

Criteria for Recruiting and Selecting Safe Church Team Members

Ideally, at least one person from each of the churches will serve on the Safe Church Team (Team). In this way, each church shows their support for the Ministry.

Team size will range from 10-20 based on the number of participating churches in the classis or region. If the geographical size of the classis is large, the classis could consider two Teams, each one representing about one-half of the churches. Both Teams fall under the jurisdiction of the same classis. Or, if a regional Team is formed, it is a good idea for each classis served by the team to sign a memorandum of understanding regarding how they will work together in using and maintaining the Team.

A diverse Team includes men and women and should reflect the ethnic composition of the churches in the classis or region. A variety of individuals, professionals and non-professionals, should be considered for the team. Some professional groups to consider: teacher, nurse, social worker, psychologist, physician, attorney, licensed day care provider, police officer, accountant, business owner, personnel manager, etc. A pastor may serve on the Safe Church Team, although he should not serve on an advisory panel if it poses a conflict of interest. A survivor of abuse who has worked through a significant part of her or his healing could also be considered for the Team. In addition, a para-professional or non-professional person with a keen interest in justice issues or the dynamics of abuse may be considered.

A classis may appoint individuals who are not members of the Christian Reformed Church, yet have desirable expertise or experience to serve on a Safe Church Team. However, classis should acknowledge difficulty arising with accountability and liability insurance coverage.

All nominees to the Safe Church Team will not be equally informed about abuse. However, nominees should agree that abuse exists, abuse is harmful and sinful, and that the church has a responsibility to respond to abuse; to respond with caring compassion to those who have been victimized and with justice and accountability to those who have abused. Further, Team members should demonstrate a willingness to learn more about abuse within the church context.

If a committee of classis is forming the Team, they may choose to interview each person nominated to serve. The committee could devise a brief questionnaire to facilitate this interview or in place of the interview. During an interview, an informal discussion could cover the Safe Church Team mandates and the expected time commitment.

We recommend that people serve on the Team without terms of office. If a

rotation of members is used, the turnover reduces consistency and requires a constant training schedule. Education and support are ongoing activities of the Team. Team members trained to serve on a panel will have the greatest level of activity when an advisory panel is convened, which may occur once in 4 years. Therefore, their time commitment may be minimal.

There are important skills to look for when recruiting people to serve on a Team. Those skills include: good oral and written communication, a personal commitment to the mandate(s), ability to empathize, ability to confront when needed, awareness of personal and professional boundaries, ability to apply church polity to situations and ability to follow through on tasks. Further, people who function well as a team player, work objectively, and work by consensus demonstrate the skills that are needed.