

SAFEGUARD [H]ER

A VICTIM-CENTRIC, VICTIM-LED,
VICTIM-PACED METHOD OF CARE

Help[H]er

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> We believe
> safeguarding is an
> expression of faithful
> shepherding and wise
> stewardship.

dr. ann maree goudzwaard

Mission

Help[H]er exists to provide trauma-specialized advocacy, education, and navigation for women in crisis in the church: guiding them toward safety, agency, and restored dignity.

Vision

A future where the church reflects the justice, mercy, and care of Christ for women in crisis.

Core Values

Victim Centric, Victim Led, Victim Paced

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The Need



In 2017, in the wake of the #MeToo movement, Christian writer and abuse survivor Emily Joy Allison created the hashtag #ChurchToo to share her experience of abuse within a Christian context. While both movements gained national attention, #ChurchToo brought the issue of abuse out of the shadows of Hollywood and into the pews of evangelical churches. What became unmistakably clear is that Christian women are not immune to the same patterns of harm seen in the broader culture.

However, #ChurchToo revealed more than the presence of abuse within Christian organizations. It exposed how often churches mishandle, minimize, or conceal it. What surfaced was not merely the moral failure of isolated individuals, but systemic breakdowns in institutional response, leadership practices and, at times, theological application.

Research indicates that abuse rates within church populations do not meaningfully differ from those in broader society, yet many cases remain unreported. The church faces a significant abuse crisis, while leaders remain underprepared to respond effectively.

Safeguard [H]er equips churches with a multidisciplinary approach to abuse prevention, response, accountability, and survivor care—integrating governance, trauma-informed practice, theology, and organizational systems to help leaders respond with wisdom, clarity, compassion, and justice.

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Who We Are



Help[H]er understands both sides of the safeguarding equation: the experience of women harmed in Christian contexts and the systems churches rely on to respond.

Our staff, board members, and volunteers bring experience supporting women in crisis and helping churches navigate complex situations involving abuse, harm, and institutional response. That perspective allows us to identify not only where policies may fall short, but how those policies are likely to function when a real crisis occurs.

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What We Do



We equip churches and Christian organizations to respond wisely to abuse through trauma-specialized education, advocacy, and multidisciplinary safeguarding systems.

When institutions respond well, we support and strengthen those efforts.

Our comprehensive safeguarding framework helps leaders respond to disclosures of crisis and abuse with clarity, consistency, and care. These structures ensure that alleged victims, victims, and survivors are connected to appropriate support.

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Why Safeguard [H]er?



Most churches have policies, but few have an integrated safeguarding system.

Christian organizations today face increasing legal, ethical, pastoral, and reputational risks when responding to crises and abuse.

The Safeguard [H]er comprehensive framework is designed to strengthen the organization's entire safeguarding system—not merely individual policies.

Through a multidisciplinary collaboration we help Christian organizations build a framework that is legally informed, survivor-centered, operationally practical, and theologically faithful.

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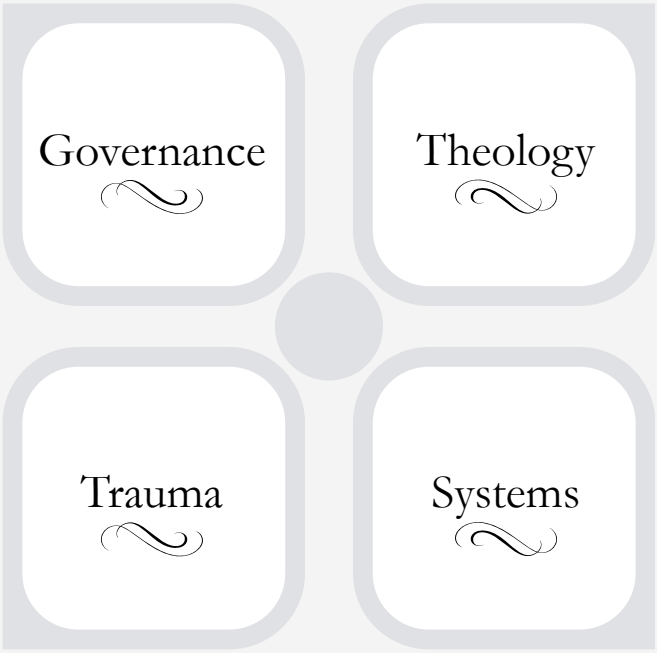
An Integrated Approach



Safeguard [H]er integrates governance, theology, trauma-specialized expertise, and organizational systems into a unified framework where every policy, decision, and process works together.

Each policy is reviewed
through three complementary lenses,

Trauma-Specialized Advocate
Licensed Attorney
Trauma-Specialized Clinician

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Policy Evaluations



governance

Role clarity
Documentation
Accountability

trauma

Safety
Confidentiality
Response

theology

Leadership
Due process
Justice

systems

Implementation
Consistency
Risk management

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policies reviewed

Child Protection
Adult Abuse Response
Domestic Violence Response
Sexual Misconduct
Spiritual Abuse Response
Abuse Reporting
Mandatory Reporting Procedures
Third-Party Reporting
Non-Retaliation
Survivor Care
Trauma-Informed Response Guidelines
Victim Advocate Referral
Independent Investigation
Code of Conduct for Leaders
Conflict of Interest
Whistleblower

outcomes

Protect children and vulnerable adults
Respond well to crises and abuse disclosures
Strengthen legal and ethical compliance
Reduce institutional mishandling
Improve leadership confidence
Increase survivor trust
Promote organizational transparency
Build a culture of safety

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What We Provide



assessment

Executive summary
Gap analysis
Policy review

training

Leadership
Staff
Volunteers

revised framework

Policy manual
Reporting flowcharts
Implementation guide

optional

Case consultation
Annual reviews
Advocacy partnership

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timeline

Phase 1
Document collection

Phase 2
Multidisciplinary review

Phase 3
Policy revision

Phase 4
Framework integration

Phase 5
Leadership presentation

Phase 6
Implementation support

Typical timeline:
12–20 weeks

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Why Help[H]er?



Churches respond according to the systems they have built.

Help[H]er brings together expertise in,

Trauma-Specialized Advocacy
Legal Review
Clinical Expertise
Ecclesiastical Systems

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Faithful Shepherding Begins
With Wise Safeguarding

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