

Module G – Prevention, Deterrence, and Treatment

For Seminary Formation Faculty and
Administrators, Parishes and Dioceses

Prevention, Deterrence, and Treatment of Those Accused of Sexual Abuse

Main Sources of Data

Reports presented to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops by the John Jay College Research Team, The City University of New York*

- *The Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States, 1950-2010, March, 2011*
- *The Nature and Scope of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests and Deacons in the United States, 1950-2002, February 2004*

* The two reports are based on data supplied by 97 percent of U.S. archdioceses and dioceses on all clergy accused of sexual abuse of minors

A. Prevention Policies

A Complex Agenda

- Education: Initial and Ongoing
- Situational Crime Prevention:
Five Models

Complex Agenda for Prevention

- The priest-abuser population is heterogeneous
- It is not possible to identify most potential abusers with traditional psychological assessments
- It is not possible or desirable to implement extensive restrictions on the mentoring and nurturing relationships between minors and priests, given that most priests have not abused and are not likely to do so

Education, 1:

Initial Formation of Seminarians

Having had the experience of at least some human formation education was a critical factor in distinguishing between priests with allegations of abuse and those without allegations

- The Human Formation component of seminary programs has evolved over the past 40 years
 - Human Formation was recognized as valuable by priests in the John Jay Study
 - Its development was consistent with the decline in sexual abuse incidents

Education, 2: Ongoing Formation of Priests

- Ongoing formation is needed to enhance the integration of priestly identity and the tasks of pastoral ministry
 - Human and financial resources are essential to ensure that ongoing formation is available
 - Sabbaticals and other sources of renewal would provide opportunities for continuing education and rest, especially for diocesan priests who do not usually have such opportunities available to them
- For reasons of excessive workloads, lack of money, or other personal factors, not all priests choose to engage in ongoing formation

Ongoing Education and Renewal, 3: Importance for Priests

- The *Causes and Context* data indicate that abuse is most likely to occur at times of stress, loneliness, and isolation
 - Such situations triggered the desire in some priests to form inappropriate relationships
 - Most often such relationships were with adults, but sometimes with minors
 - As parish sizes increase and as some priests serve several remote parishes, stress often increases, sometimes resulting in greater isolation and loneliness and less likelihood of taking time off
- One step in reducing the likelihood of abuse at stressful and challenging times is to increase understanding of the consequences of ignoring these situations and trying to lighten the stress level

Situational Prevention Models

- These models take into account situational and social factors that could influence harmful behavior in the future
- Since new opportunities will arise and over time offenders will adapt and change their 'modus operandi', it is necessary to
 - Apply strategies that incorporate a general framework that can be adapted to analyze new situations using new techniques
 - Remain aware of new intervention strategies

Five Ways to Prevent Abuse by Implementing Situational Crime Prevention Models

1. ***Increase the effort*** it takes for priests to commit acts of abuse
 - Implement mandatory safe environment training to raise awareness among
 - Potential victims
 - Guardians
 - Potential abusers

Five Ways to Prevent Abuse, 2

2. *Increase the risks* by making it more likely that those who commit acts of abuse will be identified, and once identified, will have more to lose

- Increase the risk of getting “caught” by educating potential victims and guardians
- Enforce the “zero tolerance” policy for abusers, which makes the risk greater if one is recognized as an abuser
- Institute periodic evaluation of the performance of priests in dioceses so that questionable behavior will be more likely to be detected and controlled

Five Ways to Prevent Abuse, 3

3. *Reduce the rewards* by providing alternate outlets for close bonds with others

- Lessen the need for priests to develop social bonds with the adolescents they are mentoring
- Increase opportunities for priests to form social friendships and suitable bonds with age-appropriate persons

Five Ways to Prevent Abuse, 4

- 4. *Reduce provocations*** by diminishing the factors that may lead priests to abuse, such as stress
- Provide stress-reduction seminars after transitions into a new parish
 - Require ongoing formation, including opportunities to develop administrative and financial planning skills
 - Make available time for participation in priest support groups to decrease likelihood of isolation and stress

Five Ways to Prevent Abuse, 5

5. *Remove excuses* through education about what types of behavior are and are not appropriate with minors

- Eliminate, as far as possible, the ability of priests to use techniques of 'neutralization,' whereby they excuse and justify inappropriate behavior
- Techniques of neutralization often develop over time and after periods of stress or other negative experiences in work and life

B. Deterrence - Oversight and Accountability, 1: Time and Leadership

Changes in response to sexual abuse of minors by priests take time to become routine

- Such changes can be achieved only through transparency in reporting and dealing with sexual abuse, involving review boards, parishes, and dioceses
- With continued transparency and accountability mechanisms in place, changes can become institutionalized
- Change must come from the leaders of organizations, such as evidenced by communication from Pope Benedict XVI

Deterrence - Oversight and Accountability, 2: Steps in Developing Responses

- Acknowledge the importance of structures of accountability and transparency
- Implement and maintain in a timely way these and other structures, such as the safe environment and audit programs
- Ensure that transparency/accountability structures become routine, that is, that they become institutionalized as part of the ordinary practices and culture of the diocese

Deterrence - Oversight and Accountability, 3: Steps in Developing Responses

- Redefine and restructure responses according to each geographical and subcultural context
- Provide for international priests, who may be unfamiliar with the American context, special opportunities to participate in cultural learning programs that deal with topics related to sexuality and establishing suitable relationships

Deterrence -Oversight and Accountability, 4: Steps in Developing Responses

- Assure members that the Church is committed to respond to all incidents of sexual abuse
- Inform church members about the temporal distribution of sexual abuse incidents over the past sixty years and its recent significant decline
- Update church members about steps taken to achieve changes through the safe environment and audit programs and through gaining a better grasp of the problem by commissioning two studies about the sexual abuse problem

Deterrence - Oversight and Accountability, 5: Steps in Developing Responses

Transparency requires that the whole church community be engaged at all levels, including laity and clergy, in order to maintain vigilance in the prevention of the abuse of children

Decreased rates of clergy sexual abuse do not mean that less vigilance is acceptable since new forms of abuse, such as internet relationships and pornography, are steadily increasing

To prevent sexual abuse, don't let the guard down

C. Models of and Changes in Treatment for Sex Offenders, 1: Medical Models

- Early twentieth century treatments for sex offenders were either psychoanalytic or medical in nature
- Prior to the 1940s, many habitual sexual offenders were physically castrated, a practice continued throughout the century to a lesser degree for those sexual offenders who did not respond to psychotherapy

Models of and Changes in Treatment for Sex Offenders, 2: Behavioral Treatment

- Behavioral methods of treatment began emerging in the 1950s and 1960s
- Many researchers at this time believed that deviant sexual practices resulted from deviant sexual arousal, and therapeutic practices were therefore developed to modify deviant fantasies

Models of and Changes in Treatment for Sex Offenders, 3: Cognitive Behavioral Treatment

- In the early 1970s, treatments were expanded and the programs were made multimodal in nature by adding components such as social skills training
- In the 1980s, the therapeutic technique of relapse prevention was adapted to help sex offenders, and offenders were trained to recognize and manage their fantasies and behaviors
- In the 1990s, the use of the polygraph was added, which provided insight into the acts of offenders and indicated whether or not they were being truthful during the treatment programs

Models of and Changes in Treatment for Sex Offenders, 4: Professionalization of Treatment

- The current state of understanding about the treatment of sexual offenders is that sexual offending is the result of a complex matrix of social, psychological, and developmental problems
- Recent research has focused on the role of opportunity in offending, particularly in situations where abusers have developed mentoring or nurturing relationships with those whom they abuse

Initial Diocesan Response to Sexual Abuse Allegations, 1950-1989

Initial Diocesan Action	1950 – 1979	1980 – 1989
Reprimanded & returned to ministry	34.8	12.4
Referred for evaluation	33.0	50.7
Suspended	6.4	7.6
Administrative leave	6.0	8.9
Resigned or retired	5.2	4.8
Reinstated	3.0	1.7
Treatment	2.2	4.6
Other	5.7	6.9
No Action Taken	3.7	2.4

Reassignment and the Understanding of Relapse

- When church leaders discovered that priests who had received psychological treatment had subsequently committed new offenses, they began to challenge the premise that psychological treatment could address and change the behavior of priests who had sexually abused minors
- There is a clear difference in the abusive behavior of the priests who were sent to specialized sex offender treatment when compared to all priests accused of abuse by the end of 1990

Sex Offender Treatment for Catholic Priests after 1985

Treatment Type	Percent
Specialized S.O. treatment/clergy offenders	39.9
Specialized S.O. treatment/all offenders	11.2
General treatment program	14.5
Individual psychological counseling	14.1
Psychotherapist	5.5
Relapse prevention program	0.1
Evaluation (without treatment)	10.8
Spiritual counseling	0.7
Other	3.2
Total	100 %

Recommendations for Policy Changes, 1

The 1992 Policy on Priests and Sexual Abuse of Children stated:

[W]hen there is even a hint of such an incident

- investigate immediately
- remove the priest whenever the evidence warrants it
- follow the reporting obligations of the civil law
- extend pastoral care to the victim and the victim's family
- and seek appropriate treatment for the offender

Recommendations for Policy Changes, 2

- A commission of the Archdiocese of Chicago recommended that a priest involved in sexual misconduct with minors not be returned to parish ministry or other ministry with access to minors, although it left open the possibility of other nonparochial work following administrative leave and aftercare
- Other recommendations included a review board to assist the bishop in the evaluation of cases of abuse, a lay case manager to initiate an immediate process following an accusation, and a 24-hour hotline for victims to report incidents of abuse

Summary of Prevention, Deterrence and Treatment of Clergy Sexual Abuse

- Prevention
 - Education: Initial and Ongoing
 - Situational Prevention Models
- Deterrence
 - Oversight and Accountability
- Phases of Treatment and Policy Recommendations

Discussion Questions

- What components of the prevention models are most useful in your situation?
- Are other means of deterrence possible to prevent further abuse?
- To what extent are recommendations on education of young people, parishioners, and church leaders being implemented?
- Does the progression in treatment of sexual abuse ensure the safety of children and young people as much as it can?
- How can oversight be enhanced to prevent further sexual abuse?

Link to USCCB – <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/child-and-youth-protection/charter.cfm>

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