



Honor Thy Children

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

WE MUST START BELIEVING VICTIMS OF CHILD ABUSE

Prevention starts with understanding

Sarah Allison Williams Northrop is a pediatrician in Raleigh, N.C., and an assistant professor of pediatrics at Wake Forest Baptist Health.

"Who did you tell?" "What did they do after you told them?"

These are questions I ask almost every child that I interview. The answers are important; they tell me not just who the child trusts, but also about that child's history, including what their life as a survivor of childhood sex abuse has been like. I am a child abuse pediatrician, specializing in the care of children with concerns for neglect, physical abuse, and sexual abuse. The majority of my work is in sexual abuse, and I am often called to court to explain not only physical exam findings, but the process of disclosure. Most commonly, I explain why children wait to tell. Recent events, ranging from the women-focused

"#metoo" movement to outcries of repeated sexual abuse by powerful men in government and Hollywood, have made sexual abuse, child sexual abuse, and disclosure part of the national conversation. Statistically, children wait an average of



two years before beginning the disclosure process, if they ever report it at all. No one who regularly works with victims of abuse is surprised to see victims come forward years after their abuse has ended. Disclosure is a process, not a singular event. The reasons for delaying disclosure vary, but I see many common themes repeated over and over. We see these same themes repeated in

the media by victims who have come forward against high-profile perpetrators. **"I mean, no one was going to believe me." --Boy, 10 years old at first disclosure, 7 when abuse started**

Most sexual abuse/assault in children and adults is committed by someone trusted by and known to the victim. Children are frequently warned to stay away from strangers with candy. They are rarely encouraged to stand up to their

uncle, teacher, grandparent, or the community leader who is aiding their family. When a trusted adult turns into a perpetrator, the victim feels isolated. Telling other people about what happened to them can be devastating not only for the victim, but also for their family if the abuser is offering (or perceived to be offering) pro-

(Cont... page 2 "believe")

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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 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.

BELIEVE (CONT....)

tection or help to the family in some way. Assuming, of course, the family is willing to believe the victim at all.

"When I told my teacher, she said 'It's not a big deal.' "--15 years old, age 6 when abuse started

Children frequently do a "trial run" of disclosure, telling a trusted adult or friend a piece of what has happened to them to see how that person reacts. The disclosure process can take years to start, and a person may never completely reveal everything. If they are believed and feel safe, they will often disclose more. If that person discredits them, questions them, or fails to act on the information, the child will often recant their initial disclosure. Interventions, such as removing the alleged perpetrator from the home with the aim of protecting the victim, often result in family disruption and conflict. Victims may even take it all back in an effort to undo the changes they see occurring in their families.

"I wasn't supposed to be there." -- 16 years old at first disclosure, 14 when abuse started

Shame is another reason victims wait to disclose. They place much of the blame for what happened on themselves. They weren't supposed to stay out late. They weren't supposed to be at that party. They knew what kind of

reputation the perpetrator had. They shouldn't have worn that outfit if they didn't want to be noticed. People are afraid of the repercussions of coming forward. They don't want to have their entire dating or sexual history publicized. They don't want to be publicly demeaned for what they wore or drank. They don't want to be blamed for aiding their own assault. And finally, young people often lack the basic vocabulary to describe what was done to them. I remember a girl who referred to her grandfather as "eating her cookie" being dismissed, when the actual interaction was anything but harmless. Lacking basic sex education and knowledge of appropriate names for body parts, she was unable to communicate her abuse to others.

Many of the children I see cannot tell me when their abuse first started, but they have all been able to say when they first disclosed and what that person did with the information. As a community, there are many ways we can encourage disclosure and ensure the safety of victims. Giving them the space and time to do so is essential. We must be willing to take the time to listen and be patient, even when their stories make us uncomfortable. We must start by believing.

UPCOMING TRAININGS

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

2.4.18 (2:30 p.m.)

St. Edward

(THIS IS A SPANISH TRAINING. IT WILL NOT BE IN ENGLISH)

2.5.18

Holy Spirit-Louisville

2.12.18

St. James (Elizabethtown)

2.21.18

St. Bernard (Louisville)

3.5.18

St. Gabriel

3.19.18

St. Andrew Academy

4.9.18

Incarnation

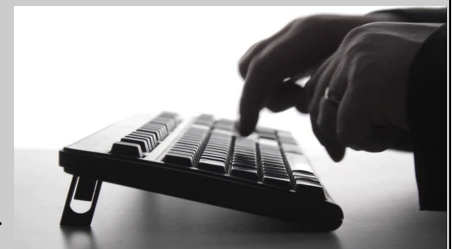
Keep checking

www.archlou.org/safe for updates as trainings cancelled due to inclement weather will be posted here

REPORTING ABUSE: COMPUTER SAFETY

For victims of abuse, using a computer at home, or where an abuser has access to it, can be very dangerous. **It is impossible to erase all computer history.** Additionally, spyware can be installed on your computer without your knowledge and give the abuser ways to track and monitor your computer activity.

We recommend that you use a computer you know is safe and that the abuser cannot access. You can go to a trusted friend's home, a public library, Internet café or domestic violence prevention center in your community to go online safely. With the advances in technology and the unprecedented access that others can gain regarding your information on the Internet, it is important to follow your intuition when it comes to your search for help and safety.



ELDER ABUSE AND REPORTING

Elder abuse is often a silent crime. Most of us never see it because most victims are abused behind closed doors by their own family members. And, too often, people who do see it choose not to get involved because it's "none of my business."

Elder abuse is a crime that knows no boundaries. Elder Abuse can occur anywhere, anytime; it can affect all races, religions, ethnicities, cultures, and socio economic groups. It can occur in community settings such as private homes or in an institutional setting. The definition of abuse varies and mandatory reporting laws vary from state to state. There is no uniform reporting system; therefore cases of abuse, neglect and exploitation often go undetected each year. During State Fiscal Year 2015, the Kentucky Department for Community Based Services received 30,037 calls for reports concerning adults 60 years and older. Those calls were screened and 12,618 met acceptance criteria for an adult protective services investigation under KRS 209. According to the National Center on Elder Abuse, one study, The New York State Elder Abuse Prevalence Study found that for every case known to programs and agencies 24 were unknown.

If the person is not in imminent danger but you are suspicious, watch the way the caregiver acts toward the elderly or disabled person. Look for a pattern of threatening, harassing, blaming or making demeaning remarks to the person — or isolating the person from family members and friends. Watch for an obvious lack of helpfulness or indifference, aggression or anger toward the person. Listen for conflicting stories about the elderly or disabled person's illnesses or injuries.

Some examples of elder abuse include (but are not limited to):

Neglect

Obvious malnutrition, dehydration, Dirty, uncombed hair and offensive body odor, torn and dirty clothes that are not appropriate for the weather, unshaven, lack of medical care, apparent weight loss and bedsores

Physical Abuse

Frequent injuries such as bruises, burns, broken bones, especially when the explanation of the injury seems unrealistic, multiple bruises in various stages of healing, particularly bruises on inner arms or thighs, appears



frightened or withdrawn, never leaves the house; never allowed visitors.

Sexual Abuse

Evidence of sexually transmitted disease, irritation or injuries to the mouth, genitals or anus, upset when changed or bathed, fearful of a particular person

Emotional/Psychological Abuse

Isolated from family and friends, sudden dramatic change in behavior: appears withdrawn, depressed, hesitant to talk openly, caregiver won't let victim speak for herself, caregiver scolds, insults, threatens victim, fearful, hopeless, anxious, lack of eye contact

Financial Abuse

Unusual activity in bank account; sud-

MONTHLY SAFE ENVIRONMENT TIP

A new year brings new changes as many parishes/schools experience some turnover and also audit time will be here before you know it.

Do those in your parish/school know where to turn with Safe Environment questions/concerns?

Are your DRE's presenting the Safe Environment Curriculums to religious education classes in compliance with the charter?

Is your school compliant by teaching the Speak Up/Be Safe curriculum?

Should you have any questions about these or other Safe Environment compliance issues please reach out to

Scott Fitzgerald
Coordinator of Safe Environment
Services
fitzgerald@archlou.org
or
502.471.2132

den large withdrawals, expenditures that are not consistent with past financial history, use of Automated Teller Machines (ATM) when the person has no history of using ATMs or cannot walk or get to an ATM, recent will, when the person seems incapable of writing a will, unpaid bills, such as house payment, rent, taxes, utilities. In Kentucky you have a responsibility. **Kentucky is a mandatory reporting state.** (Reference KRS 209.030) If you suspect elder abuse, you are legally required to report it. You can report abuse at the 24 hour toll free hotlines at 1-877-597-2331 or 1-800-752-6200. Calls can be made anonymously.

**Archdiocese of Louisville
Office of Safe Environment**

Martine Bacci Siegel, MSN, RN, CNS
Maloney Center
1200 South Shelby Street
Louisville, KY 40220

Phone: 502.636.1044
Fax: 502.634.3381
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.

HIGH PROFILE NEWS DRIVES HOME IMPORTANCE OF SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Two recent high profile news stories are underscoring the importance of Safe Environment and how important it is in what we do.

In Michigan, former gymnastics doctor Larry Nassar, accused of sexually abusing more than 140 girls and women has plead guilty to molesting seven girls.

For two decades he was a trusted household name in the gymnastic community, a star in sports medicine and a sought-after physician at Michigan State University. When the victims came forward or tried to tell their story, they continued to run into roadblocks.

In 2004, one family friend in Nassar's criminal assault case told a

counselor about the alleged abuse, according to an Ingham County court document. The counselor had the 12-year-old girl and her parents meet with Nassar, who denied the allegations, and the girl's parents forced her to recant; the girl later told "multiple therapists and counselors" about the abuse, the document says. There is no record of anyone calling law enforcement about the allegations, although state law mandates mental-health counselors to report child sexual abuse.

In California, the parents of 13 siblings -- ages 2 to 29 -- were charged with imprisoning them, abusing them and torturing them.

Authorities say "Several of the victims have cognitive impairment and neuropathy which is nerve damage as a result of this and prolonged physical abuse."

In both cases the abuse either went unnoticed or unreported. Kentucky is a mandatory reporting state. It is imperative that everyone know the signs of abuse and what to do if you suspect anything.

To report anything suspicious in Kentucky call the
Child Protection Hot Line:
1-877-KYSAFE1
1-877-597-2331
(Toll Free)