

# CONVICTED SEX OFFENDERS CHURCH ATTENDANCE POLICY



**POTOMAC CONFERENCE CORPORATION OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS**  
606 Greenville Avenue, Staunton, VA | 540-886-0771 | [www.pcsda.org](http://www.pcsda.org)

*"We exist to grow healthy disciple-making churches"*

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## Introduction

It is the moral and legal responsibility of every congregation within the territory of the Potomac Conference of Seventh-day Adventists to take reasonable steps to provide a safe environment for its members in regards to inappropriate sexual behaviors/advances during church activities. These church activities include regularly scheduled events as well as less formal social activities. While we desire to afford a spiritual ministry to sexual offenders, it is imperative that our churches take reasonable steps to provide all of our members and guests a safe and secure environment while on church premises or while participating in church activities.

As Seventh-day Adventists, we believe that spiritual health is attainable for all individuals and our hope and prayer is that we will all *“grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”* (2 Peter 3:18). As long as a person with a history of one or more sexual offenses remains honest and committed to God and to others, the local church should encourage him or her to move toward treatment and recovery and should commit its support as they continue.

The church should commit to providing a network of individuals who will hold the convicted sex offender accountable as he/she grows a relationship with Jesus Christ. If a congregation is too small and is not able to provide this support or comply with this policy, the convicted sex offender should be referred to another congregation that is able to provide support and protection as set out herein, after consultation with the Potomac Conference.

Churches ministering to convicted sex offenders should have church board members, elders, deacons and accountability partners receive appropriate training. If the Potomac Conference is not able to provide such training, it may refer such committees to one or more community groups or government organizations.

If the person in question has not been convicted of sexual misconduct but is known to have offended, the church leadership should consult with the Potomac Conference for guidance and appropriate levels of restrictions and supervision.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR ASSISTANCE CONTACT:

VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADMINISTRATION | POTOMAC CONFERENCE CORPORATION  
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## Conditions for Convicted Sex Offenders to Attend Church

The \_\_\_\_\_ Church recognizes that church attendance may be helpful for some convicted sex offenders seeking healing and recovery. Great care must be exercised, however, in allowing convicted sex offenders to attend church because they have a criminal history of victimizing individuals. Those who have committed a sexual crime, and who meet the criteria listed in this document, must follow these guidelines in order to attend church.

- I. Before a convicted sex offender can attend church
  - A. All convicted sex offenders wanting to attend the \_\_\_\_\_ Church must contact the Church Pastor or Head Elder prior to attending church.
    1. The offender must report that he/she committed a sexual offense and disclose the nature and details of that offense. The church in consultation with knowledgeable legal counsel, should assess whether this church is prepared for such sex offender assimilation and if this candidate constitutes an acceptable risk.
    2. The offender must complete and sign a background release consent form authorizing a background check. (See attached form)The Potomac Conference is willing to process this background check. The fee for the criminal history background check is \$32.00. There is an additional \$12.00 fee charged depending on the number of states checked. The offender is responsible for these fees.
    3. If the convicted sex offender is required to register with the state or complete any other conditions of probation or other requirements, he/she must show proof of compliance with all requirements imposed by the state.
  - B. All convicted sex offenders will be expected to have and regularly meet with a certified sex offender treatment therapist. The offender must sign a release form permitting the church to communicate directly with the therapist or other counselor regarding his or her treatment.
  - C. Any convicted sex offenders under state supervision must sign a release form permitting the church to communicate directly with the offender's Community Corrections Officer (CCO), probation officer, or other person filling a substantially similar role to that of probation officer.
  - D. All convicted sex offenders must have an individualized contract agreement detailing the requirements for the offender to follow while attending all church functions.
    1. A convicted sex offender under community supervision will be required to:
      - a. Meet with a certified sex offender treatment therapist, his/her Community Corrections Officer (CCO), Conference Risk Management Officer (if applicable) and the local Church Board to determine the kinds of involvement that would be

appropriate and to develop an individualized contract agreement.

- b. Sign the individualized contract agreement, along with a certified sex offender treatment therapist, CCO, the Conference Risk Management Officer (if applicable), and the Church Pastor or Head Elder.
  - c. Renew the individualized contract agreement every year with a certified sex offender treatment therapist, CCO and the local Church Board
2. A convicted sex offender not on community supervision will be required to:
- a. Meet with a certified sex offender treatment therapist and the local Church Board to determine the kinds of involvement that would be appropriate and to develop an individualized contract agreement.
  - b. Sign the individualized contract agreement, along with a certified sex offender treatment therapist and Church Pastor or Head Elder.
  - c. Renew the individualized contract agreement every two years with a certified sex offender treatment therapist and the local Church Board, or as determined by the certified sex offender treatment therapist.
- D. If accountability partners are required in the individualized contract agreement, suitable accountability partners must be identified, screened and approved by the local Church Board.
1. Approved accountability partners are not to be close family members (except on rare occasions as approved by the church, therapist, and if applicable, probation officer).
  2. Full disclosure of the crime and nature of the sexual offense must be provided to the approved accountability partners.
  3. Clear expectations will be given to accountability partners concerning their supervision of the offender.

II. Convicted sex offenders prohibited from attending the \_\_\_\_\_ Church

A. Because the \_\_\_\_\_ Church wants to be sensitive to and protective of victims and potential victims of sexual abuse or assault, convicted sex offenders will be prohibited from attending the \_\_\_\_\_ Church for the following reasons:

1. If a victim of the convicted sex offender attends the \_\_\_\_\_.

2. If the convicted sex offender has a history of not following established contract agreements with other churches.
3. The convicted sex offender does not follow all of the guidelines and conditions of this document and the approved contract agreement.

III. Church attendance

- A. The individualized contract agreement must be followed at all times. Failure to follow this contract will result in not being allowed to attend church.
- B. A convicted sex offender may not serve or be put in a leadership position in the church.

IV. Notification of convicted sex offenders attending church

- A. As long as there is a well established church attendance policy for convicted sex offenders, and the local church board as well as church elders and deacons have been made aware that a convicted sex offender is attending church, and the church has complied with all the requirements set forth in this policy, there is no need to notify the church membership.

# Accountability Partner Requirements

**DEFINITION OF AN ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER:** For the purposes of this agreement an Accountability Partner shall be a mature adult of the same gender as participant, over 25 years of age, designated by the local church board, with no sexual misconduct history, and not a relative of the person defined in this agreement. An Accountability Partner shall be provided a copy of this agreement, advised of its content and appropriate protocol should concerns arise, and be willing to take this responsibility seriously.

## PROTOCOLS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER

1. Church Board members, Church Elders, Deacons and Accountability Partners shall attend a training session with material provided by the Potomac Conference. The Potomac Conference may refer persons to one or more community groups or government organizations to receive such training if it decides that such would be preferable.
2. There shall be a designated Accountability Partner team leader to whom the other Accountability Partners report.
3. If the participant is on parole, the Accountability Partner shall be aware of the terms of the parole and shall coordinate with the participant's parole officer or case worker, as applicable.
4. The Accountability Partner shall observe the convicted sex offender at all times while attending church. The Accountability Partner will not, to the extent possible, allow the participant to be alone with other church members who are not also Accountability Partners or the church pastor and under no circumstances will the Accountability Partner permit the convicted sex offender to be alone with a minor.
5. If the Accountability Partner is unable to supervise for any reason, another designated Accountability Partner shall be assigned.
6. The Accountability Partner shall accompany the participant when access to restroom facilities is needed.
7. Any observed inappropriate behavior shall be reported to the Accountability Partner team leader, parole officer or case worker (as applicable) and pointed out to the participant. If the inappropriate behavior is serious, the matter will be referred to the Potomac Conference and, if applicable, the police.

## ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER TEAM

---

LEADER: \_\_\_\_\_

List of designated Accountability Partners (appropriate number for this agreement):

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

## **SAMPLE OF CHURCH ATTENDANCE AGREEMENT FOR CONVICTED SEX OFFENDERS**

I recognize the concerns and responsibilities of the church to ensure a safe environment for its members, especially minors, and wish to comply with the following conditions that would allow my participation in church activities:

1. I will not associate with or be in proximity to any minors attending or participating in any church/ school activity.
2. I will not sit next to a child and if a child sits next to me, I will move to a different seat. I will attempt to sit on the aisle seat with my Accountability Partner.
3. I will not linger in areas where children are being taught and will not go to any area where children's or youth ministries are being conducted, or to any other area that my Accountability Partner or the church prohibits me from entering.
4. I will not place myself into, or accept, any position of leadership, authority, or activity that may affect or influence children.
5. I will under no circumstances take a child home with me or transport him or her anywhere at any time, whether by walking, driving or any other means.
6. I will not develop any special relationships with minor children or their parents.
7. I will not go to a church member's home if they have children present without full knowledge and prior written consent of the parents, pastor and sponsors.
8. I will not hold any church office, or speak or participate in any church function in any leadership role or teaching capacity, including but not limited to taking part in any event or activity on the platform.
9. I agree to maintain an accountability network with individuals as defined by the church and make sure my whereabouts at church or church activities are known at all times to those individuals, and to church leadership as required.
10. I will not attend any functions at another church or congregation without the attendance of an approved Accountability Partner and will, if so attending another church or congregation, fully comply with the requirements of this agreement and the requests of the approved Accountability Partner.
11. I authorize the church to obtain information regarding myself from my parole officer, case worker, governmental agencies or other persons who might have information relative to my criminal records.
12. I agree to comply with any court-mandated or parole restrictions, conditions, treatments, and/or requirements and recognize that these take precedence over any less restrictive parts of this agreement. Any conflict between this Agreement and court-mandated restrictions will be resolved in favor of the court-mandated restrictions, only upon written approval of Church leadership.
13. I understand and agree that the church, in fulfilling its responsibilities in providing a safe environment for its members and guests, will disclose an account of my past behavior and criminal history to parents, church leaders, members, volunteers, and all other persons who may need to have such information in order to meet their parental or supervisory responsibilities and interact safely within the Church.



14. I understand that the provisions of this Participation Agreement do not create any personal and/or legal rights against the Seventh-day Adventist Church (Potomac Conference Corporation), the local church or congregation or any of their members, officers, employees, agents, directors or volunteers (together, the "Church"). I hereby waive any rights and release and discharge the Church from and against any and all claims or causes of action whatsoever that I may have now or in the future against the Church arising out of or in any way connected with my participation in church activities or resulting from my execution or performance of this agreement. I further agree to indemnify and hold the church and its agents, members, employees, volunteers, visitors, invitees, directors, and officers harmless for any claim, lawsuit or damages that I may cause directly or indirectly, including but not limited to those related to my actions or inactions at the Church or performance of non-performance of this Agreement.
  
15. I consent to the disclosure of any of my personal information including but limited to anything relating to or arising out of any of my activities at the church or during the term of this agreement, to any person as the Church may deem necessary, in their sole discretion, for the purposes of implementing this agreement or protecting any person. I agree to sign a release of information for the Church to communicate with my probation officer, case worker, counselor, or therapist, and to release any personal information about me to any third party, upon that party's written request and upon notice (written or oral) to me of said release.
  
16. This agreement shall remain valid until mutually terminated by a writing signed by the church and myself. The obligations stated herein shall survive termination, for so long as the Church deems it necessary, in its sole discretion, for the purposes of protecting any person. Should I wish to transfer my attendance, participation, or membership to another congregation, a copy of this document will be sent to them.
  
17. I swear and affirm, under penalty of perjury, that I have fully disclosed to the church, the pastor and the church board all aspects of my personal history, including all details related to my criminal convictions, the sentences related thereto and treatments and counseling received. I agree that if it is discovered that I have not fully disclosed such details, the church may terminate any further participation in any church activities.

Further, I have read and understand the above conditions and agree to abide by them. If at any point I break one of the above conditions or in any way breach the terms of this Agreement, I recognize that I shall not be allowed to attend church activities in the Potomac Conference and that I will be reported to the appropriate governmental, police and/or parole authorities, as required by law or otherwise stated herein, and that the Church may be entitled to injunctive relief to enforce the obligations herein and as otherwise required.

Dated this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Local Church

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Local Church Official

<b>For Church Use Only</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Copy of agreement to Participant on _____.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Copy of agreement to Potomac Conference Corporation on _____.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Copy of agreement to Accountability Partner on _____.	
_____ Name of Local Church Official	_____ Signature of Local Church Official

# SOLUTIONS

Providing Solutions to Minimize Risks  
 SEPTEMBER 2007 • VOLUME 11 • ISSUE 9

## Sex Offenders in Church

### Inspiration

*"Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers."*

*Psalms 1:1*

### Motivation

*"Be alert, be aware and be alive, and also be proactive—not reactive—toward safety. To safeguard the safety of our children is everyone's responsibility."*

*Naval Safety Code*

Several weeks ago, National Public Radio's program *All Things Considered* broadcast a story about a congregation in Southern California struggling with whether to allow a child molester to worship with them and whether they should open their arms of welcome to this black sheep. The debate that followed exposed the deep divide that all denominations struggle with when it comes to this subject matter. They are after all conflicting ministries. Churches try to reach out at the same time to the sinner and to the survivors of abuse. Many pastors have sought advice on how to deal with sex offenders who had returned from prison and have wanted to return to church. How does a congregation deal with this very sensitive subject? In this issue of *Solutions* we, too, will try to address this issue and offer some legal and practical advice on how to best serve, and, at the same time, protect.



In our world of faith which speaks of forgiveness and the offer of a sanctuary for all sinners one would think the welcome hand of fellowship would be extended to all but even the most accepting and affirming of congregations are struggling when a sex offender arrives at the door. We are admonished by Christ to forgive. On numerous occasions He told his disciples that if they *"forgive men their trespasses,*

*your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."* (Matthew 6: 14-15) The apostle Paul counseled us to *"be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you."* (Ephesians 4:32) How do we reconcile the counsel of Paul and the admonition of Christ as we deal with these individuals? While every sinner needs an opportunity to recover and lead productive lives, a balance needs to be drawn between recovery and living in the real world.

As a church we need to be smart about having safety measures in place.

Having a policy to deal with sex offenders before the crisis arises is the best way to avoid congregational turmoil. The policy has to start with a developed set of rules about how an individual should conduct themselves

in church. These rules should include having limited access to church property, staying away from children, being accompanied by escorts while on church grounds, and holding church offices.

We have been entrusted with an overwhelming responsibility to provide for the safety of our children and young people. We must continue to be vigilant in strengthening existing safeguards and establishing new measures to ensure the safety of God's gift to us.

*Karnik Dc  
 agement,  
 Risk Place*



www.adventistrisk.org

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## The Struggle

There are sex offenders in your local congregation. Some are known, but some labor with a secret sin and remain unknown. The time to consider these issues is before the sex offender appears in the pew. Before that day arrives, you should think about and develop a plan on how you will manage the issue. Such pre-planning will serve you well.

The initial question every congregation must answer is whether it will attempt to include known sex offenders or will direct them elsewhere. Each choice has consequences and the choice is not as easy as it

sounds. There are legitimate reasons for excluding the offender even though, on the surface, it appears to be contrary to Christ's teachings. Not every congregation is equally equipped to manage the issue. If, after prayerful consideration, a church determines that

it cannot meet the needs of its members, including the offender, it should not attempt to do so. If, on the other hand, the congregation determines that it has the resources and will to manage the struggle, the next question is – how?

The goal of this article is not to supply specific answers to specific situations, but rather to provide a framework for thinking about the issue and preparing for this inevitability. It focuses on the known sex offender.

### What We Hope to Achieve

The goal we must reach is inclusion

with verifiable limitations. As with most things, ideas conceived in the abstract do not always work in real life. There is no substitute for flexibility and sound judgment. Not all sex offenses are equally risky. An adult man convicted at 19 of sexual contact with his 16 year-old girlfriend presents a far different set of risks than a life-long pedophile with many victims. The former may not be an issue for the church's consideration; the latter is a high risk individual. How we manage these two extreme situations will showcase how flexible we are and the soundness of our judgment.

With many sex offenders, strict limits are completely appropriate. Limits serve to protect the congregation from the offender's potential sin and shield the offender from his or her weakness. Limits have little to do with forgiveness. They are merely the means to safely allow the offender access to worship and fellowship. Ideas and techniques must remain flexible and good judgment must be in place with each decision.

Sometimes, the idea of forgiveness may be used to justify a lack of vigilance in this area. Such a perversion of forgiveness is neither appropriate nor Biblical. Scripture is filled with examples of flawed, yet godly, people who were forgiven, but suffered the consequences of their respective sin. David and Moses are two clear and familiar examples with whom most are familiar.

There is also an idea that springs from secular culture into church life that impacts decisions on how to manage *The Struggle*. The idea is this: we should not judge the behavior of others. Without delving too far into the theology, we do and must judge behavior without judging the heart of another.

### Process Points to Ponder

There are a number of different techniques by which to manage an offender's presence in a congregation. Some sugges-

tions follow. This is not an exhaustive list and there are many variations of each idea. The common thread throughout is that the limits must be consistently enforced as a condition of an offender participating in worship. Deviation or violation by the offender should, in most situations, act to disqualify him or her from further worship.

#### 1) Conditional Membership

We all hold church membership conditionally. At a minimum we must accept the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist faith, and be baptized or enter by profession of faith. Sex offenders who wish to worship in a given congregation will, as a consequence of their wrongdoing, have additional conditions placed upon them. Explaining that conditional membership applies to all may help persuade those who resist limits.

#### 2) Covenant

This is the heart of managing *The Struggle*. Before allowing offenders to attend services, ask them to commit to a covenant designed to set forth the conditions of membership or participation in services. Such a covenant should clearly state the level of participation the congregation will permit. Typically, it would prohibit contact with children. Prohibition of participation in youth or children's ministries, such as Pathfinders, Adventurers, and Children's Sabbath School, would be appropriate. It may also prohibit the offender from attending functions such as church potlucks and other social events in which children are likely present. This should be reduced to written form, and signed and dated by the offender. Some conferences are using this technique with success.

#### 3) Accountability Partner

I call this the guardian angel solution. This person would be responsible for assist-



ing the offender in honoring the promises made in the covenant. You may want to have two or three people involved in this to avoid burnout or lapses in supervision. The Accountability Partner should stay within sight of the offender. In addition, this must be well coordinated to avoid lapses in responsibility (“I thought it was Bob’s turn.”) You may wish to consider having this person report to the church board or executive committee annually or semi-annually to discuss any problems with the offender or with the process.

#### 4) Disclosure to Church Members

This is a delicate situation requiring a high degree of skill. Do we disclose that a sex offender is worshipping with us? If so, how and to whom? These are all tough issues to work through.

First, disclosure is appropriate and necessary. It gives congregants fair warning, particularly those with children or other vulnerable family members. Second, a one time disclosure is not effective. In time, membership rolls change and those who need to know may change. Departing pastors should advise incoming pastors of the presence of a sex offender in the congregation. Third, the content of the disclosure should be factual, respectful, and true. Disclosure should avoid opinion, speculation, or pseudo-analysis. Lastly, prior to making such a disclosure, it is important to consult with local legal counsel to obtain guidance on the appropriate legal limits of such a disclosure.

#### 5) Contact with Children

Many churches have a policy or a practice of conducting criminal background checks on all people working with children. Any policy or practice should clearly state that anyone with a history of sex offense forfeits the privilege of working with young people and children, and as a condition

of membership is prohibited from contact with them within or outside of church or its functions.

As with many things, success lies with the people responsible, in this case, for enforcing limits. Those responsible for enforcement, including the offender, must be committed to the idea and the process. It is important to stress that these limits are not punitive. Instead they make it possible for the offender/believer to participate in corporate worship and fellowship.

#### 6) Flexibility

Within your policies, allow some flexibility and discretion. Whatever guidelines or policies you adopt, make sure you have sufficient discretion to address individual situations. Such flexibility will include some assessment of whether or not the offender is truly repentant or merely seeking an opportunity to approach the vulnerable. The truly repentant may be provided with conditional membership which includes appropriate limits and safeguards. Those offenders who seek access to the vulnerable should not be permitted access, under any circumstances, limits, or conditions. How to determine who is and is not truly repentant is a huge challenge, but the attempt must be made. Speaking to probation officers, observation, and other background data gathering may assist you in assessing the offender.

#### Impact on the Congregation

My mother once told me to avoid discussing religion and politics. This is because such discussions rarely bring out the best in us. The same can be said for addressing *The Struggle*. You will find, within most congregations, that any attempt to deal with this problem will polarize the members. Some will line up on the law and order side and others will stand squarely under the umbrella of grace. Few are able to see that both can be achieved. Further, the uncharitable

tone of many discussions of this subject offends some believer’s scriptural beliefs. No matter how this is managed, it is likely that some will leave and worship elsewhere. That should not deter you from working hard to manage *The Struggle*. Simply understand that this issue brings out strong opinions and no matter how you manage it, you will have some who strongly disagree with you.

#### You are Not Alone

As a local pastor or church leader, it is easy to feel overwhelmed when facing *The Struggle*. Please know that you are not alone. There are many resources you can call upon, including the staff at Adventist Risk Management. There is no single source of information on this topic. Some places where you can seek help include your local police department, probation officers, mental health care professionals, and social workers. Such professionals can assist you in evaluating your processes and help you assess the risk of a given individual. Beware, however, of the self-proclaimed experts in this field. With the problems of sex abuse within faith communities making national headlines in recent years, many are now profiting in the prevention field. You need to beware of such experts and stick with sources offering sound advice and proven techniques.

#### Conclusion

This is hard work. Developing the right processes and getting people in your congregation to commit to unwavering diligence will stretch your leadership ability to its limits. *The Struggle*, however, requires your best efforts. The sin of sexual abuse ripples throughout the lives of individuals and creates burdens for our churches and institutions. But this is work that must be done as it enables our objective – spreading the Gospel. If you have ideas on this subject

## Educating Church Members to Recognize and Deal with Sexual Predators

When church members and their children come to worship or attend other church functions, it should be with the understanding that there is no bubble that encapsulates and protects the participants from all danger. Yes, there is always the possibility of a miraculous deliverance from some evil that may have otherwise befallen someone, but the Lord has given us the ability to think and to plan on ways to protect those that need protection.

Sure, we need to continue to run fin-



gerprint cards and do background checks on adults that minister to the children and youth of our church, but that will only screen out those

that have already been caught. There may be individuals in your congregation that have never been caught by the law and have engaged in sexual abuse with children, perhaps even those whom you see from week to week in your church building.

Leaders of our local churches need to equip the adult members by educating them to recognize the symptoms of sexual abuse in the children they minister to.

There are several physical symptoms that may indicate sexual abuse in a child: difficult to walk/sit; pain/itching in genital area; bruises/bleeding in private areas; STDs; abrupt change in personal care/child fails to bath, comb hair, brush teeth, etc. When these types of symptoms are seen, an adult should feel an obligation to act to protect the child and to clarify what is going on with the child. Local laws may require that mandatory reporting of what you see to either the police or some other social services agency. Your church may also develop a protocol of other individuals you should contact with your concerns (pastor or parents/guardians of the child).

Church members also need to be able to recognize inappropriate interaction by other Sabbath School leaders or other adults with children. Some danger signs could include any of the following: adult always alone with the child; adult giving child lingering full frontal hugs instead of side hugs; expensive gift by adults to children that are not the natural objects of their affection by family line; adult always wanting to take the child places; adult and child stop talking when others are near; unusual amount of time spent together or an unusual amount of physical contact between adult and child. Again, if something suspicious is noticed, you may be under an obligation to have the professionals look into the matter for the protection of the child involved.

In a perfect world, there would be no predators in our midst. But Jesus has warned us that the devil will come among us like *a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour*. Can that illustration be stretched to encompass the thought that it would be very wise to prepare our paid and volunteer staffs in our local churches with the education that will allow them to

more effectively recognize predators and perhaps prevent the harming of young worshipers?

From the count of actual claims being brought against churches and schools in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, there are a number of children each year who have encounters with sexual predators. Either the numbers of events that are occurring per year are increasing, or victims and their families are becoming more inclined to report the encounter to the authorities. There may still be some in the church that resist the thought that in most jurisdictions it is the law that sexual abuse of a minor must be reported to the local government (police or social services). Mandatory reporting by our churches happens most of the time when it should happen.

A good way to approach the mindset that seeks to prevent sexual abuse and protect the children would be by educating three different groups in a nearly simultaneous and overlapping fashion. First the local church leaders would have to be educated. This would target not only the paid leaders, but also the volunteers that deal with church management or with the children's programming. They need to recognize that there is a sexual abuse problem throughout society in general and even specifically within the Seventh-day Adventist community. Education is a resource that can be an effective measure to help the local church better protect the children. When this administrative group buys in to the concept they can create a consciousness throughout the church that will empower the other two types of educational programs.

The second type of educational materials would be targeted to the parents of the children in the church to share



with them ways to better protect their children and to help the children recognize behaviors that they should not allow. The families should be the primary place for children to learn about the beautiful, God-given gift of sex and how it has been perverted in this sinful world. However, it is possible to provide programmed teaching packets and visual aids for the parents to use with their children in such a way that both the parents and the children learn survival skills in this area of life.

The final educational thrust would be aimed at directly helping the children themselves understand the difference between a good and bad touch. They also need to know what their best options could be when they are faced with a potential sexual abuse situation. This is a fallback way to help the children if their

parents are too busy, too unengaged in the usual childrearing responsibilities or are otherwise unable to talk about this topic. Some of the same teaching packets discussed in the above family education paragraph may be useful here also. The object is to create awareness so that children will not be tricked by a sophisticated predator. There may need to be some parental authorization for this direct training of the children.

Unfortunately, the above three-way educational thrust has not yet been produced for use by ARM. It is under consideration and may be produced by December 2007, if similar, already developed products cannot be located.

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## Risky Business

By John J. Dougan, ARM, ALCM



“Yes, we allow sex of-fenders membership. We just have a few con-ditions here that need to be met.”





## Internet Addiction Disorder

**M**ore than 160 million Americans are regular Internet users. According to researchers from Stanford University, over 1 in 8 adults may have signs of Internet addiction. The issue of Internet addiction is starting to be recognized as a legitimate object of clinical attention, as well as an economic problem, given that a great deal of non-essential Internet use takes place at work.

### Description

The typical Internet addict is male, white, has a college education, and is in his 30's. He spends over 30 hours each week on the computer for non-essential use. The American Psychiatric Association may include Internet addiction in its next guidebook, while experts debate whether the issue constitutes a psychological problem. Internet Addiction Disorder (IAD) is a theorized disorder coined by Ivan Goldberg, M.D. in 1995.

- Some experts believe the problem is a disorder and not a true addiction. Addiction is defined as a compulsive physiological need for and use of a habit-forming substance. According to one researcher who focuses on Internet communities, addiction is impossible because the Internet is an environment and the problem lies with the Internet user's priorities.
- Some mental health professionals recognize Internet addiction as a disorder. They are treating it as a dependency that can be as destructive as alcoholism and drug addiction.

### Symptoms & Consequences

Internet Addiction Disorder (IAD) is characterized by seven basic diagnostic criteria. These include increasing tolerance of long online hours, withdrawal, and

unsuccessful efforts to control Internet use. Other signs of addiction can include compulsive checking of e-mail and chat rooms, as well as habitually looking on web pages.

- The Internet has properties that, for some individuals, promote addictive behaviors and pseudo-intimate, interpersonal relationships. Many are suffering the consequences of obsession with the online world. They are unable to control gaming, sexual and shopping behaviors. As a result, they miss meals/sleep, have lowered grades, incur debt, suffer job loss and increase isolation.
- Alcoholics Anonymous is considering setting up a separate division of their organization to work with people addicted to browsing the Internet. Research has found that many use the Internet to escape a negative mood, much in the same way that alcoholics might, as a way to self-medicate. According to one study, eight percent are so obsessed they hide their habits from their partners; 14 percent find it hard to abstain from Internet use for several days. Over percent said the Internet was a means of escape from the real world.
- Online marital infidelity (cybersex) can lead to divorce and harm personal relationships. Individuals who seek out sexual partners online also appear to be at higher risk for sexually-transmitted diseases. Such behaviors can lead to cyber sexual addiction. Previous studies

have reported that approximately nine million people (15 percent of Internet users) accessed a top adult Web site in a one-month period.

- Web sites such as *MySpace* and *Facebook* are reputed to occupy users for periods in excess of five hours. In March 2005, a government clinic for Internet addiction was opened at the Beijing Military Region Central Hospital in People's Republic of China. It treats patients, mostly youths between the age of 14 to 24, who suffer from anxiety, depression, and lack of sleep, often due to long hours online. Treatments include counseling, physical activity, and enforcement of strict regular sleeping patterns.

*Sources: Medical News Today, Stanford School of Medicine, Perspectives in Psychiatric Care, New Scientist Tech, Wikipedia, Physorg, University of Albany - Dept. of Psychotechnology, and Washington and Shady Grove Adventist Hospitals.*

*The Health Tip of the Week is for educational purposes only. For additional information, consult your physician. Please feel free to copy and distribute this health resource.*



## Women's Health Series: Coffee Drinks

Coffee Drinks Can Pack on the Pounds. According to a clinical dietician with the University of Washington in Seattle, many people don't count the calories they drink and some coffee drinks might be the difference between losing half a pound per week or not.

Having one large coffee frappuccino is almost like drinking two McDonald's Quarter Pounder burgers, according to a study by the Center for Science in the Public Interest. A 24-ounce double chocolate chip frappuccino blended drink with whipped cream has, on average, 750 calories, 28 grams of fat, and 111 carbohydrates. Drinking a Starbucks Caffé Mocha has been compared to sipping a Quarter Pounder with Cheese through a straw. Both have about 500 calories.

Depending on the kind of milk and ingredients used, a large latte can contain from 250 calories to as many as 570 calories.

- A Dunkin' Donuts Mocha Almond Hot Latte (16 oz) has 464 calories, 16 grams of fat, 73 carbohydrates, and 72 grams of sugar.
- A Starbucks Java Chip Frappuccino contains 650 calories and 25 grams of fat. That's similar to a regular coffee with 11 creamers and 29 packets of sugar.

### Some information on 16-ounce "grande" drinks at Starbucks:

- Vanilla latte with whole milk – 280 calories, 10 grams of fat
- Mocha with low-fat milk and whipped cream – 302 calories, 16 grams of fat
- Caffé Americano – 16 calories
- Latte with low-fat milk – 210 calories, 6 grams of fat
- Strawberries & Crème Frappuccino with whipped cream – 600 calories,

- 17 grams of fat
- Chai latte with nonfat milk – 230 calories, 0 grams of fat
- Cappuccino with low-fat milk – 135 calories
- Light Caramel Frappuccino without whipped cream – 180 calories, 1.5 grams of fat
- Caffé au Lait with whole milk – 145 calories

*If you have a non-fat cappuccino and a biscotti for breakfast instead of a 24-ounce mocha latte and scone, you could lose 20 pounds over the coming year.*

- Large muffins and scones can have around 500 calories. A biscotti contains about 100 calories.
- Coffee in its purest form has no fat and no calories.
- Two tablespoons of flavored nondairy creamer adds 80 calories and 4 grams of fat
- One tablespoon of half-and-half has 20



calories, 2 grams of fat

- Two tablespoons of flavored syrup adds 80 calories, no fat
- One teaspoon of sugar is 15 calories
- Whipped cream can add about 120 calories and from 7-12 grams of fat

Sources: CDC, Center for Science in the Public Interest, Women's Health, Newstarget, KOMO TV, HealthAtoZ, Mayo Clinic, WebMD, and Washington and Shady Grove Adventist Hospitals. The Women's Fact Sheet of the Month is for educational purposes only. For additional information, consult your physician. Please feel free to copy and distribute this health resource.



### Berry Applesauce

Makes 2 cups

Serve this applesauce hot or cold.

#### Ingredients:

- 2 cups peeled, cored and chopped apples
- 2 cups strawberries, blueberries or raspberries, fresh or frozen (unsweetened)

- ½ cup frozen concentrate or ¾ cup fruit juice, such as apple, grape, or pomegranate
- Cinnamon

#### Directions:

In a medium-sized saucepan combine all ingredients. Bring to a simmer. Cover and cook over very low heat for about 25 minutes, or until apples are tender when pierced with a fork. Mash lightly or puree in a food processor, if desired. Sprinkle with cinnamon to serve. Serve over soy vanilla ice cream (optional).

The Cancer Project  
Recipe adapted from *Foods That Fight Pain* by Neal Barnard, M.D.; recipe by Jennifer Raymond





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**OCTOBER 31-NOVEMBER 1, 2007**

A North American Division pre-meeting  
"One Church, One Mission"

Sponsored by Adventist Risk Management, Inc.

*one* CHURCH,

Neal Wilson Auditorium  
Columbia Union Conference  
5427 Twin Knolls Drive  
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This is our 4th year of collaborating with the North American Division in sponsoring the annual meeting for church executives. We welcome you again to Maryland. Join us for a day-and-a-half meeting discussing issues relating to your role as a leader in the Seventh-day Adventist Church and issues affecting your organization.

Special dinner is planned for October 31, bring your spouse or a guest.

**RSVP BY FRIDAY, OCTOBER 12**  
301-680-6806, Gwen Ashley.

*one* MISSION.