

Preparing for Disclosure



As members in the church hear sexual abuse being addressed from the front, even in introducing the challenge, there may be survivors who feel free for the first time to approach someone to share their story. If they do, that's an opportunity to care well. Participating in the challenge over the next year will help you thoroughly consider prevention and care, but we want to point you to resources to help if those conversations happen soon after launch Sunday.

The *Becoming a Church that Cares Well for the Abused* curriculum that you will complete in Step 5 will help you in this process. The handbook for the curriculum can be downloaded at churchcares.com and you can find corresponding videos there as well. It would be wise to take a few moments and familiarize yourself with some key parts in preparation for a survivor sharing their story:

Curriculum Lessons

- Lesson 3 – Ministry Responsibilities (p. 31)
- Lesson 4 – Ministry Partners (p. 45)
- Lesson 5 – Key Responses to Sexual Abuse (p. 63)
- Lesson 7 – What Happens When You Call CPS? (p. 93)
- Lesson 9 – Pastoral Care after Reporting: Reporting is not a Ministerial Handoff (p. 121)

Mandatory Reporting

Another important aspect of preparation is to familiarize yourself with your state's mandatory reporting laws for child abuse and for abuse disclosed by an adult that happened to them as a child. [Appendix A](#) (p. 181) in the *Becoming a Church that Cares Well for the Abused* curriculum shares reporting laws state by state. Be sure to look up your state's reporting requirements and make sure your leadership and Caring Well Team are familiar with them.

Additional Resources

- [Reporting Child Sexual Abuse](#) – This resource produced by the organization Darkness to Light will also help to answer questions about the reporting process.
- Hotline – “The Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline is available by phone 24/7 at 1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453). Childhelp is also not a reporting agency, but if you have questions about what is considered child abuse in your state, or what would happen if you made a Child Protective Services (CPS) report or went to the police about your concerns, they can answer them.”
- The following sections from the [Caring Well Report](#) are also helpful in caring for those who have been abused “Disclosure” (p. 30) and “Caring Well: How to Respond when Abuse Occurs” (p. 32).