


NAD - Responding & Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

PRESENTER'S NOTES

Slide 1

The Church's Responsibility
**Responding & Reporting
Suspected Child Abuse**



North American Division
YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES
NADYouthSafety.org

Slide 2

As leaders, we have been called by God to take care of His flock. Therefore, we have the responsibility to take the necessary measures to protect the ministries of our church and establish a sense of security for our members and their children.

Slide 3

How can we make the church a safe place for children and young people?

Slide 4

In this short training you will learn:

- 1.How to respond to allegations
- 2.What should be done when there are child abuse allegations
- 3.Who is responsible to report child abuse
- 4.What to report

Slide 5

#1

How to Respond to Allegations

Not only should the church do all it can to prevent abuse; They should also be prepared to respond in case of suspicion or allegations of child abuse.

Slide 6

Responding to the Child

- Be careful how you respond and what you say to the child
- Listen, don't react in shock or disgust
- Do not punish or scold the child
- Believe and support the child, stay calm and limit the discussion
- Do not promise confidentiality or secrecy
- Remind the child how brave it was to speak

Slide 7

Responding to Adults

- Do not investigate, in doing so may jeopardize the child's safety
- Call Child Protective Services, or the police as soon as possible.
- Seek help for the child and family, call the Department of Human Services.
- For more assistance visit <https://www.childhelp.org/hotline/>

Slide 8

#2

What Should be Done When
There Are Child Abuse Allegations

Slide 9

Action Steps

1. Ensure that the child is safe and protected
2. Report the incident to Child Protective Services or the police as soon as possible
3. Help the child and family heal through services and support

In some states any suspected child abuse or neglect must be reported within 24 hours of becoming aware of such a concern. You may be charged with a misdemeanor if it is discovered that you had reason to believe that a child was being abused or neglected and you did not make a report.

Slide 10

Handling an Incident

1. Report the incident to the authorities (CPS)
2. If the abuse involves a member of the church, the pastor must be informed, and the parents as well
3. The Pastor will inform the Conference
4. Suspend the individual from all volunteer activities during the investigation by the authorities
5. Supervise the person who is under suspicion while an investigation takes place by the authorities

Slide 11

#3
Who is Responsible to Report

Slide 12

Who should make the report?

Mandated Reporters

- The law requires that any person who is employed by or volunteers for any organization to provide care for children (i.e. camp, club meetings, youth activities, etc.) and are in positions of authority over children must report any suspected or accusations of child abuse or negligence.

A **mandatory reporter** is defined as a professional who is obligated by law to report known or suspected incidents of child abuse and/or neglect.

Mandatory reporters are part of the safety net that protects children and youth and have the ability to provide lifesaving help to child victims in our community. Reference:

co4kids.org/mandatory-reporters

Slide 13

Cont. Who should make the report?

- Filing a complaint **does not require proof** that child abuse has occurred. Incidents should be reported as soon as they are suspected.
- If a mandatory reporter ceases to make a complaint and a minor suffers damage, the complainant may be punished under the penal or civil law. cwop.org

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Slide 14

Cont. Who should make the report?

- If you are a mandatory reporter consult the law on mandatory report of your state to find out the options of reporting to the authorities.
- A mandatory reporter is not an investigator.

You may be charged with a misdemeanor if it is discovered that you had reason to believe that a child was being abused or neglected and you did not make a report.

Slide 15

The Pastor is Responsible to...

- Make sure that the report of abuse is made immediately to the authorities
- Work directly with the administrative and legal team of the local conference
- Provide emotional and spiritual support to affected families
- Be sure to follow the organization's policies and procedures

Slide 16

Make a Report or Not?

- Reporting the situation is considered as a request to evaluate an alleged incident of abuse or negligence.
- A report is not an established fact of guilt, but rather a request for assessment of the safety and condition of a child.
- It is the beginning of a process of help for children and families.

Slide 17

#4

What to Report

Be the voice for a child who needs it!

Slide 18

What to Report?

- A child abuse or neglect report may be made verbally by telephone or otherwise.
- The report should provide the following information if possible:
 1. Name, address, age and sex of the minor
 2. Name and address of the minor's parents or person responsible for his care
 3. Nature and extent of the abuse or neglect of the minor

Slide 19

What to Report?

4. Any evidence of previously known or suspected abuse or neglect of the child or other minors
5. Name, address and relationship, if available, of the person who is suspected to have abused or neglected the minor
6. Report the allegations even if you don't have all the information

Slide 20

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