



## District Safeguarding Newsletter

### Winter 2019

*The aim of our Safeguarding Newsletters is to provide you with the latest information relating to best practice within safeguarding, update you with any changes in policy and provide you with information regarding training opportunities. Please circulate via email to as many people as you can around your Circuit and feel free to display a copy on your church safeguarding notice board.*

*Occasionally we will write articles about specific safeguarding issues, if there is anything you would like to see contained within the newsletter or have any feedback/questions about what we have written please contact District Safeguarding Officer, Katy Spencer-Madden at [katyspencermadden@gmail.com](mailto:katyspencermadden@gmail.com)*

## UPCOMING COURSES

### Creating Safer Space Advanced Module

Please book on a course through District Safeguarding Officer Katy Spencer-Madden, [katyspencermadden@gmail.com](mailto:katyspencermadden@gmail.com), 07771960455. For all the Advanced Module Courses; arrival and registration is from 10am with a 10.30am start and finish at 4pm.

#### Bradford South Circuit

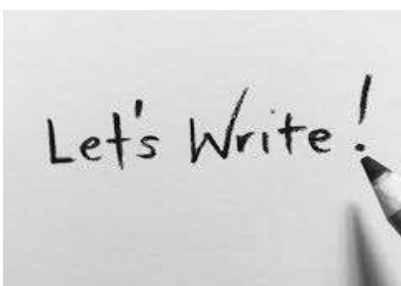
Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2019 – Aldersgate Methodist Church **\*FULL\***  
Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2019 – Aldersgate Methodist Church

#### Airedale Circuit

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2019 – Oakworth Methodist Church  
Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2019 – Silsden Methodist Church

#### Skipton and Grassington Circuit

Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2019 – St Andrew's Church, Skipton  
Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2019 – Trinity Methodist Church, Skipton



### 'Play with Words'

A creative writing day for female survivors of childhood abuse.

At Touchstone, Bradford  
Saturday March 16<sup>th</sup> 2019

9.30am for 10.00am start and 3.30pm finish.

Leaflets with further details are available, please contact Katy at [katyspencermadden@gmail.com](mailto:katyspencermadden@gmail.com) or 07771960455



Many thanks to Leeds South and West Circuit and Calderdale Circuit for hosting us to deliver our Advanced Safeguarding Module in November and January, particularly Trinity Bramley and Northorwram Methodist Churches.



Regional Safeguarding Conference - Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2019

Our regional safeguarding conference will include Yorkshire West, Sheffield and Yorkshire North and East Districts. The conference will be in Boston Spa with the day consisting of a mixture of speakers, workshops and a question panel.

The day will be useful for Presbyters, Circuit and Church Safeguarding Officers and those regularly managing/dealing with safeguarding issues. If you are in none of those roles but have an interest in the subject, you are also more than welcome to come along.

More details about booking will be released shortly.

## Online Grooming by Katy Spencer-Madden

In the previous newsletter, I mentioned there would be a series of newsletters addressing issues of the online world, something that is alien language to many of us, but is increasingly becoming more dangerous to children and young people (but not exclusively).



Online grooming is a way that those who wish to abuse others use the internet and channels of communication online to gain access to those that are vulnerable.

An individual usually adopts a different persona in order to befriend and trick others into thinking they have genuine and decent intentions.

An example of the most common grooming for younger people may involve an adult making contact with them either through Facebook, Twitter or another online/social media platform. The adult can sometimes use a different picture of themselves on their profile and give a pretence of being someone much younger than they are. They will befriend the young person with humour, making them feel special, attractive and being understanding and sympathetic towards



picture from [www.staysafeworshops.org.uk](http://www.staysafeworshops.org.uk)

A perpetrator will often ask for a mobile phone number and in some instances may ask for the young person to send them photos and/or eventually ask to meet them. Some people may wonder why a young person would talk to a stranger online or wouldn't say anything to their parents. Those that groom others are incredibly manipulative; they will make the young person feel 'grown-up,' they will make them feel as if their parents wouldn't understand them if they told them about the conversations that are happening online. Once a young person begins to send pictures or agrees to meet the individual they are placed in the most vulnerable position where they are either groomed further or suffer abuse by the groomer.

Grooming online can be where trafficking or being brought into a world of sexual exploitation begins. Radicalisation, which is a term we have heard a lot of more recently, can also begin with online grooming.

Grooming with vulnerable adults online tends to be associated more with financial abuse (although some adults are still groomed in the same ways as above and are trafficked, brought into radical thinking or sexually exploited). There are many groups and individuals who will use online platforms as a way of grooming others into giving them money. These tactics are more successful with the elderly and vulnerable. Groomers will befriend through messages before mentioning sick relatives or worthy causes which they need immediate money for. The majority of people would know not to give money, however if you are in a vulnerable position, not thinking a person could have such negative intentions, it is possible that money can be handed over.

[www.connectsafely.org](http://www.connectsafely.org) outlines a range of phrases a perpetrator might use to groom others:

- "Let's go private." (leave the public chatroom and create a private chat or move to instant messaging or phone texting)
- "Where's your computer in the house?" (to see if parents might be around)
- "Who's your favourite band? Designer? Film? (questions like these tell the groomer more about a person so they know what gifts to offer e.g. concert tickets, clothes etc.)
- "I know someone who can get you a modelling job." (Flattery, they figure, will get them everywhere)
- "I know a way you can earn money fast" (connecting to a strong motivator for young people)
- "You seem sad. Tell me what's bothering you" (offering sympathy)
- "What's your phone number?" (asking for personal info of any kind – usually happens at a later stage, after the person is feeling comfortable with the groomer)
- "If you don't {do what I ask}, I'll tell your parents OR share your photos." (intimidations, used once the groomer learns more about their victim)
- "You are the love of my life" (playing upon the feelings and emotions of a victim)



## HOW TO SPOT ONLINE GROOMING

Online grooming may be hard to recognise. Also, groomers may specifically warn children and young people not to talk to anyone about it, however there are a number of signs to be aware of:

- Increasingly spending more time on their phone/internet/computer – possibly you may notice at church or youth group that a young person has their phone out constantly and does not engage with anything else.
- Being secretive about what they are doing/who they are having conversations with. They may hide this from friends and quickly snap their phone out of someone's view if they feel like someone can see what they are messaging.
- Possessing multiple phones/electronic devices – perhaps it would be worth asking why they have more than one and did your parents buy you them? Groomers can often purchase phones for an individual to remain more secretive.
- Using sexual language that you wouldn't expect.
- Becoming emotionally volatile.

All these things aren't necessarily a sign of online grooming, which is why it is difficult to recognise without a verbal disclosure of some kind.

Remember good practice guidelines if using the online world to talk with children and young people. It is often best to contact parents or use public platforms such as a church Facebook page. Put your own safety first and do not have private chats with young people online or via text. If using text messages, send factual things only, i.e. youth group meeting has been cancelled. Parental consent should be obtained to communicate with children and young people via text or online. Using emails/text/social media is not for relationship building and should only be as a method of communicating specific information (for more information on social media guidance email [katyspencermadden@gmail.com](mailto:katyspencermadden@gmail.com) to send you our publications).

As mentioned, occasionally vulnerable adults can be groomed, more in relation to financial scams. A vulnerable adult can feel embarrassed and humiliated if caught up in a scam. Remind vulnerable adults to never give their bank details over the phone or via email. If you have knowledge that a vulnerable adult has been taken advantage of in such a way encourage them to report it to the authorities.



What can the church do about online grooming? Be observant and report things that concern you to your Minister/Church Safeguarding Officer. If involved in children's and young people's work, there are many resources to help educate them about this issue. Seek advice from a District Safeguarding Officer if you need more advice.

Further reading/information:

<https://www.internetmatters.org>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/share-aware/>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/talking-your-child-staying-safe-online/>

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/Online-grooming/>



# 'Safeguarding, Onerous or Joyful?'

by Alison Terrell

I came to work in the Methodist Church 5 years ago. The Connexion was in the middle of a major review of how they had dealt with safeguarding issues in the past, right back to 1950. I understand that the aim was to put right anything that could still be dealt with, and learn from the mistakes that had been made at a time when our knowledge of the scale of the problem, and the long term affect it had on those who were abused, was not understood. I did not grow up in the Methodist church and I am not a member, so I was surprised at how much that investigation touched me. I had something very unpleasant happen to me in the church I grew up in, I told my parents and while they believed me, nothing happened. (It was not a criminal act but should have raised concerns with social services for the family concerned.) I felt as though an official church body was finally saying, 'what happened to you as a child all those years ago matters'. It touched me deeply.

I have recently done the new advanced safeguarding module which has been revised on the basis of what has been learnt from the past. One of the highlights for me was a piece from someone who researches abuse. He talked about a man who abused children in his care in 2 places, but in between he did not abuse, even though he was working in a children's home. The reason why was because the safeguarding training was so good, the practise in the home was so good, it would have been too risky to abuse any of the children.

What we want to do is build a culture, not of suspicion, but of awareness, with really thorough safeguarding practice. This would mean that those who wish to abuse will be unable, and those with tendencies in that direction but who do not want to give in to temptation, will be kept safe too. I believe as those who follow Jesus, who championed the poor and vulnerable, this is something for which we should strive.

So when you are asked to do safeguarding training to make your church and your circuit a safer space, when you realise you have more paperwork to fill in, when recruiting volunteers seems onerous, please don't see it as one more thing you have to do, another box to tick. Please see it as another means of bringing in God's Kingdom, because God's Kingdom is somewhere where all should feel safe and welcome.

As Jesus said:

"Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven."

"Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. For he who is least among you all is the one who is great."

We may not have many children in our churches, but they matter and we all carry the small child we once were, for many that is a wounded child who needs a safe space for healing to take place.