

# To Protect

Office of Victim Assistance  
& Safe Environment



## Special points of interest:

Why Volunteering Important?

Education in Sexual Abuse

Director's Cut

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## Why is Volunteering Important?

There are many answers to the question; why volunteering is important. There is no paycheck, however, the benefits of volunteering far exceed the payment.

### *To Improve Community Life*

One good reason why volunteering is important is that it goes a long way towards creating a healthy community. Children who take part in cleaning up their classrooms and/or school, promote cleanliness. This in turn helps the community to find motivation to combat current environmental issues. It encourages the community and in the end, everyone benefits from it.

### *To Give Back*

Another reason why volunteering is important is that it highlights someone's skills. We all have special skills and talents that can be utilized in order to help others. A gardener can assist in a community garden. A successful entrepreneur can allocate some time to helping others learn to get their business' off the ground.

### *You Get Connected to Other People*

When you volunteer, you get closer to the people in your community. Due to modern conveniences, it is easy to become isolated. However, volunteering connects us to the community. By getting more involved with other people, your self-confidence also increases.

### *Things are Done Efficiently*

People who work together can move mountains! The more people involved in any activity will decrease the time it takes to complete that task. Without help, work becomes harder and more time consuming.

### *To Help Others in Need*

Ultimately, the goal of volunteering is to help others. There are people living in harsh conditions who need a helping hand. That's why, volunteering is important. This way, you can reach out to others. The joy you can bring others thru volunteering will be priceless.

### *Giving Hope*

One reason why volunteering is important is that you give others hope. A person down on their luck will be uplifted when they realize that there are people out there who will help them out. It restores their faith.

### *It Emboldens the Human Spirit*

The selfless act of helping a person or cause, provides a spiritual boost as well. Knowing you did something good for someone or something is an emotionally uplifting experience that can never be matched by money or fame.

## **Education in Sexual Abuse Prevention: It's Not Sex Ed**

*Elizabeth A. Heidt Kozisek, Ph.D*  
*Director, Child Protection Office*  
*Diocese of Grand Island, NE*

There is little argument that adults want children to be safe and grow up in healthy nurturing relationships. As a parent, catechist, or volunteer, the idea of educating children in sexual abuse prevention may make you a little anxious and may evoke the following thoughts:

I can't talk to children about sex.

I don't know what to say.

I don't want to take away their innocence or make them anxious.

Shouldn't adults be responsible for protecting children?

Here are some thoughts to alleviate anxiety:

Prevention Education is not Sexual Education. Often, when adults are anxious about sexual abuse prevention education, it is because they are focusing on the word "sexual" rather than "abuse prevention." Effective sexual abuse prevention programs do not teach sexual education, nor do they provide children graphic details about sexual activity or sexual abuse. Effective programs focus on the dignity of the human person, the qualities of right relationships, and what to do if a relationship isn't right.

Most sexual abuse occurs in the context of an established relationship between an adult and child. Often, the adult has worked to secure the trust of the child, to desensitize the child to boundary intrusions, and to coerce the child through threats, or, more commonly, enticements. Effective programs seek to educate children about the signs of abusive relationships that are observable well before any sexual contact occurs. Such programs encourage children to communicate concerns about relationships to their parent(s) or another trusted adult.

Sexual Abuse Prevention can be discussed in terms of safety concern. There are many rules that help keep us safe. Some of the rules that help prevent abuse are the same as those we follow to prevent other dangers. For example: there is safety in numbers; it is important to let our parent(s) or other caregivers know where we are and who we are with; there are people we can go to for help.

In addition to knowledge of safety, we as Catholics also have a shared understanding with our children of the language of Scripture and the Church. When we talk to our children about right relationships and signs of abuse, we can talk about the importance of truth, our children, unique and special creations in the image of God, the Ten Commandments, and the Gospel message of love.

Prevention Plans reduce anxiety. You may be concerned that children will become anxious or lose some of their innocence when they learn that child abuse occurs. The possibility of children experiencing anxiety or distress at the thought of abuse is not unlikely; abuse is a terrible thing. It helps to liken abuse prevention education to other areas of safety education, for example, fire prevention. Some children become anxious when they first learn of the concept of a house fire. The possibility of instilling anxiety, however, does not limit the value of their knowing how to escape a fire, or the value of remembering to Stop, Drop and Roll, if their clothing catches on fire. Much anxiety can be alleviated by communicating to children that there is a plan.



Thank  
You  
VERY MUCH!

OVASE would  
like to  
Thank you for your  
Commitment to our mission  
And all the hard work  
And dedication you put in to  
administering the new trainings.

Your effort is truly appreciated!



Have a New Facilitator you need  
trained?

***NEW FACILITATOR TRAINING***

***October 3, 2019***

***9:30am—4:00pm***

***Location: TBA***

Please look for an email via VIRTUS  
from Norma, soon!

# Scheduled Training

Please contact your Safe Environment Facilitator at your Parish for a list of Scheduled Trainings.

## THE DIRECTOR'S CUT

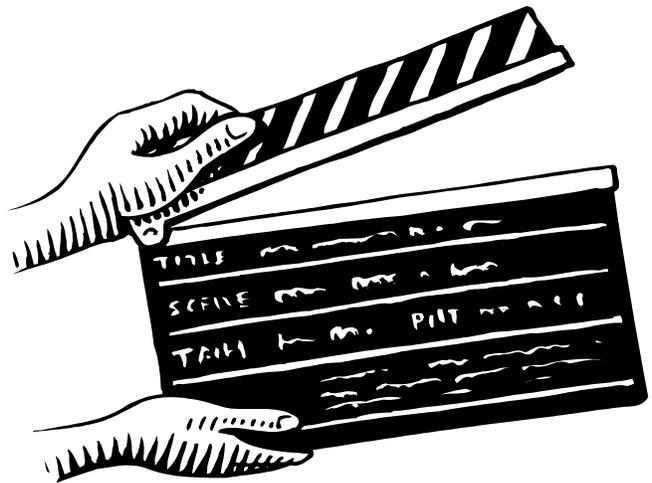
It has been years in the making but we finally have a new Code of Conduct to replace the Sexual Misconduct Policy. The new policy took effect in late May and all employees and volunteers must read and sign the document. The Code of Conduct discusses issues to create and maintain a safe environment including, boundaries with children, boundaries between adults, harassment, background checks and added two additional trainings; Sexual Harassment and Vulnerable Adult. The Code of Conduct and the trainings are available online through Virtus. The Code also includes a Misconduct Hotline, 844-709-1169, to report any Code violations.

The Code of Conduct is a living document that will grow with the Archdiocese. If you have any suggestions or concerns regarding the Code of Conduct, notify OVASE or the Risk Management Office. A committee has been formed to discuss possible changes to the Code and to update the document on a regular basis.

The Archdiocese will be audited this October to ensure that we are following the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. We are audited annually, however, this year the auditors will be on site to view all of our records. To assist in this process, please make sure that everyone that needs training at your location is being trained.

Thank you for your continued commitment in the protection of children. This ministry would not be possible without the help of countless volunteers, such as yourself, within our community. Together we are making a difference.

Steve Martinez, LCSW, LSOTP





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