

PRAESIDIUM

Our Passion. Your Protection.

Abuse Risk Management For Volunteers

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Overview

After completing this course, learners are able to identify:

- Facts about child sexual abuse
- Steps to keep kids safe
- How to protect themselves from false allegations

Lesson 1 – Facts About Child Sexual Abuse



Goals

After completing this lesson, learners are able to explain:

- Who abuses children
- How abuse affects children
- How abuse affects volunteers in an organization



Key Content

Who Abuses?

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s study on Adverse Childhood Experiences, one in four females and one in six males will be sexually abused by the time they are 18 years of age. There has been a 300% increase in reports of children molesting other children.

Most children know their molesters. They meet them at camp, school, or day care; through sports programs; on the Internet; and in religious or community organizations – like yours.

Of all molestations that are committed:

- 29% are by family members
- 11% are by strangers
- 60% are by someone else the child knows

Effects of Abuse on Children

Sexual abuse profoundly affects children. It affects how they **think**, how they **feel**, and how they **act**. And the effects can last a lifetime.

Think: Children who have been molested think the world is dangerous. They think they can’t trust anyone because most likely, they knew the person who molested them. He was their coach, or their camp counselor. Or she was their teacher or child care worker. They think they did something wrong. They think it was their fault, that they could have stopped it.

Feel: Children who have been molested start to feel bad. They feel dirty. Used. Different from everyone else. They can’t understand what’s happening. They are angry and sad and guilty and confused. One minute they feel fine, the next minute they hate everything and everybody.

Act: Children who have been molested are extremely emotional. They may

yell, fight, or punch holes in the wall. They may hit their teachers, or curse their parents. They may lose interest in activities or stop doing their school work. Children who have been abused may begin acting in sexual ways or making sexual remarks. They just can't stop thinking about what happened to them.

Lifetime Effects

Adults who were molested as children often suffer from serious depression and have difficulty forming relationships. They are at higher risk to:

- Have serious emotional problems
- Be aggressive
- Develop eating disorders
- Abuse drugs and alcohol
- Attempt suicide

Effects on the Volunteer in an Organization

When abuse happens at an organization, everyone is affected. The volunteer may feel guilty or somewhat responsible that he or she may have let it happen, that he or she should have noticed, or that there were warning signs. When the story appears in the news, their friends and family will ask them about it. If it goes to trial, they may have to testify

Summary:

Abuse does not have to happen! Remember, a volunteer may be the one person standing between a child and a child molester. This course will help a volunteer learn how to prevent sexual abuse from occurring.

Lesson 2 – Step to Keep Kids Safe



Goals

The three goals of this lesson are to:

- 1. Understand how child molesters operate.
- 2. Watch for warning signs.
- 3. Take action!



Key Content

1. Understand How Molesters Operate

Most child molesters operate in predictable ways. They may single out

- A child who is shy, one who won't tell
- A child from a single parent home
- A disadvantaged child
- A child who doesn't have many friends
- A child with a disability
- Or, a child who craves attention

Offenders need three things in order to harm a child:

1. **Access:** They take jobs working with children, such as teaching or in day care. They do volunteer work, such as coaching sports or giving swimming lessons. They help neighbors with their kids by baby-sitting and driving carpools. Child molesters do whatever is necessary to gain access to children.
2. **Privacy:** Child molesters don't want to get caught, so they make sure no one else is around. Child molesters may be alone with a child for just a few minutes or for long periods. For example, they might follow a child into the restroom, offer private coaching sessions, or invite a child to go camping or hiking. You may notice that they frequently volunteer to work one-on-one with a child.
3. **Control:** Child molesters need control. They gain control by grooming or manipulating the child and other adults into thinking they are trustworthy and kind. Child molesters can be very patient and systematic in their attempts to gain control over the children they want to molest. Grooming may take days, weeks, or months – sometimes even years.

Children to Children

Your organization may serve children from all backgrounds. Some children have been sexually abused, and exposed to pornography. They may repeat what was done to them or what they have seen. Sometimes

even very young children do this without understanding what they are doing. Normal childhood curiosity can turn into abuse when one child is older, larger, or stronger than the other child, or when the curiosity goes too far.

2. Watch for Warning Signs

Although not every adult who does these things is a molester, there are warning signs to watch for in adults:

- Adults who are too physical with kids, such as they can't keep their hands off of them.
- Adults who play favorites, single out one or two children for special attention, or give them gifts.
- Adults who break the rules, such as spending time alone with a child, giving a child cigarettes or alcohol, or using inappropriate language.
- Adults who let kids do things that parents would not permit.

There are also warning signs for children who might commit abuse:

- Children who bully others
- Children who make sexual remarks or gestures

3. Supervising Children

- When you supervise children, make sure to watch carefully in areas like bathrooms, locker rooms, or in crowds.
- Keeping kids in your line of sight, or making sure they are in small groups, can discourage anyone from acting inappropriately.
- Watch for children who bully others or who make sexual remarks or gestures. These children require extra supervision around others. Also keep an eye on kids who are picked on. They may be more likely to be victimized.

3. Take action!

How you respond to inappropriate or suspicious behaviors can help to keep children safe. That's why it's important to take action. In most cases you will not see child sexual abuse occur. If you wait until you know for sure that something has happened, you may be too late to protect a child from abuse. If something looks suspicious or if you see an adult or another child breaking the rules, here's what a volunteer should do.

1. Express the concern to their supervisor or someone in leadership in the organization. They are trained to handle difficult situations. Rest assured, your report will be handled properly.
2. Speak to the parent of the child involved. Let them know what you've seen that concerns you. Parents will be grateful that you take their child's safety so seriously.
3. Interrupt the inappropriate behavior and remind the person of the rules and what is acceptable.
4. Speak up – if a volunteer sees something wrong, such as an adult playing favorites, arranging unauthorized interactions, or using

inappropriate language – speak up. If you see a child picking on another child, or using unacceptable language or behavior – speak up. Tell the adult or child that it is wrong.

5. If the volunteer believes a child has been abused, he or she should contact the police or child protective services in their community. Your actions may stop abuse, so **take action!**

Lesson 3 – Protect Yourself from False Allegations



Goals



Key Content

After completing this lesson, learners are able to:

- Protect himself/herself from false allegations

A false allegation is when someone is accused of something he or she didn't do. False allegations occur for many reasons. Whatever the reason, being accused of harming a child can be devastating.

Only about 5% of allegations turn out to be false.

Volunteers can do three things to protect themselves from false allegations:

1. Follow the policies of the organization
 - Policies are designed to keep everyone safe! For example, if you aren't supposed to provide transportation to youth, then don't offer rides!
 - If your organization prohibits outside contact with children you meet while volunteering, then don't give private lessons, hold unauthorized practices, or babysit – even if parents pressure you.
 - If you don't understand it, ask your supervisor to explain the policy. If there's a rule, there's a reason.
2. Keep their boundaries with kids
 - The adult must set the limits in your relationship with children because they can't. For example, young children may want to climb all over you or hug you. Older children may want to find out anything they can about you. They may look up to you and try to copy what you do or say.
 - As a volunteer, keep boundaries clear by not discussing details of your personal life, not taking kids to your home, and not using inappropriate or suggestive language
 - Only use the types of physical contact authorized by your organization. For example, give side hugs, if permitted. Do not let kids sit on your lap. Do not wrestle or tickle.
3. Avoid situations where a volunteer is alone with a child
 - In most youth programs, volunteers should work in line of sight of employees, parents, or other volunteers. This reduces the risk of abuse and of false allegations of abuse.
 - If you find yourself alone with a child, move to an area where other adults or children can see you.

Other guidelines a volunteer will want to follow include:

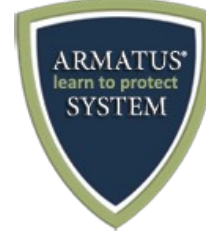
- Do not go into the bathroom with a child. Instead, take two or more children and stand outside the door to supervise.
- In some programs, such as mentoring, you may spend time alone with a child. Manage mentoring situations safely by: avoiding physical contact, using appropriate language, only going to authorized destinations, and always reporting your activities and whereabouts to your supervisor.

What to Remember: Remember the three things you can do to protect yourself from false allegations of abuse.

1. Follow the policies of your organization
2. Keep boundaries with kids clear.
3. Avoid situations where you are alone with a child.

Summary: Kids need positive role models who are willing to share their valuable time volunteering. Fortunately, false allegations of abuse don't happen very often.

07/29/2020
Selective Training - South Church



I, _____ *Print Name* have completed:

Course Name	Date
Abuse Risk Management for Volunteers	

Signature: _____

Date:

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