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RAISING AWARENESS, PREVENTING SEXUAL
ABUSE, PROMOTING HEALTHY BOUNDARIES,
BRINGING ABOUT JUSTICE AND HEALING

UM SEXUAL ETHICS

A Ministry of the GENERAL COMMISSION ON THE STATUS AND ROLE OF WOMEN of The United Methodist Church (UMC)

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Council of Bishops

The United Methodist Church



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 23, 2018

United Methodist leaders respond to #metoo and #churchtoo movement

Over the recent weeks and months, and continuing on a seemingly daily basis, the media have been saturated with stories of persons coming forward with allegations of sexual misconduct perpetrated by individuals in positions of power and authority. The pervasiveness of the power imbalance is a part of every story being told. Responses have ranged from immediate termination of employment of the accused and bribery for silence to invitations for victims to feel shame.

The Council of Bishops together with the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women reaffirm the core beliefs found in The United Methodist Church's Social Principles which clearly state, "sexual harassment must be understood as an exploitation of a power relationship and interfering with the moral mission of the Church."

Further we recognize "sexual assault as wrong no matter the circumstances", and "among women and men, [we] reject the erroneous notion [that] one gender is superior to another." Further, our General Rules, founded by John Wesley direct us to do no harm and do good in every possible way at all times. The sin of sexual misconduct must be named by the Church at every level of ministry. Further, we must confront the environment of courser public dialog and discourse that provides license and cover for sexual harassment, abuse and assault.

We acknowledge that the Church is also a place where sexual misconduct happens when persons in power positions choose to abuse their power. The stories are all too similar. Alleged victims are often reluctant to come forward fearing they will not be believed or they will experience retaliation and the decision to report will be held against them. Sexual misconduct is a symptom of a systemic problem within our Church and society where patriarchy flourishes.

The Church is a place for spiritual growth. Unfortunately, spiritual violence happens every time a person experiences sexual misconduct within the Church. Nothing excuses this behavior.

In November 2017, before the most recent flurry of stories came forward, the Council of Bishops affirmed, through its members, renewed commitment to addressing the

systemic causes of sexual misconduct and abuse of power. Upon invitation, the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women provided two training sessions to the Council during their recent meeting on topics of sustaining integrity in ministry and response to sexual misconduct.

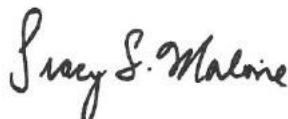
The Council of Bishops is committed to leading The United Methodist Church in the prevention of sexual misconduct, to offering healing to the victims, and to finding paths for Christ's love to be shown to the perpetrator while maintaining standards of accountability.

The Council of Bishops joins with The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women to strongly encourage and support the reporting of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment allegations within the Church. Our denomination's website, www.umsexualethics.org offers information and a toll free, confidential number for support through the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women.

To the extent of our ability, we pledge to do the right thing in every complaint received, including listening well to hear the story and developing a response which holds persons accountable and offers healing for all affected.



Bishop Bruce R. Ough
President
Council of Bishops
of The United Methodist Church



Bishop Tracy Malone
President of the Board
General Commission on the Status and Role of Women of The United Methodist Church



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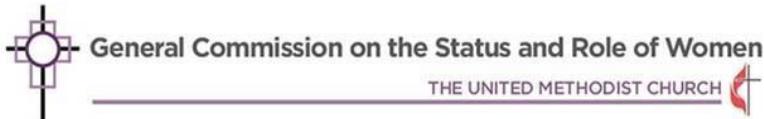
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Restorative justice emphasizes a right relationship with God, self, and community. When such relationships are violated or broken through **sexual misconduct**, opportunities are created to make things right. When allegations of misconduct are reported in The United Methodist Church, we are asked to respond in ways which encourage restorative justice, by promoting accountability and healing, in every situation.

Helpful Resources

Help for victims, families, and those accused:

UMSexualEthics.org

Congregational Resources:

[Resources for United Methodist Congregations](#)

[Adultsabusedbyclergy.org gcfa.org/administrative-and-judicial-procedures-handbook](#)

Safe Sanctuaries® Resources:

[Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in the Church](#)

[Getting Started](#)

[Talking to Your Congregation](#)

[Annual Conference Contacts](#)

The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women

For additional information, contact Becky Posey Williams at 312-346-4900 or email
at, bwilliams@gcsrw.org

UMSexualETHICS

Raising awareness,
Preventing sexual abuse,
Promoting healthy boundaries,
Bringing about justice and healing

<http://umsexualethics.org> presents
power and is a betrayal
of sacred trust. The UMC defines sexual misconduct as a continuum of behaviors that includes sexual harassment which is the creation of a hostile or abusive working environment resulting from discrimination on the basis of gender. *2012 Book of Resolutions ¶2044*

You May Have Experienced Sexual Misconduct If:

- » An incident with a ministerial leaders makes you feel uncomfortable or confused
- » You receive inappropriate personal gifts from a ministerial leader.
- » Your counseling session with a ministerial leader focuses on their needs and issues, especially details of their intimate relationships.
- » A ministerial leader invites you out for intimate, social occasions
- » A ministerial leader touches you in a confusing, uncomfortable, or upsetting way.
- » A ministerial leader sends you emails, instant, and/or text messages with sexual overtures
- » A ministerial leader uses theological rationale for questionable conduct.

If You Believe You Have Experienced Sexual Misconduct:

DOWNLOAD THIS POSTER:

<http://umsexualethics.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/GCSRW-Sexual-Ethics-Flyer-0420105-Crops.pdf>

...to STOP the behavior

and leave the situation

- » Remember, you are not to blame
- » Document incidents by keeping and saving a record of dates, times, places, and witnesses of incidents
- » Save emails, letters, cards, voicemail messages, text messages, receipts, or notes.
- » Share your feelings of hurt, betrayal, confusion, anxiety, or fear with someone you trust
- » Remember you are not the only person to whom this has happened.

Reporting Sexual Misconduct of a Person in Ministerial Leadership:

- » The UMC encourages you to file a complaint if you believe a sexual boundary is violated.
- » Submit the complaint in writing, signed and dated, to your Bishop or District Superintendent
- » You may also contact GCSRW's confidential, toll-free number 1800-523-8390 for support
- » For more information, visit www.gcsrw.org or www.umsexualethics.org



The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women In The United Methodist Church

77 W Washington Street, Suite 1500
Chicago, IL 60602

www.umsexualethics.org

800-523-8390

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Sexual misconduct at church: What every member should know

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A UMC.org Feature by Joe Lovino*

June 9, 2015

It is despicable.

News stories appear of a prominent Christian accused of fondling children. A denomination reports their historic mishandling of sexual misconduct cases. A pastor in town resigns and whispers circulate about an "affair."

We would like to believe these things only happen in other churches; that our house is pristine. Sadly, that is not the case.

United Methodists have committed acts of sexual misconduct. Adults have been sexually harassed by their pastor. Children in our care have been abused. Staff members have viewed pornographic material on their church computer.

When it happens congregations are divided, families devastated, and careers derailed.

A SIGNIFICANT PROBLEM

"Harassment is still a significant problem: well over three-fourths of the clergy (men and women) and half of the laywomen had experienced sexual harassment in the Church (about one third of laymen)."

*The Book of Resolutions
of The United Methodist Church 2012
¶2044 (emphasis added)*

See this webpage for yourself:

www.umc.org/what-we-believe/sexual-misconduct-at-church-what-every-member-should-know

In Some States, Clergy



Misconduct is a Crime..

It's A Crime, Not An Affair

State Laws Criminalize Clergy Sexual Relations with Congregant

Fiduciary duty refers to the responsibility of licensed caregivers (doctors, therapists, lawyers, social workers, etc.) to "do no harm." Society's expectation of these caregivers is that they will attend to the needs of those in their care.

Caregivers are prohibited by [state criminal statutes](#), [fiduciary duty laws](#) and by [codes of ethics](#) from exploiting their clients or patients to meet their own emotional and psychological needs.

- Bradley Toben and Kris Helge. "Sexual Misconduct of Clergypersons with Congregants or Parishioners: Civil and Criminal Liabilities and Responsibilities." This article is posted on the Baylor University Clergy Sexual Misconduct Study website under [Legislation Materials](#).

Only thirteen states and the District of Columbia have penal statutes that, in at least some circumstances, support the criminal prosecution of clergypersons engaged in sexual misconduct with congregants or parishioners.

These statutes, enacted by Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Mexico, North Dakota, Texas, South Dakota, Utah, Wisconsin and the District of Columbia turn on various linguistic formulations, including, most commonly, the specification that the misconduct occur within the confines of the counseling relationship.

For examples of how some cases have been handled in the courts, see [excerpts](#) below.

Ministers, pastors, priests and rabbis are often the first choice for those seeking emotional as well as spiritual assistance. Their role as counselors gives them fundamentally the same responsibility to those in their care as therapists have to their current or former clients.

- Nicholas Bakalar. "Two paths: Religion and psychiatry." [The New York Times](#) (September 18, 2007).

http://www.adultsabusedbyclergy.org/statelaws.html#State_laws

KEY BOD PARAGRAPHS:

2044 Sexual Misconduct Within Ministerial Relationship (BOR 2016, pg. 776)

- Sacred Trust, Power, and Responsibility
- Definitions: Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Harassment, Sexual Abuse, Sexualized Behavior •
- Ministerial Role of Leadership

Administrative Fair Process (BOD 2016, pp. 312-317)

- Judicial complaints: complaints which are chargeable offenses (BOD 2016 ¶2702.1)
- Complaints must be written, signed statement
- Upon receipt of complaint, Bishop shall notify chairperson of the BOOM
- 90 days allowed for supervisory response process (one 30 day extension possible)
- If complaint resolution is not achieved in 90 days, Bishop shall either:
 1. Dismiss the complaint with consent of the cabinet giving reasons in writing
 2. Refer matter to the counsel for the church as a complaint
- New term in BOD: Abeyance – A complaint may be held in abeyance due to matter being litigated in civil court. (BOD 2016, ¶362.1g) Complaint must be reviewed every 90 days by the Bishop and BOOM.

Mandate to provide for healing (BOD 2016, ¶362.1b, f; 2701.4c)

- Three roles of bishop or designee (often a district superintendent) handling a complaint of clergy sexual misconduct:
 1. Administrative: Fair process, follow procedures, advocate for all parties
 2. Supervisory: Clergy accountability, pastoral appointment, disciplinary measures and/or behavioral covenant for clergy
 3. Pastoral: Promote healing for all parties
- *The Discipline* also allows for the use of a Response Team to provide pastoral care when handling and following-up on a complaint: the Bishop may select “persons with qualifications and experience in assessment, intervention, or healing” to assist during the supervisory response. (¶362.1b)
- “The United Methodist Church commends the use of Response Teams in case of sexual misconduct by ministerial leaders and urges judicatory leaders to train and employ them.” (BOR, 2043, pp. 110-113) •
- Provide advocates/support person for alleged primary victim(s), for the accused, and for families involved.
- Use Response Team to facilitate congregational healing through processing feelings and thoughts.
- Provide visibility of Bishop or District Superintendent to convey official communications to congregation.
- Provide debriefing following a congregational intervention.

COMPLAINT PROCESS

Refer to 2016 Book of Discipline for specifics

Bishop contacts protective services if victim is a child or vulnerable adult

BISHOP INITIATES OR RECEIVES WRITTEN & SIGNED COMPLAINT
Supervisory Response Begins (¶ 362)
(90 day time period; extendable for 30 days)

Bishop informs BOOM Chair a complaint has been received and the general nature of complaint (¶ 362.1b)

BISHOP (or Designee) INTERVIEWS COMPLAINANT
may have support person present (¶ 362.1b)

BISHOP (or Designee) INTERVIEWS RESPONDENT
may have support person present (¶ 362.1b)

BISHOP DECIDES *

Just Resolution Process may begin anytime in the process
(¶ 362.1c)

Dismiss with consent of Cabinet; insufficient evidence
(¶ 362.1e(1))

Supervisory follow-up and healing at any point in process (¶ 362.1f)

Refer to Counsel for Church (appointed by Bishop)
(¶ 362.1e(2); 2704.2a; 2708.7)

Counsel for Church Prepares and Signs Complaint (¶ 2704.2b)

Refer to Committee on Investigation
(¶ 2704.2; 2706) **

Return to Bishop for dismissal or referral for administrative action or Just Resolution (¶ 2706.5c)

Prepares/signs bill of charge

Trial (¶ 2707-11)

Appeal (¶ 2715-16)

Suspension during process (clergy retain rights in ¶ 1334 while on suspension)

* ¶ 1362.1d / By Bishop with recommendation of BOOM Executive Committee; up to 120 days

** ¶ 12704.2c / By Bishop on recommendation of Committee on Investigation

Created by The Great Plains Conference

DS RESPONSE WHEN CLERGY PERSON IS ALLEGED VICTIM

2016 *Book of Discipline* ¶605.9

1. The DS will determine/encourage the clergy person to have someone they know and trust accompany them to the meeting with DS.
2. The clergy person's story will be heard.
3. The clergy person will be affirmed for coming forward with information.
4. If the clergy person has not already written a formal complaint, the DS will explain the process for filing a formal complaint, including what type information is helpful to be in the written complaint. The DS will explain what will happen upon receipt of the complaint by the Bishop. They should know the accused will be informed of the complaint.
5. The clergy person will be asked what she/he would like to see happen now that they have shared this information.
6. The clergy person can expect to be kept informed in a timely manner of the next steps in the process.
7. The clergy person can expect to be offered the name of a person who would walk alongside them through this process.
8. The clergy person can expect to be informed that retaliation of any kind, will not be tolerated.

Restorative justice emphasizes a right relationship with God, self, and community. When such relationships are violated or broken through **sexual misconduct**, opportunities are created to make things right. When allegations of misconduct are reported in The United Methodist Church, we are asked to respond in ways which encourage restorative justice, by promoting accountability and healing, in every situation. The following short list is offered as suggestions when responding to sexual misconduct.

10 WAYS TO RESPOND AND PROMOTE HEALING

1. Be **open** to receiving the complaint. Stay aware of any resistance you may have and understand its source.
2. Set aside **undistracted time** to hear the individuals' stories.
3. **Show up** fully and listen attentively. Be able to tell the person what you have heard disclosed.
4. **Affirm** the person's decision to come forward with the complaint and/or cooperation in the process.
5. **Explain** the process. Give a written outline of what to expect.
6. Explain the option and importance of having a **support person** walk alongside parties throughout the process. Offer to give names of trained persons for consideration and **follow up** to encourage this assignment.
7. Encourage and offer resources for **professional counseling**. Explain how payment will be managed on behalf of the church.
8. Deploy a trained **Response Team** for congregational and staff support/healing.
9. Attend to the congregation. Be **transparent** in a message revealing a complaint of an alleged chargeable offense of a sexual nature has been received by the bishop's office. Explain the process including status of clergy and the name of the interim pastor if one is being appointed.
10. Assign a support person for the **interim pastor**.

The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women

For additional information, contact Becky Posey Williams at 312-346-4900 or email at,
bwilliams@gcsrw.org

THE CONVERSATION

Academic rigor, journalistic flair

When sexual assault victims speak out, their institutions often betray them

January 11, 2018 6:41am EST

Institutional betrayal can lead to real psychological and physical harm. Aimor1992/shutterstock.com

When sexual assault victims speak out, their institutions often betray them

January 11, 2018 6:41am EST

A 27-year-old medical resident in general surgery is sexually harassed by two men – the chief resident and a staff physician at the hospital. She feels trapped. When one of the men's actions escalates to assault, she struggles to find the strength and courage to report it.

When she finally does, will the outcome harm her even more?

The story, a fictional composite based on real accounts in our research, is agonizingly familiar. The outcome is often worse. When sexual harassment and assault occur in the context of an institution – a school, the military, a workplace – the behavior of institutional leaders can become a powerful force in how the victim fares.

From Susan Fowler's poor treatment by Uber's human resources department to the silence of non-abusive men in Harvey Weinstein's orbit, our most powerful institutions often act without courage.

Over 25 years, my students and others have amassed a substantial body of empirical work revealing the real psychological and physical harm that institutions can do to those they betray.

However, if institutions want to do the hard work, they can help victims and prevent violence in the first place – by choosing courage instead of betrayal.

How betrayal harms health

My colleagues and I first introduced the term institutional betrayal in 2007, and have since explored it further, including in a book, "Blind to Betrayal."

Institutional betrayal is harm an institution does to those who depend upon it. This betrayal can take the form of overt policies or behaviors, such as discriminatory rules or genocide.

Author



Jennifer J. Freyd
Professor of Psychology, University of Oregon

Harm can also mean failing to do that what is reasonably expected of the institution, such as not providing relief to disaster victims or failing to respond effectively to sexual violence. For instance, some victims of assault are punished or even demoted or fired for reporting the assault to their institution.

In our studies, we found that more than 40 percent of college student participants who were sexually victimized in an institutional context did also report experiences of institutional betrayal.

These power ratios between harasser and victim can be quite significant, depending on the victim's status. While the medical resident's issues in our first example are deeply troubling, she may have more leverage to seek justice than a hotel or restaurant worker who is the daily and unrelenting target of harassment.

My work with clinical psychologist Carly Smith at Penn State shows that institutional betrayal can cause both emotional and physical health problems, even for those who have experienced similar levels of trauma from interpersonal betrayal.

One study found that institutional betrayal exacerbates symptoms associated with sexual trauma, such as anxiety, dissociation and sexual problems.

Other researchers have found similar effects. For instance, military sexual trauma survivors who have also experienced institutional betrayal have higher rates of PTSD symptoms and depression than those who have not experienced it. Perhaps most alarming, the survivors with institutional betrayal experiences had higher odds of attempting suicide.

In another study, we discovered that institutional betrayal is associated with physical health problems, such as headaches, sleep problems and shortness of breath.

Institutional courage

What can we do to prevent and address institutional betrayal? The antidote is something my colleagues and I call "institutional courage."

The details of institutional courage depend to some extent on the type of institution involved, but there are 10 general principles that can apply across most institutions.

1. Comply with criminal laws and civil rights codes.

Go beyond mere compliance. Avoid a check-box approach by stretching beyond minimal standards of compliance and reach for excellence in non-violence and equity.



Anonymous surveys can help an institution honestly assess its work environment. Chatchai Kitsetsakul/shutterstock.com

2. Respond sensitively to victim disclosures.

Avoid cruel responses that blame and attack the victim. Even well-meaning responses can be harmful by, for instance, taking control away from the victim or by minimizing the harm. Better listening skills can also help institutions respond sensitively.

3. Bear witness, be accountable and apologize.

Create ways for individuals to discuss what happened to them. This includes being accountable for mistakes and apologizing when appropriate.

4. Cherish the whistleblower.

Those who raise uncomfortable truths are potentially the best friends of an institution. Once people in power have been notified about a problem, they can take steps to correct it. Encourage whistleblowing through incentives like awards and salary boosts.

5. Engage in a self-study.

Institutions should make a regular practice of asking themselves if they are promoting institutional betrayal. Focus groups and committees charged with regular monitoring can make all the difference.

6. Conduct anonymous surveys.

Well-done anonymous surveys are a powerful tool for disrupting institutional betrayal. Employ experts in sexual violence measurement, use the best techniques to get meaningful data, provide a summary of the results and talk openly about the findings. This will inspire trust and repair.

We developed a tool called the Institutional Betrayal Questionnaire. First published in 2013, the questionnaire probes a company's employer-employee work environment to assess vulnerability to potential problems, the ease or difficulty of reporting such issues and how complaints are processed and handled.

7. Make sure leadership is educated about research on sexual violence and related trauma.

Teach about concepts and research on sexual violence and institutional betrayal. Use the research to create policies that prevent further harm to victims of harassment and assault.

8. Be transparent about data and policy.

Sexual violence thrives in secrecy. While privacy for individuals must be respected, aggregate data, policies and processes should be open to public input and scrutiny.

9. Use the power of your company to address the societal problem.

For instance, if you're at a research or educational institution, then produce and disseminate knowledge about sexual violence. If you are in the entertainment industry, make documentaries and films. Find a way to use your product to help end sexual violence.

10. Commit resources to steps 1 through 9.

Good intentions are a good starting place, but staff, money and time need to be dedicated to make this happen. As Joe Biden once said: "Don't tell me what you value, show me your budget, and I'll tell you what you value."

