

## **A Checklist for Churches**

Does your church have an abuse and safety policy?

Do people generally know it exists, and have they read it?

Is there a statement about legal obligations of reporting abuse of children to the appropriate legal authorities?

Does it include a screening process for volunteers who work with children or youth?

Is this screening process actually followed in the church?

Can people join the church and immediately have access to children or youth?

Are people with past convictions of sexual abuse prohibited from working with children?

Is one adult alone with children or youth, or is the policy that two adults work as a team?

Are there windows on all classroom and office doors, including the pastor's study?

If you were sexually harassed in your church, do you know to whom you would bring your complaint?

Does the policy have guidelines for providing advocates for both complainants and those against whom a complaint is laid?

Is there a clear process for adjudication and appeal?

Is it clear who will receive complaints? Are women part of that group?

If a child came to you and disclosed that someone had abused them, do you know what your responsibility is?

Is there general public awareness in your church about the long-term damage sexual abuse can cause in the life of the individual, the person who abuses and the community?

During the formation process before your minister's ordination, was there a forum to discuss professional ethics, boundaries and dangers of abuse in ministry?

Do you know how to access your denominational sexual abuse policy for clergy? (these are often on-line). It should be easy to access.

Do you know of situations where harassment or abuse happened in your church? If so, was the abuse policy followed? Was it effective in bringing about justice?