

Dear Church Leaders ,

One thing that has bothered me all these years was that I felt that those who were supposed to protect me did not. If you are a Youth Leader ,Primary Worker and/or a Parent please consider the following:

1. It is not impolite or rude for children or young adults to refuse affection . Children and Young Adults need the opportunity to build the skills for positive boundaries later on. Show support by allowing to them to make the choice to physically touch someone else.(Hugs,Kisses etc).Consent is for everyone!!
2. Christ said we should love our neighbors as ourselves. Often in our (mormon) culture we take that as meaning that we need to sacrifice our emotional and mental health to make someone happy. False. If we truly love ourselves and others then we will make boundaries and respect the boundaries others are setting regardless of age.
3. Learn to listen without judgement : When I disclosed what happened ,I was asked why I was alone with this young man,what I was wearing and what I said to "stimulate those feelings within him". When someone discloses abuse and other serious issues,they need a voice of love and support. Placing Blame only shuts the person down and you become another heavy brick in the bag of shame they are carrying.
4. We have many times been taught to be prepared. This includes understanding how to be a better advocate for those in society,at church and beyond who have no voice. Learn about how to report abuse and what the signs are. Read stories of other survivors. Think about how your actions (or lack of action) is feeding into rape culture

Sincerely Yours,

Melissa T. King, Conqueror .