

CSA PREVENTION EVALUATION TOOL FOR ORGANIZATIONS:

Child Protection Policy & Procedures

Sandy K. Wurtele, Ph.D. © 2014

General Standards	Yes
a. Policy is written in a clear and easily understood way. (Evidence: Copy of policy)	
b. Policy contains definitions of key terms (e.g., Sexual Abuse; Minor)	
c. Policy is publicized, openly displayed, promoted, and distributed to everyone involved with an organization. (Evidence: Circulation list to show distribution)	
d. States Purpose: Agency's commitment to create safe environments for children and protect them from harm (welfare/safety of youth is paramount; values children, youth)	
e. States Principles underlying standards: (e.g., all children have the right to protection and safety; equal rights to protection from harm; to an environment free from violence, abuse, harassment, and discrimination; treat each other with respect; Everyone has a responsibility to support the care and protection of children)	
f. Abuse-free, non-sexualized work environment. Zero tolerance for any form of abuse of youth, whether emotional, physical, or sexual.	
g. Policy is approved and endorsed by relevant management/oversight body (Evidence: signed statement of approval; excerpt from minutes of relevant meeting to show approval)	
h. Policy specifies to whom standards apply (e.g., mandatory for staff and volunteers)	
i. Developed in collaboration with many stakeholders (e.g., children, parents, law enforcement, legal counsel, experts, child protective services)	
j. Encourages collaboration between parents and program staff to keep children safe.	
k. Policy is reviewed/updated on regular basis. (e.g., every three years or whenever there is a major change in the organization or relevant legislation) (Evidence: Timetable for review)	
l. Processes/mechanisms are in place to consult children and parents as part of the review of safeguarding policies and practices. Steps are taken to seek users' views on policies and procedures and how they are working.	
m. Identifies personnel with clearly defined role and responsibilities in relation to child protection. Person(s) responsible for implementing/reviewing policy and procedures.	
n. Information about where to go for help and contact details for designated contact person, local social services department, police, and emergency medical help are readily available.	
Standard 1: Safe Screening and Hiring Practices	
a. There are policies and procedures for recruiting personnel and volunteers and assessing their suitability to work with children. (Evidence: Copy of Recruitment Policy & Procedure)	
b. Agency has a standard written application form. (Evidence: application form)	
c. Criteria for acceptance/rejection have been identified. Lists non-negotiable minimum standards for rejection/which offenses automatically disqualify applicants. (e.g., history	

of CSA? violence? substance-related problems? use of child pornography? major mental disorders? prior inpatient psychiatric treatment?)	
d. Person(s) responsible for screening, interviewing, reference checks, hiring, etc. have been identified.	
e. Policies and processes for screening and selection are stated and systematically followed.	
f. All adults who have the opportunity for regular contact with children, or who are in positions of trust, are screened.	
g. Applicant signs a permission form for contacting at least 2 personal references and performing a criminal background check.	
h. Applicants are asked to disclose previous criminal histories of sexual offenses, violence against youth, and other criminal offenses. All candidates are asked if there has ever been any investigation or action taken against them for any ethical, moral, legal, or malpractice action. Have you ever been censured, disciplined, dismissed, expelled from, been put on probation, or been requested to resign or withdraw from any professional school, internship, volunteer program, employment, or training program?	
i. Reference checks are conducted, with all work/volunteer experience carefully verified.	
j. Verbal contact is made not only with the people listed on the application, but also people mentioned by those references.	
k. Criminal background checks are conducted with fingerprinting if applicable, and Sex Offender Registries are checked.	
l. Agency keeps the results of criminal background checks confidential (secure storage location, limited access to files).	
m. Informal Internet searches are conducted as a way to find additional relevant information about an applicant.	
n. Code of Conduct is shared with all applicants.	
o. Applicants' home environments are assessed (for mentoring programs where youth meet with mentors at their homes)	
p. No contact with youth is allowed until applicant has been approved.	
q. Agency lets applicants know (verbally and in writing) that the program's priority is the safety and well-being of children.	
r. There is an induction process for all staff and volunteers which includes familiarization with the child protection policy and procedures.	
Standard 2: Code of Conduct	
a. Contains input from constituents: Staff, parents, youth are consulted in developing codes of behavior.	
b. Written Code of Conduct, which provides clear guidance on acceptable/expected standards of behavior of adults toward children. (Evidence: Code of Conduct for adult-child behavior and for child-child behavior)	
c. Agency lists ethical conduct/appropriate behaviors (behaviors to be encouraged). (Evidence: Guidance on acceptable/appropriate behaviors)	
d. Agency lists unethical conduct/inappropriate behaviors or boundary violations. Specifies disrespectful/unsafe/harassing behaviors (i.e., makes it clear that discriminatory behavior or language in relation to any of the following is not acceptable: race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or political views). Evidence: Code of	

Conduct specifically prohibits certain behaviors (hitting or physically assaulting children; having intimate, romantic, or sexual relationships with children; showing porn to children; exploiting children to meet emotional or sexual needs; asking youth to keep secrets)	
e. Clear statement of the need to set and maintain professional/appropriate boundaries with youth.	
f. Policy addresses one-on-one interactions with youth (e.g., being alone with a child in an area that cannot be seen or observed by other adults; taking children to your own home, to restaurants, or traveling alone with a child in a car)	
g. If applicable, policy addresses high-risk situations (e.g., bathing, changing, bathroom activities, sleep-overs)	
h. Policy addresses out-of-program contact restrictions (e.g., socializing with youth outside of agency-sponsored activities).	
i. Addresses discipline practices (that do not involve physical punishment or any other form of degrading or humiliating treatment). States responsibility of adults and children to treat one another with dignity and respect.	
j. Adequate adult/child ratios. Clear guidelines that specify under what circumstances--if any--staff are allowed to be alone with a child.	
k. Describes responsible use of the Internet	
l. Addresses taking photographs/videos of youth (including mobile phones with cameras)	
m. Provides guidelines on contacting/communicating with youth via technology (use of social media, emails, mobile phones)	
n. Guidelines regarding communication/language with children. (e.g., self-disclosure; personal/intimate topics; secrecy; sexual topics), and conduct (inappropriate gift giving)	
o. Prohibits the display or distribution of sexually suggestive or pornographic material	
p. Policy regarding transporting students/youth.	
q. Policy outlaws use, possession, or distribution of illegal or unauthorized drugs. Furnishing or encouraging minors to use, possess or unlawfully distribute alcohol, tobacco, illegal or unauthorized drugs.	
r. Code contains guidelines relating to adult-child physical contact.	
s. Code outlines Sanctions for Breaching: (e.g., Contains a statement "I have read and understand the Policy and agree to be bound by the provisions contained within. I understand that violations involving sexual relations with a student, sexual abuse of a student, or communication with a student of a sexual or romantic nature, shall result in dismissal, prompt notification of law enforcement and social services if required by state law, and in the case of an employee or volunteer licensed by a Board of Professional Licensing, the initiation of a complaint against the license.")	
t. Applicant signs/dates statement "I agree to abide by/adhere to Code of Conduct".	
u. Arrangements are in place to monitor compliance with child protection policies and procedures.	
Standard 3: Implementation and Monitoring	
a. Written plan showing what steps will be taken to keep children safe, who is responsible for implementing these measures, and when/how often monitoring will occur. (Evidence: Copy of the Child Protection Plan)	

b. Defines roles and responsibilities for implementing Plan and for monitoring both implementation and interactions between youth and adults.	
c. Audit procedures are in place for monitoring the extent to which policies and procedures and all training programs are being implemented (method of demonstrating accountability and transparency).	
d. Documentation that monitoring has occurred (using written records).	
e. Uses formal supervision including periodic evaluations (e.g., annual appraisal of staff, review of volunteers)	
f. Uses informal supervision (random observations)	
g. Institutional climate encourages professionals and volunteers to keep their eyes open for potentially problematic adult-youth interactions and share their concerns with and confront a colleague about those concerns.	
h. Agency provides therapeutic supervision (i.e., encourage and support the recognition of personal needs like loneliness and how they may be affecting professional relationships; acknowledging emotional/sexual feelings toward clients; climate of trust in which staff feel free to disclose feelings and experiences to their supervisors)	
i. Agency provides multiple opportunities for youth and staff to give/obtain feedback and seek support (e.g., peer mentoring)	
j. All incidents, allegations of abuse and complaints are recorded and monitored. (Evidence: Summary of number of incidents of abuse and number of complaints)	
Standard 4: Ensuring Safe Environments	
a. Ensure spaces are open and visible (windows in doors; "no-closed door" policy)	
b. Provide youth with privacy when toileting, showering, changing clothes.	
c. Install surveillance cameras in difficult-to-supervise public areas.	
d. Parents are allowed/encouraged to visit the agency unannounced at any time	
e. Policies in place for field trips/off-site activities.	
f. Transportation policies established and monitored.	
g. Zero-tolerance/abuse-free/anti-bullying policies are advertised throughout environment. Youth safety is priority.	
h. Child protection policy is openly displayed and available to everyone, and is included in staff handbooks along with student and parent handbooks.	
i. Children are aware of their right to be safe from abuse and who to speak to if they have worries or concerns.	
j. Agency creates a climate that encourages guardians/staff to question concerning or confusing behaviors or practices.	
Standard 5: Investigating & Reporting Concerns, Disclosures, Allegations	
a. Purpose: Provides clear guidance on what to do when a child protection concern arises.	
b. Goal: to respond quickly and appropriately to 1) inappropriate or harmful behavior, 2) violations of any policies, and 3) allegations and suspicions of harassment and sexual misconduct.	
c. All employees and adult volunteers are aware of their obligation to report suspected abuse or neglect. (e.g., Priests are clear that the Seal of Confession does not apply to	

disclosures of abuse or abusive behavior.)	
d. All employees and adult volunteers are trained in recognizing obvious signs and symptoms of abuse but also more subtle signs (crossing boundaries; grooming behaviors)	
e. All adults are trained in how to respond to a child who discloses abuse or questionable behavior. (List of do's and don'ts)	
f. Staff, parents, and youth know how to report concerns, suspicions, and allegations about unacceptable behavior.	
g. Youth have opportunities to report/describe concerning behavior directly and indirectly (e.g., a suggestion box to make complaints). Children are provided with information on where to go to for help and advice in relation to abuse, harassment and bullying. (Evidence: Copies of information for children about sources of support)	
h. Clear written procedures provide step-by-step guidance on what action to take if there are concerns, allegations, suspicions, or disclosures of abuse (historic or current).	
i. There is a designated person/person(s)/officer (Designated Officer and Deputy Officer if possible) (key point of contact) with clearly defined role and responsibilities for receiving complaints, reports, suspicions, or concerns.	
j. Chain of Reporting clearly described. Includes Designated Officer passes information on to Civil authorities. Contact details for local social services and police are included. (Evidence: Flow chart)	
k. Designated Officer consults with Child Protective Services/Law Enforcement about all allegations/disclosures.	
l. Process for recording all incidents, allegations, concerns, suspicions and referrals and storing these securely and maintaining confidentiality. (Evidence: Child Protection Recording Form; General Incident Reporting Form)	
m. Process for dealing with complaints made by parents and children about unacceptable and/or abusive behavior, with clear time tables for resolving the complaint.	
n. There is guidance on confidentiality and information-sharing which makes clear that the protection of the child is the most important consideration.	
o. Clearly stated guidelines for conducting an internal evaluation of complaint (of limited scope). Delineates what behaviors the agency will respond to internally and what behaviors require reporting to authorities.	
p. Maintain Records: Every referral should be documented, and a file should include a log of actions, events and information received. Any information/observations in connection with the case should be documented and included in the personnel file.	
q. Identifies who has responsibility for contacting the family of alleged victim and describes if, how, when, and by whom all families are notified.	
r. Provides guidance on how to respond to a child who is suspected to have been abused.	
s. Arrangements for providing supervision and support to staff and volunteers during and following an incident or allegation. Provides information and support to individuals both during and following an incident or allegation of abuse. Provides referrals, reimbursement for counseling, restorative justice, a list of professionals and organizations that provide assistance. (Evidence: List of contacts for advice, information, therapy)	
t. Clear guidance for responding to media/press.	
u. Clear plan for making public apologies.	

Standard 6: Training/Educational Programs	
a. Agency has developed and implemented educational programs specifically designed for youth, parents, professionals in training, and staff/administrators and volunteers who have significant contact with children. (Evidence: Copy of training plans/programs)	
b. All groups are educated about all forms of child maltreatment and in-depth coverage on sexual exploitation (causes, signs and symptoms, debunk myths about offenders, consequences of abuse, grooming behavior)	
c. Training includes discussion of need for and guidance in how to establish and maintain professional boundaries with youth. (Almost all serious ethical infractions emerge from a context of escalating boundary violations.)	
d. Training of professionals includes discussion of how personal problems, needs, deficits, can result in over-involvement (boundary violations) with needy youth. Acknowledge power differential between adults and youth.	
e. Provides guidance in spelling out/setting boundaries and limits with youth. Trainees have opportunities to discuss and role play risky situations.	
f. Discussions about how sexual misconduct can have its beginnings in good intentions (need to save a child from pain, risk of taking on the role of various or parent surrogate), easy to cross boundaries. Help trainees recognize ethical conflicts and provide practice in responding to sexual behaviors of youth.	
g. Opportunities for careful self-examination/training in recognizing when personal needs or unresolved problems are affecting work (e.g., addictions, pressures of work/home, loneliness, need for physical contact, for belonging, adoration, connecting)	
h. Recognizing the rationalizations/cognitive distortions adults use to construe deepening involvement as something other than sexual misconduct (e.g., good for the child). Victim sensitization approaches can make it difficult for trainees to deny the harmful effects that sexual relationships have on clients/mentees.	
i. Provide candid testimonials from respected faculty/administrators who have encountered strong (sexual) feelings for their clients (serve as models for how to engage in an open, professional discussion of sexual issues)	
j. Discuss the need to prevent sexual feelings from evolving into ethical infractions. (Draw the line between feelings and actions)	
k. Help staff recognize and intervene when they observe a co-worker crossing professional boundaries (e.g., taking a student to lunch or dinner, giving gifts).	
l. All groups are informed about duty to report sexual misconduct.	
m. Training includes a means of confirming participation and completion.	
n. Training is given before interactions with children begin, and is repeated every _ years.	

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CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF AN ABUSE-FREE SCHOOL

I. Screening and Selecting Staff

When done properly, the recruitment process offers the greatest opportunity to attract the best staff and volunteers for the job. It also deters and prevents people who are unsuitable or who have intentions to sexually abuse children.

I recommend that your school conduct criminal background checks on all employees (teachers, office staff, janitors, bus drivers) and volunteers. Recognize that a 'clear' criminal background check does not guarantee someone is safe; it may mean they have not yet been caught. However, it is a good starting point and does act as a deterrent to certain offenders.

For anyone having contact with students, additional screening methods are needed. Staff/volunteers who have opportunities to be alone with a student pose greater risks to students and thus require more intensive screening. Also, staff providing one-on-one instruction, or instruction involving physical contact (e.g., physical education; music) must be rigorously screened, including personal interviews and reference checks.

In-depth personal interviews are critical, asking applicants about their motives for wanting to work with children, along with previous histories of sexual offenses, violence against youth, substance abuse problems, attitudes toward control and punishment of children, and past rule-breaking or (non-sexual) criminal activities. Questions should help you determine whether applicants have mature, adult relationships as well as clear boundaries and ethical standards for their conduct with youth.

Personal reference checks are also critical. Verbal--not just written--contact should be made not only with the people listed on the application, but also people mentioned by those references. Informal Internet searches of an applicant may reveal legal involvement or news stories related to sexual (or non-sexual) crimes.

Any staff selected for employment should be required to sign a document (Code of Conduct) which describes your school's commitment to protecting children and your expectation that employees will abide by this policy.

II. Code of Conduct

A Code of Conduct explains appropriate behavior expected of staff and volunteers when working with children. It is a straight-forward guide of do's and don'ts to assist staff and volunteers to conduct their work professionally and effectively. It lets everyone know what behavior is acceptable and unacceptable within your organization. It might include rules about:

1. touching/physical contact,
2. not being alone with students,
3. discipline practices,
4. adult/child ratios,
5. responsible use of the Internet,
6. use of photography and mobile phones with cameras, and
7. rules about relationships between staff/volunteers and students.

III. Child Protection Policy

A Child Protection Policy is a statement of your school's commitment to child safety. It outlines the strategies the school uses to guide decisions and actions on child protection matters. It serves to guide people in dealing with difficult situations such as child abuse allegations, responding to suspicions of abuse and knowing who to talk to within your organization as well as when to report to outside authorities. I recommend that you nominate a "Child Protection Officer" for people to report issues to.

IV. Policies for Protecting Youth in High-Risk Situations

The sexual victimization of a child requires privacy. One strategy to prevent CSA in institutions is to minimize opportunities for staff to be alone with children. Some organizations have a policy limiting one-on-one interactions between youth and adults (i.e., having at least two adults present at all times with youth). The goal of such a policy is to prevent the isolation of one adult and one youth, a situation that elevates the risk for CSA.

Possible options relating to this policy include:

1. Requiring two staff members in a classroom at all times.
2. Recruiting parent volunteers and high school student mentors to assist in each classroom.
3. Limiting contact between employees and students to organization-sanctioned activities and programs.

4. Prohibiting employees from transporting children alone in a vehicle without parent and supervisor permission.

V. Ensuring Safe Environments

Although your organization provides excellent access control (security guard), the classroom building could benefit from an increase in visibility. Spaces that are open and visible to multiple people can create an environment where individuals at risk for sexually abusive behaviors do not feel comfortable abusing. Possible methods for increasing visibility include:

1. Secure areas not used for program purposes to prevent youth from being isolated (e.g., lock classrooms when not in use).
2. Institute a "no closed door" policy.
3. Install windows in doors.
4. Open blinds on windows.

VI. Training Staff about CSA Prevention

Adult education is the cornerstone of any CSA prevention plan. It is critical that in-service training programs be offered to all employees and volunteers to raise their awareness of CSA in youth-serving organizations. These trainings give all adults a heightened awareness of your organization's commitment to and intolerance of inappropriate behavior.

Trainees need opportunities to discuss ethical principles underlying their care of students, particularly the need to maintain professional boundaries, knowing what constitutes sexual misconduct, and acknowledging the potential for exploiting their greater status and power. Training should also be provided to staff on how to recognize and respond to questionable behaviors exhibited by fellow staff members, like when a co-worker has a special or intimate relationship with a particular child, gives a particular student excessive attention, is seen touching the child in questionable or inappropriate ways, or communicates with a student (via e-mails, text messaging, letters) about personal or intimate issues.

Because training can be expensive and time-consuming, mechanisms must be in place to ensure that training is conducted. Consider developing a regular training schedule or repeat trainings when a specified number of new employees/volunteers have been hired. You may also consider partnering with other organizations (public schools, university) to develop and implement training. Internet-based training interventions are also an option. For educators, EthicsEd.com offers an excellent online training program

entitled, *Preventing Sexual Misconduct and Abuse in Schools*. Training can also occur in informal settings, such as brown-bag lunches where staff can discuss case studies to elicit discussion and suggestions for handling situations.

VII. Empowering Students

A student-friendly school involves children and youth in decisions and policies which directly impact on them. When they feel valued and respected, children and youth are more likely to tell someone they trust if they are concerned or worried about something. Children and youth need to be given a voice in the school and their ideas and issues listened to and respected. You might consider consulting with or appointing students to a school safety committee.

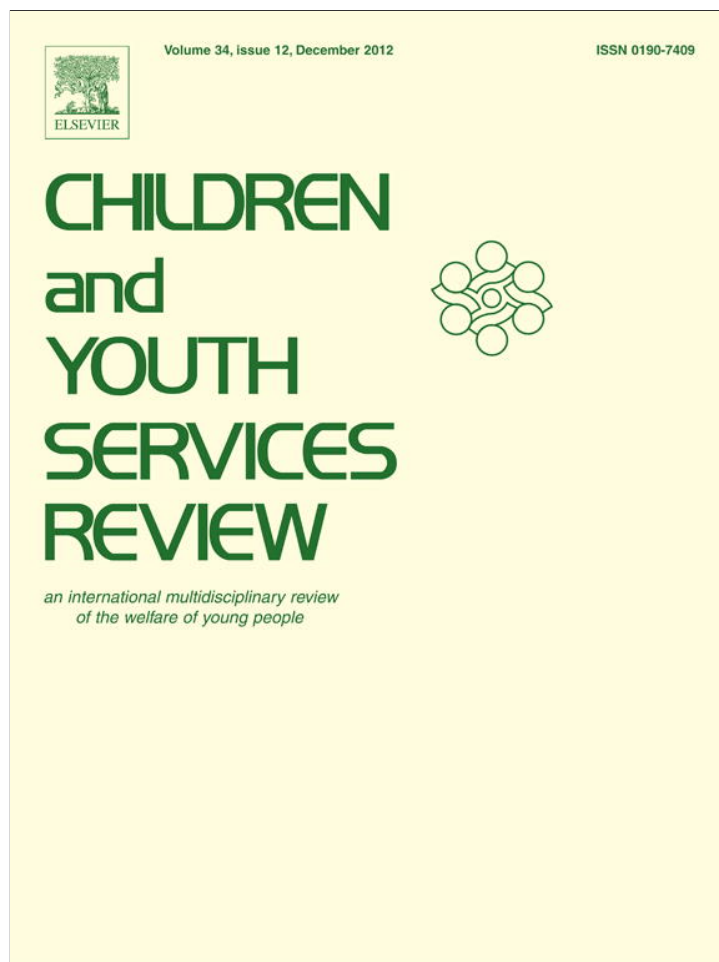
Educating children about personal safety is an important empowerment and prevention strategy. All students should be provided with developmentally appropriate personal safety knowledge and skills. I recommend that this training be offered at all grade levels, with classroom teachers either teaching the content or at least present during instruction. Students should be provided with general information about CSA, including what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate behavior from adults and other youth. Students need to know that no one has the right to ask, force, trick, or coerce them into sexual activities, and that sexual offenders, not their victims, are at fault. Instructors should discuss the importance of reporting sexual abuse, and students should have formal and informal ways of reporting abuse (e.g., drop box for students to submit concerns). I also recommend that all students be educated about healthy sexuality, and that they be taught to avoid exploitive or inappropriate sexual behavior toward others.

Feel free to contact me if you have questions or want clarification on any of the recommendations.

Sincerely,

Sandy K. Wurtele, Ph.D.

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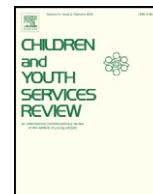
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Preventing the sexual exploitation of minors in youth-serving organizations

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses child sexual abuse (CSA) by staff members in youth-serving organizations (YSOs) including schools, residential treatment and correction facilities, scouting, clubs, faith centers, and sports leagues. Over the last ten years there have been highly publicized reports of adults in positions of authority, such as teachers, coaches, and ministers, sexually exploiting youth under their care. Using an ecological perspective, the author suggests preventing institutional sexual exploitation by addressing such macrosystem factors as national and state policies and legislation, and at the organizational level by implementing risk-management strategies and by training staff in how to have close connections with youth while avoiding sexual misconduct. Providing training, monitoring, and supervision for youth-serving staff to help them maintain appropriate professional boundaries will not only help protect the integrity of the agency but most important, may help prevent institutional child sexual exploitation.

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1. Introduction

"I will never forget...with great power comes great responsibility."
Spiderman, 2002.

Youth-serving organizations (YSOs) are establishments, organizations, facilities and clubs that provide services and activities for children, and include schools, residential treatment facilities, youth groups, faith centers, and recreational or sporting clubs; all organizations with the mission of helping young people develop into healthy adults. As noted by Trocmé and Schumaker (1999), "participation in these activities provide children with important protective factors against sexual abuse including increased self-esteem and skills development, relationships with adults outside the home who may act as role models and confidants and relationships with peers" (p. 631). Many of these organizations foster close and caring relationships between youth and staff members (employees and volunteers), but as we have seen in national studies and in media reports, this same closeness can provide opportunities for child sexual abuse (CSA) to occur. The sexual exploitation of minors in YSOs—institutional CSA—is far too common, and has become a focus of major concern among researchers, policy makers, parents, and the public.

Sometimes called professional abuse, institutional CSA, or staff sexual misconduct of youth, all terms refer to the sexual abuse of minors by an authority figure in an organization that serves youth. Gallagher's (2000) definition of institutional abuse is "the sexual abuse of a child (under 18 years of age) by an adult who works with him or her. The perpetrator may be employed in a paid or voluntary capacity; in the public, voluntary, or private sector; in a residential or non-residential setting; and may work either directly with children or be in an ancillary role" (p. 797). Unfortunately, we know very little about the nature, scope, causes, and context of institutional child sexual exploitation. What is the extent of the problem? What are the characteristics of offenders and their victims? Are certain youth more vulnerable to sexual exploitation in YSOs? Are there certain characteristics of institutions that make it more likely for youth to be sexually exploited? The first section of the paper reviews the scant research available to answer these questions, followed by suggestions for preventing institutional sexual exploitation of minors.

1.1. Scope of the problem

Three national studies have been conducted to answer some of these important questions. Pertaining to the clergy abuse crisis, the U.S. Catholic Bishops commissioned researchers from the John Jay College of Criminal Justice to conduct two studies: one to investigate the nature and scope of CSA by priests and deacons in the United States from 1950 to 2002; and the second to address the causes and context of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church (see John Jay College of Criminal Justice, 2004, 2011). The U. S. Department of Education sponsored Shakeshaft's (2004) study of sexual abuse occurring within schools. A study funded by the U. S. Department of Justice determined the extent to which youth detained in juvenile facilities were sexually victimized (Beck, Harrison, & Guerino, 2010). Unfortunately, no comprehensive large-scale studies have been conducted with other organizations that provide services to children and youth, and thus we do not know the true extent of institutional CSA.

Although the exact prevalence of CSA in YSOs is unknown, news reports clearly demonstrate that institutional CSA is a significant and widespread problem in the U.S. For example, in New Jersey, Layton and Diskin (2012) reported that 23 teachers, coaches and school officials had been charged with or convicted of sex crimes against students in the previous three years. An Associated Press investigation found more than 2500 cases over five years in which educators were sanctioned for sexual misconduct (Irvine &

Tanner, 2007). The *New York Times Magazine* published Kamil's (2012) exposé of the sordid and secret history of educator sexual misconduct occurring at Horace Mann, an elite private school in New York. In Oregon, the Boy Scouts of America were ordered to pay \$18.5 million in punitive damages to plaintiff Kerry Lewis, who had been abused in the early 1980s by an assistant troop leader, Timur Dykes (Yardley, 2010). In June 2012, former assistant Penn State football coach Gerald "Jerry" Sandusky was found guilty on 45 of 48 counts of sexually abusing 10 boys involved in his charity, The Second Mile. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Licking County (Ohio) reported that two mentors (including the executive director, James T. Russell) were charged with sexually assaulting boys involved in the program. Media reports have also highlighted sexual abuse of youth occurring in several competitive sports, including hockey, swimming, gymnastics, basketball, wrestling and football (Adelson, 2011; Chuchmach & Patel, 2010; Nack & Yaeger, 1999; O'Hagan, & Willmsen, 2003; O'Keefe, 2011; Zinser, 2011).

Very few researchers have surveyed youth in YSOs asking whether they have been sexually victimized. The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) surveyed juvenile correctional facilities and found that 10.3% of surveyed youth reported incidences of staff sexual misconduct (Beck et al., 2010). In U. S. schools, 9.6% of students reported being the targets of educator sexual misconduct at some point in their school career, with 7% reporting physical sexual contact (Shakeshaft, 2004).

1.2. Description of victims

Both females and males are sexually exploited in YSOs. In settings where the male/female ratio is similar (e.g., schools), girls are slightly more likely than boys to have been victimized (7.6% of females and 6.2% of males from grades 8 to 11 reported educator sexual abuse in Shakeshaft, 2004). In terms of age, most reported incidents of institutional CSA in YSOs involve adolescents; usually young teens between 12 and 17 years of age. For example, a review of 244 cases of staff-on-student sexual misconduct reviewed by *Education Week* found that in more than two-thirds of the cases, students were of high-school age—14 years and older (Hendrie, 1998). Studies of female sex offenders often report high percentages of adolescent male victims around the age of 12–13 years, with most victims being between 12 and 17 years of age (Fazel, Sjøstedt, Grann, & Langstrom, 2010; Vandiver & Kercher, 2004). A study of Canadian teachers found that 60% of victims were 12 years and older (Moulden, Firestone, Kingston, & Wexler, 2010). In the John Jay study of clergy abuse, the most common age of victims was about 12 years old; over 40% of all victims were males between the ages of 11 and 14 (Terry & Freilich, 2012).

What makes young adolescents so vulnerable to sexual exploitation? For both boys and girls, the biological and physical changes of puberty lead to a flood of emotions, most noticeably a new interest in romantic relationships and sex (Wurtele & Kenny, 2011). These changes signal to the youths and others that they are becoming sexually mature. Adults who are attracted to young developing bodies notice these changes too. Like their bodies, teen brains are undergoing major remodeling, especially in the prefrontal cortex, the area of the brain responsible for "executive functioning" (resisting impulses, planning ahead, problem solving, and weighing consequences) (Powell, 2006; Steinberg, 2011). During adolescence, the prefrontal cortex is in constant battle with the over-active limbic system, the part of the brain that controls the raw emotions, including sex drive and sensation seeking. Thus, teenagers' impulses and emotions develop several years before their abilities to control them. Adolescents are also exploring their sexual identities, which brings a new interest in romantic relationships and sex. Unfortunately, some adults take advantage of teens' sexual curiosity and struggles about sexual identity, and exploit their normal needs for independence, intimacy, and romantic connections (Wurtele, 2012).

Although all minors are vulnerable to sexual exploitation, certain youth appear to be at greater risk for victimization by staff. These

include children who have been previously victimized, youth with low self-esteem or self-confidence, who live in single-parent homes (especially boys without father figures), lack strong relationships with parents and peers, along with sexual minority youth. Young people with disabilities (mental and physical) are also at greater risk for sexual abuse in institutions, particularly youth with speech and language disabilities, serious emotional disturbances, or intellectual impairments including mental retardation (Jones et al., 2012; McEachern, 2012; Sullivan & Knutson, 2000).

1.3. Description of offenders

Authority figures can include members of the clergy (including youth ministers), medical or mental health professionals, coaches, teachers, administrators, youth workers, and employers. Sex offenders typically offend alone, and males are predominantly the perpetrators, except in schools and detention facilities. Shakeshaft (2004) reported that females comprised 43% of the cases of educator sexual misconduct, consistent with well-publicized media reports of female teachers sexually abusing their (mostly adolescent) male students. In juvenile correctional facilities, approximately 95% of youth who reported being sexually abused identified female correctional staff as the perpetrators, despite the fact that females made up only 42% of facility staff (Beck et al., 2010).

In the vast majority of institutional abuse cases, offenders obtain a trusted role or position where they have access to and power and control over vulnerable children. They then misuse their power, authority, and trust to sexually exploit their victims. Some abusers purposefully choose their work to gain unsupervised access to children. Sullivan and Beech (2002, 2004) refer to these offenders as “professional perpetrators”—adults who join a YSO to select, groom, and sexually abuse children. Many of the male offenders in Colton, Roberts, and Vanstone (2010) reported purposely joining youth-serving organizations and activities to access child victims. The “professional perpetrator” label suggests that offenders are sexually attracted to youth, either as pedophiles (sexually attracted to pre-pubescent children) or hebephiles (sexually attracted to pubescent youth). Certainly some cases of institutional abuse are committed by “professional perpetrators,” but this category is likely to be small. For example, as reported in the John Jay study of 4392 abusive priests, only 2% committed behavior consistent with pedophilia and 10% consistent with hebephilia (Terry & Ackerman, 2008). Rather than transgress with intention and premeditation, many others appear to make bad judgments and fall into sexual relationships (or slip down the *slippery slope* of boundary violations; Simon, 1995), especially when they work in settings where there are opportunities for unguarded access to youth along with the absence of effective risk-management strategies. Staff sexual misconduct (SSM) of youth most likely occurs when there is the combination of adults who: 1) may be having personal or professional troubles and in need of intimate contact; 2) work with adoring and often needy adolescents exploring their own sexuality; and 3) work in organizations where there are opportunities for adults to commit sexual boundary violations with youth.

2. Implications for preventing sexual exploitation of minors in YSOs

In the public health field, consensus has emerged that the etiology of many public health problems arise from multiple levels, and that preventive interventions focused on a single level of influence are limited (Wandersman & Florin, 2003). Increasingly, prevention is adopting Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, which promotes intervening at the individual, relationship, community, and societal (macrosystem) levels (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Zielinski & Bradshaw, 2006). Applying this heuristic to institutional CSA, preventing the sexual exploitation of youth in organizations can be done by educating

multiple targets—youth, their parents, and all staff members, and targeting multiple ecological levels by changing an organization's culture along with implementing risk-management policies and procedures, influencing legislation at state and national levels, along with creating national initiatives to ensure that youth are safe from sexual exploitation in YSOs.

2.1. State and national initiatives

2.1.1. Criminalizing SSM of youth

All states have child abuse legislation, but state laws pertaining to child sexual abuse by staff in YSOs vary widely—from the legal age of consensual sex to the definition of the crime. For example, sex is legal in Massachusetts between a student and teacher as long as the student is at least 16 (Most, 2006). One recent trend is for states to set a higher age of consent if the abuser is in a position of authority over the young person, such as being a teacher, manager, or parent. Over 30 U.S. states have statutes criminalizing sexual relations between minors and adults serving in positions of authority (Weiss, 2002). For example, Alabama's State Legislature recently passed Act 2010-497 making it a crime for any school employee to have any sexual relations with a student under the age of 19 (Alabama Statutes, 2010). Most statutes mention the general category of “anyone serving as authority or position of authority” (Alaska) or “position of trust” (Colorado); a minority mention specific positions to which the statute applies. For example, in Connecticut, where the general age of consent is 16, age of consent becomes 18 if the other person is a guardian, athletic coach or intensive instructor outside of a school setting, or where one person's professional, legal, occupational, or volunteer status gives him/her a role of supervision, power, or authority over the minor. Of the states that list occupations included in the “position of authority” category, the majority include school employees. Connecticut, Kentucky, and Ohio include comprehensive lists of persons in authority, including teachers, school administrators, coaches, mental health service providers, correctional personnel, clerics, and leaders of scouting troops. Clearly, all state legislatures should recognize position of authority in their child abuse statutes. And unlike laws governing sexual offenses in the U. S., which often reflect a gender bias that females cannot perpetrate the crime of rape (Denov, 2003), these “position of authority” statutes must remain gender neutral.

Youth detained in correctional facilities have many more protections from SSM. Following the passage of the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) in 2003, all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories of Puerto Rico and Guam have developed and passed laws criminalizing staff sexual misconduct in correctional facilities (Abner, Browning, & Clark, 2009). However, seven states (Oregon, Nevada, Missouri, Mississippi, Vermont, Rhode Island and South Carolina) do not cover juvenile justice agencies or their staff under staff sexual misconduct laws (Smith & Yarussi, 2012).

2.1.2. National plans and federal support

The United States lacks a comprehensive national plan or act to prevent CSA in general, let alone institutional CSA. No law or act requires YSOs to employ screening measures, follow national standards for child protection, develop policies to prevent institutional sexual abuse, or mandate youth and staff education about SSM. In terms of acts, Congress has twice passed the PROTECT Our Children Act, once in 2003 and again in 2008 (SB 1738). Both bills task the Department of Justice with focusing on Internet crimes against children. The purpose of the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act (PL 109-248), signed into law on July 27, 2006, was to protect children from sexual exploitation and violent crime. The Walsh Act created an online national sex offender registry and increased the penalties for kidnapping, sexually assaulting, and prostituting children. The proposed “Protect our Kids Act of 2011” (SB 1984) focuses on reducing fatalities resulting from child abuse and neglect. Similarly, two national plans have been published by The National Coalition to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (2012) (www.nccsa.org).

preventtogether.org). The second *National Plan to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation* addresses six targets (Research; Public Awareness; End the Demand; Policies and Organizational Practices; Collaborative Practices; Funding) and suggests action steps to accomplish these goals. Although these targets and goals are reasonable, without federal endorsement and support this plan may not come to fruition.

Even though there are centers and associations devoted to the prevention of CSA (e.g., National Child Protection Training Center at www.ncptc.org; the Enough Abuse Campaign at www.enoughabuse.org), none specifically targets institutional CSA. A national center or clearinghouse could establish national safety standards for YSOs, conduct background screening checks on all staff and volunteers, maintain a database containing names of adults accused of or resigning from YSOs due to sexual misconduct, provide for data collection and information dissemination on the incidence of institutional CSA as well as identify the risk factors that contribute to this victimization, and provide much-needed leadership, resources, technical assistance, and training to assist YSOs in preventing this crime against youth. At a time when national attention and resources are focused on staff sexual misconduct, federal support is necessary because state, local, and agency funding is sorely limited.

3. Organizational factors contributing to sexual boundary violations

Staff sexual misconduct does not happen in all YSOs. From a situational crime perspective, there are certain characteristics of an organization that can increase the risks of staff committing sexual crimes against youth (see also Smallbone, Marshall, & Wortley, 2008). These risks can include the physical condition of the facility (e.g., classrooms with no windows; offices with doors lacking windows; no security cameras in high-risk areas). A less visible but potentially more dangerous risk factor is an agency's culture.

3.1. Agency culture

An agency's culture is the sum of an organization's attitudes, values, norms, beliefs, prejudices, history, personalities and ethics of its staff (Smith & Yarussi, 2012). It is the way an agency does business, as described in the mission statement and policies and procedures, along with its character. As noted by Gula (2010), an organization's character is reflected through staff-to-staff and staff-to-youth relations, language, dress, hiring processes, and most important for the topic of children's sexual safety in YSOs, the decision-making processes. Far too many children have been sexually exploited in YSOs that lacked transparent and shared responsibility for decision making; where leaders made decisions secretly and internally, and where the emphasis was on protecting the institution's reputation over the safety and welfare of the children.

In reference to the Catholic clergy abuse scandal, Bishop Robinson (2011) asserted that the Catholic culture contains some unhealthy features that made the sexual abuse of minors easier to occur. Included is the fact that all power in the Church is in the hands of clerics (deacons, priests, bishops and the Pope); women and laity (non-clerics) have had no voice in articulating the Church's doctrine, morals, or law, or in protecting youth. His analysis of the patriarchal and hierarchical system explains the secrecy and silence that concealed many internal decisions (like not alerting authorities, but instead sending offending priests to treatment or to another parish). The Church's culture of obsessive secrecy and long-entrenched need to protect the reputation and image of the institution along with the need to avoid "scandal" have also been powerful factors in the mishandling of abusive clergy. "The horrible irony was that in protecting the faithful from scandal by concealing evidence of abusive priests and by shuffling them between parishes, many American bishops helped to create the greatest scandal in the history of the Church in this country" (Martin, 2007, p. 142).

Protecting the reputation and image of an institution was also operating when Penn State officials covered up allegations that Sandusky had sexually assaulted the young boys involved in his Second Mile charity. Shortly after Sandusky had been convicted of 45 counts of sexually abusing 10 boys, an independent investigation into the scandal documented how Penn State officials buried child sexual abuse allegations against Sandusky for 14 years to avoid bad publicity for the university. The Freeh Report (2012) highlighted how Penn State leaders favored protecting themselves and their institution with its "football-first" culture. Indeed, "the most saddening finding...is the total and consistent disregard by the most senior leaders at Penn State for the safety and welfare of Sandusky's child victims" (p. 14). The report described a "culture that permitted Sandusky's behavior...[including] an over-emphasis on 'the Penn State Way' as an approach to decision making, a resistance to seeking outside perspectives, and an excessive focus on athletics" (p. 129). As noted by Plante (2012), institutions who are caught in these kinds of scandals almost always work first to protect their good name and reputation before contacting law enforcement or attending to the needs of the victims.

In reference to a prison environment, Faulkner and Regehr (2011) reviewed organizational factors contributing to sexual boundary violations by female corrections staff, including the masculinized prison setting where female officers felt rejected and disrespected by their male colleagues and accepted by their victims, the male juveniles. Staff and inmates in correctional facilities often adhere to "the code of silence," where a person (staff or juvenile) withholds vital or important information (like reporting sexual misconduct), to avoid being branded as a traitor or snitch (English, Heil, & Dumond, 2010; Smith & Yarussi, 2012). School districts have also been accused of maintaining a "culture of silence" to hide teacher misconduct, as alleged in the criminal case against former teacher Mark Berndt of Miramonte Elementary school in Los Angeles (Martinez, Brunell, & Hurtado, 2012). A culture of silence occurs when a condition is known to exist, but by unspoken consensus is not talked about or acknowledged, and leaders collude not to address the problem. A culture of silence is maintained when administrators silently move teachers who are accused of sexual abuse from school district to school district (dubbed "passing the trash"; Schemo, 2002), when the Boy Scouts keep their "perversion files" (containing details about sexually abusive troop leaders and volunteers) secret (Yardley, 2010), or when bishops transfer offending priests to another parish (Berry, 1992). Ideally, YSOs replace a code of silence with a code of transparency and shared responsibility for children's welfare.

The Texas Youth Commission (2009) teaches correctional staff about another cultural characteristic predictive of SSM—a "sexualized work environment," defined as one in which the behaviors, dress, and speech of either staff and/or youth create a sexually-charged workplace. Indicators of a sexualized work environment include suggestive materials (e.g., sexualized calendars, cartoons, or emails of a sexual nature), talk containing sexual overtones, flirting, wearing revealing clothing, or teasing youth about their appearance or sexual orientation. Roush (2008) also includes use of profanity by staff and unnecessary or excessive monitoring of showers and toilet areas as additional red flags indicating a sexualized environment. In a sexualized environment, the professional boundaries between staff and youth are significantly eroded, leading to a suspension of ethics, which in turn, creates opportunities for SSM to occur.

3.1.1. Culture of zero tolerance

All YSOs should have zero tolerance for any form of abuse of youth, whether it is emotional, physical, or sexual. Achieving a culture of zero tolerance must be an agency-wide initiative that requires the efforts of adults at all levels and in all positions, paid or unpaid. The agency must have a clear declaration that all sexual interactions between staff members and youth are forbidden, wrong, and illegal. Some YSOs stress zero tolerance of sexual abuse, whereas others have broader strategies to eliminate all inappropriate sexual conduct (including jokes, inappropriate dress, and sexual innuendos).

4. Risk-management strategies to prevent SSM of youth

4.1. Screening

One obvious prevention strategy is to screen out potential perpetrators from obtaining positions in institutional settings. When done properly, the recruitment and screening processes offer the greatest opportunity to attract the best staff and volunteers for the job. Effective screening also has the potential to identify people who are unsuitable or who have intentions to sexually abuse children. One tool for identifying unsuitable applicants is a criminal background check. Criminal checks will identify applicants who have committed serious crimes, along with lesser crimes potentially increasing the risk for sexual exploitation of youth (e.g., crimes of a sexual nature, involving force or controlled substances, or cruelty to animals). In addition to checking criminal records, applicants' names can also be checked against the state's Sex Offender Registry (SOR), and can also be submitted to the state's Child Protective Services to search for founded allegations of abuse. As pointed out in the *Boston Magazine* exposé on teacher sexual misconduct cases, checking the state's criminal history system is not enough, as a state's system will only flag arrests in that state (Most, 2006). Only the FBI's Criminal Justice Information Services Division searches fingerprint records in all states.

Although all YSOs should conduct criminal background checks on all individuals, paid or unpaid, few of the sports organizations surveyed by Parent and Demers (2011) fully vetted their coaches, and another survey of 517 nonprofit organizations found that 12% of organizations did not screen volunteers at all (Webster & Whitman, 2008). Reasons for not screening volunteers included beliefs that screening is not useful, costs too much, and that it would offend potential volunteers. Many organizations struggle with the resources and knowledge necessary to conduct duly diligent background checks on their potential employees and volunteers, particularly organizations with large numbers of volunteers. According to the National Council of Youth Sports (www.ncys.org), over 7 million adults volunteer in youth sports, including 2.5 million coaches. Some organizations hire the services of risk-management companies that fully manage the process (e.g., National Center for Safety Initiatives; Praesidium, Inc.; VIRTUS). As suggested above, having a national background check data bank would facilitate this important step in the screening process.

It must be noted that criminal history record checks will not identify most sexual offenders because the majority of people who commit sexual offenses do not get caught, let alone convicted. For example, Smallbone et al. (2008) cite a study which found that more than three-quarters of a sample of CSA offenders did not have previous sexual offense convictions. Abel et al. (2012) claim that less than 1% of men and women who sexually abuse children have criminal records. In addition, criminal background checks will not uncover personality disorders, termination from YSOs for questionable behavior, or indications of sexual interest in children. Although criminal checks are not the sole answer to identify applicants who may present a risk to the children served by organizations, they can act as a deterrent to certain offenders (Kendrick & Taylor, 2000). From a liability standpoint, criminal background and SOR checks are essential to include, because YSOs can be found liable for harm caused by unchecked staff and could be subject to civil suits and rising insurance costs should an unchecked staff member with a previous history of sexual offenses subsequently abuse a child.

In addition to criminal background screening, Wurtele and Kenny (2012) recommend searching the Internet to find additional relevant information about applicants. Informal Internet searches of an applicant may reveal legal involvement or news stories related to sexual (or non-sexual) crimes. Checking an applicant's social media site (e.g., Facebook page) could also be informative. Additional methods for screening staff include utilizing a thorough written application form asking about candidate's experiences and interests, asking applicants if they have ever been convicted of a misdemeanor or

felony, accused of sexual misconduct, or resigned or dismissed from a youth-serving position due to complaint(s) of sexual abuse of a minor. Other important screening steps include conducting reference checks as well as administering personality tests or instruments assessing potential for abusing children.

Unfortunately, there is a dearth of reliable and valid instruments to assess potential for sexually abusing youth. Expensive and intrusive physiological measures like phallometry or polygraph testing are not options. For ethical and pragmatic reasons, questionnaires are better alternatives. Although the *Exploitation Index* (Epstein & Simon, 1990) and the *Boundary Violation Index* (Swiggart, Feurer, Samenow, Delmonico, & Spickard, 2008) are useful instruments to assess attitudes, thoughts, and behaviors of physicians and therapists at risk of sexual misconduct with adult patients, they would be of limited use with non-professional staff working with youth. Objective personality testing (e.g., using the MMPI-2; MCMI-III; 16-PF; SCID II) can provide information about personality features frequently associated with sex offenders. Assessing behavior patterns associated with narcissistic personality disorder (charming and proficient manipulators, compromised capacity for introspection and empathy, sense of entitlement that facilitates exploiting others) could prove useful, as this is a common personality characteristic of sexual offenders (Stinson, Sales, & Becker, 2008) and of professionals who commit sexual boundary violations (Celenza & Gabbard, 2007). However, the cost and need for trained administrators may limit the utility of these instruments. The *Screening Scale for Pedophilic Interests* (Seto & Lalumière, 2001) has shown to be useful as a way to detect pedophilic sexual interests (Seto, Murphy, Page, & Ennis, 2003), but it requires previous offending behavior to be scored. Abel et al. (2012) have recently developed the Diana Screen® to identify men and women who are a sexual risk to children. It measures both a test taker's understanding of appropriate adult/child sexual boundaries and the probability that a test taker has had sexual contact with a child or teenager (www.DianaScreen.com). Celenza (2007) developed the *Boundary Violations Vulnerability Index*, a 45-item instrument designed to assess presence or absence of several long-standing, potential precursors of vulnerability to sexual boundary violations. No prospective studies have been performed on any of these screening measures to date.

Best-practice guidelines for screening also recommend conducting in-depth personal interviews to look for risk factors or "red flags" suggesting a potential vulnerability to sexually exploiting youth (e.g., applicant asks to work with a child of specific age/gender; has hobbies and activities that are appealing to children; reports substance abuse/addiction or impulse control problems; admits acquiring or intentionally viewing child pornography). As a history of childhood sexual abuse has been found among professionals who have committed sexual boundary violations (e.g., Jackson & Nuttall, 2001), applicants should be asked about this risk factor. In addition, Leclerc, Proulx, and McKibben (2005) suggest asking candidates about their motives for working with children and previous work experiences with children, and assessing how candidates spend their leisure time (e.g., Is leisure time spent with children instead of adults? Are break times spent with children instead of mingling with other employees?). These types of questions will help the agency determine if applicants have mature, adult relationships. In the guidebook, *Preventing Child Sexual Abuse Within Youth-serving Organizations*, Saul and Audage (2007) suggest that interviewers describe possible scenarios that involve personal boundary issues or youth protection policy violations in order to gauge whether applicants have clear boundaries and ethical standards for their conduct with youth. These authors also recommend informing applicants about an organization's policies and procedures relevant to CSA prevention. Likewise, Finkelhor (2008) urges organizations to do "foreground checks," meaning that the topic of child protection be brought to the "fore" in recruitment and hiring. Saul, Patterson, and Audage (2010) also recommend requiring an applicant to sign a document that describes the agency's commitment to protecting children

and its expectation that all employees and volunteers will abide by this policy. By emphasizing child protection it sends a very clear message: children in this organization are off limits to sexual abusers (Wurtele & Berkower, 2010).

4.2. Youth protection policies

In addition to implementing stringent screening procedures, each YSO should develop a youth protection policy; a statement of the agency's commitment to youth safety. It outlines the strategies the agency uses to guide decisions and actions on youth protection matters. For example, organizations need to establish policies and procedures to reduce or eliminate high-risk situations to minimize sexual exploitation of youth within their institutions. As we learned from the sexual abuse crisis in the Catholic Church, any institution that allows frequent and unsupervised adult contact with children will result in a certain percentage of adults violating this trust by sexually exploiting youth (Plante, 2012). Youth-serving institutions must create safe environments so that sexual abuse of children is extremely difficult if not impossible to do. One risk-management strategy to prevent CSA in institutions is to restrict or minimize opportunities for staff to be alone with youth, since the sexual victimization of a child requires privacy (Wurtele & Berkower, 2010).

Some organizations have a policy limiting one-on-one interactions between youth and adults. For example, Boy Scouts of America (BSA) has a “two-deep leadership” policy, which requires that at least two adults supervise all scouting activities (BSA Youth Protection, n.d.). BSA requires separate sleeping and showering accommodations for youth and adults, and encourages parents and other guardians to attend all scouting activities. Another high-risk situation is when staff has contact with youth outside the context of the program. Organizations can set a policy limiting contact between staff and youth to organization-sanctioned activities and programs (Wurtele & Kenny, 2012). For example, coaches should not be permitted to go on trips alone with athletes, stay together in hotel rooms, or shower with athletes. Nor should a teacher be permitted to be alone with a student in a classroom with closed door or covered windows, or after school hours. Church personnel should never provide overnight accommodations in rectories or other personal residences for minors or go on vacations or overnight trips with minors, unless children are accompanied by parents or guardians. Some organizations require that any contact with a youth outside of organization-sponsored events must be with the knowledge and consent of the parents, and with approval from supervisors at the agency. Other institutions place surveillance cameras in strategic locations, ensure adequate staff–child ratios, and provide direct supervision, as used in juvenile detention centers.

4.3. Monitoring and supervision

Far too many cases of SSM occur when staff members work in isolation without any oversight or accountability. According to Gula (2010), “the lack of ongoing supervision is one of the most serious structural features that makes sexual boundary violations likely.” (p. 187). Every YSO should ensure all staff members receive adequate monitoring, supervision, and evaluation through documented performance reviews. Astute supervisors maintain close scrutiny of staff–youth relationships and pay attention to rumors, gossip, or indirect complaints to identify warning signs of potential problems. By ensuring that all youth workers receive regular supervision and evaluation, an agency is better able to recognize potential issues early on, and possibly prevent the sexual exploitation of a minor. YSOs that provide one-on-one mentoring to children require considerably more monitoring and supervision of its volunteers. For example, to maximize the safety of the roughly 210,000 children it serves, Big Brothers Big Sisters requires the mentor, mentee and parent or guardian to meet at least once a month with a professional staff member (AP, 2012).

4.4. Electronic communication and social media policies

The majority of American teens own cell phones (87% of teens ages 14–17; Lenhart, 2012) and they use these mobile devices to communicate frequently with people in their lives. This Internet generation also spends a great deal of time online, connecting with friends on social media sites (e.g., 80% of American teenagers are on Facebook; Dale, 2012). Although no study has documented the extent to which offenders are using electronic communication to groom youth (i.e., e-grooming), media reports and headlines around the country (see Preston, 2011) suggest that private electronic communications are facilitating the grooming process between adults in YSOs and teenagers. “Cells, texting give predators secret path to kids” by CNN writer Oglesby (2008) and “Sex abuse in schools: prosecutors say manipulation often begins with a text or email” by staff writers Layton and Diskin (2012) are two of the many headlines describing this alarming trend. Digital communications provide 24/7 access to and privacy with youth. Offenders groom youth through social networking sites, call or text adolescents via cell phones, and e-mail sexually explicit photos or videos, like when Lauren Tilo, an assistant principal of a Florida high school, sent a cell phone picture of her breasts to a 14-year-old boy (Michael, 2010).

Recognizing that youth are vulnerable to e-grooming, YSOs must develop and implement responsible-use-of-technology policies, outlining the acceptable and unacceptable uses of digital devices and electronic communications with youth, including guidelines for communicating with youth on social networking sites. For example, the New York City Department of Education released a social media policy in April, 2012, banning student–teacher Facebook friendships. However, the guidelines do not address cell phones and text messaging between teachers and students, which have been more widespread and problematic (Chen & McGeehan, 2012). The Board of Education in Paramus, New Jersey, set stricter restrictions on employee use of social networks and cell phones, including a prohibition against teachers giving out cell phone numbers to students or calling students under the age of 18 on their cell phones without the authorization of a parent. Staff and youth must also be educated about the appropriate use of cameras, to avoid sex abuse scandals like the USA Swimming coaches who secretly taped dozens of teen swimmers showering and changing clothes (Chuchmach & Patel, 2010). Boy Scouts of America specifically prohibits using any device capable of recording or transmitting visual images in showers, restrooms, or other areas where privacy is expected by participants, and also prohibits “sexting”—sending sexually explicit photos or videos by cell phone or webcams.

4.5. Code of conduct

Every YSO should develop a code of conduct (sometimes called a Code of Ethics). The purpose of a code of conduct is to describe how adults should always maintain professional relationships with youth, both in and outside the agency. It is a straight-forward guide of do's and don'ts to assist staff and volunteers to conduct their work professionally and effectively. It lets everyone know what behaviors are acceptable and unacceptable within that organization. Once developed, all staff of the YSO should sign a document agreeing to abide by the provisions contained in the code.

Codes of conduct have been established in some schools (e.g., Ohio State Board of Education adopted a Licensure Code of Professional Conduct in 2008) and in several religious associations (e.g., The Diocese of Worcester adopted a Code of Ministerial Conduct in 2004; see www.worcesterdiocese.org; also, Unitarian Universalist Association at www.uua.org). Although several standards of practice for preventing sexual abuse of children in sport are available in Europe and Canada (e.g., *Child Protection in Sport Unit*, 2003; *Irish Sports Council*, 2000; *Play By The Rules*, 2011), fewer are available in the U. S. (e.g., *USA Gymnastics*, 2009). Also in the U.S., the National Council of Youth Sports has available (for purchase at www.ncys.org) Code

of Conduct Template which “offers general principles to guide the conduct of all the organization’s participants to safeguard the best interests of the sport by acting ethically at all times.” In general, sports organizations and schools have lagged behind faith-based institutions in developing and implementing this type of prevention strategy. In Parent and Demers (2011) survey of youth sports organizations, codes of conduct were rare and when one such code existed, it did not require the coach’s signature and no disciplinary action was attached to it.

A number of professional licensing bodies have established ethical codes or standards prohibiting medical and mental health professionals from engaging in sexual intimacies with their patients or clients (e.g., American Counseling Association; American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy; National Association of Social Workers; American Psychological Association; American Psychiatric Association). In the licensed professions such as psychology, social work, medicine, and law, codes of professional ethics serve three essential purposes: to ensure high standards of practice, to protect the public (by guarding clients from exploitative therapists), and to guide practitioners in their decision making (Barrett, Casey, Visser, & Headley, 2012). Unfortunately, there is no systematic code of ethics used in training faith leaders (www.boundaries-for-effective-ministry.org), nor is there a formal code of conduct for coaches or teachers (Barrett et al., 2012).

4.6. CSA education for staff, parents, and youth

Education is the cornerstone of preventing CSA and sexual boundary violations by YSO staff members. A handful of organizations have developed comprehensive strategies to inform their staff, parents, and youth about ways to prevent CSA. For example, one of the requirements mandated by the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* (U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2002) was that all employees, volunteers, and customers (including parents and children) of Catholic services be adequately trained in policies, procedures, and information about keeping children safe from sexual exploitation. Similarly, Boy Scouts of America (BSA) mandates that all leaders and registered volunteers complete youth protection training when they join the Scouts and repeat the training every two years. In addition, every parent completing a youth membership form acknowledges awareness of the BSA’s Youth Protection policies and affirms their intention to review the book, “*How to Protect your Children from Child Abuse: A Parent’s Guide*,” which is included in every Cub Scout and Boy Scout handbook (www.scouting.org). BSA youth members are also taught personal safety awareness skills, including the “three R’s” of prevention (Wurtele, 2009): recognize, resist, and report. Scouts must take youth protection training periodically as a requirement for rank advancement.

Although all youth and parents should be educated about personal safety and boundaries, unfortunately few YSOs provide comprehensive training like the notable examples mentioned above. Yet parents desire such information. Several surveys have shown that the majority of parents strongly support having their children educated about CSA and that most parents are receptive to learning ways to discuss the topic with their children and learning strategies to keep their youth off limits from sexual abusers (Deblinger, Thakkar-Kolar, Berry, & Schroeder, 2010; Walsh, Brandon, & Chirio, 2012; Wurtele & Kenny, 2010a). In addition, all youth should be provided with general information about CSA, including what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate interactions (both online and offline) with adults, stressing the need to protect their personal boundaries. Youth need to know that no one (even trusted adults in the YSO) has the right to ask, force, trick, or coerce them into sexual activities, and that sexual offenders, not their victims, are at fault (see content reviews by Wurtele, 2008; Wurtele & Kenny, 2010a, 2010b). Instruction should stress the importance of reporting sexual abuse, and explain the

steps to follow in reporting abuse (their own or their peers). Knowing how to respond to a peer’s disclosure is particularly important, given that adolescents are more likely to disclose victimization to a peer than an adult (Kogan, 2004).

4.7. Staff development training programs

Although describing medical education, Plaut’s (2008) concern that “we are not preparing our students well enough for such boundary challenges” (p. 85) is applicable to any area of professional education. Others have likewise noted the need for pre-service education and ethical training to address boundary violations and how to prevent them (Ashby & Hepokoski, 2002; Keenan, 2005; Roush, 2008). However, developing pre-service ethics courses in higher education will not eliminate the problem of sexual misconduct of YSO staff. Many staff and volunteers in YSOs lack college education in general or pre-service professional preparation in specific. For example, the vast majority of youth sport programs in the U. S. rely primarily on parent volunteers to serve as coaches (Wiersma & Sherman, 2005). Most of these volunteer coaches have no formal training in ethically sound coaching practices. Heavy reliance on non-professional volunteers is also characteristic of youth clubs, mentoring programs, and scouting.

Thus, once selected for positions in YSOs, it is critical that in-service training programs be offered to inform all employees and volunteers about institutional CSA. These trainings can give all adults a heightened awareness of an organization’s commitment to youth safety and intolerance of sexual misconduct. Training objectives should include understanding the complex dynamics of child sexual abuse and how youth are harmed by sexual exploitation, recognizing signs that a youth is being sexually abused, responding sensitively to a victim’s disclosure, understanding the agency’s zero-tolerance policies and consequences, and knowing the agency’s reporting policies and state laws. Everyone working with children must be aware of their ethical and legal duty to report any reasonable suspicions of CSA to a designated state agency or to law enforcement. Education in the identification and reporting of CSA is available at both the pre-professional and in-service levels for early childhood educators, teachers, school counselors, and medical professionals (Bryant, 2009; Bryant & Baldwin, 2010; Cavanagh, Read, & New, 2004; Hinkelman & Bruno, 2008; McKee & Dillenburger, 2009; Smith, 2010; Walsh, Bridgstock, Farrell, Rassafiani, & Schweitzer, 2008). Online educational programs hold promise for their ease of implementation and low cost to agencies. Kenny (2007) evaluated a Web-based tutorial on child maltreatment reporting and found it to be an effective way to enhance counseling students’ knowledge about mandated reporting.

Speaking out by identifying and reporting is important, but focusing on reporting will not prevent children from being abused in the first place (i.e., primary prevention). *Darkness to Light* (2004) *Stewards of Children* program teaches child care professionals to take responsibility not only for recognizing and reporting, but also for preventing CSA. The program is available both in-person and online (at a cost of \$10). Topics include: 1) prevalence rates, risks, and consequences of CSA; 2) ways to minimize opportunities for CSA to occur; 3) talking about CSA with adults and children; 4) recognizing signs and symptoms of CSA; 5) responding to a child’s disclosure; 6) acting on suspicions and using intuition; and 7) getting others involved in preventing CSA. Rheingold, Zajac, and Patton (2012) have conducted studies showing the program’s promise for efficacy and have also compared different formats, both in-person and Web-based.

5. Sexual boundary education

5.1. Need for boundary violations training

A missing component of most staff-training courses is sexual misconduct education, including a focus on professional boundaries in

general and sexual boundary violations in particular. Any YSO staff member who has an opportunity to develop close connections with youth needs to be prepared for this type of occupational hazard. For example, Fibkins (2006) emphasizes training teachers to prepare them for personal contact with their students, given the fact “that every teacher, given the right combination of personal and professional circumstances, is at risk for sexual misconduct” (p. 19). Similarly, in the introduction to her book on sexual boundary violations committed by teachers, therapists, and clergy, Celenza (2007) reminds the reader that “we are all vulnerable to this type of transgression” (p. xxiii). YSO staff who work in close contact with youth must be educated about professional boundaries, how to avoid boundary-crossing relationships with youth, how to recognize when they or other staff are becoming too emotionally involved with or sexually attracted to a student/mentee/client, and how to intervene to prevent sexual boundary violations and protect youth. Ethical principles underlying the care of youth should be discussed, including:

- knowing the difference between personal and professional boundaries,
- recognizing power dynamics (i.e., the power differential of the adult-youth relationship),
- understanding the need to avoid sexual boundary violations,
- understanding the serious harm resulting from sexual boundary violations,
- knowing what constitutes staff sexual misconduct,
- avoiding behaviors that may be misinterpreted as sexual misconduct,
- recognizing the red flags (warning signs) in themselves or others of potential boundary violations, and
- acknowledging the barriers that make intervening difficult.

5.2. Professional boundaries in YSOs

All relationships, personal and professional, have boundaries which function to define roles and set limits or parameters on how we relate to each other. Boundaries vary according to the type of relationship. For example, in a healthy friendship, friends choose each other, the relationship is equitable (both friends meet each other's needs), there is mutual intimacy (increasingly intimate, emotional sharing), individuals are comparable in terms of power and status, and each party shares responsibility for establishing and maintaining boundaries. In contrast, institutional staff–youth relationships lack such reciprocity and mutuality. Instead, young people depend upon adult staff for their skills, knowledge, guidance, and advice. In these fiduciary relationships (i.e., relationships in which one person has an obligation to provide a service to another; Gutheil & Simon, 2002) or when an individual or institution is functioning *in loco parentis* (in the place of a parent), it is incumbent upon the professional not to exploit this trust and dependency for personal gain. Also unlike friendships, professional relationships are characterized by an imbalance of power and status, especially when adults are in positions of authority over youth. Given the considerable power differential between a staff member and a youth, healthy professional relationships in YSOs require that boundaries be more rigid, and are set and maintained by the one who holds the greater power—the youth worker.

What gives staff members in YSOs power? There are personal sources of power: age, gender, size, reputation, personality, professional expertise and knowledge, or competence. Professionals may have resources that they bring to the relationship (e.g., giving grades; writing letters of recommendation; granting privileges). “The kinds of things Sandusky was offering those boys is every boy's dream—trips to bowl games, going down on the field” (Zinser, 2011). Authority figures in YSOs have considerable influence over youth since they are often seen as parental figures, especially youth coaches (Stirling & Kerr, 2009).

Doyle (2011) describes how Catholic children trust and rarely question the authority of a religious leader, particularly a priest, who is viewed “not only as a representative of God but as God” (p. 173). Power also comes through official appointments (Gula, 2010). When some form of public validation legitimates personal power, we speak of that person as having “authority.” Thus, when a person is installed, credentialed, licensed, ordained, or hired for a position in a YSO, the community recognizes that person as having the authority and power to act on the youth's behalf.

5.3. Types of sexual boundary violations

It is critical that all YSO personnel know and understand the boundaries of appropriate behavior and be clear on the need to avoid violating those boundaries. A boundary violation is an action which penetrates the physical, emotional, and/or behavioral boundaries of another person. There are many types of boundary violations, with the most egregious form being sexual boundary transgressions. Sexual boundary violations may occur in many ways and across different types of boundaries (see Table 1 for examples).

Youth workers can cross *emotional boundaries* by treating the relationship with a child as if it was a romantic or intimate adult relationship. Emotional boundary violations might include giving and receiving gifts of a personal nature, getting over-involved in a youth's personal life, sharing secrets, or spending too much time together alone, like meeting students during out-of-school hours and away from the school grounds. Treating a minor like an equal or adult can also be seen as violating emotional boundaries. Examples of these violations would include allowing a minor to do things against parents' wishes, providing cigarettes, alcohol or drugs to minors, or showing minors pornography.

Communication boundaries involve what a staff member says to youth. Conversations might be sexually-oriented, for example, commenting on the youth's physique, appearance, or developing body (e.g., “You look really hot in those jeans”), teaching about sex, disclosing or eliciting intimate and personal details about one's sexual experiences or activities, telling off-color jokes, or making sexual remarks about a youth. Inappropriate use of self-disclosure (disclosing personal, intimate knowledge about themselves) is another way communication and emotional boundaries can be crossed. In therapy, inappropriate self-disclosure by a therapist is a common precursor to boundary violations (Faulkner & Regehr, 2011). Professional boundaries need to be maintained in all forms of communication, including electronic communication (e.g., text messaging, cell phone usage) and online social media (e.g., Twitter; Facebook).

Table 1
Types and examples of sexual boundary violations.

Emotional/personal boundaries
• Spending time alone with a minor (e.g., socializing away from work)
• Giving special or personal gifts to an individual youth
• Excessive calling, text-messaging, or emailing youth about personal issues
• Offering minors cigarettes, alcohol or drugs
• Giving rides to youth without parent permission
• Allowing minors to look at pornography
• Excessive self-disclosure, especially about sexual activities or experiences
Communication boundaries
• Making comments expressing a sexual interest or inviting sexual involvement
• Remarking about a youth's physical attributes or development
• Discussing personal troubles or intimate issues with a youth
• Graphically discussing sexual activities or experiences or allowing others to do so
• Sending emails, text messages, or letters to a minor with sexual messages
Physical boundaries
• Showing unnecessary physical affection in private or public
• Contact with any sexual body part (on or under clothing)
• Kissing on the mouth in a lingering and intimate way
• Photographing or videotaping minors while dressing or showering
• Wrestling, tickling, giving piggyback rides or massages

Physical boundaries are the physical areas surrounding a person (personal space). Staff members with healthy boundaries respect the youth's privacy and personal space and set appropriate limits in terms of physical contact. Guidelines for physical contact depend on the age of the child, the setting, context, and relationship, and are best determined with input from staff. For example, during an in-service workshop with elementary-school teachers in Curaçao, participants struggled with how much contact to have with their young students, recognizing the importance of nurturing touches and physical affection for a child's development while simultaneously respecting children's personal space and wanting to avoid spurious allegations of inappropriate behavior. Following group discussion, the teachers decided that when welcoming their young students at the beginning of the school day, they would give children the option of how they would like to be greeted, choosing from one of the four H's: hugs, high-fives, "hi's", or handshakes (Wurtele, 2010). Asking permission before touching is an acceptable way of showing affection and respect for the child's physical boundaries.

Other agencies list out prohibited behaviors. For example, the *Diocese of Worcester's (2004) Code of Ministerial Conduct* includes the following examples of behaviors church personnel should never engage in with minors: "Inappropriate or lengthy embraces; kisses on the mouth; holding minors on the lap; intentionally touching bottoms, chests, legs or genital areas; showing affection while in an isolated location; wrestling, tickling or giving piggyback rides; or giving massages." Staff must also avoid violating basic privacy rights of youths (e.g., unnecessary, surreptitious, or excessive monitoring of showers and toilet areas).

5.4. Avoiding sexual boundary transgressions

How can staff members be helped to avoid sexual boundary transgressions? Several experts on sexual misconduct advise that focusing one's attention on the client's needs is critical to preventing SSM. According to Ashby and Hepokoski (2002), "a professional relationship exists so that the professional can meet the needs of the person being served by the professional." (p. 86). Newman (2007) explains, "boundary violations occur when you place your needs above the needs of your client and you gain personally and/or professionally at his or her expense" (p. 9). Peterson (1992) observed that most boundary violations happen because professionals "used their greater power in the relationship to cross the boundary and take what they needed from the client" (p. 154).

5.5. Recognizing boundary violations in self and others

Many boundary violations occur because a professional is unaware of his/her own needs, whether for intimacy, affection, acceptance, companionship, belonging, power, rescuing, self-affirmation, or sexual gratification. Staff members benefit from a discussion about how easy it is to look to youth for affection, contact, and support, especially when adults are under stress or emotionally vulnerable (e.g., personal loss, job stress, marital conflict, loneliness). For example, findings from the "Causes and Context" study conducted by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice (2011) showed that priests who sexually abused minors experienced increased stressors from work (e.g., having recently received more responsibilities, such as becoming a pastor). One step toward preventing SSM is for staff members to recognize personal risk factors for exploiting youth. Table 2 lists questions staff can ask themselves to identify both personal risk factors and warning signs or "red flags" of potential sexual boundary violations. Red flags are events, actions, or activities that signal possible boundary transgressions, like developing a "special" relationship with a particular youth (e.g., buying gifts; spending excessive time alone with youth, taking him/her out to lunch), touching the child in questionable or inappropriate ways (e.g., horse-playing, giving massages), conversing about sexual experiences, or communicating with a youth (via cell phone, e-mail, text messages, letters) about

Table 2

Self-assessment checklist for sexual boundary violations.

Adapted from: Abner et al. (2009), Ashby and Hepokoski (2002), Smith and Yarussi (2012).

1. Do I have any experiences or issues in my personal life that might make me vulnerable to crossing boundaries? (e.g., alcohol or drug abuse, loneliness, depression, isolation, survivor of sexual, emotional, or physical abuse)
2. Am I meeting my personal needs outside of my work setting?
3. Have I acknowledged the power differential in my professional role?
4. Do I look forward to seeing a particular youth when I go to work?
5. Do I arrange to spend time alone with a particular youth? (e.g., offer rides; invite to my home; take out to lunch)
6. Have I done anything with a youth that I would not want my family or supervisor to know about?
7. Would I be reluctant to have a co-worker observe my behavior for an entire day?
8. Do I talk about my personal matters with youth?
9. Do I connect with a particular youth via digital devices? (e.g., give my home/cell phone number; include youth as "friends" on Facebook or other internet social network)
10. Do I believe I can ask a youth to do personal favors for me?
11. Do I give a youth special treatment? (e.g., overlook rule violations, grant special privilege; give gifts)
12. Have I ever asked for or received personal advice from a youth?
13. Have I said anything to or done anything with a youth that I would not want tape recorded or videotaped?
14. Do I have thoughts or fantasies of touching a particular youth? Does this extend to planning how I can be alone with that youth?
15. Have I ever insisted on hugging, touching, kissing, tickling, wrestling with, or holding a child even when the child does not want this physical contact?
16. Do I have a feeling of not being able to wait to share good/bad news with a particular youth?
17. Do I think youth are not allowed to say "no" to me, no matter what I ask?
18. Have I ever allowed a youth to talk to me about sexual experiences or sexual fantasies, or to tell sexual jokes in my presence?
19. Have I ever talked to a youth about my sexual experiences or sexual fantasies, or told sexual jokes to a youth?
20. Am I in love with a youth in my YSO? Have I ever made a youth feel like we have a "special" relationship? (e.g., told a youth "I love you")

personal or intimate issues. Instruments described in the screening section (above) can also be used to assist in the self-evaluative process.

A discussion of one's personal needs can segue into the importance of workers maintaining appropriate self-care and living balanced lives that include satisfying relationships and activities outside of the work environment. This discussion can also reinforce the need for staff to seek help and advice from a colleague or supervisor when they become aware of getting too close and potentially trespassing safe boundaries. Others have found a tendency for professionals to deny feelings of sexual attraction when they occur, and to cope with sexual attraction without seeking the support of others (Meek, McMinn, Burnett, Mazzarella, & Voytenko, 2004). In addition to seeking consultation on complex cases, a "best practice" that may help prevent boundary transgressions is the routine practice of supervision and peer case review (Jain & Roberts, 2009). The YSO has the duty to provide a safe climate for staff to seek external guidance when they become aware of any sexual feelings toward youth.

Another important topic for training is how to intervene when a staff member sees a co-worker or colleague ignoring or violating children's boundaries or shows signs of a deepening personal relationship with a minor. Staff and supervisors in YSOs have a moral and legal obligation to identify and intervene with colleagues whom they suspect of engaging in sexual conduct with minors, even when it's a teacher, pastor, or the respected football coach who takes showers with young boys and takes them on overnight trips to bowl games. Fibkins (2006) provides an example of how a staff member can discuss the matter with a colleague who appears to be headed toward possible sexual misconduct. Witnesses to concerning behavior also have to make the decision

whether to become a whistleblower; defined as one “who identifies an incompetent, unethical, or illegal situation in the workplace and reports it to someone who may have the power to stop the wrong” (McDonald & Ahern, 2000, p. 314). Trainees need opportunities to discuss the challenges and possible ramifications of whistleblowing. Peternelj-Taylor (2003) presents questions staff members can ask themselves to reach a decision about reporting in boundary-violation cases (e.g., Is failure to report a colleague not only unethical but also illegal?), and offers an ethical model to help professionals make a decision to expose a colleague who has engaged in a sexual boundary violation. Rather than turning a blind eye to potential boundary transgressions, confronting and reporting reflect an agency's zero-tolerance culture and commitment to children's needs (over the staff or agency's needs), along with the belief that all adults in the YSO have a responsibility to serve as guardians of children's safety.

6. Barriers to SSM prevention programs

Training staff can be expensive and time consuming, particularly when there is high staff turnover. Lack of personnel and resources to implement mandatory educational programs for staff is a frequently-mentioned barrier, along with asking volunteers to spend more time attending trainings (Wiersma & Sherman, 2005). To help defray costs, agencies can partner with other organizations (public schools, universities) to develop and implement in-service training. Less formal approaches should also be considered, including roundtable discussions, or accessing resources on the Web or in handbooks. Training can also occur in informal settings, such as brown-bag lunches where staff can discuss case studies to elicit discussion and suggestions for handling risky situations. Internet-based training interventions are becoming more available for various youth-serving organizations. Designed for educators but applicable to anyone serving in a position of authority with youth, EthicsEd.com offers an excellent online training program entitled, *Preventing Sexual Misconduct and Abuse in Schools*. The *Respect in Sport* program for coaches is available at www.respectinsport.com. Faith Trust Institute (faithtrustinstitute.org) conducts training and provides educational resources to prevent clergy sexual abuse.

Although cost is sometimes a problem, a potentially greater barrier is reticence about raising the subject. Agency administrators are sometimes concerned that pushing prevention may arouse fear within the organization, possibly leading members to worry that measures are being implemented because sexual abuse exists in their organization (Parent & Demers, 2011). Staff members often become fearful of false allegations due to heightened sensitivity and monitoring by parents, co-workers, and supervisors. In one boundary training course, participants expressed concern about how to create professionally appropriate distance without seeming uncaring (Vamos, 2001). Teachers often struggle with restricting their use of physical contact with students, given that “touching” can be used as a pedagogical tool to create classrooms with a warm, caring interpersonal culture (Andrzejewski & Davis, 2008). Stricter e-communication guidelines are meeting resistance from some teachers because of the increasing importance of technology as a teaching tool and of the benefits of social media for engaging with students (Preston, 2011).

Another challenge is that there is a natural reluctance among employees to believe that their colleagues are capable of such behavior. “Not in my school” is a typical belief among teachers and administrators (Hendrie, 1998). Believing that sexual boundary violations are committed by “professional perpetrators” can result in an “us versus them” attitude and lead to a denial of the inherent vulnerability to commit this type of transgression. To break through this denial, Celenza and Gabbard (2007) suggest asking trainees to explain why sexual misconduct does not occur in most staff–youth relationships. Trainees can then brainstorm answers to the question, “What are the safeguards other staff employ to prevent crossing those boundaries?”

7. Conclusion

The sexual exploitation of minors occurring in youth-serving organizations is a serious and pervasive problem. As some YSOs have experienced, when youth are sexually abused by staff members, the organization suffers from legal problems, financial costs, and damage to their community standing, all of which pale in comparison to the damage to the victims of SSM. As reviewed in this paper, conducting criminal background checks is limited in identifying potential abusers since few offenders have criminal backgrounds. Clearly, organizations that serve young people must do much more to prevent the sexual abuse of minors in their care. By applying an ecological approach to CSA prevention, this paper has suggested ways YSOs can reduce risks of SSM by strengthening appropriate formal structures (e.g., comprehensive policies and procedures) and informal structures, particularly providing sexual boundary violations training and supervising staff. Training for staff, parents, and youth in the prevention of sexual boundary misconduct is critical. These structures must be firmly embedded within a culture of prevention and protection; where all adults place the needs of minors above their own needs or the need to protect the reputation of the organization. YSOs must strive to ensure ethically safe environments and develop a collective attitude that all adults share in the responsibility to protect children. YSO staff and volunteers must never forget...with greater power comes greater moral responsibility to protect youth in their care.

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