

The Investigation Recommendation Implementation Committee would like to provide a more detailed update regarding our work through the 6 findings and subsequent recommendations from the External Investigation. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to the committee through Pastor Cheryl Guinness at cguinness@rexdalealliance.ca.

Spring 2022:

- Investigation Recommendations Implementation Committee commissioned by the RAC Board of Elders and is formed, consisting of Pastor TJ, 2 Elders, 2 staff and 2 lay leaders and included:
 - Consultation with Eastern Canadian District of The Alliance Canada
 - Consultation with CART from the National Ministry Centre of The Alliance Canada
 - Consultation with GRACE (Godly Response to Abuse in the Christian Environment) organization regarding policies, procedures & training in our Safe Church Program
- Committee has met 7 times so far:
 - May 1
 - May 15
 - May 29
 - June 11
 - August 14
 - August 28
 - September 18

Update on Recommendations:

- **Finding #1 – Abuse, Trauma, and Sexuality were Overly Spiritualized**
 - It was recommended that *a forum be created and those who have experienced abuse from the church to be invited to share their personal experiences and their healing process openly with the community if desired. The forum should be facilitated by a neutral party, who will ensure that everyone is safe and feels heard.*
 - Church leadership will be present at a listening forum on October 16th and survivors have been invited to share their story in whatever way is best & appropriate for them. We are gathering input from both survivors and professionals as to what format will be safest and most beneficial to those sharing their stories.
 - Healing to be pursued through extensive training program, rather than over spiritualizing trauma.
- **Finding #2 – Responses to Allegations were not Trauma-Informed**
 - Access to counseling has been made available for Survivors.
 - Elders, Staff, Recommendations Committee, and other key church leaders participated in a training day aimed at becoming more trauma-informed and trauma aware. This training day was held on September 17. One of the many beneficial take-aways from the day was the scope and magnitude of the topic, and the impact trauma has on victims, helping us realize that one training day will not be sufficient. We plan to do further training with professional guidance.
 - We recognize that we have a history of over spiritualizing trauma rather than pursuing healing of the whole person. As a result, we recognized our insufficiency to lead the training and had our trauma training day led by a professional psychotherapist who works in the area of trauma.
 - There was required “homework” for the leadership in preparation for the training day, completed over the summer and fall.

- Ongoing training & educational resources regarding abuse, trauma & prevention (through Safe Church) are being curated with the goal of making them available to the broader church community to assist in creating a safer, more caring, more trauma-informed culture.
- **Finding #3 - Wounds were Allowed to Fester**
 - Personalized letters were sent to each Survivor.
 - We are exploring ways for Survivors to have a voice into the changes we are implementing.
 - We are looking to provide opportunities for both the church leadership and the broader congregation to lament, confess and heal regarding all kinds of trauma. This will be encouraged during an upcoming lament service.
- **Finding #4 - Policies and Processes at Rexdale Alliance Church Protected the Powerful at the Expense of the Vulnerable**
 - Contracted G.R.A.C.E to provide extensive review & input into our current policies and procedures for updating to best practices
 - Perpetrators of abuse will be immediately removed from positions of trust and offenses reported immediately to police.
 - All known historic incidents of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct were reported to police.
 - ECD Clergy Sexual Abuse & Prevention Training required for all licensed workers (ie: clergy).
 - National Ministry Centre CART available for reporting clergy sexual abuse with a link placed on the RAC website.
 - Our Safe Church policy underwent consult and review, including but not limited to new policy regarding Adult-to-Adult abuse regardless if the perpetrator is paid staff, in leadership or a volunteer also being reviewed by GRACE. Abuse of any kind will be taken seriously, and the appropriate authorities involved.
 - Standing agenda item on Elder's Board meetings: 'alerts' to be aware of.
 - RAC will follow the Canadian Law and will report sexual abuse to police immediately upon being aware of it.
- **Finding #5 – Lack of Training**
 - Our Safe Church policies & procedures are being updated, including recommendations from GRACE and input from ZAP (Zero Abuse Project).
 - New training was implemented over the Summer / Fall for all leadership that covers abuse, trauma & prevention and more.
 - RAC refers out to professional counseling as none of the leadership has professional counseling qualifications or credentials. We can provide spiritual guidance and pastoral care but we recognize that we are not qualified for dealing with trauma or similar cases and our efforts to help may actually hurt.
 - New training to be in place this ministry year for all leadership that covers abuse, trauma & prevention and more; with newly hired Staff and newly appointed Elders to receive training.
 - We are exploring the possibility of a 16-week course in trauma-awareness, trauma-care, and trauma-recovery, led by a professional trauma-trained therapist, offered to those in our church who may benefit from such a setting.
- **Finding #6 – Lack of Transparency in Church Structures**
 - A whistleblower policy will be a part of the new Safe Church policies and procedures
 - The External Investigation Results were posted publicly on RAC website.

- We have practiced and maintained full transparency and disclosure of investigation, process, findings, and resulting changes with both C&MA District and National Offices.

There is still much work to do, but we continue to seek to improve and become a safer church. Thank you for your ongoing prayers to this end.

Kind regards,

The IRIC Members