

How common is child sexual abuse?

Fact: 1 in 5 females will be abused before reaching adulthood.

Fact: 1 in 10 males will be abused before reaching adulthood.

Myth: Strangers are responsible for most child sexual abuse.

Fact: 11% is committed by strangers, 29% by relatives, and 60% by others known by the victim.

Myth: Most sexual abusers are homosexual.

Fact: The vast majority of sexual abusers are heterosexual.

Myth: Priests abuse children because of their vow of celibacy.

Fact: Celibacy doesn't cause anyone to become a child molester. The few priests who do perpetrate abuse molest children for the same reasons that other people do.

The vast majority of child molesters have not taken a vow of celibacy, and the vast majority of persons who have taken a vow of celibacy do not molest children.

**above statistics based on national figures*

Why don't children tell anyone about sexual abuse?

- They are afraid, or have been convinced, no one will believe them or that they will get into trouble.
- They trust the person who is abusing them.
- They do not understand what is happening to them.
- The molester has threatened to hurt them or their family.
- The molester has told them they are complicit in the abuse.

Contacts

We are committed to helping you protect yourself – and all the children.

To report an allegation call

Diocesan Investigator

207-321-7836

For outreach services call

Support & Assistance Ministry

1-866-829-4437 toll free

Chancellors

207-773-6471

For Safe Environment Program information call

207-321-7809

Other Contacts

Sexual Assault Response Services

1-800-871-7741 toll free

TTY 1-888-458-5599

Department of Human Services

Adult & Child Protective Services

Main Office 1-800-482-7520

24 Hour Hotline 1-800-452-1999

The Roman Catholic
Diocese of Portland

P.O. Box 11559

Portland, ME 04104

207-773-6471

www.portlanddiocese.net

You will be heard.

We want to help.

There is a way to tell what happened.

There is a way to be heard.

And prevention is possible.



**Support & Assistance
Ministry**

**Sexual Abuse
Awareness & Prevention**

Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland

For anyone who has been abused by clergy or other church representatives...

Support & Assistance Ministry

Our outreach services help promote healing for victims/survivors of abuse — and their families by offering

Professional, respectful receipt and documentation of allegations of abuse — past or present — and support during the reporting process.

Compassion and support

- **Referrals** for counseling or spiritual direction. *We can help you obtain on-going care from competent professionals.*
- **Day-to-day support** for individuals. *We are available for continuing contact and conversation.*
- **Education** about the long-term effects of abuse – through parish-based workshops. *Reliable information can be helpful in the healing process.*
- **Retreat and facilitated workshops** as requested by groups of survivors. *Learn to heal with others who understand your experience.*

Meeting arrangements

If any victim/survivor or group of victims/survivors would like to speak directly with the Bishop, we will arrange a meeting for you.

We also encourage you to report allegations directly to the police department in the community where abuse occurred.

Sexual Abuse Awareness & Prevention

Protect yourself – and the children – with our safe environment program

Step 1 Know the Warning Signs

People who abuse are likely to

- Discourage other adults from participating in or monitoring activities.
- Always want to be alone with children.
- Prefer being with children rather than adults.
- Give gifts to children, often without permission.
- Go overboard with touching, wrestling and tickling.
- Think that rules don't apply to them.
- Allow children to engage in activities their parents would not allow.
- Use bad language, tell dirty jokes or show pornography to children.
- Progressively lure children away from family and friends.

Step 2 Control Access

- Interview your babysitters and check references.
- Become familiar with the instructors and leaders of all your child's school and extra-curricular activities.
- Get to know all the adults in your child's life.

Step 3 Monitor All Programs

- Visit your child's religious education and school classes.
- Thoroughly research your pre-school or daycare choice.

Step 4 Be Aware

- Let your children know they can tell you anything.
- Believe what your children are saying until it is proven false. *Studies show that 99% of children's accusations are true.*
- Teach your children the correct names for their private parts.
- Encourage your children to protect themselves. Teach them to say "No!" if someone tries to touch them inappropriately – and to report any incidents to parents/guardians or other trusted adults.
- Talk and listen to your children – and observe them. Look for behavioral changes like acting out, poor hygiene, bedwetting, night terrors, sudden drop in grades, withdrawal from others, avoidance of particular adults.

Step 5 Communicate your Concerns

If you are uncomfortable with a situation or suspect abuse, you should

Adults

- Call the police if you feel someone is in immediate danger.
- Talk to the supervisor of the person involved.
- Call the Chancery & Child Abuse Hotline.

Children

- Tell your parents/guardians or other trusted adults.
- Tell your school principal, teacher or counselor.