

Texas / New Mexico workers workshop May 2023

May 20

To our Friends in the Texas/New Mexico Fields,

As communicated previously, the Texas/New Mexico staff came together on May 11-13, 2023 for the specific purpose to raise our awareness of SA/CSA and the danger it presents, to equip ourselves with appropriate practices that prevent and/or address problems when they arise, and, above all, to reinforce a professional standard of behavior that reflects the testimony of our Lord and Savior. The workshop was conducted by several of our friends and each presented on a topic within the scope of their professional expertise. Even though we are not a formal organization their expertise is applicable to our fellowship. The topics covered were:

- Sexual Abuse and Child Sexual Abuse (SA/CSA)
 - Laws and regulations requiring reporting of SA/CSA
 - Agencies authorized and mandated to investigate reports of SA/CSA
 - Psychological and physiological responses to, and impacts from, SA/CSA
 - Recognizing Red Flags Behaviors associated with sexual predators
 - Education regarding the signs of victims of abuse and trauma
 - Awareness of National and State resources available for education, reporting, and treatment

- Professionalism: Boundaries and Standards of Conduct
 - Types of boundaries including: physical, personal, emotional, sexual, time, and monetary
 - Considerations for managing conflicts and building stronger communications within organizations
 - Consideration of dynamics of power and communication including: abuse of power, how to respond/report, and best practices for preventing and/or mitigating impacts within organizations
 - Consideration of cultural differences/boundaries including social, gender, societal, geographical and generational

- Technology: Smartphones/Social Media - Balance and Boundaries
 - Productivity with technology
 - Becoming aware of the “distraction to destruction” threat of technology

- Leadership Versus Management: Understanding the Difference

The workshop process provided valuable information that has, and will continue to, provide great benefit to us. The information presented and the related discussions in all the topic areas will prove extremely beneficial in assisting us as we strive to serve. The workshop resulted in better informed and educated participants on many topics, but especially those related to CSA/SA awareness, prevention, and response. The workers agreed that the outcome of the workshop was not only educational but also allowed for identification of best practices for the ministry. Our discussions also resulted in the intentional empowerment of all workers, young and old, male and female, to have open lines of communication and self-advocacy. We all agreed that there was clear evidence of the presence and leading of the Spirit throughout our workshop.

As a result of the workshop, the plan of the TX/NM Staff is to implement the following actions:

1. Develop and share a policy on identification and response to CSA/SA - in review

2. Develop and share procedures for identification of Red Flag Behaviors and how they are reported to a 3rd party professional organization for investigation - in development

3. Finalize the agreed upon internal guidelines for conduct for TX/NM Staff

We acknowledge that some of these goals will take time to complete. We are dedicated to timely establishment of guidelines/policies for effective implementation of best practices in these areas. To honor our purpose, we acknowledge that this process is an ongoing effort which must allow for continuous updating and improvement.

We are including some SA/CSA resources for your information. We encourage you to review the information we have included. The raising of awareness enables the safest environment possible. When we know better, we can do better.

The workshop was a highly informative and deeply emotional process. Each day taxed our mental and emotional limits. We understand that a three-day seminar will not allow us to resolve all the issues facing us, but we feel assured that we are pointed in the right

direction. We have already seen, even in these three days, that all workers felt the freedom to engage in open dialogue. A few of the thoughts that were shared during our days together:

- "This is something I wish we could have done years ago."
- "I really wish that we would have had this when I started in the work."
- "I am glad to see the transition here into everyone being able to express themselves."
- "It is clear that God is refining his ministry."
- "This has been the icing on the cake of all my days in the ministry."

After our days together, we are comforted and assured again by what Paul wrote to Timothy, *Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his* (II Tim. 2:19).

Sincerely,

The Texas/New Mexico Staff