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ED Mentoring Grantee Webinar 

Preventing & Dealing with Sexual Abuse of Children in One to One Mentoring Programs

Audio Dial-In Information:
U.S. & Canada: 866.740.1260
Access Code: 7853891

May 13, 2009
Presenter:
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Board Member
Nonprofit Risk Management Center

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Nonprofit Risk Management Center
Our Mission:

Helping nonprofit leaders and the organizations they represent take thoughtful, mission-fulfilling risks.



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Consulting Services include:

- Risk Assessments**
 - Analysis of risks most likely to occur with expert risk management advice
- Governance Reviews**
 - Help leaders develop or refine existing policies and procedures
- Insurance Coverage Reviews**
 - Professional review of the adequacy of your insurance program
- Research**
 - Fact finding mission to support decision-making and program planning
- Policy Review & Development**
 - Review of critical policies to improve, rewrite or help write new policies from scratch
- Product Review & Development**
 - Articles, books, videos, webinars, online tools, handbooks, policy manuals

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Agenda

- Value of Open Culture
- Irresolution
- Making Children Safer, Not Feeling Safe
- Many Faces of Child Sexual Abuse
- Finkelhor's Four Conditions
- Knowing the Risks
- Looking for Strengths

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Agenda Continued

- Flags – When in doubt check it out
- Using gut instinct
- Iatrogenic
- Resources
- Being a child advocate
- Not if but when

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Value of Open Culture

“Recognition of sexual molestation in a child is entirely dependent on the individual’s inherent willingness to **entertain** the possibility that the condition may exist”

Ann Burgess and Susan Sgroi

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Open Culture

- Disturbing topic
- Necessary to address
- Single most effective preventive element is staff ability to address the full range of this topic
- If uncomfortable, find support
- Know how to use expertise of others
- Goal is to establish your comfort to allow others to come to you

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Open Culture

- Knowing the topic
- Not about homosexuality
- Women rarely sexually abuse and most often in partnership with a male
- Less than 5% of the adult male population represent a threat to children
- Men with meaningful adult peer sexual relationships are almost never molesters

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Irresolution

- Rarely are situations black or white
- Seven years to catch abuser
- Profile of outstanding volunteer and abuser strong parallels
- Einstein definition of intelligence
"Ability of the human mind to hold two opposing ideas at the same time"
- Great volunteer/may be abusing child

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Making Children Safer, Not Feeling Safe

- Criminal Background Checks - Necessary
 - Don't allow these to let you think the volunteer is safe, only between 4 – 10% of offenders have criminal records
- Guidelines and Policies - Necessary
 - No off site contact
 - How many of you broke a law on the way to work today?

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Many faces of Child Sexual Abuse

- Mentor abuses his Mentee
- Child may have been abused by family member before entering program
- Staff may abuse children
- Board members have abused children
- Teachers, priests, pediatricians
- Peer abuse on the rise
- Greatest risk – Mother's boyfriend

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Finkelhor's Four Conditions

1. Proclivity to sexually assault a child
2. Overcome own internal inhibitions
3. Overcome external inhibitions
4. Overcome resistance of child

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Knowing the Risks

- One in 500 one to one relationships
- Greatest risk motorized vehicles, drowning and physical injury
- Peer to peer abuse on the rise
- Family members and friends of family present greatest risk

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Looking for Strengths

- Quality of Adult Relationships
- Self Awareness
- Good Social Skills
- Good Adjustment to Life Experience
 - Normal development
- Comfort with Own Sexuality
 - Right to Ask as Representative of Parent

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Strengths

- Sense of Control Over Own Life
- Able to Deal with Stress
- Clear Sense of What Volunteer Has To Offer a Child
- Good Gut Feeling About Candidate
- From Interview Do You Have a Picture of a Whole Person

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Flags – When in doubt check it out

- No formula X flags means screen out
- Flags mean this aspect of the candidate needs to be checked out in greater detail
- Start by looking at strengths, if there are not enough, stop there. Candidate should clearly have something to offer
- Key is stable, meaningful, lasting peer relationships.

See pages 2 of pre-read document—*“Preventing Sexual Abuse of Children”*

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Flags in Volunteer Interview

- #1 overinvestment in children
- #2 over identification with children
- #9 impatience with process
- #10 absence of peer relationship link #1
- # 11 history of being abused as a child
- #22 & 23 job history - caught and move
- #28 pawn like, not responsible

See pages 2-5 of pre-read document—*“Preventing Sexual Abuse of Children”*

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Flags in Match Support

- #2 finds own child for match
- #4 grooming staff
- #6 excuses to bring up sex
- #7 rapid change in behavior or grades
- #9 want close match without reason
- #13 overinvestment – critical of mother
- #20 anyone not comfortable with situation

See pages 6-9 of pre-read document—*“Preventing Sexual Abuse of Children”*

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Flags in Match Support

- #22 inappropriate secrets
- #23 youth avoids contact with mentor
- #24 youth has unusual knowledge of sex for age
- On positive look for signs of healthy development of adult/child relationship and opportunities to support this

See pages 6-9 of pre-read document—"Preventing Sexual Abuse of Children"

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Using gut instinct

- Review of molestation incidents in over 50% of the cases the caseworker had doubts but could not determine why. Follow up interviews by a different worker have not been shown to be effective
- Gut reaction should always be checked out
- Boundary issues are key
- No question you can not ask a volunteer

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Iatrogenic

- The cure may cause more harm than the disease
 - Allow the “victim” to determine the level of impact or harm.
 - Being in control of your own reactions
 - Specialization
 - Using supports

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Resources

- You do not have to be an expert in all of the areas
- Know who the experts in your organization or community are and use them for advice or assistance
- When have doubts follow up on them and document, it may not be a problem or in may be an early indicator that will allow early intervention

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Being a child advocate

- You are not bound by rules of evidence
- Always believe child
 - Only documented false reports linked to custody battles
 - Other “false reports” actually have a child as victim accusing someone safe when offender has used threats or a child who observes a victim getting lots of attention, most easily determined by good interview of child

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*Need Additional Resources?
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Mentoring Resource Center
877-579-4788 or www.edmentoring.org
www.edmentoring.org/pubs/screening.pdf

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