



PRAE²⁵IDIUM
Anniversary



Keeping Your Congregation Safe

Tips for Preventing Sexual Harassment



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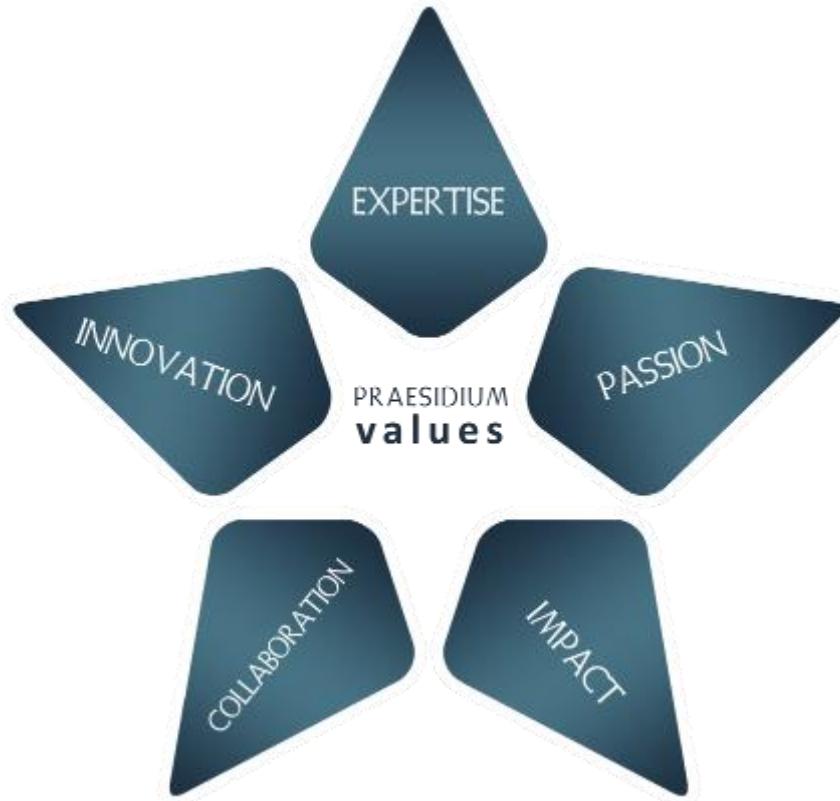


Ross works closely with Praesidium's educational clients as well as other youth-serving organizations. In collaboration with the Praesidium team, Ross trains employees and volunteers, conducts risk assessments, and performs accreditation visits to ensure the protection of youth and vulnerable adults from abuse. Prior to coming to Praesidium, Ross practiced law in his firm's education practice group. He represented teachers in a variety of employment matters and worked closely with both teacher organizations and school districts. Ross graduated from Baylor University with a bachelor's degree in business administration and obtained his law degree from South Texas College of Law in Houston, Texas.

Topics

- ✓ Who is Praesidium?
- ✓ Sexual Harassment
- ✓ How to Respond

About Praesidium



“To help you **protect those in your care** from abuse and to help **preserve trust** in your organization.”

25 years of experience

More than **4,000 clients** across diverse industries

Completed thousands of **root cause analyses**

Developed proprietary **abuse risk management model**

Offer complete range of **risk management solutions**



Abuse is NOT a
Natural Disaster

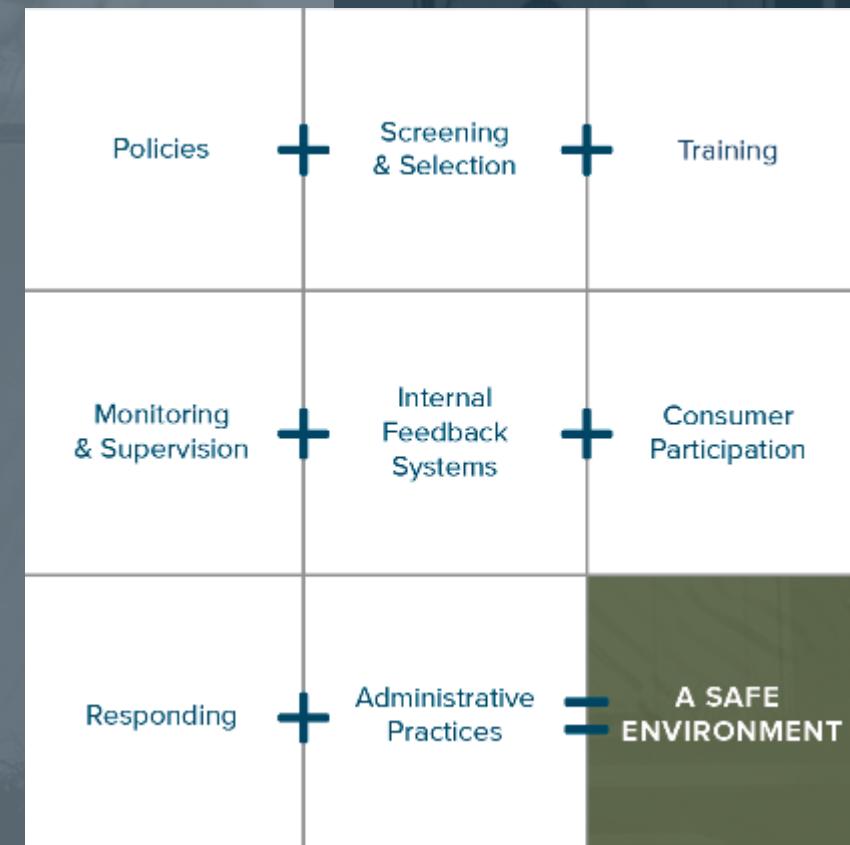


Responding to abuse is not
synonymous with
preventing abuse



We believe abuse is
PREVENTABLE

Praesidium Safety Equation®





Effects of Abuse and Harassment on Victims

1

Loss of faith

2

Damage to spiritual life

3

Loss of trust

4

Negative impact on other relationships

5

Feelings of betrayal



Effects of Abuse and Harassment on Churches

1

Loss of focus on mission and ministry

2

Long-term damage to reputation

3

Loss of members

4

Loss of trust in clergy and church leaders

5

Congregations split up

A photograph of a woman with glasses and a ponytail working at a desk, looking down at her laptop. A man stands behind her, holding a white coffee cup. The scene is set in an office environment.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment in Churches

Sexual Harassment in churches usually manifests itself in one of the following:

1. Employee and staff harassment

- ✓ Employees are bound to comply with policies and rules prohibiting harassment
- ✓ [Sexual Harassment in Churches](#)
- ✓ Classic EEOC standards and protected classes

2. Pastoral exploitation

- ✓ A type of sexual harassment whereby a pastor exploits the imbalance of power to manipulate someone into a sexual relationship
- ✓ [Pastoral Abuse](#)

3. Congregant-to-congregant misconduct

- ✓ Some churches have strict policies that forbid misconduct among members, volunteers, clergy, employees, and others
- ✓ [Volunteer Abuse](#)

Sexual Harassment Types

Sexual harassment is a type of sex discrimination which consists of two distinct categories:

- ✓ Quid Pro Quo
- ✓ Hostile Work Environment



Sexual Harassment Standards

Courts will generally look at the following to determine whether behavior and/or actions rose to the level of Sexual Harassment:

- Were the behaviors and/or actions:
 1. Severe and pervasive;
 2. Unsolicited and/or unwelcome;
 3. Offensive to a “Reasonable Person;” and
 4. Responsible for subsequent negative impact on the complainant?
- If yes to all, the actions and/or behaviors likely rise to the level of sexual harassment.

Quid Pro Quo

- ✓ Quid pro quo is a Latin phrase which means “this for that”
- ✓ The classic example of quid pro quo sexual harassment is someone, often times a superior, asking for a sexual favor in exchange for something else, such as a raise, a bonus, a favorable evaluation, or some other professional opportunity

While quid pro quo harassment frequently appears in supervisor-subordinate relationships due to a disparity in power between the parties, it is important to note that same level staff can engage in quid pro quo sexual harassment.

Example

Mike is the youth director at his local church. Tina, an assistant youth director and worship leader, meets weekly with Mike to coordinate youth activities and plan worship services. Mike has made several unwanted sexual advances toward Tina. The most recent interaction culminated with him inviting her over to his house for drinks after work. Tina declined the invitation. When Tina arrived at church the next day, she learned that Mike had suggested she be moved from her current position to a position in the church nursery.

Was this sexual harassment?

Hostile Work Environment

- ✓ When harassment or discrimination in the workplace is offensive and frequent, pervasive, or serious such that it:

- Interferes with an individual's work performance,
- Disrupts the work environment, or
- Makes a work environment intimidating or offensive



- ✓ Common Forms

- Epithets, slurs, name calling, or derogatory comments
- Offensive jokes or pranks
- Display of offensive or derogatory cartoons
- Offensive or derogatory e-mail messages or printed materials
- Display of offensive or derogatory images
- Hazing or teasing
- Forcing individuals to participate in activities
- Threatening, intimidating, or engaging in hostile or violent acts

Hostile Environment

A hostile environment is created by engaging in the following inappropriate conduct:

 **Physical**

- Unwelcome sexual advances
- Groping, kissing, unwelcomed touching, etc.

 **Verbal**

- Sexual verbal comments (insults or comments about bodies, sexuality, etc.)
- Jokes including sexual language, references, scenarios, etc.
- Sexual gestures

 **Visual**

- Sexual photographs, cartoons, calendars
- Inappropriate emails or screensavers
- Essentially any material, comments, or behaviors of a sexual nature

Example

Caroline, a recent widow, has been going to Pastor John for grief counseling. During their sessions, he “accidentally” brushes up against her and occasionally tells sexist jokes. After church one day, Pastor John asked Caroline to give him a hug and told her “that’s what all the pretty girls do.” Several congregants witnessed this behavior but did not report it. Caroline told the senior pastor about Pastor John’s behavior but the senior pastor discouraged Caroline from confronting him because “it might hurt his feelings.”

Was this behavior sexual harassment?

Example

Derek and Bethany go to a singles Bible study every Tuesday night. After Bible study when everyone is hanging out, Derek occasionally tells explicit jokes, sometimes including obscene gestures. Bethany asked Jimmy, the Bible study leader, to tell Derek to stop. Derek now facetiously refers to Bethany as “honey,” “sweetie,” and “baby” when he talks to her. Sometimes he caresses her hair, which makes Bethany cringe. Additionally, he makes sexual remarks on Bethany’s Facebook posts. Bethany is considering leaving the Bible study because she doesn’t feel comfortable there.

Is this sexual harassment?

Example

Adam, the church's business officer, has a classical picture of Eve in the Garden of Eden, which contains some nudity. Efrain, the church secretary, sees it and asks Adam to take it down. Adam ostracizes Efrain for being such a prude and leaves the picture up. When Efrain again asks Adam to take the picture down, Adam refuses and tells everyone to make fun of Efrain for being so sensitive. Efrain's productivity decreases as he no longer feels like a valued member of the church team.

- Is Efrain's reaction reasonable?
- Has Adam created a hostile work environment?

Who Can Claim Sexual Harassment?

- ✓ Any employee in the church who is impacted by the inappropriate behavior may file a claim for sexual harassment
 - ✓ Direct
The target of the harassing behavior
 - ✓ Indirect
If the person found the actor's behavior offensive or unwelcome and the behavior has a negative impact on them under the reasonable person standard, the person may file a claim of sexual harassment
- ✓ Some churches have policies that allow volunteers and congregants to raise a claim of Sexual Harassment or Misconduct
 - ✓ Check with your governing body to determine whether your church has policies addressing either Sexual Harassment or Sexual Misconduct

Prohibited Actions

- ✓ Actions taken by the harasser to prevent the harassed from reporting or participating in an investigation:

- Retaliation
- Adverse Employment Action

- ✓ Examples:

- Termination
- Demotion
- Refusal to hire or promote
- Threats
- Negative evaluations
- Negative references
- Increased surveillance
- Deterrence of individuals from pursuing their rights



Responding to Sexual Harassment

Responding to Claims of Sexual Harassment

- If you receive a report of sexual harassment-
 - Refer to Congregational Policies
 - Does your denomination have policies defining sexual harassment or misconduct?
 - Does your denomination have policies or procedures regarding investigating reports of sexual harassment or misconduct?
 - Are there policies delineating the proper reporting chains for incidents of sexual harassment or misconduct?
 - Consult your Church's legal counsel
 - Whether or not your church has written policies, legal counsel can assist you in taking the proper next steps.

Ensure both staff and congregants are aware of any policies you have!



Praesidium Solutions

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KEEP IN TOUCH

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