



GUIDELINES FOR MINISTERING TO VULNERABLE ADULTS

“Vulnerable person” means any person in a state of infirmity, physical or mental deficiency, or deprivation of personal liberty which, in fact, even occasionally, limits their ability to understand or to want or otherwise resist the offense. ~VOS ESTIS LUX

How do vulnerable adults fit into my ministry?

Vulnerable adults should be protected from abuse and neglect, which includes physical/emotional injury, abandonment, intimidation/bullying, sexual abuse, or other physical/mental abuse or exploitation.

A vulnerable adult may be suffering from a loss or a chronic illness that is not easily recognized, such as:

- Loss of a family member or pet
- Divorce
- Chronic disease/illness
- Uncertain resources
- Unexpected trauma or illness
- Lack of a support system or neglect (including self-neglect)
- Physical or sexual abuse
- Psychological or social harassment and discrimination
- Fraud, identity theft, embezzlement, or other financial exploitation

Why do vulnerable adults need extra consideration?

Vulnerable adults need extra consideration because they are experiencing a difficulty that makes them more susceptible to abuse and manipulation. These individuals may not be able to comfortably or safely access the resources they need, making them an *at-risk* population.

Do I need special training to work with vulnerable adults?

In the Diocese of Salina, the training entails safe environment training for anyone working with children and vulnerable adults, a background check, and review and acknowledgement of the Policy and Code of Conduct.

Training and education are included in the CMGConnect curriculum, and those ministering will follow the Policy for the Protection of Children and Young People/Code of Conduct and Program.

All diocesan clergy, employees and volunteers who serve vulnerable adults should adequately represent the parishes and schools in the Diocese of Salina with the compassion of Christ to those whom they serve. All serving shall treat people with respect and dignity as befits their position as persons made in the image and likeness of God.

Specific ministries to whom this is important, but not limited to:

- Ministers of Holy Communion to homebound parishioners
- Facilitators for bereavement and other support groups
- Social outreach ministers
- Parish nurses
- Retreat leaders
- Prison ministers
- Adult faith formation leaders
- Hospital ministers

What should I look for?

Abuse comes in many forms; some indicators are below:

1. Physical Abuse
 - History of unexplained falls
 - Multiple accounts of minor injuries
 - Unexplained bruising or injury
 - Reluctance to seek medical attention
 - Malnutrition, bed sores, being left in soiled clothing
2. Sexual Abuse
 - Unexplained changes in behavior
 - Tendency to spend time secluded
 - Language that is out of character
 - Expressed explicit sexual behavior
 - Torn or stained clothing
3. Psychological Abuse
 - Tendency to spend long hours in bed
 - Overeating or loss of appetite
 - Anxiety, confusion, or general resignation
 - Fearfulness
 - Does not want to be around a certain person
 - Uncooperative or aggressive
4. Financial Abuse
 - Unexplained inability to pay for shopping or bills
 - Personal possessions going missing from the home
 - Substandard living conditions
 - No or limited access to personal financial information
5. Neglect and Acts of Omission (i.e., by family/friend/caregiver)
 - Medical and physical needs are unmet
 - Proper medication, equipment, or personal care needs unmet
 - Privacy and dignity needs unmet

A vulnerable adult who is abused is provided the same resources as a minor victim. Any allegations regarding a vulnerable adult will go through the same process as an allegation from a minor victim.

What can I do to help?

The Catholic Church recognizes that there are many people who require special care and attention. Church personnel, including priests, religious staff, and volunteers can carry out their ministry and continue to respect those individuals with vulnerabilities.

1. Recognize when adults may be at risk of harm (warning signs or significant events).
2. Create an environment that is safe and follow Arch/Diocese best practices.
3. Uphold safe recruitment and selection practices for all Church personnel, including volunteers.
4. Maintain high ethical standards of conduct which set clear guidelines regarding behaviors and perceived behaviors.
5. Avoid situations that compromise your relationship with vulnerable adults.
6. Treat everyone equally and with respect.
7. Respond and report ANY concerns, suspicions, allegations or abuse to the proper individuals, or if you have any questions contact:

VAC for Diocese of Salina
866-752-8855 ext. 1067
www.reportandprotect.com

*Know your diocesan policies before participating in any events
which involve children, teens, or vulnerable adults.*

If you suspect abuse or neglect of a vulnerable adult, make a report to:

Adult Protective Services – 1-800-922-5330

If the abuse or neglect is by a member of clergy or other school/church personnel,
in addition to reporting to local civil authorities, please contact:

Victim Assistance Coordinator for the Diocese of Salina

Call: 866-752-8855 ext. 1067

Email: reportabuse@salinadiocese.org

Go to: www.reportandprotect.com