

Safeguarding and the ministry of Healing.

Safeguarding is central to the ministry of the Church.

Background.

In 2000 Cardinal Cormack Murphy-O'Connor invited Lord Nolan to set a framework for best practice in preventing abuse and responding to it, in whatever form, in the Catholic Church in England and Wales. The final recommendations were published in 2001 as "A Programme for Action" with a recommendation that it be reviewed again in 5 years time.

In Jan 2002 COPCA (the Catholic Office for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults) was established The Cumberlege Commission carried out this review and reported on 16th July 2007.

Out of the recommendations of the Cumberlege Report, on the 1st July 08 the National Catholic Safeguarding Commission (NCSC) and the Catholic Safeguarding Advisory Service (CSAS) were established. The NCSC agree policy and ensure standards are met and policies implemented, and CSAS is responsible for driving and supporting the safeguarding practice in our Parishes and Dioceses, supporting, caring for and protecting the vulnerable. **Risk Assessment**

This involves assessing risk for an event or activity and taking steps to reduce them.

- What hazards are involved?
- Who could be affected by them
- What measures need to be put in place to avoid them?
- Who will be in overall charge to organise this and cover in emergency?

Risks.

- People falling while being prayed with.
- Hazards near by which can cause injury.
- Falling heavily.
- The person praying with people is also vulnerable.

Dangers

- Where restraint is needed- bruising
- Where there is emotional need for affection etc.
- Mentally or emotional instability
- First aid required.
- Area of touch
- Over simplification of the dangers etc. eg. That the Holy Spirit will protect me. The Holy Spirit is Wisdom and expects us to use it.
- Also "I have done this for years and I have been OK up till now!"

Care.

- Treat all with respect and care.
- Be wise and prudent in all decisions and choices.
- All involved should be CRBd by Parish or Diocese.
- Avoid being drawn into attention seeking practises.
- All physical contact should be age appropriate.
- All touch should be appropriate to the persons need.
- Minimum of two persons taking into account gender balance.
- Work in public view- never alone.!
- Be prudent

Touch.

There are many ways of touching and many reasons to touch, even by accident as we brush past someone. Touch is sacred and involves trust; when it is abused it is the cause of great hurt. To enter another's world is a privilege and should be done with care and clear signals of respect.

- Always ask permission to touch-“Is it OK if I pray with you? Can I put my hand on your head? Have you been prayed with before? Ok this is what will happen , is that OK? Etc.
- Never touch intimate areas.
- If physical pain and you are male get a female to touch areas of pain outside clothing.- heart, arm leg knee etc.- with permission.
- Sensitivity and permission are essential where physical contact is involved in whatever ministry we offer.
- Awareness of our impact on others is essential- unacceptable approaches and expecting to give help, can be threatening.
- There is always an obligation of choice.
- The key question in all ministry is “Who’s needs are being met here? Is my ego involved in wanting to be seen to heal, in wanting this person to fall, or is the person and the Holy Spirit central to what I am doing?”

Overview.

- We can abuse people’s rights by adding pressure on them to claim healing or by pushing them to indicate a need to fall. If I am well known and there is respect for me and my reputation then I am likely to emit a message perhaps unintentionally. I am likely to get away with it because of who I am – but it still an abuse of ministry and of the person who is vulnerable in this situation.

- We cannot guarantee confidentiality in the case of abuse- it must be passed on- this is done with an assurance of getting them help.
- We have a duty of care even in confessional situations today where the person must be strongly advised to report this outside the confessional forum.
- **Failure to undergo CRB checks now if involved in the healing ministry, is now illegal.** This should be done before we begin this ministry in an ongoing way.
- It is helpful for people to receive training in this ministry so that they understand the dangers and needs of the healing ministry. Also that they are vetted for any involvement in the esoteric or that they themselves are emotionally stable.
- It is important that the importance of touch is highlighted. We all have different comfort zones for how near we like people to get.
- We need to be aware that restraint is close to deprivation of liberty in law, liberty does need to be regulated for a person's safety etc at times, and also to protect those present- but if it is necessary, **great care is a serious requirement!**
- **A useful principle in the area of all healing is "If you about to make a decision about a situation on your own, you are probable about to make the wrong one"**

Philip Dand. Salford.

Pat Kennedy MPS

Chair of Charismatic Renewal Hexham & Newcastle Diocese

Member of the National Service Committee of England and Wales

In Liaison with Hexham & Newcastle Safeguarding Office