

Aims:

To enable spiritual directors/ accompaniers to contribute to, and implement, good safeguarding practice within church and community contexts.

Outcomes

By the end of this course you will be able to:

- Explore safeguarding within your role, in relation to directees, informed by the voice of victims and survivors.
- Recognise issues of power and vulnerability arising from the age or circumstances of those affected, and how these issues inform appropriate action.
- Apply some principles for safer practice to a variety of case study scenarios.
- Identify wider support, accountability and supervision arrangements relevant for safeguarding in your context.

1

**Learning from
experience**

2

**Understanding
power and
vulnerability**

3

**Children and
Young people**

4

**Focusing on
vulnerable
adults**

To ponder during the session.

- What might make a directee/ director vulnerable?
- What actions can you take to reduce/ support these vulnerabilities?



Some starting points...

- 2 hour session
- Other devices off/away please
- Participate and allow others to do so
- Zoom
- Health warning
- Opening prayer



Recognise —> Respond —> Record —> Refer

Recognise

- ✓ Accept and take seriously what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief.
- ✓ Let the person tell their story and don't push for information or ask leading questions.
- ✗ Do not interrogate or decide if they are telling the truth.
- ✓ Be alert to signs and symptoms of abuse.

Respond

- ✓ Reassure the individual they have taken the right step in sharing this information and they are not to blame.
- ✓ Be honest; never make promises to keep what you are being told confidential. If abuse is involved, you will need to tell someone.
- ✓ Tell them what you will do with the information they have shared and that they will be kept informed.
- ✗ Do not introduce personal information or from either your own experience or that of others.
- ✗ Do not investigate the matter any further for yourself, or approach the person about whom allegations may have been made.

Record

- ✓ Write down, concisely, exactly what is seen, said or heard and make clear where you have added your views or interpretation.
You may find it helpful to use the 4 W's, as follows:
WHO was involved? Name the key people
WHAT happened? Facts not opinions
WHEN did it happen? Date and time
WHO have you referred the issue on to?

Refer

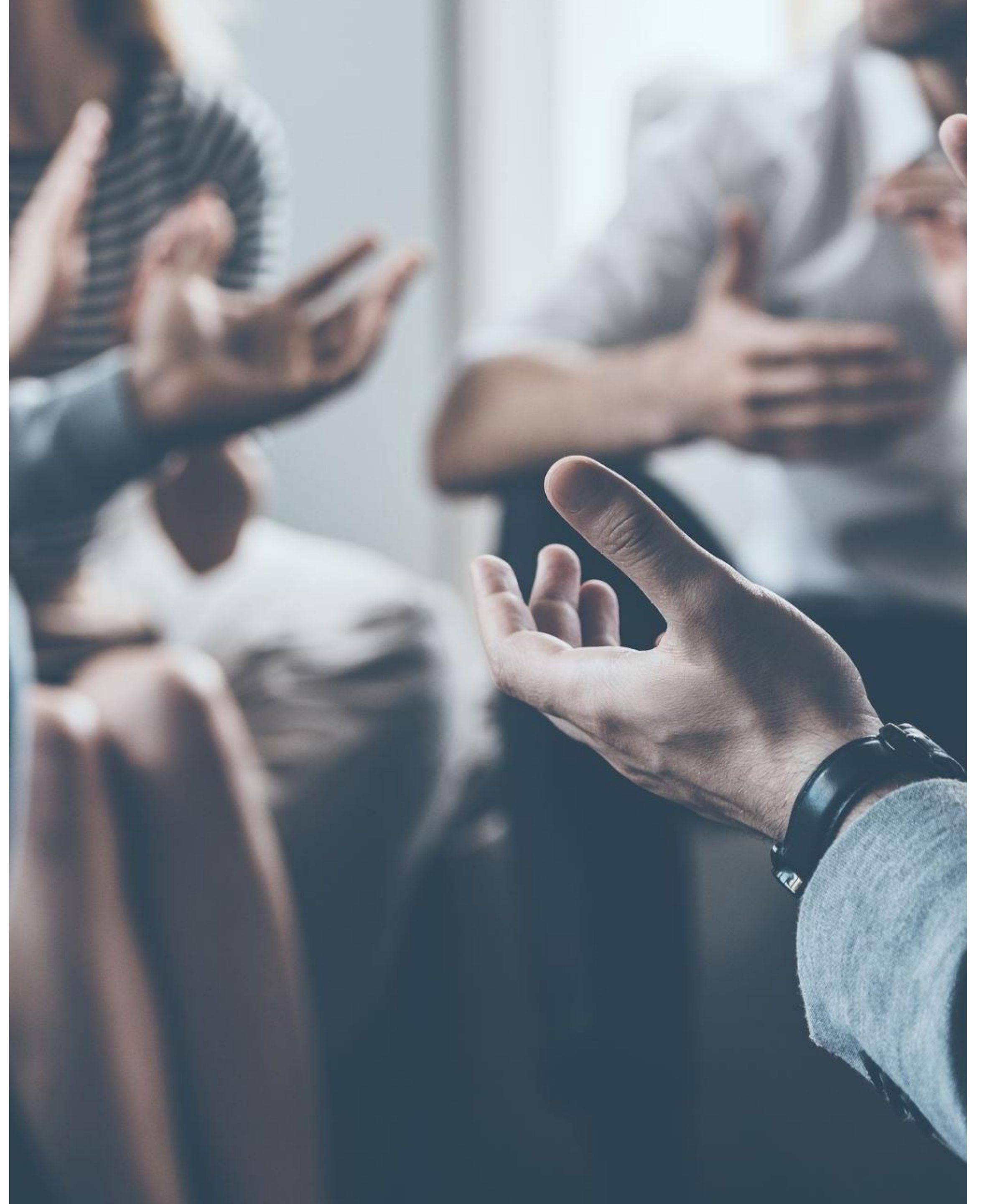
- ✓ Pass the information to the **Safeguarding Lead or Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor** in your setting within 24 hours
- ✓ In case of an emergency call the Police or dial 999.

Support

It is essential to support all parties.

Discussion

- What values, beliefs and behaviours are important for a spiritual director to have in relation to safeguarding?



Supervision, support, self care

- Enabling and empowering
- Self care
- Regular
- Right not an imposition
- Developing and supporting effective staff supervision- Jane Wonnacott
- How it relates to safeguarding

Understanding power and vulnerability

- **Power can be understood** as an ability to potentially impose your own will on a given situation, for good or for ill.
- **Power can be rooted** in an individual's attributes eg. physical strength, knowledge, or social factors eg. age, gender, wealth, position.
- **Therefore in any situation** an individual or group may be more powerful, or more vulnerable than another.
- **Those who are less powerful** are less able to determine their own lives, to protect themselves and to thrive without being significantly dependent on others.

The vulnerable in our communities

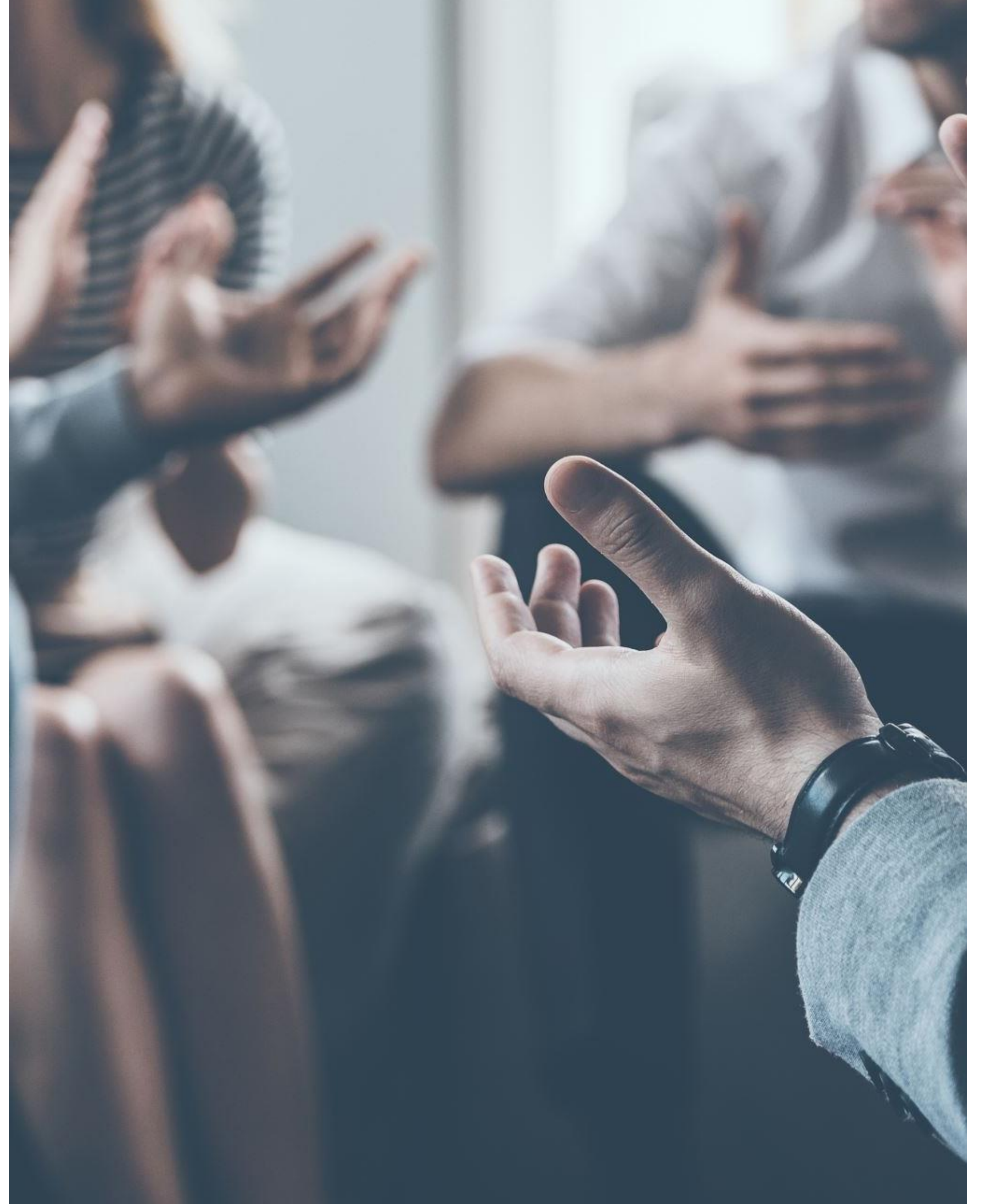
- **In society** there is a moral duty to protect and support the vulnerable and prevent them from harm.
- **The church** is a community where the relatively powerful are brought together with the relatively weak.
- **The work of the Holy Spirit** increases our love for our neighbour and our compassionate awareness of those weaker than ourselves.
- **Healthy churches** are inclusive places where individuals are deeply committed to the care and protection of one another.

Discussion

What safer working practices do you have in place already?

1. Social media
2. Dependency
3. Boundaries

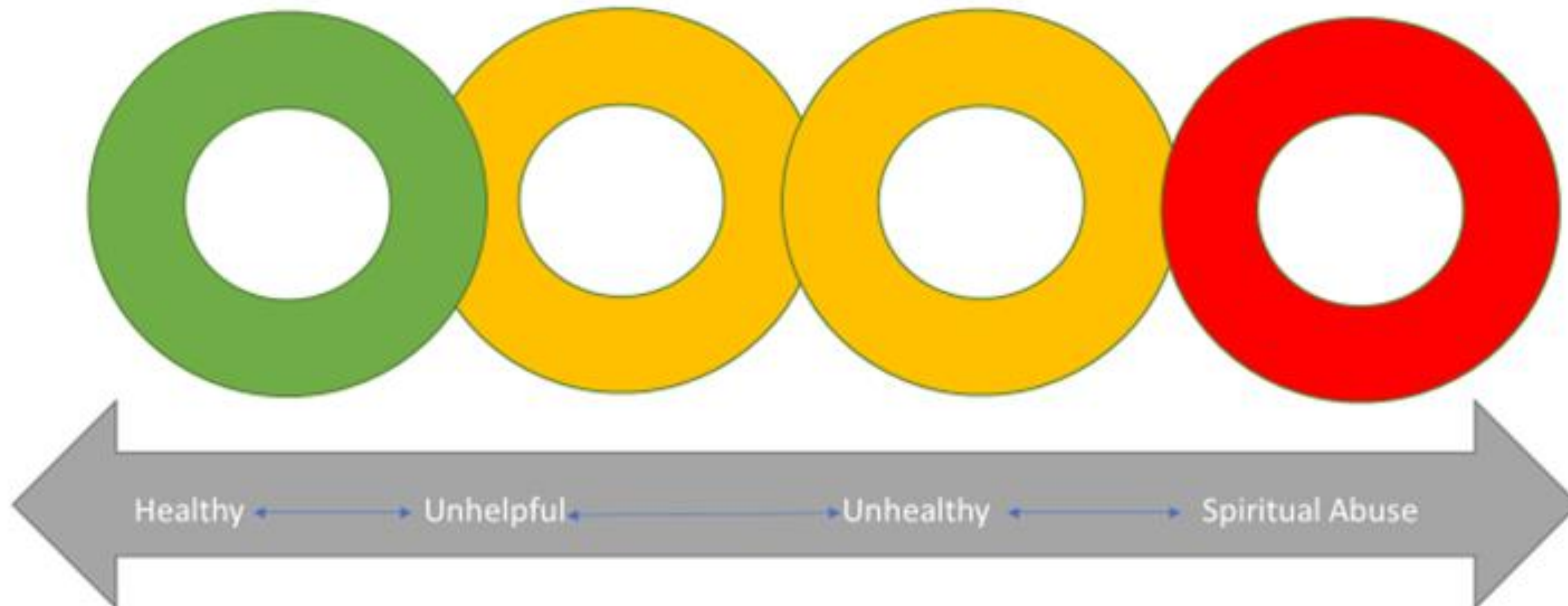
Where are the gaps?



Defining spiritual abuse

Spiritual abuse is a form of emotional and psychological abuse. It is characterised by a systematic pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour in a religious context. Spiritual abuse can have a deeply damaging impact on those who experience it and can be experienced in a variety of different relationships.

A spectrum of behaviour



Oakley (2021)

Key characteristics of spiritual abuse

Misusing scripture to coerce behaviour -

Coercing through censorship –

Requiring unquestioning obedience –

Using a sense of divine position to exert pressure to conform and suggesting this position is unchallengeable.

Enforced accountability –

Exclusion or isolation of individuals as a punishment for non-compliance –

Coercing behaviour through exploitation and manipulation

Publicly shaming and humiliating individuals in order to control their behaviour -

Threats of spiritual consequences –

Inappropriate mentoring relationships.

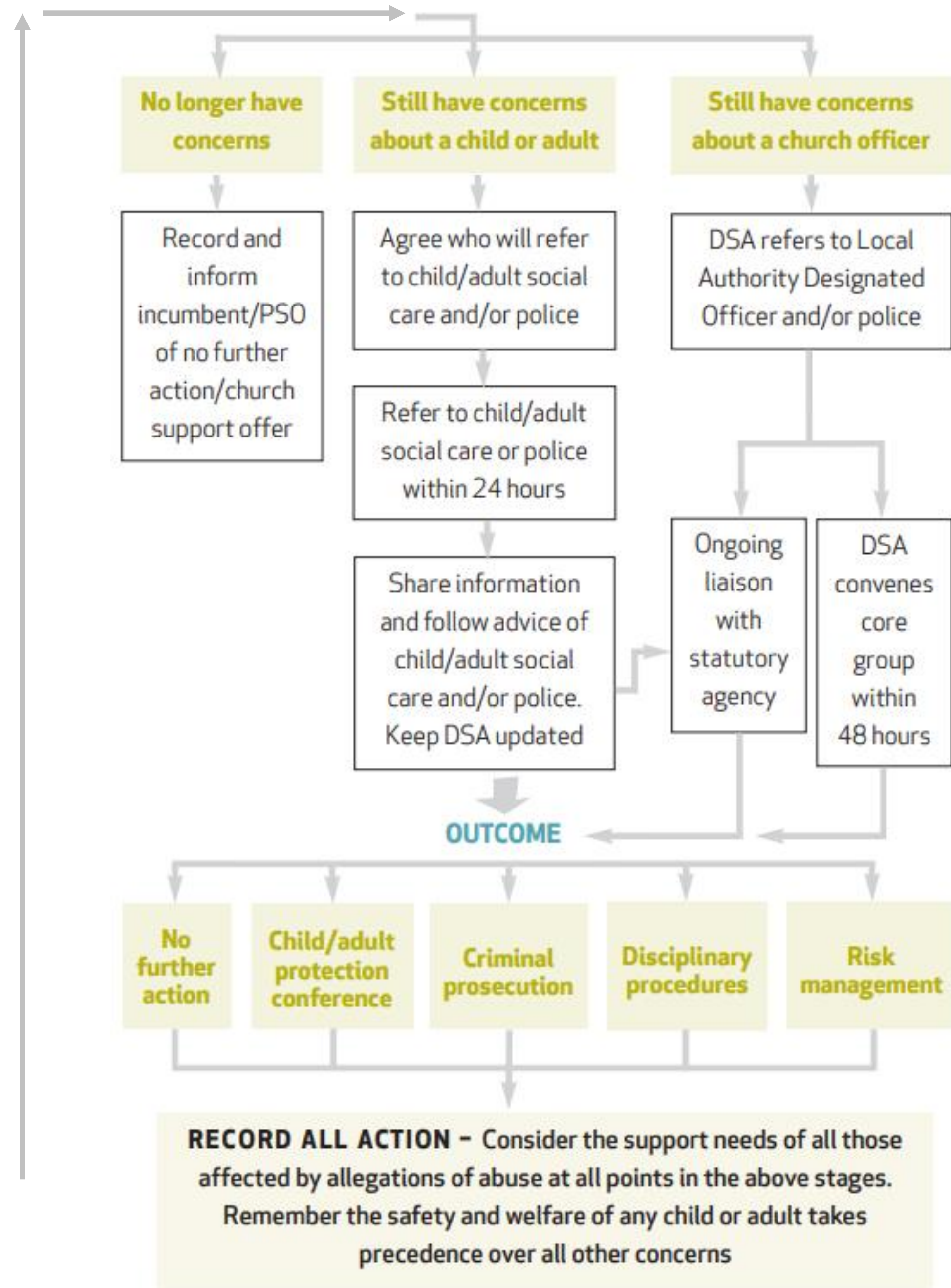
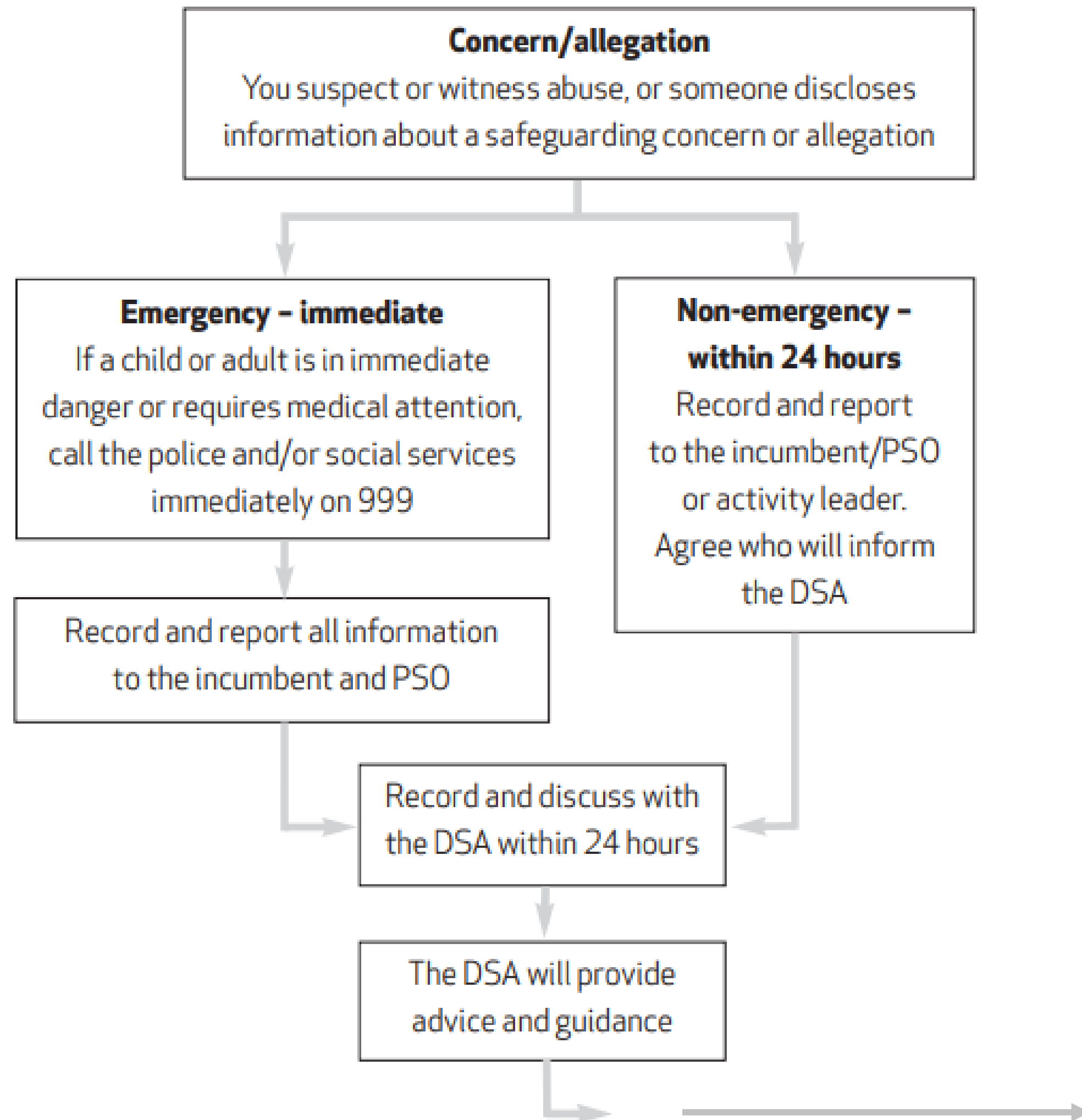
Take the opportunity to have a short break

- What has been the most significant aspect the course so far?
- How have the issues raised challenged your faith?
- Have they highlighted anything in particular in your own community?
- Is there any action you need to take?

Respond and refer

- Who is the Designated safeguarding lead/ supervisor/ head of safeguarding – who do you go to and when?
- What if concerns about supervisor, unavailable or don't want to go to them?
- Where do and where can you signpost people who need more support?

Responding to safeguarding concerns and allegations



Summary and conclusions

Explored safeguarding within the Christian community with particular attention to the voice of victims and survivors.

Recognised issues of power and vulnerability arising from the age or circumstances of those affected, and how these issues inform appropriate action.

Applied some principles for safer ministry to a variety of case study scenarios.
Identified wider support, accountability and governance arrangements relevant for safeguarding in your context.

Further training and support

- E learning- domestic abuse, safer recruitment, modern slavery available through the Church of England National Safeguarding Team's online portal.
- Leadership- available through your Diocesan Safeguarding team
- Mental Health First Aid- this may be available through your Diocesan safeguarding team.
- Spiritual abuse course with Lisa Oakley- speak to your Diocesan safeguarding team to access this.