



GRACE

**Godly Response to Abuse
in the Christian Environment**

Safeguarding Training - Part 3

Understanding Offenders
and Their Tactics



Basic Offender Dynamics



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“Most offenders will deliberately establish themselves as the kind of person who wouldn’t do that kind of thing.”

- Dr. Anna Salter



"They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves."

Matthew 7:15



In ministries, abusers may exploit religion, trust, needs, and authority.



There is no common “profile”
of an offender.



"The grooming process is typically aimed at the intended child victims and those who are responsible for their wellbeing as well as the community that they operate in. Grooming is a constellation of otherwise innocent appearing behavior that is intended to give them ongoing access to children for sexual purposes, as well as, preventing discovery by others."

- Jim Clemente, FBI



Grooming as "Testing"



Do we have to treat everyone
with suspicion?

How Prevention Works



Practicing Prevention Skills



How did “Will”
appear to
members of the
community?



He was
calculating,
persistent,
and predatory.



What did "Will"
use to gain
access?



His ability to gain access to this vulnerable child was based on deception, a double life, and trust we have in a church community.



What defenses
served her well
protecting her
son?



Essential Prevention Skills

- Listen to your intuition (your “gut”)
- Be vigilant with isolated settings
- Talk with someone trusted about concerns
- Notice when someone doesn’t respect boundaries (personal or organizational) - touch, appropriate language, isolation, etc.
- Take appropriate action, even before you fully know what is happening.



Abusers Adapt their Tactics

- Isolation (including isolated communication like texting)
- Focused attention that tests boundaries
- Touch (e.g. progression or in isolation)
- Sexual language, jokes, stories
- Secrecy (gifts, alcohol, money)
- Manipulation and deception
- Entitlement and anger (e.g. boundaries)



Common Offender Distortions

- Pretense: education, hygiene, medical treatment, helping
- Deceptions: misunderstanding, mistake, accident, false allegation
- Excuses: marriage or alcohol/medication, stress, child



Adult Tactics Against Adults - It's not "an affair" in a power structure.

- Spirituality, authority, intimacy, and care are weaponized
- Similar testing for vulnerabilities: isolation, circumstances (e.g. grief, counseling)
- Listen to your gut, especially if you feel guilty, or there is testing of boundaries - progression, unexpected (e.g. isolation, intimacy)



Upholding Boundaries

Those in positions of power and trust
are responsible and able to respect
appropriate boundaries.



Church System



Recognizing Common Tactics - DARVO
Deny, Attack, Reverse Victim and Offender

- Dr. Jennifer Freyd



Denial

- "I never said that."
- "I don't know where you are getting this from. That is not what happened."
- "You are getting upset about nothing. That wasn't what you think. It was no big deal."
- "He would never do anything like that."



Attack

- “You just like being in charge of everything. You are not submitting to your leaders.”
- “You are making that up. I will not allow you to gossip like this.”
- “Is this going to be a problem for you? If it is, you probably should think about whether this is the church for you.”
- “If you don’t accept the Bible’s teaching, you need to resign.”



Reverse the Victim and the Offender

- "Leaders will always have some who target them for criticism and abuse."
- "I have given so much to them and they are repaying my kindness with this betrayal."
- "She is having mental health issues. She is not stable right now and she is lashing out to hurt me. She is using this allegation to hurt me."
- "If this was legitimate, why didn't they come to me first like Matthew 18 says? They are trying to run me off."





Accountability and Forgiveness



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What about forgiveness?



Abusers and their allies
often use “forgiveness”
to manipulate others.



Offenders first of all
need accountability,
not comfort.
Remember the
example of Jesus.



"If your brother sins,
rebuke him, and if he
repents, forgive him"

Luke 17:3



Unrepentant abusers
should not be welcome
among vulnerable sheep.





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Safeguarding Training

Your Role in Prevention
and Response

Protecting the vulnerable is a
matter of discipleship.



We all play a role in upholding the boundaries of the policy.



When do we speak up about a concern or a policy violation?



Speak up when there is a policy violation or other concern.



Do you know who to talk
to about concerns?

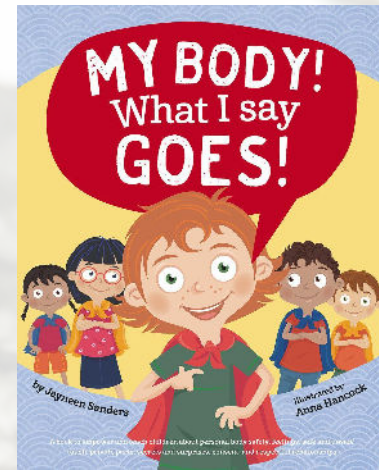
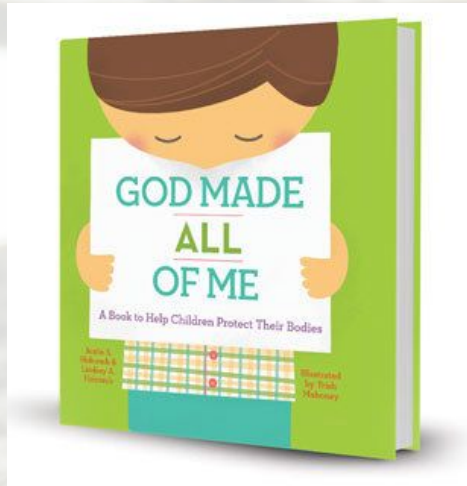




Educating Children



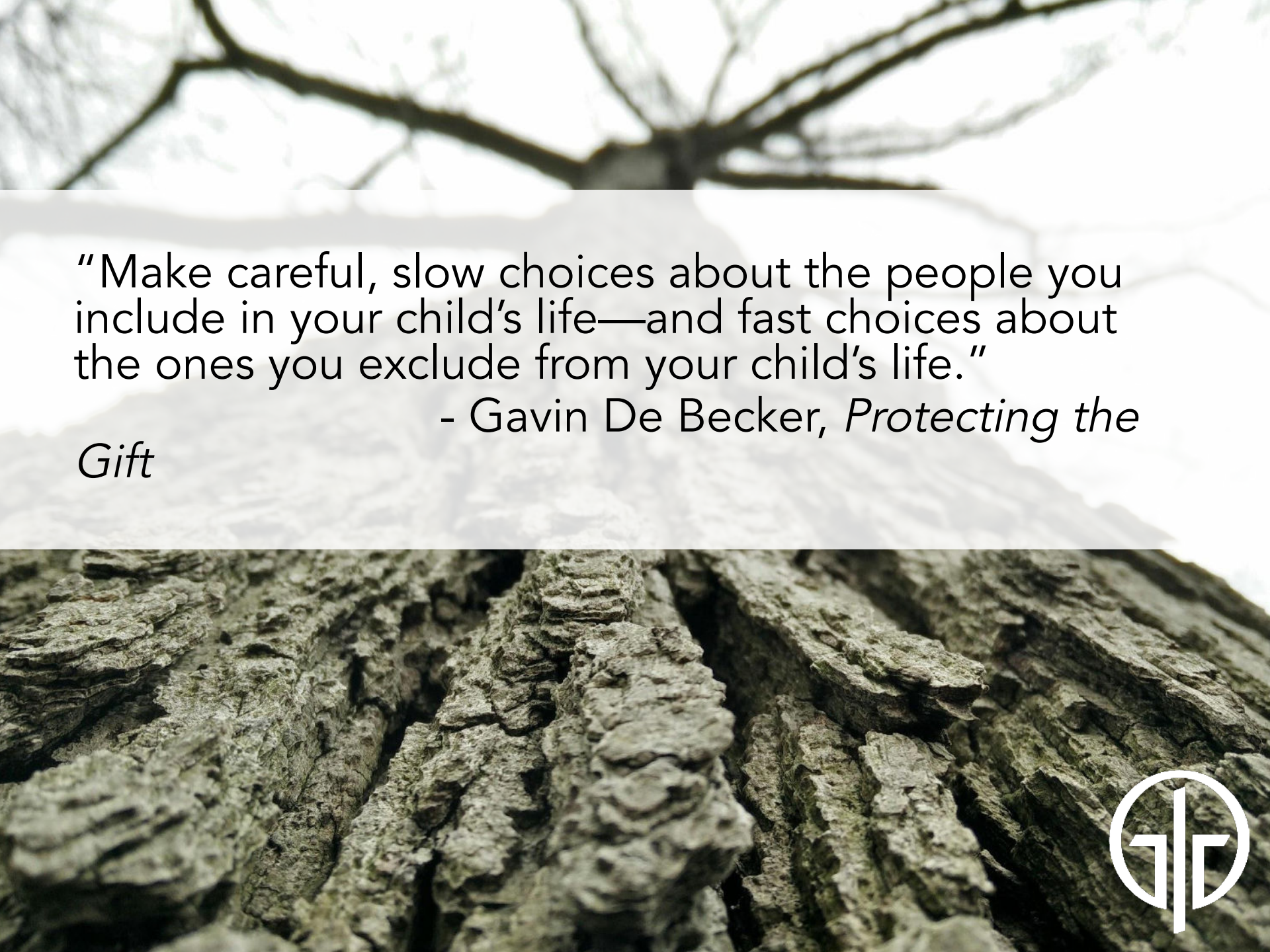
Educating Children



Teach kids:

- God made my body good
- Keep private parts private
- Anatomically Correct Names of private parts are important
- It's ok to say no!
- If someone touches, shows privates, tricks you it is not your fault
- Threats, bribes, and the difference between secrets and surprises
- Safe people - tell and keep telling until someone helps
- Telling is never tattling. We always need to tell when someone is getting hurt. You will not get in trouble, we will help you.





"Make careful, slow choices about the people you include in your child's life—and fast choices about the ones you exclude from your child's life."

- Gavin De Becker, *Protecting the Gift*



The background of the slide is a photograph of a tree trunk with rough, textured bark. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is overlaid on the upper portion of the image, containing the text. In the bottom right corner, there is a white circular logo containing a stylized 'G' and 'P' symbol.

Caregivers:

- Address “roaming” and isolated areas
- Plan ahead
- Talk about boundary expectations and give concrete examples
- Speak up about concerns



Reporting Child Abuse



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REPORT. DON'T INVESTIGATE.

Some adults in Virginia have a legal obligation to report child abuse and neglect.

All Christians have an ethical obligation to report child abuse and neglect.



REPORT. DON'T INVESTIGATE.

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

Emergencies: Call 911

Authorities can ensure the
immediate safety of a child and
get medical attention if needed.



REPORT. DON'T INVESTIGATE.

Culpeper Human Services Child Protective
Services Hotline: 540-825-9073
Virginia State Child Protective Services
(CPS) Hotline 800-552-7096

Also Call Local Law Enforcement

VA Mandated Reporters:
<https://vacps.dss.virginia.gov/VACPSWeb/>



REPORT. DON'T INVESTIGATE.

Reporting Vulnerable Adult Abuse
Culpeper Human Services Adult Protective Services
Hotline: 540-825-9073

Also Call Local Law Enforcement
Virginia 24/7 Hotline: 888-832-3858



REPORT.
DON'T INVESTIGATE.

Report online exploitation of children:
Cyber Tipline
800-843-5678
www.CyberTipline.org





REPORT.
DON'T INVESTIGATE.

Common Questions about Reporting





REPORT.
DON'T INVESTIGATE.

Shouldn't we investigate before
reporting to make sure abuse has taken
place?



REPORT.
DON'T INVESTIGATE.

Couldn't reporting
destroy a family?

POLICE



REPORT.
DON'T INVESTIGATE.

What if I'm not sure?



REPORT.
DON'T INVESTIGATE.

Can I get in trouble if I'm wrong?



REPORT.
DON'T INVESTIGATE.

What if the offender is a minor?



REPORT. DON'T INVESTIGATE.

- Report internally to leaders only after the external report
- Do not inform the family if the alleged offender is in the family or unknown
- Cooperate fully with the investigation
- Leaders must assess the possibility of other victims and take protective measures
- Focus on the vulnerable, not the institution
- "Unfounded" doesn't mean "Innocent."



Common Reporting Categories:

1. Witness/Discover Abuse
2. Disclosure of Abuse
3. Reasonable Suspicion



Witness/Discover Abuse

- Find child abuse materials ("child pornography")
- See the abuse of a child
- Discover sexually suggestive or explicit text messages.



Disclosure is a Process

- Disclosure is often a process
- Children will "test the waters"
- Often begins with something small:
"I don't like _____"
"I don't want to go."



Normal Disclosure Behavior:

- Non-disclosure
- Delayed disclosure
- Partial disclosure
- Accidental disclosure
- Unconvincing disclosure
- Recantation (about 1 in 4)



Normal Disclosure Behavior:

- Ask open-ended questions
- Do not press for details (but it is ok to ask "Who?" or "What happened?")
- Do not ask leading questions: "Was it _____ person?" "Did he touch you there?"
- Do not ask, "Are you sure?"



Disclosures of Abuse

- "I'm scared. Daddy gets mad and hits me."
- "Joey likes to touch penises together."
- "Mom said I get no food today."
- A teen tells you that their friend told them they "slept" with an adult.
- An adult or teen admits to abuse.



Reasonable Suspicion - Physical Abuse

- A suspicious bruise/wound without an explanation
- Pattern bruise/wound (hand slap or hit with an object)
- Defensive wounds



Reasonable Suspicion - Sexual Abuse

- A 5 year old demonstrates knowledge of oral sex or is acting out sexually with another child beyond what is developmentally typical
- A child returns from camp with sharp behavior change - is withdrawn, and has started wetting the bed.
- A teen is spending time tutoring with a teacher and you discover emotionally intimate chats.



Potential Physical Indicators of Sexual Abuse

- Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing
- Injuries (e.g. bruises, tearing, bleeding), itching, or swelling in the genital, vaginal, or anal area
- Difficulty, pain, or blood in the genital area when walking, sitting, or using the bathroom
- Discharge from the penis or vagina
- Promiscuity and early sexual activity
- Urinary tract infections, yeast infections, STDs
- Pregnancy



Reasonable Suspicion - Neglect

- Consistently dirty or has severe body odor
- Beggars, steals, or hoards food or complains frequently of hunger
- Untreated illness, injuries, health (e.g., unfilled cavities) or serious educational needs
- Is often left inappropriately unsupervised



Notice behavioral signs that might apply to multiple forms of abuse:

- Sudden changes in behavior
- Sudden drop in grades
- Fear toward a person or type of person or situation
- Nightmares or trouble sleeping
- Anxiety and hyperactivity
- Depression
- Eating disorders or self-harm
- Acting out sexually
- Unexplained stomach pain



You are not alone.
Seek help if you have
questions or need support.





Responding to Adult Abuse



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REPORT. DON'T INVESTIGATE.

After a report or knowledge of potential abuse, a safety team and/or leaders must:

1. Assess safety
2. Draw lines of accountability
3. Care for survivors
4. Seek answers from support resources and organizations



Practice Self Care





Q & A



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