



**DIGNITY FOR ALL:
KCCRC SAFE CHURCH
TRAINING**

INTRODUCTION



This is to help you, as a leader, be aware of what abuse is, help prevent it, and understand your role to implement KCCRC's Safe Church policies.



Use with: *KCCRC Safe Church Policy*



More info: “*Responding to Abuse: A Toolkit for Churches*” www.crcna.org/safechurch

OUTLINE

Vision of KCCRC to be a safe church

What is abuse?

Harm done in church setting – why we focus on prevention

Know and Use KCCRC policies

VISION OF KCCRC SAFE CHURCH

KCCRC strives to be a healthy church where:

- ❖ The dignity of every person is respected, as an image-bearer of God
- ❖ Worship, spiritual growth, and inclusive, loving community are nurtured
- ❖ Members and visitors need not fear any kind of abuse; a culture of respect is evident at all times.
- ❖ Any incidents of abuse are handled with care, love, and justice, to promote restoration of right relationships and healing.



ABUSE HAPPENS—ALSO IN CHURCH

The prevalence of abuse in churches is no worse or better than other parts of society. We make a difference through awareness, prevention, and response.

Many individuals in church have experienced abuse; being alert to that and open to hear about it can be helpful to them.

Abuse thrives in secrecy and silence.

Consequences are devastating and long-lasting, especially in church circles. Healing takes time; it is helped by support from others in the church context.



THE ROLE OF ALL LEADERS

- Take steps to prevent abuse;
- Talk about it to break the culture of secrecy, silence, and shame
- Actively promote respect and empathy in your programs and relationships.
- Respond to those who have suffered abuse with love and compassion
- Take appropriate action on any allegations.
- Know and comply with KCCRC Safe Church policies.

FORMS OF ABUSE IN CHURCH

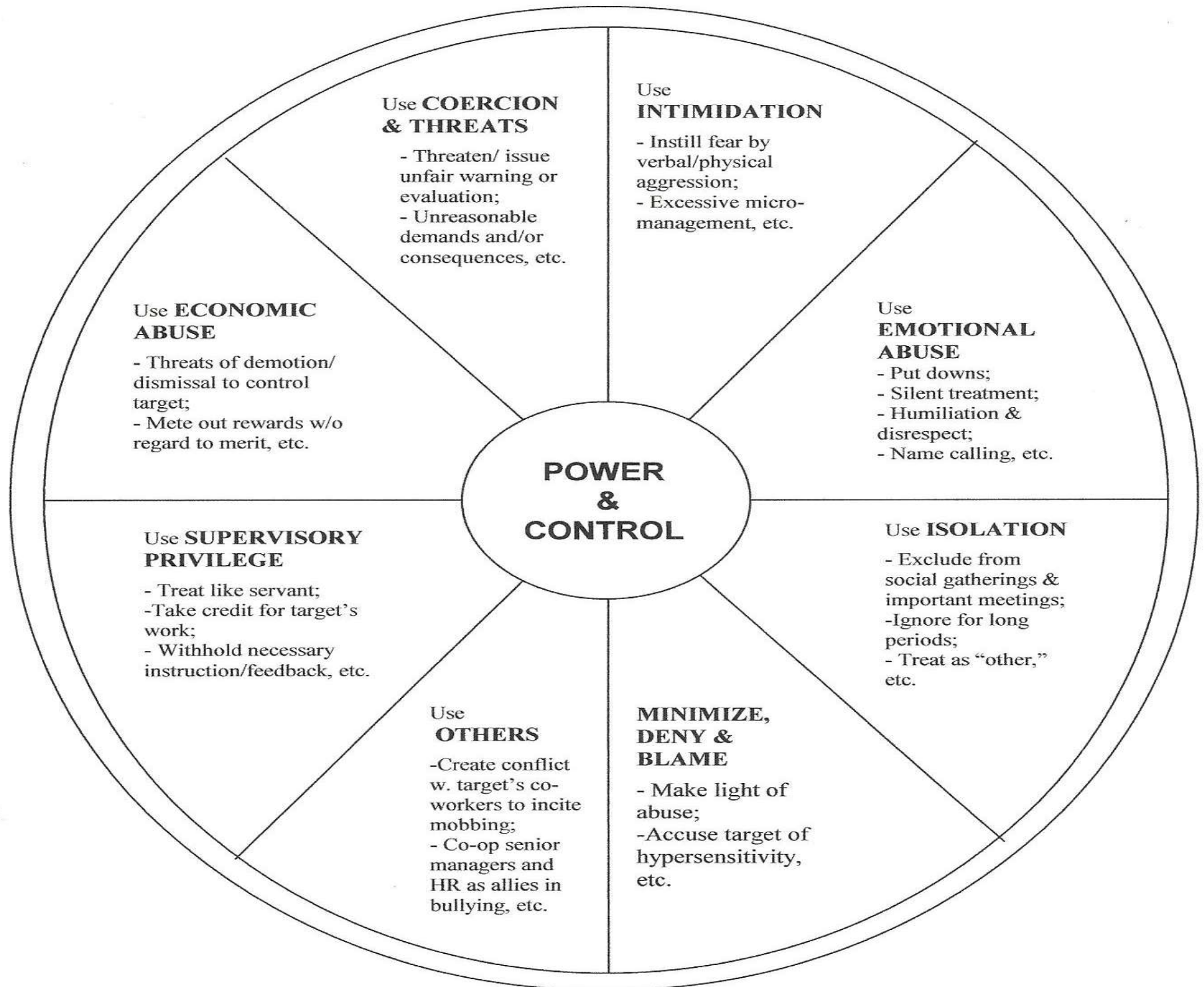
Abuse takes many forms.

Different forms of abuse often occur together.

At the root of abuse in church is misuse of a position, authority, or power that harms others.

Take a moment to look at the wheel of power and control on the next slide and identify types of abuse that you have experienced or witnessed.





WHAT IS ABUSE: SOME OF THE DEFINITIONS IN KCCRC POLICY

- **Abuse of Power:** Any use of power to harm another; misuse of position, authority, or influence within the church community.
- **Physical Abuse:** non-accidental act that causes pain or violates the dignity of another person
- **Emotional Abuse:** any attempt to control through words, threats, fear, intimidation, threats, fears
- **Sexual Abuse:** any sexual experience forced on one person by another
- **Harassment:** pattern of comment or vexatious comment or conduct known to be unwelcome.
- **Spiritual Abuse:** misuse of Scripture, God-talk, or office to control or dominate another
- Check all definitions in KCCRC policy, section 2

EXAMPLES OF PHYSICAL ABUSE:

Which of these behaviours are abuse?

- a) Slap on back of head
- b) Throwing a book or any item at someone
- c) Tight grip to arm, hair or other body part
- d) Kicking
- e) Slap to bottom
- f) Tickling children without consent

Answer: All of them

EXAMPLES OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Which of these are emotional abuse?

- a) “Don’t be stupid”
- b) “Are you an idiot?”
- c) “Are you sure you should be wearing that in public?”

Can you think of other examples?



EXAMPLES OF SEXUAL ABUSE: MORE THAN INTERCOURSE

- a) Stroking hair or any part of body
- b) Frontal hugs
- c) Prolonged hugs
- d) Suggestive leers
- e) Sexual exposure of body parts
- f) Kissing
- g) Pornography

INDICATORS OF ABUSE:

- Touching people inappropriately
- Avoiding a person or situation
- Withdrawn personality
- Drastic behaviour changes
- Low self esteem
- Delayed development
- Negative themes in art and writing



HARMS OF ABUSE - VICTIM

Abuse causes short and long-term harms:

- Loss of trust and self-confidence
- Feelings of shame, guilt, low self-worth
- Difficulty forming healthy relationships with others or God
- Long-term emotional, physical, spiritual impacts
- Contributes to depression, substance abuse, anxiety, self-harm, suicide

HARM OF ABUSE - CHURCH

Damage for the whole church includes:

- Undermining the mission to show the love of God
- Destroying trust within community
- Creating conflict between members who take sides
- Damage to credibility
- Legal liabilities and financial costs

PREVENTION: TOOLS IN KCCRC POLICY

- Leaders are appointed by council, with input from Safe Church team
- All youth leaders must have police checks – every 5 years
- Leaders read and sign Safe Church Policy and pledge to comply with Code of Conduct
- Basic educational training and regular reminders

PREVENTION: GENERAL POLICIES IN KCCRC TOOLKIT

Review the general policies that apply to you:

- Appropriate/Inappropriate Touch in church programs
- Two-person rule for programs
- Meeting place requirements: windows; public places
- Transportation
- On-line Safety, photos, social media
- Teach about abuse in age-appropriate ways

PREVENTION: DISCIPLINE POLICY

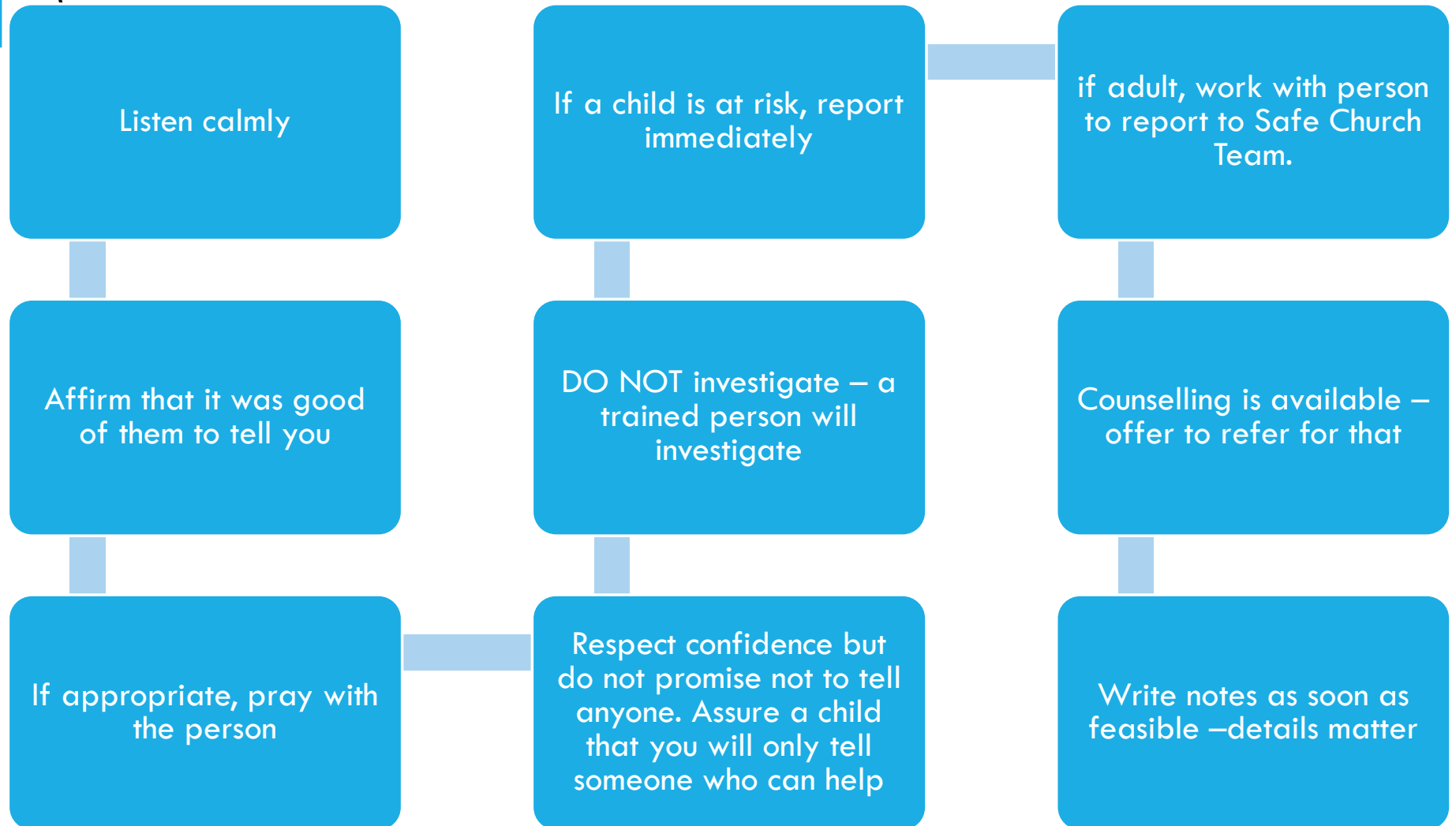
- Corporal punishment is not appropriate
- Abusive verbal reprimands and yelling are not permitted
- If young people misbehave, leaders should try to
 - redirect them with another activity
 - help them focus on other acceptable behaviours
 - separate them from others; limited time-outs
- Repeated disruptive behaviour should be discussed with director and parents. If needed, an extra aide should be provided.
- Abusive behaviour will be reported

PREVENTION: SPECIFIC PROGRAM

Read the policies that relate to your specific role:

- Nursery
- Church school (Sunday School)
- Code of Conduct for Youth Leaders
- Counselling and pastoral care meetings

STEPS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN SOMEONE REPORTS ABUSE TO YOU



10 REPORTING ABUSE

Purpose is to stop abuse, get help, and hold abusers accountable

1. Maintain confidentiality
2. Write down what happened as soon as possible
3. Do not confront perpetrator directly
4. If child is at risk, report to police or Children's Aid immediately.
5. Contact Safe Church lead
6. Think about spiritual support – prayer when appropriate. Follow up support as appropriate.

CONCLUSION

- Hold each other accountable
- Be vigilant and aware of risks
- Don't underestimate the far-reaching damage of abuse
- Keep up to date on issues relating to abuse

It is important as followers of Christ that our church is a safe place for all to worship and meet!