

## 1. Zero tolerance for emotional abuse:

We simply must have zero tolerance for intimidation, invalidation, control, slander, bullying, malice, fear mongering, retaliation, coercing, insulting, slighting and every other form of abuse.

Jesus, our example in life, never used any of the above-mentioned traits against anyone and neither should we.

### Next Steps

- a) It would be very helpful for all workers and friends to take courses on anti-bullying, white privilege and Black Lives Matter, Every Child Matters, and women's rights to educate themselves and learn other points of view.
- b) Victims of abuse must be encouraged to tell their stories to trusted friends and to seek therapy with qualified professionals. The professional recommendations will be followed to mitigate the risk of additional abuse.
- c) Mental health needs should be addressed by a qualified mental health professional. The professional recommendations should be followed. All parties involved should be educated on how to support victims with mental health concerns.
- d) There is a high frequency of workers exiting the work stating health reasons. In many cases their discouragement is a result of mental or physical abuse. The existing hierarchy and culture of power, control and emotional abuse prevents victims from telling their true story.
  - We need to be more proactive in recognising the root cause of abuse and dealing with it. We are sure most workers and friends are not okay with this behaviour or any form of abuse.
- e) Any worker should be allowed to speak freely with their parents, or any trusted friends regarding their work except of course for cases of confidentiality. This type of support offers a fresh perspective, a sounding board, education, encouragement, and suggested mediation.
  - Note: In the past workers were told not tell their parents or anyone if they were being emotionally or sexually abused. What happens in the work stays in the work was the policy. This is control.
- f) There are many man-made rules and traditions that have been elevated to doctrine and confused with righteousness. The tradition of having a certain acceptable outward appearance such as women's clothing has been a way to control people and has been controlled through shaming, bullying, consequences and other abusive tactics. Jesus dressed like a typical person of his day. Thus, we need to allow people to choose their clothing as appropriate.
- g) Another painful source of judgement and condemnation is a person's hair, especially regarding women. We are all aware that disease, genetics, race, stress, and other factors affect a person's hair. To receive judgemental condemnation for issues of hair is control. We need to do better in how we treat each other.
- h) We all, need to refrain from adding more emotional stress or abuse by judging anyone who leaves the work or the fellowship. We all must remember that this is a person's life, and they are entitled to choose accordingly. They have sacrificed a portion of their life to spreading the gospel story or to edifying others and we appreciate all their efforts.
- i) Workers and friends need to treat strangers as instructed in the Bible. We should not make anyone feel uncomfortable or unaccepted.

## 2. Hierarchy Structure:

- a) The basis of many of the crimes and cover-ups can be attributed to the power imbalance of the overseers. The proportion of abusive reports in power positions appears significantly higher. The concentration of power in one person results in higher risk of power imbalance and corruption. Using a team-based model

of decision making that consists of workers and friends both men and women would help close the communications gap.

- b) In addition to this, without an exit process or protocol in place there is no effective means of removing an overseer who chooses not to step down or who continues in their place after they are no longer effective in their role. It may be helpful to rotate people through this role on a regular basis – perhaps every 3 years.
- c) In an order to create a less tiered hierarchy of power it is important to delegate decision authority. Empower people to make appropriate and safe decisions in their field and encourage decision making by men and women at the field level.
- d) There is confusion over the existing Hierarchy structure of the Ministry and applicable responsibilities. Selected elders and workers with good reputation should meet to discuss how this process works going forward.
  - a. We need to review the responsibilities of the Elders and Workers and Overseers.
  - b. Do we need several levels of oversight?
  - c. Who makes these decisions?
  - d. Who selects the overseers? And on What bases are they selected?
- e) Background checks should be performed on anyone taking responsibility over others whether an elder, worker or oversight. This process could be as simple as several friends' elders and workers meeting together to approve the change and who witness and bless the person being given responsibility.

### 3. Communication:

- a) Communicate with workers openly about situations, to work together on peaceful solutions. These efforts should not result in retaliation and consequences.
- b) Communications should be open and honest. If issues are hidden or suppressed, they will only expand to larger issues and reduce trust when the truth is made clear.
  - There is mercy where there is truth.
  - Any communication with a married couple should be to both the man and the women to ensure the communication is received in its totality.
- c) When changes a church meeting occurs, there have been instances of poor communication. The failure to fully discuss/communicate (e.g., who requested the change and why) with both the elders and friends it can result in stress for all parties.
- d) Communicate actions taken to prevent CSA/SA abusers attending conventions and all other fellowship meetings.
- e) Schedule yearly field meetings with elders and their wives and friends to hear any questions or concerns they have.

### Behaviours that can inflict emotional wounds include:

This list below was created by a professing (Australian Physician, Professor of Medicine, Chair of the Safer Families Committee for his health service district which is focussed on prevention of CSA and Domestic Violence) also another woman in Brisbane who has cared for many harmed sister workers and has health professional and psychological training, and a male Public Health Physician who has an interest in prevention of mental illness.

- Attempts to humiliate, invalidate, and criticize.
- Behaviours of domination and control.
- Signs of emotional distance and manipulation.
- Refusal to accept blame or apologize.

- “Gaslighting” – where an emotionally abusive person leads you to question your own sanity or reality.
- Disrespect of personal boundaries.
- Name calling
- Yelling
- Insults
- Imitation
- Threats
- Swearing
- Ignoring the person
- Isolating the person
- Excluding the person from meaningful events or activities
- Feelings of humiliation.
- Feelings of invalidation.
- Being criticized.
- Feelings of being judged.
- Speech or behaviour that is degrading.
- Feelings of being dismissed.
- Being accused of being too sensitive.
- Being accused of not being able to take a joke.
- Having your opinions constantly dismissed.
- Being subject to embarrassment.
- Being isolated from talking to your friends or family.
- Not being allowed to make decisions for yourself.
- Not being allowed to take time out when you need it.
- Needing permission to do things that you need to do.
- Excessively controlling behaviours.
- Being deprived of reasonable amounts of money for necessities.
- Being required to ask permission before you spend any money.
- Being required to inform your companion of where you are and what you are doing at all times.
- Having the password to your phone, email or social media accounts known by your companion.
- Having your phone or correspondence reviewed by your companion.
- Being given the silent treatment when you have a disagreement, rather than engaging in a mature discussion.
- Feeling a sense of emotional distance.
- Being made to feel like you’re always at fault, even if you did nothing wrong.
- Being threatened or manipulated.
- Being denied usual social pleasantries, companionship, or attention as a punishment.
- Manipulation through threats.
- Threatening to harm themselves if you do something they don’t want you to do.
- The emotionally abusive person never accepts blame or apologizes.
- Constant denial or embellishment of the facts to make themselves look like a victim.
- Emotional abusers rarely admit fault, often cannot laugh at themselves, and don’t tolerate being teased by others.
- Sharing of personal information without your permission.
- Not being treated like an individual, but rather, required to do what the other person thinks is always best for you.
- Discouraged from forming personal relationships with other people.
- You question your own sanity and reality.
- You constantly second guess yourself.

- You feel a need to apologize for everything, even for insignificant or non-existent errors.
- You find yourself struggling with making simple choices.
- You feel that you are not good enough for the emotionally abusive person.
- You notice yourself becoming withdrawn, angry, gaining, or losing weight, miserable.

## Definitions:

**Bullying:** Bullying is the use of force or coercion to abuse or intimidate others. The behaviour can be habitual and involve an imbalance of social or physical power. It can include verbal harassment or threat, physical assault or coercion and may be directed repeatedly towards victims, perhaps on grounds of race religion, gender, sexuality, or ability.

**Discrimination:** Discrimination means exclusion of, treatment of, or action against an individual based on social status, race, ethnicity, colour, religion, gender including gender identity and gender expression, sexual orientation, age, marital status, national origin, political affiliation, or disability.

**Harassment:** Harassment means any unwelcome comment or behaviour that is offensive, demeaning, humiliating, derogatory, or any other inappropriate behaviour that fails to respect the dignity of an individual.

**Sexual harassment:** Sexual harassment means any unwelcome sexual advance, comment, expressed or implied sexual demand, touch, joke, gesture, or any other communication or conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal, written or visual, by any person to another individual within the scope of fellowship. Sexual harassment may be directed at members of any gender and includes harassment based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

**Sexual abuse:** Sexual abuse is actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, including inappropriate touching, by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

**Zero tolerance:** The principle and practice of not tolerating any instance of sexual abuse, harassment, bullying and discrimination in all our meetings and conferences and applying a clear procedure concerning breaches or violations.