

Why does my church need to be concerned with abuse?



➤ **Because it's there**

Abuse often remains hidden, so though you may not be aware of it, count on the fact that it is present to some extent in all of our church congregations. The effects of abuse can be devastating and long term for individuals, families and church communities. The harmful effects can extend to future generations. We are one Body, the Body of Christ. When one part hurts, the entire body suffers. To ignore such a pervasive problem is irresponsible.

➤ **Because our churches offer unique resources**

Faith can be affected by the experience of abuse and vice versa, with potential for great good and healing, or great hurt and harm. Our Lord and His Church can offer spiritual resources of faith, hope, love, power and grace, which are not available in other organizations. Mobilizing the resources that the Lord has given us such as people, funds and facilities, in partnership with others, can have a significant impact in the fight against abuse. We need to be involved in preventing and responding to abuse so that the Church can be all it was called to be, for the sake of the great Name of our Lord.

➤ **Because our churches can affect our culture**

Our churches can act as a powerful force either in reinforcing or in challenging cultural attitudes and behavior that provide a context for abuse. Recognizing the infinite value of each person created in the image of our Creator, promoting His values of justice, love, and respect can greatly enhance efforts to prevent abuse in the wider culture. In this way our churches have the opportunity to shine like stars in the darkness.