Beyond It with Ashley Thomas - Best Practices in Child Safeguarding

Ashley Thomas
Founder and CEO, Bridge II Sport
Certified Trainer in Darkness to Light
What we will accomplish today?

- Have a clear understanding of why it is important to have policies
- Have a clear understanding of what needs to be in the policies
- Have a clear understanding of who is responsible for ensuring best practices
- Have clear understanding of what to do if you are concerned, how to report
Leadership - the action of leading a group of people or an organization.

Who Qualifies as a Leader?
- Board of Directors
- Committees of the Board
- Executive Directors
- Managers
- Program Providers
- Volunteers

Leadership is responsible for protecting those within and those they serve from abuse and harm. It takes a commitment from all levels of the organization to ensure best practices.

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Organizational Leadership – Board

- Are we talking about it?
- Do we have policies on Child Safeguarding?
Interdependent Process!

- Ensures open communication between implementation and Board
- Ensures consideration of experience gained from programs implementation
- Ensure accountability for regular scheduled trainings
- Ensures open communication
- Ensures culture
What is in a Child Safeguarding Policy?

Blinding ignorance does mislead us. O!
Wretched mortals, open your eyes!
Leonardo da Vinci
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**Definitions**

- Safeguarding refers to the actions we (used collectively) take to ensure **all** children are safe from harm when involved in our activities.
- Child refers to anyone under the age of 18.
- Child protection is a set of activities that are required for children who are at higher risk of/or are suffering harm/abuse.
- Abuse refers to the acts of commission or omission that lead to a child/young person experiencing harm.
- Harm refers to the physical injury, especially that which is deliberately inflicted on a child or young person.
- Exploitation refers to an act or acts committed through non-consensual abuse or exploitation of another person's sexuality for the purpose of sexual gratification, financial gain, personal benefit or advantage, or any other non-legitimate purpose.
- Negligent treatment means failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, or medical care that includes medical neglect, and the deprivation is not due to the lack of financial means of his or her parent, guardian, or other custodian.
- Emotional abuse is a form of abuse, characterized by a person subjecting, or exposing, another person to behavior that may result in psychological trauma, including anxiety, chronic depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder.

**What do we need?**

1. Does it declare a stand – We believe....
2. Does it identify what abuse is?

****This list is not conclusive!
What else does the policy need?

Media Expectations:
- Signed Media Release form
- When one does not want a photo, what do you do?
- When one does not want a photo?
- Do we expose all pertinent information? We do not! It is exposure for predators.
- Person First Language
- Media signature

If your child has a disability they could be even more vulnerable to the dangers of sexual exploitation. Up to three or four times greater in fact, with young people with learning or communication difficulties thought to be at particular risk.


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Why the increased risk? A recent study found a number reasons:

• Children and young people with a disability tend to be isolated with fewer friends.
• Increased isolation or communications needs can result in more time spent on the internet which increases their vulnerability when online.
• Often, their parents are highly protective of them, meaning they haven’t learned how to look after themselves.
• Sometimes their disability means they’re not always listened to – and, in turn, don’t always expect to be listened to.
• It can be harder for people to imagine disabled people having sexual feelings or wanting sexual relationships.
• As a result, they might not have had the same sex education as other young people.
• Their disability can make it difficult for them to recognize that they are being exploited.
• People may be less likely to believe them – and both they and the offender may know this.
How do you report if you are concerned?

- E.D is not the reporting person
- Identify a designated CSO – Child Safeguarding Officer
- There needs to be accountability – 2 need to know!
- Do parent know the process?
- Does your staff and volunteers know the process?
Risk Assessment

- Do we schedule regular risk Assessments within our organization?
  - Driving youth to programs
  - Office space
  - Program space
  - FB, Instagram, Social media
  - Travel protocol
  - Volunteer protocol

Do we talk about it? Is it a part of your culture?
Training

The quality of a person’s life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor. -Vince Lombard
Training – Who gets it?

- All Staff
- Key Volunteers
- Board
- Committee Members
- Parents of Children in Program
Verification - ensure a process

- Background check
- Darkness to Light – Child Abuse Prevention
- CPR & First Aid
- Positive Coaching – Coaching Best Practices
- Adaptive Sports – How to Use Adaptive Sporting Equipment
- US Olympic Safe Sports
- Concussion Awareness Training
- PTSD/TBI Training
- Others as deemed appropriate

Beyond It with Ashley Thomas
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>2nd Monday</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Program Safety &amp; Policy</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14 Jan</td>
<td>Program Reporting (not covered in retreat)</td>
<td>8 April</td>
<td>Darkness to Light/AT</td>
<td>7 July</td>
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<td>11 Feb</td>
<td>Child Safeguarding Policy</td>
<td>x May</td>
<td>TBI/PTSD-Valor Games</td>
<td>12 Aug</td>
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<td>11 Mar</td>
<td>First Aid/CPR Class-$ outside vendor)</td>
<td>10 June</td>
<td>Theory Of Change; BIIS Philosophy</td>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>3rd Monday</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Office Policy &amp; Systems</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21 Jan</td>
<td>Staff Handbook</td>
<td>15 Apr</td>
<td>Admin Files Review (Naming, BOX, etc.)</td>
<td>15 July</td>
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<td>18 Feb</td>
<td>RingCentral/how-to</td>
<td>13 May</td>
<td>VGSE Policies</td>
<td>19 Aug</td>
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<td>18 Mar</td>
<td>NEON tips &amp; tricks</td>
<td>17 June</td>
<td>Software tips &amp; tricks</td>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>4th Monday</th>
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<th>Staff Enrichment Trainings</th>
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<td>28 Jan</td>
<td>Leadership - how does it relate to your job?</td>
<td>22 April</td>
<td>Prosthetics</td>
<td>22 July</td>
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<td>25 Feb</td>
<td>Nutrition expert</td>
<td>27 May</td>
<td>Stress Management</td>
<td>26 Aug</td>
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<td>25 Mar</td>
<td>Legal Shield</td>
<td>24 June</td>
<td>Software</td>
<td>23 Sept</td>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>5th Monday</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Fun Monday - Team Building</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>29 Apr</td>
<td>Admin Office</td>
<td>29 July</td>
<td>Programs</td>
<td>30 Sept</td>
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Do we educate our parents and guardians who to talk with within the organization about concerns with child sexual abuse?

- All Staff
- Key Volunteers
- Board
- Committee Members
- Parents of Children in Program
When we all commit to best practices in Child Safeguarding, we protect the people we serve, the people who served through programing, the leadership, and the mission.
Questions

Ashley@bridge2sports.org
866-880-2742