Praesidium 25th Anniversary
Scope of the Problem: Abuse

- 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
Understanding Youth-to-Youth Sexual Behaviors and Abuse

- Opportunity
- Location
- Activity
- Lack of Monitoring
- Poor Planning

Sexual Curiosity
Sexual Abuse
Top Three Incident Locations: Youth-to-Youth

- Bathroom/Shower/Locker Room
- Activity Room (Library, Gym, Teen Center)
- Overnight Activity
Effects on Churches

- Loss of Focus to Your Ministry
- Jeopardizes Insurability
- Million Dollar Verdicts
- Loss of Membership
- Reputational Damage
- Threat to the Mission
Why Churches are Vulnerable

- Close relationships
- Trusting environments
- Immediate access
- Lax screening
- Lack of supervision
- Serves vulnerable populations
- Inherent power differentials
### Praesidium Safety Equation®

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policies</th>
<th>Screening &amp; Selection</th>
<th>Training</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring &amp; Supervision</td>
<td>Internal Feedback Systems</td>
<td>Consumer Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding</td>
<td>Administrative Practices</td>
<td>A SAFE ENVIRONMENT</td>
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</table>
Managing these risks takes a sustainable, comprehensive approach that integrates everyone.
Five Steps to Prevent Abuse and Harassment
Step 1: Establish policies for clergy, staff, and church members
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Define Boundaries</th>
<th>Create Institutional Memory</th>
<th>Communicate Effectively</th>
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<td>• Remove ambiguity by clearly listing types of conduct prohibited in your organization</td>
<td>• Formalize policies regarding boundaries, interactions, and responding procedures</td>
<td>• Develop a communication plan to distribute new abuse prevention and anti-harassment policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Include a zero tolerance statement and define appropriate and inappropriate interactions between clergy, staff, and church members</td>
<td>• Take warning signs of inappropriate behavior seriously</td>
<td>• Consider using multiple platforms such as email, social media, church meetings, bulletins or other methods to communicate this information to everyone in the organization</td>
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Step 2: Develop a screening process designed to screen out high risk individuals.
Step 2: Develop a screening process to screen for risk

✔ Don’t rely on background checks alone
  • *Many offenders, both those who offend against youth or those who sexually harass, do not have a criminal record for abuse or harassment.*

✔ Encourage applicants to self select out
  • *Affirm and reinforce your organization’s zero tolerance policies and commitment to a safe and positive environment during the screening process*

✔ Ask interview questions that assess behaviors
  • *When asking behaviorally based questions, listen for problematic responses*

✔ Get the most out of references
  • *If a response concerns you, probe further and ask follow up questions!*
Step 3: Train people with skills needed to recognize and respond to warning signs
Step 3:
Train people with skills to recognize and respond

- The right content
  - Descriptive
  - Preventative
  - Addresses the risk inherent in ministry/churches

- Easy to access and use
  - Are we offering training to everyone who needs or wants it?

- Targets the right people the right way (blended learning)
  - In-person for leadership
  - Online training for staff and volunteers

- Easy to verify compliance
  - How do we know if the people who need training have taken it?
Step 4: Supervise for Safety
Create a Formalized Monitoring System

**Step 1:** Identify high risk conditions and/or individuals

**Step 2:** Develop a system for monitoring these conditions and/or individuals

**Step 3:** Develop a method for documentation of monitoring

**Step 4:** Create a method to review this documentation
Effectively Monitor Grey Areas

✔ Adherence to policy and effective monitoring can reduce claims of abuse and sexual harassment arising from the following:

- Unclear boundaries
- Outside contact such as babysitting or after-hours gatherings
- Electronic communication
- Dating relationships
- Fuzzy boundaries
- Gossip
Step 5: Implement systems for reporting and responding
Step 5: Implement Systems for Reporting and Responding to Abuse

- **Develop**
  - Develop written response procedures
    - Ensure established procedures are adhered to in every case

- **Respond**
  - Respond to tremors not earthquakes
    - Respond to all reports, even those that do not rise to the level of abuse or harassment

- **Refresh**
  - Treat “near misses” as free lessons
    - Use these as opportunities for refresher training for clergy, staff, and church members

- **Consider**
  - Don’t respond in isolation
    - No event occurs in a vacuum, consider external factors in deciding on an appropriate response

- **Remove**
  - Remove barriers to reporting
    - If you are aware of a barrier, remove it!
Common Barriers to Responding

- Loyalty to the organization
- Questionable credibility of the accuser
- Protection of the alleged perpetrator
- No training
- Lack of objectivity
- Fear that the allegation might be true
- Guilt that the incident occurred
- “I’ve reported before and they didn’t do anything about it then ...”
- Rare opportunities for one-on-one meetings
Your Role as a Responder

- Minimize barriers to reporting
- Respond to warning signs
- Follow reporting requirements
- Close the feedback loop
Promote a Culture of Safety

- Standards are clear
- Standards are enforced
- Everyone knows safety is part of their job
- Everyone takes warning signs seriously
- Everyone reports their concerns
- Morale is high
- Quality is institutionalized
## Evaluate Internal Culture

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Questions You Should Be Asking

- Do you have written polices that clearly define boundaries with youth and other adults?
- Does your screening process assess for abuse risk? What about harassment?
- Do you require all clergy, staff, and volunteers to complete training that is preventative and not just reactive?
- Do you have specific procedures for managing high-risk activities related to abuse or harassment?
- Do you have a written procedure for responding to suspicious behaviors that do not raise to the level of abuse or harassment?
User-friendly onboarding to multiple resources
Talk to a PERSON who will explain the process
Direct access to Praesidium’s support team
Praesidium Resources Provided by the Insurance Board

Armatus® Learn to Protect Training System
Web-based and Free!

Creating a Safe Environment (CASE)
Streaming access to cutting edge group training content; Free for IB policy holders, discounted rate for other members.

Know Your Score! Online Self Assessment
Assess your church against best practice standards and receive customized resources. Free!

Background Checking Services
Discounted for all Eligible congregations, subsidized up to 50% for Insurance Board Members.
KEEP IN TOUCH

Christy Schiller, MA
Vice President, Account Services
CSchiller@praesidiuminc.com

800.743.6354
PraesidiumInc.com
Info@praesidiuminc.com
SafetyBulletin@praesidiuminc.com