



Honor Thy Children

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

UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENT FACETS OF ABUSE

As discussed during the required in-person trainings, there are many facets to understanding child abuse. Understanding these will go a long way in identifying abuse. For example, family members and caregivers of children also must be groomed as the child is being targeted. When the adult abuser resides outside the family, trust must be earned from the child's guardians to gain private access to the child. A child's shame and embarrassment at having "allowed" the abuse reinforces the secrecy. Soon after the onset of the abuse, children begin to feel complicit in their abuse. They accept responsibility for causing it and feel as though they deserved it or that they should have stopped it. Threats ensure the child's secrecy. "If you tell, you'll get in trouble," "If you tell, your mommy and daddy will be sad," "If you tell, I'll have to go away" are classic examples of powerful threats used to gain control over children.

The threats place responsibility onto the child for any bad things occurring as a result of the child telling, while dismissing the wrongdoing of the sexual violation. The threat frequently involves killing someone or something that the child loves, such as a sibling, parent, or pet. This threat is frightening enough to keep the child fearful of revealing the abuse. Bribery can be both subtle and overt. Bribery may include seeking special time with a child and/ or providing gifts such as money and candy. Accepting these bribes creates guilt, shame, and a sense of responsibility for the child's sexual abuse. Abusers also rely on the child's inherent narcissism in that they accept responsibility for the abusive relations. The child's feelings of complicity assist in maintaining the child's silence, which in turn, reinforces the child's experience that he or she is responsible for the abuse.

Adult abusers often distort love and affection to increase children's vulnerability. Abusers often redefine their actions as "natural expressions of love," suggesting that they are doing these things "for the child's own good" including describing their actions as a form of "sex education." Such re-definitions reinforce the confusion that children feel and further cause them to doubt their own "uh-oh" feelings. Children are accustomed to the idea that something that pains them is good for them, i.e. getting a shot or a spanking. Adult abusers use these same arguments to justify and explain their behavior. This is a short overview. Should you have any questions about child sexual abuse, please don't hesitate to contact Archdiocese of Louisville Victim Assistance Coordinator Martine Siegel (502.636.1044) or msiegel@archlou.org.

Archdiocese of
Louisville

June
2024

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

Are You Safe Environment Compliant?

Are you working regularly with children?

If so you must have attended an Archdiocese of Louisville Safe Environment Training.

Has it been 5 years since your initial in person training? You must complete your 5 year refresher training

You must also have a satisfactory background check not older than 5 years.

See your Safe Environment Coordinator today to verify your compliance!

HOW DO I KNOW?

When children are experiencing stressors such as divorce or the death of a loved one, expect a change in their behavior. Children exhibit similar behavioral changes when they are being sexually abused. No one behavioral change by itself indicates a child is being sexually abused, however, a combination of these symptoms should alert adults to the possibility of sexual abuse:

BEHAVIORAL SIGNS

- Nightmares, trouble sleeping, fear of the dark, or other sleeping problems.
- Extreme fear of "monsters."
- "Spacing out" at odd times.
- Loss of appetite, or trouble eating or swallowing.
- Sudden mood swings: rage, fear, anger, or withdrawal.
- Fear of certain people or places (e.g., a child may not want to be left alone with a babysitter, a friend, a relative, or some other child or adult).
- Stomach illness with no identifiable reason.
- An older child behaves like a younger child, such as bed-wetting or thumb-sucking.
- Sexual activities with toys or other children, such as simulating sex with dolls or asking other children/siblings to behave sexually.
- New words for private body parts.
- Refusing to talk about a "secret" he/she has with an adult or older child.
- Talking about a new older friend.
- Suddenly having money.
- As an adolescent, cutting or burning herself or himself.



PHYSICAL SIGNS

Additionally, there are obvious physical symptoms that are clear signs of sexual abuse. Adults should take appropriate and immediate action if they detect any of the following physical warning signs:

- Unexplained bruises, redness, or bleeding of the child's genitals, anus, or mouth.
- Pain at the genitals, anus, or mouth.
- Genital sores or milky fluids in the genital area.

Remember: If you suspect abuse in the Commonwealth of Kentucky you have a legal obligation to report it. You can do so by calling 1.877.KYSAFE1

UPCOMING TRAININGS

7.29.24
Saffin Center
(Holy Family)

8.6.24
St. Gabriel

8.12.24
Flaget

8.13.24
St. Joseph (Bardstown)

Additionally trainings are being finalized for August, September and into October.

They will be published at www.archlou.org/safe once confirmed

It is strongly advised that you not wait to attend a scheduled in person training if required to do so as trainings are subject to cancellation or postponement due to inclement weather.

Be sure to bookmark www.archlou.org/safe for the latest status or changes in any training

Should any training be postponed or cancelled at the last minute, notice will be sent to the parish/school Safe Environment Coordinator and posted on the website





Safe Caregivers & Safe Situations

Most victims of sexual abuse were abused by someone they knew or in a place they were familiar with. You can take steps to surround children with safe caregivers in safe environments.

- Abusers often become friendly with potential victims and their families, earning trust and gaining time alone with children. Observe your child with others, and listen to your gut. If you feel uncomfortable with the way an adult is interacting with your child, step in.
- Ask your babysitter for background checks, including criminal and child abuse/neglect checks.
- Check that all of your child's programs require background checks, personal interviews, and professional recommendations for all adults—including volunteers—who work with children.
- Monitor children's Internet and smartphone use. Offenders have been known to use the Internet to lure children into physical contact.

Educate & Empower Your Child

Talking to your child about their bodies, body safety, and personal boundaries is key in keeping them safe. Child safety is an adult responsibility.

- Use the correct names for body parts, including their genitals, as they are learning to identify them (starting as early as possible).
- Make sure your child knows the difference between "okay" and "not okay" touches. No one should ask to see or touch the private parts of their body, except a medical provider or a caregiver who is helping them clean or use the restroom. No one should show them pictures of private parts. Teach them if those things occur, tell a trusted adult. Teach children that once they can bathe and use the restroom on their own, they should not accept such help from adults and older children.
- Teach children that it's okay for them to say "no" if they don't want to hug or kiss someone, including family, and always respect their decision.
- Educate children about the difference between good secrets and bad secrets. A surprise party is a good secret because it isn't kept for long. A secret that they are told to keep forever is not okay.

HELP FOR THOSE WHO HELP

It's also important to offer support to the caregivers (parent/guardians) of the abused child.

The caregiver is probably hearing these allegations for the first time and will likely be very distressed.

Caregivers will feel a great deal of guilt, anger, confusion, pain, and betrayal.

Inform them as to what you know and have done.

Listen to their fears and concerns and assist them by providing the names of community resources.

If one of the caregivers is the one alleged to have abused the child, he or she will be defensive and angry. Do not confront the alleged caregiver about the abuse.

Allow law enforcement personnel and investigators to handle this. Your responsibility is to ensure the safety



A PROUD PARTNERSHIP

Each person that participates in the mandatory Archdiocese of Louisville initial in-person training is given the "Body Safety 101" pamphlet provided by the Face It Movement and Kosair for Kids.

The Archdiocese of Louisville is proud to partner with these fine organizations who are committed to keeping our children safe.

Face It directly addresses the unacceptable incidences of child abuse and neglect in Kentucky with the promotion of best practices in child abuse prevention and intervention, engaging the community, and advocating for effective policies to improve the child welfare system.

The Face It Movement continues to grow in partnership and work. This is a long journey with many steps. There is no magic wand to end child abuse—and that is exactly why we have made such a comprehensive and long-term commitment. We can work together to ensure children are safe and protected.

For almost 100 years Kosair for Kids has sought to help children realize their potential while overcoming their obstacles based on trust, honesty and integrity, collaboration, prudent financial stewardship, and inclusion. Through the generosity of the Kosair Charities "FaceIt" grant, our schools have funds annually to support the "Speak Up Be Safe" curriculum in their schools.

"Speak Up Be Safe" is an excellent child sexual abuse and prevention curriculum for our students. It is also effective. In the past students have come forward to report instances of abuse to Catholic school personnel as a result of their participation in "Speak Up Be Safe." We are educating and empowering our students to respect themselves and others. Thank you to Face It and Kosair for Kids who make this possible!

**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

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.

OBLIGATION TO REPORT

All adults who have any reason to suspect child abuse are legally required to contact Child Protective Services (CPS) and make a report (1-877-KYSAFE1). This is a mandatory reporting law that obligates all adults to make a report within 24 hours of learning about possible abuse.

In reporting abuse of children and adults, keep in mind the following:

- It is better to err on the side of over-reporting than under-reporting.
- The Protection Acts provide that privileged relationships are not grounds for excluding evidence except in two situations. Neither the psychiatrist-patient privilege nor the husband-wife privilege shall be grounds for excluding evidence regarding abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Only lawyer-client privilege and clergy-penitent privilege are excluded [KRS 209.060, KRS 620.050(2)].
- Persons acting upon reasonable cause in the reporting of known or suspected adult/child abuse, neglect, or exploitation are immune from civil and criminal liability. This immunity exists concerning the reporting, the investigation, and any judicial proceedings resulting from the report [KRS 209.050, KRS 620.050(1)].
- The source of a report of abuse, neglect or exploitation is kept confidential unless it is ordered released by a court order [KRS 209.140].

The report to CPS should include the following information if known:

- Name and address of the child, or of any person responsible for the child's care.
- Nature and extent of the suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation, including any evidence of previous abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- Identity of the perpetrator.
- Name and address of the reporter (optional).
- Where the child can be found and any information you have about the location of the suspected abuser.

