

Needs Assessment Checklist for Congregations

The following checklist can help you conduct an assessment of your congregation's safety needs. To reduce the risk of abuse, misconduct, harassment, and sexual violence in your congregation, pay attention to boxes left unchecked to indicate work your congregation needs to address.

Does your congregation

- have a safe congregations committee or a sexual misconduct and abuse response team with primary responsibilities for these issues?
- have insurance coverage in case such a claim should occur?
- have a written safety policy that includes screening supervisory staff and volunteer workers, reporting procedures for suspected incidents of abuse, and response strategies?
- make sure that the minister, the religious educator, and the board chairperson know the state laws for reporting concerns about abuse to children?
- have all volunteers in the religious education program receive annual training on what to do if they suspect child abuse or child sexual abuse?
- have a screening form for all employees, regardless of position, and all volunteers who work with children and youth that asks them directly about possible histories of sexual offenses?
- have each staff person and volunteer who works with children and youth sign a code of ethics annually?
- have a draft of a Limited Access Agreement or checklist for convicted or accused sex offenders who want to participate in the congregation?
- teach *Our Whole Lives* sexuality education in the religious education program, including sessions about child sexual abuse prevention, at least twice at the elementary school age level, once at the middle school age level, and once at the high school level?
- hold an annual adult education program on sexual abuse prevention for parents and families as well as for religious education teachers?
- have two adults present in each class or program for children and youth as well as in cars transporting young people to activities?
- have a referral list of community organizations and therapists who specialize in sex abuse prevention and treatment in case you need them?
- have support groups or counseling available to those who have survived child sexual abuse?