

Slide 1

Stop It Now! Together We Can Prevent the Sexual Abuse of Children

Welcome to
Dear Stop It Now!,
My daughter says her teacher is
creepy

We will get started shortly. Please take a moment to test your Internet connection and familiarize yourself with the **Chat** functions of your toolbar. For improved audio, use the phone number and unique Audio PIN found in **Audio**. Throughout the webinar, please use **Chat** for any technical questions that arise. THIS WEBINAR WILL BE RECORDED.

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Slide 2

Introduction

Societal Community Relationship Individual

7% of Helpline callers concerned about warning signs in an adult, are concerned about a situation in a youth serving environment

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Slide 3

Continuum of Behaviors

Safe, Healthy, Appropriate


Concerning, Inappropriate, Potentially harmful

Harmful (Abuse)

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Slide 4

Coach is “Creepy”



We have a coach in our local community that, in my opinion, has an unnecessary hands on approach to coaching. He routinely hugs players (girls) and is constantly putting his hands on kids' shoulders and backs. My daughter will not get within arms reach stating she doesn't want to be hugged "cause the dude is creepy."



Slide 5

Scope of YSO Abuse


10% of students report contact and non-contact abuse from an adult educator (Spokane, A. and Craig, T. (2017). Sexual Abuse with Children: Educator Infractions and Challenging Considerations. The Online Journal of Counseling and Education. Retrieved Available at: <http://www.ogje.com/index.php/ogje/article/view/2017.04.spokane-craig.pdf>)

In August 2018, a Pennsylvania grand jury named more than 300 clergy in a report which found **more than 1,000** children had been abused.

7% of Australian priests were accused of abusing children between 1950 and 2015.


Between **2% and 8%** of minor-age athletes are victims of sexual abuse within the context of sport. (Canada) <https://www.stopitnow.ca/en/sexual-assault/fact-sheets/sexual-abuse-young-people-sport>

According to "Safe Sport" a research project on children and teenagers in competitive sports, a large proportion of the **1,800** athletes interviewed for the study claim to be or have been a victim of abuse. (UK) <https://www.stopitnow.ca/en/sexual-assault/fact-sheets/sexual-abuse-young-people-sport>




Slide 6

Worried in Faith-Based Setting





There's an adult who volunteers at my church. I'm also a volunteer, and none of us feel comfortable with her. She always hugs and tickles the girls. Her whole life is kids. Is this something I should confront her about or talk to someone about? **I don't want to ruin her life if she is innocent.**



Slide 7

Barriers to Raising Concerns

- Child's own experience not valued
- Fear of ruining professional's life
- Fear of repercussions
- "Normalizing" behavior within youth-serving org
- Fear of not being believed
- Cultural
- Dealing with "authorities"



Slide 8

Audience Poll



Slide 9


Does He Just Not Like Him, or Should I Be Worried...?

My 9 year-old son said he doesn't like his new music teacher. He's asked my son to stay after class twice so he can "catch up" with what he needs to learn. My son told me this last time this man shared some strangely personal information with him... about the status of his intimate relationship. He also says he doesn't like how closely this music teacher stands to him whenever he talks to him. Should I be concerned, or is this normal? My son typically likes everyone so I feel like his strong reaction to this guy has me paying attention.




Slide 10

When to be Concerned



The child is...

- Expressing dislike, saying they're uncomfortable around, or has fear of certain adult
- No longer wants to do activity previously engaged in
- Spending more time than before/more time than other children (in same class/activity) around particular adult
- Preoccupied (seems to always be texting, meeting with, or talking about) a particular adult



Slide 11

Involving Allies



- Is anyone else concerned?
- Share warning signs
- Make a "pact"
- Ask them to meet with you together at the school



Slide 12

Goal: Stop Abuse in Its Tracks




If we only knew when someone was walking down the wrong road, we might be able to stop them in their tracks, turn them around, and get help before a child is harmed.



Slide 13

Warning Signs

- Singles out child/teen for special attention
- Spends most of free time with children/teens
- Ignores rules/policies
- Lets children/teens bend rules
- **Crosses personal boundaries**
- Finds reasons to discuss sexual topics
- Encourages silence and secrets
- Texts, emails, calls or uses social media to converse with child/teen after school/program/church hours



Slide 14

The Role of Conversations




- Alerting adult/administration
- Sets protective tone
- Re-establishing or establishing boundaries




Slide 15

Questions Parents Should Ask About YSO Policies

- Policies, Practices and Codes of Conduct
- Staff screening and selection
- Supervision/Monitoring
- Training
- How do they handle....



Preventing Child Sexual Abuse Within Youth-serving organizations:
Getting started on Policies and Procedures
<http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pub/preventingchildabuse.html>



Slide 19

Speaking Up

- Set the tone - shared responsibility and accountability
- Be honest and genuine
- Describe the behavior
- State what you want
- Speak up and set boundaries



Slide 20

Sample Language for Having the Conversation


- **Set the tone/responsibility**
 - "I know that we both want the best for kids in our care."
 - "I know that making sure these children are safe in your classroom is important to you."
- **Be honest and genuine**
 - "I'm worried about bringing this up and this is difficult for me, but I really care about children's safety."
 - "I don't want to hurt your feelings but I have something important I want to talk to you about."
- **Describe the behavior**
 - "I saw you hug Whitney and then rub her shoulders during the game yesterday."
 - "John told me that you talked to him about the fight you had with your girlfriend Thursday when you had him stay after class."
- **Address policy/expectations/safety plan**
 - "Children need all adults in their lives to respect consistent, healthy boundaries with them."
 - "It's not appropriate for you to share personal intimate details of your life outside of the classroom."
- **Set boundaries**
 - "I want you to follow the policy and only touch children on their shoulder or back after you've gotten their approval."
 - "I don't want you to share any information about your personal life with the children in your class."




Slide 21

Role Play: Parent Concerned About Staff

I recently discovered that my daughter has been receiving messages from her softball coach, a married 30 something man. My daughter states he's messaged 3 separate times, mostly just asking if she has been practicing but they seem strange to me.




- Set the responsibility
- Be honest and genuine
- Describe the behavior
- Address policy/state expectations
- Set boundaries




Slide 22

Role Play: Staff Concerned About Colleague

I'm a school aide for children with disabilities. Another staff person in my room is overly touchy with the children, and sometimes let's kids break minor classroom rules, such as eating in the classroom – and then tells the child not to tell anyone.



- Set the responsibility
- Be honest and genuine
- Describe the behavior
- Address policy/state expectations
- Set boundaries



Slide 23

Role Play Debrief





Slide 24

Your Turn

An adult male helper in Sunday School picked my 6 year old up in the hallway and gave her a raspberry on her cheek. Later that day, she told me something bad had happen to her and proceeded to tell me about this incident. She did not like it. My wife is going to speak to him about this but how should she bring it up?

- Set the responsibility
- Be honest and genuine
- Describe the behavior
- Address policy/state expectations
- Set boundaries




Slide 25

What to do when no one seems to take it seriously

My coworker at an afterschool program will let female 5 and 6 year olds sit on his lap. He tickles them and does this thing where he yells "boo!" in a student's ear, the child then chases him, pushes him and he will push her back, and it goes back and forth like this for a while. I have taken my concerns to the supervisor who is very loyal to this person and their family. His take on it is that we have never gotten any complaints from parents.


- Refer to school's own policies
- Involve other adults
- Bring concerns up the chain



Slide 26

The Chain of Communication


- The worrisome adult
- Immediate supervisor
- The "Boss" – i.e. Principal, Pastor/Rabbi/Director
- Oversight committee – i.e. school committee, governance board
- File Title IX complaint with local OCR office
- Other – media, politicians



Slide 27

Title IX

- Requires schools (who receive federal funding) to address sexual violence
- Protects students from the negative impact of sexual harassment and violence on their education
- Sex-based harassment/violence can be carried out by school employees, other students, and third parties.



Slide 28

Resources


Stop It Now! Tip Sheets and Guidebooks:

- Prevention for Faith-Based Communities
- Questions Parents Should Ask About School Policies
- Safety In Daycare
- Safety In Sports
- Safety Planning For Summer
- A Summer of Happy Memories: Camp Safety

Online Resource Guides:

- Prevention for Organizations
- Athletic Program Safety

Preventing Child Sexual Abuse within Youth-Serving Organizations: Getting Started on Policies and Procedures
<https://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/pdf/PreventingChildSexualAbuse-a.pdf>



Slide 29

Questions?



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Stay tuned for our next webinar in 2019

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