

Presbyterian Mission Agency

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“We are God’s servants, working together.” 1 Cor. 3:9

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Prevention

The goals of training are to ensure that staff and volunteers understand the nature of child abuse/sexual misconduct and how to respond if it becomes apparent that this behavior has occurred. Training is also useful in reviewing and modifying the church policy, as volunteers who have had experience working with the policy share their experience (*We Won't Let It Happen Here*, page 27).

Awareness is the key to the prevention of sexual misconduct. When awareness is raised, persons are often able to spot and stop inappropriate conduct before it harms others.

Develop a training program

Annual training sessions are one way to raise the awareness of both staff and volunteers. Components should include: review of the ministry’s sexual misconduct policy, recognizing the signs and symptoms of abuse, maintaining healthy boundaries, appropriate use of technology and reporting of suspected abuse. Someone who is familiar with sexual misconduct prevention practices should lead the training sessions. If there is no one in your ministry with this expertise, then contact your presbytery.

The training should be biblically based, using Scripture to remind participants of God's call for justice and compassion. Relevant passages include (but are not limited to) Exodus 22:21-23, Micah 6:8, Psalm 77:1-2, Amos 5:24 and Matthew 19:14.

Be aware of prevention techniques

There are several guidelines that will enhance the atmosphere of prevention. Some of these are:

- Require teachers/leaders to work in pairs.
- Know and maintain appropriate personal boundaries.
- Have written policies and procedures in place.
- Use both background and reference checks for staff and volunteers.
- Physical plant (such as windows in doors, bathroom policies, communication between child care and parents)
- Consider healthy body education

Find additional resources

SafeConduct[™] Workbench provides tools to help you develop and participate in your ministry's abuse prevention program. [Learn more](#)

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[To Top](#)