

## **VICTIM APOLOGY LETTER GUIDELINES**

This assignment is designed for you to attempt to communicate your understanding of the damage that did to your victim(s) and to help you accept personal responsibility for what you did. You are to write a letter to your victim(s) explaining what you did, why you did it, and defining who is responsible for the sexual abuse. In most cases, we will not be sending this letter to the victim.

### **GENERAL GUIDELINES:**

1. The letter should be at least three pages long.
2. The letter should be written in a personal style—meaning that it should be written to a specific person describing specific details.
3. This is your letter. There are no right or wrong things to say. We will be reflecting on the letters in group, but primarily to help you understand your personal level of empathy, which is being expressed in the letter.

### **LETTER CONTENT AREAS:**

- A. Describe the purpose of the letter in the introduction.
- B. Describe the abusive behaviors. (Not using “sex talk” but describing the behaviors, including any grooming behaviors leading up to the abusive behaviors). Be sure to describe how you set up the situation so you could carry out the abuse.
- C. Take full responsibility for the behaviors.
- D. Take full responsibility for the family separation.
- E. Take full responsibility for the non-abused sibling reactions.
- F. Take full responsibility for other familial reactions. Take responsibility for how other family members reacted to the abuse.
- G. Take full responsibility for legal consequences.
- H. Take full responsibility for other consequences. (Tell your victim some of the ways you learned he/she might have been impacted by the abuse (i.e. relationships with family and friends).
- I. Take full responsibility for future restrictions and impact. Future restrictions include orders about contact. Impacts include how your victim may be effected in the future
- J. Correct all external justifications. If there are any reasons why people could blame your victim, explain why it is not his/her fault.
- K. Absolve victim blame. Explain why it is not his/her fault.
- L. Affirm the victim for telling. In other words, tell them why it is good that they told.
- M. Apologize for all behaviors, including abuse, manipulation, if you ever threatened him/her.
- N. Tell the victim about own treatment (tell him/her what you learned).
- O. Provide safety instructions for purposes of relapse prevention. If he/she ever has contact with you or sees you again, explain to him/her what you will do so he/she can be/feel safe. Who can your victim tell if he/she does not feel safe or finds himself/herself alone with you?