

Promoting Safe Environments through Education

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Promoting Safe Environments through Education

Diocese of Grand Island
Child Protection Office

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Session Outline

- 1. Review of Basic Safe Environment Principles**
 - The Problem of Child Sexual Abuse
 - Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People
 - Preconditions for Child Sexual Abuse / Safe Environment Principles
 - Safe Environment Strategies / Code of Conduct
- 2. The Purpose of Parent / Child Education**
 - To Protect
 - Strengthening Social / External Inhibitions
 - Building Resistance
 - To Heal
- 3. Educating Parents**
 - Goals
 - Strategies
 - Written Materials / Resources
- 4. Educating Children**
 - Goals
 - Strategies
 - "Know the Rules" Curriculum

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The Problem of Child Sexual Abuse

- The Statistics
 - 1 in every 4 girls | will be abused by age 18
 - 1 in every 6 boys
- Within our Church there were 10,667 allegations of abuse by clergy between 1950 and 2002
- 78% of alleged victims were from intact families

■ The Impact

- The sexual abuse of a child impacts the child in virtually all areas of development.
- Cognitive, Social, Emotional, Spiritual, and even Physical in some cases.

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United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People

To Protect the Faithful

Article 12. Dioceses / eparchies are to maintain **safe environment programs** which the diocesan / eparchial bishop deems to be in accord with Catholic moral principles. They are to be conducted cooperatively with parents, civil authorities, educators, and community organizations to provide **education and training for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators, volunteers** and others about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children and young people. Dioceses / eparchies are to make clear to clergy and all members of the community the **standards of conduct** for clergy and other persons in positions of trust with regard to children.

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Precondition for Abuse	Safe Environment Principle
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Adult with a motivation to abuse ■ Decreased Internal Inhibitions ■ Absence of External / Social Inhibitions ■ Breakdown in the Resistance of the Child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ References <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Background Checks Support of Vocations ■ Codes of Conduct <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervision / Consultation Self-Care ■ "Safety in Numbers" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accountability Boundaries Parent / Child Education ■ Parent / Child Education

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Maintain Clear Boundaries

Safe Environment Strategies	Code of Conduct
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Avoid physical contact that might be misinterpreted. ■ Avoid any covert or overt sexual behaviors. ■ Respect boundaries established by youth. ■ Respond appropriately to inappropriate boundaries of youth. ■ Maintain focus on the purpose of interactions with youth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ I will not: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Touch a child / youth in a sexual or other inappropriate manner. ■ Pose any health risk to children / youth (e.g., no fevers or other contagious situations). ■ Strike, spank, shake, or slap children / youth. ■ Use profanity in the presence of children / youth. ■ Smoke or use tobacco products in the presence of children and youth.

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**Respect the Power Differential
Inherent in Our Relationships with Youth**

Safe Environment Strategies	Code of Conduct
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Recognize our role as representatives of God and the ChurchAvoid use of coercion, including excessive flattery.Use descriptive praise and logical consequences.Be cautious of potential conflicts of interest / dual relationships.Be equitable in awarding gifts, privileges, etc.Establish clear rules / expectations	I will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Treat everyone with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity and consideration.Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition or comparison when working with youth.Refuse to accept expensive gifts.Refrain from giving expensive gifts. I will not: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Humiliate, ridicule, threaten or degrade children / youth.Use any discipline that frightens or humiliates children / youth.

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**Exercise Good Judgment
and preserve your ability to do so**

Safe Environment Strategies	Code of Conduct
<ul style="list-style-type: none">No alcohol, drugsSeek supervision / consultationSelf-care<ul style="list-style-type: none">Tend to your emotional / physical healthRecognize signs of impairmentMaintain a healthy lifestyleSeek help when needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Use, possess or be under the influence of alcohol at any time while working.Use, possess or be under the influence of illegal drugs at any time.

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“Safety in Numbers”

Safe Environment Strategies	Code of Conduct
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Team teaching / decision-making.“Buddy system” for youth events.Caution in 1:1 contacts with youth.Adequate supervision of children.	I will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Avoid situations where I am alone with children and/or youth at Church activities.

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Accountability

Safe Environment Strategies	Code of Conduct
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Team decision-making■ Documentation■ Report violations of code of conduct■ Report abuse■ Contract to follow Code of Conduct	I will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Report suspected abuse to the pastor, administrator or appropriate supervisor and civil authorities.■ Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of children / youth.

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Beyond Sexual Abuse

- The crisis of sexual abuse within our Church was the catalyst for the development of Safe Environment programming, but not the entire goal.
- The goal of a Safe Environment Program is to strive to reduce risk of harm from all identifiable sources.

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Parent / Child Education

Purpose, Goals, and Strategies

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Precondition for Abuse	Safe Environment Principle
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Adult with a motivation to abuse■ Decreased Internal Inhibitions■ Absence of External / Social Inhibitions■ Breakdown in Child's Resistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ References<ul style="list-style-type: none">Background ChecksSupport of Vocations■ Codes of Conduct<ul style="list-style-type: none">Supervision / ConsultationSelf-Care■ "Safety in Numbers"<ul style="list-style-type: none">AccountabilityBoundariesParent / Child Education■ Parent / Child Education

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Parent / Child Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ To Protect<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Strengthening External / Social Inhibitions<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Awareness of risk factors■ Safe Environment principles■ How to intervene■ Building Resistance<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Child education■ Helping parents teach their children■ Promoting open communication■ To Heal<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Recognizing signs that abuse has occurred■ Knowing how to respond.

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Parent Education - Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Awareness of risk<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The problem of child sexual abuse■ Signs of risk in relationships■ Internet safety■ Prevention<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Safe Environment principles■ Code of Conduct■ How to intervene

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Parent Goals, continued

- Helping parents educate their children
 - "Know the Rules"
 - Characteristics of Right Relationships
 - Appropriate Boundaries
 - When to Say No to an Adult
 - How to Say No to an Adult
 - Moral Decision-Making

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Parent Goals, continued

- Promoting open communication
 - With us
 - Ask questions
 - Share concerns
 - Provide expert information re: their child
 - With their children
 - Share feelings
 - When in doubt – check it out
 - NO Secrets

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Parent Goals, continued

- Getting help
 - Emotional / behavioral signs that abuse has occurred
 - What to do if their child discloses abuse
 - Where to get help

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Parent Education Strategies

- Workshops, programs
- Involvement in children's education programs
- Written materials
 - Parent letters
 - Bulletin Inserts
 - Posters

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Educational Materials / Resources for Parents

The slide displays three educational posters. The first poster, '10 WAYS TO KEEP YOUR CHILD SAFE', lists: 1. Know where your child is, 2. Know who your child is with, 3. Be Aware, 4. Be Sensitive, 5. TEACH YOUR CHILD ABOUT RIGHT RELATIONSHIPS, 6. LISTEN, 7. Practice basic safety skills, 8. TALK, 9. Give your child your attention, 10. BE INVOLVED IN YOUR CHILD'S ACTIVITIES. The second poster, 'Right RELATIONSHIPS', lists: Honesty, FORGIVENESS, Communication, Dependability / Commitment, HUMOR LAUGH, RELAX, HAVE FUN TOGETHER, Freedom, SAFETY SECURITY, RESPECT, Unconditional love and attention. The third poster, 'Why to Say No', lists: No HURT, threats, Secrets, BOUNDARIES, Put Down, UNSAFE, SINGLE YOU OUT, alone, Touch.

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Child Education - Goals

- Educate children in safety and build their resistance to abuse in a way that does not distract from Religious Education goals.
- Implement strategies that become an automatic part of what we do and how we relate to children.

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Child Education Goals, continued

- Safe environment principles
 - Code of Conduct
 - What to do if you feel pressure to "break the rules"
- Open communication
 - Share your feelings
 - When in doubt – check it out
 - NO secrets

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Child Education Goals, continued

- Right Relationships
 - Qualities of right relationships
 - Signs that a relationship isn't right
 - What to do if a relationship isn't right
- Moral Decision-Making

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Child Education - Strategies

- Abuse prevention programs
- Curriculum and curriculum components
- Visible signs / cues
- Teachable moments
- Parent Involvement

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Abuse Prevention Programs

- A number of parishes and schools have conducted specific abuse prevention programs with their children / youth.
- Community Resources are available – Mental health practitioners, domestic violence services, abuse prevention organizations
- Related videos are available through REMEX
- The Healthy Relationship Project

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The Healthy Relationship Project

- Resources purchased through a mini-grant from Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska.
- Healthy relationship and abuse prevention concepts.
- Replicates the Healthy Relationship Project implemented in the Lexington St. Ann's Parish in 2004.
- Materials are housed at each of the Catholic Schools and available through REMEX

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The Healthy Relationships Project,
continued

- Brief sessions introducing healthy relationship concepts
- Age / grade level specific
 - "Quit It" – grades K-3
 - "Bully Proof" – grades 3-5
 - "Reaching and Teaching Teens" – middle school / high school
 - "Love All That and More" – high school / young adults

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Quit It

- Goals / Objectives
 - Discusses reasons behind the rules of social behavior
 - Enlists students in making classroom rules
 - Helps create a safe climate in classroom
- Intended audience
 - Grades K – 3
- Format
 - 10 lessons focused around 3 sequential themes
 - Class discussions
 - Role plays
 - Creative drawing and writing activities
 - Physical games and exercises

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Bully Proof

- Goals / Objectives
 - Explore and determine the fine distinctions between teasing and bullying
 - Provides a conceptual framework and vocabulary for teasing, bullying, and sexual harassment
- Intended Audience
 - Grades 3, 4, and 5
- Format
 - 11 sequential lessons
 - Class discussions
 - Role plays
 - Case studies
 - Writing Exercises
 - Reading assignments
 - Art activities
 - Nightly Homework

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Reaching and Teaching Teens to Stop Violence

- Goals / Objectives
 - Introducing teens to the concepts of:
 - Sexual Harassment
 - Sexual Assault
 - Dating Violence
 - Healthy Relationships
 - Gender and Violence
- Intended Audience
 - Middle and High School Age Youth
- Format
 - 280 page curriculum
 - Options for 1, 2, or 3 day sessions
 - Lesson plans
 - Activities
 - Role plays
 - Teen survivor experiences
 - Appendices with information on child sexual assault, safety planning, etc.

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Love – All That and More

- Goals / Objectives
 - Inform youth about what makes healthy relationships
 - Increase awareness and understanding about abuse
 - Motivate viewers to seek relationships based on equality and mutual respect
- Intended Audience
 - High School and College Age Youth
 - Classroom, religious education and community group settings
- Format
 - Set of 3 videos
 - What Do You Want?
 - Let's Talk about Sex
 - Putting It All Together
 - Six session curriculum (50 min each)
 - Lesson plans
 - Background materials on healthy and abusive relationships
 - Interactive activities
 - Christian facilitator's guide

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Curriculum Components

- Currently under development
- Monthly newsletter providing safe environment and personal safety information that can be utilized within the existing religious education curriculum.
- Includes discussion topics, activities, games, songs, prayers, etc., designed for use with lesson themes at specific grade levels.



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Single Session Curriculum



- Curriculum / curriculum components
- Introducing children to the adult Code of Conduct in the context of a discussion of rules:
 - God's rules / the rules according to Jesus
 - Rules at home and school
 - Establishing classroom rules
 - Remembering the rules
 - What to do if you feel pressure to break the rules

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“Know the Rules”

- Familiarizes children with the Code of Conduct
- Alerts children to signs that an adult–child relationship isn’t “going by the rules.”
- Encourages children to communicate / seek help when they feel pressure to break the rules.
- Enhances religious education goals by aiding in the establishment of classroom rules, open communication and the use of positive reinforcement.

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Visible Signs / Cues

- Post rules / expectations in the classroom
- Use parent education posters (such as “Know the Rules,” “When to say NO,” “How to Say NO,” “Right Relationships” as visual reminders
- For younger children, use pictures to illustrate concepts.
- Make use of visible forms of reinforcement as well as praise, etc.
- Model appropriate behavior and relationship skills.

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Teachable Moments

- Whenever possible, make use of “teachable moments” in the classroom to illustrate safe environment concepts, right relationship skills, and foster communication.
- This method of education helps to meet the goal of introducing information in a way that does not distract from our religious education goals as it becomes a natural part of our interactions with children.

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Parent Involvement

- Keep parents informed of specific programs offered to children
 - Get parental consent for sensitive topics
 - Encourage parent participation
- Send supplemental information to parents when utilizing curriculum / curriculum components
- Model right relationship skills in interactions with parents
- Encourage open communication.

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Collaborative Process

- Ask Questions
- Provide Feedback
- Consult
- Problem-Solve

■ Diocese of Grand Island
Child Protection Office
phone: (308)382-6565; fax: (308)382-6569
e-mail: cpo@gidiocese.org
