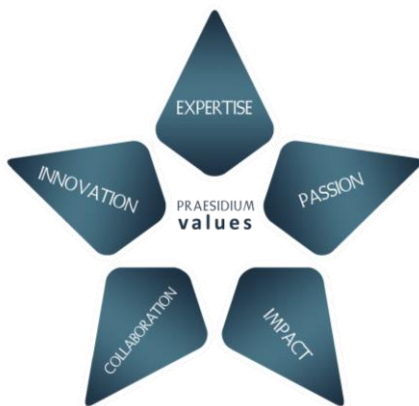


Organizational Screening: Best Practices for Building Your Safe Environment with Staff and Volunteers

PRAESIDIUM

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About Praesidium



“To help you **protect those in your care** from abuse and to help **preserve trust** in your organization.”

25+ years of experience

More than **4,000 clients** across diverse industries

Completed thousands of **root cause analyses**

Developed proprietary **abuse risk management model**

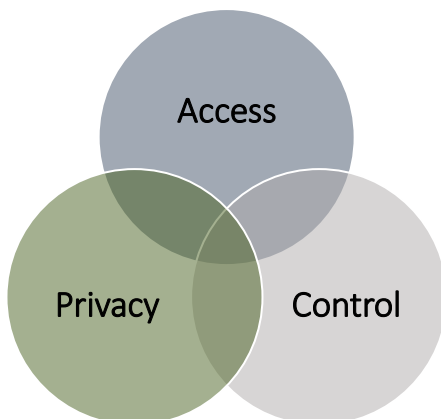
Offer complete range of **risk management solutions**

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Importance of Screening and Selection

- ✓ First line of defense against abuse and boundary violations
- ✓ Restricts access to clients – main opportunity to identify red-flags prior to access
- ✓ Not just for screening out – leverage as a supervision and training tool
- ✓ Protects your organization and the clients you serve

How Adult Offenders Operate

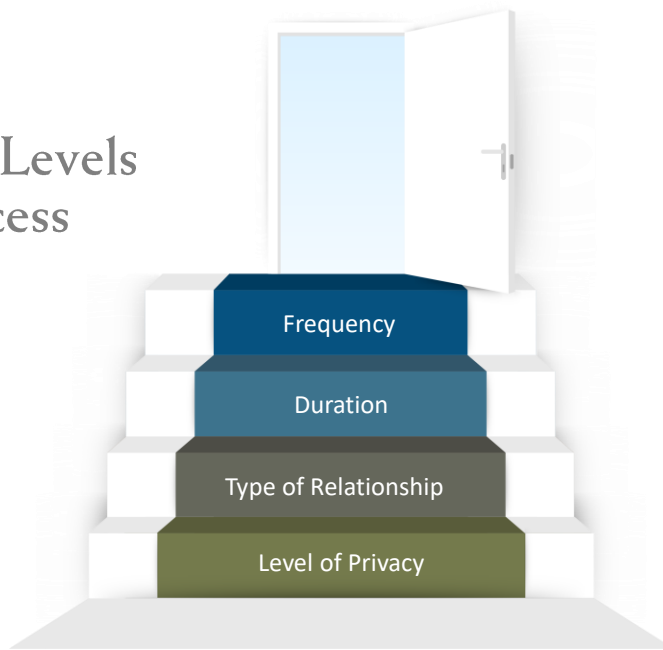


✓ Access

✓ Privacy

✓ Control

Evaluate Levels of Access



Background Checks



The Background Check Dilemma

Why can't we rely solely on criminal background checks?

- Most offenders do not have a criminal record
- Criminal background checks are not flawless
- Criminal background checks can be limited by scope and search methodology

Why must we do them anyway?

- Industry and legal standards make them a must
- You may be held liable for anything you could have, or should have, known
- Consistent, well-publicized screening measures keep offenders away

Best Practices in Background Checks

- ✓ Recommended checks for all applicants with high access to vulnerable populations:
 - A Multi-State Criminal Background Check
 - A National Sex Offender Registry Check
 - A Social Security Number Trace
 - A Name and Address Locator
 - County Criminal Record Search (all counties where lived, worked, or attended school for the last 7 years)
- ✓ Rechecks (frequency, type)



Time Management & Decision-Making Process

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Managing Screening Resources

- ✓ Screen for disqualifiers early in the process
- ✓ Use the observation of others
- ✓ Eliminate unfit applicants as soon as possible
- ✓ Include interim decision-points throughout the process
- ✓ Follow-up on red flags
- ✓ Continual discussions with team and supervisor
- ✓ Use all instruments to paint full picture of an applicant

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Avoid These Common Challenges



Mass or momentum hiring



Fragmented understanding because not using data collectively



Tunnel vision or only utilizing one set of eyes and ears

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Decision-Making Process

01 Follow a process

02 Document the process

03 Review all data

04 Don't get rushed

05 Allow time to follow-up

06 Identify who is responsible for which steps of the process

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Encouraging High-Risk Applicants to Self-Select Out

Inform applicants that your organization:

- ✓ Screens specifically to ensure the safety of clients
- ✓ Takes allegations of abuse seriously
- ✓ Fully cooperates with authorities in cases of abuse
- ✓ Will monitor interactions with clients
- ✓ Requires applicants to sign a Code of Ethics/Conduct

QUESTION: Will you offend good applicants by stating the above?

A dark blue, semi-transparent graphic overlay on a background image of a person wearing glasses and looking down at a document. The text "Application for a Position" is centered in a white serif font, flanked by two horizontal white lines.

Application for a Position

Best Practices in Applications

- ✔ Communicate a zero tolerance for abuse
- ✔ Create an application that allows hiring managers to quickly assess for red-flags
- ✔ Identify red-flags in the application
- ✔ Notify interviewer of red-flags for follow up

Potential Red-Flags in Applications

- | | |
|---|--|
| ✔ Gaps in dates (employment, residence) | ✔ Short-term relationships with references |
| ✔ Conflicting information | ✔ Overeducated for position |
| ✔ Incorrect information | ✔ Moving to a lesser-paying job |
| ✔ Omitted information | ✔ Patterns or themes of preferences for a particular age range |
| ✔ Incomplete information | ✔ Patterns or themes of problems with authority |
| ✔ Unstable work history | ✔ Found out about position without a clear connection |
| ✔ Vague reasons for leaving previous jobs | |
| ✔ Unwilling to use former supervisors as references | |



Behavioral Interviews

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Set the Right Tone

- ✓ Create a sense of privacy
- ✓ Minimize barriers
- ✓ Use an open communication style
- ✓ Create an environment that encourages honesty
- ✓ Decrease the consequences of telling the truth

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Structure the Interview

- ✓ 20/80 principle
- ✓ Introduction:
 - Realistic description of the position
 - Discuss hiring process and importance of an honest assessment of strengths and areas of development
 - Zero tolerance for abuse statement
 - Review the application and resume
- ✓ Take notes (facts and follow-up)
- ✓ Use more than one person when able

Ask the Right Questions

- ✓ Use standardized behaviorally-based interview questions
- ✓ Ask questions designed to assess for abuse risk
- ✓ Ask questions designed to assess desired applicant skills

*Trainability, Policy Adherence, Patience,
Supportiveness, Judgement, Boundaries*

Behavioral Interview Techniques

Best predictor for future behavior is past behavior

- ✓ What past behaviors do you want to learn about?
- ✓ What skill sets do you want to learn about?

- ✓ Creating behaviorally-based interview questions
 - “Tell me about a time when...”
 - “How did you...” as opposed to “How would you...”

Red-Flags in Interviews

- ✓ Defensive/angry responses
- ✓ Patterns of gaining access to vulnerable populations
- ✓ Themes of preferences for particular client populations
- ✓ Found out about a position via “drop in” or unclear connection
- ✓ Perception that clients are “helpless” or “vulnerable”
- ✓ Evasive responses
- ✓ Patterns consistent with high-risk characteristics

Reminder: High Risk Characteristics

- ✓ Social isolation or difficulty interacting with adults
- ✓ Uses excessive physical affection, particularly tickling or wrestling
- ✓ Difficulty working as a team player or working with authority figures
- ✓ Lets clients get away with things others would not approve of
- ✓ Fails to set limits with clients
- ✓ Excessively involved with individual client
- ✓ Discourages other adults from participating or monitoring
- ✓ Bends the rules for certain clients
- ✓ Using poor judgment with clients
- ✓ Having difficulty handling stress or managing stressful situations
- ✓ Presents a poor role model for clients
- ✓ Uses harsh forms of discipline
- ✓ Ignores standard policies about interacting with clients
- ✓ Behaves as a peer with clients rather than a supervising adult



Reference Checks

Best Practices in Reference Checks

- ✓ Use a standardized reference form for each call, but be sure to modify questions so that you can learn about the specific experiences the reference has had with the applicant
- ✓ Take notes during the call and write short quotes from the reference to prompt your memory
- ✓ Review and elaborate your notes immediately after the call
- ✓ Note areas of concern or questions to further clarify with applicant or internal team

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Considerations

- ✓ Professional reference vs employment verification
- ✓ Personal references
- ✓ Phone calls
- ✓ Written and/or electronic forms
- ✓ Utilizing a rating scale
- ✓ Triggers for follow-up
- ✓ Verification of individuals

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Red-Flags for Reference Checks

- ✓ Reluctant references
- ✓ Does not know the applicant well
- ✓ No references from recent position
- ✓ Deceptive responses or refusal to answer
- ✓ Differs from the applicant's account
- ✓ Describes characteristics associated with adults who abuse
- ✓ Would not rehire the applicant
- ✓ Would not place their own loved ones in the applicant's care
- ✓ Not informed they would be used as a reference
- ✓ References that cannot be contacted

Screening and Selection Summary

- ✓ Review your screening and selection practices to ensure it consists of numerous opportunities to assess abuse risk
- ✓ Consistently follow the same standardized practices for all applicants
- ✓ Integrate all information learned or known about the applicant to make an informed decision
- ✓ Identify areas in which the applicant may need additional coaching or training to increase knowledge or skills

Screening and Selection Toolkit

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**Questions and Considerations for Organizations to Pose
to Third-Party Screening Vendors**

1. What type of searches are included in your packages?
2. Can you describe your methodologies for conducting your searches?
3. Do you have different packages based on the role that the employee or volunteer is applying for?
4. Do you use databases for any searches? If so, please describe:
 - a. The nature of the database.
 - b. Any limitations on the usage of the database.
 - c. Any legal compliance issues, such as Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) Section 613.
5. Can you provide us with a sample report?
6. If there is a criminal case found, who determines if it is reportable, and describe the methodology used to determine whether it is reportable.
7. How can you assure that we are doing our due diligence in purchasing your services for pre-employment screening?
8. How do you vet new clients to ensure your services are in compliance with the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA)?
9. Describe your understanding of the laws that govern pre-employment screening and your methodology for compliance with those laws.
10. How does your firm keep updated on applicable federal and state laws affecting employment screening?

← → ↻ https://safeguarding.fadica.org/resources-for-safeguarding-children/

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A FADICA INITIATIVE

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Resources for Safeguarding Children
Resources for Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults
FADICA Members

Serving Children

Safeguarding: Proactively Protecting Our Youth

Whether your organization regularly provides direct services to minors, or functions administratively with fewer day-to-day interactions with children, find tools to assist your safeguarding journey here.

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← → ↻ https://safeguarding.fadica.org/resources-for-safeguarding-children/

Safeguarding 101: Community Seminar

Watch FADICA's free, introductory seminar, featuring speakers from Praesidium, Darkness to Light, and PCPM.

Request Access

Sample Policies

Review Praesidium's Sample Policies for Abuse Prevention, a 2021 resource exclusively for FADICA members and grantee partners.

Request Access

Stewards of Children Training

Request a virtual seat license for Darkness to Light's two-hour, flagship training module, Stewards of Children.

Request Access

WATCH

Potential Risk Framework VIDEO

Higher Risk
i.e., residential services, group homes, foster care, in-home services, inpatient healthcare, boarding schools, mentoring programs, social services, addiction recovery

Moderate Risk
i.e., childcare, recreation centers, senior care facilities, day schools, youth development, youth sports

Lower Risk
i.e., infrequent contact with children of vulnerable adults, facility rentals, hospitality, outpatient services, research

Decision Making VIDEO

- Scope of the Policy
- Code of Conduct / Boundary Guidelines
- Screening and Hiring
- Onboarding and Training
- Supervision and Support
- Responding and Reporting
- Governance and Accountability

Supporting Cultures of Safety in a Time of Fatigue VIDEO

A Conversation with Praesidium & NABCC

Safeguarding for Your Organization: How to Minimize Abuse Risk and Protect Your Clients VIDEO

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KEEP IN TOUCH

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