

**Please note this excerpt was modified to remove items unrelated to the topic of Abuse of Power within this Agenda*

20. Addressing Abuse of Power—responses to Synod 2019 directives (see *Acts of Synod 2019*, pp. 794-99)

The COD provides the following as updates to the various decisions of Synod 2019 in its response to the Addressing the Abuse of Power report. We are pleased to report that many of the tasks are completed while some of the work is still in process, as noted.

- a. Training of pastors

The proposal for the training of pastors is under way by means of a group formed by the Ministries Leadership Council under the COD's direction. We anticipate that a final report and proposal will be presented to the COD in May to be forwarded to synod by way of the COD Supplement.

b. Code of Conduct

The COD recommends to synod, for adoption, the proposed Code of Conduct report (Appendix F) in response to the instruction of Synod 2019.

c. Training at classis and local levels

The directive for classes to develop training of officebearers to be alert to power dynamics and to monitor the training await development of strategies found elsewhere before bringing such strategies to classes. Safe Church Ministry is taking the lead in developing a resource toolkit for training officebearers and leaders, and Pastor Church Resources is helping to assess what we have and what we need for such a toolkit.

d. Counseling services

Classes were encouraged “to take measures to ensure that survivors of abuse within their classis have access to appropriate counseling services.” The COD encouraged its classis delegates to return to their classes with a reminder to ensure that counseling services for victims of abuse become a part of each classis budget.

e. Strengthening Safe Church Ministry

Safe Church Ministry is taking the lead to assess what we have and what we need to effectively respond to emotional abuse. The COD encouraged Safe Church Ministry to continue to explore the use of restorative practices in the church.

An ad hoc group has been appointed to address the instruction “to examine in detail the potential for conflicts of interest in current safe church procedures and to evaluate the need for and benefits of using outside experts to deal with situations that have a high potential for conflicts of interest.” The COD anticipates an update report in May.

f. Prevention of abuse in CRCNA offices

The ad hoc group appointed as mentioned in subpoint e above will also be bringing a report on the prevention of abuse in the CRCNA offices.

g. Policy on nondisclosure agreements

The development of a policy on nondisclosure agreements is under way by CRCNA staff.

h. Abuse prevention resources for culturally diverse churches

The strategy development of abuse prevention resources for culturally diverse churches will be addressed after earlier work is completed.

i. Recordkeeping

At its February 2020 meeting the COD received an initial report on the proposed system and policies of recordkeeping and anticipates a final report at the May meeting to forward to synod.

j. Creating a culture that prevents the abuse of power

Points 1 and 2 of the “creating a culture” decision of synod are being held for strategy development after earlier work is completed.

Regarding point 3, a report on the strengthening of the role of regional pastor and church visitors by the Classis Renewal Advisory Team has been forwarded to Pastor Church Resources, specifically in regard to classes.

Point 4 of the decision, about establishing “a team that would act as a guardian of our commitment to foster a culture characterized by respect for all and mutual service,” is being referred to the ad hoc group noted in subpoint e above.

k. Implementation and monitoring

The COD continues to monitor the progress and ensure implementation of the decisions of Synod 2019 to aid in the prevention of the abuse of power in CRCNA leadership. The preceding information is presented as a progress report on addressing abuse of power matters as of February 2020.

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