



Creating
Safer Space
Foundation
Module
2020 Edition

Participant's essential handouts

‘Somewhere’ Methodist Church – Good Practice

Read through this scenario and note down any issues that concern you.

‘Somewhere’ Methodist Church (example A)	Issues
<p>A church steward is talking through his report on church activity at the synod meeting:</p> <p>“Somewhere Methodist Church has a small but dedicated congregation and, as I always say, volunteers are so hard to come by, we can’t afford to be choosy, or offend the ones we’ve got! To be honest I am proud of my congregation’s efforts.</p> <p>“Take the Browne sisters, Judy and Elaine. They work miracles with the youth club. They just open the hall and the kids come in off the streets, kids whose parents don’t even seem to care where they are. I go along when I can, usually about once a month and I was so impressed last time as Judy had been held up so Elaine opened up by herself. Some of the kids helped her set up. They got equipment out of the overflowing cupboard – and some of it was really heavy. Judy arrived later looking very frazzled, she had been to pick up some kids from the group who couldn’t get there otherwise, and they had been very loud in the car!</p> <p>“And we’re very ‘with it’ at Somewhere Methodist Church. Our youth leaders are on Facebook. They tell me they are friends with most of the young people – great news! Not that I really understand what that means, except that the youth leaders are able help the youngsters any time of the day or night, and we have some great photos on our noticeboard.</p> <p>“I also want to let you know about some brilliant work we have started doing with the local employment trust, who find work placements for people who are just out of prison. The have matched us with a Mrs Williams, who will be helping out with the tea and coffee after church every week. I am sure you will agree an extra pair of hands will be very welcome!</p> <p>“And finally there is Florence – where would we be without the beautiful flowers she arranges in church each week? Florence is so dedicated to our church that when she went to stay with her daughter for a few weeks she arranged for two or three of her neighbours to have the church key and pop in with the flowers. So thoughtful of her.</p> <p>“So as you see things are going well - thanks to everyone’s commitment.”</p>	

'Elsewhere' Methodist Church – Good Practice

Read through the scenario and note down any issues that concern you.

'Elsewhere' Methodist Church (example B)	Issues
<p>A message is read out during the service:</p> <p>“Welcome everyone to Elsewhere Methodist Church, It is lovely to see some new faces tonight! We may have a small congregation, but I know we can ‘keep the show on the road’, I am so proud of how everyone pulls together and pitches in.</p> <p>“There’s our community lunch club. We have so many wonderful people coming along every week. The social services people bring some of their clients along and some people just turn up, so we need to find lots of extra hands! It’s amazing how our people make such hearty homemade food in that tired kitchen of ours - I have no idea how they make such feasts in there!</p> <p>“And love is in the air! Brian and Mary have announced their engagement this week. Brian is our longest service volunteer and he met the women of his dreams at our humble lunch club! Although Mary did play hard to get at first! She is one of our new visitors with social services. She doesn’t say much, but Brian’s hugs seem to have won the day! I am sure you will extend your warmest wishes to Mary. We are so pleased that they found love. Lovely that.</p> <p>“Then we have a small Sunday school which Mrs White runs almost single headedly. And if the children ever want a chat, she finds a quiet space for them to talk in confidence – that’s so important these days. In fact, the Sunday school room is ideal for quiet chats as it only has one window, which looks out onto a brick wall, and the door has no window, so no one can interrupt easily. I have no idea how many children have been through Sunday school in Mrs White’s time, a hundred or so I would guess.</p> <p>“Although we have struggled with finances over the past few years, it’s all getting a lot easier now that we have started letting out the hall. There are quite a few groups coming in now – dance classes, flower arranging clubs, music groups – the list is endless. And it’s all achieved without creating much extra work. I’ve taken on managing all this myself, and I’ve kept it really simple. There are no complicated forms, they just give me the money and I record it in the book – job done!</p> <p>“Now, before I finish, we’ve had this email from the district safeguarding officer, which I promised to read out. It tells us what we should do if someone tells us they have been abused in the past. Well, that’s just political correctness gone mad! We don’t have to worry about that sort of thing here. We all know each other so well, I am sure we would know! So the information’s in the back if you want it.</p> <p>“So as you see things are going well - thanks to everyone’s commitment.”</p>	

Case Studies

Take a minute to read the case studies below and answer the questions. Your Facilitator will tell you which ones to consider

What do you **RECOGNISE** that causes concern?

How would you **RESPOND** to your concern?

What would you **RECORD**?

To whom would you **REFER** this?

1. ANNA

You are a pastoral visitor, and pop in to see Anna who hasn't been to church for a few weeks. Anna is very distressed because she has heard that her niece (now eight years old) has gone to stay with her grandparents, Mark and Claire, for a few weeks while her mum is in hospital. Anna is worried for her niece and explains that when she was little Mark sexually abused her. She worries the same will happen to her niece. However she has never told anyone and is scared of what would happen to the family if she did.

2. JUNE and SALLY

You are the pastoral visitor for mother and daughter June (aged 85) and Sally (aged 60). They have lived together for the past 60 years as Sally has mild learning difficulties and needs ongoing support. Two months ago, June broke her hip in an incident in the home, and on discharge from hospital was sent to a care home 100 miles away, but close to her other daughter, leaving Sally all alone. You visit Sally who says that she is missing her mum terribly; she hasn't had any contact with her for weeks. She says she is feeling depressed and suicidal. You are very concerned and raise Sally's situation with the minister, who tells you that June's other daughter, Amy has recently been in contact to say that June is frightened of Sally, who has physically abused her for many years. Now June doesn't want Sally to know where she is.

3. RITA

You are a pastoral visitor and regularly visit Rita, an elderly lady who lives in sheltered accommodation. On one visit she breaks down and tells you that she is very unhappy as her daughter keeps shouting at her, telling her she is stupid. The daughter has changed the address of where the bank sends Rita's statements and now she cannot keep track of her finances any more. You have no reason to suspect that Rita is exaggerating or that she has memory problems given your previous conversations, so you express sympathy and then ask Rita what she would like you to do about it. She asks you not to tell anyone else and that she doesn't want anything to happen. She is scared that if anyone finds out it will jeopardise the relationship she has with her daughter, who is her only close relative.

4. DESMOND

You have been giving Desmond, a neighbour, a lift to church most weeks for the past few years. One day, as you are driving Desmond home after church, he asks if your electricity is still working. You query why he would ask this, and he explains that he has been dealing with a very nice woman from the Electricity Board who has told him that there is a problem with the cables on your street. This problem can be sorted with the use of some expensive equipment, which needs to be hired by the residents. Desmond then tells you that he has transferred the necessary £1000 for his property, but he had been made aware that some of his other neighbours weren't able to afford it. He was told they might be embarrassed to discuss it, so he was considering covering their costs too. He admits that he has never met the nice woman from the Electricity Board as she has only been in touch via email. He reassures you that it is not a scam and, as a retired bank manager, he would know if it wasn't all above board.

5. EDWARD

You are a worship leader and are having technical difficulties setting up a presentation. Joy, a church member, offers you her husband's laptop to use, and gets it from the car. Her husband, Edward, is a local preacher and involved with the youth group. When the computer is loaded, you notice that his internet browser is open on a pornography site that concerns you. You quickly close it down, but later that night you start to worry that you should have done something else at the time.

6. DORIS

Doris is on the flower-arranging rota and goes into church most Saturday afternoons to arrange the flowers for the Sunday service. She arrives early one week to find that the doors are unlocked, and all the lights are on despite no one being in the building. She sees there is litter and mess all over the church building, which she assumes must have been left by the local dance school, which holds classes in the hall throughout the morning. Even the sanctuary and vestry have chairs, books and papers out of place. What do you think Doris should do?

7. REBECCA

Rebecca is a local preacher. She is married to Peter and has two young children. Peter has a high pressure, well-paid banking job that involves travelling away from home a lot. Consequently, Rebecca carries most of the childcare and homemaking responsibilities, and does not have any paid employment. Her church community is a very important source of support to her. You are Rebecca's pastoral visitor and she confides that she feels like a failure as a wife. This surprises you as the children always seem so well cared for and happy. Rebecca explains that this is because Peter is really disappointed in how she is running the house and that she doesn't always manage to do everything the way it should be done, she feels depressed as she says it is all her fault for not doing better. She doesn't think the children know, but there have been lots of rows with raised voices and some smashed crockery. Rebecca shares that she is worried things might get worse.

8. GRACE

Grace was an active member of the church for most of her life but now she is 93 and has been resident in a care home for some months due to limited mobility. She is starting to become forgetful and her only son works in the Middle East. You have been Grace's pastoral visitor for several years and still visit her regularly. You are her 'emergency contact' and one day you are informed that she was in hospital overnight following a fall from her chair. You go to the care home to find her with extensive bruising, and you ask what happened. She is distressed and tells you that she fell because she leaned too far out of her chair. It was a hot day and she was very thirsty. She rang her call bell several times for someone to help her reach a glass of water that was just out of reach. No one came and she was desperate. You decide to tackle the officer in charge about the incident. You have to wait 20 minutes to see her. She tells you that they are short staffed. She dismisses Grace's account of events, commenting that Grace often doesn't remember things correctly as she is confused. When you return to say goodbye to Grace, she repeats the same account of her fall. She tells you that the staff in the home are not very kind to her and she wonders what she has done wrong.

9. JOSH and BEN

Josh and Ben (both aged 14) are best mates. They are inseparable at youth club and church, and are always seen playing on their phones or tablets. As a steward responsible for the church's audio-visual equipment, you approach Ben one day when he is on his own and ask if he and Josh would be interested in helping out with the AV, as you know they are interested in computers. Ben suddenly looks upset and says that he doesn't know about Josh, as he barely sees him anymore. He then goes on to share how Josh spends all his time with a new online gaming friend, Nick. Josh has now given up all his other hobbies and even stopped going to youth club, which he loved. Neither of the boys have ever met this new gaming friend, but it seems Nick has convinced Josh that Ben has been manipulating and controlling him. Now Josh will no longer speak to or see Ben. Ben is clearly devastated as he doesn't know what to do, and suspects Josh is planning to meet Nick.

10. KYLIE and ASHER

At the Christmas toy service you see one of the stewards asking sisters Kylie and Asher (aged nine and seven) if they have brought any gifts to be donated. They look down and shake their heads before walking off, into the sanctuary. As you walk past, the steward mutters to you about those selfish kids not bringing toys for less fortunate children. He also comments on the lack of effort made in their appearance. He says "I mean, fancy coming to church in some tatty shorts and t-shirts, what are their parents thinking?" You know that Kylie and Asher's dad drops them off every Sunday and rumour has it that he goes to visit another woman while they are at church.