

# What is the Advisory Panel Process?

Safe Church and Safe Church Classis Teams offer the Advisory Panel Process when allegations of abuse are brought by an adult against a church leader.

The process is to be followed when:

- a) the claimant is a legal adult (there is no statute of limitations, so alleged abuse may have taken place when claimant was a child or adolescent)
- b) the alleged abuse is physical, emotional or sexual in nature, and involves a CRC church leader.

The process is ecclesiastical in nature and does not prevent the claimant from taking criminal or civil action if deemed necessary.

The claimant may request a safe church advocate or may bring an advocate of his or her own choosing into the process. The advocate may be present at the panel hearing and when the report is presented to council. The advocate and the claimant are allowed to attend any subsequent ecclesiastical meetings where the allegations are discussed.

Members of the panel must be trained in the *Advisory Panel Process*. They may not be members of the congregation of either the accused or the claimant, nor may they have any ongoing affiliation with the accused or the claimant. Panel members will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement. The Advisory Panel Process guidelines should be followed closely to maintain the integrity of the process. They are designed with important safe safeguards for all parties.

For more information, complete guidelines, or consultation for all parties during an Advisory Panel Process, contact Safe Church ([crcna.org/safechurch](http://crcna.org/safechurch)).

## Flow Chart of the Advisory Panel Process

