

...I heard the voice of the Lord saying: "Whom shall I send, and who shall go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me."

Isaiah 6:7

What if I'm not certain it's actually abuse?

1. You need not be certain or have proof before you communicate a concern to authorities.
2. The threshold for notification is a **good faith, reasonable concern** for a child's safety or well-being.
3. Worried about a false accusation? Communicating a **reasonable concern** is not making an accusation. If we smell smoke in our church and call 911, we're alerting the experts to a possible fire based on our reasonable concern. We're not required to confirm that an active fire is underway before calling.
4. The experts in New York at determining whether child abuse is occurring are the staff of Child Protective Services.

How do I communicate a concern or report the abuse of a child?

1. If this is an emergency, call 911 or your local police.
2. Otherwise, call the New York State Child Abuse Hotline: (800) 342-3720 [24 hrs./day, 7 days/week]
3. Be prepared to give the child's name and address, and to state the concern that prompts you to call.

Biblical models of interventions on behalf of children at risk

- Shiphrah and Puah (Exodus 1:15-21)
- Miriam (Exodus 2:1-10)
- Elisha (2 Kings 4:1-7)
- God's angel (Matthew 2:13-14)

Model brochure prepared by
Sexual Ethics Resource Ministry Team
Presbytery of Genesee
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In our congregation...

We speak up for kids!

Preventing sexual abuse of children & youth

Talk
Share
Act
Disclose
Protect
Advocate
Alert
Care
Warn
Notify

Presbyterians as witnesses

The *Book of Order*, G-4.0302, mandates that our deacons, ruling elders, certified Christian educators, and teaching elders are reporters of abuse, physical and sexual. In addition to acts against minors, the mandate to report includes the abuse of adults who lack mental capacity. People in the above roles “shall report to ecclesiastical and civil legal authorities knowledge of harm, or the risk of harm.”

At baptism, the congregation “assumes responsibility for nurturing the baptized person in the Christian life,” W-2.3012.



Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.

Ephesians 5:11



...under [God's] wings
you will find refuge...

Psalm 91:4

What is child sexual abuse?

1. Any sexual act between an adult and a minor, or between two minors, when one minor exerts power over another.
2. Forcing, coercing, or persuading a child to engage in a sexual act.
3. Non-contact acts include exhibitionism (to attract attention or cause sexual interest in another), exposure to pornography, voyeurism, and sexualized communication by phone or Internet.

Anyone then, who knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, commits sin.

James 4:17

How do I recognize the sexual abuse of a minor?

1. A child under 18-years is exposed to the danger of harm, or conditions exist that would reasonably result in the abuse or neglect of the child.
2. Look for signs: physical symptoms or problems, emotional signals of stress, or acting-out behaviors.
3. Consult the *Concerned Citizens Guide*, New York State Office of Children and Family Services: <http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/ohrd/ccg/ConcernedCitizensGuide.pdf>

If any of you put a stumbling block before one these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea.

Jesus to the disciples
Matthew 18:6