

# PRAESIDIUM

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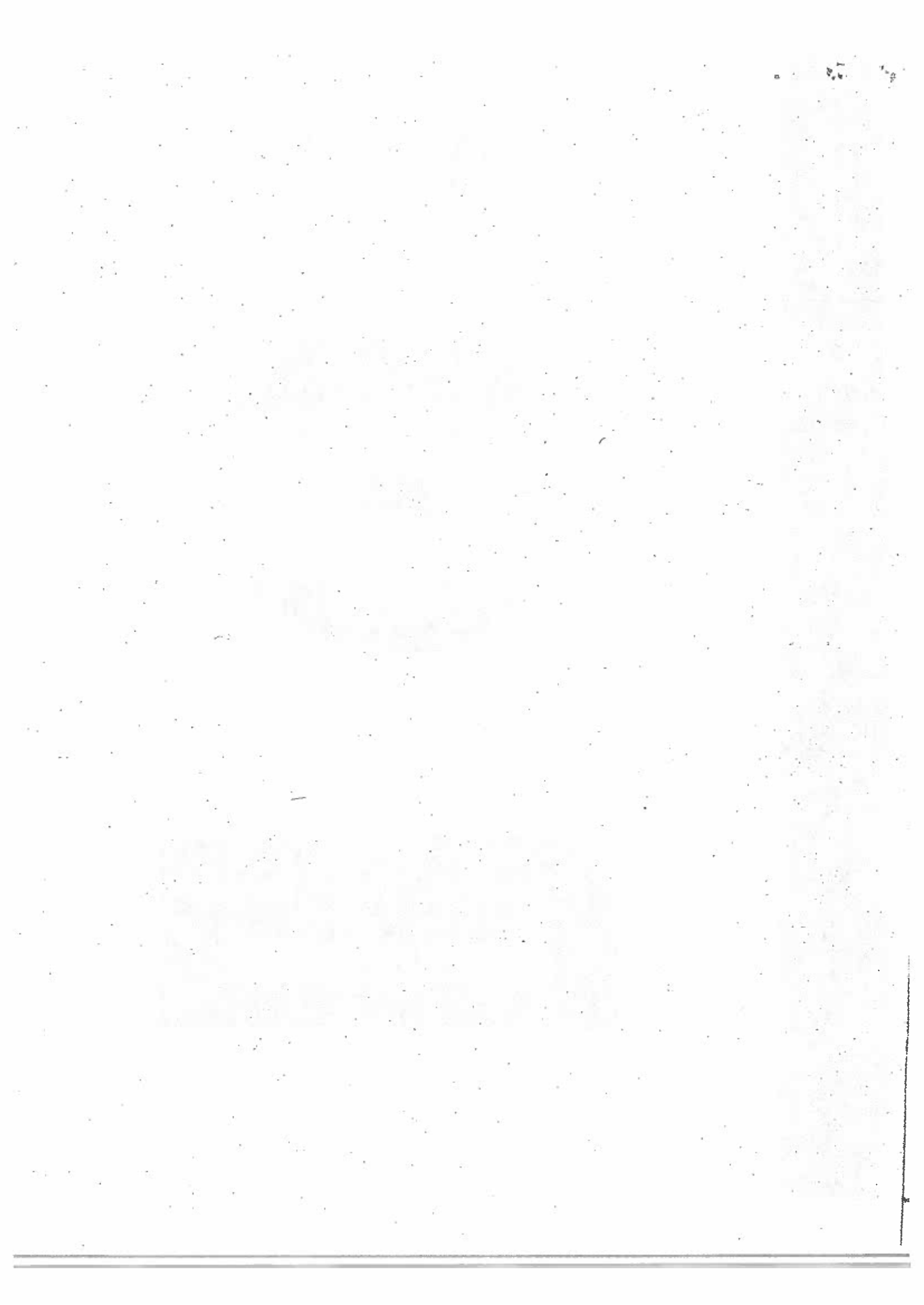
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## Abuse Risk Management FOR Volunteers

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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.

Sexual abuse affects the way that children **think, feel, and act**. Children who are molested often suffer profound effects that can persist over their lifetime.

An abused child may think, feel, and do, the following:

*What they may think:*

- *The world isn't safe*
- *Suspicious –people are out to get them*
- *They can't trust anyone*
- *They did something wrong – it's their fault*
- *That they could have stopped the abuse somehow*
- *That everyone can tell what happened by looking at them*
- *That they are worthless*

*What they may feel:*

- *Guilty*
- *Ashamed*
- *Sad*
- *Hurt*
- *Different from other kids*
- *Confused*
- *Temperamental*
- *Betrayed*
- *Angry*
- *Vulnerable*
- *Weak*
- *“Ruined”*
- *Isolated and alienated from family or friends*

## Overview

After completing this training, 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.

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.

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.

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.

## 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

Offenders need three things in order to harm a child:

1. Access
2. Privacy
3. Control

#### 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. Take action!

If a volunteer has a concern, he or she should:

1. Express the concern to their supervisor or someone in leadership in the organization.
2. Speak to the parent of the child involved.
3. Interrupt the inappropriate behavior and remind the person of the rules.
4. Speak up – when they see something wrong, they should 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.

Offenders need access, privacy, and control in order to harm a child. We all need to stay mindful and think about how we can prevent offenders from obtaining each of these three things in ALL of our programs.

*How they may act:*

- *Very emotional*
- *Mood swings*
- *Angry or aggressive*
- *Might act out sexually themselves*
- *Making inappropriate comments*
- *Ignoring personal hygiene*
- *Withdrawn*
- *Depressed*

If you notice any of these behaviors in a child, please speak with your direct supervisor (Sports Director) about the behavior.

When a child in an organization like ours is abused, it affects everyone including the employees and volunteers who were caring for the child.

**THE BEST WAY TO AVOID HAVING THIS HAPPEN**

Follow the organization's policies about monitoring children in your care, especially when in bathrooms, locker rooms, and crowds. These guidelines are in place to keep everyone safe.

**EMERGENCY HOTLINES FOR REPORTING CHILD ABUSE**

**Texas Department of Family and Protective Services**

Call the 24-Hour Toll-Free TX DFPS Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400, or make your report through their secure website: [www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org) and you will receive a response within 24 hours.

**Praesidium Inc.**

24-Hour Toll-Free Child Safety Hotline: 866-607-7233 or email: [SafeClub@Praesidiuminc.com](mailto:SafeClub@Praesidiuminc.com).

**Crisis Text Line**

Provides free, 24/7, confidential support to people in crisis. Text HELLO to 741741 or go to [www.crisistextline.org](http://www.crisistextline.org).

**Our organization gives volunteers the authority to take action when they see a warning sign!**

**Actions to Take if you see Warning Signs**

- *Tell a supervisor*
- *Interrupt inappropriate behavior*
- *Remind the adult or child of the rules*
- *As a mandated reporter, if you suspect abuse, contact the police or child protective services*

**Are You a Mandated Reporter?**

A mandated reporter is someone who is required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect.

- Texas law requires that any person suspecting that a child has been abused or neglected must immediately make a report. If there is an emergency, call 911 and then call the DFPS Texas Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-5400.

You can also make a report online at [www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org).

- Notify your direct supervisor (and up the chain-of-command) of all suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect.

**If you feel uncomfortable telling your supervisor about any warning signs witnessed, or your supervisor is the individual in question, please contact the Director of Operations, or the Executive Director. Contact information is available on our website at [www.basinkids.org](http://www.basinkids.org).**

The following questions can help you stay alert and be aware of what you should look for:

1. How may we prevent offenders from obtaining access to children in our programs?

*Answer: Following policies and procedures to keep club kids safe, Screening (i.e. background checks), and proper supervision.*

2. Offenders don't want to get caught, so they make sure no one is around. They know where to find isolated places and may be alone with a child for a few minutes or for long periods of time. Where are some areas to pay closer attention to where someone could gain **privacy** with a child in our program?

*Answer: Bathrooms, and unoccupied rooms/areas.*

3. What can we do to prevent this from happening?

*Answer: Follow organization policies and procedures on child supervision and minimize opportunities for an offender or potential offender to be alone with a child.*

4. Offenders gain **control** through crossing boundaries, by grooming or manipulating the child and other adults into thinking they are trustworthy and **kind**. Do we have a defined set of appropriate physical boundaries in our current policies? What are they?

*Answer: Follow policies and procedures on physical boundaries, including inappropriate and appropriate displays of affection. Limit close contact and unnecessary touching, and watch for signs of adults or children exhibiting inappropriate behavior.*

### **FACT**

Not all molesters are adults. In fact, sometimes children molest other children or teenagers.

There are specific red flags and warning signs to look for when an adult is trying to gain **access, privacy, and control** in order to abuse a child. In this training you learned of the warning signs.

Those are:

1. Goes overboard with touching, roughhousing, hugging, tickling
2. Has favorites among the children
3. Breaks rules or makes exceptions to befriend kids
4. Adults who let kids do things that parents would not permit

*Review our policies and procedures and rules concerning interactions with children.*



## Lesson 3 – Protect Yourself from False Allegations



### Goals

After completing this lesson, learners are able to:

- Protect himself/herself from false allegations



### Key Content

A **false allegation** is when someone is **accused** of something he or she didn't do.

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

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

There are some things you and your coworkers need to do to protect yourselves from false allegations.

**They are:**

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

*Let's talk about each of these points:*

- Review the policies of the organization regarding contact outside of work (i.e. Babysitting, tutoring, etc.)
- Set boundaries - policies in regards to social media, personal space, etc. are made clear. Be sure to abide by those for your safety from false allegations.
- Be aware of the following policies:
  - *Off-site contact with children*
  - *Physical contact – for example hugs*
  - *Tutoring/Mentoring in authorized designations*
  - *Appropriate language to use with children*

## Wrap-up

- Are there any questions or special issues anyone would like to discuss?

