Diocesan and Religious Order Review Boards

What every review board member should know

Presenters from the National Review Board:
Mr. Howard Healy
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Historical Background

- Bishop’s response in 2002 to sexual abuse crisis
  - Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People
  - Essential Norms

- Conference of Major Superior’s of Men’s Response
  - Instruments of Hope and Healing
  - Praesidium Standards
The Charter

Four main emphases

- To promote healing and reconciliation (Articles 1, 2, and 3)
- To guarantee an effective response (Articles 4-7)
- To ensure the accountability of our procedures (Articles 8-11)
- To protect the faithful in the future (Articles 12-17)

Established

- Bishops’ Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People (CPCYP)
- National Review Board
- Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection
Essential Norms

- Relationship to the Charter
- Particular law in the U.S. Church

Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons
Review Boards

Definition: What is it?

Main Tasks
- Assessment of allegations
- Suitability for Ministry
- Assessment of Policies and Procedures
Assessment of Allegations

- ALL allegations
- Who “takes” or receives
- Forwarded to the bishop
  - Review Board involvement from the beginning
- Not found to be “manifestly false or frivolous”
- Preliminary investigation
  - Outside investigator
- Issuance of Report
  - Based on the “preponderance of evidence”
- Bishop sends to Rome
Suitability for Ministry

- Proper screening for diocesan/religious order candidates for ordination
- Is Charter education included in seminary formation?
  - Is continuing education included in ongoing clergy formation?
- Making recommendations on boundary violations
- Having available support for any cleric or religious who self identifies unhealthy behaviors or thoughts
Assessment of Policies and Procedures

- Verify adherence to intentions of the Charter
- Make recommendations on improving diocesan policies and procedures
- Periodically review diocesan safe environment training program
- Review annual diocesan audit results
- Encourage parish/school audits
- Improving diocesan culture – making victim assistance and child protection core values
What Makes a good Review Board Member

- Strive for a diverse board
- Talk to other members
- Read the Charter, the Causes and Context Study, Nature and Scope Study
- Review most recent Annual Report
- Know your own diocesan policies and procedures and review board policies
  - Record keeping policies
- Participate in new member orientation
- What to expect from your diocese
- Know what to do
Do and Don’t

**DO**
- Determine as a board how to handle media requests
- Consider reading documents together as a board
- Participate in webinars and other trainings
- Review the Annual Report
- Understand the importance and helpfulness of parish/school audits
- Encourage your diocese to be as transparent as possible regarding Chartered priests
- Review your own diocesan annual audit and CARA survey

**DON’T**
- Individually engage with the media
- Individually respond if you receive an allegation from a victim/survivor or the general public
- Engage in a different process for different allegations
- Permit or authorize non-approved interested parties to investigate allegations
Review Board Deliberations

- Bishop may or may not be present
- No “one size fits all” method for review boards
- Encourage a thorough preliminary investigation with independent investigators
- Utilize consistent methods of investigating and reporting allegations
- Utilize probable cause as the norm for assessing allegations
- Issues that may occur
  - Complacency
  - Civility in deliberations
Review Boards of Religious Communities

- Safety Plans
- Praesidium Standards
Resources

- Resource Toolbox
- Child and Youth Protection online community
  - Contact Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection for access to both
    - scyp@usccb.org
- Diocesan personnel
  - Canon lawyer
  - Safe Environment Coordinator
  - Victim Assistance Coordinator
Questions?
Thank You