

CREATE A MAP

Of your office space

PURPOSE

Evaluating the place where individuals will be most vulnerable with us through their lens helps create safety and empathy. It allows us to communicate more clearly with those we intend to serve.

ACTIVITY

Create a map of your office, or the space where you would meet with people who are in need of individual support. The map does not need to be perfect or exactly to scale, but do note the following items and considerations:

- Entrances and exits
 - Are any of them locked?
 - Are they clearly marked?
 - What is on the other side?
- Windows
 - Do they have blinds? Curtains?
 - Who can see in if those are opened?
- Seating options
 - What is your chair like? The visitor's chair?
 - Do you have multiple seating options?
 - Are there items to encourage comfort nearby, such as throw pillows, blankets, fidget toys for nervous hands, or water bottles?
- Desk and other large furniture
 - If you sit behind the desk, what message does that send? For some survivors, this would feel like a reminder of power and authority. For others, this may create a barrier of safety between the two of you.
- The exterior space - reception area, parking lot, etc.
 - How is the lighting? Are there places that would make someone feel vulnerable on their way in?



- Are there loud noises that might make someone’s anxiety increase?
- Who greets people? What is their demeanor? Do they have proper training in responding to those in need of care? Do they clearly understand church policies?
- What does the art in this space communicate?
 - What would it say to someone who has experienced abuse in a church community?
 - What would it say to someone who has never been part of a church?

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

After completing your map, spend some time prayerfully considering these questions:

1. What are some simple changes I can make to my space to make it feel more welcoming and safe?
2. What options can I offer to someone who wants to meet with me?
 - a. Door open or closed?
 - b. Something to eat or drink?
 - c. Choice of seating?
 - d. The freedom to leave at any time, or to pause the conversation?
 - e. The option of having someone in the room, or waiting right outside?
3. Is there someone else I can invite to help me evaluate this space in light of these questions? A survivor in our church community? Another staff member? A trusted member? A therapist?

NEXT STEPS

1. Create a map of the children’s wing. Walk through and notice if there are any empty rooms which are regularly unlocked, a place where someone could access without permission.
2. Sit in your sanctuary and imagine you are a trauma survivor attending for the first time. What would feel comfortable and welcoming? Where would you sit? What might make you cautious or concerned? When would you leave the service?

