

## A New Twist for DRG

Since the inception of the Diocesan Response Group it has gone from just that, a group that “responds” to concerns of safety of the people of the Diocese to planning policies and trainings designed to reduce the need for ‘response’.

More recently the committee, Advisory to the Bishop, has begun to turn its’ attention to safety and security of clergy and lay employees of the Diocese. Many of us, especially in the roles of clergy, work in environments that are isolated from help, should such become necessary in the process of delivering support and care to those who seek our help. Over coming months the DRG members will be offering suggestions to reduce our risk in such situations. This is the first of these.

The first step in risk reduction is the raising of our individual awareness of the situations in which we may find ourselves and, in which others, purposely or by virtue of mental illness, pose a risk to our bodily safety. These may seem elementary when brought to mind but each is important to our safety.

1. Take an inventory of the place in which you work.
  - a. Is there good outside lighting in the parking lot and around the church entrance-way.
  - b. Are the shrubs around the doorway sufficiently cut-back so that they don’t provide a ‘hiding-place’?
  - c. When in the church alone do you keep the door to the church locked?
  - d. Do you have a means of knowing who is outside the door before you open it? (window, monitoring system?)
  - e. While seated in your office do you have a line of sight to the door or do you have a mirror to provide that view?
  - f. Ensure that you always have a clear pathway from where you are seated to the door when you are with someone for counseling.
2. When you are meeting with someone in the Church or at a home do you arrange for someone (spouse, peer) to expect a call from you by a specific time.
  - a. f you have concerns about the risks associated with the person with whom you are meeting do you make a plan for the person with whom you’ve left the message to call authorities if they haven’t heard from you by a specific time?
3. Is there a window in the door of the office where you meet with people?
4. Do you have a cell phone for times when you are travelling beyond your home base?