

Reporting Abuse

Handout: Grades 9-12

What to Do If You or Someone You Know Has Been Sexually Abused?

You are made in the image and likeness of God. Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. No one has a right to harm you. If you are currently experiencing abuse or have been abused in the past, it is important for your safety, your well-being, and your spiritual health that you tell a trusted adult who can help you, preferably a parent, teacher, counselor, or someone from your parish staff (pastor, youth minister, or faith formation leader). Normally that person will help you find the assistance you need, but if the person you tell does not help you get the abuse to stop or does not help you cope with the abuse, go to another adult you can trust and tell. Keep telling someone until you get the help you need. You are NOT made to be an object of abuse. You are made to love and be loved in the beautiful way that God has designed. This love will offer you beauty and goodness, NOT the fear, pain and suffering of abuse.

Likewise, it is important to report if someone you know has been or is currently being abused. Remember that we are all made in the image and likeness of God. For the good of every person, it is everyone's responsibility to report abuse, and to report it *now*. Note: If a friend tells you that they have been physically or sexually abused by an adult and asks you to promise not to tell, don't be sworn to secrecy. Don't promise not to tell anyone. Say, "I can't promise to keep a secret if your life is in danger or you are being hurt." Then, seek the help of a trusted adult or professional who can help you report the situation.

In addition to reporting to the State of Iowa, the Archdiocese of Dubuque has a system in place for, and encourages, reporting an incident of child sexual abuse by a priest, deacon, employee, or volunteer of the Archdiocese of Dubuque.

To report any and all child abuse, contact:

State

Department of Human Services

Website: <https://dhs.iowa.gov/report-abuse-and-fraud>

Hotline: 1-800-362-2178

Archdiocese of Dubuque

Victim Assistance Coordinators - Facilitate access to appropriate professional mental health services, social service agencies, support groups and/or individuals who can provide spiritual care. Call toll free 800-876-3546 to report an allegation or receive assistance.

To report an incident of sexual abuse of a person who is **currently under the age of 18** by a priest, deacon, employee or volunteer of the Archdiocese of Dubuque:

<https://dbqarch.org/report-sexual-abuse>

Archdiocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator: 563-584-3000

Archdiocese of Dubuque: 800-876-3546

State of Iowa - Mandatory Reporting

Although anyone may (and should) report suspected abuse, the state of Iowa has a mandatory reporting law. This means that people in certain professions must report child abuse. Mandatory reporters are:

- According to Iowa law, six classes of professionals must report suspected abuse within 24 hours from the time they notice the suspected abuse. Those professions are: health, mental health, education, law enforcement, child care, and social work. These people are required by Iowa law to complete a training course in mandatory reporting of abuse.
- A more detailed listing can be accessed using the following links:
 - Website to download "Guide for Mandatory Reporters in English or Spanish":
<https://dhs.iowa.gov/report-abuse-and-fraud>
 - Direct link to English (see pp.4-5): <https://dhs.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/Comm164.pdf?111720211656>
 - Direct link to Spanish (see pp. 4-5): <https://dhs.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/Comm164S.pdf?11172021170>
 - Enlace directo al español (ver págs. 4-5):
<https://dhs.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/Comm164S.pdf?11172021170>