



Memo

Date: August 27, 2018

To: Priests, Deacons, Brothers, Sisters, Principals, Parish, School and Chancery Staff

From: Sue Stubbs, Director, Victim Assistance Program; Perla Freed, Director, Safe Environment; Office of Child and Youth Protection

Re: Town Hall Meeting Tips to Respond to Recent Church Scandals

Archbishop Gregory conducted a town hall meeting for Chancery employees on Thursday, August 23, to discuss the recent Catholic Church scandals.

In light of the news out of Pennsylvania, many of us are struggling to manage our own emotions and the emotions of those we serve. Many of us are getting phone calls from upset, sad and angry people. You are not expected to 'counsel' them, but we wanted to offer some suggestions on how to manage these calls for the best outcome for all.

If you should get a call from someone who in the course of your conversation reveals past abuse:

- Let them know there is someone the Church has in place dedicated to helping them and transfer/refer them to Sue Stubbs, Victim Assistance 404-920-7554 or Perla Freed, Safe Environment at 404-920-7553
- You can also offer the caller the 24-hour Archdiocese of Atlanta Abuse Reporting Line 1-888-437-0764
- Take their name and number and forward their information to Sue or Perla who will get back to them as soon as possible

If you should get a call from someone who is generally angry or emotional about the recent news and feels betrayed, but doesn't reveal they have been abused themselves, let them talk on but keep your voice low and repeat the same phrases over and over again that will help them feel heard and understood such as:

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- “I understand”
- “You are so right to feel that way, it’s making me sad (angry, frustrated, sick) too”
- “I’m sorry you’ve had to deal with all that”

If they don’t wind down within a reasonable amount of time, tell them there is someone they can talk to more about this and refer them to Sue Stubbs, Victim Assistance at 404-920-7554.

Click [here](#) for these tips in Spanish.

Also, for yourself and the emotions you may be holding, remember that the Archdiocese of Atlanta has an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that offers up to three free counseling sessions for any employee and their family members. If you need or want to see this counselor beyond the three sessions, you can do so at a reduced rate or the EAP can help you find a counselor in our benefits plan. Immediate and confidential services are accessible 24/7/365 by calling Morneau Shepell (the EAP), helpline or visiting workhealthlife.com/us. The website also features additional information and tips on coping with traumatic events.

Most importantly, remember that you are not alone in your reaction to this news. Together, we can weather this storm and hope that we will all come out stronger in the end.