PROJECT WORTH / CHILD PROTECTION AWARENESS

Institutional Betrayal Awareness

When institutions ignore abuse, silence concerns, or shield those responsible, they become part of the harm.

Trust survives when leaders choose **child safety** over **reputation or loyalty to insiders.**

RECOGNIZING INSTITUTIONAL BETRAYAL

WHAT IT MEANS	Occurs when an institution harms or fails people who depend on it, including by failing to prevent or appropriately respond to wrongdoing.
HOW IT LOOKS	Ignoring warning signs, minimizing concerns, or hiding information.
WHY IT MATTERS	Intensifies trauma for survivors. Can leave risks to children unaddressed. Can misuse families' trust placed in the institution.
A BETTER WAY	Choose transparency, accountability, support, and protective action.

WHAT RESEARCH SHOWS

- Institutional betrayal can intensify trauma.
- Research and case reviews document missed warning signs and failures to act on concerns.
- Research links it with anxiety, dissociation, trauma symptoms, and reduced trust.
- Protecting the institution can interfere with child protection.

Harm can be compounded when institutions dismiss or fail to appropriately assess credible safety concerns, even before allegations are substantiated.

COMMON RESPONSES THAT CAUSE HARM

- Denial or minimization
- Victim blaming or disbelief
- Discouraging reports
- Failure to follow policy
- Retaliation against those who speak up
- Moving the problem instead of addressing it

Silence and delay can become part of the harm.

WHAT INSTITUTIONS COMMITTED TO PREVENTION DO

- Take concerns seriously
- Document and preserve reports
- Report appropriately and identify patterns
- Limit unsafe access when warranted
- Support the person who raised the concern
- Act transparently

Don't wait for criminal charges to take reasonable, lawful safety precautions consistent with policy and due process.

Children don't need perfect systems. They need adults who take reasonable safety precautions.

When child safety and reputation conflict, child safety must come first.

Together, we light up the darkness.