



Keeping the Promise Alive™

A Protecting God's Children® Refresher Program

Facilitator's Manual
VERSION 3.0



Preamble

Dear Facilitator,

The *Keeping the Promise Alive™* Program is a refresher training that provides ongoing awareness for the prevention of child sexual abuse. The material covered in *Keeping the Promise Alive* is designed to identify and reinforce the lessons of the original *Protecting God's Children®* for Adults Program. For example, some of the more challenging aspects of the sessions are clarified to strengthen the participants' ability to recognize risky behavior in their environments and take action to intervene in potentially threatening situations. This program answers the questions, "What have been some results of the *Protecting God's Children* Program, and what else can we all do to keep youth safe?" In addition, it reinforces these key issues:

- Warning signs of risky behaviors
- The need to communicate concerns about the behavior of another adult
- Identifying a healthy suspicion
- Appropriate responses by caring adults, and
- Program success stories

While not required, it is recommended that Facilitators of the *Keeping the Promise Alive* Program are persons who are already facilitators of the *Protecting God's Children* Program. If you would like to learn more about becoming a facilitator for the *Protecting God's Children* Program, please communicate directly with your safe-environment coordinator.

During the actual session itself, be sure to utilize the "Implementation Guide" within this manual as you facilitate and encourage participation—it serves as your step by step guide during the presentation.

As a facilitator, you are such an integral part of creating safe environments in communities throughout this country and beyond. Your efforts contribute to generational and societal changes that could truly save the life of a vulnerable child. You may only have one opportunity as a diocesan representative to impact your participants, make use of it and know that we support you.

Thank you for all that you do as a protector of children and youth!

Sincerely,

The VIRTUS Administrative Team

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Logistics: In Preparation for the Session

When preparing to facilitate the *Keeping the Promise Alive* refresher session, the following steps are recommended. In order to make sure that the session goes well, it is important to make sure that the following issues are handled in advance. Included are also tips to help the communication be dynamic and natural, and to create the best learning atmosphere for participants.

BEFORE THE SESSION:

- **Advanced planning.** Begin planning your session at least one month in advance. Communicate with the appropriate parties to verify dates; and then schedule on www.virtus.org.
- **Know your content.** Review all of the training materials. We recommend those leading the session read this Facilitator Manual cover-to-cover at least twice. Then, watch and become familiar with the refresher video. You will be glad you did! The more frequently you review the Facilitator Manual and video, the more prepared you will be and will be able to understand how the material works together and become comfortable with the flow of the session.
- **Develop a way to introduce yourself.** Within the Introduction of each session is time set aside to introduce yourself to the participants. Create a short, prefacing statement ahead of time, explaining your background and providing information as to why the session is important—and practice your delivery. If you are a trained facilitator for the *Protecting God's Children* program, let the participants know. Give any co-facilitators the opportunity to introduce themselves as well. This should not be more than a few lines long. This is one of the only sections of the entire session that is not scripted. Provide the following items as you present yourself:
 - **Name**
 - **Position and/or background**
 - **Statement of investment.** Explain why you feel the session is important. As you prepare this portion, ask yourself, “Why does this program matter to me?” “Why am I willing to devote time and energy to facilitating?” For example, perhaps you have a vested interest because you might have children participating in programs, or you are a caring adult who has been assigned as a safe-environment contact in your local community. In any case, perhaps you simply find that the protection of children is paramount and hope to facilitate this session to give others access to best practices for working together to prevent and respond to abuse. Feel free to utilize this information in your introduction.

Logistics: In Preparation for the Session *continued*

- **Audio/visual needs.** You will need a DVD player and a projector/TV, or the capability of projecting the DVD from a laptop computer. Depending on the size of the group, you may need a microphone and speaker system. Arrive at least one hour prior to test the audio/visual equipment before each meeting. It helps to liaise with the location ahead of time, to ensure that these materials will be available to you prior to your session. Have a backup plan, in case any portion of the equipment does not function.

- **Room set-up.** Participants may write notes during the session and will need a place to write comfortably. NOTE: If you decide to utilize round tables, ensure that only one side/half of the table has seats. You do not want participants' backs to be presented to you while you facilitate.

- **Refreshments.** Communicate with the Hosting Location regarding refreshments. Refreshments are optional, but are always appreciated by participants and lend to support a better learning environment. It is helpful to have a location representative and designated location volunteer to handle refreshments, room setup, etc. Refreshments can be provided at the beginning, during a short break, or the end.

- **Organization of materials.** Keep all materials for the sessions together. Be sure to take the following materials to each session:
 - *Keeping the Promise Alive* Facilitator's Manual with DVD
 - Attendance sheet
 - Important diocesan and local civil phone numbers and contact information to: communicate concerns, report allegations, report suspected abuse, communicate with victim assistance and counseling services
 - Optional:
 - Participant Handouts
 - Workshop Evaluation Forms

- **Practice.** Prior practice is helpful to assist with familiarity of the content. Consider practicing in front of friends or family members, or even in front of a mirror. You can also ask your diocesan coordinator, or a fellow facilitator to come to your session and provide pointers. Have them ask you pointed and specific questions to practice your delivery, and practice using the actual Facilitator Manual.

- **Attendance Verification.** It is the responsibility of the Facilitator to provide the attendance verification, which often means downloading and printing the sheet from www.virtus.org, and bringing it to the session. Each participant must "sign in" or "sign out" while participating in the awareness session. The attendance sheet is used for auditing purposes and confirmation of attendance through VIRTUS[®] *Online*. If your organization has instead decided to utilize a "sign-out" sheet, please ensure that there is only one sign-in or a sign-out sheet, and not both.

Logistics: In Preparation for the Session *continued*

DURING THE SESSION:

- **Arrive at least 45 minutes early.** The earlier you arrive, the more flexibility you have with troubleshooting. Always consider enlisting the help of others with equipment. It is sometimes best to arrive an hour early to a new location to allow sufficient time to handle problems that arise. Make sure that the sound is adequate for the number of participants and the room size, that the chairs are properly situated with signs leading participants to the right location.
- **Greeting participants.** As participants enter the room before the actual session begins, utilize this time to visit and learn more about them. For example, you might ask what program they work with and what they do. Everyone will be more comfortable if you spend a few minutes getting to know them, particularly since there are many individuals who may not be comfortable with the subject of child sexual abuse. A smile and friendly “hello” go a long way in helping others to feel more comfortable!
- **Maintain enthusiasm.** As the facilitator, you will create the atmosphere of the sessions. In an enthusiastic atmosphere, it is easier for participants to focus on learning and to participate in the sessions. The topic you are discussing can be extremely unpleasant, so it is important to balance that with a positive approach with the participants.
- **Withhold personal opinions.** Providing your opinion or anyone’s opinion that might detract from the mission of the program should be avoided. Avoid discussing any potentially divisive or political issue or addressing issues not covered by the material.
- **Keep the pace moving.** People need to know that their time is being used wisely. You will have plenty of material to cover. Avoid lingering too long over any one topic.
- **Limit participant questions to a reasonable number.** When it is time to finish the question and answer portions of the session and several people still have questions, say, “We’re going to take one more question and then we have to move on because we have lots of areas to cover.”
- **Always redirect.** Whatever comes your way, redirect to the key points you need them to know. Do not answer questions not connected to the program. Understand that the participants may unintentionally maneuver the session to off-topic subjects or share life-stories with the group, but the facilitator should gently keep them focused through redirecting.

Logistics: In Preparation for the Session *continued*

□ **Provide affirmation.** The use of praise is a crucial facilitation skill. Use it frequently! When it comes to responding to the feelings and reactions of others, it is essential that the facilitator be affirming and verbally understanding of the responses of the participants because of the nature of subjective expressions and emotions and their inherent truth to the individual person. Some participants will be encouraged by what has been accomplished and some will see the problem as a never-ending cycle. Affirmation of whatever feelings they are experiencing does not mean that you agree with them—it just means that you acknowledge what they are feeling. Some examples of praise you can use:

“That’s right!”
“Absolutely.”

“Thank you for that.”
“Perfect example.”

“Great question.”
“That’s exactly the point.”

□ **Be sincere.** Sincerity is difficult to define but essential to a compelling delivery of this material. If the participants doubt that you are being honest or genuine with them, you will have less influence on them. Be sure to be honest when you do not know the answer to a question. Faking an answer will undermine the credibility of your presentation.

□ **Show empathy.** It is important to help participants appropriately channel anger/emotions and to show them empathy and understanding through your words and body language. Recall that there will likely be victim survivors in your session.

□ **Creatively feed the material; ask questions.** Focus on drawing answers out of participants to make the session a conversation between you and the group. One way is to ask questions. For instance, if you know that more examples within a given section should be verbally provided, consider creatively asking questions. Sometimes, the facilitator may need to rephrase the question to help participants better understand what is being asked. Or, the facilitator may even need to allow for a pause to help with processing. The more focused and specific your questions, the easier it is for the participants to answer.

□ **Interactive discussions.** The session should include discussion that allows participants to provide their feedback as the session progresses. All persons like to be heard and understood.

□ **Application of video content.** Allow participants to apply the content to a realistic situation. This creates a connection back to the real world. Use the examples and case studies from the video, or examples from your own experience where applicable. However, do not discuss your own history of abuse or victimization.

□ **Stay on schedule.** Have a clock or watch within sight for the presentation. Staying on schedule allows you to complete the goals of the session and keeps everyone engaged and relaxed. This session, when facilitated, will last a maximum of 1½ hours.

Logistics: In Preparation for the Session *continued*

- **Feedback.** Ask participants to complete the evaluation forms after each session. Participants appreciate being asked for their opinions and their responses will help you improve your facilitating skills.

AFTER THE SESSION:

- **Address participants' final needs.** Some persons may want to talk with you for a few minutes after the session. However, if you encounter a person who is in need of professional counseling, offer to provide him/her with the contact information of the diocesan victim assistance coordinator or other community resources. In your role as a facilitator, you are not to counsel participants.
- **Collect and submit materials.** Collect and submit to the coordinator all of the materials needed for the diocese within the timeline designated by the Coordinator—which could be within a 24-hour period. The sooner you submit these materials, the sooner your diocese will be able to provide attendance credit. Consider scanning/ emailing or faxing the attendance verification sheets to the attention of your coordinator right away and following up with a mail package. Materials to submit include: attendance verification sheets, any evaluation forms, the Debriefing Form you completed (optional), a timesheet (if applicable), etc.
- **Communicate with diocesan coordinator.** Maintain communication with your diocesan coordinator to let them know of important items that occur within your sessions and ways to provide support to you. Consider completing the Debriefing Form after each session, and submit the form along with the session's attendance sheet to the diocesan coordinator. The Debriefing Form has the potential to enhance the facilitation process as areas of growth are self-assessed to allow for additional strengthening and resources. The ultimate goal of the Debriefing Form is to assist each facilitator with encountering less stress, and to provide a more consistent and pleasant session experience lending to a better atmosphere of learning for the facilitator and the participants.

Facilitator Session Debriefing Form

Session Date: _____

Facilitator: _____

Location: _____

I. General Questions (Circle “Yes” or “No” to each question; if applicable, provide explanation):

A. Venue & Hospitality:

- i. Did the venue properly assign a room for the training (i.e., size, acoustics, etc.)? **Y/N**
- ii. Were you greeted *and* escorted out by a parish/school representative (if applicable)? **Y/N**
- iii. Did the hospitality presented by the location encourage an atmosphere of learning (i.e., water, exterior room noise level)? **Y/N**

B. Equipment, electronics and chairs—were they:

- i. Already set up prior to your arrival? **Y/N**
- ii. Functioning properly? **Y/N**
- iii. Appropriate for the venue/session size? (i.e., TV/screen size, speakers, mic., etc.) **Y/N**

C. Handouts—do you have a sufficient amount of the following for your next session:

- i. Workbooks? **Y/N**
- ii. Additional handouts? **Y/N**

II. Session Questions (Answer each question; use back of sheet for more space):

1. What do you feel were the **strengths** of this session?
2. What do you feel were the **weaknesses** of this session?
3. Were there any questions that were **challenging** or to which you did not know an answer?
Please list:
4. Did you encounter anything that caused you or others to **feel uncomfortable?** (i.e., general facilitation, participant interaction, victims of abuse present in session, late-comers, etc.)
5. What could the diocesan safe-environment office do to help you improve your future presentations? (i.e., provide assistance/clarification or advice on challenging situations, answers to questions, follow-up training, etc.)
6. Is there anything that you will do **differently** in your facilitation as a result of this training?
7. Do you have any **suggestions** for the venue or to the diocesan safe-environment office?

Consider submitting this form with the attendance verification sheet to the coordinator for each session.

Key Knowledge and Learning Points

Child sexual abuse continues to be a universal problem.

One out of every five females and one out of every 10 males will be sexually abused before adulthood. Estimating the prevalence of child sexual abuse is challenging for many reasons—which include, but are not limited to the following: one reason is because of the quantity of unreported cases. Additionally, there are multiple studies and publications denoting that the occurrence of child sexual abuse is either higher or lower than the statistics stated in the *Protecting God’s Children* Program—all of which have different research methods in data gathering (national population surveys versus reported cases of children, versus reported cases made by adults who were abused as children, etc.) and annotate the data based on different reporting time-frames. Some studies include data sets from child protection agencies that may aggregate data based on cases that have been substantiated with evidence versus cases that have simply been reported to the agencies. Another reason it is challenging to agree upon the prevalence of child sexual abuse is because of the varied and multiple definitions of child sexual abuse that are consistently evolving over time.¹ Each state legislature defines “child sexual abuse” in its own individual statutes, the Federal government has its own definition and researchers create their definition based on the nature of the research they are conducting—and different studies provide inconsistent definitions of child sexual abuse as well, meaning that the data and prevalence will be contingent upon that definition.

Because of this, and the fact that there are many barriers for children to report abuse (signifying that there are many underreported cases), the VIRTUS programs use a conservative set of statistics denoted by Dr. David Finkelhor to indicate the prevalence of child sexual abuse.² In reality, it is very likely that prevalence of child sexual abuse is actually greater—perhaps as many as 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys are sexually abused before becoming adults.³ Regardless of minute variations in data, child sexual abuse is a serious and pervasive problem in the United States⁴ and beyond⁵ that continues to affect children and adults.

Most child abuse is done by persons who are known and trusted to the victim.

Studies estimate that the vast majority of abuse is performed by people that are considered to be acquaintances to the victim, and known and trusted both by the victim and the family.⁶ For example, 11 percent of abuse is committed by strangers, 29 percent by relatives, and 60 percent by others known to the victim.⁷

Key Knowledge and Learning Points *continued*

Healing is possible, even though child abuse can be devastating and abuse can have long and far reaching effects.

Victims can recover from sexual abuse. While the effects of abuse can be far reaching, it is very important that the participants understand that healing is possible. Recovery depends on five factors, with the most important being support/response.

1. Frequency. How often the abuse occurred?
2. Duration. How long the abuse continued?
3. Intensity. What acts of abuse were committed?
4. Betrayal. Who committed the abuse?
5. Response. How did the family, parish and community react to the disclosure?

Regarding the response, what happened if there was an opportunity for disclosure? Did the child have a trusted adult with whom to communicate? Did that adult believe the child? Did the child receive the professional help needed? We know that children who have a support system with loving and caring individuals fare much better than those who do not. We have all experienced painful events in our lives and we all respond differently. We know that if children have loving and supportive family members and friends they are likely to fare better than children who do not have love and support. This means that if any one of us have the privilege of being a trusted adult, then we have a grave responsibility to do what is right.

Certain factors may increase a child's vulnerability to sexual abuse.

Some of these factors include having disabilities, having emotional or behavioral disturbances, having been previously abused and being isolated from friends and family members.

Most molesters were abused as children.

It is true that most child molesters were abused as children, perhaps as many as 85 percent. However, most children who are sexually abused DO NOT grow up to become child molesters. In fact, only a very small percentage does. Just because someone was molested as a child does not mean that she or he will grow up to become an abuser.

Key Knowledge and Learning Points *continued*

The causes of child sexual abuse are complicated and not entirely understood.

However, we do know that some adults molest primarily because of sexual attraction to a particular age, gender, and physical characteristic of children while others act out of loneliness, depression, or anxiety. It is important to note that most molesters do not set out to hurt children. Most deny the harm they cause children.

There are several different types of sexual molesters.

Many models explain the different types of sexual molesters. Perhaps the easiest for people to understand is the following:

Type One—The preferential offender. This is a person who prefers and is fixated on a sexual relationship with a child for a social, romantic and sexual partner rather than an adult. This offender is fixated on specific characteristics. This person will seek jobs, volunteer work and other activities where he or she will have ample opportunities to access the preferred type of child (gender, age, physical characteristics). The preferential offender will physically, emotionally and psychologically groom the child and will also groom the community. The preferential offender typically has a group of victims.

Type Two—The situational offender. This is a person who does not necessarily prefer children but offends under a certain set of circumstances. This person often offends during a difficult time in his/her life and may be more likely to offend when intoxicated or severely depressed or anxious. The situational offender also grooms children and the community, but the behavior is less planned and more erratic. The situational offender typically has one victim.

Type Three—The indiscriminate offender. This is a person who will simply prey on any available vulnerable person: a child, an adult with mental retardation, a teenager in the hospital or an elderly person. The indiscriminate offender may offend under almost any set of circumstances.

A person who is known to have molested a child, regardless of the type of molester he or she is, should not be placed in a position of trust with children or vulnerable adults.

Key Knowledge and Learning Points *continued*

There is no “cure” for fixated/preferential molesters.

For child molesters who have an overwhelming sexual attraction to minors, it is extremely difficult to change their attractions. Sexual molesters who abuse out of loneliness, desperation, neediness, or other emotional difficulties tend to respond more favorably to treatment.

The prevalence child sexual abuse statistics are based on a minimum of physical touch.

The statistics that one in five females and one in 10 males will be abused before they are age 18 is based on the number of children who experience some sort of sexual abuse involving physical contact.⁸

It is entirely possible to help someone who was sexually abused in the past.

One of the most important resources to prepare in advance of the session is a list of care providers for persons who have experienced sexual abuse. These materials should be given to you by your diocesan coordinator. You will want to have a list that includes providers who work with children and providers who work with adults. Do not feel as if you must give advice about treatment issues. Your role as a facilitator does not include providing advice or therapy.

Child molesters and persons with inappropriate boundaries give gifts to children without permission and often make them promise not to tell.

Gifts can range from something simple to something more elaborate or expensive that parents either cannot afford or do not want their children to have. No adult—including grandparents and doting aunts and uncles—should give children gifts without permission from the parents or guardians. Giving gifts without permission, even with good or loving intentions, teaches children that this behavior is acceptable from people who may not have good intentions. The child molester or person with inappropriate boundaries can then use this opening to manipulate and win the child over. One simple solution is to check with parents before giving purchasing or giving a gift. Caring adults should also ensure that favoritism is not exhibited.

Key Knowledge and Learning Points *continued*

One of the warning signs of an abuser or a person with inappropriate boundaries is that he/she takes or compiles photographs of children without proper permission.

Another warning sign is that an adult might take those photos and compile some type of photo album or journal with other people's children. Trust your instincts when the actions of another adult make you feel uncomfortable or uneasy, or are contrary to the code of conduct—remember that you've been through training to recognize how to communicate when something doesn't seem right. Speak to someone in charge or directly with that person, and work with your school, parish, youth group, or organization to create policies regarding taking pictures or video and posting photos or video on a ministry related website.

Another warning sign is when an adult always want to be alone with children, and discourages others from participating.

People whose ministry requires them to sometimes be "alone" with children are not necessarily a risk. Notice people who always want to be alone with children and discourage others (especially parents) from attending activities or participating in situations with youth.

We all can identify secluded areas, as sometimes molesters and persons with inappropriate boundaries meet with children where they can't be monitored.

Notice people who regularly schedule time with children when no one else is around. Notice and make corrections if there are: rooms or areas that are not used but unlocked and unsupervised. Or, areas where children are not supposed to be yet there are no barriers, signs or other indications that the area is off limits. Or, areas that are clearly marked as adults only, yet children are permitted admittance. Sometimes even gardening and shrubs around the buildings that are planted too far from the wall leaving a gap in which a molester could seclude a child also need to be addressed. Or, if an adult is consistently scheduling private lessons, private meetings, counseling sessions, coaching sessions, etc., at times when no other adults are around.

Key Knowledge and Learning Points *continued*

Abusers and persons with poor boundaries often think rules do not apply to them.

Caring adults should be concerned about people who regularly ignore standard policies and procedures and think the rules of society do not apply to them. Remember: child molesters think that what they are doing is okay and they do not understand why you think it is a problem. Part of thinking the rules do not apply is that they think that they will not get caught. Abusers have been known to permit a background check, because they do not believe you will actually do it, or that they will not be discovered. Additionally, they are not concerned about poor references, because of community grooming and because they don't think you will check anyway.

Being affectionate with others does not make someone a child molester.

Liking children and being affectionate with them does not make anyone a child molester. The important concept for participants to understand is that solid, well intentioned adults who work with children may have to avoid certain types of affection with children, such as wrestling and tickling, so that potential child molesters do not blend in with other adults in the programs. An acronym that helps us clarify appropriate touching is "PAN." Touch that is Public, Appropriate and Non-sexual, nurtures children.

An example of possible emotional grooming is when an adult allows children to get away with things their parents would not allow.

There are lots of things that parents don't allow children to do. Pay attention to more than the obvious things that parents won't permit. For example, parents often do not allow their children to play certain types of games, use particular language, dress a certain way, eat an unlimited amount of junk food, visit specific sites on the Internet, play video games, have more screen time, etc.

Expressing concerns about suspected abuse does not open grounds for a lawsuit.

The law protects individuals who report suspected abuse in good faith. Those protections do not extend to individuals who make unfounded, malicious allegations for personal gain or in order to do harm to the accused. If you suspect that a child is at risk, then you are protected from liability for reporting.

Key Knowledge and Learning Points *continued*

Showing pornography, using sexually explicit jokes and sexual language—are more than warning signs.

Showing a child pornographic images or forcing them to watch sex acts also can be considered child sexual abuse. Using pornography is one of the most common ways that molesters break down the adult-child barrier. The molester may tell the child that he or she is teaching the child about sex and that it will help the child in the future to be a “good sexual partner.” The molester relies on the child's natural curiosity about sexual activities and the tendency to keep information about sexual activities a secret from parents. Once a child has seen pornography, the child typically believes he or she would be the one who would “get in trouble” if the behavior were discovered. The molester also tells the child that parents would be angry if they found out. Caring adults can listen to the children in their care to determine if they use sexual terms that they did not learn at home. Observe your children and you will notice if their language or actions take on sexual connotations. Talk with your children about the fact that while you do not approve of that type of language, if anyone uses it with them or shows them “adult” publications or pictures, they can tell you about it without getting in trouble.

Safe environment training does not “just let abusers know how to get away with abuse.”

First, the VIRTUS training program is only one facet of the safe-environment protection process. By educating the community, we gain allies in the process of protecting our children from potential predators. In addition, all fixated/situational child abusers must “groom” children in order to sexually abuse. It is very challenging for an abuser to sexually abuse a child without grooming that child physically and emotionally, in addition to grooming the community.

Fortunately, there are many warning signs that possible perpetrators will exhibit that alert others to the grooming process. This is one of the reasons why it is so important for everyone as caring adults to know the grooming process and to be able to recognize behavioral warning signs so that if they see one or have suspicion of abuse, they can effectively communicate their concerns to the right persons. Lastly, if there is an abuser that attends a session, they will learn about how devastating abuse can be for the victims and community.

Key Knowledge and Learning Points *continued*

The video reminds us again that adults need to communicate any concerns they have about the behavior of another adult.

Communicating may mean reporting to civil authorities for suspicion of abuse/or it may mean talking to the person and the supervisor about behavioral concerns. If an adult has a reasonable suspicion that a child has been or is being abused, the adult should (or, in some states, must) report the abuse as soon as possible to the appropriate state or local child protection services. In the case of an emergency, dial 911. If an adult has a concern about the behavior of another adult, the observer must communicate that concern to the other adult or the person's supervisor. Do not talk the situation over with other adults who are not involved as that could be "gossip" and gossip is destructive to everyone involved. Communicating concerns also means talking with the children in your care. Teach your children the touching rules and remind them that they have the right to say "no" and to leave a situation that makes them feel uncomfortable. Remind them that they should also tell you or another trusted adult if someone scares, confuses or hurts them.

Caring adults have the option of regularly checking the sex offender registries in their areas—but should be careful not to use them as a "failsafe."

There are websites that catalogue and display convicted sex abusers in any given community. However, there are benefits and detriments to perusing community sex offender websites. While using the offender site can be helpful, it can't be the only "failsafe", in that attention should not be focused entirely upon the fact that there is a known offender in the neighborhood, since it may create the myth that there aren't any other possible people in the neighborhood who could cause harm. Additionally, the perpetrator's addresses within the website may not be accurate as the offender may insert another individual's address in place of their own, perhaps even a relative's address. Moreover, sometimes the person's punishment and publication onto the offender website may not fit the crime they committed.

Key Knowledge and Learning Points *continued*

Adults should have a healthy suspicion of all the adults who regularly interact with your children.

In the beginning, there will be closer scrutiny of all adults interacting with children and young people. It is important that this scrutiny not turn into a witch hunt. We should have a “healthy suspicion” of the adults who interact with our children—not to go on a witchhunt or to see a child molester in every action adults take. As we raise our awareness about the warning signs of potential molesters, we will notice things in our own behavior as well as the behavior of others that gives cause for concern. This heightened awareness is not a witch hunt but an opportunity to change our behavior to prevent child sexual abuse.

There are also personal responsibilities if a child discloses to you.

It is your responsibility to provide ministry care and support to young people, and that includes listening to them when they come to you for help. Part of being a caring adult also means embracing a transparent environment any time you interact with youth, which means that you may not be in an isolated environment with youth as they communicate with you—even if this communication transpires online. Instead, inform the child that for safety reasons you will listen to them in an environment where others know where you are and can at least see your interaction—such as in a classroom with an open door, or the library, an open hallway, a large room with many people where you can have a quiet conversation, a bench in front of the church, etc. Make sure the door is open or that you are visible to others, others know where you are and know they may come in at any time. When the child speaks, listen carefully, showing respect to the child by taking the information seriously, offering a supportive, non-judgmental response and demonstrating empathy through tone and facial expression. Avoid reacting very strongly by maintaining a calm demeanor; instead be encouraging and supportive. Tell the child that he/she is not to blame and that they did the right thing by talking to you. Let the child explain the situation without interruption or interrogation, and instead take notes after the fact, when the child is no longer with you. In limiting the quantity and length of questions, be more concerned with who committed the abuse, do not attempt to determine credibility and ensure that the questions and statements are not accusatory. Do not promise confidentiality, since you will need to report the abuse to the proper authorities as soon as possible—within 24 hours is a good rule of thumb. The child needs to know that he/she is safe and that you will protect him/her.⁹

Key Knowledge and Learning Points *continued*

Monitoring all programs helps caring adults take action to make a difference in each parish, school or organizational environment.

For example: Walk around the property and make sure that there are no locations where a child could be secluded. Offer to help create and implement policies that create safe environments for everyone involved in ministry with children and young people. Make sure that any room in the church, school, or other facilities that could be used to meet with a child has a window in the door, or that all events or meetings involving children are made known to others so that that interaction does not occur outside of the sight, hearing or knowledge of others. However, do not rely on the physical plant to ensure safety.

Each state has a child protective services, who have specific responsibilities.

Each state has a child protective services, which are state-run agencies with the authority to investigate allegations of abuse and to take action on behalf of the child. This is a difficult set of responsibilities and investigations must be managed carefully to protect the rights of all persons involved. You may not know everything that happens once you make your report. Sometimes individuals who report incidents to protective services assume that nothing was done when in fact information continues to be gathered, or more information is needed to make a clear determination in the case.

The lesson here is that you never know if a file is being kept; even if you have reported something. It is also important that when new information is available you report that as well. Ultimately, your obligation to report abuse cannot be influenced by your perception of the effectiveness of protective services. Additionally, it is important to understand that just because a call is made to the state-run agency does not mean that there will be immediate action or an investigation. In fact, each state has specific requirements for what must be evident in the report to elevate the concern to become an investigation. Information on these requirements can be obtained by contacting the department in your state or looking at the specific agency's website.

Implementation Guide: Introduction and Video

Deliver the Introduction

- Welcome participants and recognize their time investment. Thank them for attending.
- Invite the participants to stand and join you in prayer.
- Introduce yourself: including your name, background, commitment to the program/ statement of investment.
- Discuss the attendance verification sheet and online registration.
- Outline the format of the session:
 - **Timeframe.**
 - **Participants will view an informational video called *Keeping the Promise Alive*.** It is a half-hour long and addresses key points for adults to remember to keep children safe. (The video includes real-life examples of the results that parishes and schools around the country are experiencing after participating in the *Protecting God's Children* program.)
 - **Participants will participate in discussions.** Interactive discussions will expand on the information in the videos.
 - **Participation is welcomed, and opinions will be respected and listened to.** In addition, there may be a time where the facilitator will need to inform the group about moving forward in the interest of time.

Play the Video

- Start the video** entitled *Keeping the Promise Alive*, and view it with the participants.
- While the video plays**, dim the lights, but do not allow the room to be pitch black. Ensure proper volume levels, be observant of individuals who may be struggling with the material.
- Stop the video at the end**, when the logo appears on the screen.

Implementation Guide: Group Discussion

Facilitate the Group Discussion of the Video

- Acknowledge that the subject content is not the easiest material to discuss.
- Announce a moment of silence to collect their thoughts, or perhaps pray for survivors.
- Ask the following questions, invite participation, and reinforce the “*Key Knowledge and Learning Points.*” The majority of bulleted examples should be covered.

Ask about reactions:

What are your reactions to the video?

- Upset that this happens to children.
- Anger with the abusers.
- Disgust that someone could do this to children
- Fear that this could happen to a child I know, or that abuse can't be prevented.
- Relieved that I trust my instincts, or that this program exists.

Ask about victims/survivors:

What were we reminded about the victims?

- Victims come from all demographics.
- Child abuse can be devastating, and can have long and far reaching effects.
- It is hard for children to talk about being victimized for various reasons.
- Victims and their families often trust their abusers (per abusers' manipulation).
- Many are unaware of hidden dangers of technology, and are victimized via “apps”, unsafe Internet sites, social networking, posted photos or gaming sites.

Implementation Guide: Group Discussion *continued*

Ask about abusers:

What were we reminded about the abusers, or persons with inappropriate boundaries?

- They come from all demographics, and can be male or female.
- Most child molesters (89%) are known and trusted by the victims and their families.
- They exhibit a grooming process.
- They groom the victim physically and emotionally, and also groom the community to develop more trust.
- They let children do things that their parents would not allow, and work to break down the child/parent bond.
- They will permit a background check, because they don't believe it will be conducted, that they'll be discovered or that they can talk their way out of it.
- They are not concerned about poor references, because of community grooming and because they don't think you will check anyway.

Implementation Guide: Group Discussion *continued*

Ask about tangible actions we can do to prevent/ respond to abuse:

What are the five steps to protect youth in our communities?

1. Know the warning signs
2. Control access through screening
3. Monitor all ministries and programs
4. Be aware of child and youth behavior, and
5. Communicate your concerns

What are some warning signs abusers or persons with inappropriate boundaries might exhibit?

- Give gifts without permission and often make the children promise not to tell.
- Take or compile photographs of children without proper permission.
- Always want to be alone with children, and discourage others from participating.
- Meet with children in secluded areas without monitoring.
- Behave as if the rules do not apply to them.
- Use sexually explicit jokes and sexual language.
- Show the child pornography (not just a warning sign).

Implementation Guide: Group Discussion *continued*

What are ways to control access through screening?

- Have a healthy suspicion of all the adults who regularly interact with children.
- Review the code of conduct. Know the rules, and follow them.
- Participate in screening procedures, and encourage consistent standards.

What can we do to monitor programs once we are in programs involving youth?

- Monitor secluded areas, perform random status checks.
- Schedule meetings with youth in areas with transparency.
- Ensure unused areas are properly locked.
- Assist in creating policies to ensure that no interaction with children can occur outside the sight, hearing or knowledge of others.

What should we consider about our own behavior?

- That our own actions follow the code of conduct and do not condition a child to more easily accept an action from someone with bad intentions.
- That our behavior follows the acronym of “PAN,” meaning behavior that is public, appropriate and non-sexual—even online behavior.
- We can also ask others to let us know if our behavior isn’t appropriate.

Implementation Guide: Group Discussion *continued*

When considering “being aware of child and youth behavior”, how can we teach them about how to protect themselves, and how can we be more aware?

- Listen carefully and respect the child’s wishes and boundaries.
- Observe their behavior, and communicate if something raises alarms.
- Talk to them about the importance of internet safety.
- Tell them they have a right to say “no”, to “get away” if possible, and immediately tell an adult if they’re uncomfortable or afraid.
- Teach them about their actual private parts, and that their entire body is private and belongs to them.
- Let children know that no one has the right to see or touch them, or force them to do something a way that makes them feel uncomfortable or afraid.

How do we communicate concerns if aware of a warning sign?

- If aware of a potential warning sign,
 - Speak directly to person involved, and/or a supervisor.
- Just because someone is exhibiting a warning sign, it does NOT make them an abuser.
 - Recall that a “warning sign” simply means that there’s improper behavior that could highlight an inappropriate relationship.
 - They could have poor boundaries, or not be aware that they are not following the rules. However, it could be grooming and must be addressed.
- Communicating about a concern does not mean that you are accusing someone of being an abuser.

Implementation Guide: Group Discussion *continued*

How do we communicate concerns if we see the same warning sign, after already speaking directly to the person? Do we go back to the offending person to talk to them again?

- Speak directly to the supervisor this time.
- Do not go back to the offending person—as it is NOT your role as a caring adult to investigate, rather, it is your role to communicate to the right person.
- If that supervisor does not seem to respond well, take your concern up the chain of command and talk to an overarching supervisor.

Setting that scenario aside, how would we communicate our concerns if we are aware that a child is in immediate danger?

- Call the police (911).
- Imminent dangers means you know something is happening at that moment, where someone told you or you see it.
- If possible, “Good Samaritans” can also step in as long as the behavior doesn’t cause harm to children, and 911 is still called at some point during or immediately following the event.

Implementation Guide: Group Discussion *continued*

Setting that scenario aside, how would we communicate our concerns if we aren't positive that a child is being abused, but we suspect it—although we don't have all of the facts and just aren't sure? Is there any responsibility to communicate with someone, especially if we don't know for sure?

- If you suspect or know a child is being abused, call the child abuse hotline for the area.
- What was the key word in the statement?
 - “SUSPICION” was the key word. Having a suspicion means that the thought has entered one’s head that a child could be abused. The obligation is to report, not to personally investigate.
- Depending on the state, and the organization’s policy, there may be a legal obligation to report abuse as a “mandated reporter” if it is suspected or known.
- Some organizations may have additional procedures built into their policies.
- Not all reports initiate an immediate investigation by the child protective services in the state. For concerns and questions about the state’s child protection procedures, conduct an internet search after the session as all of this information is publically available.
- **IMPORTANT:** An adult never knows if their piece of communication reported to the right person is the final piece of the jigsaw puzzle that helps initiate an investigation or begins to close one—and ultimately saves a child’s life.

Implementation Guide: Session Conclusion

Wrap up the session with the Conclusion

- Communicate about the specific steps the Diocese has taken to protect children (i.e., adult training, children’s training, background checks and other screening/compliance items, etc.).
- Ask: How has participating in the *Protecting God’s Children* program made a difference in our parish or school? *[Ask someone to jot down a list to be submitted to the coordinator, without names included. The information can be used for a report to the Parish Council or Board of Education on the progress being made on providing safe environments. It can also be submitted to the VIRTUS Programs Administrative Team.]*
- Verify location of the attendance verification sheet.
- Invite participants to communicate with you after the session if they have any questions at all, referring individuals to the proper contact if necessary.
- Distribute evaluations and ask them to be completed and returned to you after the final prayer.
- Thank everyone for coming and for their participation. Conclude with a final prayer.

Complete these items after session is concluded

- Collect the attendance verification sheet, evaluation forms, and any lists generated during the last part of the session.
- Collect the DVD and Facilitator’s Manual.
- Forward the attendance sheets and evaluation forms to the VIRTUS Coordinator as soon as possible.
- Provide the lists generated in the last part of the session to the pastor, principal or coordinator.

Video Narrative and Supplemental Information

The Video Narrative

Narrator: It is our promise to protect God's children... Yet, we know too well that there are those in this world who would harm children in order to meet their own selfish needs. And if no one stops them, they will continue to abuse.



Ronnie: I started molesting children when I was ten. And was finally apprehended when I was 36, so that I molested children over a period of 26 years for a total of approximately 34 victims.



Karl: Probably over my lifetime I fondled, probably, up to 500.

Supplemental Information

Child sexual abuse can be stopped before it starts. And you, as a member of the community, can have a role in protecting all of our children.

Sexual abuse is any sexual activity with a child—whether in the home by a caretaker, in a day care situation, a foster/residential setting, or in any other setting, including on the street by a person unknown to the child. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child.¹⁰

Karl was arrested in 1988 and placed on probation for 10 years. A condition of his probation was to be in sexual offender therapy. At the time this video was made, he had been in therapy for twelve years. After he had been in behavioral modification therapy for twelve years, he was asked in an interview before filming whether he thought it was possible for him to abuse children again. His answer, “Absolutely. If I had the chance, I know I could abuse again.”

Narrator: Together we can help stop these predators and others like them who would sexually abuse our children and young people.

Today, thanks to your commitment, your concern, and your desire to help, we are keeping alive the promise to protect.

Liking children and being affectionate with them does not make anyone a child molester.

Having a job that requires meeting alone with children also does not mean that someone is a child molester—but that adult should ensure that others are always aware of the location and timeframe of the meeting, and that status checks are welcomed.

Adults should have a healthy suspicion about the other adults who interact with their children. Heightened awareness is not a witch-hunt or paranoia.

Narrator: We are not helpless.

When we work together, we have the power to protect. In the original *Protecting God's Children* awareness session, we learned there are five steps to follow that will help protect children in your family and in your community.

They are:

1. Know the warning signs
2. Control access through screening
3. Monitor all ministries and programs
4. Be aware of child and youth behavior, and,
5. Communicate your concerns

Narrator: The *Protecting God's Children* Program is primarily designed and focused on addressing the issues of creating safe environments for children and young people.

Most child molesters are living in our communities, neighborhoods and families.

This is the reason it is so important for us to be able to implement the Five Steps outlined in the video.

By implementing this plan, we can create environments where there is no opportunity for the abuse to occur—and that will stop the abusers before they can act on their desires.

Adult persons who habitually lack the use of reason are considered to be ecclesiastically equivalent to minors. Sexual abuse offenses of this nature within the Church are treated the same way that offenses toward children are treated.¹¹

However, much of what you learn here can be applied to protecting other types of victims, such as vulnerable adults, which could include but are not limited to: adults who are homebound, in hospitals or nursing homes. Adults who are unable to defend or care for themselves and adults who are physically, emotionally or mentally incapacitated.

Narration: You are about to see three success stories that have come as a direct result of these five steps, and you will learn about innovative ways that you can continue to protect our children and young people, through awareness, communication and a timely response.

Narrator... When adults in one parish were made aware of the warning signs of a child predator, they discovered a predator in the middle of their parish.

In the beginning, there will be closer scrutiny of all adults interacting with children and young people. It is important that this scrutiny not turn into a witch hunt. We should have a “healthy suspicion” of the adults who interact with our children—not to go on a witch hunt or to see a child molester in every action adults take. As we raise our awareness about the warning signs of potential molesters, we will notice things in our own behavior as well as the behavior of others that gives cause for concern. This heightened awareness is not a witch hunt but an opportunity to change our behavior to prevent child sexual abuse.

Child molesters are experts at manipulation. They “groom” children and parents to gain their trust. Parents are often as trapped as the children. That is why it is so important for third parties to be aware of the warning signs and intervene before the abuse occurs.



Parish Representative: We were going through an awareness session at our church and it came across that as we did the warning signs

one of the ushers just jumped into my mind as someone who exhibited these traits, and he was doing things like giving candy to the children. As children were getting restless during mass he would want to take them out and walk with them or maybe go outside and play. Things of that nature and as you listen to the awareness session it really starts to just kind of piece together.

Narrator: In fact, Kevin's parish priest was thinking the exact same thing.



Parish Representative: And so the pastor did some research and found out that the usher was on the sex offender registry and it just totally blew us away.

In many of the incidents of abuse, identifiable warning signs were present. Often times, people suspected a problem but were unsure about what they should do. Some thought it was not their business, others were afraid of the repercussions if they were wrong, still others told someone and were discouraged from doing anything more about the situation. This program assists in teaching adults about the specific issues so that they trust their own instincts and know how to respond when they see a problem.

There are websites that catalogue and display convicted sex abusers in any given community. There are benefits and detriments to perusing community sex offender websites. The perpetrator's addresses within the website may not be accurate as the offender may insert another individual's address in place of their own, perhaps even a relative's address. While using the offender site can be helpful, it can't be the only "failsafe", in that attention should not be focused entirely upon the fact that there is a known offender in the neighborhood, since it may create the myth that there aren't any other possible people in the neighborhood who could cause harm.

Narrator: The usher was immediately reported to the authorities and removed from any further contact with the children. Through simple awareness, children of the parish and community were spared from the very real possibility of abuse.

Here is what happened in one parish and school when parents communicated their concerns.



Parish Representative:

There was a parent who was always taking pictures of the children. One of the parents became concerned because she thought it should just be investigated further of why he was taking all those pictures.

Narrator: The message hit home when parishioners heard almost the exact same things from this predator.

It is important to focus on specific, unacceptable behaviors rather than on the motivations for the behavior. For example, the caring adult does not need to determine why an adult is showing a child pornography or pornographic images. Caring individuals only have to know that it happened and then respond appropriately.

Individuals should watch for exceptions to policies or accepted standards. If the policy prohibits taking children into private staff areas, individuals should pay attention to an adult who violates that standard, particularly when the standard is ignored repeatedly or after verbal communication or warnings.



Karl: I was always taking pictures and I would take these pictures and I would put them in a picture album and I would have the picture album at the skating rink. And this

was another tool that I'd use to get kids to come around me. 'Cuz they'd want to look for their picture from the last time they was there or looking for pictures of their friends. And parents should have been aware that this picture book was probably 90 percent of little girls.

Narrator: Once the parents learned of this indicator, they immediately communicated their concerns to their pastor.

It is not uncommon for child molesters to “keep track” of their victims in one way or another. Journals, files, lists, photographs and computer databases have all led to the arrest of molesters. Molesters report that the primary motivation for record keeping is to permit them to fantasize about the children in the future.

There are a number of Internet sites that cater to these perpetrators. On these sites, predators provide information about places to go where there is easier access to kids. These websites, which are professionally done and look like the sites of any other business or organizations, also promote activities to “normalize” adult child sexual activities and share information about police stings and other efforts to “entrap” child molesters.

Adults are sometimes reluctant to communicate their concerns for several reasons. Some of those reasons include:

- 1. Desire to avoid conflict or create problems.*
- 2. Lack of proof.*
- 3. Lack of certainty about how to respond.*
- 4. Fear of repercussions or anger from the person.*
- 5. Disbelief that the person could commit abuse.*
- 6. Fear of civil liability, legal actions and procedures.*

Narrator: The parent photographer was told that he was no longer allowed to take pictures of any children at school or parish events. He was even barred from volunteering at the school or coming onto the grounds without specific permission. He became angry and even threatened to sue the Church. But the Church would not back down.

Narrator: Six months later, the picture taking parent was arrested by local police on three counts of performing lewd acts with a minor under 14 and charged by the FBI with possession and production of child pornography. It was the actions of the parents who participated in a *Protecting God's Children* Awareness Session that played a key role in his arrest.



Rose Perry: I think it was very difficult for the parents to speak up because you always second-guess yourself, 'Should I say anything? What if there is nothing to the situation? That it was harmless?' But it's always better to err on the side of caution especially when comes to a child.

"At one point in time I had forced three of the children to pose for me while I took pictures of them naked, and I don't mean stiff poses—jumping on the bed, and the like, and I took them to a local photo developer. In my head, deceiving myself to think, 'Well, they're just nude; there's no sexual behavior in the photograph; therefore it's going to be alright'." —Ronnie, A child abuser portrayed in the video

Rose Perry, MSW, serves as Managing Director of Oklahoma's Child Abuse Network/CAN, a community child advocacy center bringing a multidisciplinary approach to child abuse investigation and treatment. Prior to CAN and the Justice Center, Rose had 20 years of experience with Oklahoma's Department of Human Services in all aspects of child abuse intervention, investigation and treatment. She is a certified forensic interviewer and mediator via the Department of Human Services Juvenile Services from 1986-1992. In 1990, she was named OACIA Social Worker of the Year, and in 2002 the "Best of the Best" for an office of the Oklahoma Department of Human Services.

Narrator: Communicating concerns may not be easy, but it is essential. When we make a timely response, we can take action to save lives. In one Protecting God's Children session, participants heard the following:



Rose Perry: Perpetrators look for isolated areas. Children who are sexually abused, there are usually no witnesses. And if you isolate the children from other adults or other children even, then you're able to keep it a secret, you're able to talk to that child and really convince a child that it's okay, even when a child knows it's not okay.



Parish Representative: Mary was a secretary at our church. She wasn't Catholic but she went to the training because she was an employee at our parish. She took the training and then went back to her own church and found that there was a whole wing that wasn't being used. An education wing, that was unlocked, it was an area that anyone could get into. And she wanted to make sure that was secure, so it didn't become an area that could become a problem.

By communicating concerns, you are not accusing someone of being a child abuser; you are simply pointing out something of concern to you. In far too many cases of abuse, adults have noticed things along the way, but did not say anything until it was too late.

In most abuse situations, perpetrators need to seclude children.

"Adults need to be aware of secluded areas in and around school buildings and church buildings where a child could be taken alone. Those areas have to be made off limits. That means locking doors to rooms that are not being used and routinely checking places where children can be taken alone. Another important point is that adults should never meet alone with children in a secluded area. They should meet with children in an area where other adults can see them or an adult could walk in unannounced." —Dr. Barbara Bonner, noted international expert in child sexual abuse issues

Narrator: Armed with this important information, Mary went to her pastor and explained to him what she had learned about predators and isolated areas. Her church then changed locks on those empty classrooms and made sure only a select few had the key.



Dr. Block: The thing that's exciting about sharing this information is that we have a group of people who will take this training, but they can expand the training into other areas, through their own discussions about it at their own churches, again in their neighborhoods and schools. So that, not only are they protecting one child for every person involved in the training but they protecting huge numbers of children potentially when they take this information forward.

Effectively monitoring all ministries eliminates any opportunity for an adult to be alone with a child in an isolated area. If they know someone is watching them, they have more trouble finding opportunities to abuse without getting caught.

Dr. Robert Block is Professor and past Daniel C. Plunket Chair, Department of Pediatrics, The University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, in Tulsa. He specializes in behavioral and forensic pediatrics. Dr. Block received his M.D. degree from the University of Pennsylvania, and has been a member of the O.U. College of Medicine faculty since 1975. As a faculty member, he has won the Aesculapian teaching award on three occasions. Additionally, he was awarded the prestigious Stanton L. Young Master Teacher Award (1998), a Presidential Professorship (1999), the Parker J. Palmer "Courage to Teach" Award (2001) by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education. In 2003 and 2004, he was named one of the "Best Doctors in America." Dr. Block is a diplomat of the American Board of Pediatrics, a Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and chair of the Academy's Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect. Dr. Block was appointed Oklahoma's first Chief Child Abuse Examiner in 1989, and he continues to serve in that capacity. He is a member and past Chair of the Oklahoma Child Death Review Board, and a member of the State Advisory Committee on Child Abuse.

He is a member of the medical team for Tulsa's Children's Justice Center, and is past president of CAN'S board of directors.. Dr. Block is a member of the Tulsa County District Attorney's Task Force on Crimes against Children and also served several years on the board of the Margaret Hudson Pro-gram for teenage parents. Dr. Block has authored several papers and a textbook, and has delivered over 800 public presentations.

Narrator: There are so many ways you can have a timely response including:

- Installing a computerized locking system on the main entrances to church facilities.
- At the end of Religious Education, youth group meetings, or any other activity involving children or young people, have the next to the last parent arriving to pick up their child stay with the group leader until the last child's parents arrives.
- Create a form for use in reviewing all programs before the program begins; and
- Establish a review process that includes parishioners and staff.

Narrator: Now, more than ever, it is also important to have a timely response in protecting our children and young people in the ever evolving virtual world of the Internet.

This virtual world has become a cultural reality that is not a "fad." Technology will continually advance at a fast rate and will continue to be a fluid environment for adults and youth.

There has been a momentous shift in the communication in our society in recent years. Many have traded in person, face-to-face relational interaction for a virtual and technologically advanced world of electronic exchange.



Detective Robert H. Farley:

The reality is there is absolutely nothing that's private on the Internet. Nothing at all.



Detective Robert H. Farley:

As a result, a child molester can sit behind a computer or use a Smart-phone to roam online from gaming sites to social networking platforms looking for children and teens susceptible to victimization.

"It's not something you just get over. You just don't get over it. It's not that simple. I mean I tried to kill myself. I thought that everyone that looked at me knew that my manhood was gone. I felt dirty; used; disgusting." —Roberto, survivor of child sexual abuse

Robert Hugh Farley is a 30-year veteran of the Cook County Sheriff's Police Department in Chicago, Illinois. As a highly decorated Detective, Deputy U.S. Marshal and the Supervisor of the Sheriff's Police Child Exploitation Unit, he has over 28 years of experience investigating and supervising child abuse investigations. In 2007, he supervised the internal investigation, following sexual abuse allegations, at Oprah Winfrey's School for Girls in South Africa. He is now an international child exploitation consultant for INTERPOL, Microsoft and the VIRTUS Programs.

"Law enforcement in the United States observed that since 1997 that child molesters began using the Internet and even cell phones to facilitate child exploitation—using the latest technology to target and then communicate with young people. Now, after 1997, child molesters no longer had to be in a position of trust, lurk in parks and malls, or even befriend a parent to gain access to children.

Many adults and young people are still unaware of the hidden dangers of some technology related “apps” or the unsafe Internet sites, such as many social networking, photo posting or gaming sites. If teachers, parents and other caring adults would go to these internet sites or download a handful of popular “apps,” they may be shocked by the content, photos and the personal information that they would find.

Narrator: Whether in the virtual or the real world, creating a safe environment comes from knowing the warning signs and having a timely response. In the *Protecting God’s Children* Program we also learned that abusers can look like, or be, anyone, male or female, or even a team of people working together, in addition to adults who are married with children of their own.

Child sexual abuse happens in all income, racial, ethnic, and other demographic groups and sex offenders do not fall into one certain category. Sex abusers look like your neighbors, friends and acquaintances—the people with whom you work, family members and other trusted adults and other youth—this abuse is known as child-on-child or peer-on-peer abuse.

Today a child molester can sit at a computer use a cell phone to roam online from social net-working sites to gaming sites and what they’re doing is trolling for children and teens susceptible to victimization.” —Detective Robert Hugh Farley

97 percent of children between the ages of 12 to 17 play games using a computer, the Internet, a portable device or console games. Many children play these games online with individuals they do not know.¹²

It is clear that one of the best ways for adults to protect children is to cross the technology gap. Predators have already done so.

The extent of child-on-child abuse is difficult to ascertain. The majority of child sexual abuse is perpetrated by adults.¹³ Sexual abuse of children by other children is referred to as ‘peer to peer’ abuse, or ‘child-on-child’ abuse. The younger the victim, the more likely it is that the child is being abused by an older youth. While children can abuse other children, the majority of abuse is performed by adults. In reported cases of abuse, adults were the offenders in 60 percent of sexual abuse of youth under the age of 12.¹⁴

Narrator: Randy's summer camp turned into an agony when his camp counselor molested him.



Randy: He seemed like a really nice guy. He'd take us swimming. He let us sneak out of the cabins at night. When I was homesick, he would stay up with me. I trusted him. And then he did it. I've never been the same ever since.

Randy went to church camp for the first year when he was ten. He had never been away from his family for three weeks before and he was a little frightened. His cabin counselor, Mr. Tom, was "like a big kid" himself, wrestling with the boys, hitting them on the arms and holding "pinching contests" to see who could stand to be pinched the hardest on the stomach without giving up. On the first day of camp, Mr. Tom told Randy he could be his "assistant" cabin counselor and help him run the cabin. That night, Mr. Tom heard Randy rolling around on his bunk, so he rubbed Randy's back and talked to him until Randy fell asleep.

Mr. Tom "bent" the rules for the boys in his cabin, and they loved it. The other boys envied Randy for being his favorite. During the second week of camp, Mr. Tom told Randy that he was his best friend and that he picked him because he was the coolest kid in the cabin. That night, he took Randy to the boathouse and sexually assaulted him. After that, Mr. Tom took Randy to the boathouse every night. The camp had a rule that campers were not allowed to call their parents, but they could write open-faced postcards. Randy was afraid that Mr. Tom would read his postcards and he did not know who to tell at camp.



Dr. Block: The predators don't think the rules apply to them for the same reason they are predators against little children they have a distorted vision of right and wrong.

We have no reliable way of knowing "why" abusers actually abuse, but we do know that one of the warning signs is that "molesters think the rules don't apply to them." As protectors of children, when someone does enormous damage to a child, we expect them to acknowledge the wrong, show remorse and seek forgiveness. But, child molesters often think that they love the children and that their actions are loving, so in their minds there is no reason to be remorseful—at least not in ways that we, as "non-molesters," would expect.



Rose Perry: They also believe that they won't be caught. Ah, they think that they are savvy enough and can keep it enough of a secret and build enough of a relationship making that child feel special to keep it a secret that they will never be caught.

Another warning sign among child predators is that they don't believe the rules apply to them. Watch for situations where an adult keeps ignoring standard policy, or bends the rules with kids such as letting them get away with things their parents would not approve of.



Dr. David Finkelhor: Some child molesters are very appealing, socially gifted people. They win over congregations; they win over neighbors; they win over families; they even win over the kids themselves. They can be talented, resourceful, and authoritative, but they use those talents to gain confidence with parents and access to kids to act on their own sexual interests.

To gain control of a child and therefore cooperation, the molester may patiently groom a child for the type of relationship the molester seeks. For many child molesters, the process of grooming can be time consuming. This grooming can take months or years, depending on the victim and it occurs in a variety of ways.

Narrator: But if you are aware of their actions, they will get caught. They will realize the rules of society do apply to them. Knowing the behavioral warning signs of the potential predator's grooming process is an important step in creating a safe environment.

Narrator: Child abusers use a grooming process to gain access to children. They build trust not just with the child, but with the child's family as well. This manipulative process includes physical, psychological and community grooming intended to create an environment that traps children and lulls families into complacency.

Narrator: Physical grooming involves a physical progression of touches from a normal acceptable touch, to a more aggressive and intimate one. It is done for two reasons, to desensitize the child to inappropriate touch and to confuse the youth about his or her boundaries.

Abusers often go out of their way to groom the community in order to gain access to children by appearing reliable and trustworthy.¹⁵ In this way, if there ever is a suspicion or allegation, the community is more likely to defend the abuser or make excuses for him or her.

Some who work with children fear that their care for, and commitment to children will be mistaken for grooming. However, the grooming process is very different from appropriate affectionate behavior. Learning this information is an opportunity to notice others and to change our own behavior to avoid behavior that causes anyone concern.

Molesters groom children to become victims. The grooming includes three different things that are going on at the same time.

Physical grooming involves touch. The molester may initially touch a child in completely acceptable ways, such as a pat on the back or on the arm. As the child becomes more familiar with the molester, he or she may progress to hugging, tickling and wrestling to gradually condition the child to increasing levels of physical contact.



Karl: I would rub them on the back of their pants. I would rub them in ways where they didn't really know for sure what I was doing 'cuz when they felt uncomfortable sometimes they would get up and go skate. But they never said anything, so I always would just take that as well, I must of really got close to that line as to what I could cross over and that kind of told me how much more I could do the next time I could get them to sit in my lap.

Narrator: Psychological grooming includes actions that make a youth feel dependent on an adult, often involving an aspect of emotional attachment. The molester may shower the child with attention or gifts, provide the youth with drugs or alcohol or may act as a confidant.

Eventually, the molester will begin to touch more intimate areas, pretending that the touch was accidental at first, but increasing the frequency and duration as time goes on. This grooming may be so subtle that the child may not realize what is happening.

***Psychological grooming** is subtle and progressive and is also known as emotional grooming. The molester may begin by just showing attention to the child, by talking to her or him, by being friendly and funny so that the child begins to regard the molester as a friend or as a peer of sorts. The molester will advance, then, to demonstrations of concern, care and escalating affection for the child. The molester creates a sense of dependence in the child by developing this "special" relationship that the child enjoys at first. Buying the child treats or gifts or taking the child to fun activities are often part of the process. If the child begins to resist, the molester will use the dependence and affection the child has for her or him to convince the child that the child caused this behavior and that the child enjoys it. If necessary, the molester will coerce the child into continued cooperation by threatening the child with injury or violence.*

The molester may even threaten to harm the child's mother or other family members. To keep the child complicit, the molester may persuade the child that if the parents find out, they will be angry and blame the child for what happened. All of these techniques leave the child conflicted, helpless and dependent, feelings that bond him more resolutely to his abuser.

A "Gift" can be defined as "something that is bestowed voluntarily and without compensation." The word "bestow" can be defined as presenting or conferring something. And, "without compensation" means more than without payment. It means that nothing is expected in return. If there is any condition or expectation, it is not really a gift.



Karl: It's very easy for a child molester to slip into a child's life. All they gotta do is show the child any attention.

Especially if the child feels like they're being neglected at home. And they become their friend...and, boy if I was your dad. I'd let you do that. When you start agreeing with a child with the things that they're saying about their home life, you've got the kid over right away.

While no child is truly immune from abuse, most child molesters often target children who are coping with difficulties already. Children who have been removed from their homes and placed in out-of-home care are extremely vulnerable to abuse.¹⁶ Children from single-parent households, who have distant relationships from their parents¹⁷ and who have physical and emotional disabilities are at higher risk for sexual abuse.¹⁸ Disabled children are up to three times more likely to be abused than non-disabled children.¹⁹

Narrator: Community grooming provides the abusers with the environment needed to accomplish their goals. Abusers will work to ingratiate themselves into the community, developing relationships with adults and children for greater access to youth and protection against suspicion.

Community grooming provides the molester the environment needed to accomplish his or her goals. The abuser may fill a role that the community needs. The molester appears to other adults, employers, co-workers and parents as a generous, kind person who genuinely likes children and cares about a child's best interests. The molester may even develop a rapport with the mother or father of the victim to build trust, as well as further access. Generally, the community regards the molester as having special insight into children and as someone to be trusted. When a child accuses the molester or when the molester is caught perpetrating against a child, the community may react with outrage, not at the molester but at the accuser because it seems so inconceivable. In many cases, the community grooming is so effective that if an allegation does surface, the community may not believe the victim. The community may even blame or shame the victim for the allegation or the problems that seem to come as a result of the allegation. It is also difficult for a community to believe that a beloved member could be doing something as terrible as abusing a child.

A person (or group) is less likely to blame a victim for a crime if the person (or group) has acquired specific knowledge of victimization issues²⁰ including learning about child sexual abuse and how youth are victimized.



Dr. David Finkelhor: Most child molesters are well known or related to the kids they molest. They look for kids who are comfortable with them or who are needy and therefore vulnerable. They convince parents and other caretakers that they're just trying to help out with homework, with babysitting, or with special treats.

Narrator: There is a line between appropriate and inappropriate behavior. Be aware of people who ignore standard policies and procedures. Predators think the rules of society don't apply to them. Keep your eyes open for concerning or inappropriate behavior. Things that may give you that uneasy feeling.

Factors that make children more vulnerable to sexual victimization from people outside the family include a lack of adequate adult supervision, family separation due to immigration, residence in high-crime areas, parent inability to understand English, dependence on others for economic or social support and lack of affection or warmth in the family.²¹

The VIRTUS training program is only one facet of the safe-environment protection process. By educating the community, we gain allies in the process of protecting our children from potential predators. In addition, all fixated/preferential child abusers must "groom" children in order to sexually abuse. It is very challenging for a fixated abuser to sexually abuse a child without grooming that child physically and emotionally, in addition to grooming the community. Fortunately, there are many red flags that possible perpetrators will exhibit that alert others to the grooming process. This is one of the reasons why it is so important for everyone as caring adults to know the grooming process and to be able to recognize behavioral red flags, so that if they see a red flag or have suspicion of abuse, they can effectively communicate their concerns to the right persons.

Narrator: A good way to measure if adult to minor behavior is appropriate and transparent utilizes the “PAN” acronym, meaning that any affection shown to a child should be:

- **P**ublic
- **A**ppropriate, and
- **N**on-Sexual in nature.

Narrator: This is an area where knowledge of your organization’s policy and code of conduct are extremely helpful. These documents help you to understand what is appropriate, and inappropriate behavior for adults interacting with minors. When everyone is following these policies and procedures, there is a standard set that will help to quickly identify those who do not want to obey the rules.

Narrator: If adults are exhibiting these warning signs, or other inappropriate behavior, it does not always mean that they are abusing a child. However, it could be characteristic of the grooming process and must be addressed.

There is a difference between someone who genuinely cares about children and one who seems to be more interested in being with children than adults. Especially one who has their attention on children—particularly children that are not their own.

Adults should trust their instincts when something or someone makes them feel uncomfortable or uneasy.

- *Speak to the person or—in most cases, the supervisor.*
- *Before you express your concerns, think through what you want to say. Then, establish a context or a framework for the conversation.*
- *Be specific about your concern.*
- *Describe what made you uncomfortable in clear terms.*
- *Let the person know exactly what concerned you about the interaction.*
- *Let the person know why you are bringing the concern to him or her.*

Don't be surprised if the person is upset about the concern. It is natural. However, if the reaction is too strong or the person does nothing to correct the situation, take the complaint to someone else who can do something about it.

Narrator: It is also important to pay attention to who spends time with our children in today's world of technology. When a child or young person uses an electronic device with the Internet, they may be subjected to inappropriate materials or even strangers without an invitation. They can be victimized in a variety of ways such as cyberbullying or even sexual exploitation through social media, technology apps or even new internet friends who are not what they seem.



Det. Robert Farley: Because of the charm and seductive talents of molesters young people should be warned that whenever they communicate

with someone using technology—even if it is just chatting about homework within an internet gaming site—they should never provide technology-facilitator “friends” with personal or identifying information like hometown locations or school names. Even apart from conversation, an innocently posted photo taken at a school can also contain personal information in the background, in addition to tracking information imbedded in the meta data of the photo, such as the actual GPS location where the photo was taken.

Narrator: When it comes to technology it's Important to:

- Be proactive—install filtering and monitoring software onto each electronic device and regularly review the content.

The upward trend of computer and Internet use is strong among young Americans. Of those between the ages of 5 and 17, 90 percent are using computers and nearly six out of ten are on the Internet.²²

Children and teens should be encouraged to electronically communicate only with friends or other people they have actually previously met in person. Children and teens are in real danger when they actually meet “Internet friends” who are in fact strangers that they have only communicated with online through various forms of electronic devices.

As a parent or other caring adult, you must remain adamant that your young people never physically meet anyone in person that they have communicated with only online.

It is vital for caring adults to continuously reiterate to young people that they must never give out any personal information over the Internet.

- Create procedures at home for consistently reviewing activity and Internet usage conducted on your child or teen’s electronic devices. For example, encourage a proper and balanced usage of all electronics in an open area such as the living room or family room.
- Have a conversation about what constitutes “personal information.”
- Don’t allow a child or teen to post or provide personal information through a social networking venue.
- If an electronic device has webcam or video capabilities, use a piece of electrical tape to cover the lens when not in use. In this way you insure that no one can remotely access the device without your knowledge.

Narrator: By parents and, educators, and other caring adults teaching children and young people about the importance of computer safety and communicating any unusual incidents, it becomes more difficult for a predator to use technology to find their next victim.

“Adults should be monitoring how and with whom their children are communicating, whether in person, on the computer or Smartphone. While computer, tablet or cell phone monitoring software is good, a regular, nighttime examination of a young person’s cell phone messages and photos often can help to protect them further. The best security measure of all is to regularly and openly communicate with children about the latest evolving technology. Discuss the risks and benefits thereof, as well as the potential impact upon their lives.” —Detective Robert Hugh Farley

The intrinsically isolated nature of the communication and the fact that the “contact” is usually outside of the sight and hearing of others makes online communication more challenging to monitor. Known as the “Online Disinhibition Effect”, when one is safely ensconced behind the anonymity of a smart phone or computer screen, the person feels safer to do, say and experience what may be contrary to their values in ordinary, face-to-face interaction, otherwise known as the “real world.”²³

Narrator: Teaching children and young people to have a timely response and to communicate their concerns is an important part of keeping them safe from sexual abuse.

Narrator: In the past, it has been taught that a child's private body parts are only those parts of the body that are covered by a bathing suit. In reality, a person's entire body is private and belongs to them. This includes the mouth, face, arms, legs, etc.

Let your child know that no one, including an adult, young person or another child, has the right to see or touch them anywhere on their body that makes them feel uncomfortable or afraid. And, no one should ask or force a child to touch anyone else's body.

Online communication can be problematic to ministry because seemingly innocuous conversation about school or ministry between the organization's staff or volunteer member and a minor can easily move to conversations of a more intimate nature. This direct access makes it easier for a potential threat to interact with children in ways and places that used to be considered private, such as the home.²⁴

Victims may be embarrassed or reluctant to answer questions about the sexual activity.²⁵

In a study of 630 cases of alleged sexual abuse of children from 1985 through 1989, in 79 percent of the confirmed cases, children initially denied abuse or were tentative in disclosing. Of those who did disclose, approximately three-quarters disclosed accidentally, and 22 percent had recanted their statements.²⁶

Let them know that if this happens they should;

- SAY NO
- GET AWAY
- And immediately TELL A PARENT OR SAFE ADULT, even if the person tells them not to tell.

You should also teach your child that there may be special circumstances when a doctor or other safe adult may need to touch them in order to help keep them healthy or clean, but only with your permission and supervision.

Narrator: It is important to be aware of anyone who might be “grooming” a child by constantly tickling, kissing, or hugging them. A child will sometimes tell a parent that he or she does not want to be hugged, kissed or be tickled. Parents and other caring adults need to listen carefully and respect the child’s wishes. By doing so, you are helping to teach children and young people to establish healthy boundaries and avoid problematic situations.

There is the clinical assumption that children who feel compelled to keep sexual abuse a secret suffer greater psychic distress than victims who disclose the secret and receive assistance and support.²⁷

The more parents and caring adults talk and listen to the children in their care, the better they will be able to discern when their child may be in danger. One or more signs of abuse does not mean that a child is being sexually abused, but may mean the child is experiencing some kind of problem that needs to be addressed.

Sometimes children say nothing at all, but they show us something is wrong with their actions.

Other possible indicators of abuse include withdrawal and isolation from others, use of sexually explicit language, acting out sexual behaviors, changes in habits, bed-wetting and other types of regressive behavior, substance abuse and self-harm²⁸ If a child is demonstrating any one of the problematic behaviors, a trusted adult should carefully talk with the child to ascertain what the problem might be.²⁹

Narrator: Remember, protecting children is about Awareness, Communication, and Timely Response.



Dr. Block: Programs like this are definitely saving lives. And they are saving lives in actual terms of life and death. And they are saving lives in terms of positive lives for

children who could have had their lives ruined by early maltreatment.

Narrator: As we move forward, our passion and commitment to protect children and young people will continue to grow. We can find new ways to work together. We can bring our message of protection forward.

It is the responsibility of the adult to provide a safe environment for the youth and to protect children. It is also essential that children are given tools by which they can protect themselves and know how to say “no” if confronted with a dangerous situation. Catholic dioceses are responding to the issue of child sexual abuse by educating parents and also providing a separate age-appropriate safe environment training for adults, children and young people.

“The Protecting God’s Children® Program has brought a greater openness in our Diocese in talking about these issues. The videos in particular provide a good foundation for mature and honest discussion on the issues of sexual abuse within our society and how the Church can take a strong stand in protecting all people, especially our children. I am strongly convinced that this program has made a significant difference in our Diocese and will have an impact for many years to come.” —Archbishop Gregory Aymond

When adults understand the reality of child sexual abuse and know how to prevent incidents, they are more likely to act in a strong and effective manner in response to warning signs and problems.

From our own parishes and schools, we can reach out to other communities to share our success and help prevent tragedies.

This is the time, now and always to protect God's children. And it is all of God's children who need us to keep the promise alive.

"Hearing the truth about child sexual abuse is not easy, but to prevent this kind of abuse every adult must play a part. Once you know the warning signs and if you report them as soon as you see or hear them, then you are a protector of children and part of the solution to make a child's world a safer place." —Dr. Barbara Bonner

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