



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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Press Release

DA Morrissey meets with clergy to help victims of abuse

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More than sixty clergy members from across Norfolk County attended a training session hosted by Norfolk District Attorney Michael W. Morrissey this week to learn how best to recognize even subtle signs of domestic violence, child abuse and elder abuse – and how to tap into the right resources when a member of their congregations needs help.

“Responsible citizens and community leaders are often the best partners law enforcement can have,” District Attorney Morrissey said after the half-day seminar, which was held at Lombardo’s in Randolph. “The best resources are meaningless if they are not put to work, and it is often leaders like members of the clergy who are best positioned to see where help is needed.”

Speakers addressing the signs of domestic violence, and how clergy can best support victims, were Erin Miller from Newton Wellesley Hospital and Jennifer Yerdon from DOVE. Kris Klasby from South Shore Mental Health talked about clues that a child may be suffering child sexual abuse, and how clergy can respond. State Police Sgt. Dave McSweeney, who supervises computer forensic investigations for the DA’s office presented on how technology can be used to groom and exploit victims. His suggestions will help make the religious community aware of steps they can take to protect their congregations.

Assistant District Attorney Phil Burr, Tze-Wan Stern from South Shore Elder Services and State Police Sgt. Tim Grant from the Disabled Persons Protection Commission explored elder abuse, the abuse of the disabled and financial exploitation.

Assistant District Attorney Anne Yas moderated and ADA Michele Armour, who heads Morrissey’s Family Violence/Special Victims Unit, gave a presentation on the group’s obligations as mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse. She was joined by Susan Devine, Regional Counsel for the Department of Children and Families.

“There is often a barrier to asking for help in elder abuse, sexual abuse, and domestic abuse – that is something the abuser and victimizer counts on,” Morrissey said. “The trust that your congregations have in you make you powerful voices in their decisions to ask for help. It is our hope today to provide you with all that we can to make your counsel to those people as informed and effective as possible.” Morrissey thanked all those who took time out of their busy schedules to participate in this valuable training.



RECOGNIZING AND REPORTING ABUSE IN OUR COMMUNITIES An Overview for Faith-Based Programs

Wednesday, November 7, 2012 | Lombardo’s Randolph, MA

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