**Module D – Situational and Organizational Factors Related**

**to Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests**

**Outline, Goals and Comments, Discussion Questions, References, and Sources**

**Outline**

1. Situational Factors: Settings and Circumstances of Sexual Abuse (D-4 to D-17)
2. Settings Where Victims First Met Priests Who Abused Them (D-5 to D-9)
3. Physical Locations of Abuse (D-10 to D-13)
4. Circumstances and Timing of Abuse (D-14 to D-17)
5. Organizational Factors Related to Abuse (D-18 to D-23)
6. Priests’ Primary Duty or Role at Time of Abuse (D-19 to D-23)
7. Additional Observations Related to Situational and Organizational Circumstances (D-24 to D-25)
8. Summary of Situational and Organizational Factors Related to Sexual Abuse of Minors

(D-26)

1. Discussion Questions (D-27)

**Goals and Comments**

The goal of Module D is to gain an understanding of situational and organizational factors related to abuse. It is striking to notice that nearly two-thirds of sexual abuse of minors took place in a church-related setting. The physical location of most abuse was on church property or in residences. The timing was usually during or after church services and parish events or at recreational and social events. Note that most of the abuse occurred in ordinary situations where priests find themselves every day as they go about their ministry. Organizational factors are of a similar type in that over 40 percent of abuse was perpetrated by associate pastors and 25 percent by pastors in parish situations. Lesser percentages were represented by priests in residence in a parish, in diocesan offices, schools, and chaplaincies. The fact of greatest importance here is that most sexual abuse of minors by clergy takes place in relationship with and in proximity to parish ministry, where most priests spend the greater part of their active life.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Considering the settings and locations where abuse took place, what precautions should priests and other church leaders take about where they meet young people?
2. Taking into account the circumstances and timing that were most common when abuse was perpetrated, what instructions should be given to those who are or soon will be serving in ministry?
3. What other safeguards should be considered in discussions relative to the places and situations where abuse has occurred?

**Titles of Slides and References**

D-1: Module D

D-2: Title Slide

D-3: Main Sources of Data

D-4: I. Situational Factors: Settings and Circumstances of Sexual Abuse

D-5: Settings Where Victims First Met Priests Who Abused Them

Notes: *Causes and Context*, p. 108

D-6: A. Church/Parish Related

D-7: B. Teacher/School Related

D-8: C. Home of Victim or Relative of Victim

D-9: D. Other Institutions

D-10: Physical Locations of Abuse

Notes: *Causes and Context*, p. 109

D-11: A. Church/Parish Related

D-12: B. Residences

D-13: C. Other Locations

D-14: Circumstances/Timing of Abuse

Notes: *Causes and Context*, p. 110

D-15: A. Church/Parish Related

D-16: B. Social Event/Other Recreation

D-17: C. Other

D-18: II. Organizational Factors Relating to Abuse

D-19: Priest’s Primary Duty or Role at Time of Abuse

Notes: *Causes and Context*, p. 111

D-20: A. Pastoral/Parish Role

D-21: B. Other Clerical Role

D-22: C. School/Teaching Role

D-23: D. Other

D-24: Additional Observations Related to Situational and Organizational Circumstances, 1

D-25: Additional Observations Related to Situational and Organizational Circumstances, 2

D-26: Summary of Situational and Organizational Factors Related to Sexual Abuse of Minors

D-27: Discussion Questions

**Sources:**

This module and others prepared for use in seminaries and schools of theology are based primarily on the two reports presented to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops by the John Jay College Research Team, The City University of New York: *The Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States*, 1950-2010, March, 2011 and *The Nature and Scope of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests and Deacons in the United States, 1950-2002*, February 2004.

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