



# MINISTRYSAFE

## Preventing Sexual Abuse: 5-Part Safety System

### I. SEXUAL ABUSE AWARENESS TRAINING

- \*foundational piece of an educational model
- \*gives employees and volunteers ‘eyes to see and ears to hear’ grooming behaviors
- \*policies and procedures will have limited impact without the “why”
- \*explains safety principles behind policies
- \*compliant with current and anticipated legislation (i.e. Texas Youth Camp Act)

### II. SKILLFUL SCREENING TRAINING

- \*intensive, yet critical piece of the system
- \*trains screeners to properly use forms and process created to elicit high-risk responses
- \*trains screeners to recognize high risk behaviors and life patterns
- \*dove-tails with Awareness Training, Background Check and Monitoring

### III. APPROPRIATE CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK

- \*necessary, though no stand-alone piece of safety system (not a “silver bullet”)
- \*depth of background check should match degree and structure of access to children

### IV. TAILORED POLICIES & PROCEDURES

- \*“policies are what you DO ... not what you SAY you do”
- \*tailored to specific programming – no “one-size-fits-all” forms
- \*policies are marginally effective without Awareness Training
- \*beyond the basics: includes bathroom checks, six-month member rule etc.

### V. MONITORING AND OVERSIGHT

- \*ensuring that you DO what you SAY you do
- \*periodic review of the system: new programming, performance reviews, accountability
- \*monitoring tools

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*Love and Norris also serve as directors of MinistrySafe, a consulting organization designed to help churches and Christian ministries understand and address child safety risks related to sexual abuse. For additional information see [www.MinistrySafe.com](http://www.MinistrySafe.com) or call 817-737-SAFE (7233).*



# FACTS ABOUT SEXUAL ABUSE AND SEXUAL PREDATORS

**Question 1:** What system protects children at my church?

**Question 2:** Does my church's system address the following facts?

**\*Sexual Molesters will seek access to children where protective barriers are low.**

- Given this reality, secular entities are implementing proactive training measures.
- Historically, the church's protective barriers are critically low ... creating a target for predators.
- When the church consistently fails to respond to rising standards of care, the target grows *larger*.

**\*Less than 10% of sexual predators will EVER encounter the criminal justice system.**

- As a result, your criminal background check – even if it works *perfectly* – will identify only a *fraction* of those desiring to target children in church programs.
- Sexual abusers KNOW when there is no criminal record for you to find – even if a check is run.
- Background checks are important, but have limitations: NOT A SILVER BULLET!
- If a background check is ALL you do, your security system is ineffective.

**\*1 of 3 girls and 1 of 6 boys will be sexually molested before reaching age 18.**

SEXUAL ABUSE IS AN ISSUE OF EPIDEMIC PROPORTION ... AND GROWING.

**\*66% of molestation victims will not tell until adulthood (if ever).**

**\*Convicted male abusers preferring boys will molest an average of 150 victims before prosecution.**

**\*Convicted male abusers preferring girls will molest an average of 52 victims before prosecution.**

**\*85% of convicted molesters are men; 15% are women.**

**\*90% of child sexual abuse victims are abused by someone they *know and trust*.**

- Amber alerts (the 'snatch and grab') are a fraction of sexual abuse occurrences.
- Your 'security system' is insufficient if limited to a 'matching tag' for small children.
- The 'matching tag' is important, but designed to address a relatively small risk.
- A greater risk is posed by predators who are known and trusted (90%).

**\*Sexual molesters groom children AND gatekeepers prior to sexual behavior.**

- Staff members, volunteer leaders, and parents are gatekeepers!
- Staff members and volunteers MUST understand and recognize grooming behavior.

**\*There is NO visual profile for a molester.**

- Most molesters appear helpful, trustworthy and safe.
- Staff members and volunteers can be trained to recognize grooming behaviors, thereby protecting children in church programs.