

SAMPLE Parish Response Team Plan

The purpose of this document is to provide a Sample Parish Response Team (RPT) Plan for Diocese of Christ Our Hope congregations. In every circumstance of misconduct, the level of abuse and misconduct must be considered. In each case, this RPT structure will be assessed and then modified to best care for every party involved. Please contact the Diocese if a Response Team is launched. There are resources to assist the set up of processes for a PRT to follow depending on the nature of the misconduct.

Having a set plan in place for each congregation allows for the Rector, Vestry, and Staff to understand how to respond if a complaint of misconduct arises. Therefore, it is recommended that each Parish consider the following PRT construct:

1. Establishing a Parish Response Team (PRT)

- Response Team (RT) members (4 or 5 depending on circumstance):
 - 1 RT rep for Complainant, preferably trauma-informed to assist the Complainant in identifying a non-parishioner to walk alongside during the Response process as an advocate. This person will be this Response Team Rep for the Complainant.
 - 1 RT rep for Respondent, preferably trauma-informed to assist the Complainant in identifying a non-parishioner to walk alongside during the Response process as an advocate. This person will be this Response Team Rep for the Respondent.
 - 1 RT rep communications coordinator, preferably legal experience and gifted in communications
 - 1 Inquiry/investigations contact; preferably trauma informed or legally trained
 - Optional 1 Administrative Chair, depending on the nature of the complaint there may be need for additional support for the team to organize notes and meetings. If not this task could be shared within 4 members.
- Please note, the Rector should not be on the Response Team; it is their role to be Pastor to all parties involved in the RT process
- Contact information for the church's insurance policy
- Details of notification requirements from the Insurance company
- Local contact for Independent Investigations
- Local licensed trauma counselors
- Local Victim Advocate resources

II. Important Definitions for the PRT:

Advocate: non-parish individual selected by the complainant and the respondent as a companion and support for the duration of the Response Team. This person may be a trained, certified Survivor Advocate, or this may be a person that the complainant and respondent each has selected as their safe companion in this response team process.

Complainant: person claiming to be the recipient of misconduct or to have knowledge of misconduct to another.

Leadership: Any person holding a position of authority derived from the church, including clergy, Parish Council, staff, small group leaders, and church members holding administrative positions. This also includes any person holding an ad hoc position of authority, such as service project coordinator or chaperone, while acting under the auspices of the position.

Respondent: person accused of misconduct or abuse.

III. Launch a PRT:

Designated response team, appointed by the vestry, of four to five individuals appointed to review abuse and misconduct complaints.

IV. Roles and Responsibilities

Each member of the PRT will agree to strict confidentiality and care for every party involved.

- Complainant and their Advocate: The one who has submitted a complaint in writing and their support person, a non-parishioner and potentially a professional victim's advocate if the situation should require.
- Respondent and their Advocate: The one who is the subject of a complaint of abuse or misconduct and their support person, a non-parishioner and potentially a professional victim's advocate if the situation should require.
- Complainant PRT Contact: This person is not the advocate for the Complainant. This contact for the team is the Respondent's point person during the Response Team. They can assist the Complainant in identifying a non-parishioner or a professional victim's advocate to walk alongside during the Response process as an advocate. This person should have regular scheduled meetings with the respondent and their selected support person. And consistently be present on any and all PRT meetings on behalf of the Complainant. This person also

agrees to care for the Complainant for an agreed upon amount of time after the Response Team has disbanded. This role will allow for care and companionship with this individual for longer term restoration in the church body.

- Respondent PRT Contact: This person is not the advocate for the Respondent. This contact for the team is the Respondent's point person during the Response Team. They can assist the Respondent in identifying a non-parishioner or a professional victim's advocate to walk alongside during the Response process as an advocate. This person should have regular scheduled meetings with the respondent and their selected support person. And consistently be present on any and all PRT meetings on behalf of the Respondent. This person also agrees to care for the Respondent for an agreed upon amount of time after the Response Team has disbanded. This role will allow for care and companionship with this individual for longer term restoration in the church body.
- Communications coordinator (preferably with legal experience and gifted in communications): ensure any and all communications from the PRT, Vestry and/or Rector are survivor-sensitive and careful to manage documents and details of the process confidentially.
- Inquiry/investigations (preferably trauma informed or legally trained): receive details of the complainant and respondent. This person is the default lead of inquiry and also the person who would research and secure an outside investigator if needed. This person agrees to hold strict confidentiality and maintain files accordingly.
- Optional 1 Administrative Chair: depending on the nature of the complaint there may be need for additional support for the team to organize notes and meetings. If not, this task could be shared between 4 members.
- Please note, the Rector should not be on the Response Team; it is their role to be Pastor to all parties involved in the RT process. After the findings of the inquiry or investigation are complete, the Rector is debriefed and then next steps are established.