



SOMETHING'S
NOT
RIGHT

DECODING THE

HIDDEN TACTICS OF

ABUSE

AND FREEING YOURSELF

FROM ITS POWER

WADE MULLEN

Wade's work in communication theory is a must read for survivors, institutional leaders, and everyone. In a powerful, easy-to-grasp book, Wade distills the strategies and communication tools abusers use to manipulate, abuse, and resist accountability and transparency. Understanding these dynamics empowers survivors to recognize and name what they have experienced and empowers all of us to identify and stand against abusers and abusive organizations. Reading this book and evaluating leaders and ministries with this knowledge will change you forever, for the better.

RACHAEL DENHOLLANDER, speaker, victim advocate, and author of *What Is a Girl Worth?: My Story of Breaking the Silence and Exposing the Truth about Larry Nassar and USA Gymnastics*

Something's Not Right is a beacon of truth and wisdom for the abused and a help in their healing. It is a warning about power mismanagement as well as a guide for eradicating evil from our churches. Wade Mullen's expertise provides a window into the insidious language of abuse and impression-management strategies so often present among church leaders.

SCOT McKNIGHT AND LAURA BARRINGER, authors of *A Church Called Tov: Forming a Goodness Culture That Resists Abuses of Power and Promotes Healing*

Something's Not Right is essential reading for every leader. Wade Mullen brilliantly unpacks the game plan organizations often use to manage their image in a crisis

and to self-preserve at all costs. This book will change the way you see and think about abuse forever.

STEVE CARTER, pastor and author of *This Invitational Life: Risking Yourself to Align with God's Heartbeat for Humanity*

Wade Mullen has uniquely identified the hidden behaviors of abuse and has demystified the tactics used to hold victims in silent captivity. His research and voice have been an essential component of my own healing journey as well as a pathway forward in dealing with organizational dysfunction. His work is a useful tool for informative and transformative introspection for victims and organizations alike. This profound work offers a path toward authentic forgiveness, healing, and freedom.

VONDA DYER, survivor, advocate, and CCO of Minerva Consulting

Wade's work is essential reading for our growing understanding of toxic and abusive systems. His deep experience and profound insights will provide clarity for those who are confused and pave a pathway for a necessary reckoning and the ultimate healing we long for.

CHUCK DEGROAT, professor of pastoral care at Western Theological Seminary and author of *When Narcissism Comes to Church: Healing Your Community from Emotional and Spiritual Abuse*

In his book *Something's Not Right*, Wade Mullen brings insights, research-based knowledge, and clarity to the heavy topic of abuse. His years of work provide readers with a language that gives voice to those who have been silenced by abuse. He unpacks a vocabulary that can help individuals

identify and articulate tactics abusers use. While he vulnerably shares his own journey of navigating abuse, he also provides a stunning picture of hope for the reconciliation and restoration that is always possible. This book is a must-read for those who have navigated abuse, anyone who helps survivors find healing, and leaders who steward churches and organizations that want to safeguard their cultures and systems from abuse.

KERI LADOUCEUR, pastor of Vineyard Christian Church, founder of New Ground Network, silence breaker, and survivor

I first met Wade Mullen where this book begins, during his first steps of a journey to understand and free himself from an abusive church and its leadership. In the time since, I've witnessed God's voice speaking through Wade to research, identify, and call out abusive systems and to advocate for victims and survivors.

Something's Not Right offers a balm for the abused, a platform to hear their stories, and a pathway for the church to stand by their side. If you are a victim of abuse, this book will identify the tactics of manipulation and misuse of power you have suffered from, giving you a language to name and confront that sin. If you are a pastor or Christian leader, your eyes will be opened to the overt and nuanced ways abusers sow deceit and doubt *in you*, co-opting you into silence (often unwittingly) at the very time victims need you to speak truth and be the comfort of Christ.

This book offers you a glossary to discern and steps to address the scourge of abuse.

JIM VAN YPEREN, founder and executive director of Metanoia Ministries, a nonprofit ministry serving churches in conflict

Wade Mullen is one of the most important voices in evangelicalism right now. His experience and research into Christian institutions and how they can and do enable abusers is vital reading for anyone who wants to be an advocate for survivors—or to gain an understanding of what makes so many of us culpable in protecting power. Mullen uses real stories, extensive research, and gentle truth telling to highlight what is possibly the most pressing issue facing the church today: How can we stop the epidemic of abuse within our sacred institutions?

D. L. MAYFIELD, author and neighbor

Mullen offers us a sincerely thoughtful, incredibly practical, and truly compassionate book on abusive systems and the consequences of cover-ups. Full of relatable examples and opportunities to tend to one's own pain from abusive systems while leaving room for self-evaluation, this book holds up an overdue mirror. Mullen vulnerably relates to the reader, offering us a glimpse into his own experiences with toxic leadership, and moreover equips us to recognize patterns of organizational abuse and what repentance actually looks like in such instances. I cannot recommend this accessible book strongly enough to anyone considering leadership in the church, society, or politics. I will be making it required reading for teams and organizations that I work with going forward.

CHRISTINA EDMONDSON, PhD, diversity strategy and team ethics consultant, instructor at Calvin University, and cohost of *Truth's Table* podcast

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

The stories in this book were gathered in the course of my own experience, interactions, and academic research. Some are composites; all are based on true events. Names and exact details have been changed to protect the vulnerable.

FOREWORD

Something's not right. How many of us have had the uncomfortable awareness that something was amiss but had difficulty articulating exactly what was wrong? When we cannot find words to label what is awry, our discomfort may lead us to deny that a problem exists. In doing so, we risk an aftermath of self-blame: *Something was not okay, and I share the responsibility of having allowed it to happen.*

Dr. Wade Mullen is a trustworthy guide in such matters. He knows the way because he has been there. He knows that when something is not right there are often people who want us to think *we* are not right. They may seek to convince us that our thinking is off, our labels are wrong, or our imagination is running away from us. They may exclaim, "You need to trust us; we will fix it!" They may warn that we risk destroying the godly work that has been accomplished by giving voice to our concerns. Wade knows what it is like to be seen as a threat, to be silenced and pushed aside. He

understands what it is like to have people authoritatively switch all the labels in order to cover up wrongdoing.

Having our experience negated is both disorienting and isolating. It is confusing. At times like this, we need courage. We need a map, and the signposts along the way need to be true.

Not only has Dr. Mullen been in this murky land himself, but for his doctoral dissertation he studied over one thousand cases of abuse in churches and the methods used by those institutions to cover it up, rename it, and deny it. He gives names to grooming techniques used by those who abuse their power. He exposes the silencing techniques used by individuals and systems to keep truth from coming to light or being believed. He brings to light the deceptions, the twisting of words, and the manipulations that silence people and shift blame to those who expose abuse as if they, and not the abuse, were the actual threat. Wade teaches us about impression management—tools and strategies for managing what others see. These tools have been used for centuries to confuse, mislead, and cover up actions and decisions that are destroying precious people created in the image of our God.

Knowing well that abuse silences others, Wade has stepped into the light and given voice to many silenced and wounded people. His signposts are clear and true. He understands the internal experience of confusion, the silenced voice, and the changing of labels such that bad is named “good” and good seems bad. He has gathered up his own painful experiences, wounds, and confusion, and through them he brings

FOREWORD

empathy and clarity to others. He calls things by their right names. This process often brings great grief because it entails seeing things as they are—as opposed to how we hoped they would be. Truth, however, also brings freedom. The light is on, our labels are correct, and we then move forward toward greater strength and the healing of wounds.

So read, listen, and apply these concepts—to yourself first, and then to those situations you face that are abusive, confusing, and hurtful. By reading and learning what Wade has to teach us, we will be safer for each other and carry a greater likeness of the one we follow, who said that he himself is both the Truth and our Refuge.

Diane Langberg, PhD
Psychologist

You think evil is going to
come into your houses
wearing big black boots.
It doesn't come like that.
Look at the language.
It begins in the language.

JOSEPH BRODSKY

SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT

“This is abuse.”

The words stopped me in my tracks. My wife and I had just finished recounting our story to some friends who had stopped by to check on us. They'd heard we were resigning from the church where I was youth pastor and were packing up to move, and they were worried about our family. They knew how much we loved the church and how committed we were to serving with integrity. But after hearing the details of our experience the past few years—the confusion, the secrets, the oppression—these words were their diagnosis.

I didn't want to believe them.

Nobody had sexually or physically harmed me. Other people in our community had suffered far worse. “Abuse” felt like a label reserved for them, for the blatant and violent experiences they had endured. I could think of a million reasons my situation wasn't like theirs.

And yet I couldn't deny what my wife and I had been through. I didn't know how to talk about it and didn't have

the words to describe what I was feeling, but deep down I knew: *Something's not right.*

That night was a critical step in my journey toward freedom.

Recognizing the Language of Abuse

If you're like me, you may hear the word *abuse* and think, as I did, of physical or sexual harm done to another person. But the truth is, the term *abuse* is appropriate to far more situations than those. When someone treats you as an object they are willing to harm for their own benefit, abuse has occurred, and that person has become an abuser. Some of the worst forms of abuse are psychological. The victim may never be physically touched but nevertheless is traumatized by the experience of being emotionally manipulated and held captive by lies, threats, and neglect. A husband can control all the finances in a marriage and use that control to coerce his wife into compliance. This is financial abuse. A parent can destroy the self-image of a child through verbal attacks. Verbal abuse so often targets those who lack the means to withdraw or the power to advocate for themselves. In other words, abuse involves any action that takes power from another in an attempt to use them. And it almost always begins with language—words that lead to confusion and captivity.

This language is evil's greatest secret. Unknown to most, even its users, this language provides evil with its primary desire: power. It's a power acquired and retained through

deception and used to harm and destroy lives. The language of abuse is, at its core, a collection of tactics for deception, and it allows the evil of abuse to spread. Because language is so important for abusers gaining power, and also for restoring power to those who have been abused, I use the terms *abuse* and *abuser* throughout this book, even though, as in my experience, it can be difficult to see your own situation that way at first.

Through my own experience of abuse at the church and through my academic studies, I became aware of a branch of sociology called “impression management.” When I first discovered impression management research, I was shocked to find it wasn’t more broadly available—and that it hadn’t been widely applied to the various and ever-present scandals of our culture. Impression management tactics seemed to name the very ways that abusers gained their power in my life and in the stories I’d come across. My own research has focused on impression management in evangelical organizations, but the tactics are not unique to that context. I’ve collected and analyzed nearly one thousand cases of clergy abuse over the last five years to understand how abuse pervades these institutions. But the more I grow in my understanding of impression management tactics, the more I see how these same tactics are used by abusers of all kinds, to perpetuate all types of abuse. The tactics of impression management used by organizations to cover up their wrongs are the same tactics used every day by abusers throughout the world—and that have been used by evil powers throughout history. There is

a pattern that accompanies abuse, as if abusers are somehow reading from the same playbook.

If we can learn to decode these evil tactics—if we can *learn the language of abuse*—we can stop the cycle: we can make abusers less effective at accomplishing destruction in our lives. The ability to identify and describe tactics that were previously unidentifiable and indescribable will restore the power that was taken from you.

Who This Book Is For

Maybe you still aren't sure whether the information in this book will apply to your situation or experience. Maybe the words *abuse* and *abuser* still feel harsh and extreme—words for what has happened to other people but not you. Maybe all you know is that something's not right, that something feels off when you think about a certain relationship or interaction. That's okay. I wrote this book primarily for you. Even if you aren't sure whether what you're experiencing is abuse, I encourage you to keep reading. My hope is that by the end of the book, you'll have the insight, language, and direction you need to clarify your situation and take any necessary steps to personal freedom. Freedom comes first by understanding, and understanding means having the language to identify and talk about your situation. I want to give you that more than anything.

If, however, you come to this book with a clear understanding that the situation you find yourself in is, in fact,

abusive, my hope is that these pages hold power for you as well. In being able to recognize, label, and describe the tactics of deception, you might be able to resist the ways in which such behaviors can be used to manipulate you. Understanding the tactics that have been used to coerce you is an integral part of the healing process. As you make sense of and gain the ability to describe what you've experienced, may you find the inner power to shine a light on these dark places of your story.

I've also written this book for those who are seeking to advocate for victims and survivors of abuse. I commend you for doing so and know how quickly others can condemn you for your efforts and question your motivation. I've been encouraged by the many advocates I've gotten to know. They sacrifice their time and energy to provide support, prevent abuse, and create a safer future. They speak truth to power for the sake of repair and redemption. They choose to side with the oppressed despite knowing it often will require standing in the dangerous position between the oppressed and their oppressors. It might mean remaining in that stance until the battle is won, requiring tremendous sacrifice, courage, hope, and faith.

I hope this book can also speak to those who are enabling abusers—either willfully or unknowingly. I hope your eyes are opened to see the abuser in your midst. That abuser might be a leader or an organization you have come to love and support. I understand how difficult it can be to acknowledge when people you love and respect turn out to be different

than you thought, but it is necessary to understand the important role you play as a bystander. Abusive individuals and organizations might be using impression management tactics to hide what happens behind the scenes so their act can continue. You must recognize that it is not just those doing the hiding who are at fault but also those who benefit from the abuser's show and want it to continue. We might want to ignore what we see when just a portion of the curtain is pulled back, hoping that, through time or circumstance, the abuses will be resolved on their own. But organizations and their leaders are always faced with two choices when abuse happening on their watch comes to light: adopt truth telling and transparency, regardless of the impact on their approval, status, or image; or use the same tactics of abuse in an attempt to retain or regain legitimacy. This book will help you respond to exposure with truth telling by making you aware of tactics that might work against truth, justice, and compassion. Enabling abuse means allowing it the power it needs to control others.

When I was in the midst of my own abusive experience, I felt as if abusers had taken hold of the pen of my life's story. There were moments when I did not want to turn another page for fear of what the next paragraph or chapter might hold. I had lost control of my own story; it was in the hands of those who wanted to do me harm.

Perhaps that is your experience right now. If it is, I hope this book will give you the validation you need to know you are not in the wrong, you are not alone, and you deserve to be

INTRODUCTION

able to write your own story. I also hope this book will open your eyes. The best antidote to deception is truth. Silence grants evil exactly what it needs to be effective. Truth helps us speak what has been unspeakable, express what has been inexpressible, and articulate feelings for which we could not find the appropriate words. Truth helps us move from confusion to clarity and from captivity to freedom.

Something's *not* right. But by understanding the tactics of the abusers in your life, you can take back the pen and write your story anew.

THE SHOW MUST GO ON

Some have compared getting truth out of an abuser to nailing Jell-O to a wall—if caught, they’ll use any tactic necessary to wriggle free, to evade accusation, to save face, and to preserve their power and influence. By having a clear picture of the tactics abusers are likely to employ, we are less likely to be taken in by their practiced deception. This is why we must learn and understand the field of impression management research.

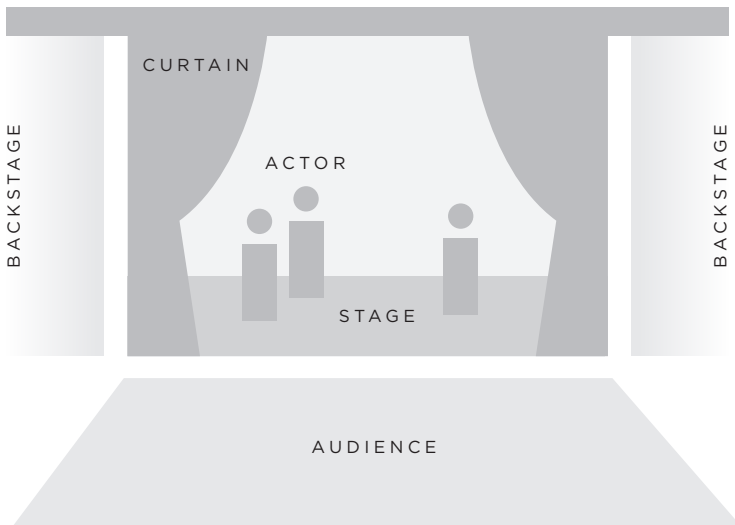
The best explanation I’ve read of impression management is from the late Canadian sociologist Erving Goffman, who defined it as the process of creating, influencing, or manipulating an image held by an audience.¹ Like Goffman, I find impression management best understood by using the

Impression management
becomes unethical when
the front-stage persona
is used to hide truths that
ought not to be hidden.

THE SHOW MUST GO ON

metaphor of a stage play: individuals (or organizations) are actors on a stage, and at any point, they are either behind the curtain or in front of the curtain. The play—what the audience sees—reflects the stage version of the actor. The actor strives to give the audience what they want, knowing that his relationship with the audience depends on it—that is the only way the show can continue. The audience reacts, and the actor adjusts his performance based on those reactions to keep the audience engaged.

The Show Must Go On



Abusive people and organizations try to manage our impressions through a series of tactics that will be described in this book. The effect is similar to the actors in a play managing what the audience sees and reacts to, which is different from what happens backstage.

Behind the curtain, however, is a different world. The audience can no longer see the actor. Behind the curtain, he can practice his performance, thinking of ways he can allure and appeal to the audience, developing who he is for the “front stage” act. The audience will never see this hidden side of him.

Now, the truth is we are all actors in our own lives, alternating between front-stage and backstage behavior as we go throughout our day. Our behavior in the privacy of our homes is different from our behavior in public. We change out of our pajamas before heading out the door in the morning, and the way we behave with clients is usually more professional than the way we relax at the end of the workday. Even certain rooms in our homes are kept cleaner than others just in case someone stops in for a visit. This is normal.

But the impression management becomes unethical when the front-stage persona is used to hide truths that ought not to be hidden. An abuser, for example, will use the tactics of impression management when grooming potential victims to conceal nefarious intent. An abuser or those seeking to protect the abuser might use the tactics of impression management to appear trustworthy while keeping the truth of the abuse behind the curtain or to explain the abuse away if the curtain is pulled back to reveal the backstage behavior.

Before we can learn the specific tactics of impression management as they relate to abuse—which we will explore in the coming chapters—we need to first consider what factors prime an environment for abuse.

Keeping Secrets

Gloria could feel her heart racing. Anxiety and fear always seemed to send her blood pumping before she was conscious that something was wrong. She wanted to walk out of the meeting. *Do I really need to do this?* she thought. *Maybe I'm making too much of it.* She took a deep breath and closed her eyes for a few seconds, as she had learned to do over the years, and she found herself easing back into a state of rest. *He may have done this to others,* she reminded herself. *And I can't keep carrying this secret.*

“So, how can we help you?” John asked. John was a board member and a vice president at the university. He was joined by the new head of human resources. Everyone knew John “handled” things at the university, and this meeting was no different. Gloria spent the next forty-five minutes telling the story of how a longtime professor had repeatedly made sexual advances toward her over the five years she had worked with him.

She was prepared to answer questions, but they didn't have any. She offered to share correspondence and other evidence, but John didn't feel it necessary. John suggested there might be some misunderstanding, alluded to the professor's outgoing personality, and assured her that it would be taken care of. Before she left, John mentioned how sensitive this information was and that she should keep it to herself for her own benefit.

Gloria didn't understand why they had seemed so

unmoved by her story. It made her feel as if she wasn't being heard or taken seriously. It was as if she was reading a story to someone who had heard it many times before. This was because they *had* heard it before, from multiple women who had recounted similar experiences.

Professor Simon was the university's most sought-after faculty member. He had been there long enough to have an academic building bear his name. Students were drawn to him. He made learning fun and seemed to come alive during a lecture. But his assistants knew a different side of him—an entitled and impatient person who always got his way. And some of the women came to learn that he even believed it was his right to claim them as his own.

But the powers above him needed his reputation to remain intact. If his backstage behaviors were exposed, it would shock the entire campus and community. They needed to keep this behind the curtain. They thought if they simply talked to Professor Simon, his behavior would change. But confronting him had the opposite effect. Talking without administering consequences made it clear to the professor that he could get away with his abusive behavior because the leadership would cover for him.

Little did Gloria know the walls within which she told her story were already plastered with secrets. The professor kept his abuse a secret from students, most colleagues, and the public. John and a few others at the top of the organization kept the reports a secret to maintain the university's

reputation. And the women each kept their stories to themselves, thinking they were alone in their experience.

* * *

The chief desire of abusive individuals and organizations is to attain or retain power—most often the kind of power gained and held firm through deception. The person who abuses others feels the freedom to do so because of their power. And as their power grows, the individual or organization is free to abuse others with greater frequency and less resistance.

If power is maintained through deception, deception is maintained through secrecy. Abusers rely upon their ability to remain hidden. And, as we'll see, evil knows the best places to hide are those least likely to be searched and among people least likely to suspect abuse. Churches, as I have learned in my research, can easily become havens for abusers for these very reasons, yet we are still surprised when we discover abusers trying to crouch behind crosses and prowl among pews.

And nothing stays hidden without help. It takes others to keep a secret of abuse. Abusers often have to rely upon other people's cooperation to keep their show going. Just as most stage plays have a cast of actors, Goffman calls those who cooperate in the show "performance teams." Consciously or not, people end up working together to protect secrets, often by managing the flow of information. For example, organizations often try to save face after a scandal

by overcommunicating some facts and undercommunicating others to the “audience.” Whether the audience is the public, other members of the organization, the media, victims, or the civil authorities, the abuser and the performance teams around them omit or undercommunicate what Goffman calls “disruptive information,” facts that threaten the audience’s image of the abuser. At the same time, the abuser and performance teams selectively disclose information that improves the abuser’s image. It’s information control. All of the actors do what they can to keep the audience from gaining disruptive information that would redefine what they’re seeing.

I sat in one meeting where senior leadership acknowledged numerous failures to the rest of the staff. They knew an employee had caused significant harm but did nothing to confront him or have him removed until the staff began writing letters to the board. The staff was upset with the entire senior leadership for enabling the abuse and looking the other way. The senior leadership called a meeting where they presented a catalog of wrongs, which looked like an act of tremendous transparency. They were thanked and applauded for it. But the most disruptive information—the facts that would have disclosed the full extent of the abuse—remained a secret. The audience’s approval was based on a limited view of the situation. It was obscurity disguised as transparency.

Secrets can be potent in the right kind of environment, allowing deception to fester and evil to rule.

Most of us probably think we have a basic understanding

of what secrets are and how they function. In reality, their depth of power and breadth of function can make them incredibly complex. According to Goffman, there are five types of secrets: dark, strategic, inside, entrusted, and free.

Dark secrets—which we’ll discuss throughout this book—are facts a person or an organization knows and conceals because if they were revealed, they could damage the image of that person or organization. Allegations of abuse, for example, are a common type of dark secret. Leaders of an organization may go to great lengths to hide an abuse allegation instead of reporting it because they know it would damage the organization’s reputation. They want to be seen as a place where dark secrets do not exist.

Any secret that an organization keeps hidden to give it an upper hand in its dealings is a *strategic secret*. In this case, an organization might keep its plans for a merger with another organization a secret, knowing that such information might disrupt the merger if leaked. Strategic secrets allow an organization to be nimble and adjust for any type of response.

Inside secrets keep information between a small, tight-knit group within a larger body—for example, between a few close associates rather than an entire leadership team, or between a few friends planning a surprise birthday party for another friend. Inside secrets can include dark and strategic secrets but may also include secrets that would not be disruptive if leaked. Inside secrets involve being “in the know” and often come with a feeling of exclusivity. That in itself can be dangerous, so sometimes abusers will ask their victims

to keep secrets as part of the grooming process, knowing that secret-keeping can be a shortcut to isolation. Even if inside secrets are not inherently dark, they can still be used in unethical ways. For example, many victims have found that their report of abuse to an organization was handled by a dedicated response team or kept within a small group of board members instead of shared with the entire board. (In Gloria's story at the start of this section, her report was kept as an inside secret with John and the human resources director and wasn't spread further.) Some abusive organizations create structures like this for the sole purpose of keeping certain secrets inside secrets, knowing that as the information reaches new people, the chances of that information becoming disruptive increases.

Similar to inside secrets, *entrusted secrets* aren't inherently dark. A secret is entrusted if the relationship calls for confidentiality. Information shared between a patient and a therapist or between close friends, for example, is usually an entrusted secret. Keeping these secrets is not necessarily wrong, although in some cases—like child abuse—the person entrusted with the secret might have a duty to report it.

Last, *free secrets* are those that do not threaten the image of the person holding the secret. The person who reveals information you entrusted to them might view it as a free secret instead of an entrusted secret—something to share with others for the thrill of gossip or to damage your reputation. To them, the secret is “free” because sharing doesn't cost them anything. Whistleblowers are often keepers of free

secrets—while the information they have may be damaging to an organization, it is not damaging to themselves personally. This is why those who serve in advocacy roles must take great care to handle information carefully and with integrity.

These different kinds of secrets may seem like a purely academic distinction. But a greater understanding of and language for these abstract concepts is the beginning of your freedom journey. When you understand how abusers and their performance teams often defend cover-ups by claiming a need for confidentiality—masking a dark secret under the guise of another, more legitimate secret—you can begin to find your footing and speak clearly about your experience. An adult, for example, might claim confidentiality (*entrusted secret*) when confessing their addiction to child pornography to a pastor or counselor. And while that relationship might usually provide confidentiality, in this case (a *dark secret*), the pastor or counselor has an obligation to report it to the police—the claim to confidentiality is overruled by the need to protect children. Or an unethical business practice, such as tax evasion (a *dark secret*), might be treated instead as confidential information necessary to run the business (a *strategic secret*) or as an invitation to a junior partner to join the privileged ranks of those in the know (an *inside secret*).

Abusive situations are often covered up by treating dark secrets as another kind of secret—spreading responsibility to those who, even unwillingly, keep the secret because they do not feel free to share it without harming themselves.

Secrets are also a powerful factor in an abusive environment

Abusive situations are
often covered up by
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another kind of secret.

because they can be used as tests of loyalty. I experienced the power of dark inside secrets while I was navigating the abusive culture of the church I worked for. Only certain board members—those who were closest to the senior pastor—were kept in the loop, while the other board members did not have access to all the information. This made it extremely difficult to work toward justice in the church and kept an abusive culture alive.

We must grasp the harm that is caused not just by abusers but also by those who fail to stop abuse and instead protect dark secrets. Our communities, schools, churches, and homes are safer when they are free of such secrets because victims no longer have to keep their stories hidden for fear of how they will be treated, either by abusers or by those who should be on their side. Instead, they are able to release their secrets and say to abusers and their enablers, “I am no longer yours.” Each time we believe and advocate for victims, walls are broken down, truth is revealed, and hope is restored.

Sacred Roles

Steven seemed to relish the new position he had at the church. He immediately noticed people were calling him “Pastor Steve.” At first it felt odd, but it grew on him, and soon he was referring to himself as “Pastor Steve” in correspondence and introductions. More and more people were asking him to pray at various functions, oversee ceremonies

like weddings and funerals, dedicate children, and baptize new believers. His preaching also took on a new kind of bravado. It had a sort of swagger to it, as if the substance was in the style itself.

Some church members began to feel he was too domineering, but few could get away with offering recommendations or critiques. He walled himself off from criticism, and when criticism did make its way through to him, he felt blindsided and wondered why people weren't more assertive to begin with. He claimed his door was always open, but fewer and fewer people felt the freedom to approach him.

Most attributed it to his heavy workload and leadership style. Some found him confident and sure of himself. They liked having a leader who seemed in control. The truth was that he felt insecure but wanted to live up to his position at the church, so he ignored his inadequacies and acted qualified. Whenever a crisis unfolded, he quickly dismissed requests for outside assistance, concerned that asking for help would make him look incompetent.

He put all of his energy into his preaching and making the church as attractive as possible. As the church grew in numbers, his role grew in importance. People began to see him as the person God had placed in the community "for such a time as this." Eventually, Pastor Steve could not keep the stories of his domineering backstage behavior from getting out. By then the church felt they needed him. More than that, they needed the role he occupied and had transformed.

The role itself needed protecting if the church was to continue its growth.

* * *

The person who occupies a position of power—and the deference with which they are treated because of that position—is another important factor in creating an abusive environment. If we return to the analogy of the play, audience expectations affect how people in different roles are perceived. People in power learn to perform in a manner consistent with the role they have been given. In churches, for example, the roles of pastor, priest, preacher, and prophet often come with high expectations, one of which might be a supernatural calling. Those who occupy those roles, then, are not treated as ordinary people but as recipients of God’s anointing, giving them implicit power over their congregants. We can see this in politics, too. When people censure the conduct of a politician or advocate for their impeachment, they argue that the politician has disgraced the *office*, not just himself or herself. The argument is that the politician should be held to a higher standard because of their role. I call these special positions “sacred roles” because they are invested with sanctity—they are seen as different, special, or set apart.

Yet it is precisely in the sanctity of these roles that the danger lies. Protecting a role’s sanctity can become a motivation for hiding wrongs. The more leaders and their communities treasure these roles, the more they will see exposure

as a threat, as a way to bring about disgrace to the role itself, threatening the role's (and even the community's) legitimacy. The greater the threat, the greater the likelihood of a cover-up. The role—not the community, not the victim, not even justice—is what must be preserved at all costs.

This kind of power and identity is tempting to those who struggle to sustain spiritual and emotional health. If a leader comes to a sacred role empty, narcissistic, and hungry, they'll likely feverishly quest for legitimacy and meaning, collecting audiences, platforms, awards, and luxuries to justify the position and their title. They begin to see people as objects to be manipulated, shaped, and molded to fit their own agenda and to further serve the role.

This isn't to say all sacred roles are exploited by abusive individuals. Despite the frequent news stories about scandals in churches and the political arena, there are still many pastors and politicians who serve with integrity and use their sacred roles for the good of others. Sacred roles are, however, vulnerable to abuse, especially when we are not aware of the warning signs. There are a few telltale symptoms to watch out for that can help protect sacred roles from being pirated by abusers.

First, the leader may insist on exercising their power in every scenario, even if they lack the expertise and resources necessary to be the decision-maker. Take, for example, the spiritual leader who, when faced with reports of child abuse in their congregation, chooses to handle the reports personally instead of involving law enforcement. Leaders can act as if they have the knowledge and skills to respond to an abusive

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situation, but in reality most possess little experience or competency to respond appropriately. Instead, they act out of concern for their own role identity rather than out of concern for those who might be harmed by the abusive situation. Competency in one realm does not always transfer to competency in another, so it can be a warning sign when leaders in sacred roles try to exercise authority outside their usual sphere.

Another indicator of abuse of power within a sacred role is that the leader may appeal to their “anointing” or role to escape accountability for their own wrongs. I worked for one leader who constantly referenced his and others’ qualifications. It became apparent that his greatest fear was being seen as unqualified for his role. He stopped at nothing in his quest for qualification, doing and saying whatever was necessary to avoid being seen as unqualified. At times, he and his supporters would simply appeal to his anointing. People were asked to believe that God had chosen him for the job and to respect God’s choice. The sanctity we ascribe to leadership roles in churches and communities can be dangerous, but that danger is compounded when narcissistic leaders find their identity in the role and use it as a justification for domination.

Unfortunately, the final indicator of abuse within a sacred role extends to the people who surround and uphold it. Often organizations and communities that define these roles will join their leaders in their quest for qualification. The design of their system *requires* the leadership role as a keystone holding everything together. An orchestra needs a conductor. A plane

won't take off without a pilot. Certain species, like giraffes, are key to the sustenance of an ecosystem. Just as a keystone holds an entire arch in place, so many of our organizations are structured around a keystone role, which makes it difficult to entertain removing leaders who abuse their roles. We come to depend on them to keep our organizations alive.

The danger of environments structured around sacred roles is this: communities need someone to fill their keystone roles, and narcissistic individuals eagerly search for opportunities to occupy them. We look for charismatic leaders who promise us a grand future. But once found, we often discover these leaders were looking for us before we were looking for them. We willingly provide them with the power they desire because they promise us something we want in return. And over time, narcissistic leaders slowly turn their organizations into monuments to themselves. The role becomes their identity, and success means proving through performance their right to occupy the role. Exposure, then, isn't just a threat to the role; it's a threat to who these leaders are. And for systems structured around keystone personalities, exposure threatens the entire system. So together, a narcissistic leader and a system that fuels and enables narcissism cooperate to maintain the performance to keep the structure intact. The show *must* go on.

Circling the Wagons

Jim had started his nonprofit to assist in global relief efforts. He presented a bold vision of ending hunger and developed

an accessible way for people to get involved by packing their own basic foods and supplies. He and his wife enlisted three other couples they had known for a long time to serve as the board of directors. Ten years after starting, they were bringing in more than \$10 million in annual revenue. In addition to Jim's making \$400,000 per year in compensation, the nonprofit also paid Jim's wife an annual salary. Soon all three of their children were working as top executives.

And then Jim learned one of his sons had been accused of racial discrimination. Stories of his racist remarks and mistreatment of people of color began to emerge. Jim quickly called a meeting with his son and the board. Jim's son denied the accusations and claimed people were seeking to bring their family down. The board placed Jim's son on a leave of absence, hoping things would blow over. It worked. Six months later he was back on the job, and the few who complained had moved on.

A year later they were hit with a lawsuit. Jim's son had continued to mistreat people of color, and now the nonprofit was being accused of racial discrimination and negligence. The board held an emergency meeting. Jim was adamant that under no circumstances should they entertain the allegations against his son. "These people envy what we've built here and just want to see us suffer. I won't allow it." But Jim knew his son, and he knew the allegations were true. He had to choose between guarding the reputation of his family and firing his son, and in his mind, there was no debate. The reputation of his family would come first.

* * *

Another environment that can contribute to abuse is tribalism among the top executives in an organization. Tribalism can pervade businesses, nonprofits, high-control groups, and churches, especially if started or managed by close friends and family. This closeness heightens the tendency leadership might have to protect family members and friends when dark secrets come to light. In a tribal corporate culture, it's easy to justify compromises because of these close relationships. When faced with an image-threatening event, the tribe is more likely to cover up wrong in order to protect their own—to circle the wagons, as it were. They often choose to defend their image rather than confront the leader or protect the vulnerable.

The choices for leadership positions within a tribal culture thus become further calcified in a crisis—family members and close friends are chosen *because* they will be able to keep secrets (and have their secrets kept). The abusive organization will slowly shift more and more power to the top as a way to protect those most important to the tribe, and as the tribe becomes more protective of insiders, they become less trusting of outsiders, resulting in an even higher potential for abuse of authority.

This is a critical problem with a tribal system: concern for powerful tribe members and the effect a controversy will have on their image means the less powerful, who are often the most profoundly harmed, are forgotten and ignored. This

is a key attribute of abusive communities and cultures—the most powerful benefit at the expense of the least powerful.

An indicator that a tribal culture has taken hold in an environment is what happens in a crisis: the leadership takes greater control of all decisions and communication, while assuring their audience that they have a legitimate claim to continued trust despite the power grab. It is a dangerous arrogance that keeps them blind to true problems and true solutions. And because tribal leaders tend to shun outsiders, they end up at a worse place than they were before the crisis: they have more power than ever but still lack a victim-centric, expert-informed understanding of the problem, increasing the potential for further crisis and abuse.

Nailing Jell-O

We've looked at the ways different environments can enable abuse through secrecy, sacred roles, and circling the wagons to protect close friends and family. The truth is, untangling environmental factors in abuse can be difficult and complex, and adding to the complexity is the shape-shifting nature of deception. Abusive individuals and organizations have likely practiced deception for some time. They've learned to keep secrets of all kinds hidden through various maneuvers, and over time they become masters at using deceptive tactics interchangeably depending on the audience and the circumstance. It's a flexible script that can be altered on the fly based on how others respond. As I said at the start of this chapter,

accurately identifying and describing deception like this can be as difficult as nailing Jell-O to a wall. It is always easier for abusers to control others when truth remains elusive and confusion abounds, so it is in their interest to practice deception. In the absence of truth and discernment, an entire community can easily be deceived.

I say all this to reassure you: it's not your fault if you feel confused and overwhelmed at the prospect of untangling the web of abusive and impression management tactics. It is, by its nature, confusing and overwhelming. And while confronting abuse may sometimes seem unkind and unnecessarily disruptive, especially in the environments I described above, I must encourage you as well: if we ignore, minimize, justify, or excuse what we see to avoid disruption, then we help create space for deceivers to continue their charades—allowing their hearts to grow darker, the abuse to become serial, and more innocent people to be placed in harm's way. It is okay, and even ethical, to bring dark secrets into the light, provided the goal of exposure isn't to shame the abuser just for the sake of condemnation but to expose them as an act of mercy—for the abuser's future health and for the protection of others.

It may be daunting, but it is not impossible. As we unearth the most common tactics of abusive people and organizations in the pages you are about to read, I hope you find a new lens for understanding your situation. You are not crazy; you are not alone. You simply need new language for your experience, for with language, you can speak. And when you speak, you can regain what has been taken from you.

CHAPTER 1 SUMMARY

THE SHOW MUST GO ON

The behavior of many abusers is like a stage play: there are front-stage behaviors and backstage behaviors, and the two are often quite different. What happens on the stage is designed to appeal to the audience, hiding what happens behind the curtain. Three types of environments especially help to keep abusive backstage behavior from being discovered.

SECRETS

Five types of secrets—*dark*, *strategic*, *inside*, *entrusted*, and *free* (see pages 17-19)—help to keep abusers in power. Abusers will often hide dark secrets (like abusive behavior) behind another, more legitimate kind of secret.

SACRED ROLES

Environments where certain roles are viewed as special or sacred can be ripe for abuse, especially if those roles are necessary for the community to function (“keystone” roles).

INNER CIRCLE

Environments where those in leadership are closely connected in multiple ways (e.g., families or friends) can become abusive as those in power try to protect themselves instead of the vulnerable.

RESOURCES FOR SURVIVORS

It's common to feel alone. Know that help is out there. Locating the help you need, however, is a process that might seem overwhelming and at times frustrating. I encourage you to begin by doing some research. Learn about the different types of abuse and the various approaches to therapy. Compile a list of local therapists and advocacy centers that specialize in helping those in abusive situations. Do some additional research to see if they are well reviewed and recommended by other professionals. Prepare a list of questions and contact them to get more information.

The list I've compiled in this appendix is by no means exhaustive. It is meant to provide possible starting points as you explore sources of support. Local advocacy centers, therapists, and attorneys are often the best places to look for in-person help. I encourage you to use the resources listed here to help you understand your situation so you can more easily find a person or an organization with the expertise and availability to offer you the individualized help you need.

I recognize that not all situations are captured in this list of resources, but I've tried to cover many common scenarios.

General Resources for Abuse and Trauma

GLOBAL TRAUMA RECOVERY INSTITUTE

(www.missio.edu/global-trauma-recovery-institute)

The Global Trauma Recovery Institute provides “high quality continuing educational resources, skills training, and case consultation for mental health clinicians, ministry leaders, and professionals interested in addressing the needs of psychosocial trauma victims in the United States and around the world.”

DIANE LANGBERG, PHD (www.dianelangberg.com)

“Dr. Diane Langberg is a practicing psychologist whose clinical expertise includes 35 years of working with trauma survivors and clergy. She speaks internationally on topics related to women, trauma, ministry and the Christian life.” Dr. Langberg has produced numerous books, articles, videos, and podcasts on the topics of trauma, abuse, narcissism, power, and recovery.

THE NATIONAL CHILD TRAUMATIC STRESS NETWORK

(www.nctsn.org)

The mission of the NCTSN is “to raise the standard of care and improve access to services for traumatized children, their families and communities throughout the United States.”

RESOURCES FOR SURVIVORS

RAPE, ABUSE & INCEST NATIONAL NETWORK (RAINN)

(www.rainn.org)

“RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network) is the nation’s largest anti-sexual violence organization. RAINN created and operates the National Sexual Assault Hotline (800.656.HOPE, online.rainn.org [and] rainn.org/es) in partnership with more than 1,000 local sexual assault service providers across the country and operates the DoD Safe Helpline for the Department of Defense. RAINN also carries out programs to prevent sexual violence, help survivors, and ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice.”

NATIONAL SEXUAL VIOLENCE RESOURCE CENTER

(www.nsvrc.org)

“Every state and territory has an organization designated to coordinate the activities of rape crisis efforts and represent that state or territory as its coalition. NSVRC maintains a Directory of State and Territory Coalitions, as well as a Directory of Victim/Survivor Support Organizations that provide services to survivors.”

BOOKS

- Herman, Judith. *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*. New York: Basic Books, 2015.
- Langberg, Diane Mandt. *On the Threshold of Hope: Opening the Door to Healing for Survivors of Sexual Abuse*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 1999.

- Salter, Anna C. *Predators: Pedophiles, Rapists, and Other Sex Offenders: Who They Are, How They Operate, and How We Can Protect Ourselves and Our Children*. New York: Basic Books, 2003.

Resources for Adult Survivors of Child Abuse

HELP FOR ADULT VICTIMS OF CHILD ABUSE

(www.havoca.org)

“HAVOCA is run by survivors for adult survivors of child abuse. We provide support, friendship and advice for any adult whose life has been affected by childhood abuse.”

ADULT SURVIVORS OF CHILD ABUSE

(www.ascasupport.org)

“Adult Survivors of Child Abuse (ASCA) is an international self-help support group program designed specifically for adult survivors of neglect, physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse.”

BOOKS

- Bear, Euan. *Adults Molested as Children: A Survivor's Manual for Women and Men*. With Peter T. Dimock. Orwell, VT: Safer Society Press, 1988.
- Courtois, Christine A. *Adult Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse*. Milwaukee, WI: Families International, 1993.

Resources for Survivors of Clergy Sexual Abuse

SNAP—SURVIVORS NETWORK OF THOSE ABUSED BY PRIESTS (www.snapnetwork.org)

“SNAP is the largest, oldest and most active self-help group for clergy sex abuse victims, whether assaulted by ministers, priests, nuns or rabbis. SNAP is a confidential, safe place for wounded men and women to be heard, supported and healed. SNAP works tirelessly to achieve two goals: to heal the wounded and to protect the vulnerable. The organization has more than 25,000 members and support groups meet in over 60 cities across the U.S. and the world.”

THE SILENT MAJORITY: ADULT VICTIMS OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION BY CLERGY (www.adultsabusedbyclergy.org)

A website that provides information centered around a study of clergy sexual misconduct with adults conducted by Baylor University School of Social Work in 2009.

Resources for Male Survivors of Abuse

MALESURVIVOR (www.malesurvivor.org)

“For 25 years, MaleSurvivor has fostered a healing community where thousands of men from more than 190 countries come together to find support, information and—most importantly—hope. MaleSurvivor is dedicated to providing personalized support for men at every stage of the healing process. We facilitate dialogue among survivors, as well as

between survivors and professional therapists, on our online forums like a vibrant and moderated discussion board, online 24/7 chat and at in-person events. We provide educational resources that help empower them to process their past and look forward to a brighter future.”

1IN6 (www.1in6.org)

1in6 provides “information and services for men with histories of unwanted or abusive sexual experiences, and anyone who cares about them.” Resources include a 24/7 online helpline, free and confidential online support groups, trauma-informed trainings and webinars, and male survivor stories.

Resources for Survivors of Domestic Violence

NATIONAL COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (NCADV) (www.ncadv.org)

The NCADV mission “is to lead, mobilize and raise our voices to support efforts that demand a change of conditions that lead to domestic violence such as patriarchy, privilege, racism, sexism, and classism. We are dedicated to supporting survivors and holding offenders accountable and supporting advocates.”

DOMESTIC SHELTERS (www.domesticshelters.org)

“We make finding the right shelter and information about domestic violence easier. Instead of searching the Internet,

RESOURCES FOR SURVIVORS

it is all right here. We've painstakingly verified information on shelters in LA to shelters in NY, and every domestic violence program in between. If you or a friend is suffering from physical abuse, emotional abuse, psychological abuse or verbal abuse, this free service can help. Select domestic violence programs based on location, service and language needs. Find 24-hour hotlines in your area, service listings, and helpful articles on domestic violence statistics, signs and cycles of abuse, housing services, emergency services, legal and financial services, support groups for women, children and families, and more."

NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE

(www.thehotline.org)

A 24/7 free hotline with access to service providers and shelters throughout the United States.

NATIONAL NETWORK TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

(www.nnedv.org)

"NNEDV represents the 56 state and U.S. territory coalitions against domestic violence. Domestic violence coalitions serve as state-wide and territory-wide leaders in the efforts to end domestic violence. These organizations connect local domestic violence service providers and are valuable resources for information about services, programs, legislation, and policies that support survivors of domestic violence."

Resources for Survivors of Incest

SURVIVORS OF INCEST ANONYMOUS (www.siaawso.org)

“SIA, started in 1982, is a 12-Step, self-help recovery program modeled after Alcoholics Anonymous. SIA is for men and women, 18 years and older, who were sexually abused as children.”

BOOKS

- Courtois, Christine A. *Healing the Incest Wound: Adult Survivors in Therapy*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1988.
- Herman, Judith Lewis. *Father-Daughter Incest*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000.

Resources for Survivors of Educator Sexual Abuse

STOP EDUCATOR SEXUAL ABUSE MISCONDUCT & EXPLOITATION (S.E.S.A.M.E.) (www.sesamenet.org)

“S.E.S.A.M.E. was founded in 1991 by volunteers who saw a need in their community. Today, the need for S.E.S.A.M.E. still persists, and a dedicated group of volunteer advocates and experts continue the work of the founders so that the nation’s schools are safer for children.”

Resources for Survivors of Organized Abuse

DR. MICHAEL SALTER (www.organisedabuse.com)

Dr. Michael Salter “specialises in the study of organised abuse and complex trauma.” According to the website, “Organised

abuse involves multiple adults who conspire to sexually abuse one or more children. Organised abuse can include the sexual exchange of children between perpetrators as well as the manufacture of child abuse images and the prostitution of children for financial gain or other advantages.”

Resources for Survivors of Elder Abuse or Disability Abuse

NATIONAL ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES ASSOCIATION

(www.napsa-now.org)

“The National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA) is a national non-profit 501(c) (3) organization with members in all fifty states. Formed in 1989, the goal of NAPSA is to provide Adult Protective Services (APS) programs a forum for sharing information, solving problems, and improving the quality of services for victims of elder and vulnerable adult mistreatment.”

VERA INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE (www.vera.org)

“People with disabilities are much more vulnerable to harm. They’re three times more likely to be sexually abused as children, and three times more likely to be victims of violent crimes ranging from robbery to rape as adolescents and adults. As troubling, survivors rarely get the help they need to heal. Organizations dedicated to serving people with disabilities and Deaf people often have no experience working with victims of crime, while agencies focused on crime and victimization are typically ill-equipped to serve

people with differing abilities. Our work focuses on connecting professionals, breaking down systemic barriers to collaboration, and rigorously tracking performance—the only way to provide services that actually meet people’s needs. Much of our work is focused on survivors of domestic and sexual violence.” The Vera Institute of Justice manages the End Abuse of People with Disabilities website (www.endabusepwd.org).

Resources for Survivors of Abuse in Detention

JUST DETENTION INTERNATIONAL (www.justdetention.org)

“JDI is a health and human rights organization that seeks to end sexual abuse in all forms of detention. Founded in 1980, JDI is the only organization in the U.S.—and the world—dedicated exclusively to ending sexual abuse behind bars. We hold government officials accountable for prisoner rape; challenge the attitudes and misperceptions that allow sexual abuse to flourish; and make sure that survivors get the help they need.”

Resources for Survivors of Psychological Abuse

CONFUSION TO CLARITY (www.confusiontoclaritynow.com)

A Christian resource that provides support and healing for women who have experienced covert narcissistic and psychological spousal abuse.

RESOURCES FOR SURVIVORS

FLYING FREE (www.flyingfreenow.com)

Flying Free helps women “recover and heal from emotional and spiritual abuse while also discovering a life of freedom and joy in Christ.”

BOOKS

- Hassan, Steven. *Combating Cult Mind Control: The #1 Best-Selling Guide to Protection, Rescue, and Recovery from Destructive Cults*. Rochester, VT: Park Street Press, 2015.
- Johnson, David, and Jeff VanVonderen. *The Subtle Power of Spiritual Abuse: Recognizing and Escaping Spiritual Manipulation and False Spiritual Authority within the Church*. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2005.

Resources for Survivors of Workplace Abuse

END WORKPLACE ABUSE (www.endworkplaceabuse.com)

“Part of the National Workplace Bullying Coalition, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, we’re a network of advocates from a variety of professional backgrounds and sectors working collaboratively to build a national movement to end workplace abuse. We believe in the urgency to make workplaces safe, healthy, and inclusive for everyone. We aim to raise awareness about the pervasive harms of workplace abuse, advocate for legislation that protects workers from

abusive behaviors, build coalition and community with other grassroots efforts that align with our vision, explore and develop solutions and ideas, and make resources available to those impacted by workplace abuse, including those who've been directly targeted.”

WORKPLACE BULLYING INSTITUTE

(www.workplacebullying.org)

“WBI is . . . dedicated to the eradication of workplace bullying that combines help for individuals, research, books, public education, training for professionals-unions-employers, legislative advocacy, and consulting solutions for organizations. Established 1997.”

Resources for Survivors of Healthcare Provider Abuse

THERAPY EXPLOITATION LINK LINE (TELL)

(www.therapyabuse.org)

“TELL is a peer support network that seeks to help victims and survivors of exploitation by psychotherapists and other healthcare providers find the resources they will need to understand what has happened to them, to take action, and to heal.”

Resources for Survivors of Dating Abuse

LOVE IS RESPECT (www.loveisrespect.org)

“Highly-trained advocates offer support, information and

advocacy to young people who have questions or concerns about their dating relationships. We also provide information and support to concerned friends and family members, teachers, counselors, service providers and members of law enforcement. Free and confidential phone, live chat and texting services are available 24/7/365.”

BREAK THE CYCLE (www.breakthecycle.org)

“Break the Cycle inspires and supports young people 12–24 to build healthy relationships and create a culture without abuse. We are a culturally affirming organization that centers young people, caring adults, and communities in our prevention and intervention efforts. Our dynamic and diverse team believes that all young people deserve to live in a world where they can thrive.”

Resources for Survivors of all Types of Crime

NATIONAL CENTER FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME

(www.victimsofcrime.org)

“The National Center for Victims of Crime is a nonprofit organization that advocates for victims’ rights, trains professionals who work with victims, and serves as a trusted source of information on victims’ issues. After more than 25 years, we remain the most comprehensive national resource committed to advancing victims’ rights and helping victims of crime rebuild their lives. The National Center is, at its core, an advocacy organization committed to—and working on

behalf of—crime victims and their families. Rather than focus the entire organization's work on one type of crime or victim, the National Center addresses all types of crime.”

Resources for Suicide Prevention

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE

(www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

“The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals.”

RESOURCES FOR ADVOCATES

For faith-based organizational assessments, independent investigations, and safeguarding certifications in the United States, I recommend Godly Response to Abuse in the Christian Environment (GRACE) (www.netgrace.org).

THIRTYONE:EIGHT (www.thirtyoneeight.org)—United Kingdom
“An independent Christian charity which helps individuals, organisations, charities, faith and community groups to protect vulnerable people from abuse. Our vision is a world where every child and adult can feel, and be, safe, and to achieve this vision we work together with a network of thousands of organisations across the UK helping them to create safer places.”

CHUCK DEGROAT, author of *When Narcissism Comes to Church: Healing Your Community from Emotional and Spiritual Abuse* (www.chuckdegroat.net)

“Chuck is Professor of Counseling and Christian Spirituality at Western Theological Seminary, Holland, MI, and Co-Founder

and a Senior Fellow at Newbiggin House of Studies, San Francisco. He is a licensed therapist, author, retreat leader, and spiritual director.”

ACADEMY ON VIOLENCE & ABUSE (www.avahealth.org)

“The mission of the AVA is to advance health education and research on the recognition, treatment, and prevention of the health effects of violence and abuse throughout the lifecourse.”

JOYFUL HEART FOUNDATION (www.joyfulheartfoundation.org)

“Founded in 2004, Joyful Heart is a leading national organization with a mission to transform society’s response to sexual assault, domestic violence, and child abuse, support survivors’ healing, and end this violence forever. Joyful Heart carries out its mission through an integrated program portfolio of education and advocacy. Our work is paving the way for innovative approaches to treating trauma; igniting shifts in the way the public views and responds to sexual assault, domestic violence, and child abuse; and reforming and advancing policies and legislation to ensure access to justice for survivors.”

AMERICAN PROFESSIONAL SOCIETY ON THE ABUSE OF CHILDREN (www.apsac.org)

“As a multidisciplinary group of professionals, APSAC achieves its mission in a number of ways; most notably through expert training and educational activities, policy leadership and collaboration, and consultation that emphasize theoretically sound, evidence-based principles.”

RESOURCES FOR ADVOCATES

ZERO ABUSE PROJECT

(www.zeroabuseproject.org)

The mission of the Zero Abuse Project is “to protect children from abuse and sexual assault, by engaging people and resources through a trauma-informed approach of education, research, advocacy, and advanced technology.”

SAFE COMMUNITIES (www.safecommunitiespa.org)

An organization that helps “youth programs, schools, faith congregations, and other community organizations to develop institutional policies and cultures that can prevent child sexual abuse; educate adults about how to keep kids safe; and spread models that enable adult survivors to heal and lead in uniting communities to end child sexual abuse.”

ACES CONNECTION (www.acesconnection.com)

ACEs Connection “connects those who are implementing trauma-informed and resilience-building practices based on ACEs science. The network’s 40,000+ members share their best practices, while inspiring each other to grow the ACEs movement.”

NATIONAL CHILDREN’S ADVOCACY CENTER

(www.nationalcac.org)

“The NCAC models, promotes, and delivers excellence in child abuse response and prevention through service, education, and leadership.”

**CHILD ADVOCACY CENTRES/CHILD & YOUTH
ADVOCACY CENTRES** (www.cac-cae.ca)

There are hundreds of child advocacy centers throughout the United States and in more than 20 countries. “Child Advocacy Centres/Child & Youth Advocacy Centres (CACs/CYACs) provide a co-ordinated, multidisciplinary approach in a safe, comfortable environment to address the needs of children, youth and their families.”

DARKNESS TO LIGHT (www.d2l.org)

“Through the combination of research, education, and community advocacy, Darkness to Light uses a social behavior change approach to pioneer new training initiatives that bring child sexual abuse to the attention of the broader cultural conversation. Over the years, nearly two million adults in 76 countries have been trained to protect children through the efforts of more than 12,000 Certified Instructors and Authorized Facilitators.”

STOP IT NOW! (www.stopitnow.org)

“Stop It Now! prevents the sexual abuse of children by mobilizing adults, families and communities to take actions that protect children before they are harmed. We provide support, information and resources to keep children safe and create healthier communities. Since 1992, we have identified, refined and shared effective ways for individuals, families and communities to act to prevent child sexual abuse before children are harmed—and to get help for everyone involved.”

RESOURCES FOR ADVOCATES

#SETTHEEXPECTATION (www.settheexpectation.org)

A nonprofit “dedicated to combating sexual and physical violence through raising awareness, giving back, education and direct engagement with coaches, young men and boys in high school, collegiate and professional athletic programs.”

CENTRE FOR RESEARCH & EDUCATION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & CHILDREN (www.learningtoendabuse.ca)

The Centre’s mission statement reads, “We facilitate the collaboration of individuals, groups and institutions representing the diversity of the community to pursue research questions and training opportunities to understand and prevent violence and abuse. We serve local, national and international communities by producing useful information and tools to assist in the daily work to prevent and stop violence towards women and children and vulnerable adults.”

ADVOCATEWEB (www.advocateweb.org)

“AdvocateWeb is a nonprofit organization providing information and resources to promote awareness and understanding of the issues involved in the exploitation of persons by trusted helping professionals. We are attempting to be a helpful resource for victims/survivors, their family and friends, the general public, and for victim advocates and professionals.”

ECPAT (www.ecpat.org)

“ECPAT is the only child rights organisation that is solely focusing on ending the sexual exploitation of children.

Today, we are a growing network of over 110 civil society organisations in over 100 countries. Together we advocate for a stronger legal environment to protect children; we raise awareness among the public about the issue; we partner with the private sector to prevent their services of being misused; we research to better understand this crime and we help survivors and victims to come to terms with what has happened to them—and better understand their rights.”