


Being Accountable
Promise to Protect
 Mary Beth Hanus, LCSW, LMHP
 Archdiocese of Omaha
 2014

2002 Catholic Church Sexual Abuse Crisis

- The Bishops commissioned John Jay College Report to address the scope of the problem. They implemented a national survey.



The results were:

- 1- Over 10,000 reports of historical abuse over a 50 year span
- 2- 75% of the allegations occurred between 1960 and 1984
- 3- The allegations involved less than 5% of the clergy

2002 Catholic Church Sexual Abuse Crisis

- Bishops developed and implemented the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People" It directed every dioceses to have:
 - Victim/Family Outreach
 - Child Protection Policies
 - Background Checks for Those Who have Contact with Minors
 - Training for Adults and Children

Current Statistics

- 2012 US Children Bureau Statistics show over 686,000 founded child abuse/neglect cases.
1- compare this to the John Jay Report that was approximately 200 allegations a year
- Faith Communities need safe environment efforts because of the world our children/youth need to navigate.

Important Lessons *2002 Catholic Sexual Abuse Crisis*

- Policies are meant to be used
- Collaboration with law enforcement agencies is crucial
- Isolation is never your friend
- Survivors want their voices to be heard
- Procedures should always be followed



Steps to Ensure Safety

- Training is essential for adults and youth
- Background checks are necessary
- Policies have to be practical
- Establish safe guards
- Safety team
- Attitude of we "want" to keep kids safe



Safe Environment Scenario

- You are the director of a Sunday school program. You just received a call from a parent who stated that her 7th grade son has been receiving text messages from his Sunday school teacher at all hours. The mother has looked at the texts and they are not related to his schoolwork. Her son tells his mom that they are friends and does not see it as big deal.
 - *What further information is need?*
 - *Should there be a discussion with the teacher?*
 - *Who will need to inform?*
 - *How will this situation be monitored?*

Putting Safe Guards in Place Ensures Accountability

- | | |
|---|--|
| ■ Identify a "Point" Person | ■ Safety of Physical Environment |
| ➢ keeps track of training and background checks | ➢ Are the spaces open? |
| ➢ Gathers data does not generate it | ➢ Is there a sense of transparency? |
| ➢ Pulls the team together when a situation arises | ➢ Are doors secure when you meet with youth? |

Church Leadership/Safety Teams

- Team members need to be key leaders who work with youth
- Team needs to review policies and procedures
- Team needs to decide how to handle questionable background checks
- Team convenes when there is an issue
- Confidentiality is necessary but should not hold you captive

Safe Environment Check List

- Dates of adult training
- Date of completed background check
- Documentation of review of background check and conclusion
- Individuals notified of safe environment certification or denial
- Dates of children and youth training
- Dates of team meetings
- Policies and Procedures readily available

Safe Environment Scenario

- The pastor discovered that the church custodian was viewing internet pornography during working hours.
 - *What should be done?*
 - *Who needs to be informed?*
 - *What further information is needed?*

Key Signs that Safety Efforts are Working

- People start paying attention to boundaries/safety issues
- There is an increase of recognizing and bringing forward concerns
- Safety Language becomes more evident

Safe Environment Scenario

One of your youth ministry volunteers is a hugger and always wants to hug the kids. A teen came to you and said it makes them uncomfortable.

- *What should be done?*
- *Who needs to be informed?*
- *What further information is needed?*

Remembering Why



Questions???
Thank you!
