Safeguarding in Faith Communities: Creating Safer, Healthier Leadership & Cultures

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Who are thirtyone:eight?

- Consultancy services
- Training
- Safeguarding Helpline
- Public policy
- APPG Safeguarding in Faith Communities
- Research

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Does leadership influence how safe children are in faith communities?

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The importance of culture and systems: a cautionary note

- No amount of good policy, procedure and training will fully embed safer practice if the culture and its supporting systems are inadequate.
- Rushing to draft and implement policies and procedures will fail if the groundwork is not prepared in advance.

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Planting in fertile ground

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Modelling Safe Behaviours
The everyday activities and behaviours that are accepted within the setting. Do those behaviours model safer practice and the importance of healthy attitudes and beliefs for all?

Establishing Good Governance
The way the setting is controlled and governed. What is most important and what attention does safer, healthier culture receive alongside monitoring performance, strategy, mission and vision?

Building Effective Structures
The written and unwritten structures, reporting lines and accountabilities that exist within the setting. How are people valued and how are unofficial or unspoken rules challenged and deconstructed to avoid the development of shadow/ghost cultures.

Listening Well
The ability to listen to accounts of past events and lived experiences when considering the setting and how it operates (e.g. how a previous disagreement, disclosure of abuse or misconduct was handled).

Communicating Well
The visual identity of the setting and what messages leaders convey in relation to its values, mission and daily practices (e.g. how the setting as a 'safe place' is communicated openly/publicly).

Managing Power
The formal and informal power within the setting. What is the role of leadership in decision-making? How empowering and inclusive is the environment (e.g. how does it encourage involvement and challenge through individual and collective voice)?

Original Model by Johnson & Scholes (2001) and Johnson, Scholes & Whittington (2012)
Adapted and reproduced by L Oakley & J Humphreys in 'Escaping the maze of spiritual abuse: creating healthy Christian cultures', SPCK, 2019

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Listening Well:
Leaders who hear

- Openness to learning from past challenges, mistakes and difficult events
- Demonstrable commitment to change and improvement where needed
- Creating opportunities to hear different perspectives and others lived experience
- Engaging with voices from the outside (customers/clients/beneficiaries/partners)

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Communicating Well:
Leaders who actively promote safer cultures and practices

- How do leaders encourage and manage discussion of low level concerns?
- Where can people see your commitment to safer practices?
- Do purpose, vision, strategy and targets eclipse a focus on safer practice?
- Do the leaders of a setting or organisation behave in a manner consistent with its messaging?

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Managing Power:

Leaders who manage power well and empower others

- Minimising opportunities for power to be misused and abused within relationships of trust
- Understanding key vulnerabilities and how these can be created by lack of awareness to power
- Leaders must nurture and empower staff as well as being nurtured themselves
- Practicing self-reflection and self-regulation to avoid causing harm and repeating mistakes.

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Building Effective Structures:

Leaders who support others and are accountable

- Structures and reporting lines are clear and facilitate transparency
- Leaders and managers are open to challenge, scrutiny, accountability and support
- Supervision and development opportunities are prioritised and encouraged
- The development of 'shadow' cultures and practices is challenged.

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Establishing Good Governance:

Leaders who operate with integrity and openness

- Policies, procedures and systems enable everyone to operate with honesty and integrity
- The role of governance and leadership in setting and maintaining good culture is clear and open to regular review and scrutiny
- Dogmatic and dictatorial approaches to leadership and governance are respectfully challenged and not allowed to flourish
- Concerns can be shared and whistle-blowing arrangements are clear for all

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Modelling Safe Behaviours:

Leaders who model safer, healthier behaviours

- 'Talk the talk and walk the walk'
- Keep your underpinning culture under constant review
- See yourselves through the eyes of others
- Challenge attitudes and behaviours that counteract agreed organisational culture and leadership models

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Safer, Healthier Culture & Systems

Modelling Safe Behaviours
The everyday activities and behaviours that are accepted within the setting. Do those behaviours model safer practice and the importance of healthy attitudes and beliefs for all?

Establishing Good Governance
The way the setting or organisation is controlled and governed. What is most important and what attention does safer, healthier culture receive alongside monitoring performance, strategy, mission and vision?

Building Effective Structures
The written and unwritten structures, reporting lines and accountabilities that exist within the setting or organisation. How are people valued and how are unofficial or unspoken rules challenged and deconstructed to avoid the development of shadow/ghost cultures.

Listening Well
The ability of the organisation to listen to accounts of past events and lived experiences when considering the setting or organisation and how it operates (e.g. how a previous disclosure of abuse was handled).

Communicating Well
The visual identity of the setting or organisation and what messages it conveys in relation to its values, mission and daily practices (e.g. how the setting as a 'safe place' is communicated to individuals and publicly).

Managing Power
The formal and informal power within the setting or organisation. What is the role of leadership in decision-making? How empowering and inclusive is the environment (e.g. how does it encourage involvement and challenge through people's individual and collective voice)?

Original Model by Johnson & Scholes (2001) and Johnson, Scholes & Whittington (2012)
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Safe Leaders:

- Speak up
- Put survivors first
- Conceal nothing
- Take responsibility
- Make change happen
- Hold each other accountable

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