

WA/NID/AK Guidelines Team Update:

This is a letter sent out by a team that collaborated with professionals and the ministry to form a set of guidelines over the last several months. Last week overseer Darryl Doland made it clear that he would not be adopting these guidelines.

Attached links:

*Background to guidelines:

<https://drive.google.com/.../1yD4lMtYZf4ti8jN9sQ2.../view...>

*Summary of Guidelines:

<https://drive.google.com/.../1wcbt-IM.../view...>

*FAQs:

<https://drive.google.com/.../1gqNc5ngCtq.../view...>

*WaNIIdAk Proposed Guidelines:

<https://drive.google.com/.../1Tecx3LwdMxSh0K9n.../view...>

Dear all,

We want to acknowledge the hurt and suffering of all victim survivors in our fellowship, known and unknown. We see you, we hear you, we believe you, and we grieve alongside you for the pain you have experienced. Thank you for your bravery and your courage in being on the front line in our current crisis.

Each of us on the guidelines team were drawn to serve in this manner because of a deep love for God, a love for others, especially the vulnerable, and a desire to see the necessary changes to making this fellowship safer for all. Over the past five months, we have poured our hearts, and, importantly, our expertise as professionals into these guidelines. The final product is a culmination of countless hours of research, discussion, thought, prayer, and consultation, and we firmly believe that it adheres to best practices in the reporting and addressing of CSA and SA.

It was our hope and prayer that there would be a unity shown forth to the fellowship from the guidelines team and the ministry that would exemplify a deep care for victims, an unwavering commitment to the vulnerable, and a recognition and adjustment of unsafe practices. In the past month, following open discussion with the staff, the opportunity for the ministry to ask questions, give feedback, or express concerns, and continued conversations had within the ministry themselves, progress stalled. Ultimately, we provided a finalized copy of the guidelines according to professional standards and best practices, and this has been met with resistance from some of the ministry.

The final decision was made to not implement the guidelines our group produced. Rather, the ministry decided to pursue brief, ambiguous guidelines that rely on the workers to make decisions in conjunction with the elders, and the safety team should that team continue to exist. These shifts away from professional expertise while allowing for ministry-based decisions about the handling of CSA/SA are not something this guidelines team can support or condone. We found it imperative to release the official version of our guidelines for the purpose of transparency and in the hope of encouraging the ministry, and the fellowship at large, to adopt practices that promote safety. We want to make it abundantly clear that the attached version of the guidelines is the only product of our work that has our endorsement and support.

Even though these guidelines were not ultimately accepted or implemented, we believe that we can each take on the responsibility to make many of these things common practice and to keep each other accountable. We encourage you to read these guidelines as an educational tool, keep them as a reference guide, and most importantly use these concepts to help guide these difficult natural choices and conversations with people. We encourage the friends and the ministry to use this document to make safe choices. We implore everyone to please be mindful of the children and vulnerable among us and to do all we can to protect them. We can all show love by raising our voices in support of survivors and by all being active to hold offenders accountable for their actions.

It has been a privilege to be a part of this team and to dedicate our efforts into the hope for a safer fellowship. Our hearts are grieved at the direction this journey has gone, and for those who are mourning, we mourn with you.

We are sending out four documents: (1) the background leading to the creation of guidelines; (2) a summary of the guidelines; (3) frequently asked questions (FAQs); and (4) the full WaNidAk proposed guidelines. Please feel free to reach out to us in the future if you need assistance, have questions, or have any concerns.

With care,

The WaNidAk Guidelines Team
