

“In our personal lives, Friends seek to acknowledge and nurture sexuality as a gift from God for celebrating human love with joy and intimacy. In defining healthy sexuality, Friends are led in part by our testimonies: that sexual relations be equal, not exploitative; that sexual behaviour be marked by integrity; and that sex be an act of love, not of aggression. Sexuality is at once an integral and an intricate part of personality. Our understanding of our own sexuality is an essential aspect of our journey toward wholeness. Learning to incorporate sexuality in our lives responsibly, joyfully, and with integrity should be a lifelong process beginning in childhood.”

- Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, *Faith and Practice*¹

Addressing Violations and Misunderstandings of a Sexual Nature (Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment) in Friends Meetings²

Written and Compiled by
the Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Ethics
Of the Canadian Yearly Meeting
2006 - 2009

This document offers guidelines, quotations and queries to aid our understanding of sexual assault and sexual harassment between adults. It provides possible responses to violations and misunderstandings of a sexual nature within the context of Friends' Meetings. It is written and compiled by the Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Ethics of Canadian Yearly Meeting and incorporates much of a document written by the Working Party on Sexual Abuse of Ministry and Counsel of New England Yearly Meeting of Friends. We hope that it will bring us closer to God's will in confronting traumatic situations. We release this paper for the Spirit to move among us.

¹ Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, “Applications of Friends’ Testimonies,” PYM - Faith and Practice, <http://www.pym.org/publish/fnp/07_applications.php>, accessed October 26, 2008

² Please refer to Alan Moosman’s document for guidelines on the same issue with respect to children and their safety.

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Last Word

Summary of the History of the Concern Regarding Sexual Harassment and Abuse and Sexual Ethics within Canadian Yearly Meeting

Introduction

Our committee, as well as undertaking to address two difficult areas of sexuality, also wishes to initiate discussion and contemplation about the meaning of healthy sexuality in a Quaker context. We see this as a necessity for fostering and affirming a Quakerly culture of loving, respectful sexuality. We believe that in educating our community about sexual values, we work towards the active prevention of behaviors which hurt and harm each other. While this document explicitly addresses violations and misunderstandings, past and present, it does not replace the need for conversation about sexuality from the perspective of Friends. For resources, please refer to Resources.

This document attempts to offer resources and guidance in the difficult situation when someone in the Meeting experiences or commits sexual assault or sexual harassment (or is accused thereof), suspects that either may be happening or may soon happen, or actually witnesses some form of sexual abuse or sexual impropriety as it occurs. This cannot be considered a legal document for which the Canadian Yearly Meeting can be held accountable, because Canadian Yearly Meeting does not exercise legal authority over Monthly Meetings. We are writing guidelines and offering suggestions for resources.

We recognize the diversity of geography, size and experience of Canadian Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups. These guidelines may need to be adapted (sometimes radically) to fit the reality of the locations and energies of Canadian Friends. For example, numerous committees of care may not be possible. The essential spirit of the document is that sexuality is meant to be a good and healthy aspect of human life; any alterations to these guidelines are possible in the light of that spirit.

These guidelines were developed as Canadian Yearly Meeting discerned the need for an independent Ad Hoc committee to complete the work initiated in 1991 after two complaints of harassment within the Yearly Meeting were made. The difficult history of this concern working its way through CYM is reflected by repeated attempts to find clarity and inspiration and to formulate policy and procedure. For our committee's summary of the seventeen years of wrestling with the issue, please refer to the Appendix entitled *Summary of the History of the Concern Regarding Sexual Harassment and Abuse and Sexual Ethics within Canadian Yearly Meeting*.

In terms of resources incorporated into this document, we are very grateful to New England Yearly Meeting for permission to base our work on their 1994 booklet *Addressing Sexual Abuse in Friends' Meetings*. We take full responsibility for the elements of that publication we chose to incorporate into *Addressing Violations and Misunderstandings of a Sexual Nature*, as well as the material we bring to it from our own experience. Note that New England Yearly Meeting is a numerically large but geographically compact body. This group may well be able to offer numerous committees of care. However, we should be conscious that our few numbers and widely distributed Yearly Meeting cannot offer such extensive assistance

Friends' core testimony is that there is that of God within every living person. We have done our best in our committee work to witness to this testimony, while acknowledging the ocean of darkness to which any person may succumb. Our committee holds in the Light all who struggle with this issue. Our intention has been to illumine the fog of confusion in which this subject is shrouded. We fully recognize that this document we have created is unlikely to be final word on the issue in Canadian Yearly Meeting nor is it our current, corporate testimony. Nevertheless, we hope that it will be accepted as a working tool in Canadian Friends' search for clarity and light as we face the reality of sexual misconduct among us.

Limitations of this document

We were not able to cover in this paper several issues that are associated with sexual abuse. Related issues include domestic violence, homophobia, pornography, gender harassment, sexual addiction and discrimination or harassment based on sexual orientation or identity, as well as the rehabilitation of convicted sexual offenders. We were unable to include issues involving ritual abuse, a manifestation of sexual abuse connected with religious rites or words. We are specifically not addressing issues related to recovered memories, or accusations that these memories are false (we do not believe we can resolve this question here). We did not address these problems in order to focus our energy and carefully cover the issues we selected.

Invitation

We invite you to share with Canadian Yearly Meeting and your own Monthly Meeting Ministry and Council how this document affected you and your Meeting. Was it useful? Did it cause dissension? You are welcome to share particular stories and what was learned from them. We speak further about this in the closing section.

The work of creating a culture and climate of loving, respectful sexuality is a large and on-going work occurring in many places in our society at large. We recommend that CYM encourage this work, possibly through the dedication of a travelling minister, the development of a testimony committing CYM to fostering a safe community, proposing new queries in Faith and Practice, inviting worship-sharing topics at CYM on related topics -- all the consciousness-raising and educational activities we would use for any other important testimony or concern.

Peering out of the fog towards the Light:

Sara avMaat, Bruce Dienes, Linda Hill, Jane Keeler, Alan Mooseman, Linnéa Rowlett

Part 1: Reflections on Sexuality and Sexual Issues Among Friends

SECTION ONE: A CULTURE OF LOVING, RESPECTFUL SEXUALITY

Grounding Sexual Ethics in Quaker Principles

SOME BASIC PRINCIPLES OF OUR FAITH AS FRIENDS

Hearing & Heeding God's Inward Voice. As Friends, we believe that God can guide us as a community to discover what is right in this area. We also believe that God can guide us in our hearts to know what is right for us to do sexually as individuals. We can also approach each other within the faith community to seek each others' guidance and assistance in discerning what is right through counsel, eldership, informal friendly advice and formal meetings for clearness.

Love. As the First Epistle of John tells us, we cannot love God unless we love one another. Our first motion in sexuality must be deep caring and affection for each other as children of God.

Wholeness. As Jesus taught us, the Kingdom of God is right here among us. As such we affirm the goodness of our bodies and the healthiness of sexuality. We reject any suggestion that our spiritual nature is "higher" than our physical nature or that there is anything inherently evil or "dirty" about the sexual part of our being. This is the heart of the idea that our bodies are "temples of the Spirit."

OUR TESTIMONIES AS GUIDES TO PRACTICE

We want to explore together what our Quaker testimonies can teach us and ways they can guide us in our sexual ethics and decision-making.

Our Testimony on Simplicity. We hope our sexual activity will draw us closer to God and will help to open our hearts to the living Voice of the Spirit. For this to happen it is important to stay free of any kind of sexual addictions that could enchain us and make it harder to act in response to God's leadings.

Our Testimony on Integrity. It is important that we be open and honest with those we are involved with sexually and not act in any way to deceive others. We hope that our behaviors are fully consistent with our deepest values and express who we are at the core. Although it is fine to practice privacy and discretion, we hope our behaviors are ones that we would be proud for others to know about and that we would not feel in any way ashamed of.

Our Testimony on Peace. Our sexual relationships should be based on mutual respect and avoid any kind of violence or coercion. As John Woolman taught us to be concerned about any behavior that involves us in the enslavement or suffering of others, we must ensure that our sexual activities do not even indirectly involve us in the exploitation or suffering of others, including those involved in the production of sexual media, even at a great distance from us.

Our Testimony on Equality. Our sexual relationships should be based on mutuality and equality of power. We affirm the importance of all among us having access to healthy sexual expression including children, those with physical and mental disabilities, the elderly and sexual and gender minorities.

Our Testimony on Community. We seek to ensure that our sexual decisions and activity serve to strengthen and build up the community of our meeting and the stability and healthiness of the marriages, relationships, families, and friendships within it.

Peter Blood-Patterson
Mount Toby MM, New England YM

Responsibility of the Meeting

The purpose of this section is to support Monthly Meetings in fostering a culture of positive sexuality. As we uphold values of loving, respectful sexuality in the Light, our beacon shines forth not only within Canadian Yearly Meeting but in society at large, in the way our other Testimonies do.

Queries

- What are your religious beliefs that relate to sexuality?
- Has your Meeting sought to educate its members about positive sexuality in ways appropriate to their ages and stages (this may include financial support)?
- Do your committees for clearness for marriage broach the subject of healthy sexuality and mention an openness to discussing sexual questions with couples who apply for marriage under the care of your Meeting?
- What is good Quaker flirtation? How do we get to being sexual with each other? How do we meet & mate in Meeting? (a little bit of humour is intended here) How do we organize a meeting for mating?

Readings

Let us then try what love will do

- William Penn

Whether we've stopped to think about it or not, each of us has a philosophy of sex. Although there are many variations on a theme, for the majority of us in this culture, that philosophy assumes that there is something wrong with sex. It is something to be feared or endured. It's inextricably linked with sin or pain. Working to break down sex-negativity is much like working to break down racism or homophobia – it's a process that takes a lifetime.

- Charlie Glickman

"The Language of Sex-Positivity"

Quakers, like others, in recent years have experienced a growing understanding and appreciation of human sexuality and its important role in our lives. In the words of the British Friends who wrote *Towards a Quaker View of Sex*:

Sexuality, looked at dispassionately, is neither good nor evil--it is a fact of nature and a force of immeasurable power. But looking at it as Christians we have felt impelled to state without reservation that it is a glorious gift of God. Throughout the whole of living nature it makes possible an endless and fascinating variety of creatures, a lavishness, a beauty of form and colour surpassing all that could be imagined as necessary to survival.

Towards a Quaker View of Sex

Revised edition, 1964

Sexuality encompasses the sexual knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, values and behaviors of individuals. It includes not only anatomy, physiology, and biochemistry of the sexual response system, but also identity, orientation, roles, personality, thoughts, feelings and relationship. The expression of sexuality is influenced by ethical, spiritual, cultural and moral concerns.

- SIECUS, 1989

It is the right of every individual to live in an environment of freely available information, knowledge and wisdom about sexuality, so as to be enabled to realize his or her human potential.

- Mary Calderone

“The SIECUS/NYU Principles Basic to Education for Sexuality”

“Just because we’re told that Jesus Christ was celibate and died a virgin, this does not mean that sex is bad, or that talking about sex is wrong.”

- Linnéa Rowlett

Ad Hoc Committee for Sexual Ethics

Then a hermit, who visited the city once a year, came forth and said, Speak to us of Pleasure.

And he answered, saying:

Pleasure is a freedom-song,

But it is not freedom.

It is the blossoming of your desires,

But it is not their fruit.

It is a depth calling unto a height,

But it is not the deep nor the high.

It is the caged taking wing,

But it is not space encompassed.

Aye, in very truth, pleasure is a freedom-song.

And I fain would have you sing it with fullness of heart; yet I would not have you lose your hearts in the singing.

- Kahlil Gibran

The Prophet

Our Meeting is a community of people seeking to perfect their love of God and of all living beings. We support each other in this quest through our silent worship together and in our relationships with each other. While we accept our human imperfections in interacting with each other, we are bound together by the trust that comes from our commitment to treat each other with love, compassion, and respect. Verbal, physical, and sexual harassment are actions which destroy this trust and require vigorous counteraction. If anyone in our Meeting feels harassed by another member/attender, the Meeting needs to be informed, usually through Overseers [Note: Ministry and Counsel in CYM], in order to act to support all concerned, prevent further occurrences, and avoid isolation of any person.

Minute on Nurturing Trust in Our Community,
Mt. Toby Meeting (MA), Sixth Month, 1989

In contrast to this recognition of vibrancy and beauty, there are lingering misunderstandings and ignorance about sexuality, especially in relation to our specifically sexual needs and urges. This can be harmful to people of all ages. Fuller knowledge and understanding are sorely needed. Sex education is therefore important for everyone. Readily available information and open discussion of human sexuality are to be encouraged for both children and adults.

People experience their sexuality from the beginning of life and need to learn what this means to them. Parents and the Meeting can encourage children in their exploration of this meaning by constructively supporting the child's natural interest in his or her own sexuality and in that of others. Parents teach their children primarily by the example of their lives together. Ideally they demonstrate mutual love, affection, consideration, and trust in a lasting relationship that includes sexual gratification and joy.

One aspect of sexuality which we are only beginning to understand is sexual orientation. Even as we begin to recognize that both heterosexual and homosexual orientations are a matter of fact, we affirm that all persons are valuable in the sight of God.

We are challenged to discipline our sexual behaviour in the light of our growing awareness of overall sexuality. This concept includes keeping sexual behaviour in the context of the total interpersonal relationship, rather than treating sexual activity as an end in and of itself. Casual, exploitative, or promiscuous sexual behaviour can produce emotional and physical suffering and harm. In dealing with sexual matters, care and concern for others is no less important than care and concern for oneself.

- Mary Calderone
1973

SECTION 2: WHAT IS SEXUAL ABUSE?

Responsibility of the Meeting

If we remain ignorant about how sexual abuse manifests itself, it will continue. As much as we encourage Meetings to learn the resources in their particular community, knowing about the resources is not enough. Friends must be able to perceive destructive behavior and have the courage to confront it. If we aren't ready or do not want to see it, we will not see it.

There are many definitions, and we do not offer “right” answers. A way to begin is to say that sexual assault is to force unwanted sexual activity and sexual harassment is to impose unwanted attention or unwanted behavior of a sexual nature. Either of these can be considered sexually abusive. Sexual abuse may take a physical, verbal or psychological form, and may be conveyed directly, or by telephone, writing or electronic means. There are many levels of discomfort, which may not be directly equivalent to the action involved. Sexual abuse is **not** a relationship of mutual consent, **not** a hug between friends and **not** mutual flirtation. The element of mutual willing participation is crucial to discerning between sexual abuse and fun.

To take the example of flirtation, it is mutual when it makes both participants feel good, acknowledged, happy and attractive. It results in positive self-esteem. It is complimentary, intended to please the recipient, and is a positive, wanted, legal behavior. Sexual harassment posing as flirtation can make the recipient feel powerless, demeaned, threatened and possibly unsafe. It may result in negative self-esteem, and can lead to the lack of self-confidence or regard for personal safety. It is one-sided, degrading and unwanted, and based on an imbalance of power. It does not lead to feelings of admiration for the flirter.

How can you tell which one you are participating in, either as the flirter or the flirtee? Direct and sensitive communication is a valuable tool for discerning the difference. Assertively and respectfully letting others know what we are comfortable with is part of the art of speaking truth to power. It is sometimes easier for Friends to do this in a political or ideological arena than inter-personally; also, being the power that truth is spoken to may come as a bit of a jolt to Friends.

In Canada, each province has a unique (although similar) legal definition of sexual abuse, sexual harassment and sexual assault. For the legal definition pertaining to your Monthly Meeting, we strongly recommend that you get professional legal advice. We recommend that Meetings and groups begin a discussion of sexual abuse by examining this definition, exploring its implications and being open about any possible feelings of reservation about its application. For an initial discussion about sexual abuse we recommend the presence of a resource specialist if possible.

Queries

- Have you had the experience of wondering if what you just experienced was sexually inappropriate in some way? Were you able to clarify your confusion over what had happened?
- Do you feel free to ask whether your touch, words or physical closeness are acceptable to the recipient?
- Have you ever complained to a third party about someone's socio-sexual behavior in Meeting, but not to the person you are complaining about?
- Do you feel that your affectionate gestures have been misinterpreted?

Readings

"Can we know and name evil, struggle against it, while focused on that simplicity that's called the good, the honest?"

- Deborah Padfield
The Friend, 23 May 1997

Rape is violence, not sex.

- A button sold by Rape Crisis Centers

SECTION THREE: AWARENESS OF SEXUAL ABUSE WITHIN A MONTHLY MEETING

Responsibility of the Meeting

It is the responsibility of members and attenders of Friends Meetings to expand and deepen their understanding of the nature of human sexuality, the factors which contribute to the expression of sexuality and the potentials for abuse, pain and distress therein. This section is useful for Friends who have not considered that sexual abuse may be affecting their Meetings. We do not offer "right" answers here, but rather readings, questions and provocative comments. We hope that this will help Friends Meetings respond to the needs of all our members and attenders, not just those struggling with sexual abuse. How can Friends bring our faith into practice regarding sexuality?

Queries:

Individual awareness:

- Have you thought about how your beliefs on the nature of women and the nature of men make an impact on your behaviour? On your attitudes towards what is appropriate behaviour for others? Are you aware of how you developed your beliefs about the nature of men and the nature of women?

- What impact do you think your comments and behavior have upon others in the meeting?
- How do you negotiate the question of consent in your sexual relationships? How do you decide when to disclose a sexual problem you have experienced or witnessed?
- Do you feel that the struggle you may have with your own childhood sexual experiences is supported in Meeting?
- Are there areas of human pain in sexuality that you feel unable to accept or approach?

Corporate awareness:

- Have individuals or a committee been identified to respond to reports of sexual abuse or harassment?
- Has your Meeting minuted its position on sexual abuse and harassment?
- How comfortable are Friends with using the legal system to resolve conflicts, to intervene for crimes such as incest, or harassment, or stalking?
- Quakers talk often about love, truth and restorative justice; how do we perceive justice in the case of sexual abuse?
- Are there people in your Meeting who have a reputation for inappropriate touching or speech? How does your Meeting handle this?

Readings

In 1698, George Fox wrote concerning the spiritual guidance of those in the Meeting: "And as such as behold their brother or sister in a transgression, go not in a rough, light or upbraiding spirit to reprove or admonish him or her, but in the power of the Lord, and spirit of the Lamb, and in the wisdom and love of the Truth, which suffers thereby, to admonish such an offender. So may the soul of such a brother or sister be seasonably and effectually reached unto and overcome, and they may have cause to bless the name of the Lord on their behalf, and so a blessing may be rewarded into the bosom of that faithful and tender brother or sister that so admonished them."

- George Fox
Epistle 264, 1698

Sexual abuse or misuse causes a wound that cannot heal itself. It must be brought into the open and placed in a healing light. Too many people are suffering the consequences alone, not knowing that other people have had the same bitter experience and that by talking openly we can help each other. One way to make that light available - to give permission to talk about these incidents - is to have useful books prominently displayed in the Meeting. We need practical books that give our children power to protect themselves from adults without conscience, and books to help victims understand that they are victims and not willing conspirators, and books that show adults that old, old wounds can still be healed.

- Anonymous
"Sexual Abuse and Recovery," *Friends Journal*, May, 1987,

In the past ten years, an outpouring of writings dealing with sexual abuse and assault from a pastoral perspective has broken the church's taboo on speaking about sexual violence, ending its centuries-old silence. This silence has had many meanings to those experiencing sexual violence, one of which has been absence: the ears that did not hear the cries, the eyes that were blind to signs of violence, the hands that did not hold and comfort, cradle and protect. Such absence can be described as a profound form of neglect.

- Carrie Doehring
Boston University School of Theology, 1993

The traditional interpretation of Scripture has often been shaped by the confusion of sexual activity with sexual violence. The clearest example of this is the Sodom and Gomorrah story (which is retold in a more complete version as the story of the Levite and his concubine in the nineteenth chapter of Judges). These are stories about the threatened (and, in Judges, the actual) sexual attack on guests spending the night in a strange town. Yet these stories have virtually always been interpreted in Christian tradition as referring to homosexual contact. This misinterpretation and its influence on Christian teaching has resulted in silence on the sin of sexual violence and inaccurate information and confused ethical teaching on homosexuality.

- Marie M. Fortune
Sexual Violence

Informed by their deep conviction that there is that of God in every person, Friends affirm the basic dignity of all humankind. In our gatherings we seek an environment of welcoming love and hospitality which encourages the full and equal participation of all. Friends strive to bring together a community of solidarity and mutual concern which challenges all forms of violence against others, a community in which faith and principles are expressed in appropriate action.

Sexual harassment and abuse profoundly violate that community of love and trust for which we yearn. Abuse in our Quaker family is similar to abuse within our personal family - the difficulties of the victims are compounded by estrangement from those from whom we had expected the most, and grief for what has been lost. Abuse or harassment by those in a position of power – such as Friends who work with children and young people, can be as devastating as incest.

When such abuse has occurred, Friends are called to assist. We must be present to those who struggle for their dignity and their rights, manifest concern for the welfare of others and loving kindness to people in need.

- Pacific YM Committee on Ministry and Oversight Subcommittee on Sexual Abuse
"When Quaker Solidarity Is Broken: Addressing the Issue of Sexual Harassment and Sexual Abuse"
(draft document)

The effect of sexual violence is powerful. It sometimes causes painful ways of coping, such as numbness, forgetting, and flashbacks. We also have a painful history at the hands of friends, family, and Meeting each time that they respond inappropriately to our victimization and to its roots in our surroundings. Uninformed reactions of shock, disbelief, insensitivity, minimizing, and ignorance "re-victimize" us and "re-enable" the perpetrator. How can we hold these ways of coping and reacting to consciousness and Light instead of being victimized by them anew?

- William How
Thoughts for Quaker Survivors and Allies Retreat, April, 1989

God's response has been to call me personally to be a "safe male." ... A safe male is one who keeps his ego in check. He does not try to rescue women nor control women. He receives advice, counsel, instruction, even defeat from a woman as easily as from a man.

A safe male is one who takes responsibility for his own sexual response. For some men arousal is license. Women are blamed if they dress, speak, walk, glance, or behave in any way that arouses a man's sexual interest...

For Christian men, being a safe male goes much deeper than just avoiding the negative behavior. While the rest of our culture is looking to the Supreme Court to set its moral values, and it seems that every talk show, every newscast, and every daily paper is flooded with the latest update on the legal boundaries regarding sexual harassment and/or abuse, the church remains sadly silent. Christian men have opportunity to witness to the wisdom and love of God by demonstrating that the issue is not a legal one but a spiritual one. It is not a matter of rights for women but a matter of love for women.

Following Christ's lead, Christian men need to believe in women... Christian men need to be at the forefront in the battle against pornography, sexual harassment, and other societal evils that literally destroy women's emotional, physical, and spiritual lives.

- Stan Thornburg
"On Being a Safe Male," Evangelical Friend

Part Two: Responding to those who are distressed

SECTION ONE: SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO RESPOND TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT OR SEXUAL ASSAULT

This section offers some step-by-step guidelines for handling many types of situations that may occur in the Meeting community. This section only applies to situations among adults; for children, see the accompanying document (title to be determined). We remind Friends that these guidelines are not exhaustive; we have concentrated on sexual harassment and sexual abuse.

There are two perspectives from which we have approached these guidelines:

(A) The Wide Range of Sexual Behaviour

There are a very wide range of possible sexual behaviours which can be experienced as offensive, harassing or abusive, from the flirtatious to the intimately physical. Many of these behaviours can also be integrated into a mutually consensual sexual relationship. The single core difference between abuse and satisfaction is freely given consent. Most of this document addresses incidents where such communication has failed.

Some examples of this failure are found within the personal experience of the Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Ethics members, such as being hugged too closely and too long, being propositioned by someone on one's committee of care, and unwelcome touch. Even incidents of this nature had an impact, making us feel unwelcome and uneasy, and were difficult to resolve successfully (unhappy feelings all around). A long-term member of another Meeting stopped attending Meeting for Worship due to an inability to end on-going and unwanted sexual attention from another member. More serious incidents, including sexual assault, have been reported to have happened at Canadian Yearly Meeting.

We believe that if a severe incident or crime is committed, Friends will know to access the appropriate community resources and/or the legal system. Much distress occurs, however, from incidents that are not clearly demarcated and which are difficult (if not impossible) to objectively quantify. Difficult incidents can occur as a result of a misunderstanding, a difference in sensitivity or culture, or a lack of clear communication. Moreover, sometimes there has been no intent to harm, even if the recipient feels harmed. In situations like these, even if there has been no intent to harm, someone feels injured and, like other hurtful experiences, deserves to have their experience recognized as such. Each of us needs to be responsible for the impact of our actions.

Offenses of a sexual nature can be felt in the same way as racist comments, class-related rejections or offensive behaviours towards someone who is disabled. That is, there may not be intent to harm even if injury is experienced. The intent of one person and the effect on another may be very different and even unrelated; for example, charity may be intended but

experienced as condescension or flattery may be intended but experienced as insult. And, as in instances of racism, classism or able-bodied discrimination, it is always possible that intent to harm or indifference to the recipient's experience of a sexual moment is present.

As listeners, when we validate another person's experience, it does not mean that we agree with their judgment of the situation; it means that we accept that they experienced what they say they did. In a situation where experiences conflict, clarity and communication may provide resolution or it may not. A willingness to accept resolution is the decision of each participant in a conflict, and we do not believe that it is possible for us to provide guidelines which will always lead to a happy ending.

Again we reiterate that in cases of criminal offenses we recommend that you seek immediate legal and medical advice. The procedures described below are not designed to address such issues. This does not mean that Meetings cannot be supportive in such cases, but we need to acknowledge our limitations.

(B) Restorative justice approach

Our overall approach to Addressing Violations and Misunderstandings of a Sexual Nature could be categorized as a kind of restorative justice. To quote from the Statement from the Committee for Criminal Justice of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (31, Third Month, 1990):

In a restorative system of justice, victims may rightly expect to be offered appropriate restitution by those who have harmed them; offenders may rightly expect to be treated as persons of worth, who have a double task: to repair the harm they have caused their victims, and also, b) to repair the damage in their own lives which has disposed them to commit crimes. Society is the human family whose task it is to create those restorative conditions in which both victims and offenders are given the tools to accomplish their own healing.

We orient our guidelines towards focused listening and deep attention of all involved, while recognizing that reconciling the subjective experiences of different perspectives may not be possible.

After hearing of an incident of sexual assault or harassment, first meet with the person who has mentioned the incident. There are several ways you may need to respond depending on the situation. This paper explores five categories of response.

- VI. What to do if you feel you have been offended, harassed, assaulted or abused, or if you are unsure**
- VII. Responding to people who feel they have been offended, harassed, assaulted or abused**
- VIII. Responding to people who fear they have offended, harassed, assaulted or abused another**

- IX. **Responding to people who suspect the harassment, assault or abuse of another person**
- X. **Responding when you observe harassment, assault or abuse of another person**

I. What to do if you feel you have been offended, harassed or assaulted, or if you are unsure.

Feelings are an important element in the sense of personal security, and may provide valuable guidance to an individual that has occurred. Sexual harassment, assault or abuse *may* have occurred when a person *feels* that they have been sexually violated in some way because feelings are an important guide to recognizing injustice or mistreatment. Feelings such as shame, guilt, confusion, embarrassment, fear, anger, and others are often associated with experiences of violation and abuse. If you feel and think that you have been offended, sexually harassed, sexually assaulted or sexually abused, you have the right to name it as such. Note though that feelings on their own are not a reliable guide for action. They need to be tempered with clear thinking and a discernment process supported by your Meeting community.

Self-doubt is a common element in sexual assault, sexual harassment or offensive behavior of a sexual nature. Questions that frequently occur to someone who may have been assaulted or offended, harassed or abused are:

- Did I imagine that? Did something just occur?
- Could that person have intended what I think they meant?
- Could a person with that status have done what I think they have just done? (a weighty Friend, a respected elder, a younger Friend, great Aunt Tillie...)
- Did I invite that somehow?
- Am I exaggerating it?
- Am I oversensitive? Was it just a joke?

Very strong feelings over an event may also indicate the presence of previous experiences of sexual violation which are being triggered by a present reminder. These flags of perception may indicate that our boundaries (whether current or past) have been violated and they deserve attention.

If you come to the conclusion that you have been sexually harassed, offended by behavior or speech of a sexual nature or sexually assaulted, what can you do? What avenues are open to you?

- a) Believe in yourself. If you feel unsafe or embarrassed, you have a right to speak up about it. Do not worry that you are the only person this may have happened to; it's a common experience.
- b) Record exactly what happened, in writing or electronically.

- c) Tell someone you trust. These people might include someone else in the Meeting, or a member of Ministry and Counsel, or a friend or relative. If members of Ministry and Counsel have seen this document, they will be better prepared to support you. If not, give it to them!
- d) You could consider that the other person does not understand or know about the depth of your response to their behavior and communicate with them about this (see Confrontation Outline in Tools for Response).
- e) You could tell the person directly that their behavior is unwanted and that you don't like it. You may want to have a friend along or write a letter to them (see Confrontation Outline in Tools for Response).
- f) You could ignore offensive behavior but it is extremely unlikely to just go away. Your discomfort shows you that something has occurred. There are many ways to address it.
- g) You could contact local community resources such as Sexual Assault Support Centres, Rape Crisis Centres or the police.

Note: it is important to remember that your feelings alone do not meet the requirements of a legal proof.

II. Responding to people who feel they have been offended, sexually harassed, assaulted or abused

The person may be upset. Stay calm.

Consider possible ways to proceed:

- a. Offer to listen in a private place.
- b. Ask the person to describe the event in detail. Ask for permission to record what they are saying, and present them with the record at the conclusion. Pinpoint the actual offense. Listen attentively and compassionately. Do not minimize any aspect of the abuse. We each only know our own experience. If someone feels offended, harassed or abused, she/he may be picking up on a feeling, an insinuated intention or a threat. Set aside your judgment of the situation and offer yourself primarily as a supportive witness for the person. Give yourself time to consider future actions, and to consult members of Ministry & Counsel.
- c. Clarify expectations about what you can offer at the moment: "We might not be able to solve this right away." or "Jim might not be willing to discuss this at this time, but we can take this next step."

- d. In most cases, but especially if he/she is distraught or the abuse is chronic (such as domestic violence), ask him/her to consider professional counseling with a supportive therapist. Recognize your limitations.
- e. Offer to pray with them. Be sensitive to the person's spiritual orientation.
- f. If either person involved (accuser or accused) is central to the functioning of the Monthly Meeting, you may want or need to go outside for help in discernment and action. It is difficult to be objective in discerning abuse if the person is central to the Meeting. In small Meetings or worship groups you may want to seek out trusted members of the wider community to help facilitate the process.
- g. If a crime has been committed (sexual assault or criminal harassment (stalking)), advise the person to consider accessing the legal system (police).

Insofar as you feel comfortable doing so, support the person in taking assertive action (for example, using the Confrontation Outline included in the Resources). This can mean helping them to confront an offender, to escape an abusive situation, pursuing the matter with Ministry and Counsel or the Monthly Meeting by helping to initiate a clearness or support committee, or accompanying them to community resources such as the police or a counsellor. Before taking any action, work with the person and other appropriate resource people to assess the potential risks and benefits. Remember to access Monthly Meeting resources for yourself as well.

Readings

Rather than pressing victims/survivors to forgive their abusers, perhaps a meaningful role for Friends is to offer assistance to the abused in their pursuit of justice. Would [they] desire support in encouraging the abusers to:

- 1) admit responsibility and become accountable for the abuse,
- 2) apologize for the abuse, and
- 3) provide restitution for the abuse?

- Faye Honey Knopp
personal correspondence, The Safer Society Program

Who makes justice? It is not something we can relegate to the legal system alone. It is a shared task of the whole community to create an atmosphere in which persons feel safe to speak. It is for us to hear and believe these experiences, to support the process of truth-telling and to help confront and call to account. It is for us to find ways to bring reconciliation and healing-for the sake of the victim first, for the sake of the community, and also for the sake of the offender.

This is not an easy task. It requires a willingness to bear the burden of the truth-telling to hear things we do not want to hear, to believe the unbelievable. Our own internal resistance will always be there in the face of horrendous stories. We do not want to acknowledge our own memories. We fear our own anger in response. We are always tempted to participate in denial

on some level. We need to own that temptation so that we can struggle against it. We need to stay in touch with our own anger in order to keep our eyes open to the reality before us.

In the absence of repentance or restitution, how can we make justice? One very simple but powerful form of justice is to believe the victim, to hear the story and to express on behalf of the wider community that what occurred should never have happened. We must be creative in our efforts to make justice without relying on the actions of the offender to provide this experience.

Calling the offender to account is a way of taking back control. It is, in effect, an opportunity for healing for both the survivor and offender.

- Marie M. Fortune

III. Responding to people who may have offended, harassed or abused another

People who may have hurt another could have any one of a wide spectrum of feelings and beliefs about it. They may feel guilty, ashamed, indifferent, or even boastful. Research has established the following characteristics of sexual offenders:

- They may lie, minimize or deny the truth of their act. Sometimes, offenders dissociate from the facts so that not only can't they acknowledge the truth, but they have no access to it.
- Expressions of remorse or wrongdoing are unlikely.
- Rarely are the offenses a first-time occurrence.

There is no socio-economic profile of the "typical perpetrator." Reported violators are usually male, and occasionally female.

Consider possible ways to proceed with someone who takes responsibility for offending, harassing or assaulting someone else:

- a. Offer to listen in a private place.
- b. Ask the offender to describe the event in detail. Ask for permission to record what they are saying, and present them with the record at the conclusion. Pinpoint the actual offense, harassment or assault. Listen attentively and compassionately. Do not minimize or exaggerate any aspect of the situation. We each only know our own experience. If someone feels they may have offended, harassed or abused another, she/he may be perceiving having transgressed their own boundaries for appropriate behaviour. Set aside your judgment of the situation and offer yourself primarily as a supportive witness for the person. Give yourself time to consider future actions, and to consult members of Ministry and Counsel.

- c. Don't make light of the confession. Give your honest perception to the confessor.
- d. If you and the responsible person believes that this situation is a misunderstanding, offer to support and accompany them in meeting with the person they offended, harassed or assaulted.
- e. Offer to pray with them. Be sensitive to the person's spiritual orientation.
- f. If this is a recurring problem, ally yourself with this person in a supportive fashion and see what you can do to help them to take positive action which heals a destructive pattern of behaviour. If they can decide on a next step, offer to take it with them. Your wording could be, for example, "Let's call a psychologist together." This is an attempt to enable them to act on the open spirit in themselves towards ameliorating the situation.
- g. If it is a case of child molestation, you are legally required to report this to legal authorities. In some provinces you are also required to report elder abuse. Check your local laws.
- h. Remember you are part of a larger body, whether designated or not for this role. One person must never carry this burden alone, although one person may be designated by the Monthly Meeting or Ministry and Counsel to personally talk with a possible offender. Whether or not you are a designated representative of Ministry and Counsel or the Monthly Meeting in this situation, remember your legal obligations to report immediate danger to legal authorities. If the situation is urgent, immediate follow-up with a Meeting body is essential, so that any Quakerly intervention comes from the wisdom of the larger body, not just one person.
- i. Do not promise the person that you can keep information revealed by them completely confidential. Confidentiality does not apply in cases where someone is in immediate danger, or if children are involved. If you are not a designated representative of a Meeting body, consider who is the most appropriate person for you to talk with. Do you share it with the clerk, a member of Ministry and Counsel, or a designated support group? Do you have enough distance from the people involved to offer needed perspective? In some cases (i.e. in small Meetings) you may want to share the incident with a person or Quaker body outside of your Monthly Meeting or Worship Group.
- j. If any person involved (accused or accuser) is central to the functioning of the Monthly Meeting, you may want or need to go outside for help in discernment and action. It is difficult to be objective in discerning offensive behavior if the person is central to the Meeting. Be very cautious of the Meeting taking on this problem alone.

Consider ways to proceed with someone who has not taken responsibility for offending someone else:

It may be that some people on Ministry and Counsel feel led to approach a person whose behavior may be concerning them, but where they lack specific information.

- A. Ask to visit in the person's home with another member of Ministry and Counsel or a friend of the person in question. **Only in very rare circumstances should you visit alone;** you want to create the atmosphere of a Meeting, and for a Meeting, you need a group. Always go in pairs. Sit with her or him and worship in silence. Wait for guidance or clarity. All words should arise from your own truth; this is not a time to accuse. It's a time to explore for yourself if you sense anything amiss, but the intent is to expect that of God in the person to come forth. This is a delicate approach which takes a certain courage since Friends calling on Friends in their home for worship has fallen into disuse in the 20th century.

Write a note shortly after the visit to the suspected offender. Stay in contact with him or her and open the way for him or her to respond to your concern... maybe she/he will voluntarily disclose information. Or you may want to ask him/her directly at some point.

- B. One effective process a group used was to meet with a suspected offender was a clear agenda. They structured the meeting in a worship-sharing format, asking this question: "What was a time you had difficulty with your relationship to the point you felt you were hurting your partner?" There were no accusations nor even much discussion. Everyone shared on an equal basis around a query that emphasized personal experience.
- C. Offer Meetings for Worship with the purpose of Healing from Abuse. Be creative; members may wish to role-play on nonviolent intervention, produce visual art, sing, whatever.

If the need to actually accuse someone of a crime arises, we cannot advise you strongly enough to do this with or through a lawyer. Access the legal resources available; it is inadvisable to accuse people without taking legal responsibility for your actions. Every accused has rights which cannot be dismissed or ignored.

Queries

- How far should information provided by or about an abusive person travel?
- Whom does confidentiality and secrecy really protect when there is a question of harassment, assault or offensive behavior of a sexual nature?
- If there is an active offender in the community, does the entire Quaker community or the community at large need to know about it?

- Can you accept that there is evil as well as good in people you may love and respect?
- When addressing people accused of offending, are we aware of the part within us that has sinned and wronged another?
- What can we do to foster healing?
- Where is 'that of God' in every perpetrator?

Readings

We must understand our own healing processes in relation to our own offensive behaviour in order to speak to the offender. Likewise, understanding our own times of denial can help us work with someone currently in denial. These words written by George Fox to Lady Claypole when she was troubled, applies to all of us who are distressed with our problems:

Looking down at sin, and corruption, and distraction, you are swallowed up in it; but looking at the Light that discovers them, you will see over them. That will give victory; and you will find grace and strength; and there is the first step of peace.

George is saying 'look at the courage it takes to speak of this, to confront one's own shabby behavior, to admit to one's own failings and mistakes.' This is similar to the beginning steps of the Twelve Step Addiction program offered by Alcoholics Anonymous and such groups.

- Jane Keeler and Linnéa Rowlett

"Sexual violence for the offender is a sin against the self. It is a denial of one's selfhood, a destruction of relationship with another, and a distortion of one's own sexuality. Not only is the sex offender committing sinful acts, he (or she) is "living in a state of sin," alienated and separated from self and from God. His alienation contributes to his acts of violence against others."

- Marie M. Fortune
Sexual Violence

Friends have always had 'difficult' people. Our unprogrammed worship is a magnet for those who want a captive audience; our contemporary concept of love and tolerance seems to be an *invitation* to those who push the limits; our unexamined guilt makes us excusers of *continuing* dysfunctional behavior. In one sense, a difficult person is one who will not take responsibility for his or her actions, and thereby frays the fabric of the Meeting community, creating divisions and sapping energy. Sexual affairs, manipulation, power trips, spiritual competition, refusal to grow, and unwillingness to listen are some of the individual behaviors that can stunt a Meeting's corporate spiritual growth. Whispering and complaining around the edges is not the answer. The Meeting must take responsibility for its own health and its own blockages.

- Martha Paxson Grundy
"Difficult People in Meeting: How did Early Friends Respond?"
Friends Journal, June, 1991

But change from a pattern of abuse in the family is not accomplished through good intentions; it requires time, hard work, and therapy. Involvement in a treatment process may be the most useful penance that could be prescribed for an abuser.

- Marie M. Fortune
Forgiveness: The Last Step

One of the primary roles of elders and ministry and counsel over the years became to deal in due time, and in a spirit of Christian love and tenderness, with any Friend whose behavior or manner of life is contrary to Christian witness, and to endeavour to restore such Friends to the fellowship of the Meeting.

- London YM Church Government, p. 70, 1968

IV. Responding to people who suspect the harassment or assault of another person

Consider ways to proceed

- A. Decide with the person who suspects someone is being abused whether to go first to Ministry and Counsel or to approach the people directly involved. Are the people involved willing to talk about the situation? If so, refer to the guidelines outlined in sections I and II above.

- B. If neither of you are able to approach the people directly, and you feel there may be some reason for concern, share your perceptions with the clerk or a member of Ministry and Counsel. They might have already been aware of the situation and might have been dealing with the issue. Also, you may know of others who know both parties well and who may offer information that helps you to decide how to proceed. If assault, abuse, harassment or offensive behavior of a sexual nature is confirmed by others, strategize about the best way to support the person(s) involved. Does the supposed victim confirm the situation?

Queries

- How can you gauge the level of consent between two people in relationship with each other (not with you)?

- What business is it of yours anyway? How much are we 'our brothers' keepers'?

Readings

For one human being to love another: that is perhaps the most difficult of all our tasks, the ultimate, the last test and proof, the work for which all other work is but preparation... So we must not forget, when we love, that we are beginners, bunglers of life, apprentices in love and must learn love; and, like all learning, this needs peace, patience, and composure.

- Rainer Maria Rilke

V. Responding when you witness abuse of another person

- a. Interrupt the behavior at that moment. In some instances you may not feel it's appropriate or you may not feel safe enough to do so at that moment. If you can't interrupt, find someone who can. Ministry and Counsel members may wish to role-play on nonviolent intervention. Immediate intervention and support after the incident is very important.
- b. Later you can share with the individuals involved what you saw and express concern; remember that what you perceived may not have been perceived by anyone else (including these individuals). Speak respectfully.
- c. Many of the same steps as section III (above), apply here. Make sure to share your perceptions with members of Ministry and Counsel.

VI. Responding to Adults who Reveal Past Sexual Abuse, including Child Sexual Abuse or Incest

This section addresses the responsibility of the Meeting to minister to adult men and women who are disclosing past incidents of sexual abuse or harassment, or who are recalling incidents of childhood abuse. We remind you that there is a spectrum of abuse, ranging from inappropriate language to repeated violent rape, and that the Meeting must recognize what it is able deal with. Many incidents which stain the soul require a wider range of support than a Meeting alone can provide.

(1) If an adult survivor of childhood, adolescent or previous adult sexual abuse comes to you

Consider Ways to Proceed

- A. Offer empathy, compassion, support. Ask if they believe they are currently in any danger. If so, refer them to the local agency/shelter/law enforcement, as appropriate. If you are feeling triggered by their disclosure, seek out someone with experience in these issues if you cannot stay grounded. Avoid sharing your own stories of abuse or mistreatment. Listen lovingly.
- B. Offer the Meeting's resources (Ministry and Counsel, a Committee of Care, this document or others like it, referrals to peer support, professionals, etc.). The survivor may need an advocate to help them determine their needs and assist them with obtaining services; ask them if they would like that form of support. Do not assume that the members of the Meeting have the training, resources or time to adequately support the survivor.
- C. The survivor may be struggling with theological questions such as: "Why me? Has God abandoned me? How do I explain this involuntary suffering inflicted on me?" It is

unjustifiable and inexplicable. More helpful ways to approach the issue of suffering may be: "Where is God in such suffering? What can God do in this situation?" It may be helpful to refer the person to a well-grounded person who shares their particular theological stance, who may be able to assist them with such questions.

- D. The survivor may not be willing or able at this time to confront or deal with the abuse. It is important as an ally of a survivor always to let them set the pace and timing of their own healing. How do we offer friendship and respect? Prayers for healing may always be offered. If you offer these, be sensitive to their theological frame of reference.
- E. You may encounter questions about forgiveness. What ingredients are necessary for forgiveness? A survivor can forgive the offender only when she/he is ready. This may include the following components:
- The survivor can let go of the abuse.
 - He/she feels the power of God's grace.
 - She/he has an experience of justice being done. (may include retribution or a sense of restoration)

Forgiveness is an aspect of healing that often comes far along the path of healing, which may be a lifelong process. If the survivor is feeling pressure to forgive because of their spiritual framework, let them know that they can choose to deal with this or not, as they are ready. Forgiveness and/or reconciliation may be supportive of a survivor in the long run, but only they are able to determine when that can happen, if at all.

- F. You may encounter questions on reconciliation. Reconciliation is possible if the offender has repented, taken responsibility for his/her behaviour, apologized to the victim, and if the survivor is agreeable. Note that reconciliation is not a necessary part of healing; in no case pressure a survivor to engage in this. Such action may only be effective after considerable work has been done to rebuild the survivor's sense of safety. This may take years. Reconciliation is not a goal, but may be a step in the healing process for some survivors.

(2) If a survivor discloses during Meeting for Worship

Memories of past abuse which are shared during open worship can be challenging for the quality of the corporate worship as well as for individual worshippers. Meeting for Worship is not a support group or a place for therapy, yet such incidents of abuse may be shared in the Spirit. While such memories may be stressful, Meeting for Worship can be a powerful source for healing. The experience of abuse tests our understanding of God's love. To hold such a reality in prayer and to be supportive to all who have experienced such pain can provide the ground for a deep, encompassing worship. After the meeting, you may want to approach persons who disclosed information about their abuse to offer support (*see above section*).

Queries:

- When someone is suffering through the experience of uncovering childhood sexual abuse, do you recognize the growth of the spirit and seek to witness to the transforming power of God's love?
- Are you steadfast in your spiritual and material support of those who are experiencing sexual abuse or sexual harassment?
- Is your ministry respectful of those who feel pain when God is identified as male or female, because they have been abused by a man or a woman?
- Have you considered the powerful effect of incidents in your own earlier life, both loving and destructive?
- How do we bring God's healing into the darkness of secrecy, elusive memories, shame and denial?
- Can you speak about incest in public, openly and honestly? Doing so removes the stigma of shame from incest survivors. Do not pretend incest does not exist in your membership!

Readings:

I need strength. I need comfort. But where can I turn? My faith provided strength and comfort in the past. It was my sanctuary. But now I find my church exposed as a traitor. It facilitated, justified and then ignored my abuse... I must be angry... My anger gives me strength to stop being a victim. Please listen to what I am angry about... Don't feed me the same old easy answers. They never did really work and now I know they're lies. But I don't want to give up my spirit. I need it... Help me to be strong. Help me to have courage... I am in a dark tunnel traveling very fast and I can see no end. Help me believe I will survive. Don't minimize my pain by speaking quick platitudes. Don't try to make me stop hurting so you don't have to see it. Acknowledge my pain. Hurt with me. I need to know I'm not alone. Be with me.

- The Violet Collective
"A Plea to My Pastor," *I Choose to Remember*, 1981

Holy One, who raises and rebuilds our ruins, may we hear your name and come into your presence.

As we open ourselves to You,
our old structures will crumble
and Your new creation will rise up.

Fill us with an urgency to let go our entrapments and
forgive us our resistance to going into the unknown
as we forgive those who insist on business as usual.

Do not abandon us in our uncertainty,
but do protect us from our backwardness,
for You are the holder of all Truth,
the redeemer of broken lives,
and we bring You alleluias for your
faithfulness.

- Judy Brutz
"In the Manner of the Lord's Prayer," Vol. III and N

The issue of forgiveness also arises for victims of abuse. A friend or family member may pressure the victim: "You should forgive him. He said he was sorry." Or it may arise internally: "I wish I could forgive him..." In either case, the victim feels guilty for not being able to forgive the abuser. In these cases, often forgiveness is interpreted to mean to forget or pretend the abuse never happened. Neither is possible. The abuse will never be forgotten - it becomes a part of the victim's history. Forgiveness is a matter of the victim's being able to say that she/he will no longer allow the experience to dominate her/his life - and will let go of it and move on. This is usually possible if there is some sense of justice in the situation, officially (through the legal system) or unofficially. Forgiveness by the victim is possible when there is repentance on the part of the abuser, and real repentance means a change in the abuser's behavior.

Another issue is timing. Too often the minister/rabbi's need for the victim to finish and resolve the abusive experience leads him/her to push a victim to forgive the abuser. Forgiveness in this case is seen as a means to hurry the victim's healing process along. Victims will move to forgive at their own pace and cannot be pushed by others' expectations of them. It may take years before they are ready to forgive: their timing needs to be respected. They will forgive when they are ready. Then the forgiveness becomes the final stage of letting go and enables them to move on with their lives.

- Marie M. Fortune and Judith Hertz
"A Commentary on Religious Issues in Family Violence"

...Accept the necessity for family upheaval. Accept the necessity for Meeting upheaval? Pastoral counselors (*elders, member of Ministry & Council, etc*) usually hold high regard for the sanctity of the family. It may be difficult to reconcile this belief with a pastoral response that precipitates family upheaval. There may be a tendency to deny the pathology within an incestuous family, to focus on the strengths of that family, and to hope that the family can work out its own problems, especially with the help of prayer. But as the title of this book [*Abuse and Religion: When Praying Isn't Enough*] implies, praying for incest to go away is simply not enough.

- Robert J. Kelly

"Identifying Sexual Abuse in Families and Engaging Them in Professional Treatment"

Part III: Response at the Meeting Level

SECTION ONE: ASSUMPTIONS

Take time for your Monthly Meeting, Ministry and Counsel, or others in pastoral care positions to reach clearness on these assumptions. If there is disagreement, the suggested actions in this document may not make sense to your community.

- Monthly Meeting has at least an ethical responsibility and possibly a legal responsibility to address reported incidents of harassment and abuse within their Meeting.
- All offenders need our care and prayers. The vast majority of sexual offenders have themselves been sexually abused and therefore have also been victims in the past. Our responsibility is to interrupt the cycle of abuse. We can start by addressing the most immediate incident of abuse and secondarily address prior abuse. Please note that the reverse is NOT true: having been abused does not make you likely to be an abuser. This is the so-called "vampire myth" (I have been bitten so therefore I will bite) that many people believe, and this belief revictimizes the survivor.
- Education is essential for Ministry and Counsel members; ideally at least one person on the committee should be knowledgeable about issues related to sexual assault or sexual harassment: the contents of this document, basic legal consequences and procedures (in Canada and home province), local resources which can be quickly drawn upon at need, etc. At the very least, there can be a resource kit that the Meeting assembles on these issues that Ministry and Counsel can draw on as needed.

SECTION TWO: MEETING ACTIONS

Consider what the Meeting may offer

- i. A list of people in Meeting who are willing to offer a temporary safe home to people who are dealing with abuse issues or a temporary safe child-free home to offenders who need to be separate from children.
- ii. A list of professional counselors who specialize in abuse. The Meeting needs to create a list of appropriate professionals in your area. The list should be made available, as deemed appropriate.
- iii. Help in finding a support group for a person dealing with abuse issues. If not available nearby, consider organizing one. Meetings are appropriate places to sponsor such groups if there are a few people who have the energy for this work. Check with your regional self-help clearinghouse if you have one. (See Resources)
- iv. A commitment to raise consciousness and respect for healthy sexuality, and to educate yourselves on the issue of sexual assault and sexual harassment. Refer to the Bibliography for suggestions.
- v. Some members of Ministry and Counsel may decide to meet to plan how to handle an abuse incident if or when it arises. This work can be stressful, and not like other forms of standing Quaker committees. It may exact a heavy emotional toll on Friends. One needs careful discernment and appropriate skills before taking on such a task.

SECTION THREE: USES OF CLEARNESS COMMITTEES AND COMMITTEES OF CARE

There is a difference between Clearness Committees and Committees of Care. Committees of Care are for individuals who are going through a trying time and need time to talk and pray. They may even need some advocacy. The individual may request certain Friends to participate. Clearness Committees are appointed by the Meeting at the individual's request when someone is changing his/her commitment or actions in a significant way and wants the Meeting's help in discernment on this decision. Clearness committees have been convened for those contemplating marriage, divorce, having a child, and changing careers, among others reasons. Committees of Care, on the other hand, may meet for each spouse when a couple has decided on a divorce, and each wants help in working through this difficult time.

We offer this distinction between Committees of Care and Clearness Committees because both may be used in dealing with accusations of sexual assault or sexual harassment among adults. Committees of Care for the victim are more common, because people often need to process their experiences before considering action.

What if both parties are active in Monthly Meeting? If the incident(s) seems to warrant it or if requested and the Meeting has the human resources to offer it, we recommend that the Monthly Meeting offer two Committees of Care, one for the person who feels offended, harassed, assaulted or abused and one for the person accused of it. If Ministry and Counsel arranges for a Committee of Care for each party willing to work on the issue, we also recommend that Ministry and Counsel plan for potential communication between the committees.

Consider ways to proceed with the support committee

1. Who should participate on the support committee(s)? It could be a mix of close friends and acquaintances with gifts of pastoral care. How many people are useful? More than three can be intimidating if the people are not well known by the person. How can Ministry and Counsel members minimize the re-telling of this embarrassing and potentially incriminating incident? What other resources does the committee need? If two committees are being formed make sure that the committees have equal resources and membership. Persons with special listening skills and those with information about sexual abuse are especially useful.
2. The survivor and the offender should meet in separate support groups. The Committees of Care will need to share information. Perhaps some clear-thinking person, not biased or close to either party, could sit on both committees. The committee should not remain isolated, but needs to report back to Ministry & Counsel.
3. Does the person who was offended, harassed or abused want to confront the offender or does he/she prefer that a member from the support committee or a person from Ministry and Counsel do this? We strongly recommend that members of Committee of Care coach and support the individual in approaching the offender and not do it on their behalf. Be sure to do a risk assessment before taking any action.
4. Remember that a Committee of Care does not replace qualified counseling or therapy. If the violation has been deep, Ministry and Counsel is best advised to recommend professional help.

Readings

The issue is to help an offender come to terms with his behavior, to look at and own responsibility for the worst in him. It cannot be done without extensive, ongoing confrontation. However, for the offender to accept the confrontation rather than simply grow distant and hostile, it must be done in such a way as to maintain the rapport with him, to hold him, as it were, with one through the confrontation. The holding must be caring and not simply controlling... The natural tendency of sex offenders, is to withdraw, deny and withhold. They believe, like small children caught in a fire, that if they just hide in the closet and keep quiet, it will all go away.

While some offenders may lack factual information about sexuality, more common deficits occur in the area of opinions and attitudes concerning sexuality.

This section is quoted and extrapolated from Anna Salter, *Treating Child Sex Offenders and Victims: A Practical Guide*, 1988.

SECTION FOUR: MEDIATION AS INAPPROPRIATE

If the accuser feels unable to confront the accused directly (whether in person, over the phone, electronically or in a letter), the possibility of mediation occurs. We do not recommend mediation by members of the Monthly Meeting or others engaged on their behalf. Only specially trained persons would use mediation as a response to sexual abuse. Here are some reasons why a situation of sexual harassment, sexual assault or sexual abuse does not lend itself to mediation:

- The power basis for both parties needs to be relatively equal. Mediation will not serve well between a parent and a child. Men are often given more power than women. The accused often appears in a position of authority to the accuser. Many accused offenders are masters at control and manipulation. The accusing person may fear further retribution.
- The report of an incident of abuse may seem to be only one incident or to be short term; this is very hard to judge. Mediation is not appropriate in a long-term or on-going situation, because the dynamic may have become an entrenched pattern.
- Mediation is difficult when the victim feels too intimidated to be clear or when the mediators are confused between compassion for either party and confrontation of destructive behavior. Each person may need supporters, yet the mediators by definition should be neutral. Who can confront the offending behavior and make clear it is unacceptable? The offender also needs compassion.
- If the offender is considered dangerous, mediation does not work. Does the accusing person fear further sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual abuse or offensive behavior of a sexual nature may happen during the meeting time? Sometimes a person may not be willing to confront the person who has offended them. The offending party may ask for mediation, but this could be painful and ill-advised.
- Again, the offender may well dissociate from the abuse. Therefore reaching the truth with the offender is often beyond the capacity of the mediation situation.

PART IV: AFTERWORD

SECTION ONE: RESPONDING TO OFFENDERS WHO STAY IN THE COMMUNITY

Note that this section does not address issues with people who offend mildly (not the convicted sex offenders) – e.g. those who hug too long and too closely, for example. The Meeting will likely be able to address those issues without external intervention.

We do not recommend that anyone in the Meeting do pastoral care with a convicted sex offender without working closely with the offender's specialized therapist. This is a serious problem that even many psychotherapists do not feel competent in handling.

Most sex offenders don't believe they have a problem. They deny the offense and any previous abuse or they admit to the offense but either minimize or defend its worth.

Quakers are seldom police officers; they often avoid enforcing secular laws. Nonetheless, if a Ministry and Counsel member decides to work with an offender it should be in conjunction with a therapist trained in working with sexual offenders. This work requires a constant setting of limits. The therapist's presence and her/his thinking must come from setting goals, making judgments and frequent limit setting. The Ministry and Counsel member must also take on a mind-set like the parental aspect of God. She or he must consider when the offender can interact with vulnerable members of the Meeting. Who makes the decisions of when an offender can move freely in the community? Whether such decisions come to a committee meeting or the monthly meeting, they have the potential to be time-consuming and contentious.

How can we operate as Quakers acknowledging the Light within each person while knowing the repeated transgressions the sex offenders commit? We can trust an inner core of goodness in them, but not trust them in this particular problem area. How much denying, lying, and minimizing is going on? Quakers need to be careful of sympathizing with offenders in this area. Those who are able to empathize with offenders often do so by minimizing their offenses and colluding with their rationalizations.

Friends may need to improve their confrontation skills by speaking truth to offending behaviours. Sex offenders need continual confrontations in dealing with their relationship to children and survivors. These confrontations should not be hostile.

We repeat, however, that we do not recommend that members of Monthly Meetings, unless specifically and professionally trained in this area, undertake pastoral care or therapeutic support of an acknowledged sexual offender. Meetings need to be careful and prayerful about whether and how they minister to offenders in their midst. Consultations with knowledgeable people in the field should be frequent.

If it is not clear that Ministry and Counsel is dealing with the situation, members often act on their own, with possible unresolved issues around abuse. The following is a possible scenario:

One Meeting in the United States was informed by another distant Meeting that an offender was now worshipping with them. The Meeting arranged for the offender to tell his story in front of the entire community. The offender became very defensive after many Friends expressed outrage and anger.

A possible approach could have been for Ministry and Counsel to hear the offender's story and then report it to the larger group without the offender present. Ministry and Counsel may need to hold the incident of a suspected abuse in confidence so as not to involve the whole Meeting community, unless it is clear that the offender is a threat to the community. Quakers need to be creative and sensitive about process. We must trust in the Spirit. Careful structuring of a meeting for worship (or business) may be helpful.

Readings

“Remember he may vehemently deny any wrongdoing and may not even be able to remember the episodes of violence.”

- Joy Bussert

Adapted from Battered Women: From a Theology of Suffering to an Ethic of Empowerment

SECTION TWO: IF A PERSON ACCUSED OF OFFENDING LEAVES THE MEETING COMMUNITY

Are these incidents so destructive that you need to warn other communities about the offender's history? Whom do you need to warn? If the Monthly Meeting does decide that notification must be made, notify institutions where the offender has been active. Be careful of the offender's rights not to be incriminated if the evidence is disputable. If he/she was not found guilty in a court of law and the Meeting still considers her or him to have engaged in offensive behaviour, perhaps you can only state the case without biased allegations. You may want to seek legal advice before acting.

SECTION THREE: HEALING THE COMMUNITY

Emphasis on healthy sexuality contradicts the message conveyed by sexual assault and sexual harassment.

When problems or difficulties occur in this area, one way of looking at them are as an opportunity for God's light to shine through the cracks. By God's light in this instance, we do not mean self-sacrifice, principled vengeance, or self-righteousness, but compassion, truth and mercy.

CONCLUSION

While we sincerely hope and pray that sexual abuse will never occur in Quaker communities again, we understand that this document may be needed to support Meetings in dealing with incidents of sexual abuse, sexual assault or sexual harassment. To this end, we have done our best to provide some possible avenues of response to potential situations as they might arise. It is unlikely that life's dynamics will provide an exact example of the dilemmas brought forward here. This document is intended to provide guidelines and to stimulate thoughtful discussion and prayerful action if ever it is needed.

A final word: Friends have seen their work as bringing God into this broken world. We have a strong tradition from which to gather guidance. However, some Quaker tendencies may provide an environment which may foster painful experiences of a sexual nature. The Canadian Yearly Meeting Committee on Sexual Ethics suggests that Friends consider the advisability of the following attitudes and situations:

1. "I'll go out of my way to be helpful even if I put myself in jeopardy." An example is a woman who gets out of her car to give a man directions on an isolated street. Do we bend over backwards to help people, who, when we are alone with them, may take advantage of us?
2. "I'll never be violent." Have we decided never to use violence to the point that we may stand defenseless while assaulted? How should we take appropriate precautions against being assaulted? Is there any situation, such as a potential instance of sexual assault, when we are willing to use force to defend ourselves or others?
3. "How could '___' of all people, do that? Impossible! He/She served on Ministry and Counsel for years." Some Quakers may be unwilling to determine when someone is behaving offensively or sexually abusive. Likewise, we prefer to avoid conflicts. In avoiding conflicts and expecting the best of everyone, do we fail to perceive the truth in a situation?
4. "Honour thy father and thy mother." Exodus 20:12. This is a guide, yes, but parental authority is revoked if the issue is sexual, emotional or physical abuse.

Broadly, should Friends' Meetings take on the issue of sexual abuse or is it best largely left with mental health workers? How do we balance our concern with the need for professional intervention? How does this issue relate to the Quaker Peace Testimony? What is God's leading for Friends in North America on this dilemma? Join with us to understand the pernicious problem of sexual misbehavior by sharing Friends' stories, insights and prayers.

Please send correspondence to Canadian Yearly Meeting.

God bless you all, and fare well.

Resources

This section includes a list of local resource types (that each Monthly Meeting or Worship Group would be well advised to complete with a Local Resources List), an annotated Bibliography, a small selection of Websites, possible Tools for Response, and a History of this Concern within Canadian Yearly Meeting.

We do not endorse any particular resource, book or website. The list represents a range of opinion, theory and practice which should be used judiciously by Friends.

Considerations when seeking a professional therapist.

The American Psychological Association writes (<http://www.apa.org/topics/memories.html>):

- First, know that there is no single set of symptoms which automatically indicates that a person was a victim of childhood abuse. There have been media reports of therapists who state that people (particularly women) with a particular set of problems or symptoms must have been victims of childhood sexual abuse. There is no scientific evidence that supports this conclusion.
- Second, all questions concerning possible recovered memories of childhood abuse should be considered from an unbiased position. A therapist should not approach recovered memories with the preconceived notion that abuse must have happened or that abuse could not possibly have happened.
- Third, when considering current problems, be wary of those therapists who offer an instant childhood abuse explanation, and those who dismiss claims or reports of sexual abuse without any exploration.
- Fourth, when seeking psychotherapy, you are advised to see a licensed practitioner with training and experience in the issue for which you seek treatment. Ask the therapist about the kinds of treatment techniques he or she uses and how they could help you.

LOCAL RESOURCES LIST

These organizations and institutions are often found through a local Directory of Social Services, in print, in the telephone book or on-line; we recommend that Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups research this information.

Rape Crisis Centre

Telephone: _____

Contact Person: _____

Address: _____

Sexual Assault Support Centre

Telephone: _____

Address: _____

Legal Aid Clinic

Telephone: _____

Address: _____

Contact Person: _____

Distress Line

Telephone: _____

Family Services Centres (for counselling, sliding fee scales usually in effect)

Telephone: _____

Address: _____

Mental Health Crisis Line

Telephone: _____

NOTE: Regulations about **requirements to report** vary from Province to Province to Territory within Canada. You should be aware of what is required of your Monthly Meeting and Worship Group.

RESOURCES FOR POSITIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION

- (1) **Our Whole Lives Sexuality Education**, or *OWL*, a series of six comprehensive sexuality curricula for children, teenagers, young adults and adults published by the Unitarian Universalist Association and the United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries. The Our Whole Lives program operates under the idea that well informed people make better, healthier decisions about sexuality than those without complete information. OWL strives to be unbiased and teaches about heterosexual, bisexual, homosexual, and transgender sexual health. In addition to information on sex, OWL is intended to help us to be emotionally healthy and responsible in terms of our sexuality. OWL has been presented at Ottawa Monthly Meeting and well received, and will have been introduced at CYM 2009.
- (2) **Humourous / theatrical performance groups** which bring forward information and perspectives which affirm healthy sexuality (for example, the Sexual Overtones from Ottawa, the Vagina Monologues)
- (3) **Books and educators** who approach sexuality with a grounded good humour (for example, Sex with Sue, the Hite Report)

PARTIALLY ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Please note that this is only a partial Bibliography of the resources available around this topic, and that bulleted entries have not been personally examined by members of the Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Ethics. Instead, they were recommended by other Quaker reviewers. Please feel confident to expand upon this list in your Meeting library.

We do not endorse any particular resource, book or website. The list represents a range of opinion, theory and practice which should be used judiciously by Friends. The broad topic of sexual abuse and how to respond to it is fraught with controversy and you will need to read widely to get a balanced perspective on the issues. Much research and development of therapeutic techniques have occurred over the years and more recent understanding of the issues will not be reflected in older publications. For example, the work of Ellen Bass and Laura Davis is controversial. While their *The Courage to Heal* was a landmark publication and contains much useful information, it gives perspectives and suggests approaches that are not currently supported by professional associations (see “Considerations when seeking a professional therapist”, above.). This is an important book for anyone wanting to understand the history of the development of this concern in our society, but should not be used uncritically as a guide to action or as an approach to therapy.

PARTIALLY ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Again, we do not endorse any particular resource, book or website. The list represents a range of opinion, theory and practice which should be used judiciously by Friends.

- Anonymous. "Sexual Abuse and Recovery." Friends Journal, May, 1987.

Bass, Ellen and Davis, Laura. The Courage to Heal: A Guide for Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse. Cambridge, MA: Harper and Row, 1988.

While controversy exists around this publication, it has been very valuable to many and continues to be popular. It describes the stages of the healing process, how to change self-defeating patterns, profiles of courageous women dealing with past abuse, and resources for healing.

Bass, Ellen and Davis, Laura. Beginning to Heal: A First Book for Men and Women Who Were Sexually Abused As Children. HarperCollins Canada, 2003.

Bazilli, Susan, and Gallivan, Kathleen. Sexual Assault: A Guide to the Criminal System. Toronto, Ontario, METRAC, (Metro Action Committee on Public Violence against Woman and Children), 1994.

A detailed guide to how the criminal code and legal system in Canada (national level) works, including information about each step of the criminal process, from the option of reporting a sexual assault to the police, through sentencing and appeals of a trial verdict. Its intent is to support people in making informed choices and to provide information about the "immense hurdles" people face in going through the system.

- Brutz, Judy. Searching for Spiritual Wholeness in the Family (1990). Friends Family Service Publications, 343 West Street, Amherst, MA 01002.
Thoughts on American culture and Quaker violence in the family and the author's own truth of past abuse. In sharing her process of healing, she shares what obedience to Christ means to her
- Brutz, Judy. In the Manner of the Lord's Prayer. Volumes III and IV Friends Family Service Publications, 343 West Street, Amherst, MA 01002.
Prayers that encourage us to pray in new ways and open ourselves to hearing and speaking hard truths.
- Brutz, Judith L. and Allen, Craig M. "Quaker Family Violence: Bringing Peace Home" In Horton, Anne L. and Williamson, Judith A. (Eds.), Abuse and Religion: When Praying Isn't Enough. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath & Co., 1988.

Danika, Elly. Don't: A Woman's Word. Charlottetown, PEI, Gynergy Books (Ragweed Press), 1988.

Davis, Laura. Allies in Healing: When the Person You Love Was Sexually Abused as a Child. Harper Perennial, 1991.

- Drake, Elizabeth and Nelson, Anne Gilroy with Roane, Thomas. Working Together, A Team Effort. 1986.
This booklet addresses how victims often initially feel nothing was wrong because of the persuasiveness of the perpetrator or their youth, etc. It describe for the child reader ways to consider the incident.
- Fortune, Marie M. A Commentary on Religious Issues in Family Violence. Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, 1914 North 34th, Suite 105, Seattle, WA 98103.
Written by Rev. Marie M. Fortune, an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ and Director of the Center Substantial contributions were made by Judith Hertz from the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods.
- Fortune, Marie M. "Forgiveness: The Last Step." In Horton, Anne L. and Williamson, Judith A. (Eds.) Abuse and Religion: When Praying Isn't Enough. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath & Co., 1988.
- Fortune, Marie M. Sexual Violence: The Unmentionable Sin. An Ethical and Pastoral Perspective. New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1983. Order from the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, Seattle, WA.
This book explores sexual abuse from a Christian perspective. The first part examines the Christian tradition and passages from the Bible and how they often support abuse and rape. After many years of ignoring the issue, the church is called to deal directly with sexual abuse now. The second part suggests contemporary ways sexual abuse can be handled within the church setting.
- Fortune, Marie M. Violence in the Family - A workshop Curriculum for Clergy and Other Helpers. New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1991. Order from the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, Seattle, WA.

Glickman, Charlie, "The Language of Sex-Positivity" from The Electronic Journal of Human Sexuality, Volume 3, July 6, 2000, <www.ejhs.org>

- Gondolf, Edward. "Dealing with the Abuser: Issues, Options, and Procedures." In Horton, Anne LL and Williamson, Judith A(Eds.), Abuse and Religion: When Praying Isn't Enough. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath & Co., 1988.

- Grundy, Martha Paxson. "Difficult People in Meeting: How did early Friends Respond?" Friends Journal, June, 1991. pp. 17-18.

Herman, Judith Lewis. Father-Daughter Incest. Harvard, Harvard University Press, 1982.

An early work in the field, an extremely readable survey of father-daughter incest. The author describes the incestuous family from several points of view, including the dynamics typical of the incest family, and of the seductive father family; the traditional values of American society that promote the possibility of abusive family conduct; the political structure of our society that fails to assist the victim and favors the perpetrator; and the legal-enforcement-treatment system, which is too heavily funded or prepared to work with incest/seductive families.

Herman, Judith Lewis. Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence--From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror. New York, NY, Basic Books, 1997.

Trauma and Recovery brings a new level of understanding to a set of problems usually considered individually. Herman draws on her own cutting-edge research in domestic violence as well as on the vast literature of combat veterans and victims of political terror, to show the parallels between private terrors such as rape and public traumas such as terrorism. The book puts individual experience in a broader political frame, arguing that psychological trauma can be understood only in a social context. Meticulously documented and frequently using the victims' own words as well as those from classic literary works and prison diaries, Trauma and Recovery is a powerful work that will continue to profoundly impact our thinking.

- Horton, Anne L., Barry L. Johnson, Lynn M. Roundy and Doran Williams (eds) (1990) The Incest Perpetrator: A Family Member No One Wants to Treat. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publishers, 292 pp.

After two introductory chapters, provides helpful information about the nature of incest perpetrators, some of the processes involved in incest, and treatment methods.

Langelan, Martha. Back Off! How to Confront and Stop Sexual Harassment and Harassers.

Riverside, New Jersey, Fireside (Simon and Schuster), 1993.

Back Off! examines the dynamics of sex and power in sexual harassment, the motives behind harassers' actions, and why traditional responses such as appeasement or aggression don't work, and describes the successful resistance strategies that you really can use -- including nonviolent personal confrontation techniques, group confrontations, administrative remedies, and formal lawsuits.

Lew, Mike. Victims No Longer: Men Recovering from Incest and Other Child Sexual Abuse. New York: Harper & Row, 1990.

- Pacific Yearly Meeting. When Quaker Solidarity is Broken: Addressing the Issue of Sexual Harassment and Sexual Abuse. Draft Document. June, 1992. Address inquiries to Becky Layfield Newman, Clerk, Ministry and Oversight Subcommittee on Sexual Abuse, 36 Butler St., Irvine, CA 92715.
- O'Connell, Michael A., Eric Leberg and Craig R. Donaldson (1990) Working with Sex Offenders – Guidelines for Therapist Selection. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 130pp.
- The Violet Collective. "A Plea to my Pastor," I Choose to Remember. Minneapolis, 1981.

Thornburg, Stan. "On Being a Safe Male," Evangelical Friend, May/June, 1992.

Stan shares his discovery that he is not the safe male he always assumed he was. He challenges all males to a new awareness of male-female dynamics.

- Walker, Alice. You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982.
- Whitmore, Catherine, Plain Living: A Quaker Path to Simplicity, Sorin Books: 2001.

Wilken, Tom. "Rebuilding Your House of Self-Respect: Men recovering in group from childhood sexual abuse," (Second Edition). Hope and Healing Associates, Erieau, ON (2008).

A fabulous very readable resource for both male survivors and those who wish to support them. This is a good resource for professional therapists also. It includes background on male sexual abuse, stories from survivors, and a model of stages of recovery. Make sure you get the updated second edition.

WEB SITES

This is just a beginning of a list of web resources. We encourage suggestions for more links.

Centre for Restorative Justice, Simon Fraser University: <http://www.sfu.ca/cfrj/>

Male Survivor: Overcoming Sexual Victimization of Boys and Men:
<http://www.malesurvivor.org>

METRAC (Metro Action Committee on Public Violence against Woman and Children):
<http://www.metrac.org>

National Clearinghouse on Family Violence - Publications
<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ncfv-cnivf/publications-eng.php>

Sexual Harassment Support: A support community for anyone who has experienced sexual harassment: <http://www.sexualharassmentsupport.org/index.html>

Survivors of Abuse Recovering (S.O.A.R.) Society: <http://www.survivorsofabuserrecovering.ca>
A peer counseling network for female and male adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse.

The British Columbia Society for Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse is a non-profit society, established to provide therapeutic services for males who have been sexually abused at some time in their lives. <http://bc-malesurvivors.com/site/>

TOOLS FOR RESPONSE

(1) Sexual Harassment

Taken from the book *Back Off!*, the following survey is an example of positive action that can be taken in a harassment situation, if the harassed individual feels safe doing so. It is surprisingly effective. We include because it makes us laugh.

THE CONFRONTATION SURVEY

Turn and face the harasser. Look him in the eye. In a calm, businesslike voice, **YOU SAY**: "That's very interesting. You have just harassed a woman. Women are conducting a research project on sexual harassment, and I want to include you in this survey. I want to take just a minute to ask you a few questions. This is important research."

1. **VERBAL HARASSMENT. YOU SAY**: "I want to get your exact words down. You just said [repeat whatever he said], is that right?" Write down what he said.

NONVERBAL OR PHYSICAL HARASSMENT. YOU SAY: "I want to get this exactly right. How would you describe what you just did?" (Examples: kissing or sucking noises; hand on some part of woman's body; exposing himself) Write what he says he did.

Now write down what he actually did (be specific – note where he touched you, etc).

THEN ASK THE HARASSER:

- 2.(optional) What's your name?
- 3.In general, can you say why you do this?
- 4.What kinds of things like this have you sometimes said or done to women or girls?
- 5.How would you describe the way women or girls usually react, when you do this?
- 6.How do you feel when you say or do this kind of thing to women or girls?
- 7.How do you think women and girls feel about it when you do this?
- 8.Do you usually do this kind of thing when you are by yourself, or when you are with a group of male friends or coworkers, or both? (Check the answer that applies)

Alone _____ With group _____ Both _____

- 9.Do you do this to all kinds of women, or do you pick out certain kinds?

All kinds _____ Only certain types _____

10. Which of the following kinds of women do you harass? (Check all answers that apply.)

Black _____ White _____ Hispanic _____ Asian _____ Arab _____ Jewish _____
Women under 15? _____ Women you know? _____ Women alone? _____
Women 16 – 40? _____ Strangers? _____ In groups? _____
Women over 40? _____ Both? _____ Women who look rich? _____
Women who look poor? _____

Any other particular kinds of women?

11. Are there any types of women that you never harass? Who?
12. Do you remember how old you were the first time you said or did something like this to a woman or girl?

Age: _____ How old are you now? Age: _____

13. About how many times today have you done this to a woman or girl? _____

14. About how many times this week have you done this to a woman or girl? _____

15. Where else have you harassed women or girls?

On the street _____

At work _____

At school _____

On the bus or subway _____

In the park _____

What other places? _____

16. Has a woman or girl ever told you to stop it, or let you know that she doesn't like it?

Yes

No

(If yes) What did she do?

17. Do you have a wife?

Yes

No

A steady girlfriend?

Yes

No

Any sisters?

Yes

No

How many? _____

Any daughters?

Yes

No

How many? _____ Ages: _____

Any sons?

Yes

No

How many? _____ Ages: _____

18. Do you harass women or girls when you have a woman or child with you?

Yes

No

19. Do you think most other men harass women, too?

Yes

No

20. What do you think a woman should do if she doesn't like this behaviour?

THEN YOU SAY: "Thank you. Most women do not think this behaviour is a compliment. I expect you not to do it again, to anyone. I appreciate your cooperation in this survey. Good-bye."

AFTERWARD, FILL IN THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

1. Time of incident:

Date:

How many harassers?

2. Describe location of incident:

3. Your age:

Your ethnicity:

Harasser's ethnicity:

4. How did the harasser react to the survey? Surprised? Polite? Rude? Apologetic?

5. Were there any witnesses? How did they react to the incident and the survey?

6. How did you feel about the incident? How did you feel about using the survey to confront the harasser?

7. Any other comments or information to share?

THANK YOU! PLEASE MAIL YOUR COMPLETED (OR PARTIALLY COMPLETED) SURVEYS TO:

CONFRONTATION SURVEY
C/O D.C. RAPE CRISIS CENTRE
P.O. BOX 21005
WASHINGTON, D.C.
UNITED STATES 20009

(2) Creating Clarity in a Difficult or Conflicted Relationship

This document is meant to provide a structure and to be filled in as preparation for a written or verbal confrontation. It can be used in many different situations from minor to dangerous. You can use elements of it as a sort of script in your communication. Use neutral language, like a court document or witness statement. Ideally, you would go through the material you've recorded here with another person to listen, where many of the more overwhelming emotions may be released, allowing you to communicate during your confrontation in a calmer, more balanced (and, hence, more effective) manner.

When you confront, remember that there are many ways to bring up difficult subjects; you can write or speak to the person, rehearse with a friend or be accompanied, or call on the telephone. Be as comfortable as you can be with the medium you choose.

OUTLINE FOR CONFRONTATION/DOCUMENTATION OF A PROBLEM

(If you are going to make a verbal confrontation, begin by flagging your intention. Ask: "I have something difficult to talk about—is this a good time? If not now, when?" This allows the person to indicate their willingness to listen or not. It maximizes your likelihood of successful communication.)

Background/History (Give the basic facts and framework of your relationship or history together. For example, how long have you known each other, the context and nature of your relationship, what you value about the relationship, etc. If there are on-going patterns in the relationship, you may want to describe them here.)

Recent Occurrences/Facts (Neutral language; avoid name-calling. What exactly is prompting you to take action at this point?)

My Feelings (angry, sad, happy, afraid, annoyed, grief stricken, etc.)

My Thoughts (*Be as clear as possible. One's thoughts about distressing events are frequently very judgmental; this is unavoidable, as it is part of the naming process, but you may need to present your thoughts in a non-judgmental fashion during a confrontation. The purpose of this section is for you to be aware of what your judgements are about your experience.*)

Impact on our relationship (*This could include decreased association or avoidance, difficulty working together, distrust, or your decision to end the relationship (and what that may look like). Include a relationship to an institution or group if applicable; for example, how does this affect the Monthly Meeting or Worship Group? Work on a common committee?*)

(OPTIONAL Bridging section... **Do NOT use with an abusive person.**
You could start with "I understand....." or "I imagine...." and attempt to express your acceptance or empathy for their position in the situation or events.)

Desired Outcome: What I want, What should happen, What should never happen again, What I intend to do (*Be specific, include how-to's and measurable, observable actions. For example, Please do not sit next to me during Meeting for Worship, or Let's shake hands in the future when we meet, rather than hugging.*)

(If you have confronted someone through writing, provide clear direction as to how they are to communicate the response (*For example, "respond to my lawyer," or "please write to me," "do not attempt to contact me in future" or "you may e-mail me," etc.*)

Adapted from Sample Letter found in *A Time for Action on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace*, the Ontario Women's Directorate, 1993.

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Last Word

The mystery of sex continues to be greater than our capacity to comprehend it, no matter how much we learn about it. We engage in it, in often too frantic efforts to enjoy it but, more subtly, also to try to fathom its ever recurring power over us. Surely this power and its mystery relate to the mystery of God's relationship to us. The mistake we have made throughout the ages has been to load onto sex the incubus of success or failure of marriage, to look upon sex as a resolution, an ending. In reality it offers us, if we could only see it, a fresh beginning every time in that relationship of which it is a part.

Mary S. Calderone, 1973

Summary of the History of the Concern Regarding Sexual Harassment and Abuse and Sexual Ethics within Canadian Yearly Meeting

Composed by Sara Avmaat

Please refer to the Appendix for the list of documents upon which this Summary is based.

- 1991 In response to a proposed statement on sexual harassment to be sent to the World Council of Churches 2 young women came forward with personal incidents of harassment within Canadian Yearly Meeting (CYM). CYM asks Continuing Meeting of Ministry and Counsel (CMM&C) to review CYM's own way of dealing with these matters and bring recommendations.
- 1992 CMM&C convenes a Women's Room at CYM, which presents a long and powerful report on sexual abuse and harassment, with personal stories and recommendations. CYM asks CMM&C to take the issue under its care, to gather resources for Monthly Meetings, to consult with other CYM committees, and to appoint Listeners.
- 1993 CMM&C produces a statement on sexual harassment and convenes a Women's group, a Men's group, and a Mixed group. CMM&C report they have appointed a sub-committee to work with Religious Education Committee on developing a sensitive way for parents to discuss these issues with their children. They hope to also involve Camp Neekaunis Committee. CYM asks CMM&C to continue working on this concern and to circulate the statement to Monthly meetings. Monthly Meetings are asked to engage in dialogue with CMM&C on this statement. CYM states (Minute 68-e) "We need to go beyond merely developing policies on the issue of sexual harassment to working together to create a positive corporate testimony for the Religious Society of Friends".
- 1994 Canadian Young Friends Yearly Meeting (CYFYM) forwards a minute to CYM from a group in the Women's Room/Group which forcefully states that CYM is not doing enough on the issue of sexual abuse. Their statement is framed around the 6 statements given by John Calvi in his Sunderland P. Gardiner Lecture earlier that week: I love you, thank you, I'm sorry, I need help, that's not good enough and bug off. However, they use the f-word in the last statement. The Yearly Meeting is distressed. However, they ask the Women's Group to bring names of Friends to CMM&C to work with them on this concern. The Women's Partner Group is established, geographically wide-spread and with no budget.
- 1995 The Women's Partner Group submits a draft protocol, which is discussed in a Special Interest Group. The SIG feels that the protocol needs more work and recommends to CYM that an ad-hoc committee be set up from one geographical area, to continue work on the protocol. This is done and begun in Ontario.

- 1996 The Ontario ad hoc committee submits draft statements of policy and procedure regarding children and adults. CYM agrees that the committee should continue for one more year (by which time the committee thinks it will have completed its work). CYM encourages Monthly Meetings to consider the draft statements.
- 1997 The Ontario ad hoc committee submits a second draft protocol focusing on adults and incorporating responses from Monthly Meetings. CYM approves their report and agrees that the Ontario ad hoc committee should continue as a working group for 3 more years, to provide on-going care of the process, consultation with Monthly Meetings, and to develop a training workshop for overseers and care-givers. CYM also agrees that the ad hoc committee/working group will submit names to Representative Meeting in Nov. 1997 for a second ad hoc committee which will develop a protocol for the protection of children.
- 1998 The Ontario working group reports doing presentations and leading discussions at Half-yearly Meetings and continuing to work on a training workshop for overseers and caregivers. The ad hoc committee addressing issues of child abuse has been set up and submits a report with a draft protocol for children, "Safeguarding Children from Harm." CYM asks the ad hoc committee re child abuse to continue for another year, to circulate their report, receive responses and arrange a threshing session for CYM 1999. One of the recommendations in the report was that a third ad hoc committee, made up of young people, be set up to work with the guidance and support of the existing working group and ad hoc committee to develop a protocol for adolescents. Young Friends had been encouraged to consider this recommendation and sent 2 representatives to CYM ready to serve. However, since further consideration of the report was laid over until 1999 this recommendation (among others) was not implemented. CYM expressed regret for hurt and disappointment caused by this.
- 1999 The Working Group on sexual abuse holds a well attended 2 day workshop for Transforming Sexual Abuse prior to CYM. CYM approves in principle the document "Safeguarding Children from Harm" produced by the ad hoc committee on issues of sexual abuse relating to children. The 1999 version is not printed in the minutes and according to the ad hoc committee's report "a full revision ...is not available at this time" so presumably it was the 1998 version that was approved by CYM. The ad hoc committee is laid down. CYM asks CMM&C to work with the responses that have come from Monthly Meetings and expresses the need to look to positive aspects of sexuality as well as the prevention of harm. Young Friends Committee for the prevention of Sexual Harassment and Abuse makes a report with a list of suggestions.
- 2000 The 3 year mandate of the Ontario working group is up. Several of the members have resigned. The 2 remaining members write a report requesting another 3 year mandate. They would like to re-offer their workshop at a future CYM and do further work on a workshop manual and pamphlet on Transformative Justice. A report from Yearly Meeting of M&C (See CYM minute 79) states that there was not unity on this issue at Yearly Meeting Ministry and Counsel (YMM&C), that some members felt that enough work had been done for now while others felt some aspects needed to be carried on. CYM acknowledges the "final" report of the

Working Group and minutes gratitude. The minute does not specifically address the request for a renewed mandate, but shifts the focus to developing a section on sexual ethics to be eventually inserted into Organization and Procedure. CYM asks CMM&C to bring names of Friends who could do this work to Representative Meeting for approval. Regarding the work related to children, CMM&C made a number of recommendations for continuing this work. CYM approves that CMM&C continue to work towards implementing the recommendations. They are not reprinted in the minute (CYM minute54).

2001 YMM&C reports to CYM that CMM&C will appoint National Listeners, complete the recommendations concerning the document "Keeping Children Safe" to make it easier to use, and ensure that a section for Organization and Procedure referring to the existing protocols related to harassment and abuse is written. CYM minutes thanks. CYFYM minutes that work had been started on guidelines that all YF's could approve of. The minute that had been started in 1999 had been lost so YF's decide to circulate a minute that was started at Western Half-Yearly Meeting in spring 2001 to Young Friends' Gatherings over the year and bring it to CYFYM in 2002.

2002 An ad hoc committee on sexual ethics has drafted a section for Organization and Procedure. (This is presumably the committee referred to in 2000. I couldn't find a reference to it in the Representative Meeting Minutes, but I'm missing those for fall of 2001 and spring of 2002). It is to be further seasoned by Discipline Review committee and brought back to CYM in 2003. Four National Listeners are now in place.

2003 The Discipline Review Committee reports they have received the draft statement on sexual ethics from CMM&C, it has been circulated and responses from Monthly Meetings have in general been positive. It was hoped the statement on sexual ethics could be placed in a new chapter of Organization and Procedure called "Right Relationships". However, "Friends expressed both agreement that this is an area which needs to be addressed in our Discipline and concern that the proposed section may be inappropriately phrased or insufficient" (CYM minute 52). (I was not present that year but have the impression that some Friends raised issues not so much to do with the statement on sexual ethics itself but with the previously approved statements on sexual abuse and harassment and the intention that the statement refer to them as expressed in 2001). CMM&C is asked by CYM to work with Monthly Meetings, CYFYM, and individuals to "season this section further". Meanwhile CYFYM minutes that they plan to continue circulating their draft guidelines to gatherings of YF's around the country and bring them to CYFYM 2004.

2004 CMM&C responds to the above mentioned request by sending out a packet of materials to Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups under the title "With Truth and Love" in March of 2004. The packet contains copies of the previous drafts and documents submitted to CYM on sexual abuse and sexual ethics as well as material from other Quaker sources on these topics and CMM&C expresses the hope that "making the packages available and inviting response will enable more informed discussion at Yearly Meeting about what to include...in...Organization and Procedure". However, a significant number of Friends felt there were serious problems

with the packet. It included material from non-Quaker sources on False Memory Syndrome and the introduction placed such heavy emphasis on false or “mischievous” accusations that the concern was raised that victims of abuse would be afraid to seek help within their Meetings or those who had already spoken of their situation would feel disbelieved after the fact. There was also concern expressed regarding process, as a process that had begun with ad hoc committees set up by CYM and reporting to CYM, though under the care of CMM&C, now seemed as if it was being directed by CMM&C. These concerns were expressed but not resolved at the open and closed sessions of YMM&C that August. CMM&C was asked by some Friends to rescind the packet but did not reach unity to do this. They did agree to write a letter of apology to be appended to the packet. CYM 2004 minutes “heaviness” and way opening “toward healing” but no specific decisions regarding how the work should proceed. In the fall of 2004 CMM&C sends out a letter of apology addressing the former concern but not the latter. CMM&C brings names for an ad hoc committee to redraft the children’s protocol to Representative Meeting Nov. 2004.

2005 In the spring of 2005 a new draft of a children’s protocol “The nurturing of Children in our Care” is circulated to Monthly Meetings. In June of 2005 Wolfville Meeting sends a letter to the clerks of CYM and Monthly Meetings expressing the concern that CMM&C is not designed to be a policy development or decision-making body and that CYM has erred in not maintaining direct oversight. At CYM 2005, Wolfville Monthly Meeting requests CYM to transfer all policy development having to do with sexual abuse and sexual harassment of both children and adults and work on the section on right relationships for Organization and Procedure to a new ad hoc committee or committees. CYM decides to ask Nominating Committee to nominate an ad hoc committee for this purpose and to bring nominations back to CYM. They are asked to consider regionalization if possible, to consider both those with professional training and other spiritually grounded Friends including young Friends, and both men and women. A closed session of YMM&C produced a minute to be sent to CYM, Monthly Meetings and worship groups to be attached to the packet “With Truth and Love” suggesting that the packet not be used as a whole. CYFYM minutes that they have set up a committee to collect copies of their draft and other existing protocols and to consider them and make recommendations on next steps to be taken.

2006 Six names are brought to CYM by Nominating Committee for what is called the Ad Hoc Committee on Right Relationships. The committee is appointed for the duration of the task. The committee is convened in Dec. 2006 and changes its name to the Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Ethics.

Submitted by Sara avMaat

Appendix

CYM Minutes and other Documents Reviewed to Create a Summary of the Concern Regarding Sexual Harassment and Abuse and Sexual Ethics within Canadian Yearly Meeting:

“A Partial History of the Concern for Sexual Assault and Harassment within Canadian Yearly Meeting” composed by (.....) which covers 1991-1999,

“Time Line: Canadian Yearly Meeting Activities Regarding Sexual Harassment and Abuse” composed by Wolfville Monthly Meeting covering 1997-2004,

and

- 1991 Report from the World Council of Churches Relations Committee.
- 1991 Minute 62
- 1992 Minute 49
- 1992 Minute 50
- 1992 Minute 53
- 1992 Minute 54
- 1993 Minute 68
- 1993 Report from the Group of Women and Men Together
- 1994 Minute 49
- 1994 Minute 84 section (c)
- 1994 Minute 89
- 1994 Minute 91
- Nov.1994 Representative Meeting minute 94-11-06
- April 1995 Representative Meeting minute 95-04-15
- 1995 Minute 63
- 1995 Minute 65
- 1995 Minute 67
- 1996 Minute 54
- 1996 Report from the Ad Hoc Committee Working on Issues of Sexual Harassment and Abuse
- 1997 Report from the Ad hoc Committee Addressing Issues of Sexual Harassment and Abuse
- 1997 Minute 56
- 1997 Minute 80
- 1997 Minute 85
- Nov. 1997 Representative Meeting minute 97-11-05 (c)
- 1998 Report from the Ad Hoc Committee Addressing Issues of Child Abuse
- 1998 Report from the Working Group Addressing Issues of Sexual Harassment and Abuse

1998 Minute 37
1998 CYFYM minute 98-08-01
1999 Report from the Ad Hoc Committee on Issues of Sexual Harassment and Abuse
Relating to Children
1999 Minute38
1999 Minute44
1999 Minute 52
1999 Report of Young Friends' Committee for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment and Abuse
2000 Report of CMM&C
2000 Report from the Working Group Addressing Issues of Sexual Harassment and Abuse
2000 Minute 51
2000 Minute54
2000 Minute79
2001 Report of CMM&C
2001 Minute 50 (b)
2001 Minute 66
2001 CYFYM minute 5
2002 Minute 47
2003 Report of CMM&C
2003 Report of Discipline Review Committee
2003 Minute 52
2003 CYFYM minute 14
Nov. 2003 Representative Meeting minute 03-11-15
2004 Report of CMM&C
2004 Minute 66
Nov.2004 Letter from CMM&C to Monthly Meetings
Nov.2004 Representative Meeting minute 04-11-13
2005 Report of CMM&C
2005 Letter from Wolfville Monthly Meeting to Clerks of CYM and Monthly Meetings
2005 Minute29
2005 Minute 45
2005 Minute 46
2005 YMM and C minute of special closed session read at CYM and forwarded to MM's
2005 CYFYM minute 05-08-04
Nov. 2005 Representative Meeting minute 05-11-21
May 2006 Representative Meeting minute 06-05-22
2006 Report of CMM&C
2006 Minute 61
2006 Minute 62