



Honor Thy Children

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

MANDATORY REPORTING

Prevention starts with understanding

Next month, is National Child Abuse Prevention month. Now is the time to look at ways you can promote awareness in your parish and or school.

The Commonwealth of Kentucky is a mandatory reporting state. KRS 620.030 clearly states "Any person who knows or has reasonable cause to believe that a child is dependent, neglected, or abused shall immediately cause an oral or written report to be made to a local law enforcement agency or the Department of Kentucky State Police; the cabinet or its designated representative; the Commonwealth's attorney or the county attorney; by telephone or otherwise. Any supervisor who receives from an employee a report of suspected dependency, neglect, or abuse shall promptly make a report to the proper authorities for investigation. If the cabinet receives a report of abuse or neglect allegedly committed by a person other than a parent, guardian, or person exercis-

ing custodial control or supervision, the cabinet shall refer the matter to the Commonwealth's attorney or the county attorney and the local law enforcement agency or the Department of Kentucky State Police. Nothing in this section shall relieve individuals of their obligations to report."

If you suspect a child is being abused, it's critical to get them the help he or she needs. Reporting child abuse seems so official. Many people are reluctant to get involved in other families' lives. Understanding some of the myths behind reporting may help put your mind at ease if you need to report child abuse.

- I don't want to interfere in someone else's family.

The effects of child abuse are lifelong, affecting future relationships, self-esteem, and sadly putting even more children at risk of abuse as the cycle continues. Help break the cycle of child abuse.

• *What if I break up someone's home?* The priority in

child protective services is keeping children in the home. A child abuse report does not mean a child is automatically removed from the home—unless the child is clearly in danger. Support such as parenting classes, anger management or other resources may be offered first to parents if safe for the child.

- They will know it was me who called. The accused child abuser cannot find out who made the report of suspected abuse. While you can report anonymously, you are encouraged to give your name and any information you have on the child. This lends more credibility to the report.

- It won't make a difference what I have to say. If you have a gut feeling that something is wrong, it is better to be safe than sorry. Even if you don't see the whole picture, others may have noticed as well, and a pattern can help identify child abuse that might have otherwise slipped through the cracks.

Archdiocese of Louisville

Volume VII Issue I

March 2016

If you need support or someone to talk to:

- ☉ Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky or Indiana:
800.CHILDREN/
800.422.4453
www.pcaky.org
www.pcaain.org
- ☉ Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline
800.4.A.CHILD
800.422.4453
www.childhelp.org

Signs of Possible Sexual Abuse

- Unexplained pain, itching, redness or bleeding in the genital area
- Increased nightmares or bedwetting
- Withdrawn behavior
- Angry outbursts/mood swings
- Loss of appetite or difficulty swallowing
- Sudden/unexplained avoidance of certain people or places
- Sexual knowledge, language or behavior that is unusual for the child's age.

HONOR THY CHILDREN TRAINING

Those employed or volunteering with youth must undergo a background check every 5 years as well as attend the "Honor Thy Children Training" that addresses child abuse, how to recognize it and how to report it. See your parish/school Safe Environment Coordinator if you have not sat-

isfied either of these requirements. The "Honor Thy Children" training is a one time requirement and is normally completed within 30 days of beginning service. Each training session lasts 2 hours. The background check **MUST** be completed **BEFORE** any service/employment begins.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT COORDINATORS

Some friendly reminders for Safe Environment Coordinators.

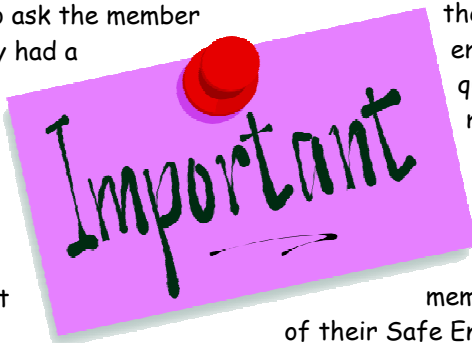
Before submitting a background check, be sure to ask the member if they've already had a background check submitted via selection.com (this would be August 2014 and later).

If unsure contact Scott Fitzgerald

(fitzgerald@archlou.org) or

502.471.2132 to check the status.

We also no longer accept outside Safe Environment Trainings. Reason being is we have a Code of Conduct specific to the Archdiocese of Louisville that is reviewed in the training and the member ultimately signs off that they understand.



As always if you are filling out the background check form in it's entirety for a member (as opposed to

them doing it via an email link) you are required to have the member sign a release form and you need to maintain this form on file.

Also remind your members to return a copy of their Safe Environment Completion Certificate to you after they complete the Safe Environment training. Should you have any questions or concerns don't hesitate to contact Scott Fitzgerald Coordinator of Safe Environment Services via email (fitzgerald@archlou.org) or by phone 50.471.2132.

5 MYTHS SURROUNDING CHILD ABUSE

When it comes to understanding Child Abuse, it's important to note abuse is more than bruises or broken bones. While physical abuse is shocking due to the scars it leaves, not all child abuse is as obvious. Ignoring children's needs, putting them in unsupervised, dangerous situations, or making a child feel worthless or stupid are also child abuse. Regardless of the type of child abuse, the result is serious emotional harm

There are five general myths when it comes to abuse. It's important to understand what is fact.

MYTH #1: It's only abuse if it's violent.

Fact: Physical abuse is just one type of child abuse. Neglect and emotional abuse can be just as damaging, and since they are more subtle, others are less likely to intervene.

MYTH #2: Only bad people abuse their children.

UPCOMING TRAININGS

A current list of trainings is always available at www.archlou.org/safe
All trainings are at 6:30p unless otherwise indicated.

3.21.16

Incarnation

4.11.16

St. Rita

4.16.16 (10 am) - Saturday

Holy Family

4.18.16

St. Albert the Great

4.25.16

St. Patrick

5.24.16 (1:30 pm)

Assumption High School

Be sure to check www.archlou.org/safe for a complete list. Dates are subject to change and of course weather delays also effect training dates

Fact: While it's easy to say that only "bad people" abuse their children, it's not always so black and white. Not all abusers are intentionally harming their children. Many have been victims of abuse themselves, and don't know any other way to parent. Others may be struggling with mental health issues or a substance abuse problem.

MYTH #3: Child abuse doesn't happen in "good" families.

Fact: Child abuse doesn't only happen in poor families or bad neighborhoods. It crosses all racial, economic, and cultural lines. Sometimes, families who seem to have it all from the

CONT Next page (myths...)

HOW CAN I PREVENT ABUSE?

Sexual abuse affects both boys and girls of all ages, in all kinds of neighborhoods and communities. Children are more likely to be sexually abused by someone they know and trust than by a stranger. Abusers do not always use physical force. Many use games, gifts, lies, or threats to engage children and to keep them from telling anyone what has happened. What can you do?

To prevent child sexual abuse, it is important to keep the focus on adult responsibility, while teaching children skills to help them protect themselves. Consider the following tips:

- Take an active role in your children's lives. Learn about their activities and people with whom they are involved. Stay alert for possible problems.
- Watch for "grooming" behaviors in adults who spend time with your child. Warning signs may include frequently finding ways to be alone with your child, ignoring your child's need for privacy (e.g., in the bathroom), or giving gifts or money for no particular occasion
- Ensure that organizations, groups,

and teams that your children are involved with minimize one-on-one time between children and adults. Ask how staff and volunteers are screened and supervised.



- Make sure your children know that they can talk to you about anything that bothers or confuses them.
- Teach children accurate names of private body parts and the difference between touches that are "okay" and "not okay".
- Empower children to make decisions about their bodies by allowing them age-appropriate privacy and encourag-

ing them to say "no" when they do not want to touch or be touched by others, even in nonsexual ways.

- Teach children to take care of their own bodies (e.g., bathing or using the bathroom) so they do not have to rely on adults or older children for help.
- Educate children about the difference between good secrets (such as birthday surprises) and bad secrets (those that make the child feel unsafe or uncomfortable).
- Monitor children's use of technology, including cell phones, social networking sites, and messaging. Review contact lists regularly and ask about any people you don't recognize.
- Trust your instincts! If you feel uneasy about leaving your child with someone, don't do it. If you are concerned about possible sexual abuse, ask questions.
- If your child tells you that he or she has been abused, stay calm, listen carefully, and never blame the child. Thank your child for telling you. Report the abuse right away

5 MYTHS SURROUNDING CHILD ABUSE (CONT...)

outside are hiding a different story behind closed doors.

MYTH #4: Most child abusers are strangers.

Fact: While abuse by strangers does happen, most abusers are family members or others close to the family.

MYTH #5: Abused children always grow up to be abusers.

Fact: It is true that abused children are more likely to repeat the cycle as adults, unconsciously repeating what they experienced as children. On the

other hand, many adult survivors of child abuse have a strong motivation to protect their children against what they went through and become excellent parents.

Should you have any questions or comments about child abuse and/or myths surrounding abuse, don't hesitate to reach out to our victim assistance coordinator, Ms. Martine Siegel, at 502/636-1044; victimassistance@archlou.org or the Chancery at 502/585-3291.



Archdiocese of Louisville Office of Safe Environment

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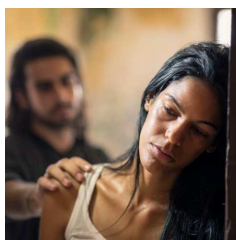
E-mail: msiegel@archlou.org

No child or adult should ever experience abuse by anyone, especially a church minister. We all have the right to be treated with dignity and to expect our church to reflect the goodness of God in all of its dealings.

We hope that this information is helpful to all in our communities who are working to prevent and respond to childhood sexual abuse. Please let us know if you need further assistance or information by calling or emailing our victim assistance coordinator, Ms. Martine Siegel, at 502/636-1044; victimassistance@archlou.org or the Chancery at 502/585-3291.

We must heed God's call to care for the most vulnerable among us and to continue our efforts toward wholeness and health in dealing with sexual abuse.

KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS BEING ABUSED?



If you suspect that someone you know is being abused, speak up! If you're hesitating—telling yourself that it's none

of your business, you might be wrong, or the person might not want to talk about it—keep in mind that expressing your concern will let the person know that you care and may even save his or her life.

When you suspect someone is being abused, here are some do's and don'ts to follow.

Do:

- Ask if something is wrong
- Express concern

- Listen and validate
 - Offer help
 - Support his or her decisions
- Don't:**
- Wait for him or her to come to you
 - Judge or blame
 - Pressure him or her
 - Give advice
 - Place conditions on your support
- (Adapted from: NYS Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)*
- Talk to the person in private and let him or her know that you're concerned. Point out the things you've noticed that make you worried. Tell the person that you're there, whenever he or she feels ready to talk.

Reassure the person that you'll keep whatever is said between the two of you, and let him or her know that you'll help in any way you can. Remember, abusers are very good at controlling and manipulating their victims. People who have been emotionally abused or battered are depressed, drained, scared, ashamed, and confused. They need help to get out, yet they've often been isolated from their family and friends. By picking up on the warning signs and offering support, you can help them escape an abusive situation and begin healing.