

The ABC's of Intervention



A. Acknowledge what makes a relationship healthy.

Boundary violations breed where the dynamics of *healthy* interpersonal and professional relationships are neither articulated nor modeled.

Practice self-care.

B. Beware of warning signs of possible boundary violations.

Trust inner feelings of discomfort, especially with any particular person.

Document the offending behaviors.

Beware of temptation to be “nice” or deny the behavior.

Make sure you are safe!

C. Complete Jesus' intervention steps, Matthew 18: 15-17.

1. Confront the person directly

“If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone.”

In person or by firmly-worded letter (if safer), outline calmly and clearly the offensive event(s) and what is expected in future interactions. For example: “I’m not amused by that joke, and consider it offensive. Please do not share jokes like that with me again.” Explain the plan for subsequent action if the behavior should occur again.

2. Ask for extra help from the community.

“But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses.”

Multiple voices may increase the individual's comprehension of the offense and encourage behavior change.

3. Tell the institution.

“If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church.”

Usually that involves filing a formal complaint. In response to the complaint and investigation, the church can design an intervention to help protect the complainant and reduce the offender's temptation to re-offend.

4. Separate from the person or
remove the person from the faith community

“If the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.”