



ABUSE PREVENTION SYSTEMS

Preventing Sexual Abuse: 5-Part Safety System

I. SEXUAL ABUSE AWARENESS TRAINING

- *foundational piece of an educational model
- *gives employees and volunteers ‘eyes to see and ears to hear’ grooming behaviors
- *policies and procedures will have limited impact without the “why”
- *explains safety principles behind policies
- *compliant with current and anticipated legislation (i.e. Texas Youth Camp Act)

II. SKILLFUL SCREENING TRAINING

- *intensive, yet critical piece of the system
- *trains screeners to properly use forms and process created to elicit high-risk responses
- *trains screeners to recognize high risk behaviors and life patterns
- *dove-tails with Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

III. APPROPRIATE CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK

- *necessary, though no stand-alone piece of safety system (not a “silver bullet”)
- *depth of background check should match degree of access to children

IV. TAILORED POLICIES & PROCEDURES

- *“policies are what you DO ... not what you SAY you do”
- *tailored to specific programming – no “one-size-fits-all” forms
- *policies are marginally effective without Awareness Training
- *beyond the basics: includes bathroom checks, six-month member rule etc.

V. MONITORING AND OVERSIGHT

- *ensuring that you DO what you SAY you do
- *periodic review of the system: new programming, performance reviews, accountability
- *monitoring tools

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Love and Norris also serve as directors of Abuse Prevention Systems & MinistrySafe, consulting organizations designed to help secular organizations and Christian ministries understand and address child safety risks related to sexual abuse. For additional information see www.AbusePreventionSystems.com, www.MinistrySafe.com, or call 817-737-SAFE (7233).

FACTS ABOUT SEXUAL ABUSE AND SEXUAL PREDATORS

Question 1: What system protects children at my organization?

Question 2: Does my organization's system address the following facts?

***Sexual Molesters will seek access to children where protective barriers are low.**

- Given this reality, entities must implement *proactive* training measures.
- Inadequate protective barriers create a target for predators.
- When an entity consistently fails to respond to rising standards of care, the target grows *larger*.

***Less than 10% of sexual predators will EVER encounter the criminal justice system.**

- As a result, your criminal background check – even working *perfectly* – will identify only a *fraction* of molesters targeting children in children's programs.
- Sexual abusers KNOW when there is no criminal record for you to find – even if a check is run.
- Criminal background checks are important, but have limitations: NOT A SILVER BULLET!
- If a criminal background check is ALL you do, your security system is ineffective.

***1 of 3 girls and 1 of 6 boys will be sexually molested before reaching age 18.**

SEXUAL ABUSE IS AN ISSUE OF EPIDEMIC PROPORTION ... AND GROWING.

***66% of molestation victims will not tell until adulthood (if ever).**

***Convicted male abusers preferring boys will molest an average of 150 victims before prosecution.**

***Convicted male abusers preferring girls will molest an average of 52 victims before prosecution.**

***85% of convicted molesters are men; 15% are women.**

***90% of child sexual abuse victims are abused by someone they *know and trust*.**

- Amber alerts (the 'snatch and grab') are a fraction of sexual abuse occurrences.
- A greater risk is posed by predators who are known and trusted (90%).

***Sexual molesters groom children AND gatekeepers prior to sexual behavior.**

- Staff members, volunteer leaders, and parents are gatekeepers!
- Staff members and volunteers MUST understand and recognize grooming behavior.

***There is NO visual profile for a molester.**

- Most molesters appear helpful, trustworthy and responsible.
- Staff members and volunteers can be trained to recognize grooming behaviors, thereby protecting children in organizational programs.