PRAESIDIUM
Back to Basics:
Refreshing Boundaries for Staff and Consumers
Returning to Programming
Praesidium Safety Equation®
Why Are We Talking About This?

✓ After months away from programming many organizations are beginning to re-engage in in-person activities
✓ Staff and consumers have been sequestered at home where expectations and norms are likely different than in your program
✓ Praesidium has had several helpline calls recently concerning lower-level red flag behaviors by staff and consumers upon return to programming—likely resulting from lack of awareness
Scope of the Issue

- One in four girls
- One in seven boys
- Ten percent of school children
- Forty to fifty percent of child molestations committed by juveniles
- Eighty percent of abuse does not get reported

10%, 50%, 80%
95% of all Americans between 12 and 17 years old are online

20% of teens have sent or posted nude or semi-nude photos or videos of themselves

44% of teens say it’s common for explicit messages and photos to be shared with people other than the intended recipient

39% of teens have sent sexually suggestive messages via text, email, or instant messaging

1 in 5 U.S. teenagers have received unwanted sexual solicitation via the web with only 25% telling a parent/guardian
## Physical Interactions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appropriate Physical Interactions:</th>
<th>Inappropriate Physical Interactions:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contact initiated by the consumer such as:</td>
<td>✗ Showing affection in isolated areas or while one-on-one</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔ Side hugs</td>
<td>✗ Kisses</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔ Shoulder-to-shoulder or “temple” hugs</td>
<td>✗ Full frontal hugs</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔ Pats on the shoulder or back</td>
<td>✗ Touching minors in genital, chest or buttocks areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔ Handshakes</td>
<td>✗ Laying down or sleeping beside minors</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔ High-fives and hand slapping</td>
<td>✗ Letting a child cling to the legs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ Pats on the head when culturally appropriate</td>
<td>✗ Allowing consumers, older than kindergarten, to sit on an employee or volunteer’s lap</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔ Touching hands, shoulders, and arms</td>
<td>✗ Massages given by children or adults</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔ Arms around shoulders</td>
<td>✗ Patting children on the bottom or the thigh</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔ Holding hands while walking (young children)</td>
<td>✗ Tickling or wrestling</td>
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<td>✔ Verbal praise or recognition</td>
<td>✗ Games involving inappropriate touching</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✗ Any form of affection that is unwanted by the consumer or the employee or volunteer</td>
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## Verbal Interactions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appropriate Verbal Interaction:</th>
<th>Inappropriate Verbal Interaction:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✔ Positive reinforcement</td>
<td>✗ Name-calling</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔ Appropriate jokes</td>
<td>✗ Secrets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ Encouragement</td>
<td>✗ Cursing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ Praise</td>
<td>✗ Off-color or sexual jokes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔ Verbal praise or recognition</td>
<td>✗ Shaming</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔ Strength-based conversations</td>
<td>✗ Belittling</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✗ Derogatory remarks</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✗ Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate consumers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✗ Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving consumers in the personal problems or issues of employees and volunteers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Monitoring and Supervision: Know Your Facility

✔ Identify high-risk locations

✔ Create a system to monitor
  ✔ Create a Facility Monitoring Checklist
  ✔ Assign staff specific facility monitoring sweeps times
  ✔ Ensure sweeps are conducted daily
Best Practices for Preventing Peer-to-Peer Abuse

✅ Adult supervision is key

✅ Line of sight supervision

✅ Maintain approved ratios

✅ Provide structure

✅ Offer designated activities rather than free time

✅ Create plans for transition times

✅ Respond

✅ No “normal sexual curiosity”

✅ Staff behavior sets the tone

✅ Interrupt, respond, report, and document all incidents of youth-to-youth sexual activity
Program Essentials for Preventing Abuse

- Hold pre and post day meetings each day
  - Review best practices and policies for safe interactions and prevention of abuse
  - Include a review of the days’ incidents
  - Procedure adjustments that may need to be made in the following days
- Create and adhere to organized daily schedule
  - Split youth into small groups
  - Ensure there is no one-on-one contact during programming
How to Handle Outside Contact

Set appropriate boundaries.

✓ Staff should still refrain from communicating with consumers via private emails, texts, or social media in accordance with existing policy.

✓ Additionally, if your organization has a policy requiring copying supervisors on communications after hours, continue enforcing that.

✓ Contemplate and communicate expectations for things like babysitting, tutoring, or private coaching.
Electronic Communication

✓ When using video conferencing apps, ensure both staff and consumers are aware of their background surroundings and personal appearance or attire in order to maintain professionalism and personal privacy.

✓ Use electronic communication strategically to communicate with consumers by keeping conversations focused on curriculum or projects, goal attainment, and safety tips, rather than personal details of one’s life.

✓ When providing general encouragement or support to consumers at this challenging time, keep in mind the necessity to maintain consistent and professional boundaries to protect oneself from false allegations.

✓ At minimum, ensure a supervisor and the consumer’s parent/caregiver are consistently aware that text messages are being exchanged between consumers and adult staff member.
Involve Parents

Keeping parents in the loop gives you another set of eyes and ears to manage this risk—especially in this unique and difficult time!

✓ Ensure any new expectations are clearly communicated to parents and consumers.

✓ Informed parents can help reinforce your revised policies.

✓ Ensure parents know how to report concerns or issues to your leadership.
Red Flag Behaviors in Adults

- Prefers time and friendships with consumers more than adults
- Gives special gifts to consumers, especially without permission
- Engages in too much physical contact with consumers
- Bends the rules for certain consumers
- Ignores policies about interacting with consumers
- Has “favorite” or preferred consumers
- Uses inappropriate language or jokes
- Behaves as a peer with consumers rather than a supervising adult
- Uses social networking sites and text messages to contact consumers privately or away from programming
- Finds reasons to spend time alone with consumers
Responding to Inappropriate Behaviors or Policy Violations

✔ Interrupt and spotlight the behavior

✔ Report warning signs immediately to your supervisor or administrator

✔ If the behavior does not stop, keep reporting your suspicions up the chain of command

Don’t wait until you witness an act of abuse – report suspicious behavior and policy violations
How to Respond if a Minor Discloses Abuse or Neglect

Stay Calm  Listen  Comfort  Don’t Criticize  Note the Facts  Report

Remember: It is never your responsibility to probe or investigate. Always report the allegation up to your supervisor.
KEEP IN TOUCH

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