

# White River Youth Camp

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Child Abuse Prevention Training



# Why this training is important...

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- ❑ Child abuse has become a nationwide issue since about the 1980's.
- ❑ Schools, camps, churches and other youth organizations have come under intense scrutiny.
- ❑ We must be sensitive and well-informed to avoid potential difficulties in this area and for the well-being of the young people entrusted to our care.

# A Team Effort...

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- It is not just the responsibility of the Cabin Counselor to ensure the safety of the campers.
- Preventing child abuse is a team effort.
- Every adult, either employee or volunteer, who has opportunity to interact with the campers is required to take this course and pass the test with 70% accuracy.



# Definition of Child Abuse

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- ❑ Child abuse is any experience during childhood or adolescence that involves inappropriate sexual attention from another person.
- ❑ This person is usually an adult but can also be an older child or a teenager.
- ❑ Child sexual abuse is not solely restricted to physical contact.



# Effects of Child Abuse

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- ❑ Difficulty in forming long term relationships.
- ❑ Sexual risk-taking
- ❑ Physical complaints and physical symptoms
- ❑ Depression, suicidal thoughts and suicide
- ❑ Links to failure of the immune system and to increases in illnesses.



# Signs of sexual abuse

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- ❑ Fear of a parent or fear of the perpetrator
- ❑ Withdrawn or isolated
- ❑ Overly compliant or cooperative when that is not their usual behavior
- ❑ Sexually precocious, which is being involved in play that is intrusive or inappropriate



## Signs of sexual abuse...

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“As we discuss the signs of abuse, it’s important to note that very few of these findings are totally specific for abuse. That means that we can see these signs in a child who is not being abused. The converse is also true. **A child can be a victim of abuse and show no outward signs.**”

Dr. Janet Squires

Children’s Medical Center of Dallas



# Characteristics of a child molester

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- A child is more likely to be abused by somebody that they know or someone in their family than they are by a stranger.
- About 1/3 of all sexual abuse of children occurs at the hands of older children, primarily adolescence.



# Strategies of Abusers

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- Molesters tend to use three basic strategies: seduction, trickery and force all wrapped in secrecy.



# Strategies of Abusers...

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- There is usually little a child can do to resist **force**, which is a very infrequent act of abuse.
- The molester may attempt to use **bribery** by giving gifts or other favors to the interested child.
- The abuser may try to shift the **blame** to the child by telling them it is their fault the molestation took place.

# Strategies of Abusers...

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- Other ways that abusers maintain secrecy during abusive relationships are:
  - Embarrassment
  - Displaced Responsibility (similar to blame)
  - Loss of Affection (98% of the time the molester is a wonderful person in the child's life and the child values that relationship in spite of the abuse.)
  - Threaten the child or someone in their family



# Abusive feelings and normal curiosity

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“Adolescence can be very sexually confusing. But if we’re talking about something sexual between somebody who is older and someone who is younger by even a couple of years, we are getting into the realm of things that can be abuse.”

David Finkelhor

University of New Hampshire



# On-Site Protection and Prevention

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These policies are primarily for the protection of the campers; however, they also serve to protect the adult leaders from false accusations of abuse.



# Protection and Prevention Policies

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1. Avoid one-on-one contact.
  - Adult to Camper
  - Camper to Camper
2. Respect camper's privacy.
3. Use constructive discipline. Corporal punishment is never a proper form of discipline.
4. Any type of hazing is prohibited.
5. Campers are responsible for proper behavior.



# Responding to Abuse

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If a child discloses abuse to you...

The most important thing you can do is **listen**.



# Responding to Abuse

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1. You should **believe** the child.
2. You should **affirm** the child.
3. You should **protect** the child.
4. You should **refer** the child.



# Reporting Abuse

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- For reporting child abuse, all the state requires is that you have **reasonable suspicion** that abuse has occurred.
- **If the suspected abuse occurs at the youth camp, the suspected abuse must be reported to the Texas Department of Health & Human Services Commission (HHSC) utilizing the online form at [https://wafers.hhsc.state.tx.us/Abuse\\_Fraud\\_Reporting\\_IR.asp](https://wafers.hhsc.state.tx.us/Abuse_Fraud_Reporting_IR.asp). (available at camp office)**
- Local authorities should also be contacted about the suspected abuse.



# Reporting Abuse

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If a child discloses abuse to you, the three on-site people that need to be notified immediately are:

1. Church Leader/minister of the child
2. Group Leader (director of the camp)
3. Retreat Center Director or his assistant