

**Script for Healthy Boundaries Training 2024**

**NOTE: IN ORDER TO DO THIS TRAINING, YOU WILL NEED A COMPUTER ON WHICH TO PLAY THE POWERPOINT, AND A WAY FOR THE GROUP TO VIEW IT- either from a tv or with a projector, hooked to the laptop/PowerPoint. YOU WILL ALSO NEED AN INTERNET CONNECTION TO BE ABLE TO PLAY THE MOVIE CLIP ON SLIDE 10.**

**IF THAT IS NOT A POSSIBILITY FOR YOUR SESSION, PLEASE CONTACT NANCY MEEHAN YAO AND WE WILL WORK SOMETHING OUT.**

**ALSO PLEASE HAVE COPIES OF THE CASE STUDY DOCUMENT PRINTED OUT FOR PEOPLE TO SEE AND DISCUSS, and DISTRIBUTED TO THEM PRIOR TO THIS TRAINING, SO THEY HAD TIME TO READ THROUGH ALL THE CASE STUDIES**

**Slide 1 Healthy Boundaries**

**Slide 2 Introduction**

Open with Prayer, read John 10: 7-10

As followers of Jesus, and leaders in our congregations, we are called to be Good Shepherds of our flocks, and so we are doing this training to know how to protect our people, prevent abuse and misconduct, and preserve and create peace and justice for all involved.

NOTE: per our Book of Order, all congregations MUST have both a Child and Youth Abuse Prevention Policy, and a Sexual Misconduct Prevention Policy. These policies MUST 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. (Book of Order G-3.0106)

This means that all Elders in active service on the Session are required to do this training, every 36 months. Your policy might require, (but if it doesn't, it is a good idea to) have youth volunteers/Sunday School teachers, and others take this training as well.

The more people who know and have healthy boundaries, the healthier the congregation will be.

**Slide 3 Topics Covered:**

Healthy Boundaries- what are they? What are they not?

Abuse/Misconduct Prevention

Responding to an Allegation

**Slide 4 Shenandoah Presbytery is:**

**Slide 5 Goals of Training**

**Slide 6 Goals of training 2**

**Slide 7 Goals of training 3**

**Slide 8 Goals of Training**

Whether you are here because you have to be, or because you want to learn more about creating a healthy congregation, welcome!

**NOTE:** some of the topics we will discuss today might bring up some feelings for some people. If you need to take a break/step out/etc., you are welcome to do so. But if you are unable to complete this training today, you will need to do it again.

Those who complete today's training will receive a certificate stating that they have done so.

**Clerk of Session:** please keep a list of who has done the training, with the date.

**Slide 9** As we begin: RESPECT

**Slide 10** video- click on arrow in middle to get video to start- NOTE: need internet for this to play

**Slide 11** Boundaries- what do you think?

Discuss: are they a gift? A burden? Do they get in the way of relationships?

Are they rude? Withholding? Culturally shaped?

What is our church culture like regarding boundaries?

**Slide 12** old bumper sticker found at the Presbytery office-

What is/might be wrong with this?

**Slide 13** where are the boundaries? Where is asking for consent?

Note: this does not mean you cannot hug anybody, ever. BUT ask if they would like a hug—allow people to have consent over their own bodies

**Slide 14** Book of Order-

Healthy Boundaries help us in this manner of life and the demonstration of the Gospel.

**Slide 15** This from the book The Giving Tree- a children's book, in which the little boy/man asks and asks, and the tree gives and gives, until she is only a stump, and even then she gives...some people want to rewrite that story with healthier boundaries for both the tree and the boy

**Slide 16** The Nature of Boundaries-

Boundaries are like a fence- and in congregations, the pastor, by the nature of our structure, has more power, and others have less – (even if it feels like Mrs. Johnson, who has been there since God made dirt, holds all the power in the congregation)

**Slide 17**

People with More power/greater resources have more potential for abusing others

People with less power/resources more potential for being abused

**Slide 18** The Nature of Boundaries- what boundaries ARE.

**Slide 19** The Nature of Boundaries- What boundaries are NOT.

More like a fence than a solid wall-

Or, more like a semipermeable membrane or filter- some things can pass through, but not all

**Slide 20** Boundary Crossing v Boundary Violation

Sometimes, in ministry (and that's all of us- Ministers, Elders, Deacons, SS and Youth leaders), we might have to cross a boundary- say, visiting somebody in the hospital who is in their bed/not wearing their usual clothes. This is a boundary CROSSING, because the ministry moment is happening where the person is at that moment.

IF, however, you are spending time with congregation members in their bed/pjs, and it is NOT a ministry related event, and you do NOT have another elder/Minister with you, then that would be a boundary VIOLATION- see the difference?

**Slide 21** You always have to ask yourself the question:

Is this in the best interest of the congregation?

ALL abuse, at heart, whether financial, emotional, physical or sexual, is about someone's meeting their own personal needs, not the needs of another.

**Slide 22 DEFINITIONS**

Sexual Misconduct

**Slide 23** Ethical Analysis of Sexual Misconduct

**Slide 24 Meaningful Consent-**

2 adults who are able to consent to the intimate contact/relationship. An employer/employee, pastor/congregation member, youth leader/youth can NOT, by definition of the relationship, have meaningful consent, due to the inherent power difference in those roles.

**Slide 24** Sexual Abuse

**Slide 26** Sexual Harassment

**Slide 27** Predators/Wanderers/Lovers- 3 types of people who are perpetrators in Misconduct/Abuse

**Slide 28** Predators/Wanderers/Lovers

**Slide 29** What our Book of Order says.

**Slide 30** Dating/friendships/dual relationships/Gifts.

**Slide 31** Dating-

In the "old days" it was pretty common for a single male pastor (they were always male) to date and marry a member of their congregation. This is a boundary violation on a number of levels. It is impossible to have meaningful consent between a pastor and a congregation member in an intimate relationship.

If the relationship is to continue, ONE of them will need to find a new worshipping community.

**Slide 32** Dating**Slide 33** Dating**Slide 34** Friends and Healthy Boundaries

**Slide 35** Friends and Family - Many of us serve (as Ministers, CREs, Elders, Deacons, SS teachers) in congregations in which we have family and/or friends.

We like to say that we are a “friendly” congregation. But if our relationships with friends or family members gets in the way of your ministry as Elder/Deacon/Pastor/Youth or SS leader, then it is time to think about what healthy boundaries would look like in those relationships, and how you can create them, and what conversations you will need to have.

**Beloved Former Pastors:** “BFPs.” When a pastor leaves a congregation, that person is no longer your pastor. While you might still consider them a friend, and may send Christmas cards, etc, that pastoral relationship has ended.

This does NOT mean that you can no longer speak to your former pastor, but it does mean that any pastoral relationship/action will happen through your new pastor. See Shenandoah Presbytery’s Departing Minister Policy

<https://shenpres.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/81/2019/11/Departing-Minister-Policy.pdf>

**Slide 36** Dual relationships- where someone from the congregation is also your: barber/dentist/car repairman-

This doesn’t mean you cannot have these relationships, but it does mean we have to have good boundaries-

It also is a reminder that healthy churches keep confidences, but do not have secrets. It is absolutely appropriate that some things remain confidential, but that other things can be openly known and discussed.

**Slide 37** Dual relationships

**Slide 38 Gifts** - is there a limit on gifts? Does the Session HAVE TO accept every gift, even if it does not meet the needs/mission of the congregation?

Is there a limit on \$ amounts for gifts to individuals? Are there any people in your congregation who feel their gifts to the church entitle them to more sway/influence in decisions?

**Slide 39** Case Studies-

Break out into small groups (2-4 people, depending upon the size of the group) and choose a case study to read/discuss, and then share with the larger group.

**Slide 40** Any questions?**BREAK TIME****Slide 41** Policies and Procedures for Abuse and Misconduct Prevention

**Slide 42 Data-**

Please note that it is estimated that nearly 80% of abuse does NOT get reported, so these #s are low compared to actual abuse.

Given that knowledge, it is statistically very likely that your congregation has survivors of abuse and misconduct. It is also likely that you might have a perpetrator of abuse/misconduct in your congregation.

**Slide 43 NOTE** how FEW false allegations were received.

We often hear stories about “oh, that one was just a troublemaker, stirring up trouble,” but this data doesn’t show that about those who report abuse/misconduct.

**Slide 44 Resources** from the PCUSA**Slide 45** How do we PREVENT abuse and misconduct?

**Slide 46** YOU NEED TO HAVE A POLICY BEFORE ANYTHING HAPPENS, because you cannot react appropriately if you do not know, ahead of time, what to do- think about a fire drill. We don’t ever want to experience a fire, but we do need to know, ahead of time, where the exits are and how to evacuate safely.

**Slide 47** These policies are **required**: if you do not have them, please contact the Presbytery office for help/resources.

**Slide 48 MANDATED REPORTING-** This means that all who are ordained: Ministers, CREs, Elders and Deacons (whether or not they are in active service on the Session/Board of Deacons) are **REQUIRED** to report any abuse or reasonable suspicion of abuse.

Every state has an 1-800 child abuse reporting number

If the abuse is against an elderly person, there are elder abuse numbers as well.

**Slide 49** We do not have the “seal of the confessional,” as other faith traditions do-

**Slide 50** There is no statute of limitations for reporting sexual abuse. You also need to know if you have knowledge of abuse/reasonably should have known of the abuse and FAIL to report, there is no statute of limitations on charging you (through the church) with the failure to do so, and church disciplinary action may be taken against you.

**Slide 51** Abuse hotline #s

**Slide 52 The** Good Samaritan Law- every state has one, which says, in essence, if you made a report of abuse in good faith, then you cannot be held liable in either civil or criminal courts, if the report turns out not to be sustained.

NOTE: this does not apply if you intentionally make a false report of abuse

**Slide 53** What are policies and procedures designed to do?**Slide 54** Based on Scripture

**Slide 55** 3 components should be included in your policy

**Slide 56** #1 Training and Education- who? How often? Communicate to congregation-

Note: it is important to let the congregation know about the policies, and that people are being trained in them = a healthier congregation. If you want families with children, they will want to know their children are safe while at church/youth group, etc.

**Slide 57** Prevention- not only policies, but physical – doors/windows/ratios

**Slide 58** Best Practices-

**Slide 59** Social Media Policy- if you do not have a social media policy, you need to create one.

It should replicate online what is practiced in person: respect for all, including an adult/family member in any electronic communication with youth, never any 1:1 communication with minors- group text/emails are best

**Slide 60 BREAK TIME** (if needed)

**Slide 61** WHEN THERE IS AN ALLEGATION OF ABUSE OR MISCONDUCT

(again you need to have policies already in place- and everyone needs to know them- Session/Deacons/Youth and SS volunteers/staff and congregation- before anything happens, so you can respond appropriately) (think: we have fire drills so we know how to respond in an emergency, even when we hope we never have to evacuate)

**Slide 62** Steps to take immediately-

REMEMBER – we receive a report with respect, but we also hold it is an allegation, not a definitive judgement, and as confidential, certainly not as gossip.

**Slide 63** Policy should involve care for all- the one making the allegation, the one against whom the allegation is made, and the whole congregation (and maybe even larger community)

**Slide 64** Procedures-

**Slide 65** If you Receive a **verbal** report-

In our polity, there must be a **written report** in order to take ecclesial (church) action and discipline.

Often, people are not comfortable with making a written complaint.

Complaints should come to the Session through a “response team,” a small group of people who are the ones who will receive the complaint, and bring it to the Clerk of Session, and the rest of the Session. Include in your policy have where/how confidential complaints/reports will be stored, for how long, and who will have access to them.

Again, healthy churches can keep confidences, but do not have secrets.

**Slide 66** If the allegation is against the pastoral leader- contact the Presbytery.

**Slide 67** notify your insurance carrier and check with your policy about whether that person against whom the allegation is made will receive a paid, or unpaid, leave of absence.

**Slide 68 allegation** against a staff/member/volunteer- what does your policy say?

**Slide 69** Informing the congregation if an allegation is made:

Again, note how this preserves confidentiality yet informs the congregation

**Slide 70 Book** of Order-

Taking these steps might seem risky, we often feel like we don't want to say anything/stir up trouble- but the Gospel of Jesus Christ compels us to take these steps for the health of our church.

**Slide 71** How do your protection policies align with your church's mission statement?

Should review your policies annually-

**Slide 72 What** is the real objective of your policy? Is it justice and healing, or protecting the assets of the church? Is it about keeping quiet, or letting the sunlight of the Gospel prevail?

**Slide 73** Questions to ask when reviewing your policy

**Slide 74** Clear language in your policy.

**Slide 75** Again, review- when? Who?

**Slide 76** Church discipline is for the BUILDING UP of the church, and health and restoration for all.

**Slide 77** Healthy Boundaries are a gift, and good policies: prepare, prevent and protect.

**Slide 78** Anyone who is enrolled in the PCUSA's Call to Health can get 50 points for doing this training

**Slide 79** next required boundary training will be in 36 months- write it down on your certificate and put it in your calendar. Also, tell the whole congregation about the fact that you have done this training, in order to create a healthy, thriving church!

Close with thanks to all who participated, and prayer!