



**SEXUAL  
ABUSE**  
**SEXUAL HARASSMENT  
PASTORAL MISCONDUCT**

**It could happen in your church**

**It could happen to you**

**We can help**

**Maritime Conference Co-ordinating  
Committee on Sexual Abuse**

## Policy Statement

*The United Church of Canada will not tolerate and will seek to eradicate any behaviour by its members (lay or Order of Ministry), volunteers, adherents, or employees which constitutes sexual abuse, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation or child abuse.*

*The United Church of Canada is committed to providing a safe environment for worship, work, and study in all pastoral charges, congregations, institutions, agencies, organizations, or other bodies which operate under its name. Complaints related to sexual abuse or child abuse will be taken seriously and dealt with in a spirit of compassion and justice.*

Manual 2001 073 (a) (b)

## What Is Sexual Abuse?

- ✦ any demeaning/exploitative behaviour of a sexual nature
- ✦ it may include threats of such behaviour
- ✦ abusive sexual acts are primarily acts of power
- ✦ it is a crime

## It may include . . .

- ✦ unwanted sexual attention in the form of remarks, jokes or innuendo about a person's body, clothing, or sexual activity
- ✦ displaying of suggestive or pornographic material unnecessary physical contact such as touching, patting, pinching or punching, and physical assault
- ✦ indirect or explicit invitations to engage in sexual activities which may include a promise of reward for complying or a threat of reprisal for not complying

## Sexual Abuse or Harassment

. . . shows no preference for age, race, sexual orientation, or occupation. It usually happens to women, but not always. Men can be victims, too. It may involve the abuse of:

- ✦ a member or adherent by a minister
- ✦ a minister by a church leader or another minister
- ✦ a lay employee by a church leader
- ✦ a youth by a youth leader



## What Sexual Abuse Is **NOT**

It is **NOT** a relationship of mutual consent.

It is **NOT** the expression of affection between friends.

It is **NOT** mutual flirtation.

## What about Child Abuse?

In the case of a child who is under the age of 16, all cases must legally be reported. Provincial laws require that any person who suspects or receives a disclosure of abuse of a child must report it to the appropriate provincial legal authority.

## What to do if you believe you are being Sexually Abused:

⌘ Believe and trust yourself and your feelings.

⌘ Remember that it is not your fault. The abuser is responsible for his/her own behaviour.

⌘ Talk to someone you trust to hear and support you.

⌘ Contact one of our Maritime Conference Consultants (listed in this brochure). Consultants are skilled listeners who are trained in our United Church policy and procedures regarding complaints of sexual abuse.

## What happens when I contact a Consultant?

⌘ A Consultant will explain all the options open to you and will work with you in your decision-making.

⌘ You will be provided with information about the United Church's policy and procedures.

⌘ Your complaint will be taken seriously and will be treated with appropriate confidentiality.

⌘ You will be treated with compassion and respect.

⌘ You are in charge of the process. Nothing will proceed without your direction.

## What if I want to know more?

If you, your congregation or Presbytery would like to learn more about these issues and/or the United Church Policy, contact one of the members of the Conference Coordinating Committee.



## **If you need to contact a Consultant, please call . . .**

### **NEW BRUNSWICK**

#### **Canterbury**

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