

# ICARE

## *Intervention Care Advocacy Resolution Education*

***The ICARE Team responds upon request to situations involving sexual misconduct related to congregations and/or clergy of The Eastern Pennsylvania Conference.***

*We affirm that sexuality is God's good gift to all persons. We call everyone to responsible stewardship of this sacred gift... 2008*  
Book of Discipline ¶161.F

As with all the good gifts of God, sexuality can be distorted, misused, and abused. And in some cases, within the brokenness of the human condition, God's good gift of sexuality can be so exploited so as to be used as a weapon of power and oppression.

The purpose of the ICARE Team is to provide pastoral care for the complainant and family, for the accused and family, and for the congregation, agency, or institution. Investigation of complaints is handled by other channels appropriate to each situation when a betrayal occurs in the stewardship of God's good gift of sexuality.

There are a variety of ways a betrayal may occur:

### **Sexual Harassment:**

Behavior that is unwelcome and/or unwanted. Any attempt to coerce an unwilling person into a sexual relationship is harassment.

Behavior that is sexual in nature or gender related. Harassment may involve a wide range of behaviors from verbal innuendo and subtle suggestions to unwelcome touch, overt demands, and physical abuse.

Behavior that interferes with one's ability to do a job, to do ministry, and/or to receive an education. Harassment exists when the work, church, or education environment is charged with sexist bias. Gender harassment may include the belittling or discrediting of people through humor, remarks, or other activities, which create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive climate. This environment is also viewed as sexual discrimination. 2009 Journal – Eastern PA Conference, Vol II, pg 214.

*The following definitions were compiled by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women of the United Methodist Church and published in the BOM Handbook; Sexual Ethics, pg 3-4.*

### **Sexual Exploitation**

Refers to unethical (and in some states unlawful) behavior by a therapist or counselor through sexual contact with a client. Any sexual contact with a client is considered an exploitation of the professional role and the counselor's/therapist's responsibility to his or her client. Consent by the client is not a legal defense for sexual exploitation.

### **Clergy/Ministerial Misconduct**

Is a violation of the sacred trust and the fiduciary responsibility of an ordained minister, local pastor, or lay minister. When this violation involves sexual contact or 'sexualized behavior,' it may be called clergy misconduct of a sexual nature. Some relationships between the so called consenting adults within the context of the church may be clergy/ministerial misconduct.

### **Sexual Abuse**

Is a sexual invasion of the body by force. Sexual abuse may be: rape, sexual assault, incest, indecent exposure, statutory rape, involuntary or voluntary deviate sexual intercourse with a child, promotion of prostitution, pornography with children, indecent assault, and aggravated

indecent assault. Sexual abuse is also an internal assault, a deliberate violation of emotional integrity; a hostile, degrading act of violence.

### **Sexual Misconduct**

Includes sexual exploitation, clergy/ministerial misconduct, any form of criminal sexual conduct, and some aspects of sexual harassment.

**If you believe you are a victim of, or have been accused of harassment, exploitation, misconduct, or abuse, please click here to obtain a detailed list of step by step instructions of what you need to do.**

***Refer to Policies and procedures which are detailed in 2009 Journal Vol. II, pg 214-216.***

### **The work of ICARE**

ICARE Team members are available to offer guidance and support. You may contact any team member:

#### ICARE TEAM MEMBERS

Bev Andrews (Chair)	215-260-3304
Truman Brooks	610-692-5190
Bumkoo Chung	610-593-2571
Donna Fiedler	610-586-2796
Georgette Hall-Peterson	302-367-4264
Carol Lawfer	570-454-0992
Bruny Martinez	717-940-3090
Rodney Miller	717-569-2153
Tim Patterson	570-573-0161
Barbara Revere	267-401-7132

While the ICARE Team works within a Covenant of Confidentiality, it is important to note that all ICARE Team members are *Mandated Reporters*. That is, if a Team member receives a report involving someone under the age of 18, there is NO discretion. It MUST be report within 24 hours.

In addition, it is important to note that within the Covenant of Confidentiality, should a report be received describing a situation so egregious as to put the reporting individual, another individual, and/or the congregation at risk, the ICARE Team member will disclose: To whom it needs to be disclosed (Normally Bishop and/or District Superintendent); To the level it needs to be disclosed; When it needs to be disclosed.

### **When the worst occurs**

When signed complaint is received, at the invitation of the Bishop, District Superintendent and Pastor/Congregation the ICARE Team provides pastoral care for the complainant and family, for the accused and family, and for the congregation, agency, or institution through the following operating guidelines and functions:

1. Insure the safety of the complainant/victim
2. Presume the innocence of the accused.
3. Observe confidentiality.
4. Shall be in contact with the District Superintendent as appropriate.
5. Serve to resource therapy, civil and church procedures, and supportive secular agencies for all involved: complainant/victim, accused, families, Congregation, and Pastor.

## Sexual Misconduct Response Guidelines

The following guidelines are steps to be followed in cases of sexual misconduct. These steps are further detailed and explained in the 2008 United Methodist Book of Discipline, the 2010 EPA Conference Journal, and on the Conference website ICARE Team link:

<http://www.epaumc.org/ministry/ordained/icare-team>.

Possible Points of Entry – There are two possible ways to initiate the process in case of alleged sexual misconduct:

- Contact the District Superintendent
- Contact an ICARE Team member

In either case, once contact is made, there is an opportunity to explain the circumstances of the alleged misconduct. In addition, the intervention process is explained. This is a time of listening and sharing information.

- District Superintendents and ICARE members are trained to listen and help the person reporting alleged misconduct to decide what her/his next step will be.
- The ICARE team may be asked to assist in making a formal complaint, which must be in writing.
- When a formal complaint is written, it is filed with the appropriate District Superintendent, who then notifies the Bishop.
- If a formal (written) complaint is not filed, there can be no further judicial action.

If a Complaint Is Filed – Once a complaint is filed, the Bishop and the DS will meet to confer in prayer and concern. This marks the beginning of the formal intervention process. At this point the person making the complaint and the person accused of alleged misconduct will be offered the support of an ICARE Team member.

- If the offer of support is accepted, each party will receive a different support person from the Team.
- The Bishop, in consultation with the DS and the Team Chair will determine which Team members will be assigned.
- Family members may, if desired, also receive ICARE Team support.

As a complaint is investigated, it may be helpful to the DS and the congregation to assign support persons for the congregation. If so, the Bishop, in consultation with the DS and the Team Chair, will assign a Congregational Support Team. These persons provide care and support for members of the congregation as they seek to cope with the alleged misconduct. In the case of a pastor being suspended, a Congregational Support Team will be provided.

***Strict confidentiality is maintained in all cases, except in matters concerning minors, in which case the laws of Pennsylvania govern disclosure.***

## Our Goal is to avoid the worst!

The challenges and demands of the world deplete us. Sadly, more times than not, the worst occurs when we allow ourselves to become depleted. The best prevention is a program of self care; a program that is focused on wholeness of body, mind, spirit.

# ***Self-care and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct***

## ***“PRACTICAL STEPS FOR PREVENTION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND JUSTICE***

Establishing the ground rules:

- It is never appropriate to have sexual contact with parishioners.
- It is always the pastor’s responsibility to keep the appropriate boundaries.
- Pastors and other leaders are also responsible for setting up and following procedures to hold pastors accountable.
- No pastor or church is free from the risks of misconduct. The only responsible path is to be aware of the problem, vigilant about prevention, and tenacious in following procedures of accountability.”<sup>1</sup>

## ***WATCHING FOR PROBLEMS AND WARNING SIGNS.***

Be self-aware in paying attention to the risk factors and warning signs.

- Watch for signs that you are attracted to a parishioner and/or a parishioner is attracted to you. Signs for you or a parishioner may include:
  - ✓ Do you anticipate and/or find reasons to be around him or her?
  - ✓ Are you secretive?
  - ✓ Would you be uncomfortable if others knew how you felt?
- Personal vulnerability, for you or a parishioner, greatly increases the risk. Sources of vulnerability may include:
  - ✓ Loneliness
  - ✓ Depression
  - ✓ Crisis (Examples include: financial, death, relationship issues or marital strife.)<sup>2</sup>
  - ✓ Overwork and Fatigue: “I am so tired of... Overwork and sleep deprivation may not kill me today, but they can quickly and powerfully harm me emotionally and spiritually. The habitual lack of rest [Sabbath] is eventually very destructive, often wiping out the gains from sacrificial hard work.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Willimon, William H. Calling & Character: Virtues of the Ordained Life. (Abingdon Press; Nashville, 2000), p. 77-78.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.78-79.

<sup>3</sup> Larson, Craig Brian. Pastoral Grit: THE STRENGTH TO STAND AND TO STAY. (Bethany House Publishers; Minneapolis, 1998), p. 56-58.

## **RESPONSE AND PREVENTION**

*What do I do when I recognize a problem or warning sign?*

- If you recognize an attraction, immediately establish better boundaries. Read and/or get training in the dynamics of transference and counter-transference.
- Enlist a spiritual advisor, someone who can help guide you.
- Join a peer accountability group and/or see a counselor. Seek out those appropriate places where you feel safe in talking about the problems and temptations.<sup>4</sup>
- **Do not go it alone!**
- “Whatever the [situation], it is always the pastor’s responsibility to keep the boundaries.”<sup>5</sup>

*How can I help to prevent problems?*

- If you counsel parishioners, be under regular supervision. Do not be alone with parishioners.
- Be faithful in on-going sexual ethics training.
- With your S/PPRC establish realistic expectations and procedures of accountability.
- Observe Sabbath. We as Ordained Clergy and Local Pastors are unique in that while others are observing Sabbath, we are putting in our “one day of work!” “Be still, and know that I am God (Ps. 46:10). The discipline of [Sabbath] shows that God has set boundaries in my life: the limitations of time and energy. To acknowledge without resentment the weakness of my humanity is to honor God as divine.”<sup>6</sup>
- Exercise at least 3 times per week on regular basis. (Joining a gym or fitness club is especially helpful, and may be something negotiated with S/PPRC as either a benefit the church provides or a requirement of employment making it a reimbursable expense.) We recognize our bodies as temple. To say, “I don’t have time” and to willfully neglect our bodies is to desecrate God’s temple.
- Join a peer accountability group.
- Engage a Spiritual Director or Mentor, someone who you can speak with openly and frankly.
- Seek out avenues for building and strengthening intimacy in your own life. Spend quality time with your spouse. Marriage enrichment programs can be particularly helpful. “...the temptation of power is greatest when intimacy is a threat. Much Christian leadership is exercised by people who do not know how to develop healthy, intimate relationship and have opted for power and control instead.”<sup>7</sup> Misconduct is all about power and control.
- Be faithful in the spiritual disciplines of Bible study and Prayer.
- ***Trust your gut! If you wonder if it is wrong, it probably is! So don’t do it!***

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<sup>4</sup> Willimon, Calling & Character: Virtues of the Ordained Life, p. 78.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 79.

<sup>6</sup> Larson, Pastoral Grit: THE STRENGTH TO STAND AND TO STAY, p. 65.

<sup>7</sup> Nouwen, Henri J.M. In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership. (Crossroad; New York, 1989), p. 60

