

REPORTING ALLEGED CHILD ABUSE

EXCUSES GIVEN FOR NOT REPORTING

REASONS TO REPORT

What if the allegation is untrue?

False accusations are rare in ministry settings. The reporting of an incident begins an investigation process to determine what actually happened. The investigation will either substantiate the allegation or clear the person against whom the allegation is made.

We don't want to get involved. We are afraid of the negative impact on all involved.

The long-term negative impact and trauma on the victim is only heightened if the incident remains a secret. If the allegations are true, other children may be victimized by the same perpetrator because we were afraid of the fallout.

The person against whom allegations have been made is a prominent member/leader of the church and community. "They would not do something like that."

In many cases, the perpetrator is counting on the fact that his or her reputation will insulate them from being caught. This is part of the power they use against a "powerless" victim. Failing to make a report means that we value the adult perpetrator over the child victim.

Clergy are not "mandatory reporters" according to Georgia Law.

While clergy are not on the list of those required to make a report, clergy are not forbidden from making a report. Our Conference Chancellor recommends that clergy report any allegations that involve sexual abuse where mandatory reporting is required of others.

As a Pastor, the information I received was privileged and confessional in nature.

¶1341.5 in *The Book of Discipline 2004* frees the Pastor to report suspected abuse even if the information was received in the confessional conversation.