



Keeping Your Team and Beneficiaries of Service Safe: An Introduction to Safeguarding Best Practices

Presented by
PRAESIDIUM
In partnership with FADICA

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What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding refers to **measures** and **interventions** that protect people from abuse, harm, exploitation, or violence. Safeguarding reflects a commitment to best practices that **prevent abuse, reduce risk, and keep all persons**—especially children and vulnerable adults—**safe**. Safeguarding also promotes action that assures **justice** and supports **healing** for victims and survivors of abuse.

You may be more familiar with the terms “safe environment,” “risk management,” or “abuse prevention” —all important aspects of safeguarding!

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safeguarding.fadica.org

What can I find on the website?



Checklists, Templates, and Policy Models

Find inspiration for building out your organization's written policies and best practices.



Custom Webinar Recordings

Explore the archive of recently recorded safeguarding webinars, curated with direct-service/nonprofits in mind.



Collaborative Consulting Opportunities

Schedule a discovery call with FADICA and Praesidium to help discern next steps in your safeguarding journey.

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ABOUT PRAESIDIUM

Our mission is to help you protect those in your care from abuse and to help preserve trust in your organization.

Praesidium is a **leading innovator** of scientifically-based solutions designed to transform the way organizations approach the prevention of sexual abuse. For **over 30 years**, Praesidium's expertise, consulting, and solutions have helped **foster safer environments** for children, vulnerable adults, staff, volunteers, and all parties involved.

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- ✓ Infants, children, and youth
- ✓ Elderly or geriatric
- ✓ Intellectual or developmental disabilities
- ✓ Physical disabilities
- ✓ Mental health challenges
- ✓ Unhoused or experiencing homelessness
- ✓ Formerly incarcerated
- ✓ Undocumented immigrants
- ✓ Refugees and asylum seekers
- ✓ Survivors of trafficking
- ✓ Substance use addiction or recovery
- ✓ Healthcare patients



“Vulnerable Populations”

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Physical

Sexual

Verbal/Emotional

Mental/Psychological

Exploitation

Neglect

Financial/Economic

Spiritual

Cultural/Identity

Types of Abuse

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Scope of Sexual Abuse Risk

- CDC estimates **1 in 4 girls** and **1 in 13 boys** experience sexual abuse during childhood.
- **Adults with intellectual disabilities** are sexually assaulted at a rate **seven times higher** than those without disabilities.
- **1 in 10 Americans aged 60+** have experienced some form of elder abuse. Those who do have a 300% higher risk of death.
- **90% of the time the perpetrator is known to the victim.**
- **Client-to-client** sexual misconduct occurs at higher prevalence rate than staff-to-client.

80% of abuse does not get reported
in some industries, reporting is even less frequent

More information available from: the US Centers for Disease Control [here](#) and [here](#), Office of Justice Programs, National Council on Aging, NPR, Associated Press, Atlanta Journal Constitution, Federation of State Medical Boards

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A LANDSCAPE OF INCREASING EXPECTATIONS

- Increased regulation and oversight designed to strengthen abuse prevention measures on a broader scale
- Expansion of minimum expectations, some at a national level
- More stakeholders are **demanding more efforts** and **asking more questions**:
 - Families
 - Legislators
 - Foundations, funders, donors
 - Insurance carriers and brokers
 - Local, state, national investigators
- Established industries are asking new questions
- More people are being **held accountable**:
 - Organizational leadership
 - Boards of Directors
- The sands are shifting:
 - Identifying who is responsible for protection efforts
 - **Hardening insurance market** for sexual abuse and molestation coverage
 - Expanding **statutes of limitations**

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- 1 Threat to an organization's mission
- 2 Long-term damage to reputation
- 3 Large plaintiff awards
- 4 Loss of financial resources for services and jeopardizes insurability
- 5 Decreased productivity and morale and increased turnover

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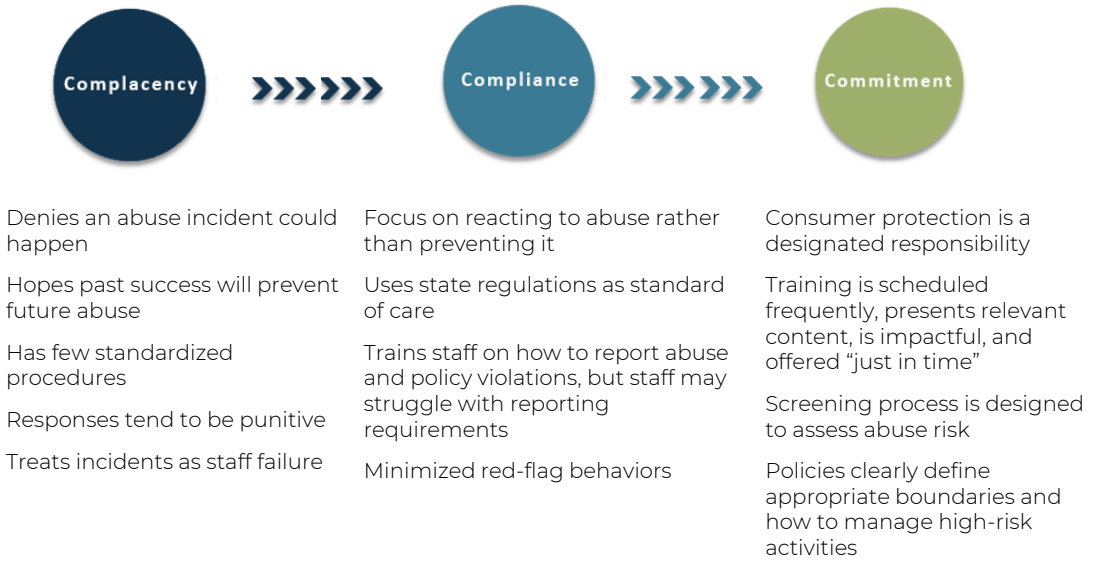
The Challenge

- ✔ Competing demands
- ✔ Low frequency, high effect
- ✔ A human problem
- ✔ Complacency and Compliance
 - “we know everyone here”
 - “we’ve never had a serious incident”
 - “all of our staff undergo background checks”
 - “we train all of our staff on mandated reporting”
 - “we must adhere to all state licensing requirements”

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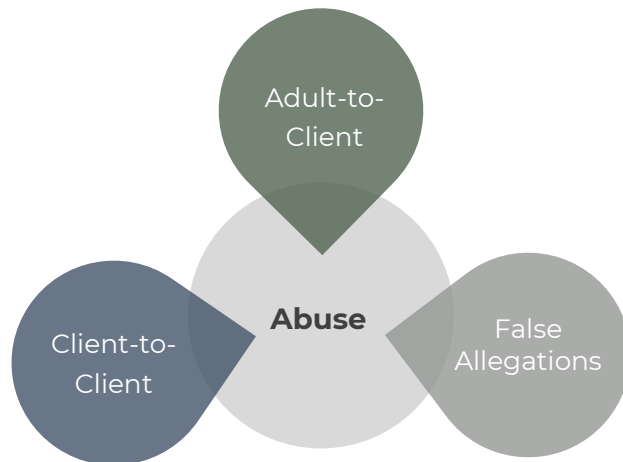
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Continuum of Commitment



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Important Risks to Safeguard Against



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WHO IS MOST LIKELY

TO ABUSE A CHILD



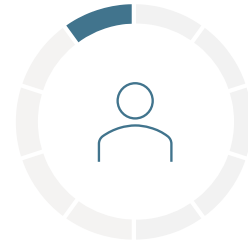
60%

Of abuse is perpetrated by someone the child **knows**.



29%

Of abuse is perpetrated by **family members**.



11%

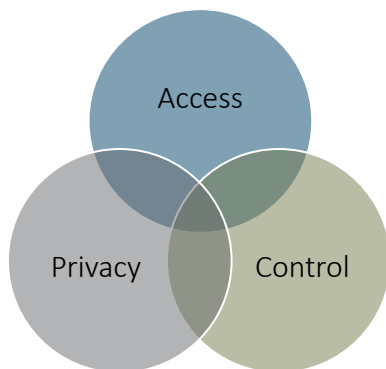
Of abuse is perpetrated by **strangers**.

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How Abuse Happens

Adult-to-Client



Client-to-Client

- ✓ Opportunity
- ✓ Location
- ✓ Activity
- ✓ Lack of Monitoring
- ✓ Poor Planning

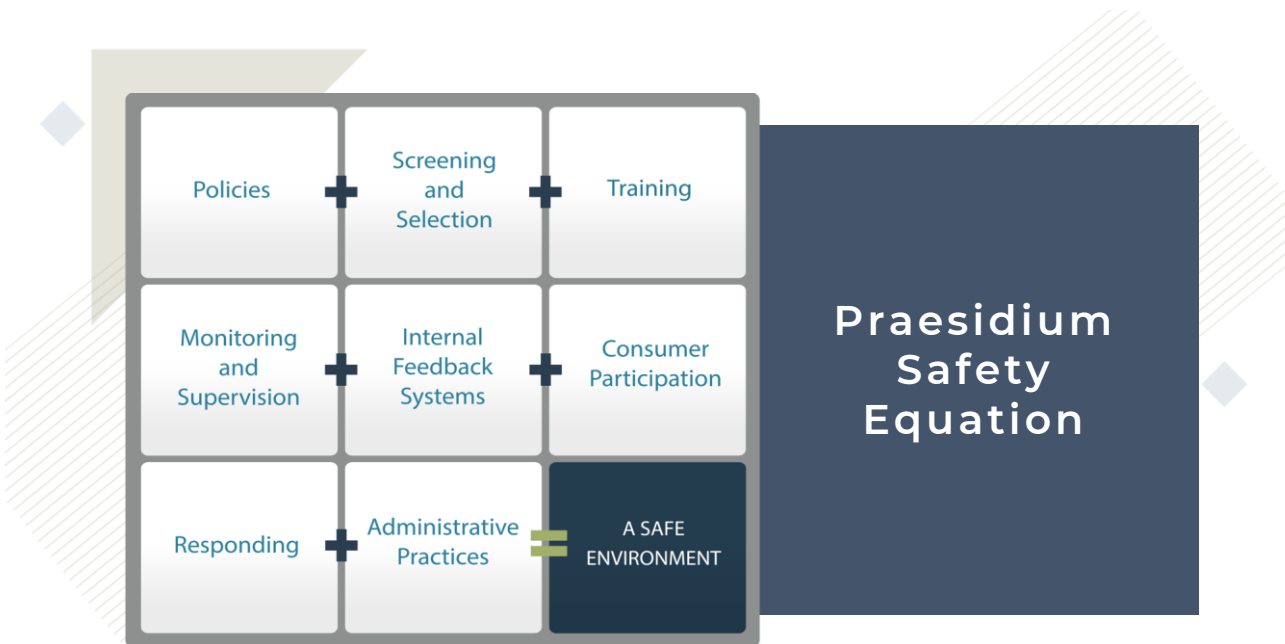
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Organizational Abuse Risk Management Strategies

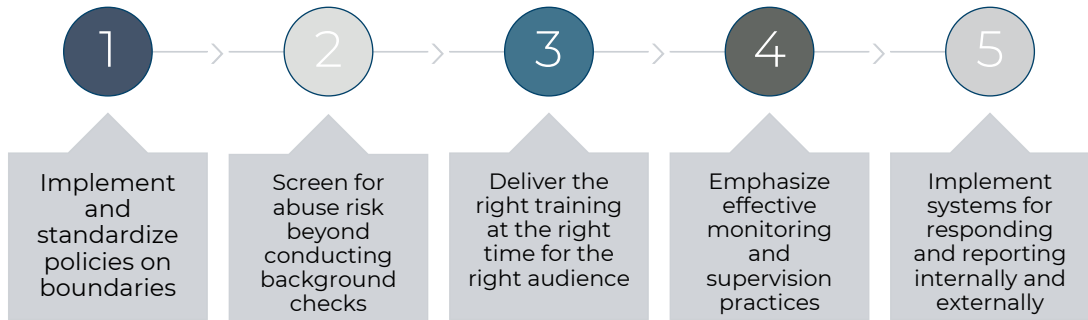
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OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN SAFEGUARDING EFFORTS

Minimum Expectations
Designed to Mitigate Risk and Prevent Abuse



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Boundaries

- What are healthy boundaries?
- Types of boundaries:
 - Physical
 - Emotional
 - Behavioral
- Why are they helpful?
 - Ensure safety
 - Ensure fair and equal treatment
 - Help set expectations and model behavior for others



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Power Differential and Vulnerability

- Individuals/clients depend on organizations and their representatives for basic needs and support
- Power derives from a helping relationship and/or the helping person's role/identity
- The client's history or circumstances may make them vulnerable: experienced past abuse or trauma, unhoused, mental health, poverty, addiction and recovery, etc.
- The helping person may be unaware of their own needs/boundaries
- An environment is conducive to inappropriate behavior and abuse when:
 - Access, privacy, control
 - Lack of policies that promote healthy boundaries
 - Lack of supervision and support
 - Lack of communication about behavioral expectations
 - Lack of channels to share or report concerns

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Balanced Relationships

It is important to maintain balance in helping relationships with clients by recognizing boundaries in others and be aware of power differentials.

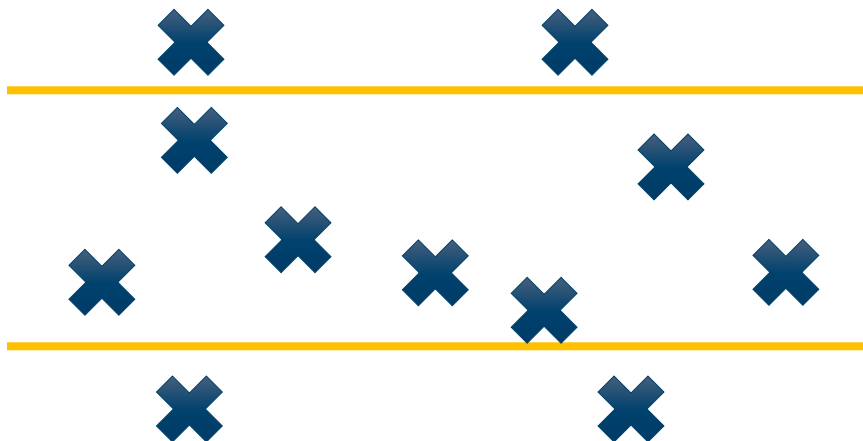
Balanced relationships are:

- Focused on fulfilling the needs of the client rather than on reciprocity (consumer-focused)
- Limited to the time period during which the client is receiving services (time-limited)
- Limited to locations and spaces of the organization or approved by the organization (location-limited)
- The objective of the helping relationship is to provide same services and support to all clients; not favorite
- Boundaries should be upheld to ensure the role of the helping professional in the client's life is clear and to encourage self-care

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Bandwidth of Acceptable Behavior



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BANDWIDTH OF BEHAVIORS



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Red Flag Behaviors in Adults

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignores policies about interacting with clients • Uses social networking sites & text messages to contact clients privately or outside of programs | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engages in too much physical contact with clients • Uses inappropriate language or jokes • Keeps secrets with clients |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has "favorite" or preferred clients • Prefers time and friendships with youth, behaves more as a peer • Bends the rules for certain clients | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finds reasons to spend time alone with clients • Gives special gifts to clients • Engages in unapproved outside contact |

Remember: These are often the observable precursors to & indications of a possible inappropriate relationship

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Define Boundaries & Interactions

- ✓ Physical affection and physical interactions
- ✓ Verbal interactions
- ✓ Managing one-on-one interactions
- ✓ Electronic communications and social media
- ✓ Contact or interactions outside of program activities
- ✓ Behavior management
- ✓ Gift giving and receiving

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Create Institutional Memory

- ✓ The safety of consumers should depend on **standardized** policies and procedures and an **institutional culture** – not personnel.
- ✓ Employees and volunteers **come and go**. You need the **same** level of policy adherence and understanding.



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Screen for
abuse risk.

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Background Check Dilemma

- ✔ Less than 5% of offenders have criminal records
- ✔ There is no perfect criminal records search
- ✔ Systematically discover and consider everything you can about an applicant

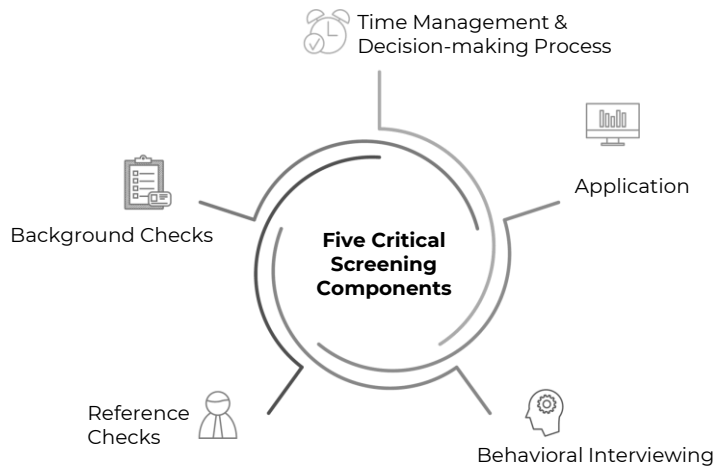
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Critical Screening Components

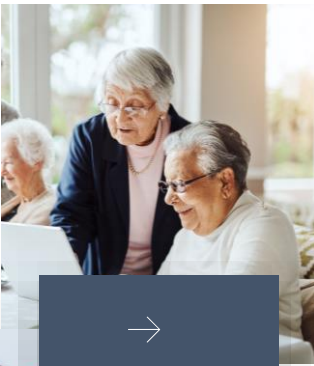


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Deliver the right
training
at the right time.

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WHY TRAINING IS ESSENTIAL

- Conveys the organization's commitment to safety and safeguarding
- Builds commitment to organizational change and policies
- Teaches individuals at all levels their role in safeguarding efforts
- Creates a common language
- Demonstrates "due diligence"

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Education & Training



CONTENT



DELIVERY



FREQUENCY

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Safeguarding Content Points

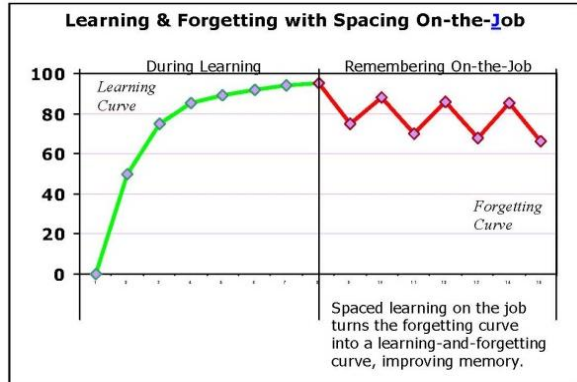
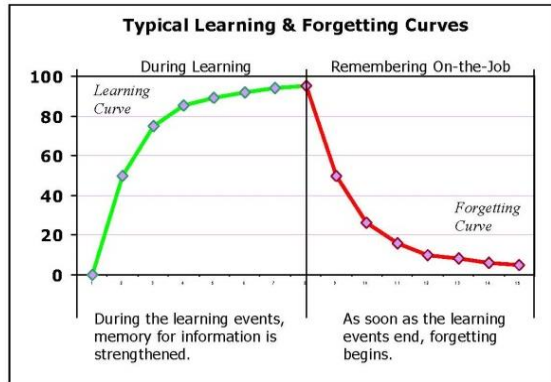
- Types of abuse and exploitation
- Understand how abuse occurs within different organizational settings
- Dynamics of access, privacy, and control and how they manifest within programs
- Appropriate versus inappropriate boundaries between organizational members and clients or beneficiaries of service (likely outlined in policies)
- How to identify and intervene on inappropriate or boundary-crossing behaviors
- How to respond and report allegations or suspicions of abuse

What additional safeguarding information or education may be needed for specific roles?

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Spacing Effect



Source: Thalheimer, W. (2006, February). *Spacing Learning Events Over Time: What the Research Says*. Retrieved October 23, 2013, from <http://www.work-learning.com/catalog/>

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Monitor and supervise
for safety.

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Three Keys to Supervision



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Supervising for Safety

- ✔ Manage high-risk situations and activities
- ✔ Adhering to ratios is compliance, not commitment
- ✔ Adding people does not add supervision
- ✔ Monitor for exceptions in policy adherence
- ✔ Support and supervise staff
- ✔ Use policy violations as teaching and coachable moments

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Monitoring and Supervision

Identify your high-risk activities and locations to develop a preventative monitoring and supervision plan	Bathrooms and personal care assistance
	Off-site activities
	One-on-one interactions
	Overnight or residential activities
	Transportation services
	Transition and free times
	Isolated or unmonitored areas
Mixed age groups	

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Implement systems for
reporting and
responding.

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Implement Systems for Reporting and Responding

- ✔ Develop written response procedures
 - Red flag behaviors and policy violations
 - Suspicions or allegations of abuse
 - Client to client sexualized behaviors
- ✔ Activate response procedures and initiate response communications
- ✔ Remove barriers to reporting



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Interrupt -> Redirect -> Report

Responding ≠ Accusing

Responding = Being an Advocate

90/10 Problem -> Avoid Community Grooming

Red Flags = Patterns of Behavior



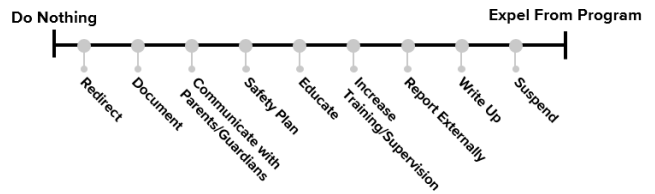
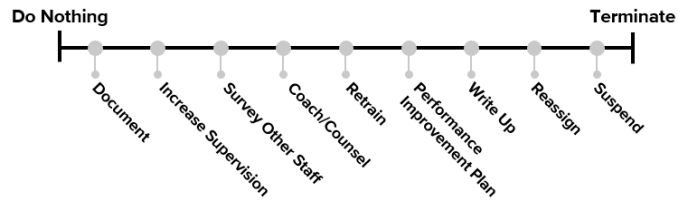
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Continuum of Responses

Consider:

- (1) Internal Processes and Procedures
- (2) Additional factors, such as:
 - Take past behavior into consideration
 - Avoid the tendency to minimize or rationalize behavior
 - Involve Human Resources and other organizational stakeholders as much as possible
 - Recognize when individuals are not trainable and may need to be released from employment
 - Implement a safety or supervision plan to prevent reoccurrence



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OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFLECTION

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Creating a Culture of Safety



Leadership is committed and vocal



Standards are clear and enforced



Everyone knows safety is part of their job



Everyone takes warning signs seriously



Everyone reports their concerns



Employee engagement is high



Quality is institutionalized

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IDENTIFY & ASSESS



- What type of vulnerable populations does your organization serve or support (i.e., children, teenagers, young adults, older adults, survivors of trafficking, formerly incarcerated, experiencing homelessness, etc.)?
- What type of interaction/engagement does your organization have with vulnerable populations (direct, indirect, frequent, ad hoc, etc.)?
- What type of positions/roles directly interact with clients (paid staff, volunteers, contracted individuals, Board members, community members, etc.)?
- How might degrees of power and control inherently manifest within your programs between staff and clients?

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Potential Risk Framework

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 or vulnerable adults, facility rentals, hospitality, outpatient services, research

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THE VALUE OF ABUSE RISK MANAGEMENT

Questions for organizational reflection:

- How can abuse risk management policies enhance communication and trust in our organization?
- What does abuse risk management say, implicitly and explicitly, about our commitment to a client's dignity and well-being?
- Have we considered how emphasizing abuse risk management will improve the relationship between employees and clients?
- How will abuse risk management knowledge/awareness serve us in other areas of service or outreach?

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THE VALUE OF ABUSE RISK MANAGEMENT

Additional questions for organizational reflection:

- With limited, few, or no standardized abuse risk management protocols, what is the safety risk to those we serve?
- Have we considered the organization's potential vulnerabilities?
- What is the risk of false allegations to employees, volunteers, or caregivers?
- What is the financial and reputational risk to the organization?

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REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- ✓ Does our program have written policies that clearly define boundaries between staff and clients?
- ✓ Do our screening or hiring processes assess for abuse risk?
- ✓ Do we require all individuals working directly with clients to complete training that is preventative, not just reactive?
- ✓ Do we have defined methods for monitoring and supervising staff, volunteers, caregivers, and clients?
- ✓ Do we have specific procedures for managing high-risk activities related to abuse prevention?
- ✓ Do we have written procedures for responding to policy violations, allegations of suspected abuse, and client-to-client sexualized behaviors?

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Safeguarding Policy: Decision Points

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

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SAFEGUARDING POLICY CHECKLIST – FADICA SAMPLE

My safeguarding policy articulates:

- ⊗ a zero-tolerance statement about abuse
- ⊗ clear definitions of types of abuse and harm, including sexual, physical, emotional abuse, and neglect
- ⊗ what a “vulnerable person” is
- ⊗ training requirements for employees, volunteers, Board and committee members, etc., suitable for their roles and interaction with youth/vulnerable adults
- ⊗ behavioral expectations for direct-service engagement, using examples of “dos” and “don’ts” (appropriate boundaries)
- ⊗ a system of reporting, including names and contact information for employees or third parties who are a “safe report”
- ⊗ obligations of mandated reporters in your state/country
- ⊗ process for documenting incidents, including how these written records will be retained
- ⊗ a statement about how the governing body (e.g., Board) oversees, supports, and enforces policy
- ⊗ whistleblower protections
- ⊗ provisions for monitoring physical facilities, including high-risk areas like bathrooms and locker rooms
- ⊗ provisions for transportation, one-on-one engagement, and off-site locations (e.g., site visits)
- ⊗ expectations for social media usage
- ⊗ best practices for recruiting/hiring employees and volunteers
- ⊗ a point of contact for safeguarding questions and concerns

Please note: This checklist is not exhaustive; it highlights common safeguarding needs across diverse sectors. Organizations should customize written safeguarding policy to align with operations, in consultation with abuse prevention experts, management, and legal counsel.



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2024

WEBINAR
SERIES



<p>PILLAR</p> <hr/> <p>Keeping Your Team and Beneficiaries of Service Safe: An Introduction to Safeguarding Best Practices</p> <p style="color: #e67e22;">WEDNESDAY, MAR. 13</p>	<p>PILLAR</p> <hr/> <p>Creating a Written Safeguarding Policy: The Essentials</p> <p style="color: #e67e22;">WEDNESDAY, MAY 22</p>	<p>PILLAR</p> <hr/> <p>Hiring Thoughtfully: Best Practices for Employee & Volunteer Screening</p> <p style="color: #e67e22;">WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 11</p>
<p>SPECIALIZED</p> <hr/> <p>First Do No Harm: The Intersection of Safeguarding Efforts in Healthcare Settings</p> <p style="color: #e67e22;">WEDNESDAY, APR. 10</p>	<p>SPECIALIZED</p> <hr/> <p>Unique Dynamics for Safeguarding Vulnerable Adult Populations</p> <p style="color: #e67e22;">WEDNESDAY, JULY 17</p>	<p>SPECIALIZED</p> <hr/> <p>High-Reliability Organizations: Inspiration for Fostering Cultures of Safety</p> <p style="color: #e67e22;">WEDNESDAY, NOV. 6</p>



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Consultation with Partners

- Document analysis and policy review/development
- Emergency or crisis response to incident
- Exploration of dynamics between domestic and international teams
- Article development for information sharing
- Guided conversation about daily operations & possible gaps
- Custom training opportunities (bilingual in Spanish)
- Funder referrals (various reasons)



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STAY IN TOUCH

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