Creating an Action-Based Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Program

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This program is designed to educate the public on child sexual abuse prevention. It is for informational purposes only and is not meant to replace intervention or the advice of a licensed professional.
Learning Objectives

1. Learn why youth programs have such a high prevalence of child sexual abuse
2. Understand how child molesters think and what they need, in order to abuse and get away with it
3. Become familiar with the informed best practices for child sexual abuse prevention in youth programs
4. Be empowered to set boundaries that protect children in your care
The Problem

Child molesters need access in order to abuse and what better way to gain it than to work or volunteer for a youth program?
The Problem

• Kenneth Lanning and Parker Dietz even refer to youth-serving organizations as a “well populated hunting ground.”
Campground worker sexually assaulted teen boy, police say
The Problem

• Research shows that nearly 10% of students surveyed say they were sexually abused at school – that is almost 4.5 million U.S. students.

• Another study found that only 11% of educators say they would report a colleague who they thought was sexually abusing a child.
Why are Youth Programs a Magnet?

• **Child molesters can:**
  – Gain repeated access to children
  – Exploit inherent opportunities for isolation
  – Stand behind a reputable organization and role
  – Rely on denial and lack of knowledge
  – Call on a culture of trust to deflect suspicions
  – Depend on collegial and organizational loyalty
  – Count on fear and discomfort to create silence

Our Silence Enables Child Molesters
The Solution

Transform our programs into a place where molesters virtually can’t succeed without being caught and therefore won’t want to work.

But how?
It’s Simple

• Program employees and volunteers need to:
  – Be educated
  – Be provided tools to identify risk
  – Be empowered to take ACTION
Shift our Focus

Abuse at Home → Abuse in Program

Sources: 1
Shift our Focus

Breaking the Law

Seduction Process

Molestation
Rape
Sodomy
Oral Copulation

Back in Time

Sources: 1
The Thoughts of a Child Molester

- Build Trust
- Gain Access
- Identify the Vulnerable
- Isolate Kids
- Desensitize Kids to Touch
- Introduce Intimacy
- Test Ability to Keep Secrets
- Maintain Silence
- Create Complicity

Diane Cranley Consulting

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Child Sexual Abuse is Predictable and Preventable

When we surround children with knowledgeable and outspoken adults. We ALL play a part in the solution!
Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Best Practices

• #1 Determine Your Starting Point
• #2 Manage Access to Children
• #3 Set, Document, and Enforce Boundaries
• #4 Regularly and Actively Assess Behaviors
• #5 Create an Accountability Team
• #6 Educate and Empower Children
• #7 Pre-Establish Your Response & Take Bold Action
• #8 Provide Support and Resource Referrals

Sources: 1
Best Practice #1
Determine Your Starting Point
Individual Barriers

• Likely 20% of your workers are survivors and may dissociate at signs of abuse
• Some workers may be non-offending parents of abused children
• Some workers may be child molesters

Sources: 5,6
Organizational/Cultural Barriers

- Fear - of being wrong, lawsuits, insurance, loss of license, reputation, confidentiality, open a can of worms
- Denial and disbelief
- Culture of silence/secrecy
- Intimidation and victim harassment
- Lack of knowledge
- Best handled internally
- Adults' rights before children's rights

- Cognitive dissonance
- Collegial/organizational loyalty
- Report only abuse at home
- Lack of time/money
- Minimum the law requires
- Abuser won't do it again
- Not part of core competencies
- Philosophy of trust/forgiveness
- Protecting friends/family
- Damage control
- Outright cover-up

Sources: 3, 7, 8, 9, 10. 11. 12. 13
Existing Policies/Practices

• What prevention policies and practices exist?
• Are they board approved and formalized?
• Are they effectively and sufficiently documented?
• Are they effectively and sufficiently communicated?
• Are they effectively and sufficiently enforced?
Best Practice #2
Manage Access to Children
“Offenders were rarely stupid. They weren’t slow to realize that if they restricted themselves to preschoolers, then their chances of a conviction were virtually zero.”

*Anna Salter*

“Those familiar with addictions recognize that the addiction drives the behavior because every act is directed at obtaining greater access to the drug of choice. For that reason, addicts primarily associate with people who can help them facilitate that goal, and do not tolerate those who interfere with that goal.”

*Carla van Dam*
Think Like a Child Molester

In our case, the drug of choice is children and child molesters will not tolerate working with people who cannot deliver victims.
Integrate Prevention into Screening

• An effective child protection focused screening process is designed to achieve two key objectives:

  1) To ensure that you are not unknowingly staffing someone with a criminal record or pending charges of a sexual offense, violent offense, or other offenses against children; and

  2) To deter child molesters from wanting to work for you.
Integrate Prevention into Screening

You are not just looking for a new staff member; you are looking for child molesters so you can keep them out!
Integrate Prevention into Screening

- Standard Application Form
- Incorporate Personal Interviews
  - Respect Your Intuition
  - Conduct Multiple Interviews
  - Include Character Focused Interview Questions
  - Include Boundary Focused Interview Questions and What if? Scenarios
  - Discuss Your Child Sexual Abuse Best Practices Program
  - Formalize the Feedback Process for Interviews
- Conduct a Thorough Reference Check Process
- Require Effective Criminal Background Checks
- Thoroughly Investigate Red Flags
- Institute a Thirty-Day Probationary Period

Sources: 1, 16, 19, 28
Integrate Prevention into Screening

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Sources: 1, 16, 19, 28
Best Practice #3
Set and Enforce Boundaries
Importance of Boundaries

• Written boundaries are at the heart of protecting children
• Without them, every day is filled with a myriad of subjective choices
• Choices are often hindered by emotions
• Pre-established boundaries provide a mechanism for objective decision making
• We must be willing to enforce the boundaries

Sources: 1, 7, 16
Importance of Boundaries

- Establish **direct correlation** between breaking boundaries and continued access to children
- **Transform the gray area** surrounding sexual abuse into absolute concrete expectations
- **Relieve confusion** for kids
- **Decrease the risk** of children being sexually abused
- **Minimize organizational liability** if a child is abused
- Sometimes children’s boundaries are being **violated elsewhere** and they need you to report

Sources: 1, 7, 16
Boundaries in Schools

1. Legal Boundaries
2. On-Site Boundaries
3. Off-Site Boundaries
4. Off-Hours Boundaries
5. Electronic & Social Media Boundaries
6. Child-to-Child Boundaries
7. Gift Boundaries
Boundaries in Schools

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Boundaries in Schools

1. Legal Boundaries

Organizational boundaries are designed to intercede with known grooming behaviors.
Legal Boundaries
Legal Boundaries

- Absolutely wrong
- Black and white
- Without question
- Non-negotiable inappropriate behavior
- Illegal
- Look to the state **penal code** to develop your policy
- Alleged offenders will be **immediately reported** to local authorities for investigation
On-Site Boundaries:

Access
Isolation
Behavioral
On-Site Boundaries: Access

• Secure the **facility** and limit access to children
• Restrict and/or monitor access of **registered sex offenders** (RSOs)
• Restrict and monitor **internet access**
On-Site Boundaries: Isolation

- No one adult – one child situations
- Approved and off-limits locations identified
- No pulling children out of their regularly scheduled program
- No before or after program help
- Two adults with infants, toddlers, and nonverbal children
- Video cameras in locations that serve children with disabilities or other high-risk areas
On-Site Boundaries: Isolation

- No **family members** working together
- Two adults monitoring **nap time**
- Multiple adults during movies or other **lights-out activities**
- **Observable diapering** and bathroom monitoring
- Designate and schedule **rovers**
- Provide **parental access** and supervision
On-Site Boundaries: Behavioral

• No **unprofessional** behavior
• No **intimidation**: secrets, lies, threats, coercion, or violence
• No **sexual** discussion, exposing children to pornography or sexually explicit material
• Limit physical **touching**
• No **showering** with children or changing clothes in front of each other

Sources: 1
On-Site Boundaries: Behavioral

- No entering children’s rooms at night
- Limit medical exams/treatment by staff members
- No sharing alcohol, prescription drugs, or street drugs
- No photographs of kids
- No hands in other people’s pockets
- Keep hands where they can be seen
- No masks, blindfolds, bondage, scatting, fetishisms, or rituals

Sources: 1
Off-Site Boundaries
Off-Site Boundaries

• Board approval process
• Require written authorization
• Engage parent chaperones
• Control transportation to off-site locations
• Additional boundaries for out-of-town travel
  – Adequate supervision
  – Hotel rooms
  – Alcohol use

ALL Legal and On-Site Boundaries Apply
Off-Hours Boundaries
Off-Hours Boundaries

- No babysitting
- No tutoring
- No visits to personal residences
- No sleepovers
- No birthday parties
- No family gatherings
- No dating

ALL Legal, On-Site and Off-Site Boundaries Apply
Electronic and Social Media Boundaries
Electronic Communication

The possibility of staff members being able to access children in your care via electronic communication is a matter of when, not if!
Electronic Communication

This opens a whole new arena where inappropriate and risky personal relationships can flourish.
Once an electronic line of communication is established between a staff member and a child in your care, it’s difficult to stop and almost impossible to manage.
Electronic & Social Media Boundaries

• No sharing **phone numbers**
• No sharing **e-mail addresses** or screen names
• Set restrictive **privacy settings** and use appropriate profile pictures
• No becoming “**friends**” on Facebook “following” on Twitter
• No connections on **multimedia** sharing sites
• No connections on **video chat** applications

Sources: 1
Child-to-Child Boundaries
Child-to-Child Sexual Touch

• *Children may touch each others* sexual parts for a variety of reasons including:
  – Natural and *healthy exploration*
  – Repeating *bad boundaries* they have been exposed to
  – A child has or is still being *sexually abused* and repeating their experience
  – A child may have a *sexual behavior problem* that requires treatment

Sources: 1
Child-to-Child Sexual Touch

30-40 percent of child sexual abuse happens at the hands of other juveniles.
Child-to-Child Sexual Touch

• **Set boundaries** that reduce the risk of inappropriate sexual touch happening
• Immediately **correct inappropriate behavior**
• Effectively **monitor future** interactions
• **Communicate** concerning behavior to others in your organization as needed and notify effected parents
• **Report to the authorities** if the inappropriate behaviors cause you to suspect a child in your care is being abused or being abusive

Sources: 1
Child-to-Child Boundaries

- Full visibility and close monitoring during **nap time**
- No unmonitored **bathroom visits**
- **Separate** age groups
- Avoid direct or inadvertent creation of **authority**
- Provide close **supervision**

Sources: 1
Gift Boundaries
Gift Boundaries

• No gifts to **children**
  – Tangible gifts
  – Special outings
  – Special privileges

• No gifts to **parents**
  – Tangible gifts
  – Loans
  – Intangible preferential treatment
Best Practice #4
Regularly and Actively Assess Behaviors
Assess Your Surroundings

• Look for legal and organizational boundary violations
• Look for inappropriate behavior in adults
• Look for inappropriate behavior in children
• Look for signs of abuse in children
• Look for inappropriate relationships between adults and children
Assess Behaviors

• Create standard operating procedures for assessing and communicating concerns
  – Ask for Feedback
  – Provide a Communication Mechanism (Paper Form, Hotline, Web Form, Phone App)
  – Establish a Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Communication Team
  – Regularly Review Feedback
• Establish standardized board reporting
Best Practice #5
Create an Accountability Team
Create and Accountability Team

• Deliver mandatory staff training
  – Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Basics
  – Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Boundaries For Youth-Serving Organizations
  – Acknowledge and Accept Your Policy

• Engage parents in training and enforcing boundaries
Best Practice #6
Educate and Empower Children
Educate and Empower Children

- **Respect Healthy Boundaries:** Tell kids the legal boundaries and the organizational boundaries that stop grooming behavior. Empower them to expect the boundaries to be honored.

- **Talk about Sex and Sexual Abuse:** Help kids embrace healthy sexuality and teach them the language of abuse, giving them permission to tell.

- **Have a Heart for Others:** Develop in kids a compassionate heart for others who are hurting.

- **Recognize Healthy Peer Relationships:** Equip them to create healthy relationships with peers.

- **Establish Healthy Relationships with Younger Children:** Prepare them to manage their own behavior and boundaries with younger children and to recognize concerning behavior in others.

Sources: 1
Best Practice #7
Pre-Establish Your Response
and Take Bold Action
Pre-Establish Your Response

• Adopt standards for responding to legal boundary violations and suspected abuse
  – Sexual behavior between children
  – Forms of sexual abuse
  – How to respond to observed, disclosed and suspected abuse
  – Mandated reporters versus passive reporters
  – Internal reporting processes
  – Centralized control
  – Organizational consequences of legal boundary violations
  – Reporting to appropriate licensing agencies
  – Incident review and risk assessment
  – Victim harassment policy
  – Board updates

Sources: 1
Pre-Establish Your Response

• Adopt standards for responding to organizational boundary violations
  – Centralized control of organizational boundary violation cases
  – Internal investigation
  – Consequences of organizational boundary violations
  – Communication of incident closure
  – Board updates

Sources: 1
Best Practice #8
Provide Support and Resource Referrals
Resources

• **Suicide Prevention Hotline**
  1-800-Suicide or 1-800-799-4TTY (Hearing Impaired)

• **To Report Child Sexual Abuse**
  Call 911 and your local Child Protection Services Agency

• **Aren't Sure if it's Child Sexual Abuse?**
  Call 1-800-4-A-Child if you need to talk through the situation

• **Inappropriate Sexual Feelings?**
  Call 1-888-PREVENT or www.stopitnow.org/help
  Anonymous hotline, calls are not recorded, phone numbers are not detected

• **Help for Survivors**
  psychologytoday.com
  thelamplighters.org
  malesurvivor.org
  taalk.org
  siawso.org
  1in6.org

• **Help for Parents of Sexually Abused Children**
  mosac.net
  taalk.org
The Change Process

• How does each policy or practice compare to best practices?
• What is the resulting level of risk in each area (High, Medium or Low)?
• How can each be improved to lower risk?
• Who needs to be involved to modify each of them?
• What obstacles must be overcome to improve them?
• What is the cost to improve each of them?
• Who can start the change process on each of them?
Prioritizing Needed Changes

• Which changes are the easiest to make?
• Which changes are the least expensive to make?
• Which changes can be done strictly within the district?
• Which changes involve the least number of people?
• Which changes would create the biggest improvement in child safety?
• Which changes would most significantly lower the district’s liability?
We’re looking forward to equipping and empowering you to transform your schools into a safer place for children.
Thank You
for joining us in the fight to protect the future of our children!

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Sources

1. Diane Cranley, 8 Ways to Create their Fate: Protecting the Sexual Innocence of Children in Youth-Serving Organizations (Mustang: Tate Publishing & Enterprises, LLC)
2. Charol Shakeshaft, “Know the Warning Signs of Educator Sexual Misconduct,” Kappan Magazine (February 2013)
Sources

Sources


25. This calculation is extremely conservative as it does not include children. It includes only adults who were likely abused when they were children. The calculation was made using the numbers in the most current topical report by David Finkelhor’s cited here and the U.S. Census Bureau report, as follows: 2013 U.S. Population Estimate = 316 million, less 23% of the population under 18 years old = 23M, total adult population = 243M, 51% female population = 124M, 49% male population = 119M, 26.6% of females are abused = 32.9M, 5.1% of males are abused = 6M, total adult population abused = 38.9M.

