Critical Conversations

The Critical Conversations Program is a new groundbreaking collaboration with the Archdiocese of Chicago, the St. John Vianney Center and Virtus Programs.
This new program explores models of healthy ministerial boundaries and the emerging role of technology in pastoral situations.
On April 29, 2013 this program will be piloted to diocesan priests, deacons and lay ministers.
For further information, please contact the diocesan Office for the Protection of Children and Young People at 516-678-5800 ext 573.

Please take a minute and review the Protecting Children web page at....

www.drvc.org

Just click on the Protecting Children tab at the top of the homepage.

Thanks!
During Pope Francis’ installation Mass, March 19, 2013, he spoke straightforwardly about protection.

Pope Francis invited us all “to protect every man and every woman, and to look upon them with tenderness and love. Today, too, amid so much darkness we need to see the light of hope and to be men and woman who bring hope to others.”

The Steubenville, Ohio rape case, too, has made national headlines. In this case, a high school girl went to a party, drank too much, and was repeatedly violated by two teenagers. The victim was transported to various parties, undressed, photographed and sexually assaulted in the presence of students at the party. The boys, age 16 at the time, posted the event on line in a 12 minute video. The mindless behavior of the assailants was documented on Facebook, Twitter, text messages, and cell phone recordings of the act.

There will be more to come on this case. The Ohio Attorney General announced that he will call for a grand jury to investigate more charges surrounding the rape of this 16 year old girl. The investigation will focus on the teens present at the party where the assault occurred, many of whom took pictures, but did nothing to intervene. It will also spotlight the adults who knew of the incident and failed to report it to law enforcement.

As disturbing and appalling, as this event has been, it may serve as another opportunity to increase awareness about the potential dangers that exist in our society today.

How could this have happened?

This incident can serve to galvanize a national conversation about many aspects of modern day culture that has strong and subtle influence on our youngsters. As parents, we can make a difference:

By taking a renewed interest in the lives of our children: where they go, who they are with, what they watch on television and the Internet.

By learning the signs of abuse and reporting abuse when they witness or suspect it.

By talking to our teenagers about this incident.

A Smart Girl’s Guide to Sticky Situations

Girls learn to take charge and feel confident in a variety of tough situations, from being threatened by a bully to getting caught in an elevator to falling down the stairs at school to losing your parents in the city.

An opportunity for parents, teachers and guardians to talk about difficult experiences that occur in life and provide valuable guidance for girls on how to manage and survive these “sticky situations.”

Suggested Reading for middle school youngsters, teachers and parents.

Eileen F. Puglisi, Director
Diocesan Office for the Protection of Children and Young People

FYI

Let us be protectors of each other...
Parents and teachers alike were reminded to cherish each day with their very dear children and to do all that they possibly can to provide a safe, secure and positive environment. The interrelationship of the school and home, as well as teamwork of family and faculty, needs to be stressed and reinforced each day.

The protection of our children is paramount, whether it is from physical assailants, sexual predators or bullies on the playground. No task or activity can ever compromise the health, safety and well-being of our children.

Within our own faculty, there has been much discussion of security and the day to day protection of everyone within the building. The obvious activities such as upgrading the security alarms, installing cameras at entrances and being certain that all exterior doors are locked at all times need to be prioritized and enforced consistently regardless of inconvenience or financial costs. Frequent updating of fire drills, lock-downs and emergency evacuation plans are also the natural responses.

In our Diocese, the simple lessons of the “Fuzzie” program are taught to preschool and early primary children. Those simple concepts of saying “No”, moving away from danger, and telling someone they trust about things out of the ordinary are taught with the simple words “No”, “Go” and “Tell”.

For us, as adults, we need to keep in mind that caution is the best defense we have. Do we enforce a policy of keeping strangers out of our classrooms, hallways and schoolyards?

Do we question and report unauthorized visitors to the school office? Do we follow-up anything out of the ordinary?

In the generally safe confines of the home and classroom, are we careful in the way we speak to our children, taking care to be firm, yet gentle and in control, rather than controlling? Do we extend a hand to the children to bring them up to our level of understanding, rather than stooping down to lower our expectations?

Protecting our children is our obligation as the adults in their lives. Preparing them is our challenge and privilege as educators. Children who are secure in the knowledge that they are loved, appreciated and valued will be the result of our efforts---if there is genuine teamwork among those who are charged with bringing up the next generation.

Grades, talents and accomplishments may vary among children, but nothing is more important than their being encouraged to thrive in a healthy and safe environment brought about by well-informed, prepared, vigilant and selfless people who truly love them.
What to do when a child discloses abuse?

- Remain calm.
- Allow the child to tell the story without interruption.
- Reassure the child. No blame.
- Support the child. He or she has done the right thing in telling you.
- Reinforce safety.
- Do not criticize the alleged abuser.
- Report the abuse to local law enforcement.
- Let law enforcement do the investigation.

Special Phone Line for REPORTING ALLEGATIONS of SEXUAL ABUSE by Church Personnel and Volunteers
516-594-9063

Office for the Protection of Children and Young People
DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE
516-678-5800  ext 573

The “How to Keep Fuzzie Safe” program is a toolkit for parents and teachers to help present safety instructions to children. The booklet is an age appropriate owners’ manual for children (pre-school and nursery) on how to keep “Fuzzie” safe. By doing so, children learn about their own personal responsibility and helpful safety skills.

As parents we know, it is never too early or too late to start this important conversation with your child.
Happy parenting!