

Roadmap for Churches in Crisis

THE ROAD AHEAD

Phase 1 · Discovery
WEEKS 1-4

Face it. Protect the harmed.
Tell the truth.

Phase 2 · Transition
MONTHS 2-6

Let the investigation finish.
Tend the grief. Begin real reform.

Phase 3 · A New Reality
MONTHS 6-YEAR 2

Make it structural. Sustain long-term care.
Become a healthier church.

PRESSURES YOU'LL FACE

- **The Legal Pressure** — Legal teams will want you to say less, admit nothing, and protect the organization. That is their job. It is not the same as protecting the people.
- **The Loyalty Pressure** — Some will minimize what happened, defend the leader, or push to move on. That is grief and loyalty misapplied.
- **The Financial Pressure** — Financial concerns will make managing the situation quietly feel responsible. It isn't.
- **The Internal Pressure** — Your own exhaustion will whisper that it would be easier to look away. Every step forward is brave.



FIRST 72 HOURS (or as quickly as possible)

- **Check mandatory reporting obligations**, especially if minors are involved.
- **Name a Survivor Liaison** — one person whose sole role is to accompany and advocate for the survivor(s).
- **Contact an independent investigator**. No prior relationship with the institution.
- **Form a Crisis Care Team** — practical care for those impacted.
- **Remove the perpetrator (or pastor)** from the church community immediately. His ongoing care belongs with leaders beyond this congregation.
- **Draft an honest public statement** that does not minimize, spiritualize, or deflect responsibility.
- **Engage outside support for your leadership team**. Your attorney is protecting the institution. You need someone caring for and protecting your people.

KEY DISTINCTIONS

- Sexual Misconduct ≠ Affair
- Internal investigation ≠ External investigation
- Forgiveness ≠ Reconciliation ≠ Restoration to ministry

FIRST, DO NO HARM

- **Report to civil authorities** if a crime may have occurred — especially involving a minor. Don't let believing the best or institutional concern delay this.
- **Guard the survivor's identity**. Never identify a victim publicly. Their confidentiality is always theirs to keep.
- **Show care**. Let the survivor set the terms and choose the location of any conversations. Never ask a survivor to meet with the person accused of harming them.
- **Default to a nonjudgmental, kind presence**. Trauma fragments. Trust that the investigation will clarify the truth.



Not sure where to start? Your first consultation is free—reach out.

Full guide:

