



Suggestions for Preventing Child Abuse through Youth Training

Child Abuse Information:

Your organization should provide youth with some basic abuse prevention information, in an age appropriate manner. This information may be provided with video, activities and/or discussions. Delivery of these programs can be provided with groups of similarly-aged youth and/or with families. You may want to seek assistance from other organizations that have created personal safety programs if your organization is interested in implementing one. In general the following information should be included:

- Provide general information about child abuse, including what constitutes appropriate, inappropriate, and harmful behavior from adults and other youth.
- Teach youth how to interact appropriately with each other.
- Discuss the importance of reporting abuse.
- Tell youth to whom they should report what they believe is inappropriate or harmful behavior.

Protective Factors:

There are factors that can help prevent youth from getting abused or abusing. Youth should be educated about how they can make themselves and others safer.

- Educate youth about the bystander approach. Empower youth to intervene or tell someone when they see inappropriate or harmful interactions between adults and youth or between youth. Encourage youth to tell a trusted adult about inappropriate or harmful things that have happened to themselves or their friends.
- Empower youth as partners in the prevention process. Encourage them to adopt healthy strategies to protect themselves, such as checking with a caregiver/adult before doing activities, going places with friends instead of alone, and identifying trusted adults.
- Educate youth about healthy sexuality. Teach youth to recognize appropriate behavior and to avoid exploitive or inappropriate behavior toward others.

Topics:

Unfortunately child abuse is part of the daily lives of many youth. While sexual abuse gets much of the attention, other forms of abuse such as bullying, physical, emotional abuse and neglect should also be part of your education programs. Some topics to include in either informal and formal discussions or activities include:

- Sexual Abuse - in an age-appropriate manner including, stranger danger, code words for parents/guardians, god touch vs. bad touch, etc.
- Bullying - many youth have been exposed to bullying and its prevention in the school setting. Your efforts should complement the prevention programs offered to youth at their school.
- Emotional abuse - education should include how to deal with others appropriately, how words can hurt and self esteem activities.
- Physical abuse - this topic should be covered with all ages in a developmentally appropriate manner. Specific age topics may include biting, hitting, sharing, etc.
- Reporting - youth should know how and where they can discuss concerns with a trained and responsible adult.

Resources:

You may want to seek assistance from other organizations that have created personal safety programs. In addition to governmental and local area organizations these are resources for information:

[Respect U](#) - bullying prevention information by Dr Joel Haber used by the American Camping Association, many camps and organizations.

[PROJECT ROCKIT](#) - an interactive anti-bullying and youth leadership program that is run by young people for young people in both Primary and Secondary school settings.

[WiredSafety](#) - an Internet safety, help and education resource center used by many educational and youth-serving organizations.

[Stop Bullying Now](#) - program and resources offered by the US Department of Health and Human Services.

[A Parent's Guide to Internet Safety](#) - from the US Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation

[2010 Youth Protection Resource Packet](#) - from the US Department of Health and Human Services' Children's Bureau; the guide contains resources to promote community awareness of five important protective factors that can help protect children from the risk of child abuse and neglect.

[Stop It Now](#) - provides information about child sexual abuse and offers resources for organizations, parents and communities.

Some information has been adapted from [Preventing Child Sexual Abuse Within Youth-serving Organizations](#) from The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other sources.

More information about youth protection is available from the [Online Resource Library](#).