

TOWARDS SAFE PLACES

*An awareness program for creating safe places
in our churches*



Participant Workbook

TOWARDS SAFE PLACES

How to use this workbook

This workbook contains valuable information for your ministry program. Throughout the workshop you will have the opportunity to work through various tasks.

There are also a number of reflection tasks (that appear in shaded boxes), specifically designed for senior church leadership and ministry co-ordinators. They may be useful in your ministry situation and we encourage you to spend time after the workshop working through these tasks.

You will not cover everything in this workbook during the workshop. There are a significant number of tables containing information that may be of benefit to those wanting in depth exploration of an area.

Please keep this workbook as a resource document after the workshop.

At the end of the workbook you will find a reference list, should you wish to undertake any further research in this area.

Acknowledgments

We acknowledge material and concepts adapted from **Keeping Children Safe, 2009** from the Anglican Diocese of Canberra & Goulburn, **Principles of Protective Care & Child Protection, 2007** a Statement of Attainment from St Mark's National Theological Centre RTO, **Creating Safe Spaces, 2008** from the Baptist Union of NSW, **Towards, ChildSafe Team Members Pocket Guide (Ed ii), 2007** from ChildSafe Limited, **Caring for Kids, 2007** from Australia Eastern Territory Salvation Army and **Keeping Children Safe, 2002** used by the Training Team at the ACT Office for Children, Youth & Family Support (OCYFS).

This workbook has been developed by the ACC-NSW Safe Places Unit, in conjunction with CMI Vocational Training Pty Ltd for use across ACC-NSW churches. It has been produced under license agreement with the Anglican Diocese of Canberra & Goulburn.

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A Note from the State Executive

As a State Executive we congratulate you on choosing to equip yourself by engaging in **Safe Ministry** training. In taking the time to train and increase awareness of **Safe Ministry** issues, you are demonstrating the passion and concern for people that was modeled for us by Jesus. This workshop is a first step towards establishing good ministry practices in local churches. While there is much that can yet be done, implementation of the guidelines provided will substantially reduce the risk of vulnerable people, especially children, being put at risk of harm.

As an Executive, we believe it is our mandate and part of our duty of care to facilitate the establishment of **safe places for ministry** for vulnerable people including children and young people in NSW and ACT ACC churches.

We have founded the **Safe Places Unit** to provide strategic assistance and support to churches endeavouring to address issues of safe ministry.

With the assistance of the unit, clear **policies** have been written and made available to you outlining the desired **standards of ministry**. These documents are known as:

1. The Child Safe and Child Friendly Policy 2008-2011
2. The Safe Places Code of Conduct
3. The Safe Places Environment Procedures

In addition, a clear protocol of **Reporting Concerns or Disclosures** in relation to abuse is mandated for all ACC churches in NSW and the ACT.

A **SAFE PLACES Implementation Pack** has been provided for churches participating in the workshops to assist Heads of Departments and Pastors with implementation in a significant way. This includes an extensive range of support documents and templates in electronic form.

Through our Safe Ministry Training Strategy, we have been able to provide access to the awareness workshop in which you are about to participate.

As you engage in the workshop activities, we encourage you to aim for excellence in safe ministry practices. Our vigilance and persistence in our local communities will result in both more effective ministry and honour for the Lord Jesus and His church.

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SESSION ONE – MINISTRY AND DUTY OF CARE

This session aims to:

- Explore aspects of being in ministry
- Explore God's heart for the vulnerable
- Provide an introduction to duty of care

1. Ministry and Duty of Care

1.1 Christian Ministry

Jesus Christ said: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength... Love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:30, TNIV).

These principles guide us into appropriate relationships and provide the basis for the establishment and exercising of safe programs, run in safe environments by safe leaders in an abuse-free Christian community.

RATIONALE for SAFE MINISTRY

In Australian Christian Churches our Mission is to:

Build a Holy Spirit empowered movement in which leaders can lead, churches can grow and people can fulfill their God given destiny to influence the world with the life of Jesus Christ.

Among the core values of our movement are the following statements:

(Summarized from ACC Australia Core Value Statements 2008)

We value all human life as a gift from God to be honoured and protected

Who could fail to be amazed at the miracle of human life! A newborn baby is at the same time a miracle and a mystery. For anyone who has seen a child born, it is overwhelming - inspiring awe and wonder. Life itself comes from God. It is not humanly generated and in this sense does not belong to us. We are merely custodians of the miracle. Whether the life is that of a dependant infant, a dependent senior citizen, or someone who finds it difficult to function in the able bodied world, it must be respected as a priceless gift of God.

We respect the right of every individual to find and fulfill their God-given destiny

'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.' (Jeremiah 29:11, TNIV)

This scripture tells us God has a unique purpose for everyone's life. The purpose and plan of God is for our success. Every individual needs to pursue the purpose of God for their life – for in fulfilling that plan, there is satisfaction and contentment.

Our objective is to enable people to find their destiny in God and thereby play their part in making a difference in their world for Jesus Christ.

Safe Ministry

We believe our mandate for safe ministry comes directly from God who in His word identified that all vulnerable people were to be protected and given care and respect (eg Ex 22:21-22, Deut 10:17-19, Jer 22:2-4, James 1:27).

Protection of vulnerable people is our responsibility. They have the right to be emotionally and physically safe, and have their views and opinions respected.

As a community that is passionate about valuing life and destiny, we are strongly committed to provide safe ministry contexts that will protect both vulnerable people and the leaders who seek to minister to them. To not do so, can effectively create hindrances or obstacles to people hearing the good news of Jesus Christ and experiencing the freedom and purpose a life in HIM can bring.

Jesus called the children to him and said, *"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these"* (Luke 18:16, TNIV).

Regardless of our age, background or circumstances we are all God's children and worthy of value and respect. Our experience of 'ministry' can strongly influence our perceptions of both the church and the nature and character of God.

We are primarily passionate about safe ministry because we love and value people AND the Lord we represent, not just because there is legislation on the issue.

Because there is legislation relating to this issue, we will seek to assist ACC Churches in New South Wales to abide by its requirements in every aspect AS WELL AS to excel in the principles of safe ministry in their programs and ministry.

1.2 God's heart for the vulnerable

Task 1A: God's heart for the vulnerable

1. What do you think constitutes safe ministry?
2. Who are we called to provide safe ministry for?

Horton the Elephant makes a significant statement in *Horton Hears a Who*,

'A person's a person, no matter how small.'¹

This modern day parable illustrates God's heart for the vulnerable.

Jesus makes special reference to children throughout His ministry on Earth (Matt 18:1-14; Mark 9:36-37, 42; Luke 18:9-30). Children in the Biblical times represented the lowest of the low in society. Children were totally dependent on their father, even to the point of death. Jesus wanted to make it clear that the gospel is concerned about the vulnerable, children being the most vulnerable in society.

The vulnerable also included the poor. In Luke 4:18, Jesus declares that He has been sent 'to proclaim good news to the poor... to proclaim freedom for the prisoners... to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.' (Luke 4:18-19, TNIV). Again Jesus described the poor as blessed (Luke 6:20, also see Matt 5:3).

Does this mean God doesn't care about the middle class and well off? No, Jesus' disciples consisted of fisherman, tax collectors, and He ate with the rich. He is concerned that whoever wants to enter the kingdom of God, must become like the vulnerable and totally depend on Him for salvation (Luke 18:17).

To love people, is to love ALL people, especially the vulnerable. All people need to hear the gospel. Those who have had the opportunity to hear and respond to the gospel, now have the responsibility to minister to the vulnerable. James makes it clear that looking after orphans and widows reflects pure and faultless religion (James 1:27).

Horton had it right from the beginning, and in his service to the Who's, he helped convince the jungle of Nool that 'a person's a person, no matter how small.'

"From the sun in the summer.
From rain when it's fall-ish,
I'm going to protect them.
No matter how small-ish!"²
- The Big Kangaroo

¹ Dr Seuss, *Horton Hears a Who*. (Random House: NewYork, 1954).

² Dr Seuss, *Horton Hears a Who*.

1.3. Duty of Care

A general description of duty of care is to do everything reasonably practicable to protect others from harm.

Discharging duty of care includes implementing policies and procedures in order to protect those in our programs from potential abuse or injury, and leaders from potential allegation of abuse or injury.

From a **senior church leadership** perspective, it includes developing and implementing policies and procedures and taking responsibility for ensuring safe practices are operating within churches.

From a **ministry co-ordinator's** perspective it includes ensuring they are aware of the policies and procedures and have clear mechanisms for implementing them.

For all **ministry leaders**, it includes embracing the policies, procedures and practices (*including code of conduct*) as set down by senior church leadership.

From a **congregational** perspective, there is an expectation that those in leadership will be diligent in discharging their duty of care by:

- ensuring that those in ministry leadership have been recruited, screened, appointed, inducted, supervised and their performance appraised according to good practice as recommended by ACC NSW.
- ensuring that a safe spiritual, emotional and physical environment is provided in which ministry programs and opportunities can take place.
- ensuring that complaints or allegations are addressed according to ACC NSW guidelines.
- ensuring that appropriate pastoral support is available to all members of the congregation.

Reflection 1: Duty of Care

How might you discharge your duty of care when establishing and running one of the following ministry situations?

- *Children's Program*
- *Youth Program*
- *Outreach Programs*
- *Small Groups*
- *Senior's Programs*

For further info on Leadership responsibilities refer to Appendix 1 - An Overview of Towards Safe Places – Ministry Reference Guide

SESSION TWO – CHILD PROTECTION

This session aims to:

- Explore the area of child abuse
- Introduce the types and indicators of abuse
- Provide guidelines for reporting abuse
- Provide guidelines for responding to disclosures

Who is a child?

Some government agencies define a child as up to 12 years of age, youth as 13 to 15 years of age, and young person as 16 and 17 years of age. For the purpose of this course, whenever the term **child** is used, it refers to anyone **up to** 18 years of age.

2. Child Protection

2.1 What is child abuse?

According to the World Health Organisation, child abuse or maltreatment constitutes “**all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect** or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in **actual or potential harm** to the child’s health, **survival, development or dignity** in the context of a **relationship of responsibility, trust or power**.”³

A key point here relates to the concept of abuse occurring within the context of **relationship of responsibility, trust and power**.

As it can be very easy to respond in “extremes” in the area of child protection, it is important to work towards achieving and keeping a balance.

Achieving and keeping a balance



³ *The Report of the Consultation on Child Abuse Prevention*, WHO Geneva 29-31 March 1999. (unpublished, Geneva: World Health Organisation, 1999), p. 15.

2.1a. Myths and facts relating to child abuse⁴

Myths are beliefs which are commonly held, which are not true or accurate. There are myths relating to all kinds of child abuse, some of which are more or less common in different parts of the world, and they result in a range of views on how to treat and discipline children. Examples of myths relating to child abuse include:

- Children need a good spanking to show who is boss
- Child abuse only occurs in poor families
- Reporting to the state child protection authorities can cause more harm than the abuse itself
- If a child is reported to the state child protection authorities, they will always be taken away from their family

Facts are based on reality and generally supported by evidence such as research projects. Some examples of facts related to child abuse include:

- Children are more likely to be abused by people they know than strangers.

Children are more commonly abused by people they know, such as family members, relatives and neighbours. Incidents of physical violence are most likely to happen at home. Violence by strangers is rare. Most sexual abuse is perpetrated by people known to children rather than by strangers. It is not helpful for children to be told that they are in most danger from strangers because they can be left without adequate skills to protect themselves from trusted adults.
- It is not always obvious that a child is being abused.

Indicators of child abuse are not always easy to identify, and people who abuse can go to great lengths to conceal it. Many of the common signs and symptoms of abuse can be confused with normal, everyday happenings. Also, children are often forced not to tell by threats, or led to believe that they will not be believed or will be blamed and punished. Adults need to be aware of the possibility that changes in a child's behaviour may be caused by child abuse.
- Children with a disability are more likely to become victims of abuse.

Evidence suggests that children with a disability are more likely to be abused than non-disabled children, and that children with multiple-disabilities are even more at risk. Possible reasons include the difficulty disabled children may have communicating with others, their intimate personal care sometimes involves a variety of carers, fear of complaining and vulnerability to bullying and intimidation.
- If abuse happened once it is likely to happen again.

Abuse is seldom a one off incident. It is often repeated over periods of months and years. The person being abusive may move on to abuse other children.

⁴ E. Jackson & M. Wernham, *Child Protection policies & procedures Toolkit*. (London: Consortium for Street Children, 2005), p. 24. Online <http://www.childhope.org.uk/article.asp?id=587>, accessed 23/09/2009.

Statistics on child abuse

There are also myths around the types of abuse committed, notified (reported) and substantiated (proven to be true). Whilst it is almost impossible to determine the amount of abuse that does occur, statistics have been gathered through government research to determine the number of notifications, substantiations and break up of perpetrators of abuse.

STATISTICS ON ABUSE

Statistics from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report⁵ for the period 2006-07 are below.

- 309,517 reports (i.e., notifications) were received by statutory child protection services
- 58,563 reports were subsequently found to involve children in need of protection (i.e., approximately 20% of all notifications were substantiated)
- 28,441 children were in out-of-home care at 30 June 2007

Another area where myths and statistics emerge around child abuse is in who abuses children. National figures released by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare in 2002⁶ reveals the following break up of perpetrators:

- 74% Natural parent
- 10% Step parent or de facto
- 7% Other relative or sibling
- 5% Friend or neighbour
- 4% Others (including strangers)

⁵ P. Holzer (compiler), *Child protection in Australia Children see. Children do. Make your influence positive*. Fact Sheet September 2008. (Melbourne: National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2008). Online <http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/pubs/sheets/fs1/fs1.html>, accessed 23/09/2009.

⁶ L. Bromfield, *Preventing Child Abuse & Neglect: Everyone's Responsibility*. (Melbourne: National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2006). Online, [http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/pubs/presentations/preventingchildabuse.ppt#291,14,Who maltreats children?](http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/pubs/presentations/preventingchildabuse.ppt#291,14,Who%20maltreats%20children%3F), accessed 23/09/2009.

2.1b. What do you think is abuse?

The purpose of this exercise is to give you the opportunity to explore your own values and attitudes, and how your experiences influence the decisions you make.

At this stage you are **ONLY** being asked to decide if abuse is occurring in any of these situations

You should go with what you feel and simply answer **YES** or **NO**.

Task 2A: What is abuse?

| Scenario | Yes | No |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| <i>After church one Sunday morning, a mother smacked her child hard several times on the bare legs.</i> | | |
| <i>A 10 year girl who attends Kid's Club every week, generally arrives with dirty clothes, smelling like she has not had a wash for some time and often with open sores on her arms and legs.</i> | | |
| <i>One of the female leaders at a youth camp often encourages one of the younger girls to share her bed during camp.</i> | | |
| <i>One of the youth leaders regularly teases a couple of the young people at Youth Group about being overweight</i> | | |

2.1c. Factors that influence our perception

When we are faced with a situation, our perception of that situation is influenced by a number of factors. These include: our up-bringing, and perception of our parents' behaviour; experiences we have had at the hands of our parents or other adults, or bigger or influential people around us; our values; our attitudes of what constitutes abuse; our views on the rights of children, and our responsibilities to protect children.

Whilst there are some areas that constitute abuse to most people, there are some "grey" areas that will vary depending upon individual perception. For example, one person's perception may be that telling a child they are useless on a regular basis, may constitute character building and resilience on the part of the child. For another person, this type of comment would be viewed as emotional abuse.

There could also be variations in perception depending upon the nature of the activity or setting. For example, for some it would be seen as acceptable for a parent to hit a child, but not acceptable for a teacher to hit a child.

2.1d. Making decisions with limited information

Anyone working with children regularly is likely to come face-to-face with what may be cases of abuse. As we are generally only given one view of what has occurred, we are faced with making a decision about reporting suspicions based upon what may be only one perspective of the situation. When our limited knowledge of a situation is combined with the factors that influence our perception, it can be difficult to be objective in our judgement.

It is because our judgement can be coloured by our own perceptions, we need to look at the guidelines that have been provided by legislation and the ACC NSW to assist us to respond appropriately when we have concerns of abuse. **Section 2.3** will provide us with definitions and indicators to determine when abuse may be occurring.

POSSIBLE BARRIERS TO PROTECTING CHILDREN

Certain community attitudes **may** contribute to on-going child abuse by creating barriers to protecting children. These include:

- Cultural acceptance of extreme physical punishment of children and the use of violence
- Acceptance of parents "ownership" of children and their right to treat children as they see fit
- The notion that the child deserved the treatment received as a result of behaviour
- Lack of desire to "get involved" in others people's business
- Fears of retaliation should a notifier's name be made known to an abuser
- Concerns about the break-up of a family unit, should the abuse be exposed
- Not being prepared to expose a person of high standing in the community
- Concern by an abused person, that by exposing an abuser, they will be publicly shamed

There are also a number of organisational⁷ **risk factors** that **may** contribute to creating barriers to protecting children. These may include:

- Staff alone with children
- Abuse of positional power – people in authority taking advantage of the position of power
- Culture of bullying
- Lack of leader and staff accountability
- Inadequate resources
- Lack of experience, awareness and training
- Internal investigations as opposed to external investigations
- Isolated venues

⁷ L.R. Beyer, D.J. Higgins and L.M. Bromfield Understanding Organisational Risk Factors for Child Maltreatment: A Review of Literature. (Melbourne: National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2005), pp. 43-47. Online: <http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/pubs/reports/organisations/organisations.pdf>, accessed 23/09/2009.

2.2. Identifying Child Abuse

2.2a. Power and Relationships

Power exists in all relationships. It can be generated by factors such as size, age, knowledge, skill, experience, physical strength and position. This power can be a positive thing and used to protect and nurture more vulnerable people and can enhance relationships if it is used appropriately.

2.2ai. Abuse of positional power in relationships⁸

Abuse can emerge when a person abuses the positional power they have in a relationship. This relates to the authority an organisation (church) gives its leaders so that they might be effective.

Task 2B: Abuse of positional power

What are some examples of positional power?

How might a person abuse their positional power?

2.2b. Types of Abuse

Abuse is generally defined in the following major categories:

- Neglect
- Physical abuse
- Psychological Harm
- Sexual abuse
- Relinquishing Care
- Carer Concern
- Unborn Child

⁸ Adapted from *Creating Safe Spaces*. (Baptist Union of NSW, 2008).

Neglect

Child neglect is the continued failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child with the basic things needed for his or her proper growth and development, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical and dental care and adequate supervision.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is a non-accidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child caused by a parent, caregiver or any other person. It includes but is not limited to injuries which are caused by excessive discipline, severe beatings or shakings, cigarette burns, attempted strangulation and female genital mutilation. Injuries include bruising, lacerations or welts, burns, fractures or dislocation of joints. Hitting a child around the head or neck and/or using a stick, belt or other object to discipline or punishing a child (in a non-trivial way) is a crime.

Psychological Abuse

Serious psychological harm can occur where the behaviour of their parent or caregiver damages the confidence and self esteem of the child or young person, resulting in serious emotional deprivation or trauma.

Although it is possible for 'one-off' incidents to cause serious harm, in general it is the frequency, persistence and duration of the parental or carer behaviour that is instrumental in defining the consequences for the child. This can include a range of behaviours such as excessive criticism, withholding affection, exposure to domestic violence, intimidation or threatening behaviour.

Also within the broad category of Psychological abuse, is **Spiritual Abuse**^[1]. Spiritual abuse involves the perpetrator inappropriately using their position of authority in the church to satisfy their own needs, or using a person for their own benefit. For example:

- Pressuring through use of guilt language. Eg. *God will be happy with you if you do this for me.*
- Manipulating others for personal gain

It can lead to excessive guilt, shame, strong "works" mentality – *if I do this then God will love me.* It may also result in being scared of God, fear of church leaders or the church.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is when someone involves a child or young person in a sexual activity by using their power over them or taking advantage of their trust. Often children are bribed or threatened physically and psychologically to make them participate in the activity. Abusers are usually known to the child e.g. relatives, family friends – rather than a stranger. It includes; inappropriate touching, fondling and any form of intercourse.^[2] Sexual abuse generally refers to an act or behaviour that has occurred and constitutes a criminal charge.

Whilst all forms of child abuse **can** be pre-meditated, sexual abuse is generally the most common form of premeditated abuse. It is often a planned process set up by the offender to manipulate the relationship with the child and deceive protective parents or adults. It is often based upon strategies to engage the child and maintain them in the abuse. The offender often uses carefully planned tactics to enforce the secrecy, and manipulate circumstances so the child feels responsible for the abuse.^[3]

^[1] Adapted from *Creating Safe Spaces*. (Baptist Union of NSW, 2008).

^[2] *What is Child Abuse?*. National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse & Neglect (NAPCAN).

^[3] NSW Child Protection Council. *Making a difference [kit]: recognising and reporting/notifying child abuse and neglect / New South Wales Child Protection Council*. (Eleonora. & Iris Pictures. 1998).

Relinquishing Care

Parent or carer indicates they are unable or unwilling to provide appropriate care for a child under the age of 16 or a young person over age 16 when he/she is currently unable to make an informed decision (temporarily or permanently).

Carer Concern

You have information that a person who requires carer assistance is at risk of harm from a designated carer or there is evidence of a lack of provision of appropriate care.

Unborn Child

Concerns for the welfare of an unborn child upon his/her birth. Allows for mobilisation of services or intervention prior to delivery for the benefit of the mother and/or child. NOTE: Reports related to an unborn child are not mandatory.

Sexual Grooming Behaviours

In addition to sexual abuse, sexual misconduct prior to a chargeable offence may also occur. It can include a range of behaviours or a pattern of behaviour aimed at involving or "grooming" children for future sexual acts. The behaviours outlined in Table 6 may not indicate risk if they occur in isolation, but if there is a **pattern of behaviour** occurring, it may indicate grooming.⁹

Task 2C: Grooming Behaviours

Watch the video clip and answer the following questions:

1. How did you feel about the behaviour between the uncle and his nephew?
2. List of the possible grooming behaviours that were present in the scenario
3. What grooming behaviours can we see in a ministry setting?

⁹ *Working with Children Check Guidelines*. (Sydney: NSW Commission for Children and Young People, 2004), p. 45. Online: <http://www.kids.nsw.gov.au/kids/working/employerguidelines.cfm>, accessed 23/09/2009.

SEXUAL GROOMING INDICATORS

Some of these behaviours may include:

- inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature
- comments that express a desire to act in a sexual manner
- personal correspondence (letters, email, SMS messages, phone calls)

The grooming process can include:

- persuading the child that a "special" relationship exists
- spending inappropriate special time with the child
- inappropriately giving gifts
- showing special favours to one child but not other children
- allowing the child to overstep rules
- testing of boundaries eg. undressing in front of the child, encouraging the child to sit on the lap
- talking about sex
- "accidental" touching of genitals
- showing the child pornographic images, erotic videos or magazines

2.2d. Indicators of Abuse

Indicators of abuse are physical and behavioural signs that can indicate that a problem exists. For those working with children and young people, it is useful to develop a habit of observing what constitutes "normal" behaviour for a particular young person or young people from their age group; and taking note if the behaviour changes.

Physical Indicators

Physical indicators can be seen on the child or young person. It may include general appearance and health, unexplained bruising and fractures, injury to specific areas.

Behavioural Indicators

Behavioural indicators can be seen in a child or young person's behaviour. They can be seen in their choice of behaviours, either on their own, or how they respond to others in either one-on-one contact or in groups.

Behavioural indicators may also be observed in those abusing the child or young person. This may include how they touch the child or young person, speak to them, or look at them.

Task 2D: Indicators of Abuse (alternate)

Read your scenario and identify any possible indicators of abuse.

Scenario A:

Josephine is a 13 year girl, who was previously a keen participant at youth group. For the last couple of months, during the study time, she hasn't seemed to be focused and frequently excuses herself to go to the toilet. She has stopped taking part in the games during the program and spends a lot of time alone at the back of the hall. She appears to have lost a lot of weight and dark circles have started to appear under her eyes. Last week you noticed her hanging around the church hall after youth group had finished, and asked her why she hadn't gone home. She told you that she hates going home since her parents started working afternoon shift, and she has to be at home alone with her older brother.

Task 2D: Indicators of Abuse (alternate) cont.

Read your scenario and identify any possible indicators of abuse.

Scenario B:

Jimmy is a 10 year old boy who attends your Kid's Club outreach program. You notice that he has had a number of absences over the last couple of months. A couple of times, you have seen bruising around his wrists, and once you noticed his lip was cut and swollen. He has become noticeably lethargic, and often requests that he be excused from games. You have asked him if he is OK. He said that things were tough at home, but he didn't want to talk about it.

Last week, the Kid's club had a BBQ dinner before their normal program. As they were eating dinner you noticed that Jimmy was having difficulty swallowing, which made you realise that he hadn't spoken since he had arrived at Kid's club for the night. You went over to talk to him. At that moment he turned his head to look at the person beside him and you saw bruises around his neck.

Scenario C:

Lawrence is a single parent, and has sole custody of his sons, 2 year old Saul and 4 year old Solomon. While he works, the children attend the child-care centre, which is part of your church. You work there as a volunteer helper twice a week. Over a period of time you have noticed that the children have become more unkempt in their appearance. Their clothes are often dirty and they have both developed sores over their bodies. Solomon was particularly lethargic one day, and you asked him why he was so tired. He told you that he had to sleep in the car last night, because daddy wanted to meet his friends at the club. He said that Saul kept crying, and they were both cold.

When all of the other children had left for the day, you were cleaning up while waiting for Lawrence to pick up the boys. You noticed that Solomon had moved out of the main playroom. You went to look for him and found him going through the garbage in the staff room and eating the food scraps he found. You asked him why he is eating rubbish from the bin and he said if he ate now he wouldn't be so hungry later that night if his Daddy went out again and forgot to cook his dinner.

Scenario D:

Gwenda is a 15 year old girl and she and her parents have been members of the local church all of her life. For the last 12 months Gwenda has been a member of the church worship team. Until recent months she has been happy to go each week. Her mother has noticed that now she sometimes refuses to go, often ending in tears and pleading with her mother not to make her. Her mother was concerned, as Gwenda had started having regular nightmares, is often teary and has stopped spending time with her friends. Some days she comes home from school and locks herself in her room until tea time.

She has tried to talk to Gwenda about why she doesn't want to be part of the worship team anymore. Gwenda finally told her mother that Effie, who had become the new Music Director about 3 months ago, always picks on her and tells her she is useless when she had trouble keeping up during key changes. On a couple of occasions she had told her in front of everyone that her lack of ability during practice was an insult to God and that she should pray for forgiveness. When Gwenda's mother said she would talk to Effie, Gwenda pleaded with her not to say anything, as it would mean that Effie would know that Gwenda had broken the code of confidentiality that Effie had introduced. Effie said that whatever happened in practice stayed in practice and nothing was to be shared with anyone outside the group.

Indicators of Abuse¹⁰**Neglect - possible indicators**

Neglect includes all instances where a person has failed to take adequate precautions to ensure the child's safety and provide food, clothing and shelter for the child. Many cases of neglect require a welfare and family support response, rather than a protective response. However, in cases where neglect has resulted in physical injury, emotional harm or a health impairment, it should be considered as abuse.

TABLE 1

| Physical indicators | Behavioural indicators | Indicators in person abusing the child |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistently dirty and unwashed. • Consistently inappropriately dressed for weather conditions. • Consistently without adequate supervision and at risk of injury or harm. • Consistently hungry, tired and listless, falling asleep in class. • Unattended health problems and lack of routine medical care. • Inadequate shelter, and unsafe or unsanitary conditions. • Abandonment by parents. • Failure to thrive. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begging or stealing food. • Gorging when food is available. • Inability to eat when extremely hungry. • Alienated from peers, withdrawn, listless, pale, thin. • Aggressive behaviour. • Delinquent acts: vandalism, drug and alcohol abuse. • Little positive interaction with parent/caregiver. • Appearing miserable or irritable. • Poor socialising habits. • Poor evidence of bonding, little stranger anxiety. • Indiscriminate with affection. • Poor or irregular school attendance. • Staying at school long hours. • Self-destructive. • Dropping out of school. • Taking on adult role of caring for parent | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing, medical attention, hygienic home conditions or leaving the child or young person inappropriately without supervision. • Inability to respond emotionally to a child or young person. • Child or young person left alone for long periods. • Depriving of or withholding physical contact or stimulation for prolonged periods. • Failure to provide psychological nurturing. • One child or young person treated differently, for example scape-goated. • Absence of social support from relatives, other adults or social networks. |

¹⁰ State of Victoria Department of Human Services Victoria, May 2001, **Child Protection and Care**, Department of Human Services. *What is Child Abuse*. (State Government of Victoria, Australia, Department of Human Services, 2009). Online: <http://www.cyf.vic.gov.au/child-protection-family-services/library/abuse/what>, accessed 23/09/2009.

Physical abuse — possible indicators

TABLE 2

| Physical indicators | Behavioural indicators | Indicators in person abusing the child |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bruises or welts on facial areas and other areas of the body, including back, bottom, legs, arms and inner thighs. • Any bruises or welts in unusual configurations or which look like the object used to make the injury, for example, finger or hand prints, buckles, iron, teeth. • Burns which show the shape of the object used to make them, such as an iron, grill, cigarette, or burns from boiling water, oil or flames. • Fractures of the skull, jaw, nose and limbs, especially those not consistent with the explanation offered or with the type of injury probable/possible at the child's age and development stage. • Cuts and grazes to the mouth, lips, gums, eye area, ears, external genitalia. • Human bite marks. • Bald patches where hair has been pulled out. • Multiple injuries, old and new. • Poisoning. • Internal injuries. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child states that an injury has been inflicted by someone else (parent or other), or offers an inconsistent or unlikely explanation, or 'can't remember' the cause of injury. • Unusual fear of physical contact with adults (for example, flinches if unexpectedly touched). • Wearing clothes unsuitable for weather conditions, (such as long-sleeved tops) to hide injuries. • Wariness or fear of a parent/caregiver, reluctance to go home. • No or little emotion when hurt. • Little or no fear when threatened. • Habitual absences from school without explanations (the parent may be keeping child away until signs of injury have disappeared). • Overly compliant, shy, withdrawn, passive and uncommunicative. • Fearfulness when other children cry or shout. • Unusually nervous or hyperactive, aggressive, disruptive and destructive to self and/or others. • Excessively friendly with strangers. • Regressive behaviour, such as bedwetting or soiling. • Poor sleeping patterns, fear of dark, nightmares. • Sadness and frequent crying. • Drug or alcohol misuse. • Poor memory and concentration. • Suicide attempts. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct admissions by parents or caregivers that they fear they may injure the child or young person. • Family history of violence, including previous harm to children and young people. • History of their own maltreatment as a child or young person. • Repeated presentations of the child or young person to health or other services with injuries, ingestions or with minor complaints. • Marked delay between injury and presentation for medical assistance. • History of injury which is inconsistent with the physical findings. • History of injury which is vague, bizarre or variable. |

Psychological Abuse— possible indicators

Psychological or emotional abuse may occur with or without other forms of abuse. If a young person grows up in a climate of rejection and criticism, they can incorporate a negative self-image that impedes development and prevents them from reaching their full potential. They may develop personality or behavioural disorders, or become an adult filled with self-doubt and internalised rage, unable to form sustained and intimate relationships. There are few physical indicators, although emotional abuse may cause delays in emotional, mental or even physical development.

TABLE 3

| Physical indicators | Behavioural indicators | Indicators in the person abusing the child |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech disorders. • Delays in physical development. • Failure to thrive (without an organic cause). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overly compliant, passive and undemanding behaviour. • Extremely demanding, aggressive, attention-seeking behaviour. • Anti-social, destructive behaviour. • Low tolerance of frustration. • Poor self-image. • Unexplained mood swings. • Age-inappropriate behaviours, for example, overly adult conduct (parenting other children) or overly infantile conduct (thumb sucking, rocking, wetting or soiling). • Mental or emotional development lags. • Fear of failure, overly high standards, excessive neatness and cleanliness. • Depression, suicidal tendencies. • Running away. • Violent drawings or writing • Rejection of contact with other children. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constant criticism, belittling, teasing of a child or young person, or ignoring or withholding praise and affection. • Excessive or unreasonable demands. • Persistent hostility and severe verbal abuse, rejection and <i>scapegoating</i>. • Belief that a particular child or young person is bad or 'evil'. • Using inappropriate physical or social isolation as punishment. • Situations where an adult's behaviour harms a child's or young person's safety, welfare and well-being. • Exposure to domestic violence. |

Garbarino et al¹¹ (1986) indicates there are five forms of emotional maltreatment, which include:

- Rejecting - behaviours which communicate or constitute abandonment.
- Terrorizing - threats with extreme or vague but sinister punishment; stimulating fear, setting unrealistic expectations, and/or stating unpredictable threats.
- Ignoring - to be psychologically unavailable to the child, ranging from a lack of sustained attention to a "barrier of silence".
- Isolating - preventing the child from taking advantage of normal opportunities for social relations.
- Corrupting - mis-socialization of the child through reinforcement and encouragement of aggression, substance abuse, sexuality, delinquent and criminal activity, etc.

¹¹ J. Garbarino, E. Guttman & J.W. Seeley. *The Psychologically Battered Child*, (California: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1986).

Sexual abuse — possible indicators

In older children and young people, sexual abuse is more likely to be identified through the child or young person disclosing to someone that they have been abused, rather than by observing physical indicators. In babies and young children, the physical indicators are observed mostly through a physical examination.

TABLE 4

| Physical indicators | Behavioural indicators | Indicators in the person abusing the child |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Injury to the genital or rectal area, such as bruising or bleeding. • Vaginal or anal bleeding or discharge. • Discomfort in urinating or defecating. • Presence of foreign bodies in vagina and/or rectum. • Inflammation and infection of genital area. • Sexually transmitted diseases. • Pregnancy, especially in very young adolescents. • Bruising and other injury to breasts, buttocks and thighs. • Anxiety related illnesses, such as anorexia or bulimia. • Frequent urinary tract infections. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child tells of abuse. • Persistent and age-inappropriate sexual activity, including excessive masturbation, masturbation with objects, rubbing genitals against adults, playing games which act out a sexually abusive event. • A fear of home, a specific place, a particular adult. • Excessive fear of men or of women. • Poor or deteriorating relationships with adults and peers. • Poor self-care/personal hygiene. • Arriving early at school and leaving late. • Complaining of headaches, stomach pains or nausea without a physiological basis. • Frequent rocking, sucking and biting. • Sleeping difficulties. • Reluctance to participate in physical or recreational activities. • Regressive behaviour, such as bedwetting or speech loss. • Sudden accumulation of money or gifts. • Truancy or running away from home. • Delinquent or aggressive behaviour. • Depression. • Self-injurious behaviour, including drug/alcohol abuse, prostitution, self-mutilation, attempted suicide. • Sudden decline in academic performance, poor memory and concentration. • Wearing of provocative clothing or layers of clothes to hide injuries. • Promiscuity. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposing a child or young person to prostitution or child pornography or using a child or young person for pornographic purposes. • Intentional exposure of child or young person to sexual behaviour in others. • Ever committed/been suspected of child sexual abuse. • Inappropriate curtailing or jealousy regarding age-appropriate development of independence from the family. • Coercing child or young person to engage in sexual behaviour with other children and young people. • Verbal threats of sexual abuse. • Denial of adolescent's pregnancy by family. • Perpetration of spouse abuse or physical child abuse. • Offenders use a range of tactics including force, threats, and tricks to engage children or young people in sexual contact and to try to silence the child or young person. They may also try to gain the trust and friendship of parents in order to obtain access to children and young people. |

2.3. Reporting Child Abuse

You are not required to establish or investigate if abuse has occurred. Your role is only to report suspicions or concerns of abuse, or concerns for a child and the grounds for those concerns.

2.3a. Reasonable Grounds for Reporting

You have reasonable grounds to report abuse if:

- A child tells you they have been or are at risk of being abused
- Someone else tells you that they know of a child who has been or is at risk of being abused
- You have concerns that the child may have been or is at risk of being abused based on their physical appearance or behaviour

See *Legislative tables on following pages for details of NSW and ACT Legislation regarding reporting.*

Note: Many people are hesitant about making a judgment about abuse occurring in case their perception is incorrect. In some cases what may appear to be cause for concern, could be a “cry for help” by a child or young person. In some cases their claims may even be fabrications. When investigations take place, the actual crisis is revealed and appropriate support is then able to be implemented.

2.3b. Who reports possible abuse?

The ACC NSW State Executive requires that we all exercise our ethical and legal responsibility to report our concerns or disclosures, regardless of our ministry position or legislation.

Mandatory Reporting

Both the ACT and NSW have legislation which designates certain people as mandatory reporters of child sexual and physical abuse. Mandatory Reporters must report such abuse to the relevant authorities. Mandatory Reporters must report when they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that a child has suffered physical or sexual abuse.

In the ACT credentialed ministers are not mandatory reporters but the ACC NSW State Executive expects them to act as if they were.

In NSW all credentialed ministers are mandatory reporters and so are persons in the church who 'work in Child-related employment'. (Refer to Table 12 for ACC NSW Reporting Procedures.) We take that to mean those persons who, under the authority of ACC NSW or local church, minister to children or young people and regularly have sole supervisory responsibility for them.

Also see Table 8 on Interstate Issues when Reporting.

TABLE 5

| WHEN A CHILD IS DEEMED TO BE AT RISK AND GROUNDS FOR REPORTING | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| NSW Legislation | |
| Timeframe for reporting | "As soon as practicable". As a guideline, the ACC NSW State Executive suggests within 24 hours of receiving disclosure or having concerns |
| When a child is at risk | <p>At risk of significant harm:</p> <p>Risk of significant harm means that you have current concerns about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child (up to 16), including pre-natal children or young person (16 or 17) for any of the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the basic physical or psychological needs of the child or young person are not being met, or at risk of not being met (neglect) • the parents or caregivers have not arranged necessary medical care for the child or young person and are unwilling or unable to do so • the child or young person is at risk of physical or sexual abuse or ill-treatment (physical or sexual abuse and assault) • the parent or caregiver's behaviour towards the child or young person causes or risks psychological harm to the child or young person (emotional abuse) • incidents of domestic violence at home resulting in a child or young person being at risk of serious physical or psychological harm (domestic or family violence) • homelessness of a child under 16 • homelessness of child over 16 (with their permission) |
| Grounds for making a report | <p>Reasonable grounds for reporting risk of harm:</p> <p>This could be derived from such things as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • first-hand observations about the child or family • what a practitioner has been told by a child, their parent or another person, or • what a practitioner can reasonably infer based on professional training and/or experience |
| Who is mandated to report | Persons who deliver health care, welfare, education, children's services, residential services or law enforcement to children. In NSW churches it also includes: all Credentialed Ministers, Camp Directors, Camp Chaplains, Co-ordinators of Children's Church, Kids Clubs, or any Children's Ministry and Youth Ministry. |

TABLE 6

| WHEN A CHILD IS DEEMED TO BE AT RISK AND GROUNDS FOR REPORTING | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ACT Legislation | |
| Timeframe for notification | "As soon as practicable". As a guideline, the ACC NSW State Executive suggests within 24 hours of receiving disclosure or having concerns |
| When a child is at risk | <p>In need of care and protection:</p> <p>A child or young person is in need of care and protection if-</p> <p>(a) the child or young person-</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(i) has been abused or neglected; or</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(ii) is being abused or neglected; or</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(iii) is at risk of abuse or neglect; and</p> <p>(b) no-one with parental responsibility for the child or young person is willing and able to protect child and young person from suffering the abuse or neglect</p> <p>A reasonable suspicion that a child or young person has suffered or is suffering sexual abuse or non-accidental physical injury up to 18 years.</p> |
| Grounds for making a report | <p>Grounds for reporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A child or young person discloses that he or she has suffered or is suffering non accidental physical injury or sexual abuse • Someone else advises you that a child or young person has been sexually abused or non-accidentally injured, or • Your own observations of the child or young person's physical condition or behaviours lead you to reasonably suspect that the child or young person has suffered or is suffering non-accidental physical injury or sexual abuse. |
| Who is mandated to notify | Doctors, dentists, nurses, teachers, police, school counsellors, child-care providers, public servants providing services relating to the health or well being of children, young people or families, the community advocate, or the official visitor |
| Multiple Reports | Where there are reasonable grounds to believe that another person has made a report about the same child and the same abuse or injury, then a mandatory reporter is still required to make a report regardless. |

INTERSTATE ISSUES RELATED TO REPORTING - ACT AND NSW

ACT

- If the child or young person you are concerned about is currently in the ACT, but resides interstate, the ACT requires you to report to **Care & Protection Services** in the ACT in the first instance.
- **Care & Protection Services** will then determine who will conduct the investigation and will notify the interstate authority of the report if the child or young person is a resident of another state.
- General 1300 556 729, Mandatory 1300 556 728

NSW

- If the child, who is a non-NSW resident, is in NSW **at the point of disclosure**, about an incident occurring in another state, then you report to the **Statutory Body** in the state of residence.
- If the child, who is a non-NSW resident, is in NSW **when the alleged abuse occurs**, then you report to **DoCS**.
- **DoCS** will also notify the **Statutory Body** in the state of residence of the report and investigation.
- General 132 111, Mandatory 133 627

QLD

- Child Safety Services, Department of Communities - 1800 811 810
After Hours 1800 177 135

VIC

- Child Protection & Family Services - Department of Human Services;
Eastern Region 1300 360 391,
Southern Region 1300 655 795,
Northern/Western Regions 1300 369 536
After Hours 131 278

2.3c. Allegations of abuse against employees

There are variations across Australia regarding procedures to follow when there is an allegation of abuse against an employee. In NSW, government departments and heads of designated agencies¹² (employers) have a responsibility to make reports to the Ombudsman using the **Reportable Conduct** legislation when an allegation is made against an employee (paid or volunteer).

Information regarding **Reportable Conduct** is located in the **Head of Department Implementation Pack**

Throughout ACC NSW where there is a complaint against a church worker (paid or voluntary) the **Response to Complaint** protocols will be followed.

¹² DoCS-licensed / funded Child Care Centre, Residential Child Care Centre, Substitute Care Service or is linked to a State School operating an After School Care Centre.

2.3d Reportable Conduct

There is an obligation for ACC churches in NSW and ACT to appropriately address and investigate allegations of reportable conduct where the allegation is made against a member of church staff (paid or volunteer). The legislation seeks to ensure that:

- children's rights to a safe environment are balanced with employee's rights to a proper investigation, NSW Ombudsman *Child Protection in the Workplace: Responding to Allegations Against Employees* p vii
- allegations are investigated promptly and thoroughly, and
- the investigation process is grounded in principles of procedural fairness.

"Reportable conduct" is a term that means :

- any sexual offence, or sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence of a child (including a child pornography offence), or
- any assault, ill-treatment or neglect of a child, or
- any behaviour that causes psychological harm to a child,

whether or not, in any case, with the consent of the child.

Reportable conduct does not extend to:

- conduct that is reasonable for the purposes of the discipline, management or care of children, having regard to the age, maturity, health or other characteristics of the children and to any relevant codes of conduct or professional standards, or
- the use of physical force that, in all the circumstances, is trivial or negligible, but only if the matter is to be investigated and the result of the investigation recorded under workplace employment procedures, or
- conduct of a class or kind exempted from being reportable conduct by the Ombudsman under section 25CA.

Note: Examples of conduct that would not constitute "reportable conduct" include (without limitation) touching a child in order to attract a child's attention, to guide a child or to comfort a distressed child; a school teacher raising his or her voice in order to attract attention or to restore order in the classroom; and conduct that is established to be accidental.

ACC churches in NSW and ACT are required to notify DOCS or Care and Protection Services and the Safe Places Unit if an allegation or conviction of Reportable conduct is made against a staff person (paid or volunteer) that arise in the course of their work. Appropriate procedure should be followed by the local church in following up the allegation and the NSW ombudsman advised of the allegation.

The NSW Ombudsman's role is to monitor an agency's response to allegations against employees and to handle complaints about the investigation process. Further information on appropriate procedure is available from:

- www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/guideorganisations/guidewrkchildprotiss.html Child protection in the workplace: responding to allegations of Reportable Conduct.
- NSW Commission for Children and Young People *The Working With Children Check Guidelines* Section 5.
- The Safe Places Unit can provide helpful guidance for churches needing to engage in this process.

Employers are also required to notify the Commission for Children and Young People of the name and other relevant identifying particulars of any employee against whom relevant employment proceedings have been completed.

2.3e. Protection for those reporting

When suspicions or concerns have been reported according to the Grounds of Reporting, then a person cannot be sued, even if the notification proved to be unsubstantiated. A notifier's identity will not be revealed to the person who they have reported, unless determined to be in the best interests by the court.

2.3f. Legislative requirements for reporting

Legislative requirements refer to what we are required to do by the various state or territory governments. It includes the roles of mandatory reporters and also procedures for making reports or notifications. See *Tables 9a and 9b for overview*.

2.3g. ACC NSW requirements

The ACC NSW State Executive requires those in ministry to follow the **Required Lines for Reporting Concerns or Disclosure of abuse in NSW and ACT Churches** – located in Table 9. By following the ACC-NSW lines for reporting, those within the ACC-NSW structure who need to be aware of concerns and/or reports are “kept in the loop”.

Contact Officers are also available through the Safe Places Unit.

They are available to members of ACC-NSW for any of the following reasons:

- If people are unsure if they should report a concern
- If someone is a victim of abuse and would like support
- If someone is a family member of a victim of abuse and would like support
- If a leader has been accused of abuse and would like support through the investigation process
- If a leader has received one or more disclosures of abuse and feels they are suffering trauma. See *Section 2.4dii in Self Care after receiving a disclosure*.

They may be contacted by ringing the Safe Places Unit on 02 9826 0300

2.3gi. Safe Places Unit

The Safe Places Unit is responsible for ensuring complaints against church employees (*paid and voluntary*) are dealt with in accordance with the Response to Complaint protocols.

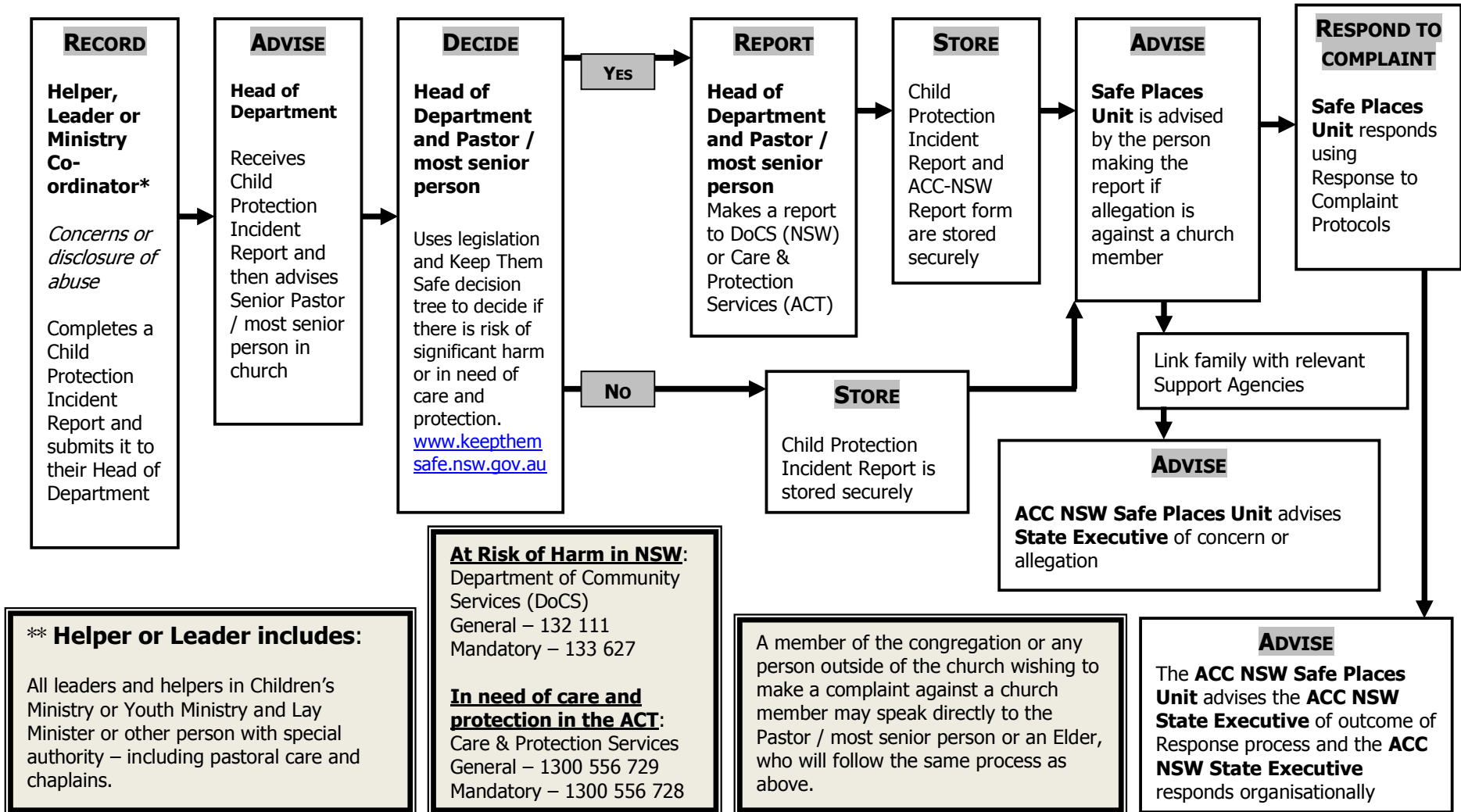
This involves receiving and assessing complaints and reporting to the ACC NSW State Executive.

The Safe Places Unit will ensure that complaints are dealt with promptly and the complainant and respondent are kept aware of the progress of the investigation.

The Safe Places Unit will also arrange for support to both the complainant and the respondent.

The Safe Places Unit is also responsible for reporting any allegations against NSW employees to the NSW Ombudsman.

TABLE 7: REQUIRED LINES FOR REPORTING CONCERNS OR DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE IN NSW and ACT ACC CHURCHES



Version 2.5 May 2009

2.3h. Making a report

2.3hi. Child Protection Incident Report Form

A Child Protection Incident Report Form is a short written account regarding a leader's concerns about a child or a disclosure made by a child.

Before making a report to a supervisor or a government agency, it is important to complete a Child Protection Incident Report Form outlining your concerns. (Refer to Table 13). Key information needed in anecdotal evidence includes:

- Name and age of child
- Document or record what was said and what you saw
- Times and dates of incidents or information recorded
- Your name and contact details

It is important to keep Child Protection Incident Reports for a number of reasons:

- It eliminates inaccuracies in information that may come from verbal transfer of information to a supervisor.
- It provides the basis for the information to be entered onto a report form which will be submitted to **DoCS or Care & Protection Services**.
- One Child Protection Incident Report Form kept and submitted to a supervisor on its own may not warrant a report to a government agency; however, when there is more than one record about the same child, then it provides a clearer picture of what may be occurring and warrant a report to a government agency.

Task 2E: Making reports

Watch the video on Annie and in your groups discuss the following:

1. Complete the Child Protection Incident Report Form
1. Using the information you have recorded, would it have covered all of the Helpline's questions?
2. What other information may have been helpful for the person ringing the Helpline?

TABLE 8

| CHILD PROTECTION INCIDENT REPORT TEMPLATE | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Name of ministry leader/co-ordinator | <i>Kama Tan</i> |
| Leader/co-ordinator contact details | <i>Hills South Child Care Centre 124 Fadesway Cir 9555-5555</i> |
| Name of child / young person | <i>Annie Steppy</i> |
| Contact details of child/ young person | <i>116 Flats Street, South Hill 9553-3987</i> |
| Age of child/ young person | <i>8</i> |
| Date and time of incident or information recorded | <i>1 October 2008</i> |
| Describe your concerns. | |
| Record what was observed or said. | |
| Please hand this record to your supervising leader (Head of Department/ Pastor) as soon as possible. Please note: It is classified as a confidential document. | |

2.3hii. ACC-NSW Report forms

Written records need to be filed securely and submitted to DoCS or Care & Protection Services if requested. This form is generally completed by the Pastor/ most senior person in conjunction with the Head of Department.

A copy of the **ACC NSW Report form** is located in the **Head of Department Implementation Pack**.

Table 9: Contacting DoCS (NSW) or Care & Protection Services (ACT)

| MAKING PHONE CONTACT WITH DoCS OR CARE & PROTECTION SERVICES | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>NSW¹³ Department of Community Services (<i>DoCS</i>)</p> | <p>To make a report you need to call the DoCS Helpline 13 3627 (or 13DOCS for easy memory) or use the Reporting Decision Tree at www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au</p> <p>Helpful information for DoCS includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • full name, date of birth (or approximate age), address and phone number of the child/ren you are concerned about • full name (including any known aliases), approximate age, address and phone number of the parents or carers • a description of the child and their current whereabouts • why you suspect the child is at risk of significant harm (what you have seen, heard or been told) • whether a language or sign interpreter may be required, whether support is required for a person with a disability or an Aboriginal agency is involved • your name and contact details. <p>Sometimes you may not have all of this information. As a minimum, DoCS needs to be able to identify and locate the child. Information that assists this, such as the child's school or child care centre, is also helpful.</p> |
| <p>ACT¹⁴ Care & Protection Services, <i>Office for Children, Youth and Family Support</i></p> | <p>When you contact Care & Protection Services on 1300 556 728, you will be asked for specific information concerning the child(ren) or young person(s). The following is a guide to the information you may be asked to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name and date of birth of the child(ren) or young person(s) • Home address of the child(ren) or young person(s) • Current whereabouts of the child(ren) or young person(s) • Names of parents/aliases and contact details • Names of known siblings • Nature of abuse or neglect • When the alleged abuse/neglect is said to have occurred • Details about when and how you became aware of the information • Names of others who may have witnessed the abuse or neglect • Details of any disclosures made to you or others • Description of any injuries seen • Description of the behaviour of the child(ren) or young person(s) • Attitudes of the carers of the child or young person to the injury /incident • Known supports to the child, young person and family |

¹³ *How do I make a report?* New South Wales Government, Department of Community Services, Online: http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/preventing_child_abuse_and_neglect/resources_for_mandatory_reporters/how_do_i_make_a_report.html, accessed 3/09/2009. Copyright in this material is retained by NSW Department of Community Services and it has been reproduced with permission.

¹⁴ Information required when making a report, Towards Safe Places, *Care & Protection Services*, Office for Children, Youth and Family Support, ACT, http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/ocys/services/care_and_protection.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOU MAKE A REPORT? (NSW)¹⁵

When you telephone DoCS to make a report, a caseworker at the Helpline will make an initial assessment to determine what action needs to be taken.

The DoCS caseworker is specially trained to ask you relevant questions, to ensure that they get all the information they can about the safety, welfare and wellbeing of the child. The caseworker can also consider any information held by DoCS about the child and/or family such as previous reports or recent contact with the family.

The caseworker will then conduct a safety and risk assessment to identify any safety or risk issues for the child or young person. This will enable them to decide what action needs to be taken.

If the caseworker decides that there is reason to believe that the child or young person is at risk of harm they may refer the matter to a DoCS Community Services Centre or Joint Investigation Response Team for a secondary assessment.

The caseworker will let you know whether they intend to refer the matter to the local DoCS Community Services Centre for follow-up.

Following an initial assessment, the caseworker may decide that, on the information provided, there is not enough reason to believe that the child or young person is at risk of harm. In this case, the caseworker will let you know that no action will be taken. The caseworker must record the reasons why they have decided not to take any action.

¹⁵ *What happens when I make a Report*. New South Wales Government, Department of Community Services, Online: http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/preventing_child_abuse_and_neglect/resources_for_mandatory_reporters/what_happens_when_i_make_a_report_.html, accessed 23/09/2009. Copyright in this material s retained by NSW Department of Community Services and it has been reproduced with permission.

2.4. Responding to disclosures

2.4a. What is a disclosure?

A disclosure occurs when a young person reveals to you that they have been abused or another young person or child has been abused.

2.4b. Guidelines for responding to disclosures¹⁶

Leaders in childrens' and youth ministry are in a unique position and your relationship with children cannot be underestimated. Your group may be providing a safe haven, and perhaps the only place where a child feels comfortable and able to talk to adults. It is therefore possible that a child may approach you to talk about abuse.

You can show your care and concern by:

- Listening carefully to what the young person is saying, but close down the conversation as soon as possible.
- Controlling expressions of panic or shock.
- Reassuring the young person that to disclose was the right thing to do.
- Indicating what you will do, i.e. that you will talk to someone (your Head of Department / Pastor).

Please do not:

- Express anger or disgust about what has happened.
- Make promises you cannot keep, such as promising that you will not tell anyone or stop the abuse happening.
- Seek further details beyond those that the young person freely wants to discuss.

Your role is to listen to the child or young person, not to conduct an investigation.

What to do next:

- Immediately refer to the **ACC NSW Required Lines for Reporting**.
- Record what the young person said on Child Protection Incident Report Form and give it to your Head of Department / Pastor.
- Please do not share what the young person has said to you with anyone other than your Head of Department / Pastor. In this situation, confidentiality is very important.
- Even if abuse is no longer happening it is still important to report the matter, as the adult may be abusing other children. Also it may be that the child will need guidance and help in overcoming the effects of the abuse.

¹⁶ Adapted from *Keeping Children & Young People Safe*. (Canberra: Office for Children, Youth & Family Support, ACT Government Publishing Services. 2006), p. 18. Online: http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/5660/keeping_childweb.pdf, accessed 23/09/2009.

2.4c. Supporting a child after disclosure

In a ministry situation it is highly likely that you will continue to have contact with the child after a disclosure. It is important to recognise that the child has disclosed to you because they trust you and feel safe with you.

As you continue to **nurture** and **minister** to the child it may be useful to be mindful of the following:

- Create a calm environment
- Engaging in appropriate relationships
- Practice social inclusivity
- Provide an ordered program
- Assist appropriate behaviours
- Focus attention on the safe space

See Table 16 for detailed information on the Guidelines for supporting a child after a disclosure of abuse.

Reflection 2: Supporting a child after a disclosure

What are some of the ways you might be able to support a child or young person in your ministry area?

2.4d. Self care for leaders receiving a disclosure

As a leader it can be very distressing to have a child or young person disclose an incidence of abuse. As part of your self care in this situation, it is important to debrief.

2.4di. Debriefing

What is debriefing?

Debriefing is verbally and emotionally “unloading” your feelings about a particular situation you have had to deal with. In this context, we are referring to debriefing after a child or someone else has disclosed a form of child abuse. It also refers to debriefing after witnessing abuse.

Why should you debrief?

If you do not debrief after disclosure or witnessing abuse, it is possible that you will take the negative feelings “on board”, and this can cause stress, which is likely to impact your relationships with others, as well as your effectiveness in your ministry. Another issue that may arise if you do not debrief, is that you may transfer your disgust or negativity about the abuse onto the child who has been abused.

How do you debrief?

You need to talk to your Head of Department or Supervisor regarding your feelings about what has been disclosed, or what you have witnessed. You do not need to tell them the details of the abuse, simply how you feel about it, and how you feel about your role in supporting the child.

GUIDELINES FOR SUPPORTING A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON AFTER A DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE ¹⁷

Create a calm environment

Children and young people who have been victims of abuse are likely to operate on "high alert" mode and might find it difficult to relax. Their brains are likely to be perpetually in a state of high arousal and their behaviour may as a consequence reflect their brain state.

When working in a ministry situation with these children and young people, it can be helpful to create a calm physical and emotional environment.

A calm physical environment may include providing an opportunity to move to a "quieter" sensory space. Eg. Calm colours, quieter inputs - such as media, less cluttered rooms

A calm emotional environment may include providing opportunities for quiet reflection (listening and thinking tasks – as opposed to doing tasks), talking in smaller group sizes or pairs, speaking in a quieter voice.

Engaging in appropriate relationships

Within a ministry role there is a capacity to engage in appropriate relationships through nurturing and ministering to children and young people. A significant component of an appropriate relationship is encouragement and affirmation. It is especially important for children and young people who are victims of abuse to feel valued and affirmed.

However, in an attempt to focus on encouraging and affirming, it is important that no special treatments are incorporated into practice which could be interpreted as favouritism by other children and young people.

Within a ministry role, it is also important for leaders to have a clear understanding of where their ministry role starts and ends. It can be helpful for ministry co-ordinator to assist leaders to understand the parameters of their role and support them in staying within the parameters of their ministry role.

Ministry co-ordinators are also responsible for supporting their leaders and ensuring the provision of any additional counselling support if required, as those leaders continue to minister to children and young people who have been abused.

Practice social inclusivity

It is important that within a ministry program that a leader does whatever they can to "normalise" expectations surrounding a child or young person's participation. It can be helpful for a victim of abuse to feel they are accepted and included in social conventions associated with their peers. If a social activity is taking place, it is important to include the child or young person in the invitation, even if they choose not to attend.

Equally it is important to be mindful of the non-verbal cues they give you when arriving at a ministry program and exercise flexibility in what you might expect from them. For example, if you had planned to ask everyone to share their good news for the week and an abused child or young person's body language tells you that things are difficult for them at the moment, it may be helpful to re-structure how you might use the activity, so they have a choice for non-participation, without drawing undue attention from the other children and young people.

Provide an ordered program

Children and young people who have been victims of abuse may not have experienced a safe, ordered environment. Again this can be result in their brain being on "high alert", which can have a flow on effect in their behaviours. It may be helpful to provide a ministry program that is predictable, with a consistent routine. This can also have the effect of creating a "calm" space for them.

Assist appropriate behaviours

Some behaviours emerging from children and young people who have been victims of abuse can be disruptive and at times destructive. As a ministry leader you have the opportunity to assist them to exercise appropriate behaviours by helping them see the patterns in their behaviour as well as the impact their behaviours have on others around them.

It is important that ministry leaders exercise "tough love" by sending clear messages about what are acceptable and unacceptable behaviours. However, in doing so, it is also important to stay emotionally connected to the child or young person, emphasizing their value.

It is also important for ministry leaders to advise their ministry co-ordinator of any concerning behaviours exhibited by children and young people who have been abused.

Focus attention on the safe space

For children and young people who have been abused, a ministry program may be a safe haven or safe space in their lives. Ministry leaders are able to be of assistance by providing opportunities within ministry program structures to focus attention on attendance at the ministry program as being safe.

It does not mean that ministry leaders are to draw attention to the abuse situation or any investigation that might be taking place. Entering into discussions of this nature may jeopardise investigations by contaminating evidence.

¹⁷ Adapted from *Working with Traumatized Children*. (Australian Childhood Foundation, 2007).

2.4dii. Possible Trauma from Exposure to Disclosures of Abuse

Each person has a unique response to receiving a disclosure of abuse. There may be some common reactions such as: shock, anger, sympathy for the victim and frustration.

However, there may also be more severe reactions which may in some cases have a more invasive impact of a person's ability to function effectively within their ministry and life in general.

This more invasive impact may be a result of trauma reactions to hearing about abuse involving someone with whom a relationship exists.

Some indicators that may suggest a leader has been traumatised by receiving one or more disclosures may manifest in a variety of ways.

See *Table 11* for an overview of some common manifestations of trauma associated with disclosure of abuse.

If a leader is displaying one or more of these manifestations, it may be helpful for them to seek additional counselling support. The **Safe Places Unit** may be contacted in this situation.

See information in *Section 2.3f* for contact details.

POSSIBLE TRAUMA FROM EXPOSURE TO DISCLOSURES OF ABUSE¹⁸

- Hyper-vigilance – in relation to the alleged victim of abuse and/or all children and young people involved in ministry
- Sleep and appetite disturbances
- Flashbacks to receiving the disclosure – “seeing yourself” in the space where the disclosure occurred, hearing the information repeatedly
- Overwhelming sense of powerlessness to being able to protect the children and young people in ministry
- Overwhelming sense of guilt that the leader was not able to protect the child or young person prior to abuse occurring
- Mistrusting of ability to discern that abuse may be occurring
- Questioning of core beliefs
- Difficulty in “switching off” from ministry role
- Constant questioning of ministry ability

¹⁸ Adapted from *Vicarious Trauma*. (Australian Childhood Foundation, 2007).

SESSION THREE: SAFE MINISTRY LEADERS

This session aims to:

- Increase awareness on the aspects of selecting appropriate leaders
- Explore the components of ministry appointment, induction and supervision
- Provide guidelines on handling complaints
- Explore elements of appropriate leader behaviour

3. Safe Ministry Leaders

This section is divided into 2 major areas:

- Responsibilities for senior church leaders and ministry co-ordinators in choosing and appointing the right people for ministry
- Appropriate leader behaviours

During the workshop the main emphasis will be on appropriate leader behaviours. It is expected that senior church leadership and ministry co-ordinators will take the information which will be introduced briefly during the workshop and determine how effectively they are following the recommendations for leaders. There are a substantial number of support documents available in the **Head of Department Implementation Pack** and it is highly recommended that churches explore how the resources may be of value to them in discharging their duty of care in this area.

Task 3A: Safe Ministry Concerns

Read Henry's Story and in your groups discuss and record your concerns in this scenario.

Task 3B: Safe Ministry Improvements

In your groups discuss and record what could have been done to ensure that safe ministry took place.

Henry's Story

Henry has been attending morning services at Evergreen Community Church for about 4 months. He first came to Evergreen when he responded to an invitation to attend a café church evening. He hadn't been to a church since he was a small child when his grandfather used to take him for Christmas and Easter services - some 30 years ago.

One of the things he noticed about Evergreen was the children, who became restless and disturbed people during the service. Henry thought it would be a good idea to run a games program during the service to keep the children entertained.

The next week, he brought along some sports gear. Before the service he told the Pastor that he would be happy to take the kids outside for some games. The Pastor had some concerns. He hadn't known Henry for very long. He seemed OK, but he didn't really know anything about him, except that he worked in something to do with computers.

On the other hand, he knew that the children were disrupting the service as he had received a number of complaints from the congregation, saying they found it hard to hear over the noise of the children. In the past the Pastor had tried to start a Children's Church, but no-one wanted to take responsibility for it.

The Pastor decided to let Henry go ahead with the games program and see how it went over the next few weeks. Just before the sermon, the Pastor announced that Henry had offered to take the children for games in the church yard.

Henry was delighted. He had 12 children aged from 3 to 12 years. He thought they'd start with a game of "flag tag", where the aim was to pull the coloured sash off the people from the other team. Unfortunately, he had some problems with the game, because the bigger children knocked over a couple of the younger children and a 4 year old ended up with a bad cut on the knee from a sharp rock jutting out of the dirt.

He then set up a game of soccer and then took the injured child into the kitchen at the back of the parish hall and tried to clean up the cut. He had some difficulty stopping the bleeding, so he decided to tie a tea towel around the child's knee. Even though he felt like he was out of his depth, and the child kept crying, he really didn't want to take the child back into church, as he thought it would look like he wasn't competent.

He decided he'd better get back to the other children. When he went back outside, there were only 7 children there. One of the children said the others had decided to go for a walk down to the shops. Henry started to feel panicky. He decided the best thing was to take the rest of the children with him and go to find the others at the shops.

He finally found them and was heading up the street to the church when the service finished and people started to come out of the church. There were some exclamations from parents who were not happy that Henry had taken the children off the church premises. The parent of the injured child saw the tea towel wrapped around their leg and ran over to Henry to find out what happened.

3.1. Selecting Appropriate Leaders¹⁹

A key component of Safe Ministry is to ensure that the appropriate leaders are involved with the ministry. Thorough recruitment, screening and selection of leaders are vital to the success of a ministry. By being thorough, churches are ensuring that the people attending programs are being ministered to by people who are suited to the ministry role.

Recruitment and screening is ultimately the responsibility of Senior Leadership. However, ministry leaders and helpers are often selected by Ministry Co-ordinators.

A **Leader Selection Checklist** is located in **Head of Department Implementation Pack**, covering the aspects of recruitment and screening that need to be covered before a person is appointed to a ministry role.

A formal selection process provides a transparent process that would survive an investigative enquiry related to your degree of due diligence when selecting and appointing leaders.

The steps to selecting leaders include:

- Pre-recruitment
- Recruitment
- Screening
 - Proof of Identification
 - Minimum Attendance Policy
 - Application forms
 - Declaration forms
 - Reference Checks
 - Observation of potential leaders
 - Interview process

Detailed information on the steps may be found in Table 13

¹⁹ Adapted from *Towards Safe Places*, (Sydney: ACC-NSW, 2007), p. 28

| RECOMMENDED STEPS TO SELECTING LEADERS |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Pre-recruitment</p> <p>Determine the ministry role, duties, etc.</p> <p>Determine what pre-requisites are required for the ministry role.</p> <p>Recruitment</p> <p>Depending on the positions and requirements, this may require a personal approach or a broadcast of the need for ministry leaders.</p> |
| <p>Screening</p> <p>There are several components to effective screening of potential leaders. This includes evaluating written material, investigating written and verbal references, observing the potential leader during ministry involvement and assessing suitability through responses, questions and general behaviour in an interview.²⁰</p> |
| <p>Minimum Attendance Policy</p> <p>It is advisable to have a minimum attendance policy (eg. 6 months) at your church before appointing a person to a ministry role. While this may be difficult to implement if a person is keen and the need is great, there are valuable reasons for implementing a minimum attendance policy. One concept behind having a minimum attendance policy is to enable people to "receive" before they "serve". When a person starts to attend a church it is important that they are nurtured and ministered to as they come to know others within the Body of Christ in a particular congregation. Throughout this period they also have the opportunity to develop relationships that will be supportive of them in any ministry roles they undertake in the future.</p> <p>Each church has a particular culture. Some aspects of the culture are obvious, others are less obvious. It is important that people joining ministry teams have some understanding of how the church functions and its culture.</p> <p>As a person attends over a period of time, it also gives the church leadership an opportunity to get to know them, their giftings and suitability for particular ministry roles.</p> |
| <p>Application forms</p> <p>Regardless of the leadership position within the church it is advisable to have all leaders complete an application form. These forms can be designed to give those appointing or employing leaders vital information regarding the applicant's background and experience. It is also valuable to use these forms to ask specific questions regarding criminal convictions or investigations of child abuse.</p> |
| <p>Declaration forms</p> <p>In NSW churches, all leaders are required to complete a NSW Working With Children Check – Volunteer Declaration and paid staff are required to complete a NSW Working With Children Check – Applicant Declaration and Consent. Copies of these forms are available from the NSW Commission for Children and Young People at www.check.kids.nsw.gov.au/volunteer-declaration.php and www.check.kids.nsw.gov.au/background-check-consent.php</p> <p>In ACT churches all leaders are required to complete a Statutory Declaration. A copy of a Statutory Declaration for ACT churches is located in Head of Department Implementation Pack.</p> <p>In both cases these forms are to be submitted to the local church office for processing. Failure to require some form of declaration from a potential leader may invalidate your insurance cover, should that person be later convicted of child abuse.</p> |

²⁰ For more information on applying effective staff selection, refer to *Working with Children's Check*, NSW Commission for Children & Young People, <http://www.kids.nsw.gov.au/check/guidelines.html>.

Reference Checks

Even if a potential leader comes to your church on the recommendation of a person within your church, it is important to still thoroughly check **all** references. It is the responsibility of the Pastor, Ministry Coordinators or their delegate to ensure that this takes place.

Observation of potential leaders

If a potential leader is already involved in your church, it is advisable to observe their general behaviour and interaction with people (particularly if they are going to be working with children or young people) before appointing them to leadership.

Interview process

Even if time is very short and the need for a new leader is great, it is still advisable to go through a formal interview process with each potential leader. During an interview, questions can be asked to assist you in determining potential risks of appointing a specific person. A selection of sample **interview questions** is located in the **Head of Department Implementation Pack**.

3.2. Ministry Appointment and Induction

Once a potential leader has been selected through recruitment and screening it is advisable to formally appoint them. This method of appointment will vary from church to church. However, the following points on **appointment authority** may provide some helpful guidelines.

- Determine who has the authority to appoint a leader to a ministry
- Determine how the **selection** steps above will be used and who will implement each step
- Determine who has the authority to ask a leader to step down from a ministry or step aside for a period of time
- Have more than one person responsible for appointing a person
- Before a leader is formally appointed, ask the Pastor if they have any objections to that person fulfilling a specific ministry role.

Reflection 3: Appointment Authority

Consider your ministry or church.

- *Who has appointment authority for new leaders?*
- *What process do you use?*
- *What opportunity does your Pastor have to make comment about a person's suitability for ministry?*

Before a new leader commences ministry, it is important that they are equipped for their position through effective induction and training. Even though time can be pressured and leaders may be needed immediately, not providing them with all required information and training can result in them not completing ministry tasks appropriately. Lack of adequate training can also result in a ministry becoming unnecessarily stressful for a leader. In some situations, excessive ministry stress can contribute to unwise decisions being made by a leader, irresponsible behaviours and possibly even ministry burnout.

A Sample **Ministry Induction Template** is located in the **Head of Department Implementation Pack**.

Reflection 4: Ministry Induction

Consider your ministry or church. What would be helpful information for a new person in a ministry role?

- *How you would present that information to them?*
- *What you would make available to them?*
- *Who would present the information?*

Before a new leader is formally appointed to a position of ministry, they also need to know what the ministry role will entail and what is expected of them. It is essential that potential leaders are aware of the church's Code of Conduct and are willing to embrace it prior to being appointed.

3.2a. Leaders and Accountability

Accountability relates to an acceptance of being answerable to those in authority and responsible for words and actions (*or lack of*) to those sharing in ministry and those receiving ministry (*Marshall, T, 1991*). Within a Christian framework, the notion of being answerable to those in authority implies a willingness to be called to account. This implies that anyone in ministry is not able to function in ministry without responsibility for how their words or actions will impact another person, or to what degree they are consistent with the aims and objectives of the ministry and the church. A Code of Conduct is a valuable tool for facilitating accountability.

3.2ai. Code of Conduct

A Code of Conduct is a set of guidelines that list what are **appropriate, expected, and inappropriate** behaviours by leaders. It defines clear behavioural and activity boundaries. Promotion of and adherence to a Code of Conduct by all leaders, assists the church to become accountable to the children and young people in its care.

ACC NSW Code of Conduct is for churches to implement.

The code of conduct includes areas:

- Stay connected: *maintaining your relationship with God and your church community.*
- Be faithful: *being faithful to your ministry commitments and requirements and to your representation of the ACC in NSW.*
- Bring honour: *conducting yourself both in and out of ministry in a way that brings honor to your ministry, your church and to the Lord Jesus Christ.*
- Be a leader of integrity: *act in accordance with the values, policies and protocols of the NSW ACC and your local church, stewarding information and resources well and working towards fulfilling your responsibilities and being the best leader you can be in your field of endeavour.*
- Ensure safe ministry: *Comply with all Child Safe and Child Friendly policy requirements.*

The Code of Conduct also provides a mechanism for leaders to call each other to account. If a member of the ministry team is operating outside of the code of conduct, the accountability that exists between team members should enable one team member to call another team member to account in love.

Reflection 5: Code of Conduct

Review the ACC NSW Code of Conduct.

How can the Code of Conduct be communicated to your ministry leaders and co-ordinators?

Task 3C: Code of Conduct

Read the scenarios below and determine what you should do and what the Ministry Co-ordinator could do in each situation.

1. One of the 18 year old kid's club leaders has had it explained that she is not to contact the children in their homes alone. She has been asked not to do this several times by her ministry co-ordinator. This week at Kids Club you overhear one of the 10 year old girls talking about how this leader has visited her in her bedroom yesterday after school.
2. After youth group on a Friday night you see a 19 year old male youth leader at the movies with one of the 15 year old girls.
3. Susan is part of the worship team. She regularly disagrees with the Worship Pastor regarding song choice and musical arrangement. She shares her criticisms with other church members on a regular basis after the services and during practice. She is particularly critical of the Worship Pastor on a personal level.
4. Daniel is a key leader of your Seniors group. He is involved with driving the group on outings and teaching during meeting times. He is particularly attentive to some of the older widows in the group. One day you notice that he has a brand new car. Commenting, on how nice the car is, he shares that it has been given to him by one of the widows he assists regularly as her way of thanking him.

3.5. Leaders and Appropriate Behaviour

3.5a. Principles of Responsible Ministry

When working with people and especially children and young people, it is helpful to adopt principles of responsible ministry. These are not “black and white” rules, but principles to use as a guide in your words, actions and situations in which you find yourself as a leader.

- Be private in a public setting
- Communicate intentions
- Practice safety in numbers
- Be aware of the power of the role model
- Be aware of non-verbal communication messages
- Be aware of the impact of your words and actions
- Be mindful of diversity
- Practice appropriate touch
- Respond to individual’s touch positively
- Respond to the needs of the individual

Reflection 6: Responsible ministry

Describe how these principles might impact your ministry. How could you implement each principle?

Use some of Tables 20a – 20d information on the following pages to assist you to unpack each principle.

PRINCIPLES OF RESPONSIBLE MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Be mindful of the power of words

As a leader you are in a position to have an enormous impact on a person's life. The words we choose to use can build a person up, boost their self esteem and demonstrate how they are valued. Words can also "cut them down", diminish their self esteem and give them the message that they are not valued, therefore we need to be careful how we bring correction.

Be private in a public setting

This principle encourages a "transparent" approach. If a leader is required to speak with a child individually, then it is wise to do so privately in a public setting. For example, moving a few metres away from the rest of the group, but staying within the view of all of the group, allows a leader to have a private conversation without others hearing what is said. This also ensures that anyone in the group can see that the leader is behaving in an appropriate manner.

Communicate intentions

When it is necessary to speak to a child privately, even in the view of others, then it is wise to inform another leader of the intention to do so. This removes the risk of supposition by others looking on, that anything inappropriate could be happening. It is also a useful way of setting up a safety net, should it become necessary to have additional assistance with a child, or an opportunity to end the discussion.

Practice safety in numbers

If it is necessary for a leader to remove themselves and a child from the view of the group, then it is wise to take another leader with them. This may be particularly useful, if a child is distressed, or the child needs to be counselled. If it is not possible to take another leader, it is wise to leave the door open and to sit in front of a window, where the leader can be seen by passers-by.

Alternatively, a room where people regularly come in and out, and the door is left open, can be used if other options are not possible. In some circumstances, it may be preferable to take one or more other children with them. For example, taking out sporting supplies is best done with a number of children, rather than one child.

Leaders and transport

Where leaders need to drive children or young people in their vehicle, they should only do so if another person is with them at all times. It may be helpful to draw up a transport roster ensuring that there will always be more than one leader available for transporting children or young people.

The "buddy system" can also be used to ensure that one leader is never left alone at a venue with a child or young person.

Be aware of the power of the role model

The behaviour of adult leaders is observed at all times by the children in their care. Children are quick to discern inconsistency between words and actions, and credibility can be lost if they perceive inconsistencies. In general, children will model the behaviours they observe by the people who are influential in their lives. If a child admires a leader, then they are likely to imitate the behaviours of that leader. If a leader is encouraging, nurturing, affirming and respectful in their words and actions, then the child is more likely to become encouraging, nurturing, affirming and respectful when relating to others. If a leader is discouraging, unreasonably punitive, disaffirming, disrespectful or sarcastic, then the child is more likely to treat others in the same manner. If the latter occurs, the child often also becomes disrespectful towards the leader whom they sought to imitate. It can become of case of a leader "reaping what they have sowed".

PRINCIPLES OF RESPONSIBLE MINISTRY (CONTINUED)

Be aware of non-verbal communication messages

Non-verbal communication refers to all methods or channels of communication not including the use of words. It includes body language, physical characteristics and appearance, the distance one person stands from another, physical environment and the use of time.

The use of all of these categories of non-verbal communication sends powerful messages to others. When working with children it is useful for a leader to identify cues that a child has a problem, and needs support, through interpreting their non-verbal communication. This is particularly useful in the case of a distressed child needing physical contact. (See section on Appropriate touch) The more a leader observes the behaviour of children in their care, the easier it will be to identify a distressed non-verbal cue.

A general understanding of the impact of distance and personal space is also useful for leaders. It is useful for leaders to consider the distances they stand or sit from the children in their care, and determine if they may be making children uncomfortable, because they are operating within an inappropriate space for a task.

Be mindful of diversity

We live in a socially and culturally diverse society. Children and their families will come into programs within our church with a variety of cultural norms and expectations. You may come across diversity needs associated with: country of origin, religion, values, past experiences, customs, social-economic backgrounds, disabilities and denominational expectations.

During ministry, we need to be mindful of expectations and taboos that may exist for a child or their family – especially in the form of words and actions we use and activities and situations we expect children to become involved in.

When planning your programs, make a checklist of any activities that may cause a problem socially or culturally for the children involved. If you suspect an activity could be a problem, ask the family prior to asking the child to take part in it²¹

²¹ Information on social and cultural norms and taboos may be found at:

G. Imai, 'Gestures: Body Language and Non-Verbal Communication', in *1996 Curriculum Materials for Grades K-12*. (Pomona, California: Teachers' Asian Studies Summer Institute, 1996).

Online: <http://www.intranet.csupomona.edu/~tassi/gestures.htm#gestures>, accessed 23/09/2009.

"Exploring Cultural Awareness", in *GAL Volunteer Workbook Training Manual*. (Raleigh, North Carolina: National CASA 2001). Online: <http://www.nccourts.org/Citizens/GAL/Documents/Workbook/chapter3.doc>, accessed 23/09/2009.

PRINCIPLES OF RESPONSIBLE MINISTRY (CONTINUED)

Practice appropriate touch

Human touch is a vital part of most, if not all, people's development. In general, we need to have some degree of touch with another person. Some leaders have developed such anxiety about being wrongfully accused of child abuse, that they won't ever touch a child, even if the child is distressed. A useful principle for leaders to embrace is to work at getting the right balance between "no touch" and "prolonged touch". Using the guidelines below will provide transparency in your approach to the area of touch

If a child is distressed a hug around the shoulders for 30 seconds, may be adequate, and more appropriate than a frontal hug until they stop crying.

A useful strategy to use when confronted by a distressed child is to move them as quickly as possible to a seated position side by side at a 45 to 90 degree angle. This puts the child and leader on equal grounds, and allows the leader to have easy and appropriate access to physically comfort the child. Creating the angle or "triangle of safety" is important. The triangle enables the leader to remain close enough to provide physical comfort, but not so close that the child or young person can "drape" themselves on them. The triangle also enables the leader to "control" the situation more effectively. A key point in the area of touch is that leaders need to be seen to be doing the right thing.

It is also advisable for leaders to use **neutral zones** when touching a child. The preferable area for touch is from the shoulder to the elbow on the outside of the arm. Another area is across the shoulders and top of back. It is important not to touch below the top third of the back. A good "rule of thumb" is to restrict touch to the bony parts of the child's upper body – excluding the child's head. Be on the look out for muscle response. When you touch a child or young person, take special note of their physical response to your touch. If their muscles tense under your touch there is a good chance that they are not comfortable with your touch. If they move closer to you in response to your touch, they are giving you an indication that they want the physical touch.

Respond to an individual's touch positively

Sometimes children take it upon themselves to touch adults, and small children; in particular can climb onto a leader's lap. In general, when a child does this, they are letting a leader know that they need some form of physical contact. Rather than remove the child immediately, it may be wiser for the leader to allow the child to satisfy their urge for contact for a brief time (perhaps 30 seconds to a minute), and then remove them, leaving them close by, so not to imply to the child that they are rejecting them.

Another common method of touch employed by children is unsolicited hugging of adult leaders. It is helpful to develop strategies to use in these situations. (Example: give a child a task, something to hold)

Respond to the needs of the child

When a child has been abused or is distressed, it is important not to pre-determine how much physical contact a child needs, based upon the need of the leader to provide comfort. For example, a child who has been a victim of on-going physical or emotional abuse may be uncomfortable with anything more than the briefest physical contact. If touch has always been negative, it can be hard for them to respond to or desire to be comforted physically. A useful principle to embrace is to let the child lead. If they don't lead, then sit beside them, but keep touch to the bare minimum.

Scenario 3D - Responsible Ministry

Scenario A:

During a prayer ministry time at youth group, 14 year old Catherine told Bob, who was a youth leader that she needed to talk to him privately about something.

Scenario B:

Jack is an 8 year old boy who has attended Kids' Club at the local church for the last 2 years. Until recently he had been a happy and outgoing child. Around 3 months ago he became considerably quieter and stopped wanting to play games during Kids' Club. Last week when he arrived at the church he was limping. When asked by John, a leader, what had happened he said nothing had happened and limped away. One of his friends who also came to Kids' Club overheard him telling John. He then told John that Jack had changed when his mother's new boyfriend moved in with them, and now he was sad most of the time.

Scenario C:

When leaving the church at the end of youth group one evening, Albert, one of the leaders, spotted 15 year old Henry hanging around in the car park. Albert called out to him and asked if he was waiting to be picked up to which Henry said no. Albert walked over to him and asked him why he hadn't left. Henry said no-one would care if he never went home. By this stage all of the other leaders had left the church car park.

Scenario D:

Blake co-ordinates Kid's Club at his church. Evelyn is an 18 year old helper at Kid's Club. During the story time at the program, Evelyn often squeezes children's shoulders at the base of their necks, or uses her foot to poke at the bottoms of the children who are not paying attention. Suzanne, one of the mothers, contacted Blake and informed him that Evelyn had injured her son's neck.

Scenario E:

Fourteen year old Kerry catches the 7:30pm bus outside the church hall after Creative Ministry on Thursday nights. Last week they were learning a new song and the rehearsal went a few minutes overtime and she missed the bus. There wasn't going to be another bus for an hour so she asked Richard, one of the worship leaders, to drive her home.

Scenario F:

Thirteen year old Marcel started coming to youth group four weeks ago, just after she moved to the area with her Mother. She was often disruptive during the talks and, if one of the leaders asked her to listen to what was being said, she often back-chatted them and kept on distracting those around her. Her behaviour was discussed at Leaders' meetings and Josie, one of the leaders, agreed to take her aside and try to find out why she behaved the way she did.

3.3. Leader Supervision

3.3a. Ministry Expectations²²

A key aspect of effective supervision in ministry is linked to clearly understood expectations by leaders and ministry co-ordinators. Below are some guidelines related to ministry expectations.

As a **ministry team leader** you could be expected to:

- Commit to the aims of the ministry
- Support other ministry team leaders
- Fulfill your ministry role as described to you by your ministry co-ordinator/Head of Department
- Undergo any training required for your ministry position
- Attend ministry team meetings as required
- Embrace the church code of conduct

As a **ministry co-ordinator / Head of Department** you could be expected to:

- Commit to the aims of the ministry
- Support ministry team leaders
- Fulfil your ministry role as described to you by your Pastor
- Undergo any training required for your ministry position
- Embrace the church code of conduct
- Ensure that all leaders are screened, appointed and inducted effectively into ministry roles
- Ensure that your ministry program has been approved by senior church leadership
- Ensure that your ministry program meets the requirements for Safe Leaders and Safe Programs, as set down by the ACC-NSW Policy.

As a person in a ministry role within the church you could expect that your **senior church leadership** will:

- Provide mechanisms to support all leaders in their roles
- Ensure resources (people, financial, administrative access and equipment) are available for approved ministry programs
- Provide mechanisms to access approved ministry training

Reflection 10: Ministry Expectations

1. How realistic are the ministry expectations above?
2. Which aspects would you find difficult to implement in your church?
3. How could you communicate any of the expectations to those in ministry roles?
4. What mechanism could you use to monitor the degree to which expectations are being met by those in ministry and senior church leadership?

²² Adapted from *Creating Safe Spaces*. (Baptist Union of NSW, 2008).

3.3b. Support for Leaders

Another key aspect of supervision is leader support. Once appointed, it is important that the Senior Leadership ensure that support is provided for all leaders. This support may take the form of formal or informal support mechanisms.

Regardless of the type of mechanism implemented, it is important that all leaders have a clear understanding of:

- to whom they can go for support
- what type of support is available to them
 - how to identify that they may need additional support

Reflection 11: Ministry Support

Consider your ministry or church.

1. *What support mechanisms do you have in place for ministry leaders?*
2. *What indicators may you observe in a ministry leader who is not coping with their ministry role?*
3. *What actions might you take when these indicators are present*

Reflection 12: Ministry Support

1. *As a ministry leader, what type of support would you like from your ministry co-ordinators, Head of Department or senior church leadership?*
2. *How often would you like to access this type of support?*

3.3c. Fulfilling Ministry Role

Once a leader has commenced ministry, it is a helpful practice to appraise or evaluate how well they are fulfilling their ministry role. This can be achieved through a variety of methods. For example:

- Observation by Ministry Co-ordinator, Head of Department and/or Senior Church Leadership Team
- Formal or informal mentoring arrangements
- Self appraisal
- Ministry team appraisals
- Informal discussions at regular intervals

See **Head of Department Implementation Pack** for **Ministry Review** template

Reflection 13: Ministry appraisals

Consider your ministry or church.

What mechanisms might you use to determine how a leader is fulfilling a ministry role?

3.4. Handling Complaints²³

As Duty of Care extends to the wider body of Christ in a church, it also includes appropriate practices when handling complaints against a leader. The NSW Ombudsman has provided information through Fact Sheets to address the issue of complaints against a paid or volunteer church employee. The essence of addressing a complaint is for it to be handled in a fair, unbiased and prompt manner by someone who has no conflict of interest in the matter.

GUIDELINES FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS

Appoint an unbiased person/mediator (or team)

Appoint a person/team of people to mediate problems and complaints who are not directly related to program, eg. in a church setting, people from the leadership team (eldership) who are approachable would be appropriate candidates. The role of this person/ team is to be an unbiased mediator who has no conflict of interest in the issue.

Reconciliation and forgiveness

In dealing with problems or difficulties, reconciliation is the goal. In a church context, Matthew 18:15-20 provides a suggested process to bring about reconciliation. In the past, people were reluctant to give apologies as this could be taken as an admission of liability. However, amendments to the Act, which came into force on 6 December 2002, mean that an apology does not constitute an admission of liability (Ombudsman Child Protection Factsheet 11).

Determine a course of action

All courses of action must be based on evidence gathered by the mediator. Disputes need to be handled fairly, without bias and without delay. As part of the process, and once a course of action is determined "keep a record of who will do what, why it is being done, how it is to be done, what the [organisation (church)] hopes to achieve and when it needs to be done" (Ombudsman Child Protection Factsheet 4).

Clear communication of the process to staff and volunteers

Once your organisation has established a process for handling problems and difficulties, this process needs to be communicated to all parties, i.e. employers and employees/volunteers.

For more information regarding handling complaints or allegations against a church leader, please contact the Safe Places Unit.

Reflection 14: Handling Complaints

What information and support do you need from the State Executive to assist you to handle complaints more effectively?

²³ Adapted from *Creating Safe Places*. (Baptist Union of NSW, 2007).

SESSION FOUR: SAFE ENVIRONMENTS and PROGRAMS

This session aims to:

- Introduce participants to the concept of safe emotional and physical environments in ministry
- Explore the areas of establishing a safe program and safe ministry practices

4. Safe Environments and Programs

Task 4A: Safe physical environment

Which areas of providing a safe physical environment had not been addressed in the scenario about Henry?

4.1. Why Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)?

The national OHS Strategy for 2002-2012 has a vision to see 'Australian workplaces free from death, injury and disease.'²⁴

OHS is not just a legal responsibility of every organisation, it also improves service and productivity. Some research even suggests that 'workers and volunteers who are secure, safe, healthy and supported tend to stay in the service longer, and are better able to cope with the demands of client-centred work. This means that the whole of the community benefits.'²⁵

Why OHS? Because as a church we should be leading the way in creating a safe place for all our workers, volunteers and members. People will not hear and respond to the gospel, if they don't feel safe. Secondly, it is the law.

²⁴ *National OHS Strategy 2002-2012*. (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2002), p. iv.

²⁵ *The Community Services Safety Pack*. January 2004. (Lisarow: Workcover NSW, 2003), p. 5.

4.1.a Duties of the employer

It is the legal responsibility of an employer to ensure the health and wellbeing of all workers, volunteers and anyone on the property. This includes: relevant workplace training, recording and reporting, first aid, identifying hazards and risks.

OHS Representative

In NSW every employer, this includes churches, needs to nominate an OHS representative. For churches who employ more than 20 people, a committee must be established.

In the ACT small employers (less than 10 employees) are not required to nominate a OHS representative.

Consultation

Consultation is not just a legal requirement; it encourages individual and corporate ownership.²⁶

This is an awareness only workshop, for more information please contact your state authority.

| | | |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Australia | Australian Safety and Compensation Council http://www.ascc.gov.au/ | 02 6121 5317 |
| ACT | ACT WorkCover www.workcover.act.gov.au | 02 6205 0200 |
| NSW | <i>WorkCover NSW</i> www.workcover.nsw.gov.au <i>NSW Workers' Compensation Commission</i> www.wcc.nsw.gov.au | 13 10 50 1300 368 040 |

4.2. A Safe Physical Environment

- Suitable venue for ministry and activities has been organised
- Hazards have been identified and control measures implemented

4.2a. A suitable venue for ministry and activities has been organised

Before a ministry or activity commences it is important to ensure that a suitable venue has been selected for an activity. This may include on premises and off premises venues. It is important that the Ministry Co-ordinator, Head of Department or Senior Church Leadership have completed the **Safe Environment Checklist** and considered issues associated with holding activities off premises.

See **Head of Department Implementation Pack** for a **Safe Environment Checklist**.

²⁶ R. Johnson, *OH&S Made Easy*. (Adelaide: Ron Johnson Consulting, 2002), 10.

4.2b. Hazards have been identified and control measures implemented

A hazard is a source of danger that could result in an accident if undue care is not exercised.

Where **risk assessment** considers things that might be a risk or go wrong during a ministry activity, **hazard identification and control measures** relate to actual hazards that are present prior to the commencement of a ministry activity.

Where a hazard is identified, it is important to decide upon one or more measures that can be used to control or eliminate the hazard. These measures are referred to as **Hierarchy of Control measures**.

See **Head of Department Implementation Pack** for **Hazard Identification and Hierarchy of Control Measures Pack**.

4.3. Establishing Safe Programs

There are a number of considerations to be mindful of when establishing a safe ministry program. The key components to consider include:

- Approval for ministry has been obtained
- Program has been outlined and required resources identified
- Appropriate leaders and volunteers have been recruited, screened and selected
- Adequate supervision for ministry and activities has been arranged
- Appropriate activities have been selected
- Level of risks for activities have been assessed and minimised
- Programs and resources are developed
- Permission to proceed with ministry and activities has been given [by Senior Church Leadership – Pastor, Head of Department]
- Activities are monitored and reviewed
 - Ministry leaders are supervised and accountability mechanisms are in place

4.3a. Approval for ministry has been obtained

The Senior Leadership of a church is ultimately responsible for any activities that take place under the umbrella of the church. For this reason every ministry must be approved by the Senior Leadership prior to it commencing.

4.3b. Program has been outlined and required resources identified

Once permission for a ministry has been obtained, then the program associated with that ministry needs to be outlined and resources identified. Resources can include people, equipment and financial resources. At this stage, it does not mean that the ministry is in a position to start or has ***permission to proceed***.

4.3c. Appropriate leaders and volunteers have been recruited, screened, selected and supervised

Thorough recruitment, screening and selection are vital to the success of a ministry. Again this is ultimately the responsibility of Senior Leadership. However, once Heads of Department / Ministry Co-ordinators are in place using the recruitment, screening and selection process, then ministry leaders and helpers may be selected by Heads of Department / Ministry Co-ordinators. However, this is still ultimately the responsibility of Senior Church Leadership and it is in their best interest to have "ticked off" on every person serving in ministry leadership at any level.

Recruitment, screening and selection checklists and forms are available in the **Head of Department Implementation Pack**.

4.3d. Appropriate activities have been selected

Appropriateness for activities can be determined from a number of perspectives:

- Age appropriateness
- Gender appropriateness
- Cultural and social appropriateness
- Awareness of special needs

4.3e. Level of risk assessed and minimised

Activity-based risks

These are risks associated with the activities in a ministry. These potential risks can be related to dangers associated with specific activities, or leader to young person ratio or lack of leader supervision.

Structural risks

These risks are related to the manner in which the ministry or church is structured. It includes accepted behaviours and lack of supervision by adult leaders, lack of existence and implementation of code of conduct, leadership being inaccessible by victims of abuse, lack of implemented child protection and safe environment policies.

4.3ei. Activity risks

Activities can be deemed to be high, medium or low risk activities.

Characteristics of a high risk activity:

- High degree of potential for physical or emotional harm or discomfort to those participating and/or leaders
- High degree of potential for the activity to become emotionally or physically out of control
- Leaders do not know what the possible outcomes of activity might be
- There is a high chance that the leader may lose control of the activity, resulting in one or participants [or the leader] being subject to trauma from others

The hallmarks of a high risk activity may also be present for an individual in what has been classified as a medium or even low risk activity.

When deciding upon activities for your ministry it may be useful to ask yourself the following:

- Does the benefit outweigh possible risks for participants?
- Could this be classified as a high risk activity?
- Is there a high likelihood for damage or trauma?
- Is there a high degree of potential for physical or emotional harm to participants and/ or leaders?
- Can the activity be modified to reduce the possible risks?
- Are there critical incident and emergency procedures in place if required?
- Does the ministry or church have suitably trained and qualified people to address critical incidents or emergencies?
- Would the activities be covered by ACC-NSW insurance?

An **Activity Risk Assessment Template** is located in the **Head of Department Implementation Pack**. A general **Risk Assessment** template (including Risk Matrix, Risk Register and Risk Action Plan) is also located in the **Head of Department Implementation Pack**.

4.3f. Adequate supervision for ministry and activities has been arranged

Another component of a safe environment looks at appropriate levels of supervision. Supervision covers both the general ministry – overseer – as well as specific activity supervision.

Some factors to consider when determining ratios

- In the normal course of events are the children or young people likely to be left unsupervised?
- Do any of the children or young people have special needs that may require additional leader assistance?
- Is the activity likely to be a high, medium or low risk activity? How might the level of risk affect the supervision requirements for participants?
- How do outdoor activities impact the supervision requirements for participants?
- How do off-premises activities impact the supervision requirements for participants?
- How do overnight activities impact the supervision requirements for participants?

Staff to Child Ratios

The Children's Services Regulation 2004 sets out the following ratio for working with children:

- (a) 1:4 in respect of all children who are under the age of 2 years, and,
- (b) 1:8 in respect of all children who are 2 or more years of age but under 3 years of age, and
- (c) 1:10 in respect of all children who are 3 or more years of age but under 6 years of age.

4.3g. Permission to proceed with ministry and activities has been given [by Senior Church Leadership]

A safe program is one which has been well prepared. Once all of the components have been addressed and endorsed by the Senior Church Leadership, then the ministry would have reached the stage where it has **Permission to Proceed**. Whilst this is linked with meeting insurance

requirements, it is mainly about our **Duty of Care** to provide a safe environment for the people in our care.

A **Permission to Proceed** checklist may be found in the **Head of Department Implementation Pack**.

4.3h. Activities are monitored and reviewed

Even though an activity within a ministry has been assessed for risks and approved, it still needs to be monitored and reviewed for suitability.

A **Ministry Review Template** may be found in the **Head of Department Implementation Pack**.

4.3j. Ministry leaders are supervised and accountability mechanisms are in place

Supervision and accountability of leaders are two key issues in establishing and maintaining a safe environment. As with the other components of safe environments, ultimately all ministries operating within a church are the responsibility of the Senior Leadership. **See Section 3 – Safe Ministry Leaders.**

4.4 Safe Practices

Safe practices to consider when running a ministry program include:

- First Aid expertise and equipment are in place
- A Critical Incident Response Plan has been developed
- Transport protocols are in place
- Safe food and hygiene practices are in place
- Safe manual handling practices are in place
- Safe visual and auditory practices are in place
- All necessary forms have been completed and collected

4.4a. First Aid expertise and equipment are in place

There are two parts to First Aid and Critical incident response. The first part is related to access to people and equipment; and the second part is related to level of expertise (knowledge and skill) to exercise expertise when required.

When developing a ministry and rostering leaders for the program it is important to ensure that a leader possessing a current First Aid certificate is always present. It is also wise to have access [via phone] at short notice to additional First Aid support.

Part of being prepared includes a well stocked and accessible First Aid Kit.

See the **Head of Department Implementation Pack** for a **First Aid Kit Checklist**.

4.4b. A Critical Incident Response Plan has been developed

A Critical Incident is an event or set of circumstances that have the potential to result in physical or psychological outcomes ranging from mild trauma to a fatality for one or more people.

A Critical Incident Response Plan is a systematic approach to planning and implementing an immediate and long-term response to a critical incident. It has 3 main stages.

1. Preparedness
2. Response
3. Recovery

See **Head of Department Implementation Pack** for a **Critical Incident Response Plan template**.

4.4c. Transport protocols are in place

It is important to have a transport policy. The protocols may include:

- Minimum requirements for approved drivers
- Procedures for approving drivers
- Procedures for obtaining parental permission for children or young people to be transported by a particular person
- Guidelines for number of passengers
- Guidelines for “transport buddies” – more than one leader must be in a car when transporting a child or young person

See **Head of Department Implementation Pack** for transport forms

4.4d. Safe food and hygiene practices are in place

As many church activities include some component of food and/or drink, it is important to follow safe food and hygiene practices. Incorrectly handled, stored or served food can lead to food poisoning.

See **Head of Department Implementation Pack** for **Food Safety Guidelines**.

4.4e. Safe manual handling practices are in place

It is important that safe manual handling techniques are to be used when lifting or moving equipment or furniture (*see* GUIDANCE ON MANUAL HANDLING, ACT Work Cover, http://www.workcover.act.gov.au/pdfs/guides_cop/guidance_on_manual_handling.pdf or NSW Work Cover, http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/52AB13BC-77B6-44C4-95B2-4C4A4073C98C/0/manual_handling_resource_1306.pdf)

It is advisable that all leaders are to be briefed in safe lifting techniques at the beginning of each year and persons responsible for lifting or moving equipment or furniture should be trained in safe manual handling techniques.

4.4f. Safe visual and auditory practices are in place

It is important that safe visual and auditory care is provided for leaders and those attending programs as part of the church.

Visual Care:

- Effective lighting is to be used during all church events
- Faulty lights are not to be used during church events
- Faulty light globes and fittings are to be brought to the notice of the Church Safety Officer and are to be replaced as soon as practicable

Auditory care:

- Consideration is to be given to auditory comfort when setting volume levels of audio equipment
- Volume of audio equipment during church events is to be kept at less than 85 decibels or lower, or as deemed to be appropriate by the senior church leadership for a given situation (Additional information on impact of noise may be found at: <http://www.hearing.com.au/ViewPage.action?siteNodeId=40&languageId=1&contentId=-1>)
- Persons operating sound desk during church events, are to be trained in providing safe auditory levels

4.4g. All necessary forms have been completed and collected

All ministries need to ensure that all required information has been collected and appropriate forms completed before activities occurs. The information and forms may vary according to the ministry and activities. Below is a list of essential forms to be completed prior to or have available for the duration of your ministry.

More information regarding ministry may be found in the **Head of Department Implementation Pack**

Task 4B: Identifying Risks

Use the scenario allocated to your group and determine what needs to be addressed in the area of safe ministry environment and program.

Scenario A:

Archie is an ex-public servant, from your church, who took an early retirement package, so he could pursue his love of painting and teaching young people to paint. He runs mini art schools for the young people in the congregation during school holidays in the studio in his backyard, as well as taking young people aged from 11 years to 16 years for private lessons. Sometimes his wife helps him with the art schools by bringing morning tea and lunch for the young people into the studio. One of the things he particularly enjoys is taking the young people for bush walks to observe the small animals in nature, and then they paint what they have seen, when they arrive back at his art studio.

Task 4B: Identifying Risks cont.**Scenario B:**

Joel is the Manager of a Youth Program which is jointly funded by your church and the local council to work with young people at risk. Blake is a 15 year old who has been picked up by the police on numerous occasions for picking fights in the city and causing injury with a pen knife. As part of his non-custodial sentence, he is required to attend the Youth Program 3 days a week. Joel has found it difficult to manage Blake's angry outbursts and has confiscated his pen knife on a number of occasions. At the end of the night Blake is permitted to retrieve his knife before leaving the program.

Scenario C:

Samantha is the Youth Pastor from the youth group at the local church. She gets on really well with the young people and they enjoy the activities she plans. As a treat for the beginning of the term, she arranged to take the youth group rock climbing at the local indoor rock climbing centre. She contacted the young people who had attended the youth program last year and let them know that they would start the year with this activity. She encouraged them to bring their friends along. She decided it would be best to arrange for the young people to meet her at the Indoor Climbing Centre at 7pm on Friday night.

Scenario D:

Esther is the Children's Pastor at the local church. As there has been a steady stream of primary school children and early high school young people hanging around the church every afternoon, she decided to start a drop in centre one day a week. She decided that the drop in centre would offer Playstation, Christian Music DVDs, a chill out corner with snacks, bike activities in the carpark and a canteen. All indoor activities took place in the auditorium.

She organised 2 other leaders to help her and then advertised the program at the local primary and high schools. Each week somewhere between 20 and 40 children and young people turn up, including 2 of the local bike gangs, who regularly have fights in the church carpark. They have had to call the police on several occasions to assist in breaking up the gang fights. Every couple of weeks one of the parents turns up at the church and verbally attacks a child - generally not their own. During these times, Esther tries to calm the parent down by talking to them and also endeavours to stand between the parent and the child who is being attacked. On one occasion a parent who was annoyed at a child for taking her son's bike physically attacked the boy before Esther could reach them.

Scenario E:

Your church is in need of some renovation. Your Pastor organises a working bee one Saturday for all the men in the church. Men are to bring their own tools, ladders and painting gear. On the day of the working bee, several of the men arrive with old power tools and ladders with safety features missing. No power tools have electrical test tags. Several of the gardening tools supplied are rusty. Many of the men have arrived to work in shorts and thongs as the day is hot.

Scenario F:

You have a training event for leaders and volunteers in your church. Everyone is invited to bring something to share for dinner. There is limited facility for heating food, so people are asked to bring their dishes from home ready to serve hot. Placed on the tables, which have tablecloths are several bowls of sauce for people to dip their finger food into. Set up to the side of the hall being used are tea and coffee making facilities, including an urn with a push button spout at table height. Young children will be attending this function, as well as several of your elderly church members who require mobility assistance.

Reflection 15: Safe Environment

1. What are some potentially unsafe situations or environments in your ministry or church?
2. Describe how the situation or environment could become safer.

THE NEXT STEP.....

Today's workshop is just the beginning.....

THE CHURCH IS CALLED:

- ▶ **To provide safe Christian Ministry and Duty of Care**
- ▶ **To love, shelter, protect, defend, embrace and advocate for the child**
- ▶ **To provide Safe Ministry Leaders**
- ▶ **To establish Safe Environments for Ministry and Programs**

When you return to your church, please meet with your heads of department, ministry co-ordinators and leaders and review how well your policies, procedures, structures, practices and behaviours help to fulfill the church's calling to make church a safe place for the people in your care?

If you need assistance in reviewing your practices, please refer to the **TOWARDS SAFE PLACES Head of Department Implementation Pack**, or contact the **Safe Places Unit**.

IDENTIFY THREE AREAS IN YOUR MINISTRY THAT YOU CAN APPLY SAFE MINISTRY PRACTICES.

Appendix 1

An Overview of Towards Safe Places – Ministry Reference Guide

| | Helpers | Leaders | Heads of Depart. | Board of Elders | Senior Pastors | Where to go for more information |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Duty of Care | | | | | | |
| Develop policies - <i>Child Protection, Code of Conduct, Safe Environment (inc. Risk Management and OH&S)</i> | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ACC-NSW Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2007 |
| Oversee and implement the policies and procedures | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ACC-NSW Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2007 State Executive |
| Respond to complaints and allegations | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ACC-NSW Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2007 State Executive |
| Recruit, screen, select, induct and supervise leaders and staff | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ACC-NSW Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2007 Head of Depart. Pack |
| Select appropriate activities, obtain approval, complete necessary forms, enlist adequate supervision, receive permission to proceed, monitor activities | | | ✓ | | | ACC-NSW Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2007 Towards Safe Places Head of Depart. Pack |
| Embrace and implement the policies and procedures through appropriate practices | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Towards Safe Places |
| Child Protection | | | | | | |
| Identify possible abuse | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Towards Safe Places Head of Depart. Pack |
| Respond to concerns about abuse | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Towards Safe Places ACC-NSW Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2007 |
| Respond to disclosures | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Towards Safe Places |
| Support children & young people | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Towards Safe Places |
| Report concerns or allegations (ACC-NSW) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ACC-NSW Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2007 Towards Safe Places Head of Depart. Pack |
| Report concerns or allegations (DoCS or Care and Protection) | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ACC-NSW Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2007 Towards Safe Places Head of Depart. Pack |
| Safe Ministry | | | | | | |
| Embrace the code of conduct | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Towards Safe Places |
| Model appropriate behaviour | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Towards Safe Places |
| Demonstrate appropriateness for ministry | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Towards Safe Places |
| Implement the principles of responsible behaviour | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Towards Safe Places |
| Safe Environment | | | | | | |
| Identify and minimise risks in structures, activities and OH&S | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ACC-NSW Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2007 Towards Safe Places Head of Depart. Pack |
| Follow best practice in providing a safe environment | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Towards Safe Places |

Useful Websites

Non-Government Organisations

Council of Social Services of NSW: www.ncoss.org.au

NSW Family Services: www.nswfamilyservices.asn.au

Foster Care Association: www.fcansw.org.au

Child and Family Welfare Association: www.cafwaa.org.au

Create: www.create.org.au

Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care: www.adsec.org.au

Foster Parents Support Network: www.fosterparentsupportnetwork.org.au

The Youth Accommodation Association: www.yaa.com.au

Youth Action and Policy Association: www.yapa.org.au

NSW Government

Department of Community Services: www.community.nsw.gov.au

The Children's Guardian: www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au

NSW Ombudsman: www.ombo.nsw.gov.au

NSW Commission for Children and Young People: www.kids.nsw.gov.au

NSW Parenting Centre: www.community.nsw.gov.au

Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care: www.dadhc.nsw.gov.au

Community Builders: www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au

Better Service Delivery Program: www.hsnet.nsw.gov.au

Further Reading

The following list of web sites will provide you with some useful background material.

Child Protection System, Reporting Child Abuse, 1999, Victorian Government Department of Human Services,
<http://hnb.dhs.vic.gov.au/4A25673000078E04/BCView/A6A3F518B54D122C4A25675300226C00?OpenDocument>

Child Protection: Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse Against Employees (March 2001 edition) , NSW Ombudsman, www.ombo.nsw.gov.au.

Child Protection ~ Watton on the Web ~ part of River Ministries, Norfolk, UK,
<http://www.watton.org/abuse/policy/>

Children and Young People Act 1999, <http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/1999-63/current/pdf/1999-63.pdf>

Children's Charter, General Synod Children's Network from the Children's Charter from the Office of Children's Ministries for the Episcopal Church,
http://www.episcopalchurch.org/documents/Implementing_CC_fnl.pdf

Code of Good Practice, Anglican Diocese of Canberra & Goulburn,
<http://www.canberragoulburn.anglican.org/HTML/publications/CodeofGoodPractice.pdf>

Exploring Cultural Awareness, National CASA 2001,
<http://www.nccourts.org/Citizens/GAL/Documents/Workbook/chapter3.doc>

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