

Church assessment

DOES YOUR CHURCH PROVIDE...

Yes No

Ongoing sexual abuse awareness **TRAINING** for staff/ volunteers working with children, youth, and vulnerable adults?

A **SCREENING** process for staff & volunteers using background checks, references, and personal interviews?

Written abuse **PROTECTION** policies which are actively implemented by staff & volunteers?

A plan of how to respond to allegations of abuse and to officially **REPORT** abuse according to Mississippi law?

Resources to help **CARE** long-term for trauma survivors & their families?

If you answered 'NO' to any of the above, please see [The Pathway to Prevention & Response](#). For more information visit mbcb.org/sart.



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The Pathway to Preventing & Responding to Sexual Abuse

Why should we care?

We have a clear compelling Gospel and Scriptural call to protect & care well for children, teenagers, and vulnerable adults. We must not turn a blind eye or deaf ear since it may be difficult or hard. We must respond!

“But whoever causes the downfall of one of these little ones who believe in Me – it would be better for him if a heavy millstone were hung around his neck and he were drowned in the depths of the sea!” – Matthew 18:6

“He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you? But to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.” – Micah 6:8

“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; ensure justice for those being crushed. Yes, speak up for the poor & helpless, & see that they get justice.” – Proverbs 31:8-9

Did you know?

- In 2021, 3 children were sexually abused every day in Mississippi. That translates into 1006 reported cases for the year (CWLA).
- 93% of child abuse victims know their perpetrators, someone they know & trust (DOJ).
- 1 in 4 girls & 1 in 6 boys are sexually abused before they turn 18 (D2L).
- Only 16% of child victims ever tell about their abuse (NCAC).
- A male abuser who molests boys has an average of 150 victims. A male abuser who molests girls has an average of 52 victims (Emory University).
- The devastation of sexual abuse doesn't stop when the abuse ends. The physical, emotional, mental, & spiritual effects last for a lifetime.
- In Mississippi, all adults, including clergy, are mandatory reporters of suspected or known child abuse.

Why don't churches do more?

- They believe this couldn't or wouldn't happen at their church.
- They think criminal background checks alone are adequate.
- They minimize abuse as a “mistake” that should be just forgiven & forgotten.
- They don't know how to recognize grooming behavior in potential offenders.
- They fail to implement best practices regarding abuse prevention, response, and survivor care because you feel inadequate or overwhelmed.

What can my church do?

- Every Pastor & church can learn the PATHWAY to TRAIN, SCREEN, PROTECT, REPORT, & CARE.

The Pathway to Prevention & Response



TRAIN Proverbs 3:13-14; 2:11

Provide initial and ongoing TRAINING for staff, volunteers, and church members that raises awareness and shares effective actions to help prevent incidents of abuse in the church.

SCREEN Ephesians 4:25

Adopt a careful vetting process for all those working with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. SCREENING should include an application, interview, references, social media review, and background checks.

PROTECT Psalm 140:4

Create and implement policies that PROTECT children, youth, and vulnerable adults from grooming and abuse.

REPORT Proverbs 31:8-9

Have a written plan in place to REPORT abuse to appropriate government authorities and communicate with the church in the event of an abuse allegation.

CARE Psalm 147:3; 9:9

Identify and offer resources that will provide victims, survivors, and their families with options for on-going CARE.