Mennonite Church USA

Sexual Misconduct Recognition and Response

Safe Church

We resolve to ...
- **Tell the truth**
- **Hold abusers accountable**
- **Acknowledge the seriousness of their sin**
- **Listen with care to those who have been wounded**
- **Protect vulnerable persons from injury**
- **Work restoratively for justice**
- **Hold out hope**

–MC USA's Churchwide Statement on Sexual Abuse (2015)

"Because of the power and authority implicit in the ministerial office, such inappropriate relating constitutes sexual harassment and abuse. No matter how this misconduct begins, it is always the pastor's responsibility to stop this behavior."
–Shared Understanding of Ministerial Leadership, pg.68 (2017)

You may have experienced sexual misconduct if:

You feel uncomfortable or confused by an incident or behavior.

You have received invitations for intimate, social occasions.

You have been touched in a confusing, uncomfortable or unsettling way.

Your counseling session focuses on the pastor's or counselor's needs, or details of their intimate relationships.

You receive inappropriate personal gifts or emails/texts with sexual overtones.

If you believe you have experienced sexual misconduct:

Remember, you are not to blame.

Pay attention to, and trust your feelings during and after the situation.

Document incidents and save all electronic and written communication.

Share your feelings with someone you trust.

Be direct and tell him/her to STOP the behavior. Leave the situation.

Reporting abuse:

If a child/youth discloses abuse, or you witness or suspect abuse, immediately make a report to Child Protective Services or the police and then notify church leadership.

Do not do an investigation yourself. Believe the child. Remember that you do not need evidence or proof. Child abuse is not an issue to deal with through church leadership.

An adult victim experiencing sexual abuse may seek support from local resources and/or report to the police.

When you witness or suspect a child is being abused, immediately contact Child Protective Services and/or the police.

Additional resources for responding to child abuse:

National Child Abuse Hotline: (1-800) 4-A-Child or (1-800) 422-4453
Safe Church: SafeChurch@MennoniteUSA.org

When you believe there may be sexual misconduct, contact one of the following:

Your Conference Safety Liaison: _____
MC USA Leadership Development Office at SafeChurch@MennoniteUSA.org