

## How common is child sexual abuse?

- Fact:** 1 in 4 females will be abused before reaching adulthood.
- Fact:** 1 in 6 males will be abused before reaching adulthood.
- Myth:** Strangers are responsible for most child sexual abuse.
- Fact:** 11% is committed by strangers, 29% by relatives, and 60% by others known by the victim.
- Myth:** Most sexual abusers are homosexual.
- Fact:** The vast majority of sexual abusers are heterosexual.
- Myth:** Priests abuse children because of their vow of celibacy.
- Fact:** Celibacy doesn't cause anyone to become a child molester. The few priests who do perpetrate abuse molest children for the same reasons that other people do.
- The vast majority of child molesters have not taken a vow of celibacy, and the vast majority of persons who have taken a vow of celibacy do not molest children.
- \*above statistics based on national figures.

## Why don't children tell anyone about sexual abuse?

- They are afraid, or have been convinced, no one will believe them or that they will get into trouble.
- They trust the person who is abusing them.
- They do not understand what is happening to them.
- The molester has threatened to hurt them or their family.
- The molester has told them they are complicit in the abuse.

## Contacts

***We are committed to helping you protect yourself—and all the children.***

To find your diocesan/eparchial **victim assistance coordinator** and contact information please visit:  
<http://www.usccb.org/ocyp/helpandhealing.shtml>

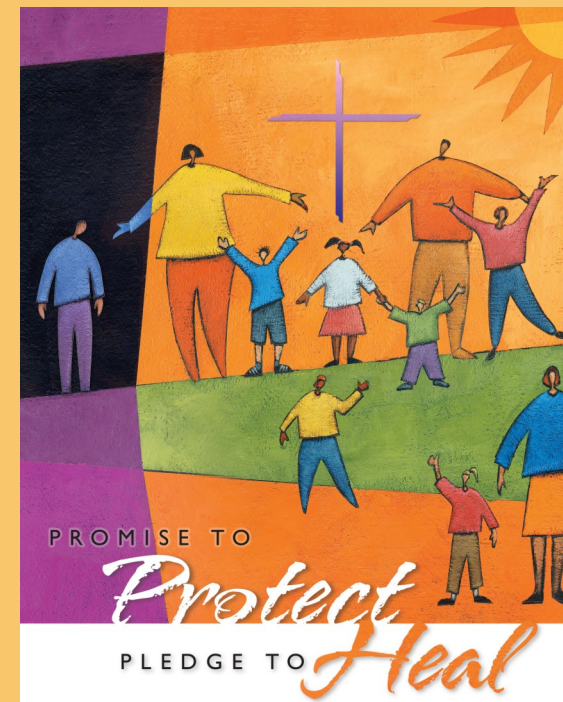
To find your diocesan/eparchial **safe environment coordinator** and contact information please visit:  
<http://www.usccb.org/ocyp/sepcoord.shtml>

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United States Conference of Catholic Bishops  
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scyp@usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org/ocyp/scyp@usccb.org)

***You will be heard.  
We want to help.***

*There is a way to tell  
what happened.  
There is a way to be heard.  
And prevention is possible.*



Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection  
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

*For anyone who has been abused by  
clergy or other church representatives...*

## The *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*

is a comprehensive set of procedures established by the USCCB in June 2002 for addressing allegations of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy. The *Charter* also includes guidelines for reconciliation, healing, accountability, and prevention of future acts of abuse.

“We now re-affirm [in the Charter] that we will assist in the healing of those who have been injured, will do all in our power to protect children and young people, and will work with our clergy, religious, and laity to restore trust and harmony in our faith communities, as we pray for God’s kingdom to come, here on earth, as it is in heaven.

The four sections of the *Charter* are...

To Promote Healing and Reconciliation with Victims/Survivors of Sexual Abuse of Minors

To Guarantee an Effective Response to Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors

To Ensure the Accountability of Our Procedures

To Protect the Faithful in the Future

## *Sexual Abuse Awareness & Prevention*

*Protect yourself—and the children—by being aware of these steps.*

### **Step 1: Know the Warning Signs**

*People who abuse are likely to*

- Discourage other adults from participating in or monitoring activities.
- Always want to be alone with children.
- Prefer being with children rather than adults.
- Give gifts to children, often without permission.
- Go overboard with touching, wrestling, and tickling
- Think that rules don’t apply to them.
- Allow children to engage in activities their parents would not allow.
- Use bad language, tell dirty jokes, or show pornography to children.
- Progressively lure children away from family and friends.

### **Step 2: Control Access**

- Interview your babysitters and check references.
- Become familiar with the instructors and leaders of all your child’s school and extra-curricular activities.
- Get to know all the adults in your child’s life.

### **Step 3: Monitor All Programs**

- Visit your child’s religious education and school classes.
- Thoroughly research your pre-school or daycare choice.

### **Step 4: Be Aware**

- Let your children know they can tell you anything.
- Believe what your children are saying until it is proven false. *Studies show that 99% of children’s accusations are true.*
- Teach your children the correct names for their private parts.
- Encourage your children to protect themselves. Teach them to say “No!” if someone tries to touch them inappropriately—and to report any incidents to parents/guardians or other trusted adults
- Talk and listen to your children—and observe them. Look for behavioral changes like acting out, poor hygiene, bedwetting, night terrors, sudden drop in grades, withdrawal from others, avoidance of particular adults.

### **Step 5: Communicate your Concerns**

If you are uncomfortable with a situation or suspect abuse you should

#### **Adults**

- Call the police if you feel someone is in immediate danger.
- Talk to the supervisor of the person involved.
- Call the diocese & Child Abuse Hotline.

#### **Children**

- Tell your parents/guardians or other trusted adults.
- Tell your school principal, teacher, or counselor.