

# Spotlight on Safe Environment

2021 Issue 8

## Safe Environment :

Did you know in 2020 Unicameral in Nebraska passed a “grooming” law, Statute 79-879. This law makes grooming a crime if a pattern can be proven.

### What is grooming?

Grooming is a common tool used by those who’s intent is to sexually abuse kids. Some red flag behaviors may include such things as:

1. Continuously targeting specific kids for special attention.
2. Slowly isolating a kid from family and friends: emotionally and physically. For example, finding reasons for isolated one-on-one interactions.
3. Gradually crossing physical boundaries. For example, making kids sit in their laps; “accidentally” touching private parts.
4. Encouraging a kid to keep secrets from family and friends.

One thing to remember is that grooming takes time. Most predators won’t risk getting caught by pushing a victim to fast. One of the best defenses against grooming behaviors is to talk to kids early and often about their bodies and boundaries. Let them know if anyone makes them feel uncomfortable they can come to you or another trusted adult.



### Did you know?

In the United States, Catholic .....

- **3,100,151** Children received safety training
- **2,538,413** adults received Safe Environment Training
- **2,557,934** background checks WERE performed

(2020 USSCB Annual Report)

### Circle of Care Is Making an Impact in Central America

In 2020, Sister Mary Rachel from the Diocese of Belize inquired about using the adult safe environment training in her home parish. Child abuse and neglect is still a taboo subject for many in Belize. She wanted to empower the adults in her community with the knowledge necessary to protect children. The Archdiocese of Omaha was very happy to gift the *Circle of Care* adult training program to her.

She has since reported back to us that not only have they been able to train adult mission volunteers but adults in other Belizian parishes and schools. In addition, they have also trained faculty at the local Catholic Junior College. She says, “I have been very edified by how this program has been received and how it clearly expresses our expectations for those who work with our children and youth.”

### Safe Environment Champion:

Deacon Gregorio Elizalde

Deacon Gregorio is not only the Manager of the Hispanic Ministry office for the Archdiocese of Omaha, but one of Safe Environment’s leading champions within the Hispanic community. Deacon sees the value and necessity of helping the Latino community in Omaha become Safe Environment certified to be able to volunteer and work with children in the archdiocese. He holds trainings in Spanish monthly. As a member of the GRACES committee he has valuable input for our efforts. Thanks Deacon Gregorio!!!

### Safe Environment Coordinators

Each parish and school has a Safe Environment Coordinator. This is your go to person to find out when your certification expires, when there is a training or if you have forgotten your CMG account login information. Make a note to yourself to find out who this person is in your parish or school.



### Circle of Grace Corner:

One of the most important concepts of Circle of Grace is helping **children** identify “trusted adults” in their lives. These “trusted adults” will include their parents or other caregivers but it is important that there are others as well. The more adults in a child’s safety net makes more people for the child to turn to if there is a problem. The question then is, how do I help my child identify “trusted adults”?

A couple of questions to ask your child when having a conversation about “trusted adults” are, “who is someone that makes you feel safe?” and “who is someone that listens when you talk to them?”. Another important aspect to remember, this special person needs to be available and aware your child has identified them as one of their “trusted adults”.



### Check it out:

Smart GEN Society - [smartgensociety.org](http://smartgensociety.org)

This Omaha based website has many helpful resources for parents and teens. The goal of SmartGen is to help parents and youth navigate and make choices in the digital world. There are guides about the latest technology trends and apps that youth are using. There are resources for those dealing with bullying, emotional issues, or thoughts of suicide. There are also downloadable guides on topics such as TikTok, smart digital dating, and remote learning. This is a great resource for the whole family.

## Blessing from our Circle of Grace to yours!

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ONE CHURCH  
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