

RELIGIOUS ABUSE INVENTORY

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These are common teachings among cults and high-control religious groups.

EXCLUSIVITY + ELITISM

- The group's teachings are the ultimate truth that cannot be questioned.
- The group's teachings offer the only path to self-actualization and/or the afterlife.
- The group has sacred texts and rules that are resistant to change.
- The group is a utopian community where all needs can/should be met.
- The group has a special calling or destiny that must be achieved.
- The group uses special language that only insiders understand.
- The group or deity's authority supersedes that of any secular government.
- The group or deity is not subject to the laws of science or recorded history.
- Group leaders possess special wisdom that makes them spiritually elite.
- Those who reject the group's teachings are pitied or mocked within the group.
- Group members are tasked with rescuing outsiders from their ignorance.

FEAR + SHAME CULTIVATION

- Exclusion from the group will result in eternal suffering or annihilation.
- Humans are fundamentally broken and inadequate on their own.
- Evil influences seek to corrupt or seduce members away from the group.
- The body's natural instincts are evil and cannot be trusted.
- Unseen malicious spiritual forces pose a tangible threat.
- Eternal consequences for temporal behaviors are a constant threat.
- Personal suffering is seen as evidence of failure or inadequacy.
- Asserting autonomy or prioritizing personal well-being is considered selfish.
- Unfavored identities or groups are depicted as deviant and/or disgusting.
- Voicing doubt or dissent within the group is seen as a sign of evil or corruption.
- Group teachings warn of an impending end-times reckoning.
- Seemingly coincidental events indicate the deity's approval or disapproval.
- Loved ones who are not recruited to the group will be permanently cut off.

INSULATION + CONFORMITY

- Acceptance within the group is contingent on obedience and conformity.
- Nonconformance is grounds for discipline, correction, or exclusion from the group.
- Contradictory teachings must be rejected, censored, or publicly denounced.
- Special efforts are made to protect children from outside influences.
- Close relationships with outsiders must be limited or completely cut off.
- Leadership status is limited to those who exemplify the group's ideals.
- Members are expected to routinely practice the group's rituals.
- Members are expected to make routine financial contributions to the group.
- Members are expected to report one another's non-conformance to leadership.
- Members are expected to recruit new members to the group regularly.
- Members are expected to practice confession and penance regularly.
- Members are expected to adhere to rigid rules regarding sex and sexuality.
- Members are expected to adhere to rigid gender role expectations.
- Sacrificing one's personal comfort on behalf of the group is applauded.