

Sexual Abuse of Adult Women by Clergy

It is not uncommon for clergy to misuse their power and engage congregants in sexual relationships. While these relationships do not represent a breaking of the law, as do the forms of abuse noted above, they represent clear ethical violations. Obtaining justice is a prerequisite to healing. When exploitation occurs, the following materials establish elements for achieving justice: (1) victim truth-telling, (2) acknowledgment of the violation by the clergy and the faith community, (3) compassion for the victim, (4) protection of the vulnerable, (5) accountability of the clergy abuser, and (6) vindication. Basic components of policies and procedures to handle these situations are recommended for churches and synagogues.

Book:

- *Is Nothing Sacred? The Story of a Pastor, the Women He Sexually Abused, and the Congregation He Nearly Destroyed* by Marie M. Fortune.

Videos:

- *A Sacred Trust: Boundary Issues for Clergy and Spiritual Teachers* includes four 22-minute videos with a curriculum. It includes specific Appendices on boundary issues for African American communities, Asian and Pacific Islander communities, Jewish communities, Latina and Latino communities, and Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual and Transgendered clergy or spiritual teachers. Meditations and prayers are included in the Buddhist, Jewish, and Christian traditions.
- *Not in My Church*, a 45-minute color video for Christian audiences.
- *Not in My Congregation*, a 48-minute color video for Jewish audiences.
- *Once You Cross the Line*, a 50-minute, six-segment video on preventing clergy misconduct and sexual abuse in ministerial relationships.