

# Pastoral Care / Recovery for Parishes Workshop



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[www.johnmark.net.au](http://www.johnmark.net.au)



# Brainstorm

WHAT PRACTICAL STEPS OF HEALING OR CARE ASSIST PARISHES RECOVER FROM THE DISCLOSURE OF SEXUAL ABUSE?

# Secondary Victims

Secondary Victims: Those directly impacted by their close relationship with either the perpetrator or a primary victim

- ▶ Family members of perpetrator or primary victims
- ▶ Close friends / confidantes
- ▶ Parish staff, Senior lay leaders (Wardens, Parish or Church Council members, volunteer ministry leaders)

# The parish as a whole

Parish / Congregation as a whole: Those in a trust relationship with the perpetrator

- ▶ Those already carrying wounds of past abuse or poorly handled situations in previous parishes
- ▶ Those with unrelated interpersonal conflicts or mental health issues
- ▶ Those who have received significant pastoral ministry from the minister / priest

# Theological Foundations

- ▶ Truth – telling
- ▶ Justice – seeking
- ▶ Grace – giving
- ▶ Peace (shalom) – making



# Truth-telling:

## Appropriate disclosure to a Parish

- ▶ A parish meeting (not a Sunday service for worship)
- ▶ Clear prepared parish statement (Not distributed)
- ▶ Pastoral guidance on how a church community should respond
- ▶ Anticipate questions in the statement and the guidance – (It is generally not helpful to open the meeting to the floor, or to allow the perpetrator to address the meeting)
- ▶ Opportunity to gather following the meeting (Duty of care and travel)

# Truth-telling:

## Pastoral instruction around language

- ▶ It is OK to talk about your own feelings in relation to this!
- ▶ It is OK to have differences in personal response and differences of concern
- ▶ While truth-telling is important. There are limits to what can and should be communicated
- ▶ It is not appropriate to speculate, to gossip or to create dissention

# Justice Seeking:

## Ensuring processes are transparent

- ▶ Trust in parishes is often undermined by the seeming lack of transparency in process and the time investigative and judicial processes take.
- ▶ Parishes need to know that there has been justice for the survivor/s and justice for the perpetrator as a key element of recovery.

# Grace giving: Care, prayer, healing

- ▶ Recovery is a journey
- ▶ Pastoral care for those most impacted (Counselling referrals where required)
- ▶ Prayer for the recovery journey
- ▶ Gatherings for services of healing
- ▶ Encouraging patience, gentleness and kindness (Eph 4:2ff)

# Peace making: Managing differences in recovery

- ▶ Conflict is common in many recovery situations
- ▶ Clear communication
- ▶ Helping parishioners move from 'positions' to 'needs, interests and values'
- ▶ Covenants of behaviour where needed  
(See Covenant Commitments for Christians)

# Helpful pastoral processes

- ▶ Trained parish recovery teams
- ▶ Facilitated parish meetings
  - ▶ Personal self awareness for parishioners
  - ▶ Awareness of the pastoral needs of others
  - ▶ Awareness of the impact on the whole parish
- ▶ First and second (Subsequent) meetings
  - ▶ Mapping exercises
  - ▶ Action planning
  - ▶ Reports and followup

# Common concerns expressed by parishioners

- ▶ Victims and survivors of abuse, both known and unknown
- ▶ The healing of the parish community
- ▶ The Bishop/s
- ▶ The Rector and parish staff
- ▶ Secondary victims of family and friends of survivors and perpetrators
- ▶ The reputation of the church in the wider community
- ▶ Perpetrators and respondents

# Helpful pastoral processes

- ▶ Tailored processes for groups with special needs
- ▶ A parish based 'Healing Team'
- ▶ Lessons learned...