

MinistrySafe, the official abuse prevention system for all churches in Central Texas Conference is very important to all of us. This newsletter will provide you with helpful information for your use.

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Understanding the Screening Process – Part 2

The Interview can be the aspect of the Screening Process that churches find the most difficult to incorporate into their program. It can be seen as time-consuming and intrusive, rather than relationship-building and proactive. MinistrySafe co-founder, Kimberlee Norris reminds us, *“There are some people that you cannot afford to be wrong about.”*

Here are some frequent questions about the Interview that came up in our recent MinistrySafe workshops.

At what point should the interview be conducted?

1. MinistrySafe recommends starting with the Video Training so that potential volunteers will understand the basis for the questions in the Application and Interview. This is also an “opt-out” moment for predators. After watching the video, they might realize that your church has high barriers and is

not an easy target.

2. Collect the Application from the volunteer and give out the Policy & Procedures. This will give everyone “reading homework” before an interview is scheduled.
3. If an interview is scheduled, the Interviewer should be prepared to ask follow up questions based on the written Application. The Interviewer will want to look for any inconsistency in responses between the Application and the oral interview.

Who can conduct the interviews? What are some best practices?

Many congregations will want to involve their Pastor in the interviews. But Pastors are not the only ones with good listening skills. Trained professionals who understand confidentiality such as school counselors, social workers, even police officers can be effective facilitators of the interview. If your church has a Stephen Ministry program, these lay people may be good Interviewers, too. Some churches might be tempted to “grandfather” in their long-standing volunteers and skip the Screening Process, including the interview. Following an equal and organized structure for all volunteers may alleviate some feelings of defensiveness in the compliance process. In other words, no one is being singled out or given different treatment. A best practice seems to be scheduling blocks of times when all volunteers sign-up for an interview.

What are the risk factors to look for?

As experts in the field, MinistrySafe has compiled a list of Risk Indicators that safety committees and those participating in the screening process (e.g., interviewers) should be aware of when considering potential volunteers. Good candidates for your volunteer program will have open and emotionally healthy peer relationships among friend, work, and family networks.

[To view Risk Indicators click here.](#)

*NOTE- just one or two “high-risk” responses does not disqualify a volunteer from your program. For instance, a church member may want to volunteer with middle school boys because that was a pivotal time when a mentor reached out to him after his parents’ divorce. With that explanation, this volunteer may be an asset to your ministry if there are no other concerns.

Does the Interviewer have to ask about personal experiences of abuse?

The written application includes the question, “Do you consider yourself to have been physically or sexually abused as a child.” This is highly-sensitive, yet relevant information to the safety system. If an applicant answers “yes” to this question, an appropriate Interviewer (e.g., the Pastor) should be utilized who can process this response if necessary. However, no in depth discussion of past abuse is required if there are no Risk Indicators present. If there are or if the applicants wants to discuss the question, you may take the opportunity to ask:

- a) if he/she needs any counseling resources; and
- b) if he/she understands the reporting procedure for abuse

Not all victims of abuse become abusers, but every volunteer in your program needs to be aware of the reporting procedure and understand that suspicions of abuse must be reported. Indeed, this may be a much-appreciated stance to some victims who felt stifled, helpless, or ignored when they needed help.

For more information on the Screening Process visit MinistrySafe by clicking [here](#).

The Central Texas Conference highly recommends the use of the Screening Documents designed by MinistrySafe. The Application, Interview, and Reference documents for local use is available by [clicking here](#).

For any questions please contact MinistrySafe (817-737-7233) or Rev. Amber Massingill in the CTC Conference Service Center (817-877-5222).

September Edition You are receiving this newsletter because you are listed as a SSA - Safety System Administrator of your church. The purpose of the newsletter is to answer frequently asked questions, provide supplemental information and resources as they become available, and share best practices related to our Central Texas Conference policies and MinistrySafe procedures. Please share this information with your supervisors. *If you are no longer your church's MinistrySafe SSA, please be sure to change the information on your church's dashboard and contact Sheryl Crumrine (sheryl@ctcumc.org) to update our mailing list. The newsletters will be archived on the CTC website (<http://www.ctcumc.org/ministrysafe>). This site also contains a link through which you can submit a topic for consideration to the MinistrySafe Oversight Committee for inclusion in a future newsletter.*

We hope this resource will be helpful for you as we move forward into implementing MinistrySafe and to continuing to grow in excellence in our care for children and youth in the years ahead.

The CTC MinistrySafe Oversight Committee



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