
lovers, but not predators

When prevention fails, intervention
is necessary. This is why we have
policies and procedures.



Book of Order 2023-2025

- G-3.0106 All councils shall adopt and implement the following policies: a sexual misconduct policy, a harassment policy, a child and youth protection policy, and an antiracism policy.
- Each Council's policy shall include requirements for boundary training which includes the topic of sexual misconduct, and child sexual abuse prevention training for its members at least every thirty-six months.



Dating,
Friendships,
Dual
Relationships,
and Gifts



Dating

Pastoral leaders who are single must often decide whether to date someone in their congregation – it is where they spend a lot of time with people with shared values and commitments. Dating a congregant creates many issues...



Dating

If you find yourself near or in a dating relationship with a congregant:

1. You cannot be their spiritual leader and have romantic involvement. If you pursue a dating relationship, one of you will need to find another church.



Dating

If you find yourself near or in a dating relationships with a congregant:

2. Tell the presbytery staff! NOTE: IF YOUR PASTOR COMES WITH SPOUSE/FAMILY, THEN THINK ABOUT POSSIBLE CONFLICT OF INTEREST AREAS/ie, is it appropriate for them to serve on Session, be employed by the church, etc.?



Friends

Having friends among the people you lead and serve with is natural but also has complications. There is a difference between being friendly and being a close friend who shares confidences. Develop close friendships elsewhere to avoid issues...



Friends

If you find yourself the close friend or family of a congregant, consider the following:

1. Discuss the difficulties of being both a spiritual leader and a friend/family.
2. Beloved Former Pastors-BFPs
when a pastor leaves, the pastoral relationship ends.

See Shenandoah Presbytery's Departing Minister Covenant



Dual Relationships

A dual relationship is one in which you might have more than one role such as being the patient of a congregant.
Sometimes, this is unavoidable...



Dual Relationships

Tips for dual relationships:

1. Minimize the number of them
2. Have a clear understanding about what you expect from each other
3. Learn to set boundaries (i.e., don't talk "church talk" while in the barber's chair, if the barber is also a member). Think about any policies Session might have about engaging in business with members (plumbing, contractors, etc.)
4. If problems develop, reach out to presbytery



Gifts

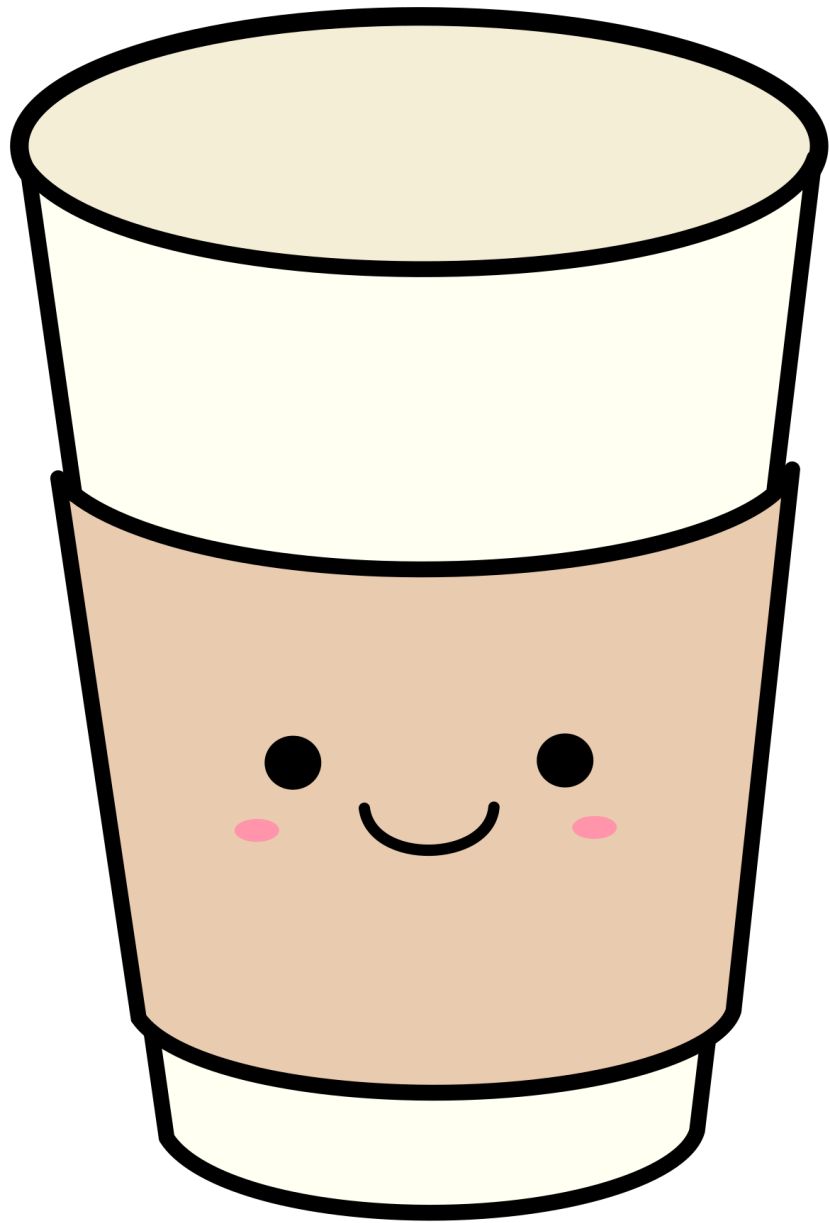
Where is the line between what is appropriate to accept and what is not appropriate?

1. Let common sense guide you
2. Be certain you are not expected to do anything in return
3. Say thank you!
4. Consider setting a dollar limit
5. Think beforehand about a gracious way to decline inappropriate gifts- this applies to Sessions, too! Any gift/endowment/special fund with restrictions attached needs discussion, and may be (gratefully) declined by Session



Discussion:
Case Studies
Breakout Rooms





Questions?

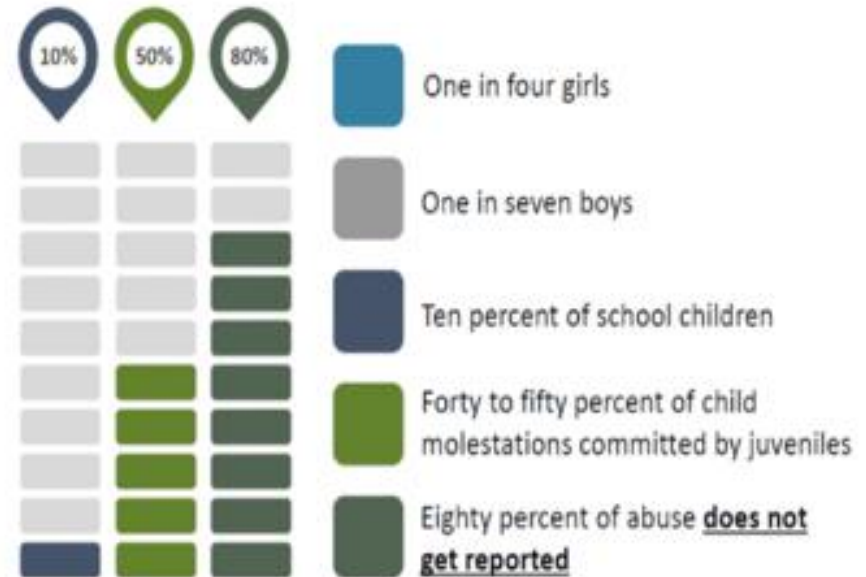
Break Time

Abuse and Misconduct Prevention



Policies and Procedures

Data regarding Sexual Abuse



Data regarding Abuse and Misconduct at Church

- OGA PC(USA) reports 50 allegations of clergy misconduct annually.
- Mark Tammen, PC(USA)'s polity guidance trainer, reports that of 90 cases over a 5 year period, 2 were false allegations.¹
- Abuse/Misconduct may be perpetrated by pastoral leaders/REs/Deacons/Youth leaders/Sunday School teachers/youth to youth
- In 2015 the first national survey of adult survivors of clergy perpetrated sexual abuse was conducted (March-May 2015). 280 survivors participated in the study.²
- • 50% Agree or Strongly Agree that their experience with the church after the abuse negatively affected their relationship with God
- • 80% Agree or Strongly Agree that their experience with the church after the abuse negatively affected their spiritual life

PCUSA RESOURCES

- <https://pcusa.org/resources/legal/creating-safe-ministries>

Given what we know,

- How do we PREVENT abuse and misconduct?
- Scripture
- Policies-
 - Include practical applications-
 - Ratios/windows/clear line of sight
 - Background checks/reference checks/training
 - Annual review of policies
- Culture of health/no tolerance for harm
- Shared by all-
 - Predators will not stay if they know you have prevention steps

Policy needs to be created and known

- BEFORE something happens-
- You cannot scramble to make things up in the heat of the moment-



Mandated Reporting

- G-4.0302 Mandatory Reporting
- Any member of this church engaged in ordered ministry and any certified Christian educator employed by this church or its congregations, **shall** report to ecclesiastical and civil legal authorities knowledge of harm, or the risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or an adult who lacks mental capacity when (1) such information is gained outside of a confidential communication as defined in G-4.0301, (2) she or he is not bound by an obligation of privileged communication under law, or (3) she or he reasonably believes that there is risk of future physical harm or abuse.

Abuse Hot Line Numbers

- VA:
 - Child Abuse:
 - 804 786-8536
 - Elder Abuse:
 - 1-888-832-3858
- WV:
 - Child Abuse:
 - 1-800-352-6513
 - Elder Abuse:
 - 1-800-352-6513

BOO D-7.0201a

- No written allegation shall be filed later than five years from the time the alleged offense was discovered
- **Except** in cases of sexual abuse of another person as defined in D-7.0901, in which case the five year time limit **shall not** apply.
- There is also **no time limit** to file an allegation that a person who knew or reasonably should have known of the reasonable risk of sexual abuse of another as defined in D-7.0901 failed to take reasonable steps to minimize the risk.

Good Samaritan Law

- Every state has a Good Samaritan clause- if you make a report of abuse in good faith, you cannot be charge civilly or criminally

Questions? Comments? Break time?



Policies and Procedures- Goals

- To prevent misconduct
- To address allegation of misconduct with a fair process
- If allegations are founded, to repair the breach of trust that the misconduct created and to make justice

- To offer resources for healing to the victim(s)
- To hold the abuser accountable
- To offer resources for healing to the congregation

Theological and Biblical Convictions

- Truth-telling John 8:32
- Acknowledging the victim with compassion- to “suffer with”
 - 1 Cor 12:26
- Protecting the Vulnerable- see “hospitality code”
- Accountability Luke 17: 2
 - 2 Samuel 12: 1-7
- Restitution Luke 19: 1-12
- Vindication Luke 18: 1-
 - Not revenge, but to be set free

All Policies Should Have These Components:

Training and
Education

Prevention of
Misconduct
and Abuse

Response to
an Allegation

#1 Training and Education

Who will you train?

Who will do the training?

How often will you train?

How will you communicate this to the congregation?



#2 Prevention of Misconduct and Abuse

Not only behavior, but also speech, social media, etc.

Physical factors- doors/windows/records of meetings, etc.

The fact of having these policies, and making them known to the congregation reduces risk of abuse and misconduct

Best Practices for Prevention

- Ratios- 2:1 (at least 2 adults, preferably not related/married) to youth/others
- If that is not possible: 1:2 (1 adult with MORE than 1 youth/other)
- Clear sight lines
- Open doors/windows in doors
- Volunteers? At least 6 months, preferably background checked/reference checked
- Signed affidavits of all volunteers and staff agreeing to abide by your church's policies
- Sharing of practices and policies with congregation

Social Media Policy

- Need to have a social media component in your policies
- Biblical basis of respect for all
 - Includes who will be copied on texts/emails, etc.
 - Some congregations set up group text options-
 - Applies to adults as well as youth
 - Youth misconduct a growing phenomenon in social media





- If you do NOT yet have these policies, The Presbytery is available to help.
- While it is helpful to see policies other churches and Sessions have developed/adopted,
- PLEASE take the time to write your own- don't just rubber stamp somebody else's boiler plate, as it should fit your unique situation
- Talk with your insurance carrier.
- If you already have policies, review/update annually

If there is an
allegation



#3 Response to an Allegation

What to do?

- Have a clear process- and follow it
- Acting for justice
- Need to have policy in place BEFORE an allegation/event happens
- Notify Presbytery (through Stated Clerk) AND your insurance agency



Steps to take immediately:

An allegation is an allegation-

and is taken seriously
but it is, at this point, an allegation

But your policy may include, at this
point:

separation of alleged and allegedee,
administrative leave,
stepping down from Session/youth
group, Sunday School, etc.

Clarity in your policy

- Who receives allegations?
 - Does the congregation know who to contact/report this?
 - Does the Session?
 - How do they know who to contact? How is this information shared?
- What happens next?

When you receive a verbal report of an allegation

- Care for the person making the allegation
- The allegation is received with trust and confidentiality
- In order to take ecclesial (church) disciplinary action, there must be a **written complaint-**
- D-7.0102
- “The disciplinary process begins when a written statement alleging that an active member of a congregation or a minister of Word and Sacrament of the Presbyterian Church (USA) has committed an offense to the clerk of Session or the stated clerk of the presbytery having jurisdiction over the member.”
- **NOTE:** if allegation is regarding abuse of a minor, still need to notify civil authorities/child abuse hotline (and also Presbytery)

If the allegation is against the pastoral leader:

- Call the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery
- Notify your insurance carrier
- Have in your policy information about administrative leave for the pastoral leader:
 - And how that will end, if the matter is:
 - Substantiated
 - unsubstantiated

If the allegation is against a staff/volunteer/member:

- Notify the Session that an allegation has been made (no names yet)
 - Follow the procedures in your policy
 - Contact the Presbytery for help
 - Notify your insurance carrier
- Have in your policy information about separation of that person until investigation is concluded:
I.e., if Sunday School teacher, no longer can teach
If youth leader, no longer allowed with you- including social media, etc.
until the allegation is substantiated or resolved

If there is an allegation:

- You will need to inform the congregation:
- “The Session has received a written allegation regarding an offense. The Session is following the procedure outlined in our policies. Because this is an allegation, and because we want to preserve the confidentiality of all involved, we will not be naming names. We pray for, and ask for your prayers for, all involved.”
- Contact the Presbytery and your insurance carrier.
- Always have copies of your policies available and known.
- Healthy congregations can keep confidentiality, but do NOT have secrets.




Book of Order

- F-1.0301 “The Church is to be a community of faith, entrusting itself to God alone, even at the risk of losing its life.”
-

After...

- Denial/guilt/anger/Grief/loss
- Your congregation might experience all of these feelings and reactions
- It is important to stress what is known and shared, and not gossip/hear say/parking lot or email conversations
- Presbytery can help in this process-
- Which might include some or all of these steps-
- Lament, confession, prayers for wholeness and healing
- The Book of Common Worship Pastoral Edition has liturgies and services for individual and congregational use



Questions to ask about your policy

- Is it clear, fair and consistent with your mission and theology?
 - Is it fair to all: those who make allegations, those against whom allegations have been made, survivors of misconduct?
 - Does it have the capacity to hold perpetrators accountable?
 - How do you deal with allegations that are found to be sustained?
 - Those that are found to be false? What is the process for exoneration?
 - What is the process for sharing communication
 - around these issues?
 - When an allegation arises?
-

What is the real objective
of your policy?

- Is it to protect the institution?

- Or is it about justice making for all involved-
- Person who makes the allegation
- Person against whom the allegation is made
- The faith community


Policy should clearly state the range of behavior you are attempting to prevent

This

- Sample: “It is clergy misconduct when any person in a ministerial role of leadership (TE, RE, Deacon, or lay) engages in sexual conduct or sexualized behavior with a congregant, client, employees, staff member, etc., (child, youth or adult) in a professional relationship.”

Instead of this

- “conduct unbecoming the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament”



Policy review

- How old is the policy?
 - Do you have a regular, set time for review- and who does this work?
 - Session? Sub-group? Outside group?
 - What language/BOO citations need to be updated?
 - How are people being trained? Where are records kept/for how long/by whom?
-

Book of Order D-1.0101

Church discipline is the church's exercise of authority given by Christ, both in the direction of guidance, control, and nurture of its members and in the direction of constructive criticism of offenders.

The church's disciplinary process exists not as a substitute for the secular judicial system, but to do what the secular judicial system cannot do.

The purpose of discipline is to honor God by making clear the significance of membership in the body of Christ;

to preserve the purity of the church by nourishing the individual within the life of the believing community;

to achieve justice and compassion for all participants involved;

to correct or restrain wrongdoing in order to bring members to repentance and restoration;

to uphold the dignity of those who have been harmed by disciplinary offenses;

to restore the unity of the church by removing the causes of discord and division;

and to secure the just, speedy, and economical determination of proceedings.

In all respects, all participants are to be accorded procedural safeguards and due process,

and it is the intention of these rules so to provide.

Boundaries and Policies are NOT a burden

- Healthy Boundaries = Healthy Church
- Healthy Churches have Healthy Boundaries!





Call to Health
THE BOARD OF PENSIONS

Next Boundary Training...?

- EVERY 36 MONTHS-
- You have received a certificate
- Put the date on it, and then put the date of when you are next due-

