Safeguarding Children and Youth from Sexual Predators

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Research

Outreach

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Executive Summary

In response to a request from The Office of Family Policy, Children and Youth, the Center for Research and Outreach (REACH) team conducted a review of the literature focused on safeguarding children and youth from sexual predators. An extensive and systematic review of the literature was conducted identifying relevant articles and reports; approximately 400 documents were reviewed for this report. This report focuses on both the tactics that offenders utilize in grooming young people for sexual abuse, as well as existing programs that are in place to protect young people from predatory practices. Based on the extensive review of empirical evidence, organizational best practices and recommendations are also identified.

Report Summary

Child sexual abuse is a pervasive societal problem. The current prevention model tends to place the responsibility on the very young people that are being victimized. Instead, there needs to be a more comprehensive approach that targets all contexts of a young person's life. Parents, guardians, other caregivers, teachers, coaches, and others that work with young people need to be well-informed regarding the topics surrounding child sexual abuse.

Understanding the Victim

Evidence suggests that young people are most at risk around the time of pubertal onset. This corresponds with the time during which young people are undergoing pubertal development. While young people's bodies are maturing in these manners, their cognitive capabilities, particularly areas of the brain responsible for advanced cognition, are not yet fully developed. This puts the developing adolescent in a situation in which s/he may be seen as sexually attractive to adults who show interest in young developing bodies, but lacking the cognitive ability to fully comprehend the increased risk for abuse. These tendencies make adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17 ideal targets for adult offenders who take advantage of adolescents' relative cognitive immaturity.

Understanding the Offender

Increasing our understanding of offenders may be one powerful approach to recognizing and preventing sexual abuse. Three groups of sexual perpetrators are discussed in this report: (1) situational offenders, (2) preferential offenders, and (3) young offenders. Regardless of the offender type, an estimated 90% of sexual offenders know their victims prior to the abuse.

Understanding Offenders' Grooming Tactics

Sexual offenders often engage in seemingly benign behaviors that enhance a victim's sense of trust in the offender. This establishment of trust enables offenders to gain access to young people and isolate them from those who would normally protect them from abuse. Offenders often pay special attention to potential victims and may take them on special outings alone. Physical contact may begin in seemingly innocent manners such as wrestling or back rubs, but progress to increasingly sexualized contact both over and under the clothes, and may ultimately lead to more severe forms of abuse. Grooming often entails the encouragement of a young person to keep simple secrets in anticipation of maintaining secrets about abuse.

Primary Prevention

Parents, guardians, and non-parental caregivers are primary lines of defense against child sexual abuse, both individually and collaboratively. Educating parents and caregivers about sexual abuse and the grooming tactics used by sexual offenders can be a powerful prevention tool.

A variety of child-focused, parent-focused, organization-focused, and community-focused prevention programs are reviewed in this report in an effort to identify best prevention practices. These best practices include screening, monitoring, and supervision of all individuals that come into contact with young people. Additional best practices are identified relating to the frequency of trainings, teaching methods of prevention programs, and finally the prevention training content itself.

Through this review process, community-focused interventions showed the strongest evidence for sustainable efforts, by targeting the development of infrastructure that is necessary for the ongoing dissemination of prevention materials and training of community members in prevention programming. Although many other programs are available that seek to prevent child sexual abuse, most are not studied rigorously. As a result, little is known about the effectiveness of many prevention programs.

Conclusions and Recommendations

A comprehensive approach to prevention is recommended that includes collaboration among parents, organizations, and the larger community. Programs should seek to educate caretakers and the larger community about offender characteristics (e.g., 90% of offenders know their victims prior to the abuse), grooming tactics (e.g., secrecy), and effective approaches to screening and monitoring those who have contact with young people. Empirical support for existing programs is limited and caution is warranted when implementing any given program. It is critical to integrate ongoing evaluation of the outcomes of ongoing trainings in order to best estimate the effectiveness of prevention programming.

Safeguarding Children & Youth from Sexual Predators

In response to a request from The Office of Family Policy, Children and Youth, the Center for Research and Outreach (REACH) team conducted a review of the literature focused on safeguarding children and youth from sexual predators. This report focuses on both the tactics that offenders utilize in grooming young people for sexual abuse, as well as existing programs that are in place to protect young people from predatory practices. Based on the extensive review of empirical evidence, organizational best practices and recommendations are also identified.

An extensive and systematic review of the literature was conducted identifying relevant articles and reports. In order to represent the most recent literature, only literature that was produced since 2008 was reviewed when considering child sexual abuse prevention programs. Literature on grooming tactics produced since 2003 was reviewed, because the literature in this area is less developed. In select instances, literature produced prior to these dates was also included in order to ensure adequate coverage of literature relevant to grooming tactics and prevention of child sexual abuse in organizations serving young people. Articles used in this report consisted of scholarly work as well as relevant literature reviews, reports, and policy briefs dated from 2003 or later. Approximately 400 documents were critically reviewed for use within this report.

Introduction

Non-parental caregivers play an important role in the lives of young people during the transition from early childhood through adolescence. Teachers, coaches, and youth group leaders take on greater responsibility for children's development and safety through academic and other extracurricular activities. The trusting relationships that are built between young people and these individuals often serve as part of the critical foundation young people need to develop their interpersonal skills and learn the skills necessary to become healthy and well-adjusted members of society. Although the vast majority of young people's relationships with non-parental caregivers are healthy, a minority of such relationships can be unhealthy. Sexual abuse is the most harmful of these unhealthy relationships.

The acts that constitute sexual abuse are not always clear. Definitions vary across states, and within research literature. A lack of agreement regarding what constitutes sexual abuse is one barrier to preventing its occurrence. For the purposes of this report, sexual abuse of children and youth, ages 6-17, will refer to sexual acts perpetrated by an individual in relative power to the victim. As noted in Figure 1, sexual acts that constitute sexual abuse include both contact and non-contact offenses. These acts are considered abusive regardless of whether or not the act involved alleged consent or initiation by the victim[1].

The negative impacts of sexual abuse on physical, social, emotional, and behavioral health, as well as family dynamics are well documented (Barrett, 2009; Brown, Brack, & Mullis, 2008; Colman & Widom, 2004; Irish, Kobayashi, & Delahanty, 2010; Mimiaga et al., 2009; Wilson, 2009). However, a culture of silence often muffles open conversations about sex, sexual development, sexuality, and sexual abuse. Thus, young people's caregivers are often left unable to recognize risk and provide adequate protection from offenders. Research by Wurtele (2012) shows that lack of education and training, as well as effective policies within organizations leave young people vulnerable to the secretive advances of sexual

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[1] See **Appendix A** for additional definitions of terms used throughout this report.

offenders. Since the harmful effects of sexual abuse are well-known, parents, guardians, and organizations must become actively engaged in prevention efforts.

Contact	Non-Contact
• Touching genitalia, thighs, buttocks, breasts, etc. • Offender touching victim • Offender asking victim to touch him/her • Oral-genital contact • Vaginal or anal penetration	• Peeping at a young person's naked body • Taking sexualized pictures or video of the victim • Showing genitalia to a victim • Showing the victim sexual pictures, videos, or other pornographic materials

Figure 1. Examples of Contact & Non-Contact Acts of Sexual Abuse (Deblinger, Thakkar-Kolar, Berru, & Schroeder, 2010; Topping & Barron, 2009; Walsh, Brandon, & Chirio, 2012; Wurtele, 2009)

Most parents/guardians and organizations maintain a basic level of safety measures to enhance child safety. For example, many organizations require their staff to have background checks in an effort to screen out volunteers and employees who could potentially harm young people. However, these background checks are often ineffective in identifying potential offenders (Finkelhor, 2009). Parents/guardians and organizations that serve young people may be able to more effectively prevent sexual abuse by strengthening formal and informal prevention strategies. By developing a systemic culture that encourages healthy boundaries between caretakers and young people, values the voices of young people, and that responds to inappropriate behaviors, parents/guardians and organizations can defend against potentially abusive situations (Wurtele, 2012).

This report focuses on both the tactics that offenders utilize in grooming young people for sexual abuse, as well as existing programs that are in place to protect young people from predatory practices.

<p align="center">**Overview of Key Elements of Sexual Abuse**</p>

An understanding of the topics covered in this report requires a basic understanding of several key elements of sexual abuse. The elements covered in this section offer a foundation from which to understand the effects of sexual abuse on young people.

A Young Person's World
Throughout their lives, young people find themselves in various contexts that include family life, school life, community life, as well as participation in various clubs and organizations. In an effort to understand child sexual abuse more fully, many researchers and advocates believe that we must intervene across all of these domains. A young person's world includes their families, neighbors, organizations, and the larger community/society.

Culture of Silence

Often, when adults find out that a child has been abused, the first question asked is, "Why didn't this young person tell someone?" Understanding how a culture of silence surrounds the sexual abuse of young people is key to prevention efforts. The role of silence is not new and has survived through many cultural views of shame; taboos and modesty; sexual scripts; virginity; women's status; obligatory violence; and honor, respect, and patriarchy that are interpreted by groups in different ways (Fontes & Plummer, 2010). The permeation of silence in a young person's life can prevent a young person from disclosing abuse, preventing appropriate responses by families, schools, organizations, and communities. This culture of silence offers perpetrators a greater sense of safety when approaching a young person. As shown below, this culture of silence looks different for young people, offenders, family, organizations, and communities.

Key Finding:

The sexual abuse of young people typically occurs in private and leaves no physical signs, which makes detection very difficult (Craven et al., 2006).

Young person. From a very young age, children begin to pick up the verbal and behavioral cues that can reflect a culture of silence. Growing up in a culture of silence leads to difficulty initiating conversations, particularly when involving topics like sexuality and sexual abuse that are considered embarrassing, shameful, or taboo (Becker-Blease & Freyd, 2006; Hershkowitz et al., 2007; Jensen et al., 2005; Plummer & Njuguna, 2009). Limitations in cognitive development and language skills can further complicate young people's ability to engage adults in such difficult conversations (Fontes & Plummer, 2010). For example, younger children may struggle to disclose abuse due to insufficient vocabularies required to describe what has happened (NSVRC, 2012). In contrast may refrain from disclosing as a result of an enhanced understanding of the potential social consequences such as victim blaming or social stigma (Hershkowitz et al., 2007). In other cases, the young person may not understand that what they are experiencing is abnormal due to its presence in their larger family systems, environments, and communities (NSVRC, 2012).

The offender. Offenders often take advantage of an existing culture of silence, building upon pre-existing grooming tactics that encourage secrecy in order to avoid discovery (Craven et al., 2006; see **Manipulation of Victims** for further discussion).

Parents, guardians, and family. Alaggia and Kirshenbaum (2005) found that parents, guardians, and the larger family system often experience some of the same pressures to maintain the culture of silence that young people do. Moreover, adults are often ill prepared to respond appropriately to discussions about sexual abuse due to a lack of education or training about such abuse (Fontes & Plummer, 2010). The culture of silence is often intensified within families when the offender themselves is a parent or guardian. Young people may fear that disclosing the abuse will place their family in jeopardy of legal reprisals and the disintegration of the family unit. In addition, families may also fear the impact that disclosure could have on social standing in the community, or the impact of the stigma on the victim at school. Families tend to be particularly reluctant to break the culture of silence if the suspected abuse is deemed small or insignificant as measured against the turmoil and upheaval to which the disclosure could lead.

Organization and community. A general reluctance of a community to acknowledge and confront abuse can also contribute to the culture of silence that enables abuse to occur (Becker-

Blease & Freyd, 2006). Even in cases where abuse is disclosed, the culture of silence can impact how quickly it is accepted to be true.

Understanding the Victim

Addressing sexual abuse requires an understanding of the young people who are the victims of abuse, the frequency of the abuse, and the effects of abuse.

Prevalence of Abuse

It is difficult to accurately estimate the prevalence of abuse, which tends to vary by the type of abuse being reported. It is suspected that existing estimates likely far under-represent the true prevalence of child sexual abuse (Craven, Brown, & Gilchrist, 2006). One study estimated that one in three girls and one in seven boys are sexually abused before the age of 18 (Briere & Elliott, 2003). Gallagher et al. (2008) estimate that approximately one in five young people were the victim of attempted or completed sexual abuse or abduction that could have led to abuse outside of their home. The prevalence of sexual abuse in young people's lives changes depending on the age, gender, sexual identity, and ability of each child in question.

Age at time of abuse. Some reports estimate the average age of sexual abuse to be around 10 years old (Briere & Elliott, 2003). Reports that are specific to sexual abuse perpetrated within an organizational setting suggest that the highest rates of abuse occur between the ages of 12 and 17 (Brackenridge et al., 2008; Fazel, Sjostedt, Grann, & Langstrom, 2010; Vandiver & Kercher, 2004; Vivolo, Holland, Teten & Holt, 2010). This corresponds with the time during

Key Finding:

Estimates suggest that 1 in 3 girls and 1 in 7 boys are sexually abuse before the age of 18 (Briere & Elliott, 2003).

which young people are undergoing pubertal development. While young people's bodies are maturing in these manners, their cognitive capabilities, particularly areas of the brain responsible for advanced cognition, are not yet fully developed (Dahl, 2004). This puts the developing adolescent in a situation in which s/he may be seen as sexually attractive to adults who show interest in young developing bodies, but lacking the cognitive ability to fully comprehend the increased risk for abuse. These tendencies make adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17 ideal targets for adult offenders who take advantage of adolescents' relative cognitive immaturity (Wurtele, 2012).

Gender. Girls are generally overrepresented as victims of sexual abuse. Rates of abuse in girls range from 12% to 40%, while rates for boys are much lower, ranging from 4% to 16.5% (Barrett, 2009; Finkelhor, 2009). When considering specific types of abuse, it is noted that girls are more than five times as likely to experience indecent exposure, and twice as likely to be inappropriately touched (Gallagher et al., 2008). Boys have been shown to be at greater risk of victimization perpetrated by a woman (Briere & Elliott, 2003) and more often are the reported victims of clergy abuse (Terry & Ackerman, 2008). Evidence suggests that girls are more likely than boys to disclose sexual abuse, and therefore rates of sexual abuse in boys are likely to be under-estimated (Goodman-Brown et al., 2003). In school settings, gender differences in rates of sexual abuse have been reported to be minimal (Shakeshaft, 2004), though the reason for this discrepancy with other literature is unclear.

Sexual identity. Evidence suggests that youth who identify as a sexual minority are at higher risk of being sexually abused, though it is clear that sexual abuse does not lead to a sexual minority identity (Arreola, Neilands, Pollack, Paul, & Catania, 2008; Atkinson & Newton, 2010; Brady, 2008; Friedman et al., 2011; Whittle et al., 2013).

Disability. Children and youth with disabilities that include behavioral disorders, speech impairment, physical impairments, and intellectual disability are three times more likely to be victims of sexual abuse (Lumley & Scotti, 2001; McCormack, Kavanagh, Caffrey, & Power, 2005; Skarbek, Hahn, & Parrish, 2009). In fact, among children with developmental disabilities, roughly 40% to 68% of girls and 16% to 30% of boys experience victimization before the age of 18 (Mandell, Walrath, Manteuffel, Sgro, & Pinto-Martin, 2005; Sobsey & Doe, 1991).

Normal Development in Young People

The many developmental changes that occur between the ages of 6 and 17 are highly relevant to discussions of sexual abuse because they inform how sexual abuse affects young people, why understanding grooming tactics is a key to prevention, and how primary prevention programs should be designed to be developmentally appropriate.

Cognitive development. Cognitive development follows general stages from egocentric and concrete to understanding other points of view and engaging in abstract thought. The extent to which teens are able to apply principles of safety in their reasoning about a given situation is linked to such factors as their education level and the kinds of cognitive skills that are valued in their culture. Furthermore, although teens are typically developing the capacity to consider other's points of view, they are not likely to see a potential sexual offender's motives in giving compliments or other gifts (Cook & Cook, 2005).

Physical development. As children age, they also grow in height, weight, and physical strength. These physical aspects of development are relevant to a young person's ability to physically resist sexual advances. This physical capacity also interacts with a young person's cognitive development, as described above. For example, even though a young person may have increasing physical ability to resist acts of sexual abuse, s/he may fail to understand that an act is inappropriate due to relative cognitive immaturity and/or lack of education (Cook & Cook, 2005). In addition to size and strength, middle-school and the teen years mark a time of pubertal transitions.

Sexual development. Across developmental stages, it is important to consider the various stages of sexual development that occurs in young people's lives. It is common for children to begin asking questions about sex by the time they are in elementary school (Smallbone, Marshall, & Wortley, 2008). Experimenting with same-age children and engaging in private masturbation are considered normal to this phase of sexual development (Stop It Now!, 2010). Further, curiosity about sex tends to develop into an emerging sexual identity around the time of pubertal onset, at which time young people often begin to experience their first sexual attractions (Smallbone et al., 2008). During this time, the use of sexual words and discussion of sexual acts become common, and experimentation with others begins to extend to open-mouthed kissing and fondling (Stop it Now!, 2010). As young people become teens, sexual experimentation with same age peers continues to increase in frequency, voyeuristic behaviors become common, and approximately one-third of 13 to 16 year olds begin to engage in intercourse (Stop It Now!, 2010).

Sexual development of young people includes considering where young people learn about sex and sexuality. Although some young people report that they learn about intimacy and sexuality from their parents, peers, and sex education courses; most report that their primary source of information about sex and sexuality is television, movies, music, the internet, and other forms of mass media (DeLamater & Friedrich, 2002). This exploration of sex and sexuality outside of direct adult supervision contributes to the risk of possible sexual abuse (Smallbone, Marshall, & Wortley, 2008).

Developmental effects

Sexual abuse has the potential to be devastating to a young person's development. Understanding these effects helps highlight the importance of exploring grooming techniques and effective primary prevention programs. The effects of sexual abuse include physical/medical problems, impaired social, emotional, and behavioral development, as well as increased risk for academic failure, and impaired family dynamics.

Physical/medical. Research has demonstrated that sexual abuse is associated with a wide range of long-term physical health problems (Arreola, Neilands, Pollack, Paul, & Catania, 2008; Irish, Kobayashi, & Delahanty, 2010; Wilson, 2010). As victims of child sexual abuse age, their general health tends to be poorer. Often, gastrointestinal symptoms tend to increase, victims experience more chronic pain, gynecological symptoms are common in female victims, and victims are at increased risk for obesity and cardiopulmonary disease (Irish et al., 2010; Wilson, 2010). In addition, risk for sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV is also associated with a history of childhood sexual abuse (Arreola et al., 2008).

Social. A multitude of social consequences appear to be associated with child sexual victimization, including being more likely to associate with deviant peers and engage in violent behaviors (Thompson & Braaten-Antrim, 1998; Tyler, 2002). Consequences to intimate relationships are most prominent, such that victims of child sexual abuse tend to begin having sex earlier (Boyer & Fine, 1992; Stock, Bell, Boyer, & Connell, 1997; Tyler, 2002). Victims of child sexual assault are also at an increased risk of teen pregnancy (Herrenkohl, Herrenkohl, Egolf, & Russo, 1998; Stock et al., 1997; Tyler, 2002). Often times, victims go on to experience significant dysfunction within intimate relationships, particularly with respect to issues of trust (Mullen, Martin, Anderson, Romans, & Herbison, 1994).

Emotional. Child sexual assault has been shown to have a wide variety of emotional effects on victims during childhood and adulthood. Significantly higher levels of fear, anxiety, anger, hypervigilance, depression, and psychological distress are noted among victims of sexual abuse when compared with those who have never been victimized (Arreola et al., 2008; Johnson, 2004; Walker, Holman, & Busby, 2009; Wilson, 2009).

Behavioral. Broadly speaking, research has shown that young people who experience sexual abuse exhibit a wide range of behavior problems including aggressive behavior, substance abuse, and risky sexual behaviors (Forbey, Ben-Porath, & Davis, 2000; Ryan & Lane, 1997; Walrath et al., 2003; Paolucci, Genuis, & Violato, 2001; Putnam, 2003). Younger children displaying these behaviors sometimes engage in aggressive play (e.g., hitting, kicking, playing with violent toys, or acting aggressively towards dolls), while older children may act out their aggression by yelling or making threats (Ater, 2001). These increased acts of anger, aggression, and hostility often continue into adulthood (Bridgeland, Duane, & Stewart, 2001; Cornman,

1997; Hall, 1999, 2000; Knisely, Barker, Ingeroll, & Dawson, 2000; Roberts, 1996; World Health Organization, 1997; Dube et al., 2001; Plant & Miller, 2004). Victims of sexual abuse may also engage in sexualized play that is inappropriate for their age or developmental stage (Ater, 2001). Older victims sometimes engage in risky sexual behaviors such as not using protection or having multiple partners (Cunningham et al., 1994; Noll, Trickett, & Putnam, 2003; Rotherraum-Borus et al., 1996; Wilson & Widom, 2008; Wingood & DiClemente, 1997; Jones et al., 2010). In addition, victimization has been associated with alcohol use that often continues into adulthood (Cunningham et al., 1994; Noll et al., 2003; Rotheram-Borus et al., 1996; Wilson & Widom, 2008; Wingood & DiClemente, 1997; Jones et al., 2010).

Academic. The traumatic effects of sexual abuse often extend to academic achievement in a variety of ways. This can include an inability to concentrate, inability to complete work on time, and poor grades (Brown, Brack, & Mullis, 2008; Wilson, 2010; Slade & Wissow, 2007).

Family dynamics. Literature examining the impact of child sexual abuse on family dynamics is primarily limited to the parent-child relationship. As victims of child sexual abuse begin having families of their own, many struggle to effectively parent their children; some express lower levels of parental warmth or higher psychological aggression towards their children; many feel ineffective as parents; and some feel significantly less satisfied with being a parent than parents who were not victims of childhood sexual abuse (Barrett, 2009; Jaffe, Cranston, & Shadlow, 2012; Libby, Orton, Beals, Buchwald, & Mansona, 2008; Kim, Trickett, & Putnam, 2010).

Understanding the Offender

In an effort to better understand and prevent child sexual abuse, researchers and practitioners have begun to focus more explicitly on the offenders perpetrating abuse (Darwinkel, Powell, & Tidmarsh, 2013). Increasing our understanding of offenders may be one powerful approach to preventing sexual abuse. Teaching parents/guardians, non-parental caregivers, and communities at large about sexual offenders may allow everyone to more effectively protect young people from sexual abuse.

Offender Myths

Research has shown that there are many inaccurate stereotypes and myths regarding offender characteristics (Cromer & Goldsmith, 2010). The prevalence of mistaken beliefs about perpetrators places children and youth at risk. This occurs as caregivers fail to suspect perpetrators that do not fit their preconceived idea of an offender profile. Figure 2 presents a list of myths about offender characteristics, and the associated realities.

Characteristic	Myth	Reality
Relationship to Child	Stranger	90% Known to Victim
Gender	Men Only	80% Men; 20% Women (varies by type of offense)
Age	Older	66% Adult; 34% Young People

Figure 2. Myths and Realities: Offender Characteristics

Familiarity with victim. As many as 90% of sexual abuse cases are perpetrated by a person whom the victim knows and trusts (Douglas & Finkelhor, 2005). These individuals can be trusted religious leaders, coaches, teachers or daycare workers, and even family members (Death, 2013; Whittle et al., 2013; Auweele et al, 2008; Turner, et al., 2013).

Key Finding:

As many as 90% of sexual abuse cases are perpetrated by a person whom the victim knows and trusts (Douglas & Finkelhor, 2005).

Gender. The most common myth regarding sexual offenders is that all perpetrators are male. This belief is only somewhat accurate, in that males account for 80% of perpetrators for all types of abuse (Gallagher, Bradford, & Pease, 2008). Female perpetrators however, commit up to one-third of touching-related forms of abuse, and a smaller percentage of other forms of sexual abuse (Gallagher, Bradford, & Pease, 2008).

Age. Although 66% of perpetrators are adults, older children and adolescents commit one-third of all offenses (Gallagher, Bradford, & Pease, 2008). Further, adolescents make up an even larger percentage of specific types of sexual abuse, such as internet related sexual abuse and touching offenses (Atkinson & Newton, 2010; Gallagher, Bradford, & Pease, 2008). Internet related offenses include those in which the offender coerces the victim to meet in-person, at which time abuse may occur; and non-touch offenses such as exposing victims to pornographic materials, coercing them into sending nude photos, stripping, or masturbating on webcam.

Offender Characteristics

Perpetrators of sexual abuse have varied backgrounds and motivations. Three groups of sexual perpetrators are discussed below: (1) situational offenders, (2) preferential offenders, and (3) young offenders. These categories are not mutually exclusive. For example, a situational offender can be a minor, and a preferential offender may commit an offense based on a situation that presented itself. These categories are broken down to carefully address each specific type of offender, however this distinction is not intended to imply that an offender cannot fit the profile of more than one category discussed.

Situational offenders. Situational offenders are those who abuse young people because the opportunity presents itself. These are adults who would otherwise be in appropriate sexual relationships with other adults, but take advantage of young people because of a particular situation in which the opportunity was presented (Adams, 2013). In a study of clergy offenders, close to three-quarters of offenses were characterized as situational opportunity (Terry & Ackerman, 2008). Situational offenders may use young people as sexual substitutes in situations of extreme emotional stress, but would typically choose to have appropriate sexual relationships with other same-aged peers under normal conditions (Smallbone, Marshall, & Wortley, 2008). Situational offenders tend to be less well-adjusted than preferential offenders, often displaying poor coping skills and low self-esteem (Lanning, 2010).

Preferential offenders*.* In contrast, preferential offenders are those who have an exclusive sexual attraction to, and interest in, prepubescent young people (Seto, 2008). These adults are clinically and criminally classified as pedophiles. Ward and Beech (2006) describe preferential offenders as those who have deviant sexual arousal and a strong sexual preference for children

and youth. If given a choice between engaging in a sexual relationship with a consenting adult or a child, these offenders would have greater sexual attraction to a child. These offenders often develop elaborate and intentional grooming techniques for the sole purpose of gaining sexual access to children and youth (Robertiello & Terry, 2007).

Young offenders. Sexual abuse is particularly difficult to diagnose when it is perpetrated by young people. However, it is important to recognize that sexual perpetration is not limited to adult offenders. Evidence suggests that approximately one-third of all sexual abuse is perpetrated by young people (Gallagher, Bradford, & Pease, 2008), with rates of unwanted internet-based sexual solicitations being perpetrated by young people up to 50% of the time (Atkinson & Newton, 2010). Instances of sexual offending committed by young people can be difficult to identify because normal sexual curiosity can be difficult to distinguish from potentially abusive behaviors (Stop It Now, 2010). For this reason, atypical sexual behaviors are described by age group below.

> ***Differentiating between typical and atypical behaviors.*** Generally speaking, adult-like sexual interactions, discussions of specific sexual acts including oral contact, genital contact, intercourse, or engaging in public genital stimulation are considered atypical for school-aged and middle-school children; while sexual interest directed towards much younger children is atypical for teens (Stop it Now!, 2010). Sexual behavior between young people is considered problematic when it occurs with coercion, is associated with emotional distress, occurs between children of significantly different ages or developmental abilities, or reoccurs repeatedly in secrecy after an adult has attempted to intervene (Chaffin, Bonner, & Pierce, 2003).
>
> These behaviors may be explained by many factors, including having an older sibling or unsupervised exposure to certain television, films, games, or song lyrics (Stop it Now!, 2010). Variation in cognitive development across young people can make the extent to which the young offender understands the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touch unclear. However, perhaps the most critical feature to consider is the power differential between the offender and victim. Age, size, cognitive capacity, and status are some of the power-relevant factors that are considered when seeking to determine whether a young person's sexual behaviors with another child are considered abusive. Figure 3 elaborates upon these important factors (Stop It Now!, 2010).

Characteristic	Questions & Considerations
Age	• Is there a large age discrepancy between the young offender and his/her victim? • Cognitive abilities develop quickly during childhood and teenage years, so a difference of only 2 or 3 years may mean substantial differences in cognitive ability.
Size/Physical Capability	• Is one individual much larger, stronger, or otherwise physically capable than the other? • Size and physical capabilities may be involved in physical or psychological (e.g. intimidation) coercion.
Status	• Does one individual hold substantially more power in the relationship? • This could refer to a caretaker status (e.g. teenage babysitter), social status, identity as a bully, etc.
Ability	• Do both children have equal physical, cognitive, or emotional abilities? • If a young person is more capable than the victim in any of these areas, s/he may be more likely to engage in manipulation, tricks, threats, bribes, or even physical force.

Figure 3. Power Differential in Young Offenders

Risk Factors for Sexual Offending

Although it is impossible to predict with complete accuracy who will become sexual abusers, certain characteristics have been identified that are closely related to sexual offending. Risk factors are broken down into two broad categories in Figure 4: (1) individual-level risk factors, indicating factors related to the perpetrator, him/herself; and (2) family-level risk factors, indicating factors that occur within the family context, often when the offender was still a child.

Cognitive distortions represent one critical individual-level risk factor in which an individual has irrational beliefs about child sexual abuse. These distorted thought processes place individuals at risk of becoming sexual offenders (Ciardha & Ward, 2013). For example, if a person agrees with the statement, "sexual contact between an adult and a child that is unwanted by the child and that is physically pleasurable for the child cannot be described as abusive," s/he is more likely to become a sexual offender (Cromer & Goldsmith, 2010).

Other risk factors include difficulty empathizing with others, alcohol and drug abuse, other criminal behavior, and a high number of sexual partners (Almond & Giles, 2008; Harrell et al., 2009). In addition, children who exhibit poor attachment, or were physically or sexually abused are also at increased risk for becoming sexual offenders (Almond & Giles, 2008; Harrell et al., 2009; Smallbone, Marshall, & Wortley, 2008).

Individual-Level Risk Factors

- **General Characteristics**
  - Cognitive Distortions and about child sexual abuse (Cromer, 2010; Harrell et al., 2009)
  - Low empathy (Harrell et al., 2009)
- **Factors That May Begin During Adolescence**
  - Alcohol and drug abuse (Almond & Giles, 2008; Harrell et al., 2009)
  - Other criminal behavior (Almond & Giles, 2008; Harrell et al., 2009)
  - High number of sexual partners (Harrell et al., 2009)

Family-Level Risk Factors

- Poor attachment patterns as a child (Almond & Giles, 2008; Smallbone, Marshall, & Wortley, 2008)
- **History of Abuse**
  - Physical abuse (Almond & Giles, 2008; Harrell et al., 2009)
  - Sexual abuse (Merrill et al., 2001)

Figure 4. Risk Factors for Sexual Offending by Ecological Level

Understanding Offenders' Grooming Tactics

Offenders use grooming tactics to break down barriers that would otherwise protect young people from sexual abuse. Rarely would circumstance alone allow an offender to sexually assault a victim without any previous planning. Rather, grooming tactics are used to gain access to the victim. Establishing when the grooming of a victim begins and ends is nearly impossible; however, research has found that certain behaviors are consistently associated with grooming (Gillespie, 2004).

Researchers have learned much about grooming techniques from both the victims and the offenders (Brackenridge, Bishopp, Moussalli, & Tapp, 2008; Craven, Brown, & Gilchrist, 2006). Although research cannot identify every tactic that may be used, the current research provides a foundation from which it can be identified and reported.

Types of Grooming

Access and trust. Throughout the course of interactions with the young person, the offender may be assessing the young person's level of trust and vulnerability, as well as the risk for discovery on a regular basis (Williams et al., 2013; O'Connell, 2003). Offenders are less likely to abuse when they think they will be caught.

Offenders gain access to young people in a variety of manners as explored further in Figure 5. Historical myths about the danger of strangers have given way to evidence that sexual offenders are very often family members, friends, or know the young person in some other manner prior to the abuse (Auweele et al., 2008, Cromer & Goldsmith, 2010; Fogler, Shipherd, Rowe, Jensen, & Clarke, 2008; Knoll, 2010; NSVRC, 2011). Thus, some offenders have immediate access within their home or extended network of family and friends, while other have access through volunteer activities or employment. After the offender has gained access to a given child, s/he may form a friendship (Adams, 2013; Center for Behavioral Intervention, 2010; Davidson, 2009;

Knoll, 2010; Wooden, & Wooden, 2012) and even present themselves as a mentor to the young person; often encouraging him/her to see the offender as a trustworthy source of support and encouragement during difficult times (Whittle et al., 2013). The victim may subsequently become more dependent on the offender as a source of support (O'Connell, 2003).

Gaining Access	Compliance from Young People	Compliance from Adults	Maintaining Secrecy
● Joining an organization that works with young people ● Befriending vulnerable families that have children ● Choosing an occupation that allows for proximity to children	● Non-sexualized physical touch that gradually progresses to sexualized touch ● Buying gifts ● Isolating from other responsible adults (e.g. invitations to go on private outings)	● Presenting as a role model ● Offering to assist with seemingly innocent activities to help out the family (e.g. picking children up from school, etc.) ● When questions arise, have explanations ready that make the behavior seem innocent	● Encouraging seemingly harmless secrets in preparation for more harmful secrets about inappropriate behaviors ● Threatening to hurt people the child cares about ● Shaming a child into believing it was his/her fault

Figure 5. Examples of Possible Grooming Behaviors

Trust is often a prerequisite to many other acts of grooming that ultimately lead to a sexual offense (Katz, 2013; Whittle et al., 2013). For example, strong trust may enable the offender to take the victim on private outings, in which the offender might begin to develop an exclusive relationship with the young person, therefore isolating him/her from others (Katz, 2013; Whittle et. al, 2013).

Manipulation of victims. A power differential most often exists between victims and offenders. Offenders may use this power to manipulate young people as part of the grooming process (Ospina et al., 2010). For example, the offender may use gifts, money, or flattery to establish themselves as someone who is able to make the victim feel good. The offender may then threaten to take those things away if the victim does not comply with the abuse (Berson, 2003; Elliott, Browne, & Kilcoyne, 1995; McAlinden, 2006; Mishna, McLuckie, & Saini, 2009; Mitchell et al., 2005; O'Connell, 2003; Ospina et al., 2010). Another way offenders manipulate their victims is by expressing similarities in order to get the victim to self-identify with the offender, making the victim more vulnerable to grooming behaviors that lead to abuse (Annitto, 2011; Craven, Brown, & Gilchrist, 2006).

Offenders use manipulation techniques on victims in order to increase the likelihood that the abuse will be kept a secret. Although manipulation can come in many forms, Table 6 identifies some of the most common statements used to gain compliance from the victim. It is important to remember the statements may be adjusted for the age of the victim.

Type of Manipulation	Possible Statements
Invalidating	• "No one will believe you." • "You know you like it." • "You're the one that made me do it! They'll know it was your fault!" • They will be stigmatized by other people
Fear-Based	• "You'll get into trouble if you tell!" • "I'll kill you (or your parents, siblings, others you care about) if you tell!"
Relationship-Based	• "You'll never get to see me again if you tell." (especially complicated if the offender is a parent or primary caregiver)

Figure 6. Types of Manipulations Aimed at Maintaining Secrecy

Manipulation of family and community. Offenders assess family-level risk in similar manners to the ways in which they assess risk from the victim him/herself (Craven, Brown, & Gilchrist, 2006). Offenders may target young people who show evidence of negative family relationships, including parent-child conflict, parental neglect, or other forms of physical and emotional abuse (Atkinson & Newton, 2010; Jones et al., 2010; Walker, Holman, & Busby, 2009; Whitaker et al., 2008; Whittle et al., 2013). Offenders may also seek families who are isolated, lack confidence, demonstrate indiscriminate trust, or exhibit other problems and thus target the young person within that family (Adams, 2013).

Such a family may experience some degree of relief that a seemingly trustworthy adult has time to mentor their child. In projecting trust and integrity, an offender gains the trust of the young person, as well as that of other caregivers and the larger community. The offender also positions him/herself as an individual who would never harm a young person (Sullivan & Quayle, 2012). As the offender gains the family's trust, the risk increases that the family may unwittingly give the offender access to the young person, allowing private interactions in which grooming behaviors escalate (Adams, 2013). By manipulating the family and larger community, the offender knows that even if a victim reports them to other adults, many times the victim will not be believed (Berson, 2003; Elliott, Browne, & Kilcoyne, 1995; McAlinden, 2006; Mishna, McLuckie, & Saini, 2009; Mitchell et al., 2005; O'Connell, 2003; Ospina et al., 2010).

Sexualization and boundary pushing. As a trusting relationship is established between an offender and young person, the relationship gradually becomes sexualized using both physical and psychological grooming techniques (Adams, 2013; Center for Behavioral Intervention, 2010; Davidson, 2009; Knoll, 2010; Wooden, & Wooden, 2012). These techniques are explored further in Figure 7. The offender might pretend to accidentally walk into a room while the child is undressing. The offender might also engage in graduated physical touch involving a touch on the shoulder, a back rub, moving towards more intimate touching such as a touch on the thigh (Craven, Brown, & Gilchrist, 2006; Cromer, 2010; Harrell et al., 2009). The offender may also test physical boundaries by playing seemingly innocent games such as tickling and wrestling that can lead to more sexualized physical interactions (Center for Behavioral Intervention, 2010).

Offenders may also use non-physical ways to sexualize interactions with young people. For example, conversations may become sexualized through flirtation, sexualized jokes, or dirty talking (O'Connell, 2003; Ospina et al., 2010). The victim might be exposed to sexualized photos varying in degrees of exposure (O'Connell, 2003; Ospina et al., 2010). Such sexualization of interactions may occur either in person or via electronic communications including the internet, texting, or cell phone calls. Pornographic images in particular are especially easy for an offender to share with victims using electronic communications. The introduction of pornographic images may allow the offender to initiate more physical types of sexualized interaction by encouraging and even teaching the victim to masturbate, perform oral sex, or pressure the victim into having intercourse (Cohen-Almagor, 2013).

The pace of sexualized interactions can serve to desensitize the young person to abuse by altering the young person's beliefs about what is a normal and natural sexual activity for their age (Cohen-Almagor, 2013; Olson et al., 2007).

Developmental Considerations

Sexualizing interactions and boundary pushing may be particularly effective for offenders in certain situations. For example, young people may not understand that what they are experiencing is abnormal due to either: (a) their young age, limiting their ability to comprehend what is happening to them; or (b) its presence in their larger family systems, environments, and communities (NSVRC, 2012). School-aged children are least likely to understand the nature of these grooming behaviors as inappropriate, particularly when discussions of physical and verbal boundaries have not been a part of their young experience.

As middle-school and teenage youth begin to enter puberty, offenders may exploit natural sexual curiosities, which may make these age groups particularly vulnerable to abuse. A high risk for exploitation may be particularly salient for later teens given ongoing controversy about their capacity to consent to sexual activity (Annitto, 2011).

Effectiveness of Grooming

The purposes for utilizing grooming techniques are multifold. First, these behaviors are conducive to establishing a relationship with the potential victim. Second, an offender grooms the family or other caring adults in the victim's life to overlook warning signs and possibly dismiss any accusations

Physical Grooming Techniques

- Playing body contact games
- Tickling
- Backrubs
- Wrestling
- The offender entering the room when the victim is undressing
- Physical contact that progresses from on top of clothing to contact without clothing

Psychological Grooming Techniques

- Paying special attention
- Getting to know likes and dislikes
- Buying gifts
- Isolating by taking them on special outings where they can be alone
- Taking advantage of natural curiosity about sexuality (see Victims for further information)
- Desensitizing by talking or telling sexualized jokes to test boundaries
- Showing pictures or pornographic images to normalize the behavior
- Encouraging apparently harmless secrets in preparation for later sexual secrets (see Culture of Silence for further information)

Figure 7. Physical and Psychological Grooming Techniques

made by the young person. Third, these grooming behaviors allow the offender to pace the abuse in a way that is most conducive to victimizing youth and children. While it may be difficult to believe that offenders purposefully employ tactics to manipulate situations to their advantage, researchers find it to be true (Craven, Brown, & Gilchrist, 2006; O'Connell, 2003). Organizations and communities need to understand how to recognize these tactics and behaviors. More importantly, people should be empowered to take action when they witness offenders employing grooming tactics. Primary prevention efforts will be more effective if everyone can recognize when grooming is occurring and how to respond to it.

Primary Prevention

Parents, guardians, and non-parental caregivers are primary lines of defense against child sexual abuse, both individually and collaboratively. Educating parents/guardians and caregivers about sexual abuse and the grooming tactics used by sexual offenders is believed to be a powerful prevention tool (KSARC, 2013). Historically, most prevention programs have focused exclusively on teaching young people about sexual abuse and how to protect themselves (Collin-Vezina & Daigneault, 2013). This approach has been criticized for placing the responsibility of prevention on the shoulders of would-be victims, rather than on the shoulders of the adults who are responsible for young people's care (Collin-Vezina & Daigneault, 2013; Wurtele, 2009).

Evidence suggests that in order to maximize the effectiveness of prevention programming, parental involvement is needed (Babatsikos, 2010; Wurtele & Kenny, 2010). Parental involvement is currently limited to programs that are already occurring in a school or an organization, because no known stand-alone parent-focused programs have been developed to date. In addition to parental involvement in prevention efforts, experts believe that non-parental caregivers employed by, or volunteering with, organizations such as schools, youth groups, faith centers, recreational clubs, or sporting activities are critical to the prevention of child sexual abuse (Schober, Fawcet, & Bernier, 2012a).

Key Finding:
Both parental and non-parental caregivers (e.g., those employed by schools, youth groups, faith centers, recreational clubs, or sporting activities) are CRITICAL to the prevention of child sexual abuse.

Many organizations foster close and caring relationships between young people and staff or volunteers. Unfortunately, it is this same closeness that can provide opportunities for abuse to occur (Wurtele, 2012). It is thus imperative that organizations gain an understanding of offender characteristics, and the grooming tactics employed in abusing young people. Such knowledge enables the organization to purposefully plan and implement policies and procedures that maximally support and protect the young people who are served by the organization. The following review describes the best practices recommended by experts in the field of child sexual abuse prevention, based on available direct and indirect evidence as well as clinical experience in the field. Strategies for implementing and maintaining these best practices are also described.

Screening Individuals that Interact with Young People
Recent literature suggests that best practice for child sexual abuse prevention include training parental and non-parental caregivers in strategies designed to protect young people from sexual offenders (Collin-Vezina & Daigneault, 2013; Wurtele, 2009). Discussion of these strategies begins with minimizing

the risk that offenders will be able to access young people. Because offenders cannot be prevented from accessing young people all of the time, supervision of interactions with young people is needed.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in collaboration with experts in the field, has developed a set of recommendations for screening employees and volunteers who work with young people (Saul & Audage, 2007). These recommendations include screening both adults and adolescents who work with young people for possible signs of risk for offending. Recommended screening strategies include reference checks, written applications, and mandatory interviews. Guidelines for implementing these strategies are briefly outlined here.

> **Managing access to young people.** Managing access to young people includes screening both those who have access to young people from outside and within a home or organization. Smallbone and Wortley (2008) recommend that visitors to an organization be required to report to a main office before entering a building. Alternatively, a register may be kept of who is allowed to pick young people up after activities.

> **Responsible person**. Within organizations, it is important to identify the person who will be responsible for hiring both paid and unpaid staff. Organizations need clear protocols and procedures for this person to follow during the screening process. Consultation with an attorney is advisable to ensure that screening and selection policies do not violate Title VII of the Civil Rights Act or laws prohibiting discrimination (Saul & Audage, 2007).

> **Screen everyone.** All adults and adolescents who will have contact with young people should be screened in this process. In-depth written applications and personal interviews may be particularly critical for applicants with limited work history and those who will have more autonomy in their work activities if hired. Organizations should ensure that all applicants follow the same procedures and that no exceptions are made.

> **Read and sign.** During the screening process, applicants should be provided with, and asked to sign, the organization's policy and procedures statement relevant to child sexual abuse prevention.

> **Written application**. It is advisable that applications ask close-ended questions that specifically require applicants to disclose any history of sexual offenses, violence against youth, and other criminal offenses. In addition to specific close ended questions, providing a space for open-ended questions that encourage broad answers in the written application will also provide an opportunity for follow-up in a personal interview. Applications should be sure to clarify that questions refer to the applicant's history of perpetration, rather than history of victimization. Applications should also include an indemnification clause developed by an attorney to protect the organization from false allegations or other legal issues.

> **Personal interview.** A personal interview with potential staff and volunteers should include open-ended questions that encourage discussion, and that expand upon answers to questions from the written application.

Reference checks. Screening should be sensitive to any omissions in the references that are offered by the applicant such as omitting a supervisor from the most recent job. Conversations with references have the potential be more informative than written responses. Questions are advisable that inquire about what makes an applicant a good fit for work with young people, or any concerns about the applicant working with young people.

Criminal background checks. Although criminal background checks are an important screening tool, their primary limitation lies in the fact that most sexual offenders have not yet been caught. Thus, such background checks should always supplement other screening strategies. Identification of violent behavior or prior abuse of children would disqualify this person. Drug and driving offenses are potential disqualifiers, depending on the risk inherent in the job that the applicant is seeking to fill and the mission of the organization. Only offenses that resulted in a conviction can be used as the basis of disqualifying an applicant.

Other strategies. Organizations that have staff working with young people in their home's (e.g., mentorship positions) may need additional levels of screening that include assessment of a home environment. A log of applicants who have been turned down in the past should be kept on record. Internet searches can also be employed in the screening process, though with the caution that it may be difficult to verify the accuracy of information found on the internet.

Key Finding:

A traditional background check is not enough information to screen future employees and volunteers.

Monitoring and Supervision

Screening strategies provide an initial step towards ensuring young people's safety from sexual offenders. The next step towards ensuring young people's safety is to establish effective monitoring and supervision practices (Saul & Audage, 2007). In addition to monitoring in-person interactions, both on- and off-line activities should be monitored.

Key Finding:

When risk of detection is high, the risk of actual offending is reduced.

Monitoring and supervision must start with clear definitions of appropriate and inappropriate interactions. This can be a particularly difficult task when seeking to adequately account for cultural and developmental contexts. It can be helpful to consider general boundary violations, verbal and physical interactions, and other red flags in order to help clarify these questions. Figure 8 presents a list of behaviors that are cause for concern across most cultural and developmental contexts. More extensive guiding principles for monitoring interactions with young people are provided below.

Families and organizations should be sure to structure interactions with young people in ways that are conducive to monitoring by a third party. Examples include encouraging in-person interactions to occur in open and easily viewable spaces, and placing computers and webcams in places that allow the monitoring of online interactions. Such strategies increase the chances that an offender's activities will be discovered, and decrease the risk that they will commit a sexual offense (Atkinson & Newton, 2010; Knoll, 2010; Kaufman, Hayes, & Knox, 2010; Smallbone & Wortley, 2008; Whittle et al., 2013).

Watch for General Boundary Violations	Watch for Inappropriate Physical Interactions	Watch for Inappropriate Verbal Interactions	Other Red Flags
• Ignoring social, emotional, or physical boundaries or limits • Refusing to let a young person set his/her own limits • Exposing a young person to adult sexual interactions without apparent concern	• Insists on hugging, touching, kissing, tickling, wrestling with or holding a young person even when s/he does not want this physical contact or attention • Patting the buttocks • Intimate/romantic/sexual contact between staff and young people	• Uses teasing or belittling language to keep a young person from setting a limit • Frequent sexual references or sexually suggestive jokes with young people present • sexually provocative comments • degrading comments	• Secret interactions with young people • Spending excessive time emailing, text messaging or calling a young person • Taking young people on special outings alone • Allowing young people to consistently get away with inappropriate behaviors

Figure 8. Stop It Now! (2010)

Person-to-person interactions. The interactions between adults within a family or organization can model acceptable and unacceptable behaviors and provide an environment that either promotes or inhibits the safety of the young people involved (Wurtele, 2012). Adults with the responsibility for a young person's safety and wellbeing should be alert to inappropriate interactions between adults and young people. Young people who observe inappropriate interactions between adults are more likely to engage in such interactions amongst themselves as well, making adult-adult interactions among the most critical interactions to monitor (Bandura, 2006). The overall behavior of adults within a family or organization can contribute to an environment that places young people at risk for sexual abuse (Wurtele, 2012).

Organizations must have policies and procedures in place related to one-to-one interactions between those who are employed. These policies should address concerns that arise during one-to-one interactions and the potential for harm. Organizations have found that having two adults present at all times can reduce this risk. The procedures and policies within an organization should identify how this policy is enforced. It is recognized that some organizations will need a strict prohibition of one-on-one interaction, which may be incompatible with the mission of other organizations that participate in activities like mentoring. Those organizations will need to develop additional policies and procedures to guide this interactions. Organizations may also choose to develop guidelines for limiting one-on-one interactions outside of the activities sanctioned by the organization.

Responding to inappropriate behaviors. Adults who are responsible for the wellbeing of young people must be vigilant to responding to inappropriate behaviors and interactions. If the behavior is clearly a violation of the law, it must be reported.

Supervision of staff and volunteers requires addressing behaviors that are deemed inappropriate based on the policies and procedures of the organization. These conversations need to clearly define the behavior that is inappropriate and the rationale for why it is considered inappropriate. This conversation can be guided from the staff or volunteer's vantage point beginning with a concern for their wellbeing. When an inappropriate situation arises, it should be explored without accusation; discussing what behaviors were observed that are of concern using questions that are direct. The first talk should end in a manner that gives space for ongoing conversation, which will be required in many situations in order to ensure that concerns are adequately addressed. The person leading the conversation should be sure to debrief with another trusted adult to discuss what further action may be required. Families and organization should be careful to balance between encouraging positive and appropriate interactions, and discouraging inappropriate and harmful interactions, as excessive vigilance regarding inappropriate behaviors or insufficient attention to healthy behaviors is detrimental to the wellbeing of young people (Saul & Audage, 2007).

Key Finding:

Organizations should have clear policies for responding to questionable and inappropriate behavior, including reporting to the authorities.

A culture of silence, as described herein, has enabled many offenders to go undetected in perpetrating sexual abuse against young people. Perpetrators who interact with family and organizational systems in which such silence prevails feel secure that their victims, staff, and those in charge will remain silent (Smallbone & Wortley, 2008). For this reason, opportunities and encouragement to report suspicious activity is absolutely necessary. This may be done via telephone and internet helplines, as well as both formal and informal policies regarding communication within a family or organization. It is important that organizations be opened to regular independent reviews by outside entities in order to assure proper response policies are in place (Kendrick & Taylor, 2000; Trocme & Schumaker, 1999).

Implementing Trainings

The development of policies and procedures for screening, monitoring interactions, and responding to inappropriate behaviors is necessary for ensuring maximal protection of young people. However, neither formal nor informal policies are sufficient. Effectively implementing prevention policies requires ongoing training (Darwinkel, Powell, & Tidmarsh, 2013; Wurtele, 2012). This training would ideally occur in a manner that is responsive to the specific risks and protective factors that are present in a given system (Kaufman, Hayes, & Knox, 2010; Smallbone & Wortley, 2008). A proper implementation of trainings includes evaluating risks, monitoring training content, and program maintenance.

Evaluating risks. The Situational Prevention Model describes manners in which young people's environments may be more or less conducive to their safety (Kaufman, Hayes, & Knox, 2010; Smallbone & Wortley, 2008). This model is a principle-based approach to prevention that is based on crime opportunity theory. It has been successfully applied to reduce other types of crime, and can be flexibly applied to any organizational setting. Although this model has not

been applied in a family context, similar approaches to evaluating strengths and needs for improvement within a family system may also be applicable.

According to the Situational Prevention Model, a risk assessment must be conducted as the first step towards developing effective prevention strategies. In the case of organization-based prevention, administrative and supervisory staff provide input into identifying risks within the organizational environment. Alternatively, the community-focused Enough Abuse Campaign conducted this assessment using public opinion polls (Schober, Fawcet, & Bernier, 2012a). Whether conducted via staff input within an organization, public opinion polls associated with community-focused prevention, or family meetings, an exhaustive list of risks have been identified using these various methods. These risk are then prioritized and linked to specific prevention strategies. As these strategies are implemented, a monitoring plan is also developed and implemented (Kaufman, Hayes, & Knox, 2010; Smallbone & Wortley, 2008).

Although the Situational Prevention Model recommends that prevention strategies be implemented in response to identified risks through an iterative process, established programs typically do not follow this recommendation (Kaufman, Hayes, & Knox, 2010; Smallbone & Wortley, 2008). Rather, trainings are typically designed to be delivered in a relatively rigid manner, are often delivered in a single session, and often fail to provide recommendations for ongoing maintenance of prevention strategies.

Conducting trainings. Prevention programs that aim to train caregivers in strategies to protect young people from sexual abuse should respond to risk assessments as described above. It is critical that such programs be established within all organizations, and involve parents in order to more fully protect young people (Darwinkel, Powell, & Tidmarsh, 2013; Wurtele, 2012). Training caregivers in strategies for effectively preventing sexual abuse involves not only specific content, but also effective teaching methods, sufficient duration of program delivery, and maintenance plans. The availability of training manuals and ongoing consultation can help to ensure that facilitators deliver content and use teaching methods effectively (Rheingold et al., 2012; Schober et al., 2012; Smothers & Smothers, 2011). Moreover, it is becoming increasingly clear that ongoing evaluation of program outcomes is critical to verification of program effectiveness (Kaufman et al., 2010; Saul & Audage, 2007).

Teaching methods. Effective teaching methods are often more important than the content that is being delivered (Topping & Barron, 2009). Evidence suggests that use of multiple active teaching methods is associated with enhanced prevention outcomes (Daigneault et al., 2012; Topping & Barron, 2009). Common active teaching methods are described in Figure 9. These teaching methods have been more thoroughly studied in prevention programs targeting young people than those targeting caregivers (Bowman, Scotti, & Morris, 2010; Rheingold, Zajac, & Patton, 2012; Smothers & Smothers, 2012; Topping & Barron, 2009). However, other non-abuse empirically supported parenting programs rely heavily on such active teaching methods (Gewirtz, Pinna, Hanson, & Brockberg, in press; Stallman & Sanders, 2014). By extension, the use of multiple active teaching methods are believed to be critical to the effective delivery of child sexual abuse prevention programming that targets caregivers, as well.

Modeling	Role Playing	Group Discussion
Program facilitators show participants how skills being taught look (i.e. versus simple verbal description of the skill)	Program participants are invited to practice skills being taught by pretending that a given situation is occurring (e.g. an adult suggests that a young person keep a secret that seems unsafe), and using the skill being taught in this pretend situation	In order to help program participants process the skills being taught, they are encouraged to engage in active discussion about the skills (e.g. sharing thoughts, reactions, asking questions, etc.)

Figure 9. Active Teaching Methods

Other promising methods are more common in caregiver-focused sexual abuse prevention programs. One program used video to deliver content (Paranal et al., 2012; Rheingold, Zajac, & Patton, 2012). Additional programs have used handouts or workbooks, victim testimonials of sexual abuse, and testimonials from sexual abuse prevention experts (Ogunfowakan & Fajemilehin, 2012; Rheingold, Zajac, & Patton, 2012). Several programs delivered content online (Davidson & Martellozzo, 2008; Rheingold, Zajac, & Patton, 2012), with one such program integrating interactive quizzes and a chapter training format (Rheingold et al., 2012). Quizzes were designed to provide further review for material as needed on an individual basis, while the chapter format allowed individuals to pause and return to training as needed. Although these teaching methods are promising, evidence is insufficient to determine the extent to which these methods are effective to the delivery of prevention content.

Cultural competencies are critical to any teaching method as cultural background can impact an individual's willingness to employ the skills being taught in prevention programs (Fontes, 2005; Fontes & Plummer, 2010; Ligiero et al., 2009). For example, some cultures believe that children should speak only when spoken to and show this respect towards their elders. Encouraging young people to speak out against authority figures might be seen as inconsistent with such cultural views. Failing to account for cultural backgrounds in such a manner may reduce the effectiveness of prevention efforts (Fontes, 2005). Facilitators of prevention programming are encouraged to develop an awareness of their target audience's cultural backgrounds in all of its complexity (e.g., racial/ethnic, family, organizational, etc.). Unfortunately, few programs explicitly target cultural competency in guidelines for program delivery. Smothers and Smothers (2011) was the only such program identified that explicitly targeted cultural competency.

Similarly, facilitators of prevention programming are also encouraged to ensure that programming is sensitive to the developmental level of the young people being protected. For example, pubertal development and cognitive immaturity relative to potential offenders makes early adolescence a particularly sensitive age to target in prevention programming (Wurtele, 2012). Such programming may directly or indirectly target this age group, depending on whether training is being delivered directly to the early adolescent or his/her caregivers. All prevention programming should seek to adjust language and content to account for the developmental level of the young people who are directly or indirectly targeted for protection (Daigneault, Hebert, McDuff, & Frappier, 2012; Schober, Fawcet, & Bernier, 2012; Smothers & Smothers, 2011).

Duration of program delivery. Culturally and developmentally sensitive teaching methods help to ensure immediate effects of prevention programming. Evidence suggests that employing these teaching methods over the course of at least four sessions may enhance retention of knowledge and skills (Topping & Barron, 2009). As with literature suggesting the importance of active teaching techniques, literature seeking to determine optimal dosage is limited to programs that target young people. Empirically based parenting programs suggest that similar principles may also apply to programs that target caregivers (Gewirtz et al., in press; Stallman & Sanders, 2014).

Key Finding:

Best Practices for Primary Prevention programming include: (1) multiple active teaching methods, (2) at least 4 session in duration and (3) involving parents.

Caregiver-focused programs that use online delivery formats allow for more flexible delivery of content over the course of multiple sessions, as is recommended by literature focusing on training young people (Topping & Barron, 2009). For example, in the online version of Stewards of Children, caregivers were given two weeks to complete online trainings that would otherwise be delivered over the course of a 2.5 hour workshop.

Maintenance. While evidence suggests that sufficient dosage is necessary to maximize short-term retention of knowledge and skills learned during prevention programming (Topping & Barron, 2009), booster sessions are believed to be necessary for long-term maintenance and retention of such knowledge and skills (Daigneault et al., 2012; Wurtele, 2009). This is particularly important for organizations that hire new staff on a regular basis. Organizations should ensure that policies and procedures are in place to deliver regularly scheduled trainings to train new staff, as well as to ensure that existing staff's knowledge and skills are maintained over the course of time. Community-based prevention programs are good examples of establishing policies and procedures for ongoing training (Schober et al., 2011; 2012; Smothers & Smothers, 2011).

Content. Effective teaching methods, duration of program delivery, and maintenance plans represent the core framework within which prevention content is delivered. Critical components of effective sexual abuse prevention programs is categorized into four primary content areas: (1) educational; (2) communication; (3) caregiver responsibilities, and (4) self-protection skills.

Educational content. Educational components of child sexual abuse prevention trainings include the following topics:
1. The nature and characteristics of sexual abuse (Bowman, Scotti, & Morris, 2010; Chen, Fortson, & Tseng, 2012; Mathew & Laurie, 2002; Ogunfowokan & Fajemilihin, 2012; Rheingold, Zajac, & Patton, 2012)
2. Offender characteristics and grooming tactics (Ogunfowokan & Fajemilihin, 2012; Schober et al., 2011; 2012)
3. Body parts (Chen et al., 2012; Topping & Barron, 2009)
4. Sexual development (Bowman et al., 2010; Chen et al., 2012; Schober et al., 2011; 2012)
5. Physical and verbal boundaries (Chen et al., 2012; Mathew & Laurie, 2002; Schober et al., 2011; 2012; Smothers & Smothers, 2011)

6. Secrets (Chen et al., 2012; Davidson & Martellozzo, 2008; Mathew & Laurie, 2002; Smothers & Smothers, 2011)

Education about the nature and characteristics of sexual abuse represents the most traditional form of sexual abuse prevention content. Education about offender characteristics and grooming tactics help to effectively shift the focus of prevention from teaching the would-be victim to protect him/herself, to recognizing the need for caregivers to actively protect young people from offenders through monitoring interactions for signs of possible grooming. Teaching young people the proper vocabulary for genitalia and other body parts is also a traditional component of child-focused prevention. Caregiver-focused prevention entails increasing awareness of the importance that proper terminology be used when communicating about sexual abuse and its prevention. This helps to ensure that concerns about potential grooming behaviors or actual abuse are accurately described, which enhances the effectiveness of communication. Similarly, education about physical and verbal boundaries is another traditional approach to training young people in self-protective skills. Such education is also relevant to training caregivers, both in order to focus their monitoring practices and to guide their communications about sexual abuse and its prevention. Education about secrets are less traditionally included in any prevention programming. However, education about the secretive nature of sexual abuse and grooming tactics in particular is believed to be as critical as the shift towards focusing on offenders and the responsibilities of caregivers to protect young people.

Key Finding:

Education surrounding grooming tactics is believed to be as critical as the shift towards focusing on offenders and the responsibilities of caregivers to protect young people.

Communication content. Many of the educational components of effective child sexual abuse prevention serve to inform manners in which both parents/guardians and non-parental caregivers must communicate with each other, with young people, and with the larger community within which young people reside (Paranal, Washington, & Derrick, 2012; Rheingold et al., 2012; Schober et al., 2011; 2012b; Smothers & Smothers, 2011). Communicating about sexual abuse is understood to be a complicated matter given the culture of silence that has been described. Individual's discomfort with, or lack of knowledge about, sexual development and abuse may place young people at increased risk for victimization (Smallbone, Marshall, & Wortley, 2008). Risk for sexual abuse is likely to be powerfully reduced as individuals overcome their discomfort with communicating about sexual abuse and its prevention (Deblinger et al., 2010; Walsh, Brandon, & Chirio, 2012).

Parental/guardian communication. Parents and guardians remain a relatively untapped resource with regard to their role in preventing child sexual abuse. Parents and guardians are seen as key figures in the education and socialization of young people related to sexuality and sexual issues (Kenny, 2009; Martin & Luke, 2010), and are the most readily available sources of information and support about sex and sexuality (DiIorio, Pluhar, & Belcher, 2003; Wurtele, 2009) outside of mass media (DeLamater & Friedrich, 2002).

Research provides insights that may help to guide the most effective approaches to engaging parents in trainings that would support their communication skills. Evidence suggests that most parents and guardians naturally make efforts to educate their children about sexual abuse (Deblinger et al., 2010). However, parents and guardians appear to often neglect critical information, often disproportionately focusing on strangers as perpetrators and avoiding discussions around the secrecy surrounding abuse by known perpetrators (Walsh, 2012). This evidence further suggests that parents/guardians are more likely to discuss the possibility that someone might try to touch a young person's genitals, but failed to discuss the likelihood that the perpetrator would then ask them to keep it secret. Guardians who have no direct or indirect personal experience with abuse are least likely to talk to their children about it (Walsh, 2012). As a result, the education of parents and guardians do provide to young people is often inaccurate or lacking in detail.

Key Finding:

Parents are likely to discuss the possibility that someone might try to touch a young person's genitals, but failed to discuss the likelihood that the perpetrator would then ask them to keep it secret.

Evidence suggests that fathers may be in greater need of training in how to communicate about sexual abuse than mothers; both in terms of general communication and range of relevant topics of discussion (Deblinger et al., 2010). Evidence also suggests that mothers may be more willing to participate in sexual abuse prevention programs to gain increased skills for protecting their children against abuse, suggesting the importance of focusing efforts on increasing conversations with fathers about sexual abuse prevention. Finally, both mothers and fathers are more likely to provide prevention messages to their daughters than their sons (Deblinger et al., 2010), suggesting the need to encourage more frequent and in-depth conversations with sons.

Walsh and colleagues (2012) describe the expressed needs and wants of parents for training in sexual abuse prevention. Figure 10 presents noted parental strengths, needs, and expressed desires for such training. Stop It Now.org responds to these needs, and wants in providing helpful guidelines on how to create a family safety plan, which can serve as the basis for communicating with young people about sexual abuse and its prevention (Stop It Now!, 2008). This resource describes how to educate everyone in the family about healthy sexual development, and how to communicate about appropriate and inappropriate behavior. Discussions on setting and respecting boundaries are also included. Finally, guidance is provided in developing a plan for what to do if someone witnesses inappropriate behavior or is approached by someone wanting to engage in unhealthy sexual behavior. Although this resource is designed for application within the family, it may be applicable to structuring conversations with other caregivers and community members as well.

Strengths

- **Developmental Nuances of Supervision:** Parents were sensitive to the developmental nuances involved in providing adequate supervision to their children
- **Protective Adults:** Parents were also sensitive to the importance of involving other adults in the community in the supervision of their children
- **Parent-Child Communication:** Parents emphasized the importance of having an open, trusting, respectful relationship with their children so that their children would be more receptive to relevant conversations about preventing sexual abuse

Needs

- **Knowledge:** Parents expressed concern that they did not know enough about sexual abuse prevention to adequately teach their children
- **"Stranger Danger":** Parents expressed concern that they were still focusing on teaching their children to avoid strangers as a primary approach to preventing sexual abuse
- **Bodies, Touching, & Relationships:** Parents appeared eager for more information on talking to young people about their bodies, inappropriate touch, and relationships
- **Just the Basics:** Parents expressed a preference that prevention programs not teach children the details of sexual acts. Because prevention programs generally do not teach such specific details of sexual acts, parents may benefit from greater awareness of course content in child-focused prevention

Wants

- **Voice & Choice:** Parents expressed a strong desire to have a voice in what their children learn, and to retain the role of primary provider of such information

Figure 10. Parent/Guardian Focus Group Strengths (Walsh et al., 2012)

Community-based communication. It is becoming increasingly clear that prevention messages need to be communicated not just to young people and their caregivers, but to the larger communities within which young people reside as well (Paranal, Washington, & Derrick, 2012; Schober et al., 2011; 2012b; Smothers & Smothers, 2011; Stop It Now!, 2010). One model program (Smother & Smothers, 2011) chose to communicate messages about: (1) relationship health; (2) assertiveness; and (3) trusting one's intuition/gut feeling.

Stewards of Children (Paranal, Washington, & Derrick, 2012; Rheingold, Zajac, & Patton, 2012) and the Enough Abuse Campaign (Schober, Fawcet, & Bernier, 2012a) disseminated messages about the prevention of child sexual abuse through the following means: (1) community presentations; (2) media coverage including television,

radio, and print formats; (3) establishment of a statewide helpline; (4) establishment of a training programs; and (4) inviting residents to join an advocacy-based movement to prevent sexual abuse.

One final approach to communicating with the larger community is through the scripting of plays that depict sexual abuse. One such play, titled "Family Tracks," was developed with the goal of creating a dialogue around the issue of child sexual between community parents, advocates, and professionals (Davis et al., 2013). More research about how to implement this strategy as a prevention tool should be conducted.

Model Programs:

Community-based prevention programs were found to be the most comprehensive programs available. These shift away from traditional prevention efforts that focus exclusively on the young person, and assure that the entire community is educated.

Caregiver Responsibilities

In addition to caregiver's responsibility to communicate with young people and the larger community about preventing child abuse, the following caregiver responsibilities for protecting young people from sexual abuse have been identified: (1) monitoring/supervision (Paranal, Washington, & Derrisk, 2012; Rheingold et al., 2012; Saul & Audage, 2007); (2) limiting access to young people/screening caregivers (Rheingold et al., 2012); and (3) responding to signs of grooming or actual abuse (Paranal et al., 2012; Rheingold et al., 2012; Schober et al., 2011; 2012; Smothers & Smothers, 2011). This content is the most direct response to criticisms of child-focused programs for placing the responsibility for abuse on the shoulders of young people, rather than on the shoulders of adults who are responsible for young people's wellbeing (Collin-Vezina & Daigneault, 2013; Wurtele, 2009).

Personal Safety

As has been emphasized throughout this report, focusing prevention efforts solely on the young person is considered inappropriate. However, neglecting to engage the young person in prevention is also not advisable. Teaching personal safety skills is one of the critical components to sexual abuse prevention that is specific to the young person (Chen et al., 2012; Daigneault et al., 2012; Mathew & Laurie, 2002; Ogunfowokan & Fajemilehin, 2012; Smothers & Smothers, 2011).

Primary goals of child-focused prevention tend to fall within three primary areas of focus: (1) communication; (2) skill development; and (3) disclosure (Figure 11; Kenny, Capri, Thakkar-Kolar, Ryan, & Runyon, 2008; Repucci & Herman, 1991; Topping & Barron, 2009; Wurtele, 2009).

Recognizing & Communicate about Abuse

- **Good touch/bad touch**: teach how to distinguish appropriate from inappropriate touch and other interactions (e.g., sexualized jokes)
- **Vocabulary for anatomy:** teach proper names for body parts; enables young people to accurately describe interactions that violate physical boundaries (including actual acts of abuse)
- **Good secrets vs. bad secrets:** teach the difference between "good" secrets (e.g., surprise birthday party) and "bad" (e.g., touched inappropriately) or "questionable" secrets; perpetrators often directly encourage young people to keep benign secrets as a grooming tactic that sets victims up to keep actual acts of abuse a secret, as well
- **"Stranger Danger" is a Myth:** teach that most perpetrators of sexual abuse are known to the victim (e.g., family member, caregiver); "stranger danger" suggests that only strangers abuse young people, but this is a myth

Developing Skills to Avoid Abuse

- **Self-assertion/self-protection:** teach specific skills for getting out of a situation that seems risky (e.g., feels uncomfortable). Mixed evidence suggests that self-assertion may place young people at risk of greater harm. Thus, caution is warranted when integrating these skills into prevention programs

Disclosing Abuse

- Although the goal of primary prevention is to intervene before abuse has occurred, young people who have already been abused will inevitably be involved in programming. For this reason, it is critical to ensure that young people are encouraged to disclose abuse that has already occurred.

Figure 11. Goals of Child-Focused Prevention (Kenny et al., 2008; Wurtele & Kenny, 2010)

Ongoing Evaluation

The final component of effective primary prevention of child sexual abuse, according to CDC recommendation is ongoing monitoring of risk factors (Saul & Audage, 2007). In addition to supervising interactions with young people, it is recommended that prevention programming be strategically developed and implemented in such a manner as to ensure that the outcomes of risk reduction strategies are measured and monitored over the course of time (Kaufman et al., 2010).

Strengths and Limitations of Existing Prevention Programs

A number of prevention programs have been developed in recent years that have shifted the burden of prevention from young people toward the responsible adults who care for them. Although no program reviewed covers all core best practices described above, they cumulatively provide guidance in how best to implement each best practice, as noted in **Appendix B**. All programs reviewed included educational components. Inclusion of communication and caregiver components was represented less frequently and was limited to programs that target non-parental caregivers or the larger community. Personal safety was addressed only in programs specifically targeting young people. Those programs that exclusively targeted the prevention of internet-based abuse did not clearly teach about sexual abuse, but did teach about secrecy. Discussion of secrecy was more common in child-focused programs, and

did not appear to be covered in any of the organization-focused programs that were reviewed. Lager discussion of grooming tactics was rare, being limited to one child-focused and two community-focused programs. Similarly, education about body parts, which facilitates conversation about sexual abuse was also found to be limited. Several programs, including one organization-focused program, discussed sexual development, and about half of programs reviewed discussed healthy boundaries. That these types of content are increasingly represented amongst various programs is proof of progress within the field of child sexual abuse prevention.

Varying types of prevention programs each boast unique strengths and challenges. Child-focused primary prevention programs boast the benefit of reaching a large number of young people in a setting that places them in close proximity with those who could potentially perpetrate abuse (e.g., teachers, older peers). These child-focused programs also take advantage of the salient peer and adult group nature of the setting, and enable follow-up with young people to determine the effectiveness of programming (Topping & Barron, 2009). In addition, because schools are a setting of potential risk for abuse, implementing prevention programming in this setting is particularly critical. However, these benefits reflect only the potential inherent in prevention programming. Well-designed and intentional evaluations of programs are necessary in order to determine the effectiveness of prevention programming.

Many child-focused programs have at least minimal data supporting their effectiveness, but much of this data is of poor quality. Evidence suggests that prevention programs that employ multiple active approaches to teaching program content, are at least four to five sessions in duration, and involve parents may be effective in improving abuse-related knowledge and skills (Topping & Barron, 2009). Further evidence suggests that such knowledge and skills may be maintained over time (Chen et al., 2012; Ogunfowokan & Fajemilehin, 2012; Topping & Barron, 2009). However, among the limited number of high quality child-focused prevention studies published in the past five years, only one found significantly greater increases in knowledge gained following the prevention programming, compared to a no-prevention condition (Ogunfowokan & Fajemilehin, 2012). Similarly, only one high quality study found increases in self-protection skills (Chen et al., 2012).

Importantly, concern has been raised regarding the implications of targeting would-be victims, rather than the potential perpetrators or the adults responsible for young people's care (Collin-Vezina, 2013; Daigneault & Hebert, 2013; Topping & Barron, 2009; Wurtele, 2009). For this reason, greater focus of prevention efforts on responsible adults is recommended as child-focused programming is considered necessary, but highly insufficient.

Although programs have begun to branch out towards organization-based prevention, no known data is available at this time. Such programs are being developed to train caregivers in techniques that safeguard young people against sexual abuse. Promising online delivery methods are being developed that are low-cost and that can be easily delivered organization-wide to direct caregivers and administrative personnel alike. Prevention programs delivered within organizations may provide a unique opportunity to involve parents and guardians in new and more effective ways. Such involvement is believed to be critical to the maximization of prevention effects. Moreover, principles of implementation that have supporting evidence may be incorporated into organizational prevention (e.g., multiple approaches to active teaching). However, caution is warranted in the level of confidence that can be had in such programs given the absence of data that speaks to how well these programs prevent child sexual abuse.

Most prevention programs that have been studied in recent years seek to determine changes in knowledge, while the ultimate goal of all programs is to reduce the incidence of abuse itself. The Prevent Child Abuse Georgia campaign (Schober et al., 2011) stands out in this respect. Incidences of child abuse were monitored over a five year period in conjunction with the delivery of this program. Although little or no change in incidence was seen in the first two years following the campaign, reports of sexual abuse declined considerably beginning in year three (21% in years three and four, and another 12% in year five). Although the results of this program are promising, conclusions cannot be drawn regarding the extent to which noted changes in knowledge and reported abuse incidents were the result of the prevention programs due to the lack of comparison to communities who were not exposed to the intervention. Further research employing randomized control conditions are required for such conclusions to be made with any degree of confidence.

In summary, evidence suggests that prevention programs may be most effective when they employ multiple active teaching methods, provide at least four sessions in duration, and involve parents/guardians (Chen et al., 2012; Ogunfowokan & Fajemilehin, 2012; Topping & Barron, 2009). Most studies use poor methodology and these studies are rarely replicated. Therefore, results of such studies must be interpreted with caution. More rigorous studies are required in order to make more definitive statements. As programs begin to following the CDC recommendation of tracking changes in risk factors, data is expected to become more readily available that will be conducive to increased confidence in the effectiveness of programs to achieve their goal of protecting young people from sexual abuse (Saul & Audage, 2007).

Conclusions and Recommendations

It is impossible to predict with complete accuracy who will sexually abuse a young person. It is also difficult to predict when and where this abuse will occur. However, evidence suggests that 90% of perpetrators knew their victims prior to an offense, which heavily influences our understanding of how to effectively prevent sexual abuse (Douglas & Finkelhor, 2005). These individuals can be family members, teachers, coaches, clergy, youth group leaders, or other non-parental caregivers. This knowledge has led to the debunking of stranger danger myth.

Implementing prevention programming at the organizational level is particularly important due to the large number of young people who are served. These programs need to include: (1) an increased understanding and awareness of organizational culture in regards to sexual abuse; (2) a recognition that a code of silence may place young people at risk for sexual abuse. For example, organizations that clearly place authorities in power above the voice of young people may lack sensitivity to the reality that authority figures sometimes abuse young people.

Prevention programs must focus on both the young people and the adults who work with and on their behalf. Historically, programs have focused on young people through school-based prevention programs; teaching skills for asserting their boundaries and disclosing abuse to other trusted adults. Schools are one of the largest organizations that serve young people and thus delivering prevention programs in this setting would seem appropriate. However, school-based programs have been criticized for inappropriately placing the responsibility for preventing sexual abuse on the shoulders of young people.

In response to this criticism, current recommendations include an enhanced focus on teaching responsible adults how to best protect young people from sexual abuse. Caregivers' roles have historically been limited to responding to young people's disclosures of abuse. The need to prevent sexual abuse from occurring in the first place has driven the shift towards helping adults to develop skills to protect young people, in addition to prosecuting perpetrators and seeking treatment for victims after abuse has occurred.

Developing skills to protect young people can be a complicated process as caretakers seek to find an optimal balance between overreacting and underreacting. This balance is complicated by the culture of silence, which dissuades adults and young people alike from discussing sex, sexual development, and sexual abuse. Open conversations about what constitutes appropriate versus inappropriate interactions are thus one critical step towards helping caretakers developing effective skills for protecting young people.

As caretakers begin to develop an understanding of the difference between appropriate and inappropriate interactions, they can begin to also develop skills for intervening with inappropriate interactions.

Specifically, families and organizations must develop and implement a comprehensive plan that promotes the safety and wellbeing of young people. This plan must provide caregivers with clear guidance on which interactions are considered appropriate and what interactions are inappropriate. These guidelines must be communicated on an ongoing basis. Organizational communication should be grounded in regularly occurring staff trainings that includes parents and the broader community to the extent possible (Darwinkel, Powell, & Tidmarsh, 2013; Paranal, Washington, & Derrick, 2012; Schober et al., 2011; 2012b; Smothers & Smothers, 2011; Stop It Now!, 2010; Wurtele, 2012). Thus, prevention programs should be comprehensive in nature, involving parents, the larger community, and also young people as much as possible.

Comprehensive systems-level training should include discussions of, and practice responding to, grooming tactics. This training should provide exposure to and practice responding to the wide range of grooming behaviors that move an offender closer to substantive acts of sexual abuse. Understanding grooming is only one component of the training process. Staff must also learn how to screen those who are allowed access to young people, how to monitor ongoing interactions with young people, and how to engaging in conversations when inappropriate interactions are observed. Staff and volunteer training should ensure that staff clearly understand when and how to report inappropriate interactions to the authorities.

Training offers families and organizations one type of preventative measure when addressing sexual abuse. The use of data as a tool to track outcomes of trainings is another important approach. Data could include the following: (1) pre/post assessments during organizational trainings; (2) staff and volunteers knowledge checks regarding procedures and policies; (3) attendance at trainings; (4) trainings conducted for young people and their attendance; and (5) non-staff-specific risk factors (e.g., frequency of one-on-one interactions with young people). Pre-intervention assessments allow for tailoring of the intervention to the particular needs within a given organization. Comparing pre-intervention assessments to post-intervention outcomes will serve the purpose of helping to determine the effectiveness of intervention goals. However, empirical methodology such as random assignment of organizations to active intervention versus usual policies, is the only way to ensure that the program is effective beyond a placebo effect.

As sexual abuse prevention strategies are developed and implemented, the following recommendations should be considered:

- **Guiding Principles**: CDC-identified components and the Situational Prevention Model should be considered as guiding principles to program development (Saul & Audage, 2007; Kaufman et al., 2010). These principles include conducting a risk assessment, tailoring prevention strategies to respond to the risk assessment, and tracking outcomes associated with implementation of the prevention strategies.

- **Culture of Silence:** A culture of silence often entices adults and young people alike to keep secrets and avoid conversations about topics relevant to sexual abuse (Becker-Blease & Freyd, 2006; Center for Behavioral Intervention, 2010; Fontes & Plummer, 2010; Hershkowitz et al., 2007; Knoll, 2010; Plummer & Njuguna, 2009; Wooden, & Wooden, 2012). Open conversations about these topics despite the associated discomfort is believed to be one effective and essential strategy for overcoming the risk for abuse conferred by this culture of silence.

- **Development:** An understanding of youth development is relevant to understanding both risks for being sexual abused and who may perpetrate such abuse. Physical, cognitive, and sexual development may place victims at increased risk, and approximately one-third of those who would perpetrate abuse are other young people, rather than adults (Gallagher, Bradford, & Pease, 2008). Thus, prevention programming must be tailored to account for young people's development that places them at increased risk for being abused, and also target young people who comprise a significant proportion of sexual offenders (Saeed & Little, 2013; Smallbone et al., 2008; Smothers & Smothers, 2011).

- **Screening Staff:** Evaluation of prospective job applicants should include reference checks and in-person interviews in addition to written application and background checks (Saul & Audage, 2007).

- **Monitoring and Supervising:** Families and organizations should assure that all interactions between individuals are appropriate. They must also respond appropriately when interactions of any kind violate physical or verbal boundaries (Atkinson & Newton, 2010; Knoll, 2010; Saeed & Little, 2013; Whittle et al., 2013).

- **Learn about Grooming:** The purpose of monitoring and supervision is to ensure that interactions remain appropriate. An increased awareness of interactions that may seem like minor violations of boundaries, but which may lead to acts of overt abuse is essential to effective prevention programming (Craven, Brown, & Gilchrist, 2006; Wooden & Wooden, 2012).

- **Parents, Guardians, and Community Involvement:** Parents, guardians, and the larger community should be included in program implementation in order to enhance preventative effects through collaboration with organization staff and to enhance their own prevention knowledge and skills (Collin-Vezina et al., 2013; Dworkin & Martyniuk, 2011; Kenny et al., 2008; Saeed & Little, 2013; Wurtele et al., 2008).

- **New Technologies**: New technologies including social media should be considered as potentially valid and effective approaches to disseminating prevention programming information (Collin-Vezina et al., 2013; Kenny & Wurtele, 2012; Paranal et al., 2012; Rheingold et al., 2012).

- **Ongoing Trainings:** Ongoing trainings trainings should be provided to ensure the ongoing training of new staff and to ensure the retention of knowledge and skills in existing parental and non-parental caregivers (Bowman et al., 2010; Kenny et al., 2008; Topping & Barron, 2009; WCSAP, 2013).

- **Assessment:** Program outcomes should be assessed frequently to ensure that stated goals are being achieved (Bowman et al., 2010; Kaufman et al., 2010).

In addition to the above noted principles, sufficient human and financial resources will be required in order to enable organizations to achieve the goal of maximum child and youth protection against sexual abuse (Feinstein & O'Kane, 2008). Such resources should support the dissemination of both print and broadcast media that increase the awareness of sexual abuse, in addition to effective prevention strategies (Stagner & Lansing, 2009). Further, funding and human resources should target the development, testing, and dissemination of effective prevention curricula, including the training of professionals, parents, community members, and young people alike (WCSAP, 2013).

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In order to ensure clarity in the terms used throughout this report, key terms are briefly discussed and defined below.

Child Sexual Abuse: Child sexual abuse has historically been defined by the Department of Defense (DoD) as "a category of abusive behavior within the definition of child abuse that includes the rape, molestation, prostitution, or other such form of sexual exploitation of a child; or incest with a child; or the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of a child to engage in, or assist in, any sexually explicit conduct (or any simulation of such conduct)" (DoD, 1989). More recently, the DoD has clarified that child maltreatment, including sexual abuse, may be committed by any individual responsible for the young person's welfare in any act that leads to harm or threat (DoD Directive 6400.2, 2004). Although neither definition clarifies what acts constitute molestation, other forms of sexual exploitation, or sexually explicit conduct, the 2004 definition alludes to the particularly high risk of abuse in those who are developmentally or otherwise disabled (Skarbek, Hahn, & Parrish, 2009).

Primary Prevention: Primary prevention of child sexual abuse aims to prevent abuse by targeting offenders and their grooming tactics, in addition to enhancing protective factors that increase barriers to offending (WCSAP, 2013).

Grooming: Grooming is a process by which an individual prepares a young person, significant adults in the young person's life, and the system at large to unknowingly submit to the young person's abuse. The process of grooming serves to strengthen the offender's abusive pattern, and may be used as a means of justifying or denying their actions (Craven, Brown, & Gilchrist, 2006).

Grooming Tactics: Grooming tactics are used by offenders to gain access to the young person, gain his/her compliance with various physical and psychological acts, and secrecy in order to avoid disclosure/discovery of the abusive behaviors. These Grooming techniques are often utilized over long periods of time and in very discreet manners. Grooming tactics can mimic the types of behaviors that any caring adult would display towards a young person. In these manners, the offender prepares the young person, his/her family, and the larger system for the deception that s/he is a trustworthy individual worthy of the privilege of caring for children and youth (Wooden & Wooden, 2012).

Culture: Broadly speaking, culture is reflected in the particular sets of beliefs and behaviors that define a specific group of individuals (Santrock, 2007). The group of individuals can be as large as an entire nation or profession, or as small as an individual family. The beliefs and behaviors exist by unspoken consensus, such that individuals typically do not overtly discuss or acknowledge the belief system, attitudes, or sets of behaviors. These distinct behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes can be observed in groups that are defined by a common age, ethnicity, or societal group, and are typically passed on to subsequent generations.

Culture of Silence: A culture of silence is present when young people are discouraged from standing up for themselves or from questioning the behavior of adults. This would include, the right to question when an adult touches or abuse them in a sexual manner. Moreover, this culture of silence is further emphasized when young people are discouraged from discussing the topic of sex or sexual abuse (Plummer & Njuguna, 2009). A culture of silence can be present at every level of young person's life including their families, schools, religious groups, extracurricular activities, and the community as a whole (e.g., ethnic, geographic and occupational).

Ecological Level	Program Name	Target Age Range	Target Audience	Training & Consultation	Attention to Developmental Variation	Risk Assessment	Match Programming to Risk	Assess Outcomes
	Program Information					**Built-In Evaluation**		
Child Focused	The Tweenees (Mathew & Laurie, 2002)	6-13	Children; Purports to be Deliverable in Communities					
Child Focused	Safer Surfing (Davidson & Martellozzo, 2008)	10+	Children Using Internet					
Child Focused	ESPACE (Daigneault, Hebert, McDuff, & Frappier, 2012)	3-12	Children		x			
Child Focused	Chen Pilot (Chen, Fortson, & Tseng 2012)	6-13	Children					
Child Focused	Sexual Abuse Prevention Education Package (SAPEP; Ogunfowokan & Fajemilehin, 2012)	13-24	High School Students					
Organization Focused	Bowman, Scotti, & Morris (2010)	unspecified	Staff Working with Developmentally Disabled Childen & Adults					
Organization Focused	Stewards of Children:in-person training (Rheingold, Zajac, & Patton, 2012)	unspecified	Organizations Serving Young People	x				
Organization Focused	Stewards of Children:web-based training (Paranal, Washington, & Derrisk, 2012; Rheingold, Zajac, & Patton, 2012)	unspecified	Organizations Serving Young People					
Community Focused	Smothers and Smothers (2011)	5th - 12th Grades	Guardians, staff, students	x	x			
Community Focused	Prevent Child Abuse Georgia (Schober et al., 2011)	< 18	Communities					
Community Focused	Enough Aubse Campaign - Massachusetts (Schober, Fawcet, & Bernier, 2012)			x	x	x	x	

Ecological Level	Program Name	Instructional Manual	Duration of Program	Frequency of Program Delivery	Culturally Sensitive	Modeling	Role Playing	Group Discussion	Testimonials/ Case Examples	Handouts/Workbook	Video	Quizzes	Online
Child Focused	The Tweenees (Mathew & Laurie, 2002)	x	4 sessions	1				x			x		
	Safer Surfing (Davidson & Martellozzo, 2008)		1 session	1			x	x					x
	ESPACE (Daigneault, Hebert, McDuff, & Frappier, 2012)		1 session	2		x	x	x					
	Chen Pilot (Chen, Fortson, & Tseng 2012)		2 sessions	1		x	x						
	Sexual Abuse Prevention Education Package (SAPEP; Ogunfowokan & Fajemilehin, 2012)		10 sessions	1				x	x	x			
Organization Focused	Bowman, Scotti, & Morris (2010)		4 hrs	1				x					
	Stewards of Children: in-person training (Rheingold, Zajac, & Patton, 2012)		2.5 hrs	1				x	x	x	x		
	Stewards of Children: web-based training (Paranal, Washington, & Derrisk, 2012; Rheingold, Zajac, & Patton, 2012)		2.5 hrs over 2 wks	1					x		x	x	x
Community Focused	Smothers and Smothers (2011)	x	3 sessions	Ongoing	x	x	x	x					
	Prevent Child Abuse Georgia (Schober et al., 2011)		ongoing	ongoing									
	Enough Aubse Campaign - Massachusetts (Schober, Fawcet, & Bernier, 2012)	x	Ongoing	Ongoing		unclear							x

Ecological Level	Program Name	Content													
		Educational						Communication				Caregiver			Child
		Sexual Abuse	Offender Characteristics/ Grooming Tactics	Body Parts	Sexual Development	Boundaries (Physical & Verbal)	Secrets	Communicating with Young People	Communicating with Parents	Communicating within Organizations	Community-Level Communication	Monitoring/Supervision	Limiting Access to Children/ Screening Caregivers	Responding to Red Flags	Personal Safety
Child Focused	The Tweenees (Mathew & Laurie, 2002)	x				Phys	x								x
Child Focused	Safer Surfing (Davidson & Martellozzo, 2008)						x								x
Child Focused	ESPACE (Daigneault, Hebert, McDuff, & Frappier, 2012)														x
Child Focused	Chen Pilot (Chen, Fortson, & Tseng 2012)	x		x	x	Both	x								x
Child Focused	Sexual Abuse Prevention Education Package (SAPEP; Ogunfowokan & Fajemilehin, 2012)	x	x												x
Organization Focused	Bowman, Scotti, & Morris, 2010	x			x									x	
Organization Focused	Stewards of Children: in-person training (Rheingold, Zajac, & Patton, 2012)	x						x		x	x	x	x	x	
Organization Focused	Stewards of Children: web-based training (Paranal, Washington, & Derrisk, 2012; Rheingold, Zajac, & Patton, 2012)	x						x		x	x	x	x	x	
Community Focused	Smothers and Smothers (2011)	x				Phys	x		x	x				x	x
Community Focused	Prevent Child Abuse Georgia (Schober et al., 2011)	x	x		x	x			x	x	x			x	
Community Focused	Enough Aubse Campaign - Massachusetts (Schober, Fawcet, & Bernier, 2012)	x	x		x	x					x			x	