



Preventing Child Sexual Abuse

Connect the Dots!
Child Abuse Prevention Day Mini Conference

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- Strengths-based approach
 - ✓ Family Support Principles
 - ✓ Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework
- Funding
 - ✓ 11 million for primary prevention programs:
 - Home visiting, family resource centers , parenting education, & fatherhood
- Evaluation
 - ✓ Currently completing a randomized control study of home visiting
- Education
 - ✓ Training and advocacy



Just the Facts



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Victims of Child Sexual Abuse

- 1 in 5 girls & 1 in 10 boys are sexually abused before they are 18
(CDC)
- 1 out of every 10 students are victims of sexual misconduct by an educator
(US Dept of Education)
- Research shows toxic stress damages developing brain architecture which can lead to lifelong problems in learning, behavior, and physical/mental illness.
(Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University)



Victims *continued*

- ACE study done by the CDC found childhood experience of abuse increased adverse health outcomes
- Children who have been sexually abused are 2.5 times more likely to abuse alcohol and 3.6 times more likely to develop drug addictions (*Child Help*)



Pedophiles

- 90% of children (under age 12) know the offender.
(US Dept of Justice '97, Finkelhor, UNH, 2001)
- Pedophile has an average of 244 victims over the course of their life - majority began offending as juvenile
(National Institute of Mental Health)
- 66% of male juvenile sex offenders indicated they had been physically (19%) and/or sexually abused (49%).



After sexual abuse has happened:

We can punish

- Changing or eliminating civil statutes so victims can sue in civil court
- Sex Offender registries
- Increase sentencing of convicted pedophiles

Improve treatment/oversight including

- Court ordered lie detectors on regular basis
- Long term probation with ankle bracelets as needed



We can treat and support victims



Incredible work of child advocacy centers

Increase access to trained mental health
specialists

Support for parents and family members





What is our reaction
when we read about a
case of child sexual
abuse in the newspaper
or on TV?



Denial

Not in our town, not in my neighborhood or school
and certainly never in my family.



- Pedophiles count on that: they fly under our radar
- Kids counts on us – this is an adult responsibility
- You would not be surprised to find a drunk in a bar, so why are you surprised to find a pedophile where kids are?





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The challenge



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What can we do as professionals within our agencies, in our churches, in our roles as volunteers, and as parents?



Need for prevention: *Moving Upstream*



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Putting **multiple barriers**
up to keep pedophiles
from accessing children



Massachusetts Model

Ensuring that all child serving agencies have:

- Clear reporting protocol & structure within the organization
- Code of conduct & safe environment policies
- Staff Training
- Parent Training
- Training children once everyone else is on board!



Massachusetts Model

Designing and Implementing a School Reporting Protocol

2nd Edition



Code of Conduct

- minimize situations where a child is alone with an adult
- No acceptance of gifts without a parents knowledge and permission, identify what kinds of touch (high five, pats on the back) that are OK and those (tickling, wrestling , piggy back rides) that are not.



Safe environment policy

- Secure areas not used for program purposes:
 - Lock closets and store rooms, windows in doors, bright lighting.
 - Reviewing transportation policies
 - Review transportation policies
 - Privacy when in the bathroom or changing clothes
 - Access control: policies & procedures for who is allowed in and under what circumstances



Components of manual also include:

- Signs & symptoms pedophiles
- Signs & symptoms victims
- Creating a team: reporting to child protection



Staff Training

- Screening at hiring
- Keeping it on everyone's radar screen



Talking about Touching

- Implemented across various child serving agencies
- Developmentally appropriate and evidenced based safety curriculum for kids.
- Experience working with the RCAB



Training Parents



Take it to where they are!



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Now...

Train kids



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Resources

Preventing Child Sexual Abuse within Youth-Serving Organizations – CDC

<http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/pub/PreventingChildAbuse.html>

Committee for Children – Talking About Touching

www.cfchildren.org

Massachusetts Children’s Trust Fund

www.mctf.org

One Tough Job Parenting Website

www.onetoughjob.org





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