

Shepherding in GBC Student Ministry

Overall Principles for a good shepherd

- Be Holy Spirit led
- Refer to the list, use common sense to differentiate between immediate or deferred response
- Be prepared to differentiate a situation differently depending on whether you have seen signs of brokenness or whether they have explicitly told you of any of the scenarios below
- Ask for wisdom and discernment - James 1:5
- Be aware: many times students will shut down if authority figures express extreme emotion
- Proper communication to staff
 - Remember direct details of the situation (specifics: time and date, what you saw/heard, when you reported it to a staff member, name of student(s) involved, how you came by the information, etc.)
 - Use definitive language (don't assume anything, try avoiding "she/he seemed okay")
 - If you're in the service, communicate in person. If you're outside of service, give a call or shoot a text
 - Air on the side of being oversensitive, and use common sense
- Develop action plan (with staff, not solo)
 - Write up plan may be needed for: bullying, fight breaking out, something illegal
- Engage with student
 - Actively Listening to the student with their story and situation
 - Be prepared to share hard truth with the end goal of sanctification/growth/health
- Involve parents (if needed and followed by staff)
- Create a follow up plan and share with your staff member

What if ...

Areas of immediate response

- Medical Emergency / Thoughts of Suicide (friend of a student who's processing) / Neglect or Abuse (sexual, physical, emotional) / Self Harm / Child Pornography (sexting, sending/receiving nudes) / Catching students in the act of sex, possession of alcohol or illegal substances, bullying, etc.
- **A student is having a medical emergency?**
 - Ask someone close to call 911
 - Stay with the student and remain calm
 - Have someone else inform the staff member
 - Ask for anyone who has a medical background to step in
- **A student is processing suicide?**
 - Listen and speak against lies, remind them of their value

- Determine whether a legal response is needed or if you need to remain on the phone because if they're in immediate danger
 - If they are in immediate danger, do not hang up. Place them on speaker phone and text someone else to call the authorities and find out there location so authorities can be sent there
 - Questions to ask ...
- Do you have a suicide plan?
- Have you thought of a plan to take your own life before?
 - Next step
- Inform staff member who will create a plan
- You and the staff member will determine whether a legal response is needed
 - Staff: Call 911 or 988 (VA suicide Hotline number), request an office trained as a member of the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT Trained)
 - A staff member will respond to you quickly to inform of next steps
- Suicide needs to be dealt with quickly

- **A student shows signs of neglect/physical or sexual abuse?**
 - Engage in a discussion with a staff member in the same day
 - Retain information that you witnessed (write it down or take note of it)
 - You and a staff member will create a game plan to engage the student in a conversation or report
 - When talking with a student, listen and remain calm
 - Ask open ended questions and always assure the student you believe them
 - The staff member will notify the student that they have to report because they are legally obligated to do so
- If a student opens up about abuse in the home in private or with others, make sure the staff is notified, and then staff will call National Domestic Violence Hotline (**1-800-552-7096**)
 - Be prepared to answer questions from CPS or other investigative services. Your job is to report, not fix

- **A student is self-harming?**
 - If you see cut marks/scars, you have no legal obligation to report anything. But as a shepherd, you should engage in conversation
 - Actively Listen to their story, and don't overreact
 - Gather details from the scenario and remember them
 - Respond with compassion and care
 - Notify a staff member on the same day
 - The staff member will develop game plan to partner with parents
 - Be prepared to have a conversation with parents and or student

- **A student is involved in child pornography?**

- Definition: "child pornography" means sexually explicit visual material which utilizes or has as a subject an identifiable minor. (this includes possession, publication, reproduction, or sale)
- Sexting, photos of nudes on a phone, DM's, snapchat's saved, screen shots, etc.
 - If witnessed, overhead, or discussed directly by a student, contact the staff member the same day, if not ASAP
- If there is reporting needed, we are legally required to do so within 24 hours
- Remember all details and record them in a written format either on your phone or somewhere else
 - The staff member will develop a game plan to contact the authorities (if necessary), the parents, and notify the student
 - Be prepared to be contacted by the authorities to share details about what you witnessed
- **I catch a student in the act of sex, self-harm, possession of alcohol or illegal substances, vaping, bullying, etc.?**
 - Stay with the student(s) to maintain safety and accountability
 - Immediately notify a staff member
 - A discussion will occur in the moment with a staff member and a game plan will be put in place
 - A staff member will contact parents to notify them of the situation or have them come and pick them up
 - In the event of a fight or bullying, have the students separate to cool off, and they should be monitored by other volunteers
 - Then have the students come together to reconcile

What if ...

Areas of deferred response

- Student watching pornography, eating disorder, anxiety, depression, questioning sexuality, defacement of church property or someone else's
- **Process for handling these scenarios ...**
 - Familiarize yourself with resources
 - Stick to the principles
 - Connect with the staff member to create a strategy for health

Resource List ...

Theology in the Raw Podcasts

- Primarily focused on sexuality, gender dysphoria, feminism, and women in the church

Axis Resources

- Parent discussions and content for them to walk their student through
- ANYTHING under the sun that students are going through

Types and Symptoms of Self Harm

- <https://www.crisistextline.org/topics/self-harm/#what-is-self-harm-1>

Signs and Symptoms of Abuse/Neglect

- [Signs & Symptoms | Child Abuse | Stanford Medicine](#)

Resources on Sexual Sin

- Pornography Books
 - Finally Free
 - Sex Matters
 - Every Young Man/Woman's battle
- LGBTQ+ Books
 - Living in a Gray World by Preston Sprinkle
 - Gay Girl Good God by Jackie Hill Perry
- Gender Dysphoria
 - <https://waltheyer.com/>
 - Theology in the raw episode 1,042: Sexuality and Gender Identities: Andrew Bunt
- Conversation resources for parents on sexuality
 - <https://www.centerforfaith.com/>