

Iowa/Minnesota Policy for Preventing and Responding to Sexual Abuse

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Introduction

As a faith-based group with a focus on loving God and our neighbor as ourselves, we are committed to ensuring our gatherings are safe. This means that any person with allegations of abuse, including Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) and Sexual Abuse (SA) does not join any gathering in person, whether a worship service or social event. This document outlines the policy, practices, and implementation, both in a single page document and a detailed version that includes material in multiple appendices. Child sexual abuse and many other forms of abuse are crimes and must be reported to law enforcement; not reporting is against the law. Failing to report allows perpetrators to continue their destructive behavior, leaves victims without any recourse for justice or treatment, and exposes others to become victims of perpetrator's abuse.

In addition to being a crime, CSA and SA is a grievous sin that happens when someone in a position of power and trust violates or exploits someone who is often powerless to stop it. Our goal is to prevent and respond appropriately to abuse by becoming a community that is educated on identifying early warning grooming behaviors, clarifying appropriate boundaries, and holding each other accountable. Safety is a shared responsibility among everyone in the faith-based community, including workers, meeting hosts, and meeting attendees. The safest protection for all people in our faith-based community is universal awareness and understanding the devastating lifelong impact of abuse, along with a commitment to support survivors and to prevent abusive behavior via education with a culture of speaking up.

Purpose

Iowa and Minnesota have **zero tolerance for child sexual abuse (CSA) and sexual abuse (SA)**. CSA/SA is a crime and will be reported to law enforcement. The purpose of this document is to outline how to have a safe environment, free from any form of abuse, for gatherings in our faith community. To meet this goal, we need to prevent and respond appropriately to abuse by becoming educated on the various forms of abuse and to clarify appropriate boundaries. We cannot reduce a risk we do not understand. We need to acknowledge abuse of any kind has no place anywhere or at any time. Those who use any position of power to abuse as defined by this policy shall never again serve in any formal role within our faith-based community.

Summary

Once a CSA or SA allegation is received, the information will be immediately reported to the proper legal authorities who are equipped and experienced in investigating and handling these issues. **The accused person will be told NOT to attend meetings or gatherings of any kind.** A reassessment can be done only if the person is cleared, which means that the allegations are recanted without any coercion, financial incentive or pressure from family members, friends, or workers.

- We all must take ownership of preventing any form of abuse.
- Every worker, meeting host, and leaders (elder) and spouse must complete the MinistrySafe Training annually.
- MinistrySafe will be available to every adult; all are encouraged to take it.
- All meetings and gatherings will be considered a safe zone which ensures anyone with a past or present conviction or allegations of any type of abuse will be told NOT to attend.
- A policy cannot cover every situation. Therefore a "Safety Team" will be developed with individuals who have trust within our fellowship and can analyze each situation, always erring on the side of safety.

Implementation Plan

- a) All people are responsible for speaking up.
 - If you have "reasonable suspicion" that abuse has occurred, report it.
 - Do not investigate. Trained professional investigators will evaluate after the report is filed.
 - Do not inform the family of a child or vulnerable adult that a report has been made when the alleged perpetrator is or may be within the home.
- b) Report to appropriate authorities.
 - Report all child sexual allegations to appropriate authorities by calling 911 or report to Child Protective Services
 - In Iowa, call the Iowa DHS Hotline at 1-800-362-2178 and then local law enforcement.
 - In Minnesota, call your county Department of Human Services/Child Protective Services and then call local law enforcement.
 - Online exploitation of children should be reported to the Cyber Tipline at 800-843-5678 or online at www.CyberTipline.org.
 - Adult abuse survivors are encouraged to access RAINN.org online chat or phone hotline or:
 - In Iowa, call the Dependent Adult Protective Services hotline (24/7) at 1-800-362-2178 and then call local law enforcement.
 - In Minnesota, call the Minnesota Adult Abuse Reporting Center (24/7) at 1-844-880-1574 and then local law enforcement.

- When making a report to authorities, obtain an intake or case number and badge number or name to share with the Safety Team. Do not investigate the case yourself or impede the authorities who have the responsibility to investigate the report.
- c) Communicate to Safety Team (under development)
- A Safety Team will communicate to attendees, meeting hosts, elders, and workers on the status of various safety issues and protocols. This team will coordinate with law enforcement and other professionals on incidents and ensure this policy is followed.
 - Education to understand how trauma affects victims and those close to them is essential. The Safety Team will provide resources to victims to support healing.
 - For more details on the procedures followed by the Safety Team, please reference APPENDIX 3: Safety Team Administrative Policy.

Prevention of Abuse

Our goal is to prevent and respond appropriately to abuse by becoming a community that is educated on various forms of abuse and common dynamics, clarifying appropriate boundaries, and holding each other accountable. All persons should experience an environment of safety and justice and one that is free from any form of abuse.

One key to prevention of sexual abuse is to be educated about this subject and follow the recommendations of sexual abuse professionals. Every worker, meeting host, and leaders (elder) and spouse are required to take MinistrySafe Awareness Training. All others are also encouraged to take MinistrySafe training. Workers, meeting hosts, elders, and others with responsibility should have regular training updates regarding abuse. Important reference information is available to support parents as they teach their children to be safe. These documents define sexual abuse and sexual harassment, and they describe behaviors to be aware of such as grooming. In most states, it is a crime to communicate with minors for the purpose of luring them into sexual activity. Perpetrators not only groom potential victims, but they are also very skilled at grooming those closest to them, including friends, adults, ministers and other workers and friends to believe they are safe to be around.

Communications

Abuse thrives in silence and secrecy. Please communicate regarding abuse, threats, or any questionable or worrisome behavior by any person, including meeting hosts, elders and workers. Troublesome behavior patterns need to be addressed before they become abuse. If you have concerns, please notify a Safety Team member, worker, elder or any other person you trust. To be clear, there should be no retaliation by anyone in our community against anyone for bringing forward, in good faith, a concern about potentially abusive behavior.

Safety Responsibility

All individuals are responsible for safety within our community. These responsibilities vary based on role and whether a person may otherwise be a mandatory reporter of abuse. Elders and meeting hosts are ultimately responsible for the safety of those that gather in their home. Meeting hosts must exercise the same caution with respect to CSA and SA as they would for other safety concerns in their home, such as shoveling a driveway. Please see the attached APPENDIX 2: for individual responsibilities for safety chart.

Safe Meetings (Weekly and Annual)

Home settings are a typical gathering place in our faith-based community for meetings that often include children or other vulnerable people. Therefore, known sex offenders or others with a significant history of physical violence are not allowed to attend regular meetings. Meetings and conventions must be safe for everyone. Elders, meeting/convention hosts are responsible for safety and have the right and responsibility to make safety decisions regarding their meetings and premises.

Safety Practices:

1. **Fellowship meetings and Bible Studies.** CSA/SA offenders may not attend meetings in person. Meeting attendees will notify all other meeting attendees when friends and/or ministers are visiting from other states/areas. Meeting attendees will inform their visitors that there are children in the meeting and express that we have a zero-tolerance policy for CSA/SA.
2. **Special meetings, conventions, gospel meetings, funerals, and informal gatherings.** CSA/SA offenders may not attend in person. The exception is funerals for immediate family, with family approval. Other offenders may not attend these gatherings.
3. **Listening to meetings.** It may be possible for offenders to electronically listen to meetings. CSA offenders will not be permitted to listen to a Fellowship meeting or Bible study meeting where any children speak. Other offenders will not be permitted to listen to a Fellowship meeting or Bible study where any of the offender's victims speak or are present. Attendees of the Sunday Fellowship meeting have the final say in determining if an offender is allowed to listen. If any attendees of a meeting are uncomfortable, with an offender listening, the offender will not be allowed to listen.
4. **If an offender moves.** If an offender moves their residence to another area (including a different state or country) or desires to attend a different meeting or convention (possibly in a different state or country), the Safety Team is responsible for informing the workers and elders in the new area of the status of the convicted offenders and persons with substantiated allegations. We have a process to keep aware of the histories and behavior of convicted offenders and those with substantiated allegations. This is to make sure new workers in a field are aware of offenders and issues. If offenders move to other areas, whether in our region or not, we will do our best to notify the workers in the area that they move to and make appropriate arrangements for the safety and awareness of friends and workers in their new location.

Support for Victims

It is very important to provide care and support for all victims of abuse, both for CSA and SA, including professional therapy and, if needed, medical attention. Many past cases of CSA or SA have not been or will never be able to be addressed through the court system. Victims should be encouraged to have professional therapy to help work through the major decision of whether to work with the court system or to utilize other approaches to healing. Anyone can donate funds directly to abuse victims for therapy. Financial aid for initial therapy for victims in Iowa and Minnesota will be available through a non-profit organization created by our community. Donations can be made, anonymously if desired.

Response to Alleged Abuse

Our fellowship is committed to providing a timely and effective response to any allegations or findings of abuse or harassment within our church. We will work to create an environment where anyone feels comfortable raising questions and concerns, coming forward with reports of any potential abuse, and being proactive about preventing and responding to abuse. In responding to abuse, we will always prioritize the safety and needs of victims, survivors and other vulnerable persons. It is hard for victims to come forward in most circumstances. We will do our best never to blame victims for struggling to come forward, delaying disclosure, or other common disclosure behavior.

Learn to recognize abuse: We all act as gatekeepers, responsible for protecting everyone. Anyone can be a victim of abuse. When sexual abuse comes to our attention, we must respond in accordance with the law and with support for the victims. A report based on *reasonable suspicion*, or a *credible allegation* does not require proof that abuse has actually occurred or that the reporter witnessed the incident in question. Reporting is not a determination that abuse has actually occurred; rather, it is a request for an investigation of the situation. There is legal protection for reports made in good faith.

Failure to report or intentionally false reporting is punishable by law. It should be noted that if it is unclear whether an abuse allegation constitutes a reasonable suspicion, report directly to the state child abuse hotline or RAINN to determine whether (1) the abuse allegation constitutes reasonable suspicion, (2) any additional information is needed to make the determination of whether there is a reasonable suspicion of child abuse, or (3) if the allegation should be dismissed and not reported. In general, everyone is encouraged to err on the side of reporting.

New allegations. When a new credible sexual abuse allegation is made known, secure law enforcement approval if possible before communicating with others, so the investigation is not compromised. Contact the Safety Team who will communicate with those who attend meetings, with the alleged offender and other people who need to know, including victims. The Safety Team will communicate that, as a precautionary measure, the alleged offender is not allowed to be in meetings. The names of victims and details of alleged abuse are not to be disclosed in the communications.

Previous convictions and allegations. When previous sexual abuse convictions and allegations come to light, they must be addressed for the safety of children and others. As a precaution, the Safety Team, worker, meeting host, or elder is to instruct the offender to not attend meetings. Communication by our Safety Team needs to be made to friends and workers in the area where the offender attends meetings and other areas where the offender has lived. These communications are needed so that victims feel free to come forward and report abuse and receive the help they need. The Safety Team also needs to issue an updated communication when an offender's status changes.

Status of Offenders

Known sex offenders, or others with a significant history of physical violence, are not allowed to attend meetings or other gatherings. Ongoing communications about an offender's status is required to protect the safety of children and others. The Safety Team is to be responsible for keeping track of the status of all sexual abuse offenders in the region. This requires continual communication with other regions, so no offenders move into the region without notice and no offenders move to other regions without notice. It is the responsibility of the Safety Team to inform the people who need to know the status of offenders.

Ministry to Offenders

It may be possible for adults to volunteer to have fellowship with an offender. Volunteers would meet at a non-customary time so the volunteers can also attend their regular meetings. In addition, all legal restrictions must be followed for any offender on parole or registered as a sex offender. Education regarding sex offender behaviors will better equip workers to minister in this situation more effectively. This education should include common offender distortions, grooming, and any behavior other than full ownership of their own behavior (e.g. denying, minimizing, excusing, or blaming others for their offenses).

APPENDIX: Iowa/Minnesota Policy for Preventing and Responding to Sexual Abuse

APPENDIX 1:	Policy Details.....	4
APPENDIX 2:	Individual Responsibilities for Safety Chart	7
APPENDIX 3:	Safety Team Administrative Policy (WIP).....	8
APPENDIX 4:	Caring for Survivors	9
APPENDIX 5:	Retaliation.....	10
APPENDIX 6:	Educational - Potential Indicators of Child Abuse	10
APPENDIX 7:	Educational - Boundaries	11
APPENDIX 8:	Glossary.....	12

APPENDIX 1: Policy Details

Meetings in home settings, often with children or other people who have significant vulnerabilities, are a typical gathering place in our faith-based community. Known sex offenders or others with a significant history of physical violence are not allowed to attend regular meetings. Any person with a past offence who wishes to join our faith-based community should make this known to our Safety Team so they can coordinate with workers on an appropriate course of action. The Safety Team shall take any reasonable steps to ensure that Known Sex Offenders or others with a significant history of violence are not able to access and attend regular meetings. The Safety Team will inform a fellowship group when this is necessary or prudent. Adults may volunteer to have fellowship with an offender, just as any may volunteer to have fellowship with any others, at a non-customary time so the volunteers can also attend their regular meetings. In addition, all legal restrictions must be followed for any offender on parole or registered as a sex offender.

Our faith-based community is committed to holding admitted or convicted offenders to a high standard of accountability. Known offenders are not welcome in regular meetings. Jesus welcomed sinners, but he did not command us to welcome wolves among the sheep. Workers should pursue their own education regarding sex offenders when ministering to known sex offenders. Education will better equip the workers to minister effectively by confronting common offender distortions, grooming, and any behavior other than full ownership of their own behavior (e.g. denying, minimizing, excusing, or blaming others for their offenses).

The following steps, which include legal requirements, are to be followed by everyone.

1. **New/Recent Offenses:** If you believe a child is in immediate danger that could result in death or serious harm, call 911 first. Anyone with reasonable suspicion that a child is being abused or neglected is required by law to report it to a state child abuse hotline (see below for numbers) or the RAINN National Assault Hotline 800-656-4673. Hotline calls are screened by the appropriate state or local child protective/social services agencies to determine if they warrant investigation. State law protects the identity of reporters and gives them immunity from liability of good faith reports.

CSA: If there is a disclosure of abuse, any evidence or knowledge of abuse, or any reasonable belief of abuse or neglect against a minor (age 17 or younger), any adult must immediately report to both Child Protective Services (CPS) and local law enforcement.

- In Iowa, call the Iowa DHS Hotline at 1-800-362-2178 and then local law enforcement.
- In Minnesota, call your county Department of Human Services/Child Protective Services and then call local law enforcement.
- Online exploitation of children should be reported to the Cyber Tipline at 800-843-5678 or online at www.CyberTipline.org.

Vulnerable Adult SA: If there is a disclosure of abuse, any evidence or knowledge of abuse, or any reasonable belief of abuse or neglect against a vulnerable adult (e.g. elder abuse, or abuse against an adult with intellectual disabilities), any adult must immediately report to appropriate Adult Protective Services and local law enforcement.

- In Iowa, call the Dependent Adult Protective Services hotline (24/7) at 1-800-362-2178 and then call local law enforcement.
- In Minnesota, call the Minnesota Adult Abuse Reporting Center (24/7) at 1-844-880-1574 and then call local law enforcement.

Clergy SA: If there is a disclosure, any evidence or knowledge, or any reasonable belief of sexual abuse against an adult under the spiritual authority and/or care of a worker, all persons within our fellowship must report as soon as possible to local law enforcement. Clergy sexual abuse is a crime in both Iowa and Minnesota. After the report, contact a member of the Safety Team (see APPENDIX 3: for contact information).

SA: If there is a disclosure, any evidence or knowledge, or any reasonable belief abuse against an adult, all persons within our fellowship must report as soon as possible to the Safety Team (see APPENDIX 3: for contact information). For new allegations of

SA, the decision to report to law enforcement is up to the victim. The victim should consult with law enforcement or other professionals on whether or not to proceed in the legal system.

2. **Previous/Historic Offenses:**

All Previous/Historic Offenses should be communicated to the Safety Team. Information needs to be communicated to the people who need to know the status of the offender: In ALL CASES, no one will be allowed into a meeting or gathering.

CSA: In some states there is no statute of limitations for CSA; the abuser can still be prosecuted when credible allegations of CSA are made by adult victims who were minors at the time of abuse. In other situations, the statute of limitations may have expired.

SA: For old allegations of SA that come to light, note that the statute of limitations may or may not have run out. The decision to report to law enforcement is up to the victim. If more information is desired about statutes of limitations and definitions of various kinds of sexual abuse (which vary by type of crime, victim age, and state), refer to your state's laws as described at www.rainn.org.

3. Follow the protocol below once proper authorities, including law enforcement, the Safety Team, workers, and local meeting elders have been notified.

- a) In every case, workers, meeting hosts and elders, in consultation with law enforcement, need to make timely decisions regarding safe meeting arrangements. It is essential to help the victim get professional therapy to assist in making the important decision of whether or not to pursue justice through the legal system.
- b) If there is a disclosure, any evidence or knowledge, or any reasonable belief of sexual abuse against an adult under the spiritual authority and/or care of a worker, all persons within our fellowship must report as soon as possible to local law enforcement. Clergy sexual abuse is a crime in both Iowa and Minnesota. After the report, contact a member of the Safety Team (contact information will be forthcoming).
- c) When making a report to authorities, obtain an intake or case number and badge number or name. Do not investigate the case yourself or impede the authorities who have the responsibility to investigate the report.
- d) When the alleged perpetrator is within our faith-based community (friend or worker), the person against whom the allegation is received will be told NOT to attend meetings or gatherings of any kind. All persons within our faith-based community must communicate as soon as possible with the Safety Team (contact information will be forthcoming).
- e) Except for necessary meeting arrangements or other safety issues, do not talk to the alleged abuser about the pending investigation. DO NOT try to investigate the matter. Any delay in reporting could result in a loss of critical evidence, potentially be a violation of the law, and worst of all, enable the continued abuse of vulnerable children or adults. After any report, contact a member of the Safety Team (see contact information above).
- f) Keep the identity of victims confidential except for required communications with investigators and family. Do not inform the family of a child or vulnerable adult that a report has been made when the alleged perpetrator is or may be within the home.
- g) After receiving any information from any of the above steps, a Safety Team member shall inform the entire team (except a person or family member of a person who is involved in any allegation) and document the information. If there are concerns or allegations involving a member or members of the Safety Team, contact any worker on the IA/MN Staff or any elder/meeting host.

The Safety Team and IA/MN Staff shall ensure reports have been made to proper authorities (law enforcement and social services when applicable) in situations of potential abuse, as explained above, including child abuse and neglect, elder abuse, abuse against an adult with intellectual disabilities, or clergy sexual abuse. In other cases, involving an adult victim, the Safety Team and IA/MN Staff will respect the autonomy of any adult victim(s) with regard to whether the adult victim(s) reports personally to the appropriate authorities. The decision of a survivor to personally report adult abuse and/or cooperate with authorities is ultimately their choice. However, the Safety Team should work to encourage and support the victim(s) in every possible way. There may be situations where the Safety Team will report information pertaining to a potential crime against an adult or child even when the victim is not ready to do so. When reporting is required or is in the judgment of the Safety Team in the best interest of the safety of others, the Safety Team may coordinate with the IA/MN Staff as well as consult with national or local experts and the victim to make a safety plan when there is any potential reason to believe the victim or others may still be in danger (e.g. in cases involving domestic violence, stalking, assault, or threats). The Safety Team will also seek to communicate as sensitively as possible the reason for reporting to the victim.

- h) After receiving any information from any of the above steps, the Safety Team will establish a point of contact with any impacted group (e.g. field assigned worker(s), meeting host, or leader (elders) who is not directly connected or family to anyone involved in an allegation of abuse). The Safety Team will coordinate with any local point of contact and the IA/MN Staff on critical response issues including:
 - Assessing Safety
 - Assessing Accountability or Boundaries for Alleged Perpetrators
 - Implementing Care for any Victims and Families
 - Connecting to Specialized Resources
- i) **Final review of cases:** Every allegation will be looked at but needs to be verified by proper investigation, including 3rd party investigators.

- **For New/Recent Offenses:** If the allegation is completely cleared, it will be reassessed, which means that the allegations are recanted without any coercion, financial incentive or pressure from family members, friends, workers or any other individual.
- **Previous/Historic Offenses:** The Safety Team will need to have a full investigation by licensed third party investigators before recommending any meeting or gathering privileges. Once a full investigation is completed, then a determination of attendance or alternative form of ministry will be made. See Ministry to Offenders section. Furthermore, an assessment of risk will be done by independent third party therapists that are recommended by the Association for the Treatment & Prevention of Sexual Abuse and in conjunction with the use of polygraph. These assessments and processes will need to be further reviewed and developed in order to provide the safety and assurance that we are striving for.

Communication to affected individuals: Note the following four offender categories and examples of information that may need to be communicated to the people who need to know the status of the offender: In ALL CASES, none will be allowed into a typical meeting or gathering.

- **Offender has been convicted of sexual abuse.** Example: Offender has been released from prison and will be registered as a sex offender for the next ten years. Offender is not attending meetings.
- **Offender admitted sexual abuse but was not prosecuted.** Example: Offender has acknowledged allegations of SA and is not attending meetings
- **Offender has sexual abuse allegations against them that were substantiated by a Public Authority but not prosecuted.** Example: Due to substantiated CSA allegations, offender is not attending meetings.
- **Offender has credible sexual abuse allegations against them that have not been substantiated by a Public Authority.** Example: As a result of credible SA allegations by licensed investigators, offender is not attending meetings.

When the alleged perpetrator is a meeting host or leader (elders) or spouse or a worker, the Safety Team shall make any recommendations regarding responsibility including meeting restrictions. This will be reevaluated as necessary as the situation develops. It is strongly recommended that any person, but especially a worker or other leader, be put on leave of responsibility and restricted access to any vulnerable persons when there are credible and/or substantive allegations of abuse as defined above. This would be a temporary step until the completion of any investigations and the Safety Team has sufficient information to make safety recommendations.

Any person facing an allegation of abuse, and any family member or close friend of such a person must recuse themselves from these response protocols, whether a member of the Safety Team, worker, elder, or friend.

Further Response Protocols

Whenever possible, the Safety Team should refer the victim(s) to local expert help (where available) and/or national organizations such as:

- The National Domestic Violence Hotline (1-800-799-SAFE)
- The Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network Hotline (RAINN - 1-800-656-4673)
- SAMHSA's National Helpline (1-800-662-HELP)

Each fellowship group may consult with the Safety Team for local or regional support:

- Nearest Child Advocacy Center and Contact
- Nearest Domestic Violence Shelter and Contact
- Available Sexual Assault Center and Contact
- Other Local Resources

Victims may choose to submit a confidential webform at <https://www.advocatesforthetruth.com/> or call or text the confidential hotline at 503-386-4634 for support and resources.

Any victim has a right for their privacy to be respected as much as possible. At times, it may be necessary for our workers and/or Safety Team to share certain information to safeguard other vulnerable persons and allow for any other potential victims to come forward.

The Safety Team shall coordinate further appropriate response including but not limited to:

- Ensuring all potential abuse has been reported to appropriate authorities according to the policy outlined above,
- Taking any further action for the protection of vulnerable persons,
- Facilitating cooperation with any investigations including helping investigators assess the possibility of other victims and communicating in appropriate ways within the church or with others,
- Ongoing, appropriate care for the victim(s) including helping them connect with professional trauma informed care if desired,

- When appropriate, with careful attention to protecting the privacy of any victims, offering public support and/or opposing harmful narratives toward victims,
- Maintaining contact with the alleged offender during any investigations, leave, or restrictions to ensure proper boundaries and accountability, especially with regard to controlling the narrative, retaliation, and access to other vulnerable people,
- Caring for others in the group and coordinating with outside resources as needed,
- Documenting relevant actions and information related to the situation,
- Reaching out to qualified experts with questions or when an Independent Consultation or Investigation is appropriate.

Those who use any position of power to abuse as defined by this policy shall never again serve in any formal role within our fellowship.

APPENDIX 2: Individual Responsibilities for Safety Chart

Roles and Responsibilities for CSA/SA Issues

Personal responsibility for the safety of our fellowship is shared by all.

* This chart is not intended to represent all safety responsibilities, but rather to educate on the various duties we all share.

Responsibilities	Meeting Attendees	Meeting/Convention Hosts	Ministry	All in the Fellowship
Commitment to Zero Tolerance Iowa Minnesota CSA/SA Policy	•	•	•	•
Support and empower survivors	•	•	•	•
Legal responsibility for safety of the guests on their property		•		
Notify meeting attendees of visitors	•	•	•	•
Notify visitors that children attend the meeting and there is a zero-tolerance policy in our region	•	•	•	•
Responsible to monitor and report anyone who exhibits questionable behavior	Recommended	•	•	Recommended
Annual MinistrySafe training	Recommended	•	•	Recommended
Observe and maintain appropriate boundaries (see APPENDIX 7:)	•	•	•	•
Mandated Reporters	Recommended	•	•	Recommended
Communicate the status of offenders			•	

APPENDIX 3: Safety Team Administrative Policy (WIP)

A policy cannot cover every situation. Therefore a "Safety Team" will be developed with individuals who have trust within our fellowship and can analyze each situation, always erring on the side of safety. The Safety Team is responsible for equipping our fellowship for effective prevention and response. A Safety Team should be comprised of a mixed group of 7-11 friends and workers, including women and men. The team needs to seek a close balance of people from both Iowa and Minnesota (e.g. 4 from IA and 3 from MN or vice versa, not 5 from MN and 2 from IA). Our current team is under development and contact information will follow. Each Safety Team member will have a background check done.

Role of the Safety Team

The Safety Team will coordinate with any local point of contact and the IA/MN Staff on critical response issues including:

- Assessing Safety
- Assessing Accountability or Boundaries for Alleged Perpetrators
- Implementing Care for any Victims and Families
- Connecting to Specialized Resources

Duties of the Safety Team:

- Maintain rigorous knowledge of Abuse Policy
- Establish a point of contact and backup contact in each fellowship group in the area (typically an elder and/or other designated friends)
- Lead in implementing and overseeing compliance with our Abuse Policy
- Brief all IA/MN staff, elders and/or other designated friends on the application of the policy on a regular basis, including in advance of any large gathering
- Ensure all fellowship groups understand the role of the Safety Team and how to contact them
- Receive, Document, and Respond to any policy violations or concerning behavior
- Lead in responding to any allegations of abuse
- Conduct or coordinate screening of workers, elders, meeting hosts on anyone in place of authority
- Complete continuing education from a qualified organization on an annual basis and help leaders with an ongoing education plan for the area

Screening of Workers and Elders (including Overseers)

Beyond the typical spiritual vetting, our fellowship shall utilize third party professional screening tools for all new workers (including overseers) in our region, and meeting hosts and elders. References from within and without the fellowship are necessary; including professional screening agencies i.e. background checks. An interview that explores a candidate's qualifications and includes questions related to abuse, protecting the vulnerable, and our Abuse Policy will be conducted. If the screening process yields information that an individual abused a child or others in any way or has been convicted of a violent and/or sexual crime, that individual is not a candidate for worker, overseer meeting host or elder. If any potentially concerning information comes to light OR if the screening process shows that a candidate has ever been accused or convicted of any type of abuse or crime, our Safety Team may consult with an expert to help assess.

Screening of Friends

Our fellowship shall utilize the following screening tools for all regular meeting attendees (friends):

- The completion of a professional process including questions related to the responsibility of all in our fellowship to live by our abuse policy and the responsibility to make it known if they have committed abuse or been accused of abuse
- A commitment to the Iowa/Minnesota CSA SA Abuse Policy
- State sex offender registry check (when publicly accessible)

Training and Resources

The Safety Team will develop and maintain a three-year plan for education for the region and update it annually. The Safety Team will work to implement the plan with elders and friends who serve as local points of contact as well as the IA/MN Staff. The plan will prioritize annual continuing education on abuse for the whole fellowship. The plan will also prioritize independent expertise as well as regular internal briefings on our policy. The Safety Team will maintain an online resource folder on abuse for all in the fellowship.

Responding to Boundary Violations

Our fellowship takes seriously any policy violations and any concerns related to respect and safety. Any person - worker, overseer, elder, or friend - who witnesses a violation of this policy is expected to intervene if you feel safe to do so or get someone who can. Then speak to the Safety Team as soon as possible. Furthermore, any concerns related to vulnerable persons should be brought to the attention of the Safety Team. **It is not gossip to speak up on behalf of what is right, especially on behalf of someone who is vulnerable.** The Safety Team will document all concerns or policy violations and collaborate on any appropriate response and accountability. Any concerns about the Safety Team may go to any worker of the IA/MN Staff.

Responding to Abuse and Harassment

Our fellowship is committed to providing a timely and effective response to any allegations or findings of abuse or harassment within our church. We will work to create an environment where anyone feels comfortable raising questions and concerns, coming forward with reports of any potential abuse, and being proactive about preventing and responding to abuse. In responding to abuse, we will always

prioritize the safety and needs of the victim(s) and other vulnerable persons. It is difficult for victims to come forward in most circumstances. We will do our best never to blame victims for struggling to come forward, delaying disclosure, or other common disclosure behavior.

Independent Consultation and Investigation

There are several scenarios when it is strongly advisable that our fellowship pursue independent consultation or investigation in response to allegations of abuse or harassment, such as:

- Authorities decline to investigate reports of abuse even though there is evidence of wrongdoing,
- An adult victim is not ready to report allegations of a criminal nature to the authorities,
- The alleged offender is not charged with criminal wrongdoing by the authorities after an investigation, but sufficient concerns remain whether the alleged offender engaged in wrongful conduct that may disqualify them from continued involvement in the church,
- There is a serious pattern of misconduct denied by the alleged perpetrator,
- The alleged offender is a worker, elder/meeting host or the Safety Team,
- The alleged victim(s) requests an investigation or there is a strong belief that there may be other victims,
- The organization wants to investigate and assess how it responded to the allegations of abuse to better understand how it could have responded more effectively and to improve for the future.

The Safety Team will make a recommendation to the I/MN Staff regarding the wisdom of independent consultation or investigation. If the I/MN Staff decline to engage in an independent consultation or investigation, they, along with the Safety Team shall document all related information along with an account of their decision. The documentation shall be made known and available within the church for the sake of transparency while protecting the privacy of any potential victims.

If the I/MN Staff decide to engage in an independent investigation, it must be conducted by an organization or persons completely independent of our fellowship and experienced in investigating cases of the specific form(s) of abuse or misconduct in view. The organization or persons should utilize a multidisciplinary team of trained investigators (examples can include current or past law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and/or mental health experts) who are trained in best practice investigative standards, have significant experience investigating a wide range of misconduct and/or abuse cases, and utilize trauma-informed practices in their investigations.

Upon completion of an investigation, the independent investigating body will deliver a report to the I/MN Staff and Safety Team that will consist of its investigative findings, analysis, and recommendations. The I/MN Staff and Safety Team will make decisions based on the report's recommendations to provide safety and communicate these decisions to affected individuals in a transparent manner.

APPENDIX 4: Caring for Survivors

Survivors should have control over sharing their story. When survivors choose to do so, they need our utmost support.

This support will include:

- Listening and staying calm,
- Affirming without judgment,
- Validating strong emotions (such as anger, betrayal, and confusion),
- Respecting their privacy,
- Encouraging and empowering their autonomy,
- Encouraging them to seek professional medical or mental health care as appropriate,
- Asking if there is anything practical the church can do.

Our support will recognize our limitations and will not offer therapeutic, legal, or other professional advice, but will focus on personal support and empowerment.

We will be careful to avoid causing further harm, and under no circumstances - even when the abuse is alleged and not proven - will we:

- Place any portion of blame for the abuse on the victim,
- Probe for intimate details of the abuse,
- Express disbelief,
- Attempt to silence the victim,
- Encourage noncompliance with the law,
- Encourage silence regarding violations of this policy,
- Express support for the perpetrator,
- Urge meeting with, reconciliation with, or forgiveness of the perpetrator.

Receiving an abuse disclosure is an honor, not a burden; it is a sign of trust. Survivors often choose to disclose their abuse years, even decades, after it occurred. We encourage anyone receiving an adult's abuse disclosure to be guided by the following responses:

DO Say

Thank you for telling me.

I believe you.

I'm so sorry this happened to you. How can I help? ☹☹☹

Take as much time as you need. ☹☹☹

I am here.

The following should only be said if the victim indicates these concerns are on his/her mind.

It is okay to be angry.

It's understandable you're feeling that way. ☹☹☹

Your reaction is not an uncommon response.

You're not going crazy. These are normal responses following abuse.

It wasn't your fault.

DON'T Say

Why are you telling me this?

Why didn't you _____ (run/scream/stop him etc.)

What do you mean when you say he abused you? What exactly did he do?

You need to forgive and move on.

It'll take some time, but you'll get over it.

It was so long ago, why are you still letting your abuser win by hanging on to it? Let it go.

Try to be strong.

Out of tragedies good things happen.

You're lucky that _____ didn't happen.

I know how you feel.

Perhaps you misunderstood...

APPENDIX 5: Retaliation

Our fellowship prohibits any form of retaliation against any individual or group who is involved in any activity in this policy, such as reporting concerns or potential evidence, or cooperating in a criminal or independent investigation. Retaliation can take many forms, including, but not limited to, shunning, violence, threats, or intimidation that would discourage some persons from engaging in activities required or encouraged by this policy. Actions in response to a good faith report or response under this policy are considered retaliatory if they could reasonably have an adverse effect on the wellbeing of an individual or if they impact their ability to fully participate in church activities, including compliance with this policy. Concerns or questions about retaliation should be immediately communicated to the Safety Team or a member of the IA/MN Staff. All individuals and groups of individuals engaging in retaliation will be held accountable under this policy.

APPENDIX 6: *Educational* - Potential Indicators of Child Abuse

Consider the possibility of sexual abuse if a child has:

- Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing,
- Pain or blood in the genital area and/or walking, sitting, or using the bathroom,
- Discharge from the penis or vagina,
- Injuries (e.g., bruises, tearing, bleeding), itching, or swelling in the genital, vaginal, or anal area,
- Urinary tract infections, yeast infections, sexually transmitted diseases,
- Pregnancy.

It is atypical for children to engage in the following sexual behaviors:

- Placing mouth on sex part,
- Asking others to engage in sexual acts,
- Trying to have intercourse or imitating intercourse,
- Undressing others, especially if done forcefully,
- Imitating sexual positions with dolls,
- Inserting an object into vagina or anus, especially if child continues to do so despite pain,
- Manually stimulating or having oral or genital contact with pets,
- Making sexual sounds,
- Inserting tongue in mouth when kissing.

Consider the possibility of physical abuse if you notice:

- Frequent injuries of any kind (e.g., bruises, cuts, fractures, burns),
- Especially if the child is unable to provide an adequate explanation of the cause of injury,
- These injuries may appear in distinctive patterns such as grab marks, human bite marks, cigarette burns, or impressions of other instruments,
- Pay particular attention to injuries that are present on both sides of the head or body, as accidental injuries typically only affect one side of the body.

Consider the possibility of neglect if a child:

- Is obviously malnourished, listless, or fatigued,
- Begs, steals, or hoards food or complains frequently of hunger,
- Is consistently dirty or has severe body odor,
- Lacks sufficient clothing for the weather,
- Untreated illness, injuries, health (e.g., unfilled cavities) or serious educational needs,
- Broken or missing eyeglasses, hearing aid, or other necessary aids or equipment,
- Has an untreated need for glasses, dental care, or other medical attention,
- Stays at school outside of school hours,
- Frequently absent or significant academic struggles,
- Is inappropriately left unsupervised,
- Abuses alcohol or other drugs.

APPENDIX 7: *Educational - Boundaries*

Healthy Boundaries for All Friends and Workers

Abusers often use charm or other tactics to manipulate others. Targets of abuse often report feeling flattered and then later confused, upset, guilty, ashamed, and like it is their fault. Victims should know that although it is normal to feel this way, abuse is never their fault. Those in positions of power and trust are responsible and able to respect appropriate boundaries.

Abusers are often skilled at explaining away concerning behavior. Anyone who experiences or has information regarding concerning behavior or a policy violation should document it and speak up as soon as possible to the Safety Team. All of us should be mindful of what is happening around us and speak up to the Safety Team if anyone is demonstrating concerning behavior, crossing boundaries, or violating this policy in any way.

The following boundaries are simply how we should conduct ourselves as a faith-based community. We should uphold the following standards of respect and safety at all times. Friends (adults and minors) and workers are all accountable for healthy behaviors both in person and online, including responsibly using electronic media, texts and the internet. Workers are especially responsible to uphold safe and healthy behaviors and set an example for all.

Show respect in physical touch, space, and visibility:

- To be healthy, touch must always be welcomed by the other person (whether they are an adult or a minor). If you are not sure just ask - e.g. Can I give you a hug?
- Touch within a significant power difference should be observable to others (e.g. between an adult and a child).
- Be considerate of others and give them appropriate space: Notice the body language of others and be aware of your impact on others.
- Stay in visible and accountable spaces: No one should be alone with a minor or vulnerable adult who is not part of their own family (including giving rides and online interaction and messaging).
- No one should be in a restroom with a child except a child's parent or guardian. Parents or guardians must help with any restroom assistance or diapering.
- Appropriate touch with minors that is observable, and welcome may include: high-fives, fist bumps, short hugs, or pat on the shoulder or upper back.
- Inappropriate touch with minors also includes (for a child not in your own family):
 - Any touch that is unwanted by a minor or not observable by others
 - Touching a minor's thighs, stomach, or lower back
 - Any intimate touch such as massage or any touch under clothing
 - Tickling, piggy-back rides, or other games involving lots of touch with minors
 - Lap sitting for minors older than 2 years old
 - Corporal punishment

Show respect in your words:

- Use words that convey the respect always due to others
- Avoid any language that belittles or objectifies (e.g. commenting on a minor's sexual development, or especially within a power differential, commenting on a person's sexual attractiveness)
- Avoid sexualized comments including jokes, stories, experiences, or sharing sexualized content (such as images, video or other media) or engaging in any other sexualized communication, especially with a minor, vulnerable adult, or in a power differential

Show respect in personal boundaries:

- Healthy people do not seek to control others, but rather encourage and empower others to take healthy control of their own life (e.g. making decisions for someone or taking control of an aspect of their life such as directing their finances or career or social life)
- Avoid volunteering inappropriately intimate information or asking someone to reveal intimate details or personal information when the person is not ready or comfortable doing so
- Give control to others (e.g. "Where would you be comfortable meeting up?")
- Always respect the "no" of others in setting personal boundaries

It is always the responsibility of the person in the position of greater power to maintain appropriate boundaries with others. The following behaviors are unacceptable by any workers, overseer, elder or meeting host:

- Any abuse of power as defined by this policy
- Sexual harassment of any kind, including unwanted sexual attention, comments, or unwanted physical touch
- Behavior or words that discriminate against anyone based on age, race, sex, ethnicity, national origin, religion, language, disability, health conditions, socioeconomic status, marital status, domestic status, or parental status
- Any words that belittle or threaten
- Any attempts to put themselves or any other worker or elder above the standards of this policy
- Any attempts to enforce secrecy with regard to violations of this policy

Specific Convention Boundaries:

In anticipation of each convention, the Safety Team will create a condensed policy with safety boundaries specific to the set up of that convention and that are aligned with the full policy. Boundaries will directly address sleeping arrangements, private showering and changing, and other boundaries specific to the set up of the convention. The Safety Team will ensure this is distributed to each attendee so there is clarity on the safe boundaries, and who to contact if there is a policy violation, other safety concerns, or any potential abuse.

Boundaries for Workers Staying in Homes

When a worker stays in a home, due care must be taken to uphold safe and healthy boundaries. It is always the responsibility of the worker to maintain appropriate boundaries with others.

The boundaries in the section above apply at all times, including when a worker is staying in the home of a friend. Additionally, the following boundaries shall apply:

- All sleeping arrangements shall ensure a private room for any worker or workers. No friend or family member of an adult or child shall be alone with a worker in their private room.
- All changing, showering/bathing, and restroom use must be private.
- A worker is never to be in the presence of a friend or family member of a friend where either is in a state of undress.
- A worker is never to be alone with a minor, as stated above. This includes being in the house of a friend without another adult family member in the room (the exception being when the worker is a family member of the household).

If any worker, overseer, or elder wishes to pursue a consensual romantic relationship with someone under their spiritual care or a power hierarchy, they must contact the IAVMN Staff for the sake of transparency and to discuss any appropriate boundaries given the power dynamics or other factors.

APPENDIX 8: Glossary

Abuse: In general, abuse occurs when a person in a position of power and/or trust (e.g. worker, elder, overseer, boss, supervisor, parent, adult, older child, etc.) uses that position to exploit or violate someone who is more vulnerable (e.g. a child, someone who is sick, elderly, or disabled, student, supervisee, intern, immigrant, etc.). That exploitation or violation can take a variety of forms such as emotional, financial, physical, sexual, spiritual, etc.

Sexual Abuse: When a person in a place of power and/or trust, engages in sexual behavior with a child or an adult under their supervision, authority, or spiritual care, including:

Sexual Penetration: Any act or attempted act of vaginal or anal penetration, however slight, by a person's penis, finger, other body part, or an object, and/or any oral-genital contact.

Sexual Contact: Any intentional touching of a person's breasts, buttocks, groin, genitals, or other intimate parts. Touching may be over or under clothing and may include the touching or making the person touch, or making the person touch their own body. This also includes contact with non-sexual areas of the body for the sexual gratification of the perpetrator (such as with certain paraphilic disorders).

Non-Contact Sexual Acts:

- observing a person's nudity or sexual activity or allowing a person to observe sexual activity;
- recording, photographing, transmitting, showing, viewing, streaming, or distributing intimate or sexual images, audio recordings, or sexual information of persons; or
- exposing one's genitals or inducing a person to expose their own genitals ,
- within a power dynamic (boss-employee, doctor-patient, teacher-student, worker-friend, adult-child) communicating sexual desire or sexually stimulating content toward a person.

A child cannot consent to any sexual behavior with an adult or significantly older child. An adult under the authority or care of a leader cannot consent to sexual activity. Even when both people are adults and the contact is not forcible, any crossing of sexual boundaries within a power structure is not an "affair" or a "relationship" but an egregious abuse of power. Adult sexual abusers often develop an emotional and spiritual connection and then exploit it.

Clergy Sexual Abuse: sexual abuse (see above) by worker, overseer, elder, or other leader holding formal spiritual authority with a person under their spiritual care and/or supervision, whether an adult or a child. It is an abuse of power, and both Iowa and Minnesota have laws that criminalize clergy sexual abuse. Other states do as well (but not all).

Sexual Assault: sexual contact or behavior that occurs without the consent of the victim. Sexual harassment generally violates civil laws—all have a right to work or learn without being harassed—but in many cases is not a criminal act (see more on harassment below). Sexual assault usually refers to acts that are criminal. Some forms of sexual assault include:

- Penetration of the victim's body, also known as rape,
- Attempted rape,
- Forcing a victim to perform sexual acts, such as oral sex or penetration of the perpetrator's body,
- Fondling or unwanted sexual touching.

Consent is words or overt actions indicating a freely given agreement to the sexual act or contact. Silence or the absence of an explicit "no" does not equal consent. Physical submission by the victim - such as "freezing" or "fawning" in fear - does not equal consent. Consent also implies the ability to say no in a mutual relationship: Children, certain vulnerable adults (based on functioning related to factors such as intellectual disabilities, age, mental health, or other vulnerabilities), or those within a power differential (e.g. with a religious leader, teacher, or supervisor) are unable to consent to sexual activity. Other circumstances such as intoxication or unconsciousness also render a person unable to give consent to sexual activity. Deception or manipulation of a person also renders that person unable to consent.

Sexual Harassment: The legal definition of Sexual Harassment by the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (1980) is "Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment. These behaviors constitute sexual harassment when:

1. submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment,
2. submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual;
3. such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment".

Beyond the legal definition, harassment, sexual or otherwise, can also occur in a community, conference, or event when the people involved are not employees of the church. In accord with our values, sexual harassment is not restricted to what is defined as sexual harassment under the law. We consider any unwanted sexualized behavior or sexualized behavior within a power differential to be a serious form of harassment (including unwanted touch or communication, other unwanted sexual attention, or any behavior that objectifies or degrades.) Other common forms of harassment include bullying and acts of discrimination. Harassment can include discrimination against a specific group of people based on age, race, sex, ethnicity, national origin, religion, language, disability, health conditions, socioeconomic status, marital status, domestic status, or parental status.

Intimate Partner Violence (Domestic Violence): A pattern of behavior where a person in or who has been in an intimate relationship uses tactics of control, belittling, isolation, fear, stalking, and/or intimidation to dominate, harm, degrade, or otherwise undermine the worth of the other person in the relationship. Intimate partner violence can be physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, social, or financial.

Emotional Abuse: When a person holding power and trust uses pattern of controlling and domineering behaviors such as shaming, insulting, degrading, intimidating, threatening, humiliating, and/or domineering. Bullying is a common term for acts that typically constitute emotional abuse.

Financial Abuse: The illegal or improper use of a vulnerable person or his/her financial resources for another's profit or advantage. Some examples of financial abuse may include: the taking of money or property; forging a signature; getting a person to sign a deed, will or

power of attorney through deception; coercion or undue influence; or illegally or improperly adding names to bank accounts or safety deposit boxes. The elderly in particular are often targeted for financial abuse.

Physical Abuse: Non-accidental physical injury (ranging from bruises to severe fractures or death) by way of bodily contact (such as slapping, punching, pushing, beating, kicking, shaking, or striking with an object) or non-injurious contact with the goal or effect of intimidating, threatening, or controlling.

Neglect occurs when caregivers have the resources to provide (in other words, struggling with poverty is not neglect), but withhold essential aspects of care such as:

- Physical: failure to provide necessary food or shelter, or appropriate supervision,
- Medical: failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatment,
- Educational: failure to educate a child or attend to special education needs,
- Emotional: inattention to a child's emotional needs, failure to provide psychological care, or permitting the child to use alcohol or other drugs.

Spiritual Abuse: a form of emotional abuse, meaning a pattern of coercive or domineering behaviors using religion, usually by a person who holds power and trust. Many acts of abuse in a religious environment will have a spiritual dimension. Examples include:

- Use of religious ideology, precepts, tradition, or sacred texts to harm,
- Compelling a person to engage in religious acts against his or her will,
- Abuse that occurs in a religious context or by a religious leader,
- Invoking of divine authority to manipulate a person into meeting the needs of the abuser,
- Using spirituality or spiritual authority to dismiss a person's perspective or value,
- Attempts to use the divine, sacred texts, sacred tradition, theology, or spirituality to put their leadership or decisions beyond questioning or accountability,
- Attempts to spiritualize or justify harm using the divine, sacred texts, sacred tradition, theology, or spirituality.

Stalking: A pattern of unwanted, fixated, and obsessive behavior which is intrusive and causes fear of violence, alarm, or distress.

Stalking is a terrifying reality and is now recognized as a crime in all fifty states.

Examples of stalking include (from The Justice Department's Stalking Victimization Survey):

- Making unwanted phone calls/texts or sending unwanted messages or emails,
- Following or spying on the victim,
- Showing up or waiting at places without a legitimate reason,
- Leaving unwanted items, such as presents, or flowers,
- Posting information or spreading false or confidential information about a person or victim on the internet, in a public place, or by word of mouth.