

ALL GOD'S CHILDREN

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DEADLINES FAST APPROACHING

June 1— New clergy, employees, and volunteers who work with children must complete the Called to Protect Training.

June 1— All clergy and any employee or volunteer who works 4 or more times a year with minors must complete Armatus course "Meet Sam" and "Archdiocese of Portland Standards of Conduct for Ministry with Children and Youth".

All Minors in parish and school programs must receive training by the last day of school or parish programs.

June 15— All training must be recorded in Armatus by Administrators of Parishes and Schools.



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April—National Child Abuse Prevention Month

Thank you to the staff of the USCCB Office of Child and Youth Protection and the many experts around the country for the articles featured in this newsletter. For other resources including bulletin announcements and liturgy guides go to www.usccb.org/ocyp.

How to React to Reports of Sexual Abuse

By Beth Dotson Brown

It's not a situation anyone wants to be in. Hearing someone say he or she has been sexually abused can make the listener feel inadequate, overwhelmed and that someone more experienced needs to deal with the revelation. But according to Mary Beth Hanus, Victim Assistance Coordinator for the Archdiocese of Omaha, every person can and should do what the situation requires.

"I think it's a moral and ethical responsibility," says Hanus, a trained mental health and social worker who has been assisting abuse victims for 25 years. Beyond government and church laws and regulations, people of faith have a responsibility to safeguard every life and to treat it as sacred.

Carrying through with that responsibility isn't easy even for someone as experienced as Hanus. Sometimes people don't want to report suspected abuse because it's uncomfortable and they think it should be someone else's job. "I've been doing it for 25 years and it's never comfortable," she says. "I always bring those situations to prayer because it's never good if a family is disrupted." (continued on page 2)

Since the U.S. Bishops developed the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, dioceses throughout the country have developed policies for creating safe environments and responding promptly to allegations of abuse. The Omaha Archdiocese has put together a list of steps to remind people what to do if they suspect abuse. The steps include: being attentive to the child, contacting key people immediately, using a team approach to gather all information, reporting to the authorities, drawing on other church and community resources and documenting all observations, statements and actions taken.

Hanus says a key in being attentive to the child is trying to see the situation through that child's eyes. For example, she says, an adult should not put his or her own assumptions into a situation but should ask open-ended questions.

"If a child says, 'My Daddy hurt me' the adult shouldn't say, 'Did he touch you down there?'" Hanus says. Children interpret and express things differently than adults so it's important not to put words into a child's mouth. A child might say a parent is "mean" simply because of being banned from a favorite toy.

The more appropriate questions, Hanus says, are: "How did that make you feel?" or, "If your tears had words, what would they say?" In that way, the adult can develop a stronger perspective of how the child is truly seeing the situation.

If the child does reveal sexual abuse, Hanus says it's important to "stay calm and not show that you are appalled because that will make the child feel something they did was wrong."

The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists says it's helpful to children if the person they reveal the problem listens, assures the child he is telling is the right thing, says the child is not to blame and offers protection.

Once the adult has worked through those steps, it's time to report the abuse to the appropriate authorities. State laws vary but typically point people to reporting to local law enforcement or the child advocacy office. Reporting can also be done on a hotline, such as the National Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-4-A-CHILD. In addition, a person reporting abuse needs to check on the regulations the church has set in their diocese.

Hanus emphasizes that every report is important. Because both law enforcement offices and hotlines keep records, the frequency of reporting can help identify a problem that needs to be addressed. How long it will take to begin investigating the situation depends on the immediate danger to the child.



Mary Beth Hanus, Victim Assistance Coordinator, Archdiocese of Omaha

Where to Report Abuse—

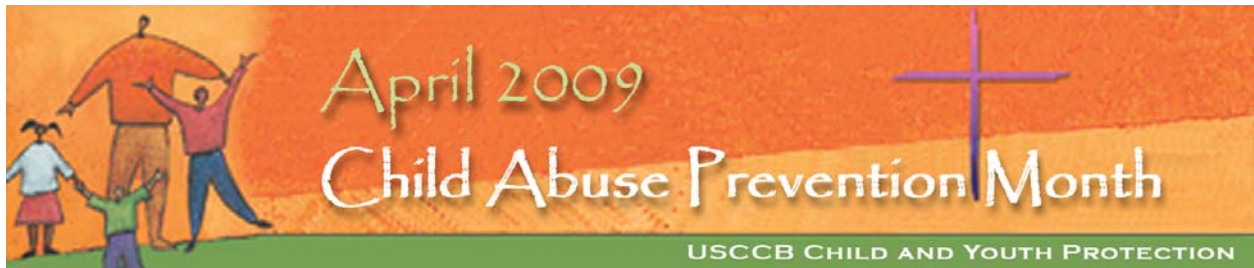
Phone numbers to report abuse for each county in the Archdiocese of Portland are listed in the Child Abuse Policy, Appendix B.

A copy of this policy is available on the Archdiocesan website, www.archdpdx.org.



This article is compliments of United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Office of Child and Youth Protection. www.usccb.org/ocyp





Child Sexual Abuse: An Old Problem Just Discovered

By Anne LeVeque

Child sexual abuse has existed for all of human history. What has changed is society's perception of it and response to it.

For thousands of years, women and children were considered property. Beating a wife or child was once considered a man's prerogative, even if his peers thought less of him for doing so. Child sexual abuse was seen similarly, though more secrecy and shame surrounded it.

Monica Applewhite, Ph.D., a consultant in the area of child abuse prevention, describes three types of child sexual abuse: "violent assaults, incest abuse, and acquaintance abuse." This last is perpetrated by a teacher, coach, clergyman, or other person known to a child. It was widely unacknowledged until the 1980s.

The real effects of child sexual abuse have been recognized only recently. For years, many experts didn't recognize, especially in the case of boys, the potential for serious and long-term effects of child sexual abuse. Today's society knows child sexual abuse can cause a range of effects, some of which last a lifetime.

Before the 1980s, organizations that served children had virtually no guidelines for dealing with or preventing child sexual abuse. Problems were handled individually, often with secrecy, thereby leaving future victims in danger.

In the 1980s, many national organizations began to put guidelines in place to prevent and deal with child sexual abuse. Big Brothers/Big Sisters was among the first to do so, and to screen their volunteers for characteristics of child abusers.

"We have discovered that psychological testing alone cannot differentiate between child molesters and the general population," Applewhite says. Molesters "are simply too much like everyone else when it comes to psychological profiles." What's effective, however, is identifying behaviors that offenders typically engage in, and prohibiting them as a matter of policy.

"Wrestling, tickling, and extended hugging all raise red flags about an adult's interactions with children," Applewhite says.



Monica Applewhite,
Ph.D, consultant child
abuse prevention

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“Paying attention to adults’ interactions with children and defining within an organization what behavior is acceptable is the best preventative,” she says.

Most major religious denominations now have policies on abuse prevention and reporting abuse that has taken place. In the nineties, most organizations that serve youth instituted policies for preventing child sexual abuse. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention now offers guidelines for organizations to provide a safe environment.

State and federal laws have also been enacted that protect children. Some states did not even have child sexual abuse statutes until the 1960s or 1970s. “It was thought that existing sex-crime law was sufficient,” says Applewhite. The problem was that these laws did not address sexual abuse that was not overtly violent, focusing instead on physical assault.

Now, not only are there laws in every state that address child sexual abuse, but there are also “Megan’s Law”-type laws that require community notification when sexual predators are present in a community. Virtually every state now has an online sex-offender registry.

The Catholic Church clergy sexual abuse scandal that was widely reported from 2002 onwards led to increased awareness and greater willingness on the part of victims to speak out about past abuse. Victims’ support groups sprang up, enabling many people to talk about their abuse for the first time.

“Once victims began to speak publicly and specifically about what had happened to them,” says Applewhite, “other victims felt empowered to come forward as well.”

Much child sexual abuse is not reported. “It is estimated that 30 percent of victimized girls and 40 percent of victimized boys don’t tell anyone of their abuse when it happens,” Applewhite said. Researchers make these estimates based on retrospective studies with adults who are asked whether they experienced sexual abuse irrespective of whether the study participant ever reported the crimes.

Reported cases have declined in the last few years. “We have come to believe that this is a real decline and not a decline in reporting,” says Applewhite. She notes that teen pregnancy and runaway rates are also declining and that these events are highly correlated with sexual abuse.



This article is compliments of United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Office of Child and Youth Protection. www.usccb.org/ocyp

NEW

Pilot Editions of Supplemental Lessons for High School Students on:
Electronic Communication
Dating Violence

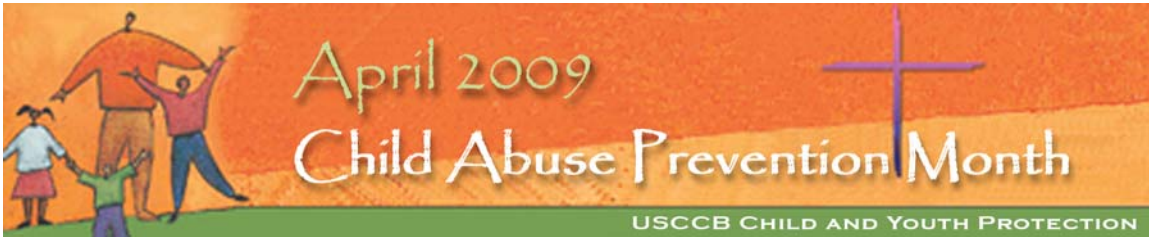
Check out ACP Website for copies and survey forms.

Coming Soon to your mailbox:
Called to Protect for Young Children
DVD and Handouts

**IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW
HAS BEEN ABUSED BY SOMEONE IN
THE CHURCH, PLEASE CONTACT**

**CATHY SHANNON
503-416-8810**





Protecting Youth on the Internet

By Kate Blain

One of the biggest threats to children using the Internet today, says Kenneth Lanning, is their parents' outdated understanding of technology.

Just as problematic is the fact that the "children" who are meeting sexual offenders online are often teenagers, willing victims who believe they have developed a relationship with the offender.

"The use of the word 'predator' is a waste of time, because these kids almost never perceive the person as a sexual predator, but as a 'BFF' [Best Friend Forever]," asserts Lanning, a retired FBI agent now heading CAC Consultants, a Virginia-based consulting firm specializing in crimes against children.

The acronym "BFF" is just one example of the ways technology has passed many parents by, according to both Lanning and Robert Farley of RHF Consultants in Chicago.

Farley is a consultant for INTERPOL and other agencies on child abuse investigative techniques, as well as the author of the Virtus programs used in many U.S. Catholic dioceses to protect children from sexual predators. He notes that "the biggest problem right now is that you have a technology gap."

Lanning gives further examples: "PAW" and "PIR," used by children and teens in text-messaging, respectively mean "Parents Are Watching" and "Parents in Room." The acronyms are quick ways to end conversations so that parents don't catch on to inappropriate exchanges.

Text-messaging, Farley explains, "is a completely different language. People are contacting kids [via cell phones and other handheld devices] with a text message claiming to be a friend, then encouraging the kid to move to a computer so they can do real-time instant-messaging."

The experts say that, while most parents know enough to keep computers in common areas at home so they can be monitored, children know how to send messages their parents will not understand – and technology has moved beyond the need to use home computers to make contacts.

"Cell phones are the big problem now," Farley states.

While the experts agree that parental monitoring of computer use has its place, as does software limiting access to Web sites, they note that the keys to protecting children from sexual offenders are love and communication.



Kenneth Lanning,
CAC Consultants



Robert Farley,
RHF Consultants

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“It’s about personal relationships, being involved in your child’s life,” Lanning states. “It increases the odds” against being lured by a sexual offender.

Farley refers to the common claim children make that “everyone’s doing” some activity. In the case of social networking, he says, “Everybody is really doing it, so sit down and say, ‘What’s the most popular social networking site in your school? Let me see one of your friends’ sites.’”

Then a parent can talk about what information the child’s friends might be posting that’s inappropriate, set boundaries around what a child can post and explain how to beware of offenders.

Above all, say Lanning and Farley, parents should not demand that children have no access to the Internet or ban social networking sites, since that makes kids more likely to go online at friends’ houses or other unmonitored locations.

Farley also advises that parents learn how to use today’s technology themselves.

“Parents have to learn how to text-message,” he states – and the best teachers are their children.

If parents discover that their children are involved in risky Internet behavior, Lanning stresses they should not react with anger: “A typical parent is going to say, ‘What are you doing, going to those sites?’ But if that’s your attitude, is your son going to come to you?”

Instead, he said, parents should talk about the risks of sharing information online or looking at pornographic Web sites: encountering predators, cyber-bullying, compromising one’s computer and identity theft.

To go further in stopping Internet contacts, the experts offer several options: changing email addresses, taking the child to a therapist to work through the issues that caused them to be victimized, or making a police report.

However, Farley cautions that many local police departments are not equipped to pursue online predators. He suggests that parents with serious concerns call the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children’s cyber tipline at 1-800-843-5678.



This article is compliments of United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Office of Child and Youth Protection. www.usccb.org/ocyp



A Rosary for the Healing and Protection

The US Bishops Secretariat for Children and Youth Protection invites us to pray the rosary for the prevention of child abuse and the healing of those who have been abused. A rosary guide for these intentions is available at:

online version: http://www.usccb.org/ocyp/rosary_guide_online.pdf

printable version: http://www.usccb.org/ocyp/rosary_guide_print.pdf

Please note the printable version is copy ready in booklet format.

