

Comprehensive letter from Perry Pearson to Dakota friends

From: Perry Pearson [email address redacted]

Date: Wed, May 24, 2023

Subject: Letter to Dakota friends

To: Perry Pearson [email address redacted]

Cc: Paul Haakenson [email address redacted]

Dear North & South Dakota Friends,

We would like to share with you what we discussed at our staff meeting on May 19th. The information below has been reviewed and accepted by all workers on our staff.

Several topics we covered and will discuss here are as follows:

- Reporting concerns of child sexual abuse (CSA)
- Guidelines regarding sex offenders' attendance in meetings
- Current and additional child safety training for the Dakota staff
- Accountability for workers' behavior in the home

Since being notified in March of Dean Bruer's crimes, the Dakota workers have received no allegations of child sexual abuse/sexual abuse (CSA/SA) against anyone in the ministry in the Dakotas. We are aware this is a widespread issue with allegations presented in other states. We encourage any victims to reach out to available resources to begin your journey toward healing. The Dakota workers support you and will respect your confidentiality in this process.

A few available resources:

National Suicide & Crisis Hotline: 988 (Call or Text)

RAINN (National Anti-Sexual Violence Organization): 800-656-HOPE (4673)
or [online.rainn.org](https://www.rainn.org) (Live Chat)

These hotlines can assist you in connecting with appropriate resources in your area.

Reporting Concerns of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA):

The safety of children is everyone's business. Mandated reporters are required by law to report any reasonable suspicions of child abuse or neglect to the authorities. Anyone

can and should report reasonable suspicions of child abuse or neglect. According to the laws in North and South Dakota, workers are not considered mandated reporters. However, we intend to respond as mandated reporters and report all suspicions and concerns of CSA. We were advised to report suspicions and concerns to Child Protective Services so that the report is brought to the correct people and the appropriate action can be taken immediately.

RAINN Hotline (They will direct you to the appropriate reporting jurisdiction):800-656-HOPE (4673)

North Dakota Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting (M-F 8am-5pm): 833-958-3500

South Dakota Child Protective Services (M-F 8am-5pm):877-244-0864

If you believe a child is in IMMEDIATE danger, call 911

Guidelines Regarding Sex Offenders' Attendance in Meetings:

We will continue to work within full compliance of each offender's parole restrictions within North and South Dakota. Each situation varies and has its own concerns; however, there are a few general guidelines we will be putting in place, in addition to any legal restrictions that may be associated with their case:

- There will be NO registered sex offenders at any ND/SD convention.
- The people in the meeting will be consulted before an offender attends. No one will be in meeting with an offender against their wishes.

Current and Additional Child Safety Training for the Dakota Staff:

We are all helping each other be accountable. We do not need to live in fear, but we do need to be aware. We discussed several different child safety programs that would be a benefit for us to take.

- All of the ND/SD workers are certified in the Ministry Safe program. This has been ongoing since 2010. It is renewed every 2-3 years.
- All of the ND/SD workers will take the ND mandated reporter training by May 31, 2023 and retake it every 2-3 years.
- All of the ND/SD workers will take the Youth Protection Training offered by Boy Scouts of America before June 8, 2023 and retake it every 2-3 years.
- All workers transferring to our staff from other areas or starting in the work will take the above training also.

We are also asking all of our elders and wives to take the Ministry Safe course. [names redacted] in Sioux Falls will be managing the course for the elders and any of the friends that wish to take it. If you are interested in taking the course, please contact them at [email address redacted].

We invite anyone who would like to educate themselves to also take advantage of these resources.

Ministry

Safe: <https://ministrysafe.com>

North Dakota Mandated Reporter Training: <https://mandatedreporter.pcand.org/index.html>

Youth Protection Training: <https://www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection>

Accountability for Workers' Behavior in the Home:

We want to do all we can to be a safe ministry.

- We recognize that it is safest when two (or three) workers work together in a field. We commit to doing this in our work except in rare, unavoidable circumstances.
- Workers will not purposefully seek to be alone with children in secluded areas.
- Workers' activities with minors will be with parental consent or involvement.
- Workers will be respectful of personal property.
- If you, for any reason, are uncomfortable with a worker in your home, please communicate with us and alternative arrangements will be made.

We cannot change what has been done in the past, but we can do our very best to improve the future. It is important to us that you are comfortable with us in your homes and with your families. Please communicate with us regarding your comfort level and concerns, and know we will listen and respect your boundaries.

Things we would like to encourage you:

- If you observe a worker alone too much, please approach them and/or alert other workers.
- If you see inappropriate behavior in a worker, please tell someone you trust.
- If you are not comfortable with what has been asked of you, say **NO**.
- If you see that any of the items outlined above are not being adhered to, please tell someone you trust.

Thank you for sharing your concerns with us so that actions can be taken to alleviate them. We have outlined initial steps to address the CSA/SA issues. We realize it is just a start. We are committed to follow through and know there are more conversations to have and actions to take. Please continue sharing with us and making suggestions so that the ministry and the meetings can be a safe place for all.

Sincerely,

Your staff of workers in the Dakotas