



## **WG2 Faith & GBV - Learning Brief**

# Child Safety in Faith Communities: Moving from Words to Actions

## **How can we help children thrive without violence in faith communities?**

Discover the four learnings that emerged from discussion between survivors, faith leaders and child sector professionals.

[Read the learning brief](#)





## **Learning 1: Listen to, and involve, survivors of child sexual abuse**

- **Listen to survivors** as part of supporting their self-healing process.
- **Involve survivors to hold** faith leaders and faith institutions **accountable.**
- Involve survivors in the **planning and design** of prevention programmes and child safeguarding systems.
- Address the **abuse of spiritual power** that leads to survivors being **silenced or denied justice.**





## **Learning 1: Listen to, and involve, survivors of child sexual abuse**

***“Who would I have been, if I had not been abused? I lost almost half of my life due to early child (sexual) abuse. What would my life and the life of my children have been like if I had been treated with dignity and respect during my childhood? Trauma is always intergenerational.”***

Suzie Greco, survivor of  
child sexual abuse





## Learning 2: Engage faith leaders through a faith-informed call to action

- Faith leaders **should speak out** and **embody action** on child protection.
- Point to the **positive beliefs** faith traditions have that support **non-discrimination, accountability and doing no harm**.
- **Educate** faith leaders on **child safeguarding** as part of their theological curriculum.

*“It is not enough to say, ‘we care about children’, we must demonstrate this care through **actionable safeguarding measures** in our places of worship, schools and communities.”* (Rabbi Diana Gerson)





## Learning 3: Go beyond policies only to create cultures of child safeguarding

- **Create safe spaces to foster dialogue** with faith leaders around the risks children face.
- **Train** a range of both **female and male faith leaders** as first responders, not only those who are ordained.
- **Involve children** in developing the wider systems that aim to protect them.

*“Children need to be able to identify what is violence and what they can do. They have to be active participants in their own safety.” (Fatuma, Muslim, Uganda)*





## 8 Trauma Informed Care Principles

1. **Create safety** for children when they report abuse.
2. Build **trust** and **transparency** with children.
3. **Give voice and space** to child survivors.
4. **Collaborate** with the child to decide next steps.
5. Offer the child **choices, control and agency**.
6. **Build resilience** through affirming the child.
7. Be aware of **social biases** that may affect your own response.
8. Identify **peer mentors** to support the child.

By Daniella Moosaji,  
Director of Arise South Africa





## Learning 4: Address forms of theological misuse that can do further harm

- **Reject** the use of sacred texts and rituals to instil **fear, shame or guilt.**
- **Reject misuse of sacred texts** to legitimise harmful practices such as child marriage.
- Challenge theological **misapplications of mercy and forgiveness** to perpetrators without accountability and **justice for victims.**

*“Mercy belongs to the victims, not the perpetrators. True healing begins only when accountability paves the way forward.”* (Tanya, Christian, Portugal)



[Read the learning brief](#)