

# SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

**Tuesday, October 14, 2025**

- **When Faith Hurts: Understanding, Recognizing and Responding to the Physical, Emotional, and Spiritual Impact of Child Maltreatment (Parts 1, 2, 3)**

**Victor Vieth, JD, MTh**

This opening session will provide an introduction to the issue of child abuse in faith-based communities. The speaker will highlight the prevalence of child abuse, how children disclose sexual abuse, the impact of sexual abuse on spirituality, behaviors indicative of sexual abuse, the interest sexual offenders have in faith based camps and schools and the methods often used in selecting children to be abused, effective policies for deterring sexual offenders, helpful rules and lessons from youth-serving organizations, physical abuse signs, types of emotional abuse, the role of background checks and worker interviews, how to respond when the church, synagogue, seminary or other faith institution is sued by a victim or group of victims, and suggestions for speaking with an adult survivor disclosing childhood maltreatment and an adult confessing child sexual abuse. The ongoing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) studies out of Kaiser Permanente and the Center for Disease Control suggest that childhood maltreatment and family dysfunction are major risk factors for the leading causes of illness, death and poor psychological adjustment in the United States. Cumulative adverse childhood events have a role in poor physical health, problematic health risk behaviors, learning challenges, behavior problems and disease. The presentation will introduce faith leaders to this research and discuss the importance of faith, medical and mental health providers working to address having a holistic approach to fulfilling a child's needs.

- **Mandated Reporting for Clergy**

**Shauna Galloway-Williams, M.Ed, LPC**

One of the most important roles a clergy person plays in protecting children and responding to a disclosure of child abuse is that of a mandated reporter. This session will provide an overview of definitions, important laws, and procedures for fulfilling the role of the mandated reporter and will address the issue of clergy/penitent privilege.

**Wednesday, October 15, 2025**

- **When Child Abuse Hits Home**

**Victor Vieth, JD, MTh**

In this session, participants will receive an overview of research on the effectiveness and risk factors associated with corporal punishment as well as an overview of the contracting legal definition of reasonable force. Various theological approaches to corporal punishment are discussed. Finally, participants are presented with a case scenario and work through possible approaches to a case of physical discipline resulting in child injuries.

- **“What happens after a child discloses?”**

**Krista Alessandrini, MS and Dr. Lyle Pritchard,**

This session gives an overview of the role child advocacy centers play in responding to child abuse in the community. After a child discloses abuse, the CAC facilitates the investigative party's evidence collection and response to the needs of the child and family. Participants will learn about the general trajectory of children's cases and the routes to justice and healing provided by community partners.

- **When Children Offend**

**Kim Ponce, MS, NCC, LPC**

We spend a lot of time talking about the characteristics of adult offenders and how to best protect children against these offenders. Did you know that 36% of child sexual abuse is perpetrated by someone under the age of eighteen? Child-on-child sexual abuse can be just as traumatic as when abuse is inflicted by an adult. When abuse is inflicted by an older peer or sibling, families, and even mandated reporters may be resistant to reporting and seeking interventions. This session will focus on the issue of children abusing other children. This includes: Risks of older children serving in supervisory roles of younger children in youth and faith settings, the importance of reporting incidents of child-on-child sexual abuse, Age appropriate sexual behaviors and concerning behaviors, Understanding the reoffending risks of child and adolescent offenders, and why reporting these incidents and treating young offenders is so important.

**Thursday, October 16 -- 8:30 am - 10:00 am**

- **Internet Safety**

**Rick Floyd, Greenville County Schools Cyber Safe Programs Information Security Department**

This session will cover current trends in threats to groom and exploit children online, measures safe adults can take to help protect our children and our technology, digital hygiene 101, as well as appropriate measures to take when we discover child sexual abuse materials on our devices.

- **Child Abuse Prevention in the Faith-Based Setting**

**Nina Mitchell, BA**

Participants will receive information about child abuse prevention and protection policies in the church setting, as well as information about how child safety education programs will benefit church leadership, children, and parents.

- **Offenders in the Congregation: Case Examples and Policies for Addressing Sex Offenders in Places of Worship**

**Rev. Dr. Jay Kieve, M.Div., Th.M., D.Min and Laura Thien, LISW-CP**

Church leadership often faces challenges when making decisions about how to address sex offenders in the Christian environments, how to address issues arising from sex offenders and survivors in the same place of worship, and how to provide appropriate safety measures and pastoral care. This session will discuss these dynamics and provide practical case study examples for discussion and application.

- **Human Trafficking & The Interfaith Community**

**Roger Acton, MDiv, Dr. Kamran Borhanian, and James Massie, MSW**

This session will debut the state's new interfaith training providing a basic understanding of trafficking for faith-based organizations. Participants will learn about opportunities to join forces with the task force to provide community education, prevention, and create a safer community.

- **Middle School Prevention Module: Safer, Smarter Teens**

**Alexa Harper, MPA**

Safer, Smarter Teens empowers students to protect themselves and others by encouraging them to use their voices when they feel uncomfortable. This age-appropriate program provides practical strategies to prevent sexual abuse and exploitation without being explicit or scary. Teens will learn that building self-esteem encourages responsible behavior, including helping others. The program teaches the key components of a safe relationship, including a balance of power, and reinforces that setting personal boundaries means they have the right to say "no" to anything or anyone that makes them feel uncomfortable. Students will also learn to identify trusted adults they can turn to in difficult situations, recognize "red flags" such as secrets or threats, and practice responsible use of social media and the internet.

- **Child Sexual Exploitation in Places of Worship**

**Kim Ponce, MS, NCC, LPC**

This module aims to assist participants to better understand how to identify and prevent child sexual exploitation in faith communities. We will learn how South Carolina defines sexual exploitation. This includes trafficking but is more commonly the exploitation of children to create digital records of sexual content. We will explore myths and facts of sexual exploitation, victims, and perpetrators. We will also highlight case examples that occurred in places of worship or were perpetrated by faith leaders, both nationally and in South Carolina.

- **Addressing Spiritual Injury from Trauma-Informed Pastoral and Mental Health Perspectives**

**Laura Thien, LISW-CP and Rev. Dr. Jay Kieve, M.Div., Th.M., D.Min**

This session focuses on trauma-informed approaches to addressing spiritual injury, through the lens of both pastoral care and mental health treatment. Participants will work through the six principles of trauma-informed care and discuss practical application in their contexts.

- **Forgiving**

**Erica Van Wagner, LISW-CP and Carrie Nettles, MDiv, BCC**

This session will explore trauma-informed perspectives for teaching, preaching, and offering spiritual care on the topic of forgiving. We will utilize videos and case studies to illustrate emotionally safe verbiage and frameworks for abuse survivors.

- **Elementary School Prevention Module: Talk About Touching**

**Alexa Harper, MPA**

Talk About Touching utilizes evidence-based personal safety lessons designed for elementary-aged students. Tailored specifically for K5 and 3rd-grade students, these age-appropriate sessions teach essential safety skills. The K5 program covers topics like identifying trusted adults, distinguishing between safe and unsafe secrets or touches, understanding body boundaries, and learning four key safety rules for tricky or dangerous situations. The 3rd-grade program builds on these concepts, introducing additional topics like tricky people, identifying child molesters, and online safety strategies.

- **Sextortion, CSAM (child sexual abuse material), and the Online Enticement of Minors**

**Krista Alessandrini, MS and Erica Van Wagner, LISW-CP**

We're increasingly online, and many of us are raising digital natives while our own childhood was internet-free. This session will list the most common types of online abuse and highlight the importance of vigilance, education, and compassion in addressing online sextortion and enticement. We will encourage ongoing learning and collaboration with relevant agencies and support systems.

- **“Love, Honor, and Obey?” The Implications of Marital Rape**

**Mary McGee, RN, BA, SANE-A**

In this session, we will address the unique social and legal aspects of this crime, its ties to traditions of power and social control and its intersection with other related interpersonal violence. Through case studies and testimony from survivors, we as providers will discuss what tools we need to provide the greatest amount of support and healing for this trauma. In doing so, we will hopefully lift the veil and bring light to an important aspect of sexual trauma.

- **IPV (Interpersonal Violence) & Threat Assessments for Houses of Worship**

**Ellen Kennedy, BSN, RN, SANE-A, SANE-P and Rev. Dr. Jay Kieve, M.Div., Th.M., D.Min**

Research tells us that most mass violence events are precipitated by rising rates of interpersonal violence in the home. For faith communities committed to the common good, this session will offer current statistics, case examples, and highlight strategies for houses of worship to assess and intervene to prevent violence wherever possible.

- **Trees Walking: Using Guidance from Public Interest Communications to Craft Prevention Messaging for Faith Communities**

**Rev. Dr. Jay Kieve, M.Div., Th.M., D.Min**

In the Bible, Mark chapter 8, Jesus works to heal a blind man who, on the first attempt, doesn't fully receive his sight. He comments to Jesus, "I see people but they look like trees, walking." Hazy vision limited the man's ability to move toward thriving until Jesus acted again to fully restore the man's sight. Connecting to houses of worship with child sexual abuse prevention messages and training is essential for the thriving of those entities and their communities. But too often, a hazy vision of the faith tradition, its leaders, and its people limits our ability to connect with impactful experiences that cultivate prevention behavior. When we see people, but our understanding of them and their perspectives are limited, it is difficult to access their communities with training that transforms.

Using an approach to prevention planning that is informed by principles borrowed from public interest communications can help us see faith communities more clearly and improve our opportunity to create prevention-related behavior change. Public interest communications suggest that by narrowly targeting an audience and creating a clear and compelling call to action that is informed by a theory of change, when delivered by the right messenger, can move them beyond awareness to behavior modification. When applied to planning for prevention messaging and training, this approach would include:

- 1) Identifying and understanding the target faith community audience with empathy and accuracy. Using the levels suggested by the social-ecological model of prevention constitutes a useful method of organizing learning about the audience.
- 2) Creating a compelling call to action is closely tied to the identity of the audience discovered in phase 1. Here, best practices for prevention can be communicated with maximum hope for positive behavioral change.
- 3) Developing a theory of change that makes explicit the pathway to prevention within the faith community will enable prevention professionals to measure change, evaluate messaging, and create the next compelling call to action.
- 4) Selecting the messenger most likely to successfully deliver the prevention messaging forms the final step for powerfully connecting with faith communities.

From a hazy vision of "trees, walking," to a clear vision and plan for supporting houses of worship with excellent prevention training involves following the four steps suggested by public interest communications.

- **Creating A Spiritual Home for LGBTQ youth and their families**

**Rev. Adam Schultz, MDiv.**

Whether you know it or not, LGBTQIA+ people exist as part of every community--even communities of faith-- even well-intentioned faith communities can impart unwelcoming messages and spiritual abuse to LGBTQIA+ children and youth in the congregation. In this module, we will define the LGBTQIA+ community, explore the challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ children and youth, discuss how the lived experience of LGBTQIA+ can deepen all of our understanding of the gospel, and learn about what you as individuals and congregations can do to create communities of welcome for LGBTQIA+ children, youth, and their families.

- **Lessons from the SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examination) Room**

**Ellen Kennedy, BSN, RN, SANE-A, SANE-P**

In this session Prisma SANE coordinator will educate participants on the process of patients seeking a rape kit, dispel myths about evidence collection and prosecution, and enhance our capacity to respond sensitively. Participants will learn about local and national resources for survivors. Through this module, faith leaders will be better prepared to provide a supportive and empathic environment for survivors of sexual assault to aid the healing process and foster a safer community for all members.

- **I Wonder...**

**Rev. Carrie Nettles, MDiv, BCC and Erica Van Wagner, LISW-CP**

This session will present a spiritual care approach that employs story-telling, silence, and invitational curiosity to empower survivors to mend their broken meaning-making frameworks as a part of their healing process.