



Caring, Advocacy, Response, Education

The
Peninsula
Delaware
Annual
Conference

CARE TEAM

presents...

What is the CARE Team?

The CARE Team is a group of clergy and laity in our Conference entrusted with the roles of:

Care • Advocacy • Response • Education

for persons and congregations involved in cases of alleged sexual misconduct.

What is the Vision of the CARE Team?

The CARE Team is a resource to help persons and congregations move toward:

Understanding • Reconciliation • Wholeness

What is the Hope of the CARE Team?

The CARE Team will take appropriate steps for:

Prevention • Intervention • Restoration

with the hope that persons and congregations will achieve an optimum sense of well-being.

What the CARE Team is NOT.

The CARE Team is not a replacement for the intervention process that investigates complaints of alleged sexual misconduct. That process is directed by the Bishop, in compliance with *The Book of Discipline*. Rather, the CARE Team is considered a resource to provide appropriate care to persons and congregations engaged in that process.

Sexual Abuse within Ministerial Relationships

There is little doubt that sexual misconduct in church and society is a significant and troubling topic for our communities and congregations worldwide. We are aware that this unwanted behavior damages the moral environment where people worship, work, and learn. In 1996, the General Conference made a commitment to focus on sexual misconduct within the church and take action to address this brokenness and pain within The United Methodist Church.

In accordance with *The Book of Discipline*, para. 161F, all human beings have equal worth in the eyes of God. As the promise of Galatians 3:26-29 states, “all are one in Christ”; therefore, we as United Methodists support equity among all persons without regard to ethnicity, situation or gender. In our congregations and settings for ministry, we seek to create an environment of hospitality for all persons, male or female, which is free from misconduct of a sexual nature and encourages respect, equality and kinship in Christ.

Sexual misconduct by either a lay person or clergy person within a ministerial relationship can be defined as a betrayal of sacred trust, a violation of the ministerial role, and the exploitation of those who are vulnerable in that relationship. Sexual abuse within the ministerial relationship occurs when a person within a ministerial role of leadership (lay or clergy, pastor, educator, counselor, youth leader, or other position of leadership) engages in sexual conduct or sexualized behavior with a congregant, client, employee, student, staff member, coworker, or volunteer.

The 2000 Book of Resolutions

To access conference policy and resources go to:
www.pen-del.org

For articles information on Sexual Ethics go to:
www.umsexualethics.org

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Sexual Misconduct Response Guidelines

The following guidelines are the steps to be followed in cases of *Sexual Misconduct*. These steps are further detailed and explained in the 2000 United Methodist Book of Discipline and the 2001 Minutes of the Peninsula Delaware Conference Journal.

Possible Points of Entry There are two possible ways to initiate the process in cases of alleged sexual misconduct.

- Contact the District Superintendent
- Contact a CARE Team member

In either case, once contact is made, there is an opportunity to explain the circumstances of the alleged misconduct. In addition, the intervention process is explained. This is a time of listening and sharing information.

- District Superintendents and CARE Team members are trained to listen and help the person reporting the alleged misconduct to decide what her/his next step will be.
- The CARE Team may be asked to assist in making a formal complaint, which must be in writing.
- When a formal complaint is written, it is filed with the appropriate District Superintendent, who then notifies the Bishop.
- If a formal (written) complaint is not filed, there can be no further judicial action.

If a Complaint Is Filed Once a complaint is filed, the Bishop and the District Superintendent will meet to confer in prayer and concern. This marks the beginning of the formal intervention process. It is at this point that the person making the complaint and the person accused of alleged misconduct will be offered the support of a CARE Team member.

- If the offer of support is accepted, each party will receive a different support person from the CARE Team.
- The Bishop, in consultation with the District Superintendent and the CARE Team Chairperson, will determine which CARE Team members will be assigned.
- Family members may, if desired, also receive CARE Team support.

As a complaint is investigated, it may be helpful to the District Superintendent and the congregation to assign support persons for the congregation. If so, the Bishop, in consultation with the District Superintendent and the CARE Team Chairperson, will assign a *Congregational CARE Support Team*. These persons provide care and support for members of the congregation as they seek to cope with the alleged misconduct. In the case where a pastor is to be suspended, a *Congregational CARE Support Team* will be provided.

Strict confidentiality is maintained in all cases, except in matters concerning minors, in which case, the laws of Delaware and Maryland govern disclosure.