

Checklist for Pastor or Church Leader and District Superintendent Facing a Crisis in a Church

Should information be revealed or a catastrophic event happen that disrupts the balance within a congregation resulting in a state of emotional turmoil and impairment, the following steps should be taken to access help for the congregation:

1. If the incident involves physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of a minor (0-17 years), you as a clergy person are legally obligated by Texas State Law to report without delegating this responsibility within 48 hours to make a report to either the police (especially if at risk of being around the accused) or the 24 hour Texas Child Abuse Hotline (800)252-5400. It is good practice to make the report as soon as you are done meeting with the complainant or family, even if they/the family state that they have reported to the authorities and/or filed a complaint.
2. If the incident involves a crime against an adult in the congregation, the pastor or person taking the complaint should offer to assist the complainant in reporting to the police. (If the incident is non-criminal misconduct between adults then proceed to the next step).
3. Report the incident to your District Superintendent (DS) immediately.
4. DS reports to Bishop.
5. Church Leader in consultation with DS determine administrative steps to be employed.
6. The DS and/or the Center for Leadership Development (CLD) refer to Crisis Coordinator for assessment. The Crisis Coordinator will speak with the DS, church leader, and others involved to complete the assessment.
7. DS and/or church leader disclose information to Staff Parish Relations Committee Chair (SPRC Chair) and church staff. The church staff and other leaders involved determine the initial appropriate responses to questions that are asked if/when the crisis information becomes known in the church and community.
8. Crisis Coordinator in Consultation with DS, Director of CLD, and SPRC determine crisis intervention plan (See CART Crisis Information Brochure).