



## **RESPOND**

### **AVOID COMMON BARRIERS\* TO RESPONDING:**

<i>Denial</i>	We don't want to believe that abuse occurs.
<i>Loyalty</i>	We have allegiance to the alleged perpetrator or the church.
<i>Fear</i>	We could be wrong or we may not want to be identified.
<i>Protection</i>	We want to protect the victim from embarrassment or pain.
<i>Avoidance</i>	We don't want to get caught in the middle or waste time.
<i>Guilt</i>	We should have known or we might be implicated.

### **IF A CHILD DISCLOSES ABUSE:**

- Listen (be sensitive to vague disclosures).
- Avoid making promises.
- Avoid expressing shock or outrage or panic.
- Don't threaten or condemn the alleged perpetrator.
- Believe what the child is telling you.
- Reassure the child he or she was right to tell you.
- Assure the child the abuse was not his or her fault.
- Avoid questions that could make the child feel responsible.
- Try to get enough details about the situation (without asking leading questions) to determine your response (find resources, report to CPS, talk to parents, etc.).  
(Your role is discernment and getting help, not investigation!)
- Write down exactly what the child said.
- Follow the church and California reporting procedure.

Child Protective Services	(510) 259-1800
Adult Protective Services	(800) 814-0009
Law Enforcement	911 or (510) 293-7047
- Encourage the child to continue with her/his routine and school activities as soon as possible but do not force. Consider counseling and be prepared to talk with the child about the abusive situation.
- Find a place to vent your own feelings. Take care of yourself too.

For more abuse prevention information, visit [www.kyros.org](http://www.kyros.org) (under "Resources")

For free on-line training for mandated reporters visit  
<http://mandatedreporterca.com/training/generaltraining.htm>

---

\* Adapted from *Safeguarding God's Children Handbook for Parents and Congregations*, page 24