

Creating Healthy Cultures & Understanding Spiritual Abuse



Creating safer places. Together.

Welcome to the Thirtyone:eight Creating Healthy Cultures and Understanding Spiritual Abuse course. This handbook is designed to accompany the course and contains additional knowledge related to the course content and the case scenarios we will be using. You will also find questions to help you think through and contextualise the course for your church/organisation's unique context. Finally, we've prepared a list of relevant resources and organisations in the Signposting section that you might find useful to refer to beyond this training.

We encourage peer learning and co-production of knowledge throughout the webinar. This kind of dialogue is not only a trait of healthy cultures, but in fact training on this topic was developed because of conversations: As a Safeguarding organisation supporting faith communities with experiences of abuse, we would see examples of harmful cultures in faith communities. Our interaction with survivors/victims led to research, and the voices we heard there strongly advocated for training. Our knowledge only grows with continued conversations (and ongoing research/integration of new legislation), so do feel free to add your voice during the sessions.

We are looking forward to supporting you on your journey of creating a healthier culture for your organisation and for supporting those who may have experienced spiritual abuse.

The Thirtyone:eight team

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Course Outcomes

- 1) To understand what healthy cultures look like and that these are the opposite extreme to spiritually abusive behaviours.
- 2) Build an understanding of the roles that people, policies and practices play in creating, reinforcing, or contesting cultures.
- 3) To consider how a healthy culture can be preventative and restorative.
- 4) To understand what spiritual abuse is and its impacts.
- 5) To know how to respond well.
- 6) To understand how openness, awareness and processes support healthy cultures.

A Spectrum of Behaviour

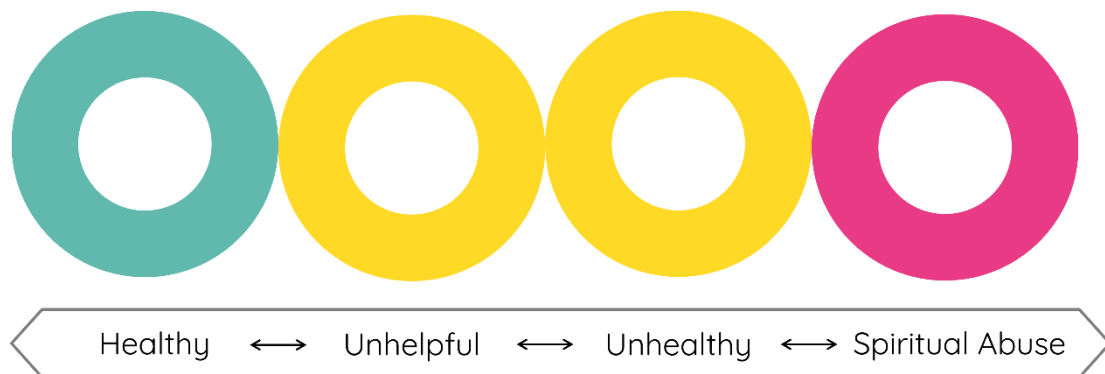


Illustration developed by Lisa Oakley, Professor of Safeguarding and Knowledge Exchange at University of Chester.

The behaviours we see normalised in our organisation's cultures can be reimagined on a scale.

Healthy: Good, nurturing behaviour in which people flourish and grow.

Unhelpful: Reactions/behaviour that is not harmful but not helpful. We all behave in this way at times.

Unhealthy: If/when we see a consistent pattern of behaviour that is negative, where we check ourselves before approaching that person and where they are not open to questions. Much of behaviour that concerns us sits here. It can still be addressed at this stage.

Spiritual Abuse: If it becomes a persistent pattern of coercive controlling behaviour that reflects the definition of psychological abuse*

*Psychological Abuse: The regular and deliberate use of a range of words and non-physical actions used with the purpose to manipulate, hurt, weaken or frighten a person mentally and emotionally; and/or distort, confuse or influence a person's thoughts and actions within their everyday lives, changing their sense of self and harming their wellbeing. ([Women's Aid, 2023](#))

Six Components of Healthy Culture – Self Audit

	Healthy	Unhelpful	Unhealthy	Harmful
Establish good governance				
Listen well				
Build effective structures				
Manage power				
Model safe behaviours				
Communicate well				

What does good governance look like?

- Procedures and the expectations on people are clear, consistent, and easy to understand.
- Control within the organisation is not coercive, and the difference between demands and requests is clear
- When dealing with complex situations, organisations willingly seeks impartial advice from outside.
- The behaviours shown by our leaders and others within our organisation are not rigid, dogmatic, or controlling.
- People are given genuine freedom to make choices for themselves about matters that affect their lives

What does listening well look like?

- Stories being told by people **outside** the organisation are mostly positive.
- Stories being told by people **inside** the organisation are mostly positive.
- There's an awareness of what negative stories might be being told about the organisation.
- The organisation has a culture that welcomes feedback and encourages open discussion about these stories.
- The organisation has a culture that encourages people to be humble in the way we respond to issues and learn from them.

What does building effective structures look like?

- The structures in the organisation help to develop and maintain safer, healthier cultures and practices.
- People are clear about what our organisation is trying to achieve with its structure and that leadership is exercised safely.
- The leadership structure has processes in place that encourage and invite challenge, scrutiny and accountability.
- The way the organisation's structure works displays and develops safer, healthier culture.
- Everyone with responsibility is offered an appropriate level of support e.g. through supervision, personal development, coaching/mentoring, etc.

What does managing power look like?

- In the organisation decisions are made in a way that includes and welcomes the input of others
- The leaders model humility and respect. They challenge any behaviours and attitudes which don't value and treat people equally.
- In the organisation people can be seen displaying safe and healthy attitudes, values, and behaviours.
- The organisation can identify the places where power dynamics could create unhelpful or harmful imbalances and people feel able to talk about this openly.
- Individuals feel they could challenge the development of authoritarian or dictatorial power dynamics in the organisation's leadership.

What does modelling safe behaviours look like?

- The organisation is committed to being transparent and clearly communicates what behaviours are acceptable and permissible.
- The organisation welcomes feedback on practices and ways of working from people who are new.
- The organisation welcomes feedback on practices and ways of working from people who are long-standing members.
- The routines and rituals are kept under review and reflect a safer, healthier culture.

- The routines and rituals consider how they might affect people who may be vulnerable.

What does communicating well look like?

- The organisation communicates messages that support all in developing and maintaining a safer culture.
- The organisation clearly communicates what a safe place looks like, so everybody understands what's expected of them and others.
- A commitment to being a safer place is an important part of the organisation's identity
- People are clear about where accountability lies and that it is used to encourage personal value and equality
- The organisation actively welcomes people who are broken, wounded and vulnerable providing them with a safe place.

Overview: Of the 6 components...

- **Which is your strongest?**
- **Which is weakest?**
- **Are any unhealthy or harmful?**

Case Study: the nine O'clock service, Sheffield

Article 1:

'Sex cult' leaves 150 in need of counselling Church of England scandal: Followers of the suspended Nine O'Clock Service left 'traumatised' by group's radical methods.

John McKie, Andrew Brown. Tuesday 22 August 1995 23:02

As many as 150 former members of the radical Anglican group, the Nine O'Clock Service, still in Sheffield are receiving counselling following the group's suspension by the Bishop of Sheffield, the Rt Rev David Lunn.

The priest at the centre of the scandal, the Rev Chris Brain, had attracted 400 followers to the Nine O'Clock Service since 1986. The mostly young following came from all walks of life and gave up time, money and, in some cases, their jobs to help further the movement.

But last week the Bishop of Sheffield received complaints about the group's leadership methods. The priest is alleged to have told members how to run their lives and influenced their choice of friends.

Mr Brain, 38, who has a wife and five-year-old daughter, has admitted to church officials that he "enjoyed sexual favours" from as many as 20 of his female followers. He is now receiving counselling at a "safe house" provided by the Sheffield church hierarchy.

The Rev Paddy Mallon, a former colleague, said: "Many members have left the Sheffield area because they were so traumatised by the whole situation. As many as 150 are now receiving counselling elsewhere as far as I know.

"Those who didn't know about the abuse are completely gobsmacked by the whole situation and can't believe they've been let down. We are talking about people who had chucked in their careers to be part of this movement."

The services that the group produced were often surprisingly reflective, according to the Rev John David, a former curate at St Thomas's.

"You might have thought you were going into a Roman Catholic Mass, or a Greek Orthodox service," he said. "They would use Greek Orthodox chants and over that the ambient music of the modern era.

"Then you would notice you were in a whole new world of visual aids and television screens. These would show images: perhaps a crucifix disappearing into the distance, or simply clouds passing."

Mr Mallon, whose Baptist congregation shares St Thomas's with the Anglican congregation, was more impressed. "They started off with something like 40 people and in the first 21 months there were 150 converts, mostly from a non-church background which is impressive," he said. "I suspect, though, that like all guru-type figures Chris began to believe the publicity around him."

The Rev Mike Breen, 38, team rector of St Thomas's, said yesterday: "The service probably became more radicalised as time went on and it distanced itself more from what we would describe as biblical orthodox Christianity."

Mr Davis remains optimistic about the experiment. "It was something which I am sure was of God, even if something has gone wrong in the middle. I am sure that it helped a lot of urban youth in Sheffield to get some glimpse of God; and then it all went wrong in a personality cult," he said.

(Source: Independent, Online, 1995)

Article 2:

Nine O'Clock Service survivors approach Bishop of Sheffield. July 2021

THE Church of England is facing possible compensation claims from former members of a rave-culture style Evangelical movement that collapsed in the 1990s amid claims of sexual and mental abuse.

At the time, the Nine O'Clock Service (NOS), based on a 1980s lights-and-music nightclub theme, attracted hundreds of young people to its meetings in Sheffield and was seen by church leaders as a revolutionary way to reach a new generation of worshippers. Spin-off projects were launched in other big cities, but it all ended when the founder, the Revd Chris Brain, then 37, was accused of abuse and exploitation.

This week, in a statement, the Bishop of Sheffield, Dr Pete Wilcox, said: "We can confirm that a group of survivors of the appalling conduct at the Nine O'clock Service in the diocese of Sheffield, which originally surfaced in the 1990s, have contacted the Church of England. Their concerns and harrowing testimonies are being taken very seriously, and there is of course a limit to what we can say while that process continues. Support is being offered, and the Church is working closely with the statutory authorities.

"We utterly deplore the abuse which occurred in this diocese at that time, and remain committed both to working with survivors to address their needs, and to ensuring that the diocese of Sheffield is a safe place for all."

One told *The Times*: “People have been silent for a long time and it has caused them huge distress and trauma. The Church told them at the time that they should keep silent, don’t talk about it, the press will destroy you. I think after the #MeToo movement people felt enough is enough, and they made a decision to come forward.”

Another, in a YouTube interview, said: “I am very angry about what he has done to all my friends. It is abominable, it is unspeakable. The pain that people are experiencing is unspeakable, it won’t ever be able to be spoken – the depths of it – ever.”

Richard Scorer, a specialist abuse lawyer acting for former NOS members, said that the Church of England “has a moral and legal responsibility to those harmed by abuse in the Nine O’Clock Service, and it must honour that and ensure that the appalling harm suffered by victims is properly acknowledged. It also needs to learn the right lessons and ensure that those in religious authority are held fully accountable.”

In the 1980s, Mr Brain was the front man of an electro-pop band, Present Tense. He persuaded the Church in Sheffield, where he lived, to let him use St Thomas’s, a large Evangelical church in the district of Crookes, for a new style of worship: a radical mix of rave culture, social and environmental campaigning, and religion. It took its name from the only time-slot that the church had available. Hundreds of followers, dressed in trademark black, attended its gatherings.

In 1990, the Archbishop of Canterbury-elect, Dr George Carey, met Mr Brain to discuss his methods. Brain was fast-tracked for ordination in 1992, and the Church and NOS members provided substantial amounts of cash to support it. At the time, the Bishop of Sheffield, the Rt Revd David Lunn, said that NOS had a “permanent significance”, and was a “new development in the way we understand the Christian religion”.

In 1995, however, a scandal broke when three whistleblowers came forward with allegations of cult-like manipulation, including cutting followers off from their families, and reports that Mr Brain’s entourage included a group of “postmodern nuns”, who wore black Lycra miniskirts and whose tasks ranged from housekeeping duties to “putting him to bed” at night.

Later that year, in a BBC interview, he admitted that he had been “involved in improper sexual conduct with a number of women”. One member told the programme: “He would talk about how we were discovering a postmodern definition of sexuality in the Church. It’s just language – language covering up the fact of what was really going on: one bloke getting his rocks off.” Now aged 63, Mr Brain uses James as his first name, and runs a design consultancy in Manchester.

In a Sunday newspaper interview in 1995, he said that the sexual contact that he had with women followers was “heavy petting” but “non-penetrative”. His “Homebase Team” had been created to help his wife at home because he was busy with his work. He said: “It was like any other vicarage: you always get ladies helping the vicar’s wife. They set up a rota, but the idea of handmaidens is ridiculous.”

(Source: Church Times, online, 2021)

Article 3:

Two arrested on suspicion of sexual offences at Nine O’Clock Service. August 2022

POLICE have arrested two people who were involved with the Nine O’Clock Service (NOS), a rave-culture style Evangelical initiative that attracted scores of young worshippers in Sheffield during the 1980s and 1990s.

South Yorkshire Police confirmed on Thursday that a man and a woman had been arrested on suspicion of sexual offences, alleged to have taken place in Sheffield between 1980 and 1995. They have since been released under investigation pending further inquiries.

At its inception, NOS was lauded as a breakthrough in bringing young people to faith. Lord Carey, then Archbishop of Canterbury, was among senior clerics who supported its blend of Evangelical Christianity, social and environmental campaigns, and rave culture. Its founder, a rock musician, Chris Brain, was fast-tracked for ordination.

But, in 1992, there were protests when dancers in bikinis performed suggestive routines at a Christian festival, and, in 1995, it was shut down when Mr Brain was accused of abuse and exploitation. He has always denied the accusations.

Last summer, police launched a criminal investigation into claims by former NOS members that they had been sexually assaulted. Detectives have since interviewed dozens of people and several have launched civil claims against the diocese of Sheffield. The Church is providing counselling for some former members.

Richard Scorer, a specialist abuse lawyer at Slater & Gordon in Manchester, who represents some of the alleged victims, said: “It is imperative that all allegations arising from the Nine O’Clock Service are thoroughly investigated. My clients are aware of the police investigation and are co-operating fully with it.”

A statement from Sheffield diocese, issued on Thursday, said: “We continue to work with the investigation and won’t be commenting further at this time.” It has promised a further investigation once the legal process is completed.

The Bishop of Sheffield, Dr Pete Wilcox, said last year that survivors had told of “appalling conduct” (News, 23 July 2021). “We remain committed to working with survivors to address their needs, and to ensuring that the diocese of Sheffield is a safe place,” he said.

(Source: Church Times, online, Aug 2022)

For now, putting aside the sexually exploitative element of the situation, and focusing on healthy cultures vs. spiritual abuse:

- **What can you identify as positive cultures in this situation?**
- **What were the harmful and abusive traits?**
- **How did the 'myth of homogeneity' contribute to the issues going unaddressed?**

Poll #1 - Same or Different?

Think about the last 3 books you've read/TV programmes you've watched.

Is the author or main character the same or different:

- Ethnicity?
- Age?
- Culture?
- Religion?
- Income level?

Aside from books and TV programmes, what other ways can we increase our ability to 'hear' voices different from our own?

Breakout Room - Marriage

You have someone who is a part of your church who's having difficulties in their marriage. The husband used to come to the church but has stopped coming as he does not believe in women in leadership, and he has been pressuring his wife to leave, saying the woman's role is to submit to her husband. He has not attended church for a while now. It is causing challenges in their marriage, and it is affecting her mental well-being.

He is not letting her go to bed to sleep until she agrees with him.

There are three children 8, 6 and 1 year of age.

There doesn't seem to be any physical or financial abuse.

Questions to guide your discussion:

- What people are/should be involved in this situation?
- Where are the areas for potential harm?
- How might religious and legal considerations overlap?
- What policies may guide decision making?
- What practices might help facilitate healthy cultures for the woman experiencing domestic abuse?

Poll #2 – Sense of Safety

Do you feel [psychologically] safe enough to question problematic behaviours and attitudes soon enough to prevent harm occurring?

- Yes
- No
- Depends on the situation
- Depends on the leaders/individuals involved

Key Characteristics of Spiritual Abuse

The whole experience is one of coercion and control and there are some key features which can act as indicators.

Use of scripture to coerce and control

Teaching and challenging through scripture is part of the Christian journey. However, it would become concerning if scripture was being used to coerce and control rather than guide. It should be used for the development and nurture of the person receiving the teaching/scripture, rather than to fulfil the agenda of the person sharing. There are key biblical messages such as unity and submission which can be misused to coerce and control.

Enforced Accountability

Accountability can be a positive element of the Christian life. However, where people feel forced into being accountable this would give rise to concern. Obviously, there may be times when accountability is essential (for example where there is a safeguarding agreement in place). However, generally individuals should be able to exercise consent and set boundaries around accountability.

Manipulation and Exploitation

Manipulation and exploitation are hallmarks of spiritual abuse. Often people feel under pressure in a variety of ways and feel that they must conform to increasing expectations of others. These requests often involve excessive service, presence at all meetings etc. Conformity can be suggested to be a measure of how much an individual loves God or how healthy their spiritual life is. In a coercive controlling culture often only service inside of Church is valued.

Censorship

Censorship is a hallmark of spiritual abuse. There are several ways communication is censored. One way is pressurising people to be silent if they disagree or raise concerns about harmful behaviour. Information is often carefully controlled ensuring a position of power for the abuser. It is often difficult to ask questions, to disagree or raise concerns without being accused of causing division or being difficult. Decision making may be censored in that it may be presented as a team decision but in reality, it is being made by one or a few individuals with everyone else expected to agree.

Requirement for Blind Obedience

There can be a requirement for blind obedience to the abuser. This obedience can be equated to the individual's obedience and love for God. An individual can feel pressured into submitting to requests that they do not wish to. They may fear the abuser or fear what God might think of them if they don't.

Use of 'divine' calling to coerce

In some cases, an individual may use their 'divine calling' to put pressure on others to conform or obey. There can be a suggestion that 'God put me here and you can't disagree with me'. It is important to note that many believe that people are called and anointed for different roles. However, it is when this calling is used to coerce and control others and where the suggestion is to disagree is almost like disagreeing with God, that there should be concern.

Exclusion and Isolation

Exclusion and isolation are used as a form of punishment either for disobedience or non-conformity. An individual might find themselves isolated within the Church. There is also external isolation sometimes where people are discouraged from mixing with other Churches or those outside of the relationship or culture.

Public Shaming and Humiliation

Some people will experience public shame to rebuke them. This can be really damaging and often leaves the individual unable to challenge back.

Case Study:

Can you offer advice on how we could proceed, please? A friend and I raised concerns re: a member of staff's behaviour at our group.

This was based around bullying-type behaviours to manipulate an outcome and included false accusations. Our concerns, raised to the leader in January, were ignored. In December, we received a letter from the leader and board, claiming that we had made the accusations verbally, in emails to the perpetrator and others, and we were excluded from all group activities.

We disputed this and requested evidence to support these false accusations - there will not be any - but the situation hasn't changed, and it has been suggested we leave our faith community. Our situation has reached the denominational leaders who have issued a mandate to our area leaders to investigate 'thoroughly and fairly to our satisfaction', but we're still waiting.

Our Church family are unaware of our plight, and we can't speak openly about it. The situation is taking its toll emotionally on both of us.

Who are the perpetrators?

When does it become harmful?

Is this spiritual abuse, psychological abuse or neither?

Breakout Room - Finance

How should we manage teaching, guidance, and policies around *financial giving** within our charities and faith communities?



* You can interchange this topic with dating, or attendance at events, or parenting styles.

Personal story – Abuse survivor



- Listen to the personal story and consider the impacts of spiritual abuse on an individual.

I am a spiritual abuse survivor.

That six-word sentence is very hard for me to say. When my therapist asked me to write that down on my paper, I didn't know the wave of emotions those six words would have on me. Am I really, truly a spiritual abuse survivor? That sounds so serious. So big. I struggle to grasp it. Sure, abuse can be physical, emotional, and verbal. I get that. But spiritual? That sounds pathetic.

Yet, here I am. I can hardly sit through a church service without breaking down crying. My shoulders and neck often ache when I leave the service because I have sat so tense. In almost every service, I get a strong feeling to run. Run outside to get some fresh air because I can't breathe. But I will myself to stay in my seat. I know it's ridiculous and I tell myself to stop – that I'm being over dramatic and stupid. But I can't stop. No matter how hard I try.

I leave the service feeling exhausted. Confused. Conflicted.

Is this church ok? How can they be when they are not the traditional setting I'm used to? I've been warned my entire life about churches like this. I think of the pastors and leaders on the platform. What are they hiding? If I give them my heart and support their ministry, when will I get hurt again? Not if, but when. I don't think I can take another rejection. I don't think I can pour my all into a church and people, only to have them throw me away when I have questions. To disown me like I've never existed. I contemplate whether I even want to go to church anymore. I am so tired.

I have served in every way you can imagine, I have served my entire life. Cleaning church buildings, doing church laundry, teaching many Sunday Schools, decorating rooms, playing musical instruments, being in church productions, helping plan services, using my artistic abilities, being a Children's Director, working in the nursery, and more. And what do I have to show for it? I have been rejected by almost everyone I've known in church. I can count on one hand the church people, outside of family, who have stayed in contact with me on a regular basis. Less than 5 church people after 30 years. Sound devastating? You're absolutely right.

My pastor would scream about hell and about us missing the rapture because we had a head knowledge of salvation and not a heart knowledge. “What a shame to miss heaven by 18 inches.” he would say.

I would be terrified. I would go to the altar and silently beg God to forgive me. To please not leave me after the rapture. I would wake up some nights and think that I was left behind. That God took my family to heaven and not me.

“God doesn’t play around,” he’d say. “You’re either all in or all out.” I revered this man. I thought of him and his family so highly that I honestly couldn’t imagine that they would ever have to go to the bathroom. How could people so perfect and close to God have such vile things come out of their bodies? Brainwashed? You betcha.

It was never enough. The rules list was so long. It’s sad to think that the more they yelled, belittled and guilt tripped me, the better I thought the church was. We recently left. Why? Because it became very abusive.

No matter how much we did, it was never enough. Never enough serving. Never enough money given. I was called awful names. We were shunned.

They all deserted me. Like I’d never existed. People who I did life with. People who I babysat for. People who I visited in the hospital and bought gifts for. People I comforted and cried with. People who I had given my whole heart to. When we left, one of the pastors looked us square in the eyes and told us that the church would be able to see how spiritually [im]mature we were if they heard we told anyone why we left.

The church has always been my identity – and I’ve lost it. So here I am. Standing with broken pieces of my heart scattered around me. I have no church home. My family has no church home.

For the first time in my life, I am not serving in a church and I feel so guilty. I wonder if God’s going to punish me. I hurt. The church has left me with gaping wounds. Huge, horrific, deadly wounds. I am sometimes amazed that I still go to church. “The church is a hospital for the wounded,” I’ve heard. I disagree with that. In my experience, the church shoots their wounded. They beat you to a bloody pulp with their expectations, demands of service and unspoken rules, and as you lay there bleeding, they kick you and tell you to get up and keep going. They say, “Real Christians serve even when it hurts. Who are you serving – people or God? You need to give your all.”

Right now, I don’t have anything more to give.

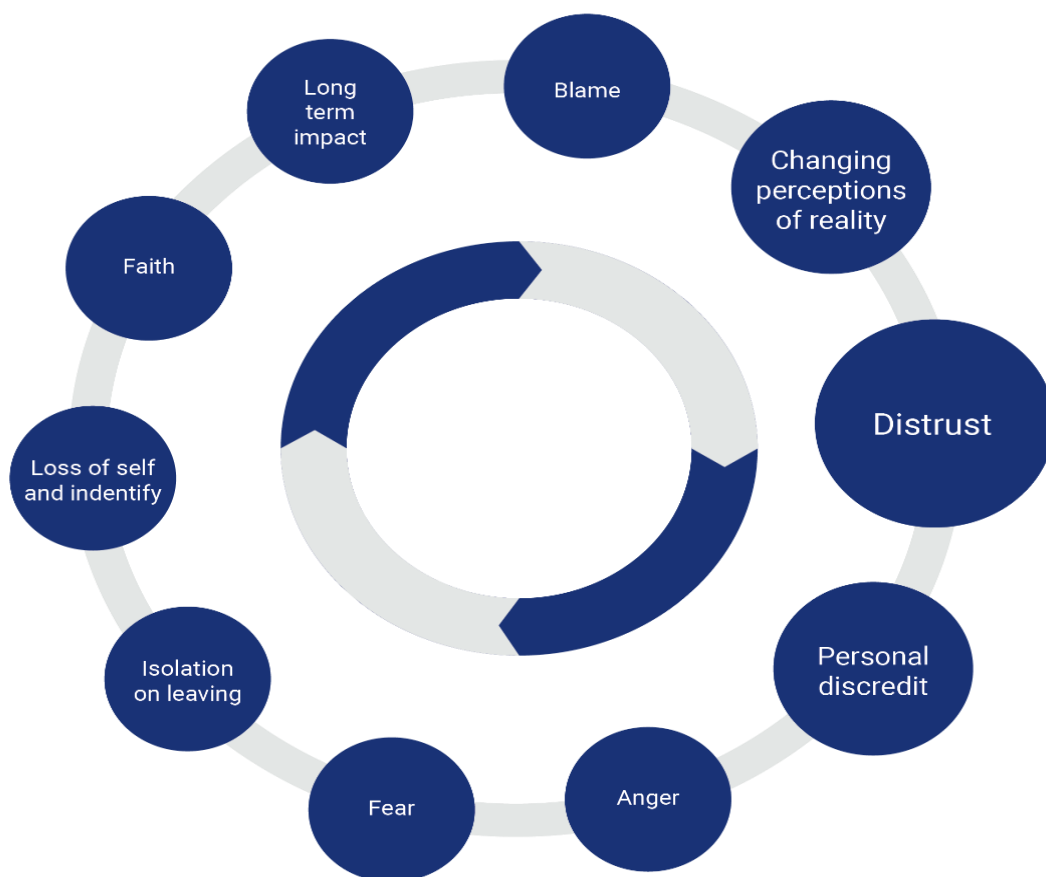
Right now, the only I can do is will myself to stay in my seat and not run out of the door on Sunday morning.

Yes, I am a spiritual abuse survivor.

(Source: [A survivor shares her personal story](#) [shortened], online, 2023)

Impacts of Spiritual Abuse

- The diagram below illustrates some of the impacts of this experience and is based upon an analysis of stories of those who have experienced spiritual abuse.



Oakley & Kinmond, 2013.

Distrust

After this experience many people find trusting others very difficult. They feel they were unsafe in what should have been a safe place. So now they are unsure of who they can trust. Distrust is the most reported response to spiritual abuse. This can make pastoral care and counselling challenging. It can also make it difficult for people to attend or stay at a new Church.

Loss of Self and Identity

This experience often impacts on self and identity. For many people, their Christian faith is central to who they are. A damaging experience involving their faith often impacts their sense of what they believe, and who they are. Also, people may lose their roles in Church or a Christian organisation. Again, this may impact on who they now see themselves to be. It may take time to rebuild. It is important to understand this when interacting with someone who has had this experience.

Powerlessness and Fear

Common responses to any experience of abuse are feeling powerless and afraid. This is also the case after experiencing coercive control. Individuals may well have been expected to rely on their abuser for decision-making and opinions. Therefore, the period following this experience can be scary. Individuals may find decision making very difficult and worry that there is a 'correct' answer to any questions asked and they should ensure they give it. This is important to take into account when supporting a person through disclosures and referrals.

Anger and Self-blame

Many people will feel angry about what has happened, especially how God and faith have been used in their experience. Others will blame themselves for not noticing sooner what was really happening or for the way the perpetrator treated others.

Long-Term Impact

Many people report the long-term impact of spiritual abuse. This can be an impact in terms of faith and Church attendance (see later). It can also be an impact on their sense of self, relationships with others and feelings of safety. It is important to understand that unlike other forms of abuse there are very limited support groups for spiritual abuse currently. Therefore, many people will be working through experiences alone. In addition, as understandings are only now developing, many people may not know how to describe their experience or that it is abuse. It is suggested that as work in this area continues, non-recent disclosures may occur, as individuals understand their own experiences. All these factors are important to consider.

Faith and Church Attendance

One of the biggest impacts of spiritual abuse is on faith and Church attendance. This whole experience is rooted in faith, a religious context and the use of scripture. Therefore, for many people there will be a direct impact on their faith. They may be unsure of what, if anything, they believe. They may also be extremely fearful or reluctant to engage with Church or Christian organisations again.

It is important to understand this when listening to a disclosure or supporting someone after an experience. Those who continue with faith often find this a difficult journey. This needs to be recognised and not judged.

Activity - Discussion



Are the responses helpful or unhelpful?

Below is a list of responses to a disclosure of spiritual abuse. Consider each one and tick whether you think it is helpful or unhelpful.

STATEMENT	Helpful	Unhelpful
1. I am taking this seriously		
2. I believe what you are saying		
3. I will keep this confidential		
4. Can I pray with you?		
5. I want to show you some bible verses which may help		
6. I think you should use the Matthew 18 principle and go and speak directly to the person		
7. The best place for support is your church leader		
8. The best place for support is your family and friends		
9. I am going to need to speak to the safeguarding officer		

Poll #3 - Openness

Are you open to hearing negative feedback about yourself or your organisation?

- Yes
- No
- Depends on the situation
- Depends on the people involved



Do you have a 'Roger Black' (a trusted friend who can bring challenge) in your life?

- Yes
- No
- No, but hope to

The UK Charity Regulators

There are three Charity Regulators in the UK. They are independent, non-ministerial government departments who are accountable to the relevant government. The Charity Commission for England and Wales has jurisdiction in England and Wales (accountable to Westminster), the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland has jurisdiction in Northern Ireland (accountable to Stormont) and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator has jurisdiction in Scotland (accountable to Holyrood).

Charity Commission for England and Wales – [About us – The Charity Commission – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Charity Commission for Northern Ireland [Home | The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland \(charitycommissionni.org.uk\)](#)

Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator [OSCR | Home](#)

Signposting

Please note: These links are accurate at the time of course preparation. Thirtyone:eight don't recommend organisations but you may find these links useful when signposting people for support and guidance.

Support Organisations/professionals

Association of Christian Counsellors (ACC) <https://www.acc-uk.org>

British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)
<https://www.bacp.co.uk>

Dr Kathryn Kinmond, www.counselling-directory.org.uk/counsellors/kathryn-kinmond

Minister & Clergy Sexual Abuse Service (MACSAS) <http://www.macsas.org.uk>

National Association for People Abused in Childhood (NAPAC) <https://napac.org.uk>

Replenished Life [Home - Replenished](#)

Samaritans <https://www.samaritans.org> or by phone on 116 123

The Survivors Trust <https://www.thesurvivorstrust.org>

Managing low-level concerns:

Developing and implementing a low-level concerns policy: A guide for organisations which work with children

https://www.academia.edu/43695726/Developing_and_implementing_a_low_level_concerns_policy_A_guide_for_organisations_which_work_with_children

NSPCC, Responding to low-level concerns in education,

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/news/2021/october/responding-low-level-concerns-in-education>

Safeguarding: What Trusts need to know about managing low-level concerns

<https://trust-journal.org.uk/current-edition/safeguarding-what-trusts-need-to-know-about-managing-low-level-concerns/>

Safeguarding Children: dealing with low-level concerns about adults,
<https://www.farrer.co.uk/globalassets/news-articles/downloads/low-level-concerns-article---may-2017-final-version-.pdf>

Further reading and learning on this topic:

A church called Tov, [book], Laura Barringer and Scot McKnight

Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes, [book], E. Randolph Richards and Brandon J. O'Brien

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2010). *Persistent Fear and Anxiety Can Affect Young Children's Learning and Development: Working Paper No. 9*. Retrieved from www.developingchild.harvard.edu.

Rise and Fall of the Nine O'Clock Service, [book], Roland Howard

Safer, Healthier Leadership, [resources], <https://thirtyoneeight.org/saferleadership>

The Fearless Organisation, [book], Amy C. Edmondson

The rise and fall of Mars Hill [podcast].
<https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/podcasts/rise-and-fall-of-mars-hill/>

Unjudge someone - The Human Library Organization <https://humanlibrary.org/>

Watching the English, [book], Kate Fox

When you faith (in the church, or its leaders) is shaken..., [article], Dr Kate Middleton
https://www.mindandsoulfoundation.org/Articles/662634/Mind_and_Soul/Articles/When_your_faith_in_the_church_or_its_leaders_is.aspx

Links commonly used throughout the webinar

Please note: As above, these links are accurate at the time of course preparation. Thirtyone:eight don't recommend organisations, but you may find these links useful when looking for support and guidance.

These are shared in the order they're likely to be mentioned during our webinar. Some of these are also included in our signposting section.

Session One:

[Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse](#)

[Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry](#)

[Developing and implementing a low-level concerns policy](#)

[NSPCC, Responding to low-level concerns in education](#)

[Safeguarding: What Trusts need to know about managing low-level concerns](#)

[Safeguarding Children: dealing with low-level concerns about adults](#)

[National Scientific Council on the Developing Child \(2010\). Persistent Fear and Anxiety Can Affect Young Children's Learning and Development: Working Paper No. 9.](#)

[Amy C. Edmondson, The Fearless Organisation](#)

[7 top tips: Safer, healthier culture \(thirtyoneeight.org\)](#)

[Escaping the Maze of Spiritual Abuse: Creating Healthy Christian Cultures by Dr Lisa Oakley and Justin Humphries](#)

['A church called Tov' by Laura Barringer and Scot McKnight](#)

[Independent lessons learned review – Emmanuel, Wimbledon \(2021\)](#)

[Human Library](#)

Session 2:

[Witch-hunts and ritual child abuse are a stain on Africa. We must confront them | Joan Nyanyuki | The Guardian](#)

[When your faith \(in the church, or its leaders\) is shaken article: Dr Kate Middleton](#)

[Domestic Abuse Act 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

[Domestic Abuse Scotland Act and Coercive Control](#)

[What is Spiritual Abuse? The National Domestic Violence Hotline](#)

[Spiritual Abuse Survey 2017 with Bournemouth University](#)

[Matthew 18:6 Meaning of If Anyone Causes One of These Little Ones to Stumble – ConnectUS \(connectusfund.org\)](#)

[Ireland publishes report on 'appalling' abuse at mother and baby homes | Ireland | The Guardian](#)

[Mother and Baby Homes Commission of Investigation Final Report 30 October 2020 Truth Project | IICSA Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse](#)

[The Charity Commission - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[OSCR | Home](#)

[Home | The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland \(charitycommissionni.org.uk\)](#)