

SafeR Church:
Prevention of and Response to Abuse
Resource Materials, November 2014

Part III: SafeR Church—
How-To Guide and Tool Kit
Steps 4–5

For Parishes in the Anglican Diocese
of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island

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(1) Recap: Major Elements of How-To Guide: Parts I and II

Parts I and II of the How-To Guide (available as of November 2013) outlined the purpose and goals of SafeR Church and provided background, “how-to” information, and tools for Steps 1-3 in the process of creating a SafeR Church Plan. This document, Part III of the How-To Guide, offers information and tools for Steps 4 and 5 of the process of creating a SafeR Church Plan.

A separate set of Appendices will include a number of resource documents and additional tools focussed on specific relevant issues (e.g., screening, etc.). People who have participated in the SafeR Church webinars in 2014 will recognize many of these materials, as most were created for these sessions.

Before we move into Step 4, here is a brief recap of what SafeR Church is all about—and some of its primary elements.

•The Purpose and Goal of SafeR Church

*The purpose and goal of SafeR Church activities in the parishes and diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island is to create, restore, build, nourish, and sustain communities of trust and trustworthy communities—to create SafeR Church for **everyone** in our parishes and diocese—by taking active measures to prevent and respond to the threat of*

- *all forms of abuse—sexual, physical, spiritual, psychological, emotional, etc.—including bullying and harassment;*

committed

- *by anyone involved in our parishes and diocese—children, youth, adults, seniors, men, women, laypeople, and clergy;*

committed

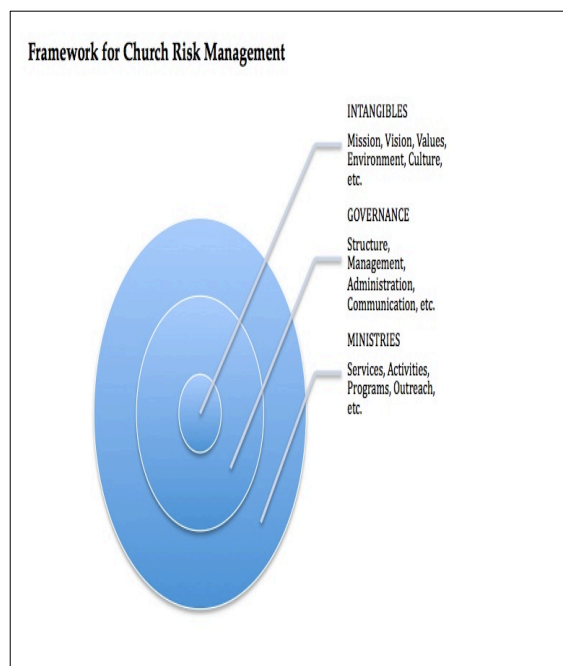
- *against anyone involved in our parishes and diocese—children, youth, adults, seniors, men, women, laypeople, and clergy.*

(See SafeR Church How-To Guide, Part I, pp. 3-4, for more details)

• SafeR Church Framework

A SafeR Church Plan is essentially a risk management plan, focussed on reducing the negative risks, or Threats, of abuse of all kinds, and on expanding the positive risks, or Opportunities to prevent or respond to abuse.

Efforts like these are often compromised or fatally flawed because they are disorganized and incomplete, and because groups often choose to implement specific measures simply because they are familiar—“this is what we’ve always done”—or because everyone else is doing them, etc., rather than because they are effective at combatting abuse.



A framework helps with the first of these problems—with organizing the work. It offers a structure—a beginning, middle, and end—to the work, and therefore a way to organize it. (There will always be overlap between and among these “layers,” but that’s not a problem. Better that something is identified twice than not at all.)

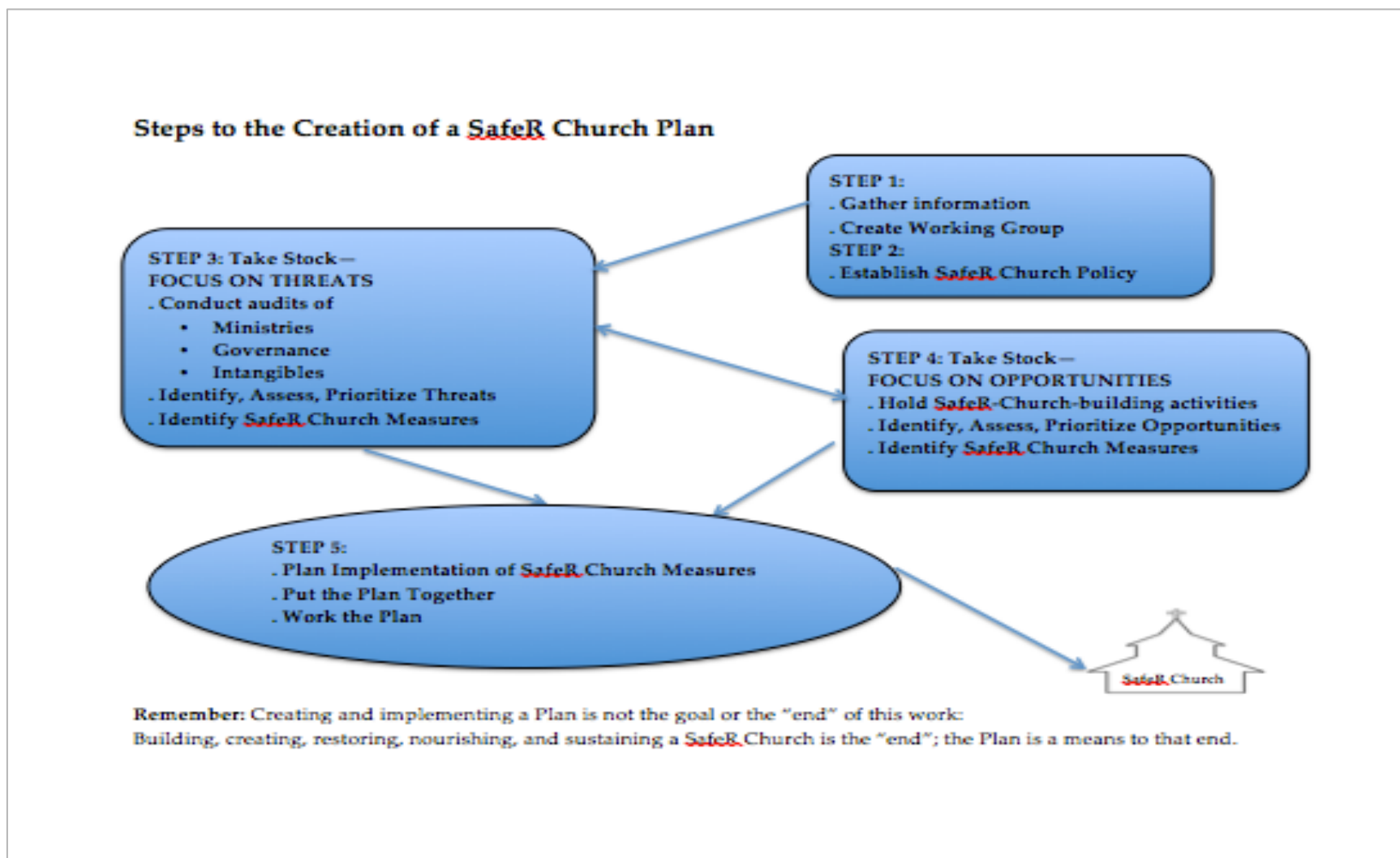
The second problem is addressed by the process (Steps 3 and 4) of auditing the realities of the parish, identifying specific risks, and then asking the question directly: Which Measure(s) are prudent, reasonable, appropriate and, above all, will **effectively** address these risks?

The most important aspect of this framework is that it includes not only the most obvious area of risk—the Ministries (services, programs, activities, etc.)—it also includes the less-obvious but often equally significant area of risk: the area or “layer” of Governance. And, most important of all, it includes the layer of the Intangibles, the source and “location” of the most significant risks in every organization.

If risks in the Intangibles are not identified and managed—Threats reduced and Opportunities expanded—abuse response and prevention efforts will be incomplete and may be fatally flawed. The most complete and thorough risk management processes, protocols, practices, and procedures, etc., can be—and usually are—undermined, subverted, and sometimes completely undone by risks in the Intangibles that are not identified, examined, and managed.

(See How-To Guide, Part I, p. 12; Part II, pp. 8-10.)

• **Steps to the Creation of a SafeR Church Plan** (See How-To Guide, Part II, pp. 11-37)



Recap of Steps 1-3: Here is a summary of what’s involved in Steps 1-3. For the details and tools, see the How-To Guide, Part II, pp. 11-37.

Step 1.

- **Gather Information**
- **Set up Working Group**

Step 1 includes two activities:

(1) Gathering information (terms of reference, program descriptions, position descriptions, codes of conduct, bylaws, etc.) that you will need as you create your Plan.

(2) Appointing a small group to take the lead in creating the parish’s Plan. (See How-To Guide, Part II, pp. 12-13)

Step 2.

- **Establish SafeR Church Policy**

It is important that each Parish create a SafeR Church Policy to establish the principles and guiding directions for your work. NOTE: A policy should not include a list of specific Measures (e.g., putting windows in doors, etc.). That list of Measures belongs in the second part of the Plan. (See How-To Guide, Part II, pp. 14-15, for more about

policy, and pp. 16-20 for a sample SafeR Church Policy that can help you create your own. Check the SafeR Church webpage for other sample policies created by various parishes in our diocese.

Step 3.

- **Identify Risks—Threats**
- **Identify Measures to Manage Threats in**

- Parish **Ministries**
- Parish **Governance**
- Parish **Intangibles**

Step 3 involves the following:

1. Describing these three areas completely and fully
2. Identifying the inherent or foreseeable Threat in these three areas
3. Identifying specific measures to address these Threats—to eliminate, avoid, transfer, or accept/reduce them.

So, what remains to be done?

In **Step 4**, you’ll identify positive risks—i.e., Opportunities—in Ministries, Governance, and Intangibles, and ways to expand and encourage them. In **Step 5**, you’ll put the pieces of the Plan together.

Re Ecclesiastical’s Requirements

Ecclesiastical Insurance has established a list of requirements that parishes in our diocese will have to meet, as conditions of their abuse-related insurance policy. The list is posted on the SafeR Church page of the Diocese’s website. NOTE: The list is under revision (November 2014), and the final version will be posted as soon as it is available.

Ecclesiastical’s expectation is that parishes will have made “significant and substantial progress toward the completion and implementation of their individual SafeR Church Plans by January of 2015,” and that they will complete and implement them soon after that.

Remember that the Measures required by Ecclesiastical are the minimums that must be met in order to maintain abuse-related insurance coverage. Your parish may well determine that other Measures are also essential to creating SafeR Church in your parish, and that’s the larger goal: SafeR Church.

Step 4.

■ Identify Risks—Opportunities ■ Identify SafeR Church Measures to Expand Opportunities

• How-To: From Step 3 into Step 4

TOOL:

■ Step 4 Audit Tool

Simplified Step 4

This document was supposed to have been completed shortly after Parts I and II were published. It was, unfortunately, not possible to complete it until now.

Consequently, since so many parishes have completed Step 3 or are well on the way to doing so and, in recognition of their efforts to make substantial progress toward the completion and implementation of their Plans by January 2015, the “How-To” activities for completing Step 4 have been radically simplified from what was originally envisioned.

■ Identify Risks— Opportunities ■ Identify SafeR Church Measures to Expand Opportunities

• What and why

Recap re negative risks (Threats) and positive risks (Opportunities)

Creating a SafeR Church Plan is an effort at managing risk, and the most basic definition of risk is “uncertainty.” A risk is an uncertainty, a possibility, that something might happen—or that it might not. (See the How-To Guide, Part I, pp. 3, 9-10; Part II, pp. 24-27) for more on this.)

Managing risk is something we all do, hundreds of times every day, in large and small ways—mostly without thinking about it. Everyday risk management usually looks like something like this:

(1) We take stock of a situation consciously or unconsciously;

(2) We recognize/identify (again consciously or unconsciously) the risks in the situation; and
(3) We take action to manage them.

Here’s an example: Driving a car, heading east into a bright sunrise, consciously and/or unconsciously, we recognize the risks caused by the glare. In response, we might

- put the visor down
- put sunglasses on
- slow down
- put more distance between our car and the one in front of us
- turn on the hazard lights
- pull right off the road for a bit.

People may choose to do one, some, or all of these (and probably other things not included here). And each of these activities (e.g., putting on sunglasses, using the visor, slowing down, etc.) is a risk management **Measure**, something we do, some action we take, some aid or mechanism we use, to manage the

risk, in the effort to reduce the chances of causing or being involved in a collision or driving off the road, etc.

The work of creating SafeR Church follows the same process, in the service of preventing and responding to the risks of abuse. The only difference is that we're doing this work in a more conscious, deliberate, and organized fashion.

Historically, “risks” have almost always been understood as, by definition, negative—as Threats. So, in the example of driving into the glare of a sunrise, our primary focus is on minimizing the Threats of harm, on reducing the chances that we'll be involved in some kind of collision, or drive off the road, that we and/or others will be harmed.

But risks can also run the other way. The risk in the situation described above is that we'll get to our destination safely, that things will go **right**.

Thinking about risk in this way is probably unfamiliar. But it's important—perhaps especially in relation to an effort like abuse prevention and response, which is almost always overwhelmingly framed negatively—i.e., in terms of what could go **wrong**.

It is very important not to deny reality or delude ourselves about the Threats of abuse: There are many—in churches as in every other kind of human association or organization, and we have to deal with them, to manage them. But we also have to recognize that there are positive risks (Opportunities) in all or virtually all human associations and organizations, including our churches and parishes and diocese,

i.e., aspects and elements of Ministries, Governance, and Intangibles that are **hostile** to abuse, that **discourage** it or make it more difficult to perpetrate. These positive risks, or Opportunities, increase the probability or likelihood that things will go **right**.

So: We have to face the Threats head on, AND it's equally important to look for the positive risks, the Opportunities, so that we can encourage, support, nourish, and expand them, thereby increasing the chances that abuse will not happen, or that, if it does, we will find out about it quickly so that we can move to stop it.

In Step 4, the focus is on these positive risks—Opportunities—in parish Ministries, Governance, and Intangibles, identifying them, along with measures we can take to support, encourage, expand, nourish, and build on them.

• **How-To: Step 4**

In Step 4, you are doing the same tasks you did in Step 3, except that the focus is on positive risk. In Step 4, you will

(1) Take stock of the parish’s Ministries, Governance, and Intangibles

(2) Identify **positive risks** (**Opportunities**) in Ministries, Governance, and Intangibles

(3) Identify measures to support and encourage and expand the positive risks.

■ **Did you “Mix it Up”?**

Step 3 and Step 4

In the How-To Guide, Part II, on pp. 21-22, the suggestion was made that parishes might want to “mix it up” — to look at positive risks (Step 4) at the same time as negative risks (Step 3).

The four different Audit tools (Program, Position, Governance, Intangibles) on pages 23, 28, 33, and

35), flagged the possibility of doing both at once.

If your parish did that—if, in your Step 3 audits, you identified both negative and positive risks, along with Measures to reduce the Threats, and Measures to support, encourage, and expand the Opportunities—then you have already done Step 4 and can basically move on to Step 5.

■ **Have you completed Step 3? Are you moving to Step 4?**

Then here’s some good news: The simplified Step 4 means that you’ve already done the most time-consuming part of the work, the audits. You now have descriptions of your Ministries, Governance, and Intangibles and can move directly to the heart of Step 4.

■ **Are you starting Step 3?**

If you are now beginning Step 3, you may want to do Step 4 at the same time. This means that as you

conduct your audits of Ministries, Governance, and the Intangibles, you would

■ Ask both

“What are the negative risks (Threats) in this situation?”

AND

“What are the positive risks (Opportunities) in this situation?”

THEN

■ Identify Measures to address and eliminate, avoid, transfer, or minimize the negative risks (Threats)

AND

■ Identify Measures to address and encourage, support, build on, and expand the positive risks (Opportunities).

(See the Audit Tools in the How-To Guide, Part II, pages 23, 28, 33, 35),

The audit tool, on page 10, below, builds on the work of Step 3 and moves it into Step 4.

Examples of positive risks, or Opportunities

As stated above, thinking about Opportunities as “positive risks” is going to be unfamiliar to many. So here’s a bit more information and some specific examples.

The objective here is to identify the specific aspects or elements of your parish’s Ministries, Governance, and Intangibles that encourage respect for the dignity of each person, that are hostile to abuse, that make abusive behaviour or actions more difficult to hide or sustain. Here are examples:

- Our parish’s children’s and youth activities are all held in rooms with windows in the doors; the rooms are close to parish offices and/or high-traffic areas of the church building. (Positive risk in Ministries)
- Our parish has been through some difficult times, and we are facing major changes. But the attitude of clergy and parishioners is to embrace challenges honestly, not to fear them. (Positive risk in Intangibles)

- Our lay visitors and the people being visited are consciously and actively supported. Visitors receive orientation and training and have regular opportunities to give and seek feedback; a designated person calls people being visited twice a year to check on visits, and it is made clear to visitors and those visited that they can call on the Rector if they have concerns. (Positive risk in Ministries and in Governance)

- Parish leaders don’t avoid problems and act quickly to deal with them. If someone came forward and reported or disclosed abuse, he or she would be taken seriously, and the parish would act on the matter. (Positive risk in Intangibles and Governance)
- Our parish is committed to serious screening for positions of trust. We screen new candidates for positions of trust on the basis of the Bona Fide Occupational Requirements (BFORs) we have identified for these positions, and we focus most of our screening efforts on

Measures used **after** someone takes up such a position. We are in regular, direct contact with people in positions of trust **and** with those they serve. We create specific, frequent opportunities for people who have concerns to speak to the Rector or a Warden. We have established protocols for dealing with concerns, and we follow them. (Positive risks in Ministries, Governance, and Intangibles)

Take Stock: At the end of Step 4, what should have been accomplished?

- Established Parish SafeR Church Policy (Step 2)
 - Audited our parish’s Ministries, Governance, and Intangibles
 - Identified; prioritized Threats (Step 3) and the Opportunities (Step 4) related to abuse, and
 - Identified measures to address these risks – measures to minimize the Threats and measures to maximize the Opportunities.
- It’s time to move on to Step 5.**

Step 4 Audit Tool: Focussing on Positive Risks —Opportunities in Ministries, Governance, and Intangibles

1. Take stock: Gather the audits of Ministries, Governance, and Intangibles that you completed in Step 3.
(These audits are the **descriptions** of the realities of your parish.)

2. Review the audits in turn, and identify the positive risks, the Opportunities they reveal.

(What Opportunities exist in our Ministries (programs, services, activities, positions? In our Governance? In our Intangibles? You may find none, one, a few, or many in each area.)

Develop a prioritized list of the positive risks (Opportunities) in

I. Ministries

II. Governance

III. Intangibles

(Don't worry about overlap or duplication. That's not a problem; in fact, it's almost to be expected. And don't spend time worrying about whether a particular Opportunity belongs in one category (Ministries, Governance, Intangibles) or another. The most important thing is to identify them so that you can look at ways to support and expand them.)

3. Identify measures to encourage, expand, support, nurture, nourish, build on, increase, develop, etc., these Opportunities in

I. Ministries

II. Governance

III. Intangibles

Add these measures to the prioritized list that you created above. Take this list forward to Step 5.

(As with the negative risks you identified in Step 3, if you discover a positive risk that is somehow urgent or time-sensitive in some way, you may want to act on it right away and not wait until the Plan is complete.)

Step 5.

■ Plan Implementation of SafeR Church Measures

■ Put the SafeR Church Plan Together

■ Implement the Plan

■ Review and Update the Plan

- How-To: Step 5

TOOLS:

■ SafeR Church Measures

Implementation Planning Tool

■ Outline of SafeR Church Plan

• How-To: Step 5

■ Plan Implementation of SafeR Church Measures

In Step 5, you will put your parish's SafeR Church Plan together, so that you can begin to implement it.

Basically, the only new work in Step 5 is creating a prioritized timeline for the implementation of the Measures that have selected.

Each parish will have a different list of risks, and of Measures to address

them. It may be possible in some parishes to implement all the Measures in short order. Others, however, may have identified a significant number of risks, and Measures they need to implement, and it's very difficult and (often risky in itself) to try and do everything at once.

In addition, some measures may be easy to implement and relatively inexpensive (e.g., installing a floodlight for the parking lot); others may be more complex (e.g., implementing proper screening measures for positions of trust). It's important to recognize (even to expect) that your initial timeline may change, and to allow for that.

The basic rule, however, is the obvious one: Deal with the most significant risks first. If you have identified any serious risks of harm—deal with them before

dealing with the less serious risks. (See the How-To Guide, Part II, pp. 24-27 for more about assessing and prioritizing risks.)

The Legal Requirement:

Enterprise Risk Management

It's important to keep the basic legal obligation of parishes (and of every other organization, large or small) in mind: **A parish is responsible for managing the risks generated by its enterprises. Lack of resources is not an excuse that the civil courts will accept. So says the Supreme Court of Canada.** (See How-To Guide, Part I, pp. 9-12.)

Requirements Established by Ecclesiastical Insurance

Remember too that in order to meet the conditions of the abuse protection insurance, each parish is required to include specific Measures in its Plan. (See final page of this document for more information.)

■ IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING TOOL

(This tool can be used to list your risk priorities, Measures to address them, and to flesh out how, when, by whom, etc., the Measures will be implemented, and other details. Adapt it to suit your needs. It may be wise to keep the master as a computer file as it will need to be updated, revised, etc.)

SafeR Church Measures Implementation Planning Tool

Current as at _____

| Risks (in order of priority) | Specific Measure identified to address this risk | Implementing the Measure: Cost? Time? Source? Resources needed? | Committee/Parish Council approval required for this Measure? Sought? Received? | Who is responsible for Measure? (Implementing? Troubleshooting? Monitoring? Evaluating, etc.?) | Concerns? Work to be done in advance of, to support, implementation of Measure? | Who will evaluate effectiveness of Measure? When? How? |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| (1) e.g., Atmosphere of fear of acknowledging risks of abuse | 1. | | | | | |
| | 2. | | | | | |
| | 3. | | | | | |
| (2) e.g., No Screening In Place for Positions of Trust | 1. | | | | | |
| | 2. | | | | | |
| | 3. | | | | | |
| | 4. | | | | | |
| | 5. | | | | | |
| (3) e.g., Parish Space used by Outside Orgs. Unused basement easily accessible | 1. | | | | | |
| (4) etc. | | | | | | |

■ Put the SafeR Church Plan Together

Here is a basic outline of a Parish SafeR Church Plan:

SafeR Church Plan Contents

(1) SafeR Church POLICY

(2) List of SafeR Church MEASURES that address negative risks (Threats) and positive risks (Opportunities) in

- I. Parish MINISTRIES
- II. Parish GOVERNANCE
- III. Parish INTANGIBLES

(3) IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

(4) SUPPORTING MATERIAL

(1) SafeR Church POLICY

The policy established the principles behind and the overall

directions for your parish’s SafeR Church efforts, now outlined in the rest of the Plan.

(2) SafeR Church MEASURES

There’s no need to make extra work for yourselves here. **Simply take the lists of risks and Measures you created in Steps 3 and 4, and move them into the Plan.** But remember that this list needs to identify the **specific** things your parish is going to do to combat abuse of all forms, based on your audits of Ministries, Governance, and Intangibles (including the measures required by Ecclesiastical Insurance).

Organize the list the way that makes most sense for your parish, but **keep in mind that others, who have not been involved in this process, may have to work the Plan** at some point. Make it as easy as you can for others to follow it or figure it out.

(3) IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

This is the beating heart of the Plan—what will be done, when, by whom, what’s needed to make it work, etc. Again, **first priority should be given to the most significant risks.** And remember that things often don’t go just as you think they will, so keep the timeline somewhat flexible.

(4) SUPPORTING MATERIAL

Be sure to keep copies of your audits, and other materials used in the development of the Plan—don’t discard them once the Plan is complete. The Parish needs to be able to explain **why** it has made the decisions it has about abuse response and prevention measures. You may not want to include all this documentation with all copies of the Plan, but the original material should be kept in an organized fashion, along with other confidential parish documents.

■ Implement the Plan

Last, but most important of all is the implementation of the Plan. To state the obvious—the Plan doesn't protect anyone—least of all those who are vulnerable to abuse—if it is not put into action. And to be absolutely clear: Simply “having a Plan” does not protect a parish at all, if that Plan is not implemented.

Addressing the most significant risks first should be the highest priority, along with implementing the measures required by Ecclesiastical, and the two will no doubt overlap. Given that it's not possible to do everything at the same time, implementing the Plan requires common sense and the exercise of good judgment.

■ Review and Update Plan

Programs and activities change. Positions are reconfigured; governance bodies are restructured. Intangibles shift over time. In

addition, you might discover that Measures you have adopted are not effective. Or you might discover a new risk that needs to be addressed. A parish's SafeR Church Plan has to be a living document, not something written once and for all (and definitely not something put up on a shelf and forgotten).

Set a date; identify how and by whom the Plan will be reviewed

One of the primary legal obligations of organizations is that their leaders are vigilant—that they actively seek to identify significant changes, to evaluate measures being taken, to confirm that Measures being taken to respond to risk are, in fact, appropriate, adequate and, above all, **effective**.

So, this is a good time to identify how and when and by whom the Plan will be reviewed so that you can tweak it or amend it, update it or change priorities if situations

change. Because the prize we are keeping our eyes on is not a Plan—that's a means to an end.

The end is Safer Church, whose purpose and goal is to create, restore, build, nourish, and sustain communities of trust and trustworthy communities—to create SafeR Church for everyone in our parishes and diocese—by taking active measures to prevent and respond to the threat of

- *all forms of abuse—sexual, physical, spiritual, psychological, emotional, etc.—including bullying and harassment;*

committed

- *by anyone involved in our parishes and diocese—children, youth, adults, seniors, men, women, laypeople, and clergy;*

committed

- *against anyone involved in our parishes and diocese—children, youth, adults, seniors, men, women, laypeople, and clergy.*

■ Final Notes

Why the recap of SafeR Church basics and Steps 1-3?

Some parishes are beginning the work now. The recap is included to provide a summary of the basics and to flag the places in Parts I and II where detailed information and tools are available.

Why has Step 4 been radically simplified?

Because Part III is following so much later than originally planned, and because many parishes have completed Step 3 and have been waiting for this material to do Step 4 and complete their Plans. If any parish would like resource materials on “SafeR Church Building Activities” (originally planned as a large part of Step 4. See How-To Guide, Part II, pp. 21-22), please e-mail lstretrmc@gmail.com.

Where are the other resource materials and tools originally to be included in Part III?

They will follow this month, in a set of Appendices to the How-To Guide.

Most of the materials are already available on the SafeR Church page of the diocesan website—they were created for and have been used in the SafeR Church webinar series, which began in February 2014.

There is some reformatting to be done so that the materials (especially tools) can be more easily used, and there are a number of new pieces to be added.

Where can we get copies of SafeR Church resource materials?

These documents are all online:

■ Look on the home page of the website of the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island (nspeidiocese.ca).

■ Scroll down the page until you see the SafeR Church logo, and click on the link. That will take you to the SafeR Church page. Materials are all posted there.

(Please note that the webpage is being redesigned (November 2014) to make it easier to find materials.)

If you have any questions about the webpage or webinars, please contact Jan Connors at the Synod Office (jconnors@nspeidiocese.ca) or by phone at (902) 420-0717.

If you have any questions about SafeR Church, or if there are resource materials you would like to see created and/or made available for your SafeR Church work, please contact Lorraine Street, the project consultant, at lstretrmc@gmail.com or by phone at (902) 697-2927.