



1



2



3



4

The Bible speaks over and over about God's heart for the vulnerable and the oppressed.



5

"The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed..."

Psalm 9:9



6

"...[God] does not forget the cry of the afflicted."

Psalm 9:12



7

"Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me."


Mark 9:37



8

"If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea."


Matthew 18:6



9

And in his teaching he said, "Beware of the scribes...who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."


Mark 12:38-40




10

God Speaks Against Violence


- Psalm 11:5 The Lord hates the wicked and the one who loves violence.
- Psalm 73:6 For the wicked pride is their necklace; violence are the clothes they wear.
- Prov. 3:31 God says "Do not envy a man of violence and do not choose any of his ways"
- Prov. 24:2 The hearts of the wicked devise violence



11



Basic Definitions  
and Prevalence



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

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What is abuse?

Abuse is not a sin like other sins.



13

Abuse occurs when a person, holding power and trust, uses that power and trust to exploit, violate, or domineer a person who is more vulnerable.

Abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional, spiritual, financial, etc.



14

Jesus and Power



15

## US Child Abuse Statistics

- Sexual Abuse: 1 in 4 women, 1 in 6 men
- Physical Abuse: 1 in 4
- Emotional Abuse: 11%
- Emotional Neglect: 15%
- Neglect: 10%
- Spiritual Abuse

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/about.html>

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## US Abuse Statistics

- Intimate Partner Violence: 1 in 3 women (American Medical Association)
- Clergy Sexual Abuse: over 10% (*Sexual Abuse by Clergy: A Crisis for the Church* by Marie M. Fortune and James N. Poling)



17

Adult Clergy Sexual Abuse occurs when a pastor or spiritual leader crosses sexual boundaries with a person under their spiritual care or supervision.



18

Abuse is often a pattern of behaviors.



19

Critical distinction in all abuse:  
sinning and being sinned against  
or  
a perpetrator and a victim



20



Our Role in  
Safeguarding: Out of  
Denial into Education



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Culture matters:  
Effective prevention  
and response  
requires coming  
out of denial into  
education as a  
community.




22

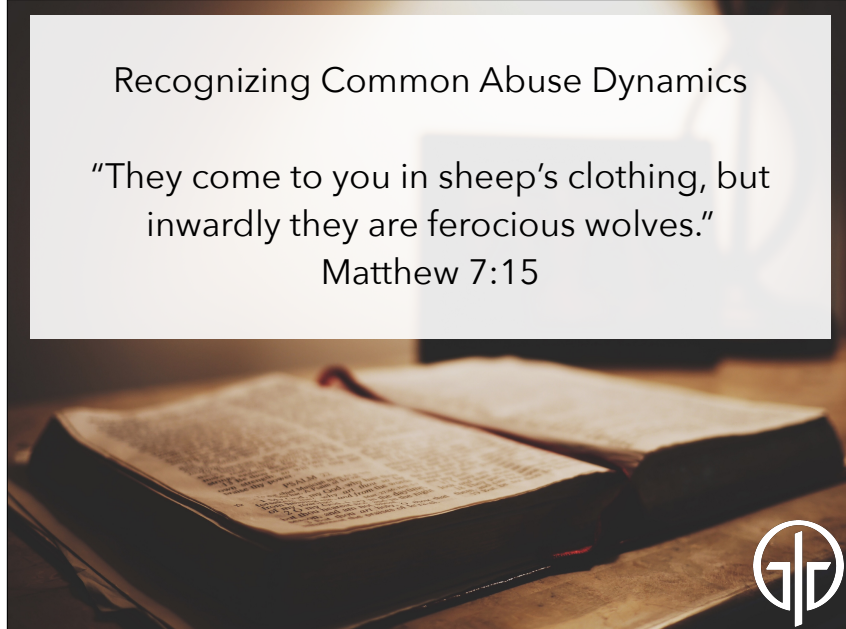


Common Myths:

- "Not here."
- False reports of abuse are common
- "If he/she had \_\_\_\_\_, this wouldn't have happened."
- Victims need to forgive and move on




23

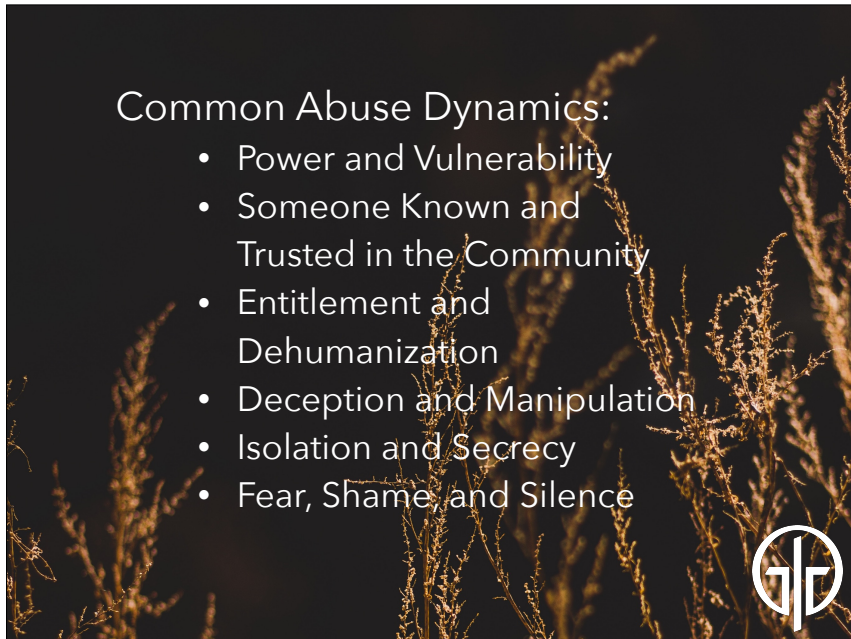


Recognizing Common Abuse Dynamics

"They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves."  
Matthew 7:15



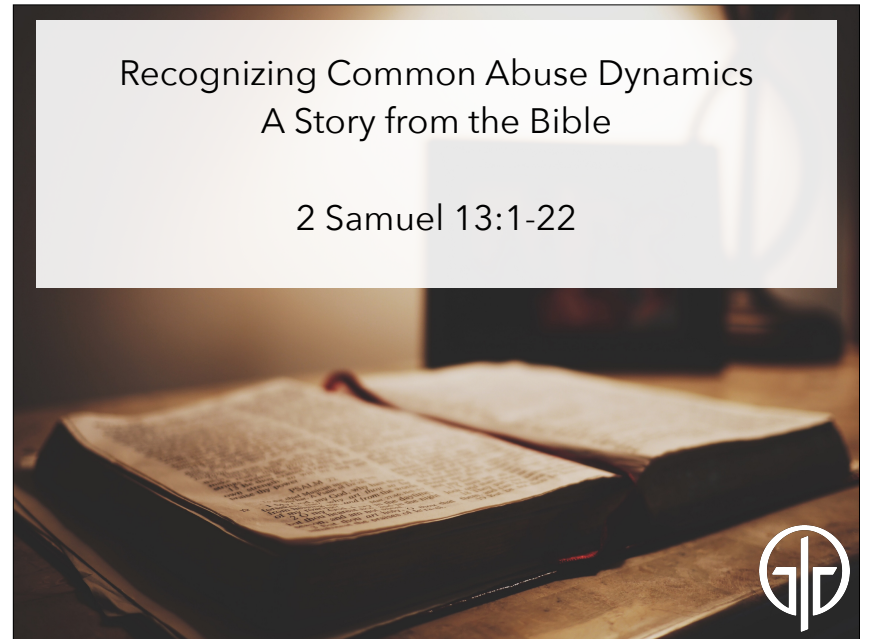
24

A slide with a background of tall, golden-brown grasses against a dark sky. The text is white and lists common abuse dynamics. A circular logo with the letters 'JF' is in the bottom right corner.

Common Abuse Dynamics:

- Power and Vulnerability
- Someone Known and Trusted in the Community
- Entitlement and Dehumanization
- Deception and Manipulation
- Isolation and Secrecy
- Fear, Shame, and Silence

25

A slide with a background of an open book on a desk. The text is white and centered. A circular logo with the letters 'JF' is in the bottom right corner.

Recognizing Common Abuse Dynamics  
A Story from the Bible

2 Samuel 13:1-22

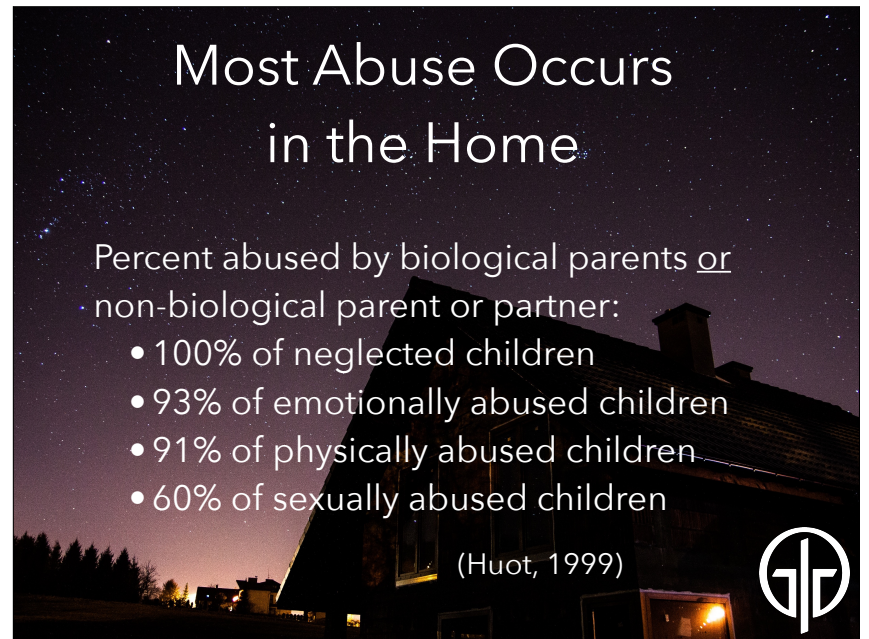
26

A slide with a background of hands baking cookies on a tray. A white circular callout contains the main text. A circular logo with the letters 'JF' is in the bottom right corner.

Over 90% of  
Victims Know  
Their Abuser

(Finkelhor, 2012 and Whealin, 2007)

27

A slide with a background of a house at night under a starry sky. The text is white and centered. A circular logo with the letters 'JF' is in the bottom right corner.

Most Abuse Occurs  
in the Home

Percent abused by biological parents or  
non-biological parent or partner:

- 100% of neglected children
- 93% of emotionally abused children
- 91% of physically abused children
- 60% of sexually abused children

(Huot, 1999)

28

Over 80% of child sexual abuse is perpetrated in one on one situations

(Finkelhor, 2012)

29

Child sexual abuse is often perpetrated in close proximity to others.

30

40% of Child Sexual Abuse is Perpetrated by Minors

(Finkelhor, 2012)

31

Many Victims Never Disclose

32



False Reports  
of Abuse are  
Rare



33



GRACE Safeguarding Training

Part 2 - Responding to the Impact of Abuse



34



Common Impacts  
of Abuse



35



### Common Emotional Impacts

- Anger
- Confusion
- Betrayal
- Grief
- Guilt
- Shame
- Humiliation
- Fear
- Powerlessness



36

## Common Physical Impacts

- Loss of Sleep
- Loss of Appetite
- Loss of Focus
- Increased Stress Levels
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Injury



37

## Common Mental Health Impacts

- Anxiety (e.g. Panic Attacks)
- Depression
- PTSD
- Substance abuse
- Self-harm
- Loss of Motivation



38

## Common Spiritual Impacts

- Loss of Safety in Church
- Feeling Betrayal by God, the Church, and Spiritual Leaders
- Feeling Distance from God
- Spiritual Places and Practices can be Triggering



39

## Common Spiritual Impacts

In a review of 34 studies, encompassing 19,090 victims of child abuse, scholars note that most studies found abuse damaged the faith of children, often damaging the child's view of and relationship with God.

*On This Rock: A Call to Center the Christian Response to Child Abuse of the Life and Words of Jesus* by Victor Vieth



40



Godly Response  
to Survivors




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Godly Response to Abuse  
in the Christian Environment

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As Christians, we are called  
to expose deeds of evil and  
bind up wounds.

42



"Take care of him, and  
whatever more you spend, I will  
repay you when I come back."  
Luke 10

43



We have to get over our  
discomfort so we can  
understand and help  
victims.

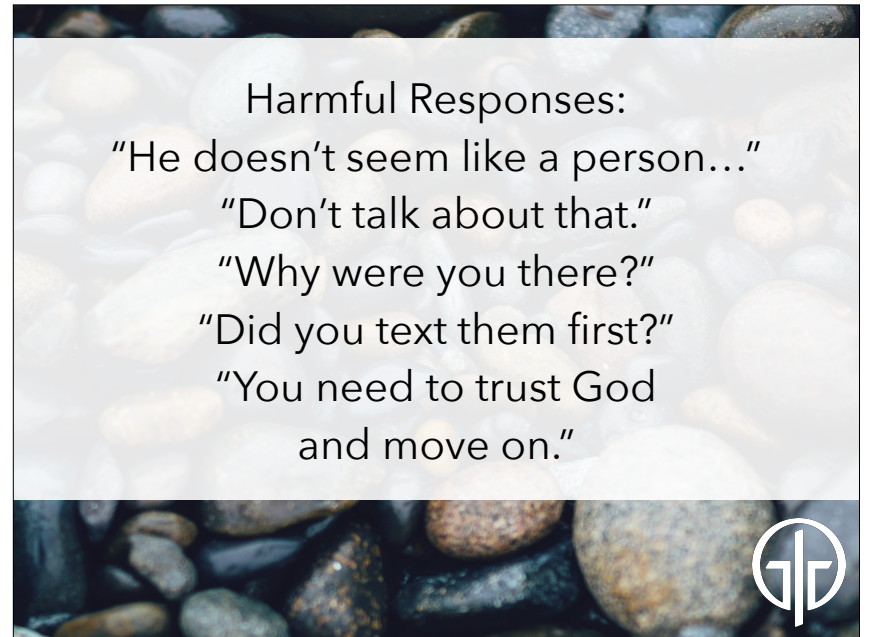
44



The Church must reject a culture of silence, disbelief, and blame that re-traumatizes victims.



45



Harmful Responses:  
"He doesn't seem like a person..."  
"Don't talk about that."  
"Why were you there?"  
"Did you text them first?"  
"You need to trust God and move on."



46



Survivors often blame themselves for abuse.



47



It is critical to focus on staying calm and listening.



48

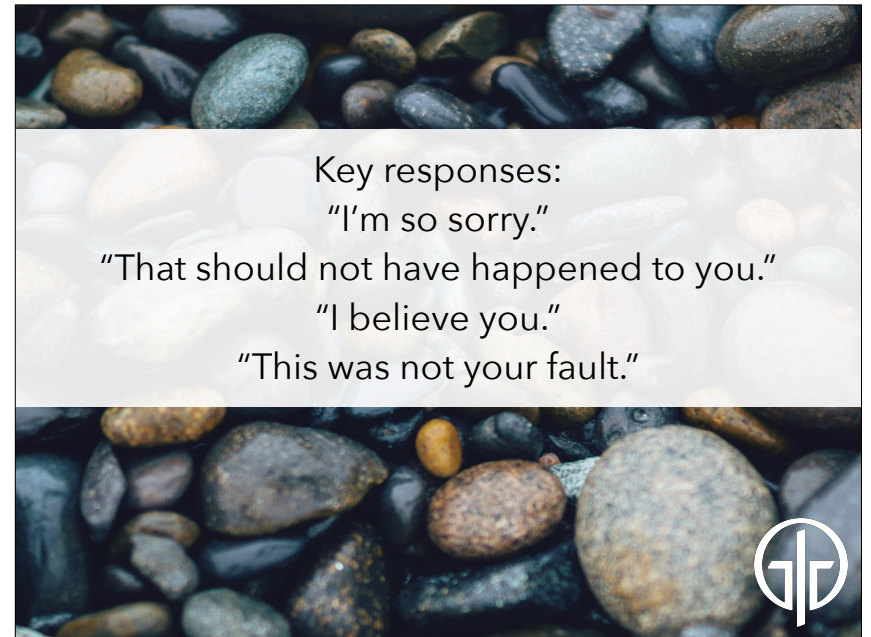


Don't try to "fix it."


Most survivors don't need Bible verses or platitudes when disclosing abuse.



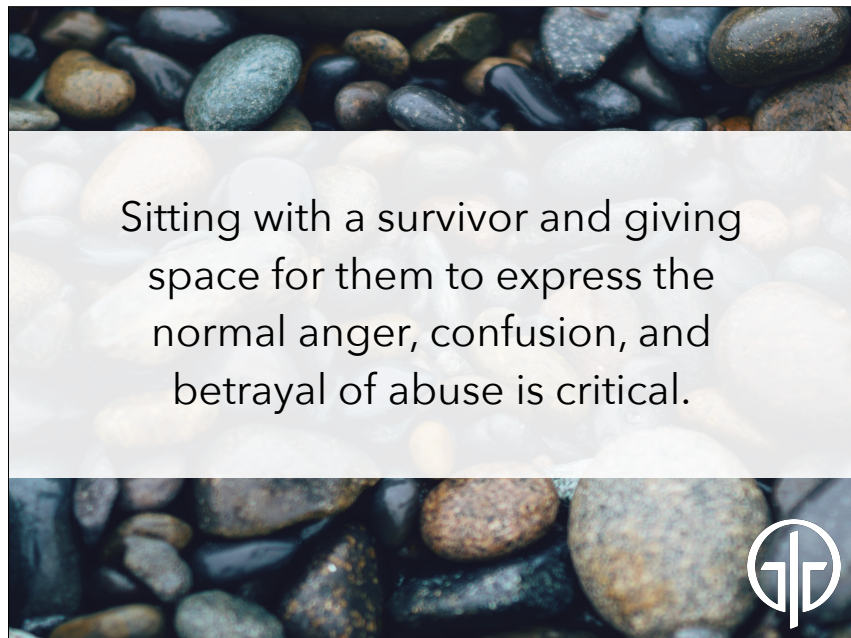
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Key responses:  
"I'm so sorry."  
"That should not have happened to you."  
"I believe you."  
"This was not your fault."



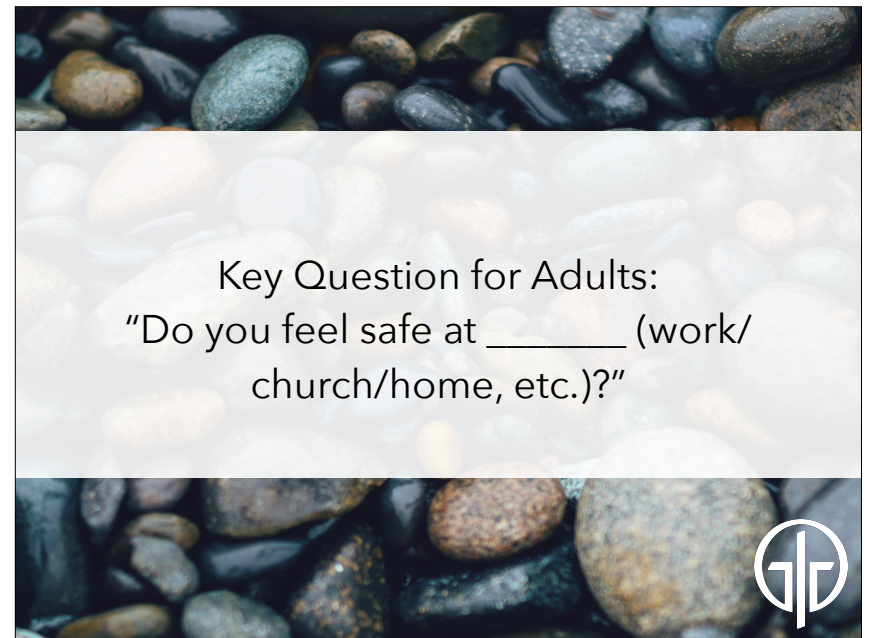
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Sitting with a survivor and giving space for them to express the normal anger, confusion, and betrayal of abuse is critical.



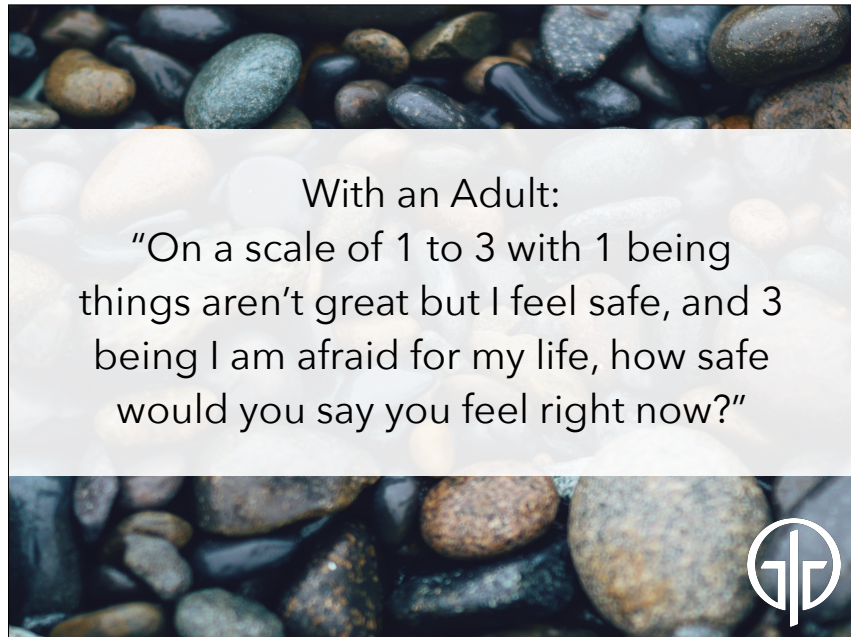
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Key Question for Adults:  
"Do you feel safe at \_\_\_\_\_ (work/ church/home, etc.)?"



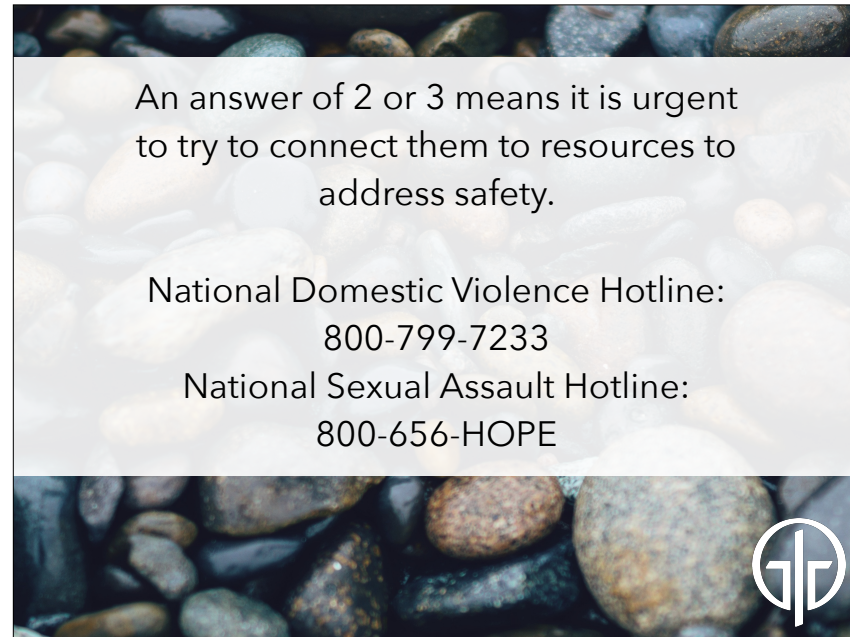
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With an Adult:  
"On a scale of 1 to 3 with 1 being things aren't great but I feel safe, and 3 being I am afraid for my life, how safe would you say you feel right now?"




53



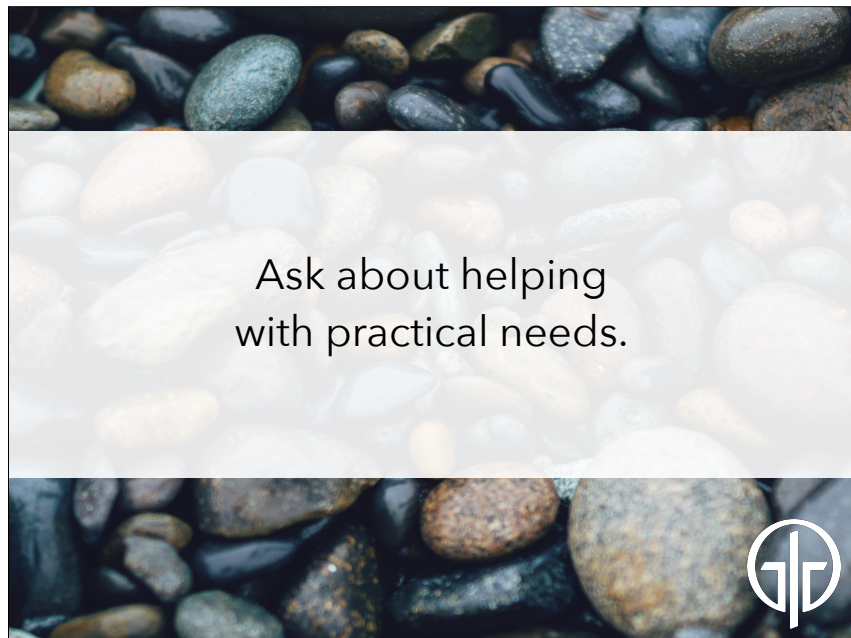
An answer of 2 or 3 means it is urgent to try to connect them to resources to address safety.

National Domestic Violence Hotline:  
800-799-7233


National Sexual Assault Hotline:  
800-656-HOPE



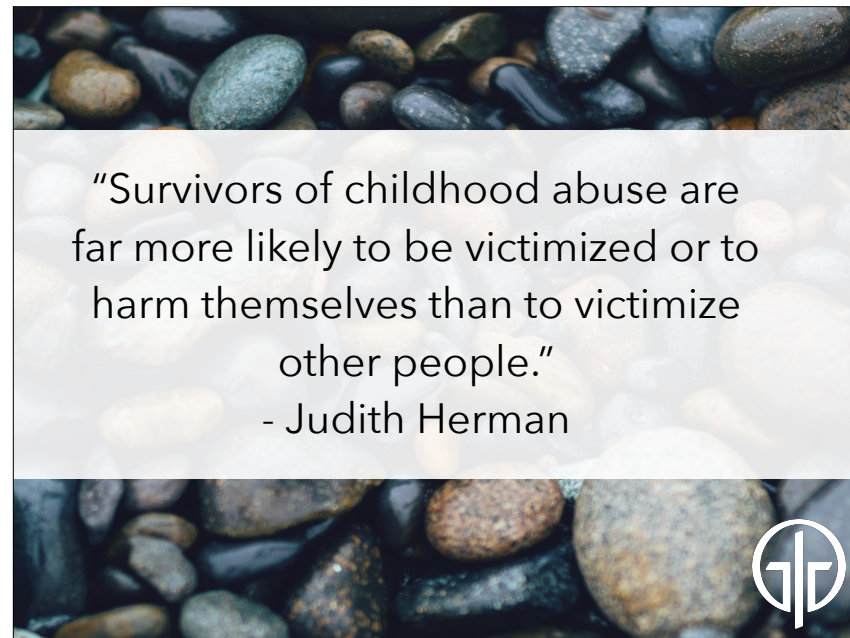
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Ask about helping with practical needs.



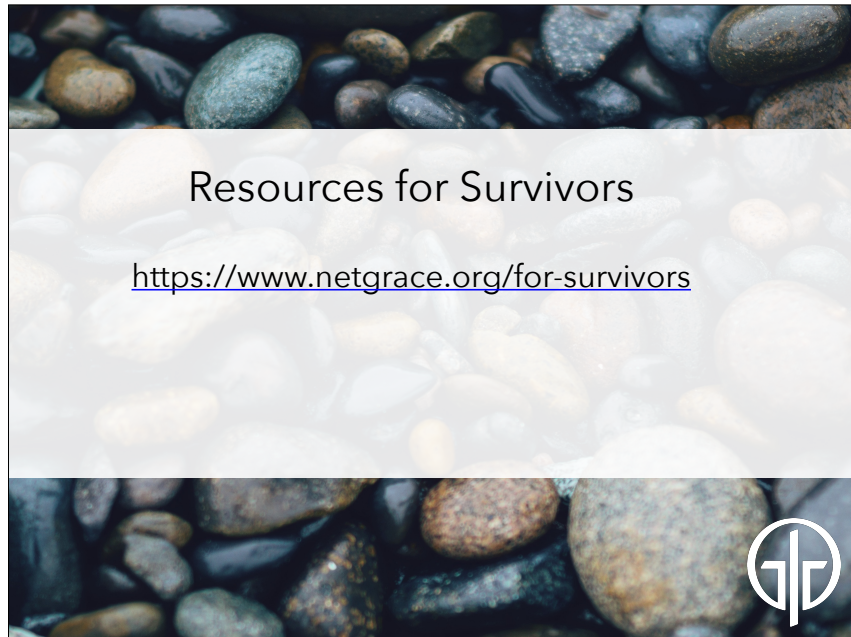
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"Survivors of childhood abuse are far more likely to be victimized or to harm themselves than to victimize other people."  
- Judith Herman




56

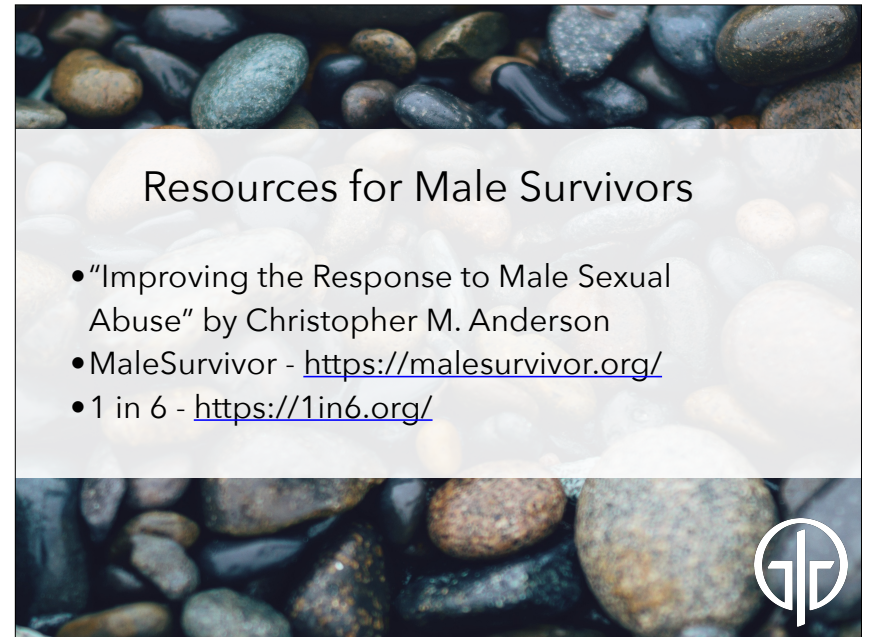


Resources for Survivors

<https://www.netgrace.org/for-survivors>




57

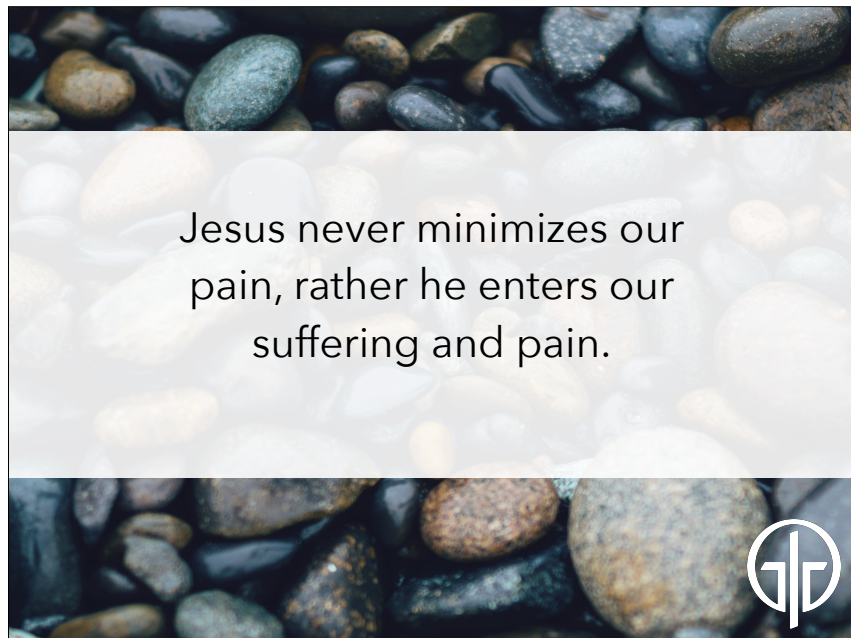


Resources for Male Survivors


- “Improving the Response to Male Sexual Abuse” by Christopher M. Anderson
- MaleSurvivor - <https://malesurvivor.org/>
- 1 in 6 - <https://1in6.org/>



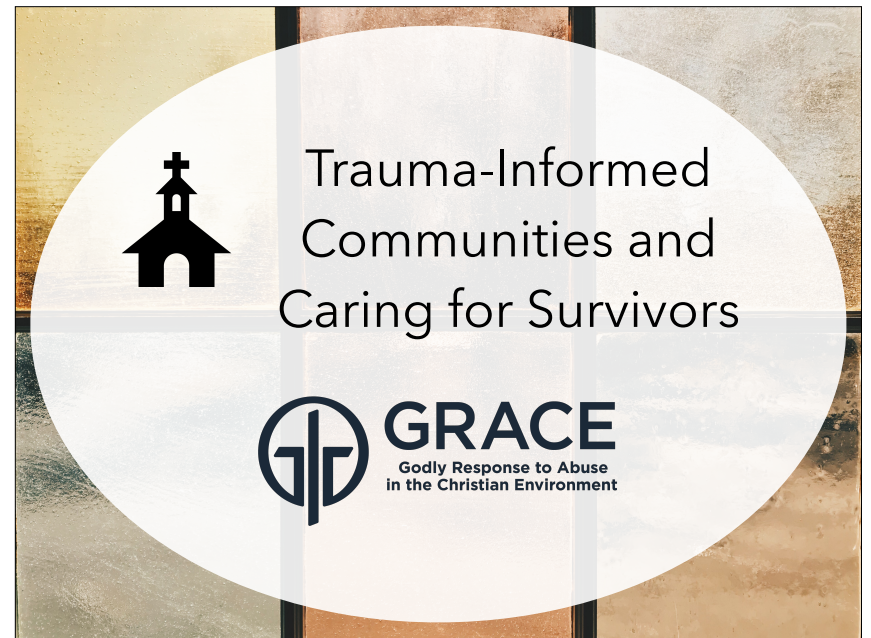
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Jesus never minimizes our pain, rather he enters our suffering and pain.



59



 Trauma-Informed Communities and Caring for Survivors

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60

## What is Trauma?

God created us with bodily systems to keep us safe and respond to danger.



61

## What is Trauma?

Our brains do amazing things to protect us.

The brain can get "stuck" in a fear/stress response.



62

## What is Trauma?

The terror of the past can break unexpectedly into the present.

Triggers  
Stress Hormones



63

## What is Trauma?

### The Three "E's" of Trauma

1. The Event
2. The Person's Experience of the Event
3. The Ongoing Effects of the Event

After the Event, you cannot change 1, but 2 and 3 change over time

*SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach (SAMHSA's Trauma and Justice Strategic Initiative July 2014)*



64

## What is Trauma?

Our nervous systems are constantly seeking safety and connection.

A calm, non-judgmental, supportive interaction can help another person's nervous system begin to regulate.



65

## What is Trauma?

Trauma-Informed Communities Prioritize:

1. Safety
2. Dignity
3. Agency
4. Trustworthiness



66

"The solidarity of a group provides the strongest protection against terror and despair, and the strongest antidote to traumatic experience. Trauma isolates; the group re-creates a sense of belonging. Trauma shames and stigmatizes; the group bears witness and affirms. Trauma degrades the victim; the group exalts [them]. Trauma dehumanizes the victim; the group restores [their] humanity."

Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*



67

## What is Trauma?

The Role of Your Church Community  
AND  
The Role of Licensed  
Trauma Counselors



68

## What is Trauma?

Listen well, validate strong emotions, and offer support with any practical needs.



69

## Supportive People:

- Believe victims and take practical steps to establish safety
- Never blame survivors or minimize abuse
- Never press for details about the abuse
- Never urge the survivor to meet the abuser, "reconcile," or push forgiveness
- Ask if you can help with any practical needs



70

Q & A



71