

Guidelines for Addressing Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) and Sexual Abuse (SA)

Washington, North Idaho, and Alaska

Summer 2024, to be reviewed annually

The safety of everyone in our fellowship is important. All allegations of sexual abuse and inappropriate behavior will be taken seriously and no allegation will be overlooked or covered up. Greater awareness and proper reporting will help foster a safer environment where sexual abuse is not tolerated.

Education:

It is our shared responsibility to educate ourselves about abuse in order to prevent it from happening. One way we can accomplish this is to all take the MinistrySafe Awareness Training Program. The following link allows you to take the program free of charge: <https://forms.gle/dnZjQCVMqPWAfiu6A>. This program is helpful for everyone and will increase our awareness and understanding of sexual abuse. It addresses patterns of grooming behaviors, ways to keep children safe, and key indicators of abuse.

- All workers will take the MinistrySafe course every other year.
- Elders and wives are strongly encouraged to take MinistrySafe every other year. Elders are considered clergy by authorities.
- Parents are encouraged to take the MinistrySafe course also, as it is important to learn about these issues and talk to your children about them in an age-appropriate manner.

Reporting:

All members of our fellowship are encouraged to assume the role of mandatory reporter; all workers **will** assume the responsibility of mandatory reporters (even if not bound by state law to do so).

If you have specific knowledge about a recent or historic allegation of child abuse (even if the victim is now an adult), please report to the proper authorities as soon as reasonably possible. No one will be punished or discriminated against for making a good-faith report.

- If you believe a child is in imminent danger, call 9-1-1 immediately.
- When there is reasonable suspicion that a child is being abused or neglected:
 - Report to the state child abuse hotline. (See reporting numbers below.)
 - Hotline calls are screened to determine if they warrant investigation.
 - Keep the identity of victims and offenders confidential except for required communication with investigators, the minor's parents/guardians, the field workers, and the safety team.
 - Report to law enforcement in the area where the abuse occurred.
 - Contact local workers and the safety team after reporting to authorities.

WASHINGTON (Report within 48 hours)

- 1-866-363-4276 - Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families
- 1-800-562-5624 - Washington Child Protective Services
- <https://tinyurl.com/WashingtonCAC> - Washington's Children's Advocacy Centers

IDAHO (Report within 24 hours)

- 1-855-552-5437- Idaho Child Protection Service
- <https://tinyurl.com/IdahoCAC> - Idaho Network of Children's Advocacy Centers

ALASKA (Report within 24 hours)

- 1-800-478-4444 - Alaska Office of Children's Services
- <https://tinyurl.com/AlaskaCAC> - Alaska's Child Advocacy Center

NATIONAL

- 1-800-656-4673 or 1-800-422-4453 - National Sexual Assault Hotline
- www.RAINN.org or www.Childhelp.org
- <https://tinyurl.com/Victimsofcrimes> - Office for Victims of Crime

Response to Reported Allegations:

When workers or safety team members are made aware of allegations of abuse, they will:

- Make sure all the required reports to authorities have been made.
- Confidentially seek the assistance of others who have the appropriate skills and training in order to write a safety plan for the offender, which will include:
 - Measures to keep the victim safe.
 - Safeguards and restrictions (including all legal restrictions).
 - Meeting attendance restrictions.
- Communicate the status of offenders as needed.
- Communicate with workers and elders in the new area if the offender moves locations.

Safe Meetings and Conventions:

Fellowship meetings, gospel meetings, special meetings and conventions must be as safe as possible for everyone involved.

- Elders and convention hosts will help make safety decisions specific to their meetings and property.
- A professional risk assessment may be needed to determine when meeting attendance restrictions are required for an individual accused of CSA or SA.
- In some cases, after appropriate counseling and professional assessment, fellowship meeting attendance may be permitted if everyone in the meeting freely and voluntarily agrees to meet with the offender.
 - All legal restrictions set by law will always be followed.
 - It may be possible for offenders to participate in fellowship meetings by phone if all participants freely consent to the arrangement.
 - Prescribed meeting arrangements and restrictions must be honored in order for meeting privileges to continue.

Care for Victim Survivors:

If anyone is currently carrying the burden of unreported sexual abuse, or has been the victim of inappropriate sexual behavior, we encourage you to reach out to a trusted friend and report to the proper authorities as appropriate. We will listen with compassion, respect and support to every allegation of abuse within our fellowship.

Anyone can help victim survivors personally to ensure they receive needed therapy. Financial aid for therapy is also available through the WaNIdAk therapy fund WaNIdAkTherapyFund@gmail.com. We encourage victim survivors to reach out to this confidential resource either personally or with the help of a trusted friend.

Safety Team:

The WaNIdAk safety team can be reached by email at WaNIdAksafety@gmail.com. The safety team is available to help walk you through the process of reporting allegations to authorities, to hear any safety concerns you have (including concerning patterns of behavior), and to direct you to more resources. Please email the safety team if you would like a list of contact information for current individual members.

We appreciate the heartfelt care and efforts of everyone in our fellowship to foster a safe environment.