

## **RED FLAGS: PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN**

There is no single list that would automatically and accurately predict either potential offender or potential victim, but there are things that should be considered. The listings below are not in any order of priority.

### ***Possible Victims***

- A child who chooses to consistently spend time with a specific adult over time with other children
- A child who is frequently alone, secretive, and/or anti-social
- A child who experiences a rapid drop in school achievement or displays a significant lack of interest in what was before a positive experience
- A child whose parents spend little or no time with him or her
- A child who engages in a display of inappropriate behavior or language—especially if either is beyond normal responses expected for one that age
- A child who speaks of suicide
- A child who self-mutilates

### ***Possible Offenders***

- An adult who consistently seeks out the company of specific children over time in peer relationships (a mirror of the child who chooses an adult over peer activity)
- An adult who does not have appropriate boundaries in place when speaking with children -- speaks to them as adults
- An adult who is insecure among adults—difficult to recognize but usually there is a sense of aloofness held when in the presence of other adults
- An adult who frequently rewards a child with things the child might not otherwise have
- An adult who appears emotionally attached to a child without a reason for that attachment

### ***Preventative Measures for Parents***

- Communicate with your children and let them know that they can share anything with you
- Avoid heavy-handed judgment when they share with you
- Recognize normal “hero” worship children have for teachers, coaches, ministers, etc. Just because a child speaks of one person often is not a sign that anything unusual is happening. A healthy child will still have good peer relationships
- Be involved with your child without controlling every movement, every activity
- Be good role models for your children of healthy love—especially show them the love and respect a man has for his wife. Anything else will clearly be seen by a child as unhealthy and therefore not desirable.
- Nothing is more important to a child than to be loved. If this love is available at home, there is little likelihood that a distorted form of love would be preferred.
- Recognize normal healthy human sexual development. Sex as a secret to be hidden only enhances the desire to find out at any cost.