



Safe Sanctuaries and Vulnerable Adults

“Vulnerable adult” - any person over 18 years of age with diagnosed diminished physical, mental or emotional capacities.

Why include vulnerable adults under Safe Sanctuary Policies?

- As church, we are called to minister to all God’s children, providing ministries to those who depend on the faith community to nurture them spiritually, physically and emotionally. Increasingly more adults are becoming dependent on the care of another, and they seek such care in our local congregations.

What type of ministries might be offered for vulnerable adults?

- Senior’s Day Out programs
- Adult Day Care programs - full-day or half-day; full-week or partial week (check with state licensing requirements if offering a full or partial week program)

What accommodations do congregations need to make in their Safe Sanctuary Policy and Procedures if they have or plan to offer ministries to vulnerable adults?

- Implement the two adult rule – two adults of sound mind and body to oversee the ministry.
- Provide sufficient supervision for number and needs of participants.
- Screen workers as stated in Safe Sanctuaries best practices (background check, 6-month rule, interview, etc.).
- Train workers on safety practices in handling special needs (i.e., dementia, safe transfers, oxygen use, etc.).
- Have background and medical information, and family contact information available on participants should an emergency arise.
- Verify that the space being used is safe for adults with special needs, such as:
 - For mobility needs, clear floor of carpets, cords, small furniture, etc.
 - For dementia participants, secured exits to prevent wandering.
 - Special furniture needs for the elderly and physically handicapped.
 - Etc.
- Verify that your church’s insurance policy offers sufficient coverage for such ministries.

Remember, Safe Sanctuaries is a process, not a product. Allow your congregation the time to analyze how to do ministry in the best and safest way in order to be Christ to ALL God’s children!

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