

Child Abuse, Mandatory Reporting, & Presbyterians in New York:

Part 4. What Does Reporting Involve?



Presbytery of Genesee Valley
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Rev. James S. Evinger & Mel Olver (former PGV Attorney)
6th update of material presented 2013-2017

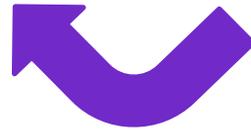
Prevention Phase



Postvention Phase

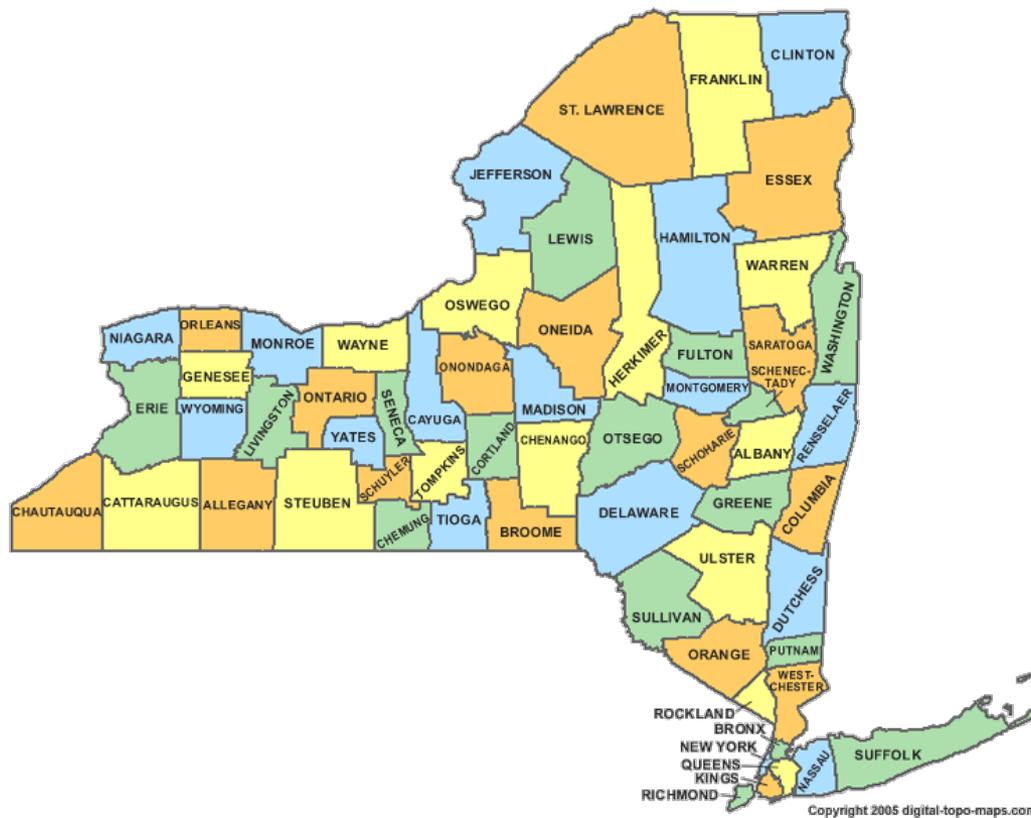


Intervention Phase



- Disclosure, e.g., church leaders, people at risk, congregation.
- Reporting, e.g., civil authorities, insurance carrier.
- Obtain outside expertise.
- Offer assistance to those affected.

The question of how to report child abuse is typically a question arising in the Intervention Phase.



How do I make a report of child abuse, neglect, or maltreatment in NYS?

If it is an emergency – young child left alone, child being beaten, unlawful sexual behavior – call 911 or the police

Threshold for reporting: *Good faith, reasonable cause for concern about a child's safety or well-being.*

- Based on rational observations or knowledge of circumstances, you have a concern or suspicion that a child under under 18 years of age is exposed to the danger of harm, or conditions exist that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect.
- Proof is not required.

Concerned Citizens Guide. (2006, Sept.). New York State Office of Children and Family Services, Bureau of Training:

<http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/ohrd/ccg/ConcernedCitizensGuide.pdf>

[Accessed 12/13/17.]

To report a reasonable concern in NYS

- NYS child abuse hotline 24/7: (800) 342-3720
- Non-mandated reporters have option of anonymity.
 - * providing name allows CPS to seek follow-up info.
- Expect to be asked about:
 - * nature & extent of child's injuries, or the risk of harm.
 - * child's name, home address, & age.
 - * name & address of parent or person who caused the injury or created the risk.
 - * names & address of child's siblings & parents if different from above.
 - * prior suspicious injuries to child or his/her siblings.
 - * potential witnesses.

Best practice

Hopefully, you have been keeping notes before you reach this stage. Have your notes available for the call.

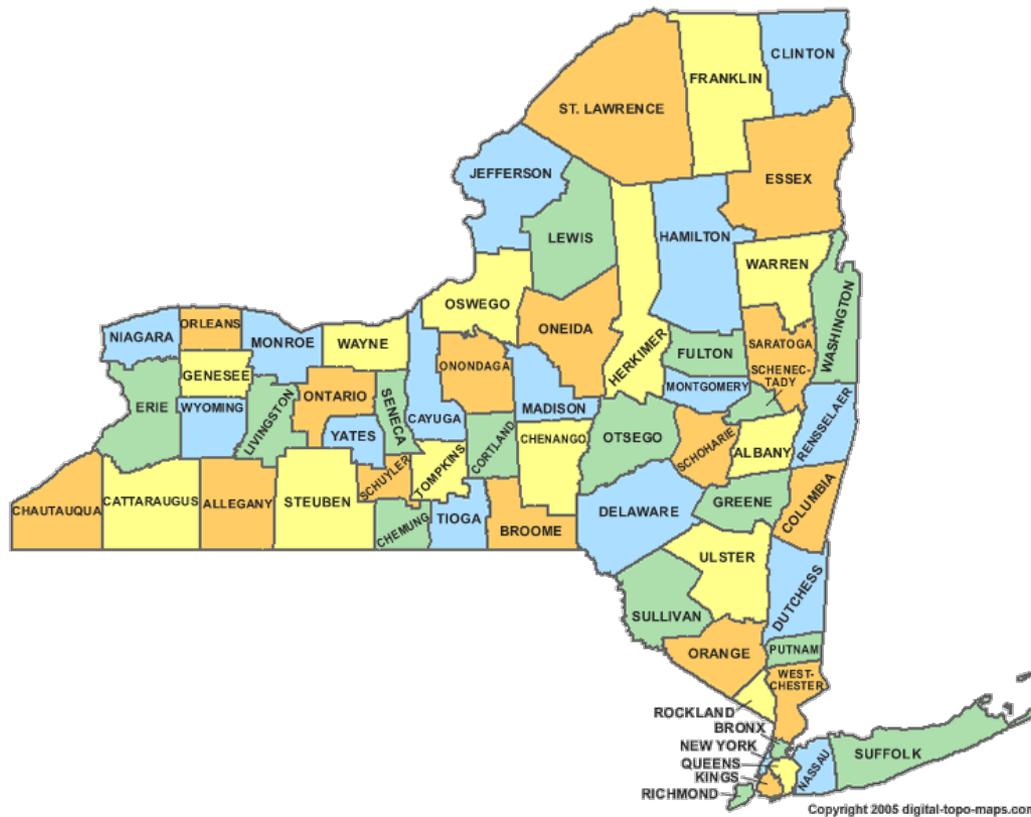
- Name, age, address, phone.
- Construct a family tree.
- Events, dates, places.
- Consequences.
- Sources of your information.
- Contact information for potential witnesses.
- Knowledge of any interventions by any agencies, law enforcement, medical providers, etc.

“...but ours is a small community.
Who should we call?”

State child abuse hotline 24/7:
(800) 342-3720

“Why not rely on our local resources
first?”

1. Local law enforcement in small communities lack sufficient training &/or experience.
2. Potential dual role relationships in a small community are reduced by starting at State level.



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What happens after I report?

Follow-up to a report by authorities

- local Child Protective Services will be notified.
- within 24 hours, CPS will investigate and take action as needed (children are taken into protective custody only if in immediate danger).
- within 60 days, CPS determines if report is “unfounded or “indicated.”
- if “indicated,” which means evidence of abuse or neglect, CPS recommends a plan for the family.
- due to confidentiality, reporter is not informed by CPS of outcomes.



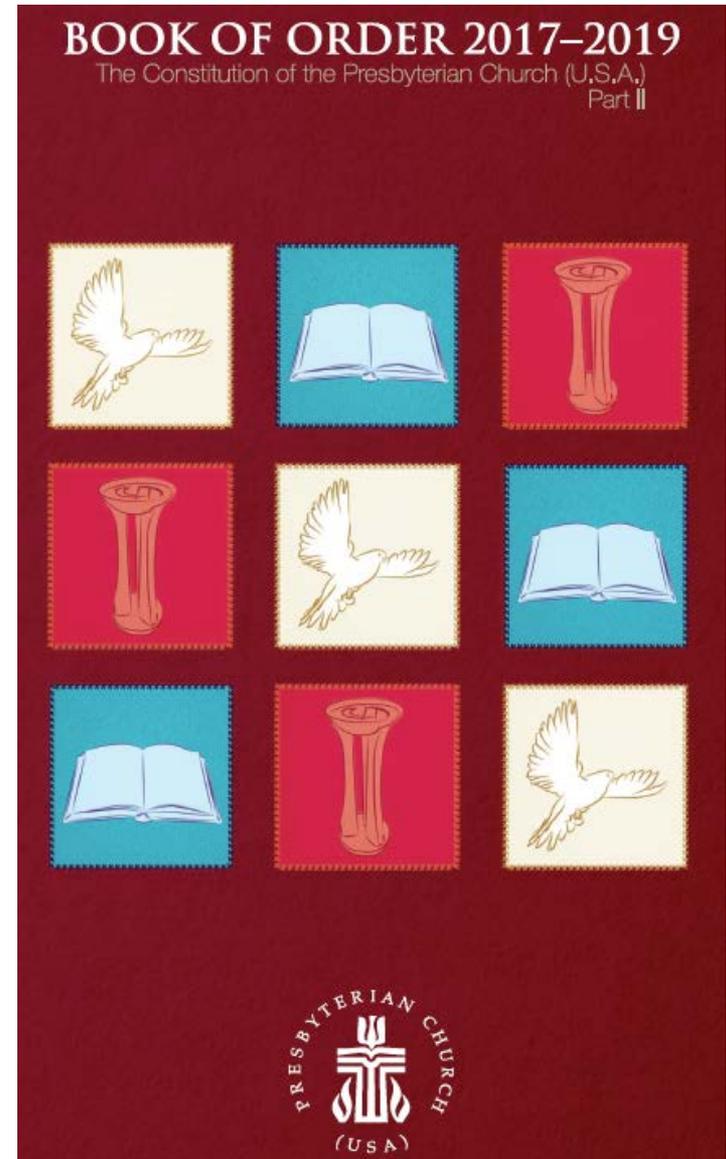
<http://www.preventchildabuseny.org/index.php/resources/about-child-abuse/reporting-faq/>
[Accessed 12/13/17.]

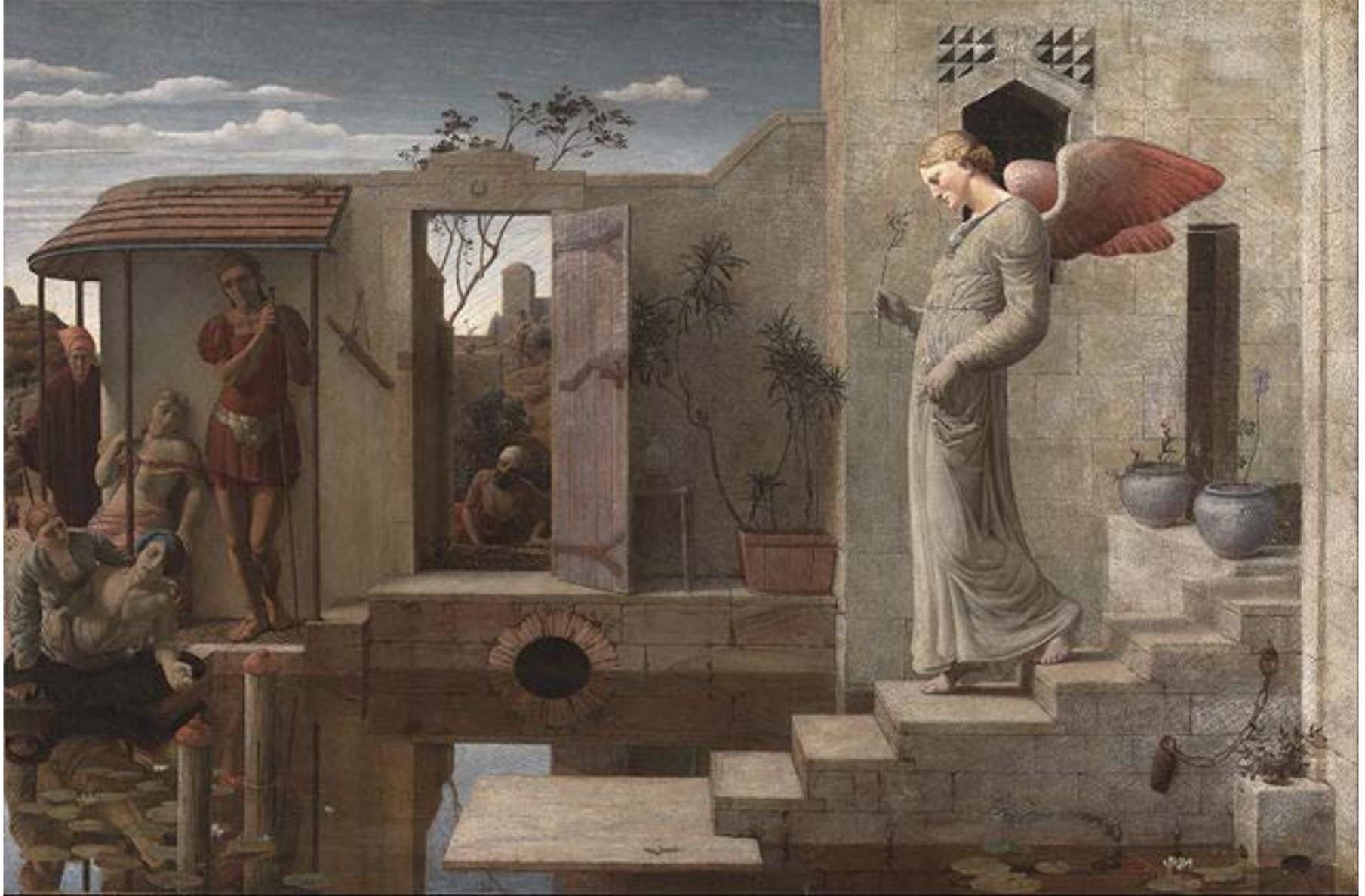
What about reporting to “ecclesiastical authorities”?

G-4.0302, *Book of Order*, also mandates the reporting of abuse to “ecclesiastical authorities.”

In the Presbytery of Genesee Valley, please inform any of these individuals by role:

- Presbytery Leader
- Presbyter for Healthy Congregations / Stated Clerk
- Chair of Committee on Ministry





The pool at Bethesda *John 5*

Healing comes only after the angel troubles the waters.

This concludes Part 4.

Part 1. What is Required of Us?

Part 2. Discerning Whether to Report

Part 3 Risk Assessment & Incident Data

