



# Honor Thy Children

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

## SEXTORTION IS REAL AND NEEDS ATTENTION

*Prevention starts with understanding*

Child exploitation is one of the most reprehensible and destructive offenses confronting America today. It harms the safety and well-being of our young people; it devastates our families and communities; and it degrades our strength as a nation of laws and civic security. Last month the Justice Department declared in a new report that "sextortion is by far the most significantly growing threat to children, with more than 60 percent of survey respondents indicating this type of online enticement of minors was increasing" In the report the Justice Department made clear that sextortion has numerous tragic consequences. "The threat of sextortion directed toward children is not just restricted to the immediate sexual and emotional abuse imposed by the offender on their victims," the report found. "Sextortion victims engage

in cutting, have depression, drop out of school or grades decline, as well as engage in other forms of self-harm at an alarming



rate. In fact, a 2015 FBI analysis of 43 sextortion cases involving child victims revealed at least two victims committed suicide and at least ten more attempted suicide. Thus, at least 28 percent of these cases had at least one sex-

tortion victim who committed or attempted suicide." Investigators have found that sextortion is often committed by organized groups, rather than individuals, who not only recruit "agents" to extract explicit material from victims, but then pay monthly incentives "for the best-performing blackmailer," Capt. Brian Cozby with the George Mason University Police Department tells the Washington Post after two students recently fell victim to sextortion. The Justice Department wrote that "it is becoming common for investigations to reveal that a single sextortion offender has been communicating with hundreds of potential victims. Forensic examinations of sextortion offenders' digital media commonly reveal thousands of organized folders containing videos and documentation of their contact with countless minors, often around the world."

## Archdiocese of Louisville

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### If you need support or someone to talk to:

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

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# 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-

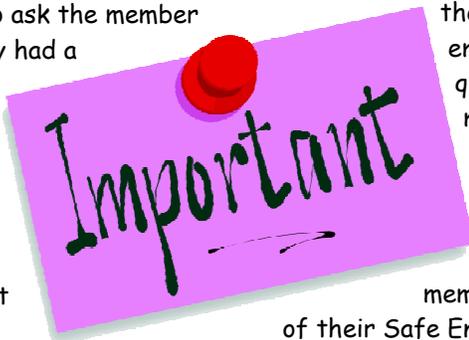
isfied either of these requirements. The "Honor Thy Children" training is a one time requirement and is normally completed within 30 days of beginning service. Each training session lasts 2 hours. The background check MUST be completed BEFORE any service/employment begins.

## 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.

### UPCOMING TRAININGS

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

5.24.16

*Assumption High School  
(1:30 pm start)*

6.5.16

*Flaget Center  
(5:30 pm start)*

6.13.16

*St. Margaret Mary*

8.3.16

*Holy Trinity (Louisville)  
(5:00 pm start)*

8.8.16

*St. Gregory (Cox's Creek)*

*More trainings are being scheduled for both June and July and will be posted once confirmed.*

*Be sure to check [archlou.org/safe](http://archlou.org/safe) for a complete list. Dates are subject to change and of course weather delays also effect training dates*

## SEXTORTION (CONT.)

The Justice Department performed a "National Child Exploitation Threat Assessment" by surveying investigators, prosecutors, analysts and victim service providers to determine the biggest threats in child sexual exploitation.

In one 2015 FBI sextortion investigation, the Justice Department wrote, "offenders were specifically seeking out those children they considered easy targets because of

their demonstrated willingness to post personal content online and engage in live-streaming video activity, whether the content was sexually explicit or not."

No matter what form child exploitation takes—from the creation and circulation of child pornography to



the trafficking of children for sex—it demands the full attention of law enforcement, policymakers, community leaders, and service providers, each of whom plays an essential role in combating this unconscionable crime. Parents are strongly encouraged to continue monitoring their child's cell phone/tablet use to prevent this from happening to them.

# RECOGNIZING ABUSE

Being proactive when it comes to abuse is paramount to minimizing its effects. Recognizing some behaviors is key. Some of these behavioral signs can show up at other stressful times in a child's life such as divorce, the death of a family member, friend or pet, or when there are problems in school, as well as when abuse is involved. Any single sign doesn't mean the child was abused, but several of them mean that you should begin to explore the situation more fully.



- Nightmares, sleep problems, extreme fears without an obvious explanation
- Sudden or unexplained personality changes; seems withdrawn, angry, moody, clingy, "checked-out" or shows significant changes in eating habits
- An older child behaving like a younger child (for example, bedwetting or thumb-sucking)
- Develops fear of certain places or

- resists being alone with an adult or young person for unknown reasons
- Shows resistance to routine bathing, toileting or removing clothes even in appropriate situations
- Play, writing, drawings or dreams of sexual or frightening images

- Refuses to talk about a secret he or she has with an adult or older child
- Stomach aches or illness, often with no identifiable reason
- Leaves clues that seem likely to provoke a discussion about sexual issues
- Uses new or adult words for body parts
- Engages in adult-like sexual activities with toys, objects or other chil-

- dren
  - Develops special relationship with older friends that may include unexplained money, gifts or privileges
  - Intentionally harms himself or herself, for example, drug/alcohol use, cutting, burning, running away, sexual promiscuity
  - Becomes increasingly secretive around use of the internet or cell phone
  - Develops physical symptoms such as unexplained soreness, pain or bruises around genital or mouth, sexually-transmitted disease, or pregnancy
- If you believe a child is being abused, neglected or is dependent, please call the Kentucky Child Protection Hot Line number below
- 1-877-KYSAFE1 or 1-877-597-2331 (Toll Free).**

Should you have any questions at all about recognizing and or reporting abuse you may also reach out to the Archdiocese of Louisville victim assistance coordinator, Ms. Martine Siegel, at 502/636-1044; [victimassistance@archlou.org](mailto:victimassistance@archlou.org) or the Chancery at 502/585-3291.

## RISK FACTORS FOR CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

While child abuse and neglect occurs in all types of families—even in those that look happy from the outside—children are at a much greater risk in certain situations.

**Domestic violence.** Witnessing domestic violence is terrifying to children and emotionally abusive. Even if the mother does her best to protect her children and keeps them from being physically abused, the situation is still extremely damaging.

**Alcohol and drug abuse.** Living with an alcoholic or addict is very difficult

for children and can easily lead to abuse and neglect. Parents who are drunk or high are unable to care for their children, make good parenting decisions, and control often-dangerous impulses. Substance abuse also commonly leads to physical abuse.

**Untreated mental illness.** Parents who are suffering from depression, an anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder, or another mental illness have trouble taking care of themselves, much less their children. A mentally ill or traumatized parent may be distant and

withdrawn from his or her children, or quick to anger without understanding why..

**Lack of parenting skills.** Some caregivers never learned the skills necessary for good parenting. Teen parents, for example, might have unrealistic expectations about how much care babies and small children need. Or parents who were themselves victims of child abuse may only know how to raise their children the way they were raised.

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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](mailto: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.

## PHYSICAL ABUSE V. DISCIPLINE



Physical abuse involves physical harm or injury to the child. It may be the result of a deliberate attempt to hurt the child, but not always. It can also result from severe discipline, such as using a belt on a child, or physical punishment that is inappropriate to the child's age or physical condition. Many physically abusive parents and

caregivers insist that their actions are simply forms of discipline—ways to make children learn to behave. But there is a big difference between using physical punishment to discipline and physical abuse. The point of disciplining children is to teach them right from wrong, not to make them live in fear.

### ***Physical abuse vs. Discipline***

In physical abuse, unlike physical forms of discipline, the following elements are present:

**Unpredictability.** The child never knows what is going to set the parent off. There are no clear boundaries or rules. The child is constantly walking on eggshells, never sure what behavior will trigger a physical assault.

**Lashing out in anger.** Physically abu-

sive parents act out of anger and the desire to assert control, not the motivation to lovingly teach the child. The angrier the parent, the more intense the abuse.

**Using fear to control behavior.** Parents who are physically abusive may believe that their children need to fear them in order to behave, so they use physical abuse to "keep their child in line." However, what children are really learning is how to avoid being hit, not how to behave or grow as individuals.