



Frequently Asked Questions

"What is sexual abuse?"

Sexual abuse occurs when sexual exploitation by an older or more powerful person takes place for the satisfaction of the abuser's needs. The misused power can be actual physical strength or perceived relational power. It can be engaged in with or without consent, or the understanding of what consent implies. Penetration does not have to happen for someone to experience sexual abuse.

There can also be sexual confusion when an adult uses a child in a relational way as a surrogate spouse. There may be no inappropriate physical contact, but there is an inappropriate relational contact that is confusing for children. This is sometimes called "emotional incest". It is not necessarily committed out of malice, but more often out of loneliness by an adult who struggles to intimately connect with his or her peers.

"What is physical abuse?"

Physical abuse occurs when physical injuries are inflicted that are not accidental. This mistreatment is very different from discipline. The physical attacks are so extreme that only condemnation and terror are communicated, rather than love, guidance, and respect.

"What is emotional abuse?"

Emotional abuse occurs when words are used as weapons. Verbal attacks, harsh threats, ridicule, humiliation, blaming, and rejection are expressed by care-givers or other significant relationships to condemn and injure.

"What is spiritual abuse?"

Spiritual abuse occurs when a person in a position of spiritual authority deliberately manipulates or misuses that authority. It can be inflicted by people who are not necessarily in official positions of authority, but are perceived or self-proclaimed to be deeply spiritual people. Spiritual abuse can also be done out of ignorance rather than malice.

"Does penetration have to occur in order for a person to be sexually abused?"

No. As sexual abuse is defined, there are many different forms of sexual abuse. All sexual abuse is serious and damaging, whether it involves physical contact (clothed or unclothed) or a violation in relationships.

"How common is sexual abuse?"

- 1 out of every 3-4 women has experienced sexual abuse before her 18th birthday.
- 1 out of every 5-6 men has experienced sexual abuse before his 18th birthday.

"Does abuse happen in Christian families?"

Unfortunately, childhood and adolescent abuse happens in all kinds of families and homes, including Christian homes. There is no segment of society untouched by abuse. Abuse happens among all races, religions, socio-economic groups, educated or uneducated people, and in all geographic locations.

"What impact does abuse have on a victim?"

Abuse affects every area of a victim's life. If victims do not receive help, the damage can be far reaching. Abuse damages the victim's view of God, other people and themselves. It is common for abuse survivors to have a history of dysfunctional relationships, anger management problems, depression, destructive or addictive behavior.

"What is a Committed to Freedom retreat?"

Committed to Freedom is a retreat for adult survivors of childhood/adolescent abuse (specifically sexual abuse) to give them Spiritual tools to move beyond the abuse experience. It gives abuse survivors a brief oasis from the pressures of daily life in order to experience God's healing grace for their damaged lives.

"Who developed the Committed to Freedom ministry?"

Sallie Culbreth developed the retreat and the curriculum used in the retreat. Sallie is a survivor of childhood sexual abuse. Through her own experiences of being sexually abused and her own spiritual journey, she developed this ministry. Sallie has assembled a team of sensitive, compassionate people to minister with her during the retreat.

"Is there any follow up after the retreat?"

There is an opportunity to participate in an online support group after the retreat. There are also regular inspirational articles and encouraging emails, which help them to continue on their path toward healing. There are also books and study guides available.

"Who can participate in and what can they expect at a Committed to Freedom retreat?"

There are retreats for men and women in various tranquil venues. Participants can expect to find rest; Spiritual tools for healing, cleansing; freedom; love; support; and fellowship from people who understand. Participants can expect to have an encounter with Jesus Christ in a profound, non-manipulative way.

"What do participants *do* at the retreat?"

One thing participants DO NOT do is share their abuse experience with other people at the retreat. The retreat focuses on how to move forward with spiritual tools. At every turn in the retreat, there are delightful surprises and even some fun moments!

"How much does the retreat cost per person?"

The retreat costs vary depending on location and setting. We accept MasterCard and Visa. A \$25 deposit is included in the overall cost of the retreat in circumstances where the registered participant must cancel. The retreat fee must be paid in full by the retreat registration deadline.

"How does a survivor attend a Committed to Freedom retreat?"

A Registration Form must be received for every participant who wants to attend a retreat. These may be obtained by requesting one from the national Committed to Freedom office by phone, mail, fax or email (listed below). We also have a form available for download.

"Why is the exact location of the retreat not available until a registration form has been received?"

Once we receive a completed Registration Form, we send detailed information including the facility location. We do this to protect the privacy of our retreat participants and to prevent visitors from disrupting the safety and confidentiality we value.

"How can I help?"

- Promote the retreats and seminars in your publications, public announcements, and encourage survivors to attend.
- Pray for this ministry.
- Support this ministry with your tax deductible gifts.
- Sponsor someone to attend a Committed to Freedom retreat or seminar by contacting our office, or designate donated funds through our website.
- Educate yourself about the issues and damage of abuse.

"How long has Committed to Freedom Ministries existed?"

The ministry began in 1992.

"Is there anyone that I can contact for references?"

Yes. Please contact our offices and specify your request.

"How do I navigate the Committed to Freedom website?"

The Committed to Freedom website has many different links. Many of those links are highlighted in the sentences. Almost all of the links you find on this site open into new windows so that you can keep your place on the page. All images and content are © Copyright protected by Committed to Freedom Ministries. If you have questions about the website, graphics or images, please contact the Webmaster. Most pages offer a printable version, such as this one, in a PDF file format.

"Have another question?"

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