

Texas District United Pentecostal Church
Sunday School and Youth Camp
2017 Child Abuse Prevention Training

Introduction

The Texas District United Pentecostal Church (TXDUPC) is committed to providing a safe environment for campers. The following training is designed to heighten the awareness of child abuse and to offer information and guidelines to prevent any type of abuse while at camp and beyond. We must view the task of creating a safe environment for the campers as a team effort. Every parent, church leader and Camp staff has a part in being informed and carrying out their role in keeping children safe. Every adult, employee or volunteer, who will be on campus and have opportunity to interact with the campers is required to take this course and pass the accompanying exam with 70% accuracy. Documentation verifying participation in the course and passing the test is kept on file in the Camp Office.

Child abuse is a nationwide issue. Schools, churches, camps and other youth organizations have come under intense scrutiny. We must be sensitive and well informed to avoid having potential difficulties in this area and for the well being of the children and youth who are entrusted to our care.

Definition of Neglect

A child is neglected if the persons this child depends on do not provide food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education and supervision. When these basic needs are deliberately withheld, not because the parents or caregivers are poor, it is considered neglect.

Definition of Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is the deliberate injury of a child by a person responsible for the child's care. Physical abuse injuries can include bruises, broken bones, burns, and abrasions. Children experience minor injuries as a normal part of childhood, usually in predictable places such as the shins, knees, and elbows. When the injuries are in soft-tissue areas on the abdomen or back, or don't seem to be typical childhood injuries, physical abuse becomes a possibility.

Definition of Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is a series of repeated instances, whether intentional or not, that insults, threatens, isolates, degrades, humiliates, and/or controls another person. A child suffers from emotional abuse when constantly ridiculed, rejected, blamed, or compared unfavorably with brothers or sisters or other children. Emotional abuse is harder to recognize but is just as harmful to the child as other forms of abuse because it damages the child's self-esteem and, in extreme cases, can lead to developmental problems and speech disorders.

Definition of Sexual Abuse and Molestation

When an adult or an older child uses his or her authority over a child to involve the child in sexual activity, it is sexual abuse, and that person is a child molester. Sexual abuse includes any activity performed for the sexual satisfaction of the molester, including acts ranging from exhibitionism, voyeurism, to fondling and rape.

A Few Facts

- Child sexual abuse occurs to as many as 25 percent of girls and 14 percent of boys before they reach the age of 18.
- Children can be abused at any age; however, most sexual abuse occurs between the ages of 7 and 13.
- Children are most likely to be molested by someone they know and trust.
- Eighty to 90 percent of sexually abused boys are molested by acquaintances who are nonfamily members.
- Females perform 20 percent of the sexual abuse of boys under age 14.

Effects of Abuse

A fallacy regarding sexual abuse is that some people say that sexually touching does no harm. Some adults will even tell boy victims to "act like a man" and "stop whining." Other adults are unsympathetic about the experiences

of adult survivors. They say, “no matter what happened in childhood, it is in the past. You are an adult now, so get over it.”

The fact is that sexual abuse does harm the child and that the damage often carries over into the adult life. Studies show that this damage can include:

- difficulty in forming long-term relationships
- sexual risk-taking that may lead to contracting sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS
- physical complaints and symptoms
- depression, suicidal thoughts, and suicide
- links to failure of the immune system and to increases in illnesses, hospitalizations, & early deaths

In addition to the tangible physical and emotional damage that sexual abuse does to the child, that terrible secret that is held so close by two or three family members can go on to tear at the fiber of the family in generation after generation.

Warning Signs of Sexual Abuse

There are a variety of signs of sexual abuse. The best sign is the child’s statement that he or she was abused. However, children often do not report their abuse, so adults in positions of authority over children should be alert for other signs. Some of the following behaviors are very common signs that children are upset. However, if one or more signs are present for more than a few days, they *may be* signs that the child is being sexually abused:

- Hints, indirect messages—refusing to go to a friend’s or relative’s home for no apparent reason.
- Seductive or provocative behavior—acting out adult sexual behavior or using sexual language a child his or her age is unlikely to know.
- Self-destructive behavior—deliberately harming himself, running away, thoughts of or attempting suicide, or sexual recklessness or promiscuity.
- Unhappiness—undue anxiety and crying or loss of appetite
- Regression—behaving like a younger child, thumb sucking, or bed-wetting
- Being noticeably and unusually withdrawn or isolated.
- Excessively compliant or cooperative.
- Extreme shame or a sense of embarrassment.
- Sleep disorders—nightmares or difficulty either going to sleep or sleeping through the night.
- Avoidant types of behaviors, fears or phobias—some kind of concern about being in a particular place or with a particular person

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

Dr. Janet Squires

Abusive Feelings and Normal Curiosity

“Adolescence can be very sexually confusing. However, if we’re talking about something sexual between somebody who is older and someone who is younger by even a couple of years, we are getting into the realm of things that can be abuse. If we’re talking about someone who is in a position of authority as a baby sitter or as an older brother or as a big brother, those kinds of situations are going to be abusive. I don’t think older children recognize the kind of power and authority that they have and the fact that the younger people in these relationships don’t have the capacity to really assert themselves in the face of that kind of authority.”

Characteristics of a Child Molester

"There are a lot of misleading ideas about who child molesters are. It used to be thought that they were easily spotted, dirty old men, deviants, and guys in raincoats. We know that that's not true. Very ordinary, very upstanding, very well respected individuals, people in positions of authority—all these kinds of individuals have been found to molest children—people who are relatives, people who are well known to the child. A child is more likely to be abused by somebody that they know or someone in their family than they are by a stranger."

David Finkelhor, Ph.D.

Sexual Molestation by Peers

Approximately one-third of all sexual molestation of children occurs at the hands of other children, primarily adolescents. Adolescents abuse for a whole variety of reasons: because they are isolated, they think that they should be getting some kind of sexual experience, or they've been abused or victimized or suffered in some way. In the past, there has been a tendency to sweep this under the rug and say, "Well, he's just going through a phase." Children who molest other children need professional help, and they are more likely to respond to treatment when young. We now know that if a sexually abusive adolescent goes untreated, they are at a very high risk to continue that pattern of behavior into adulthood. It's very important that we identify adolescents who are abusing children and get them help before the process goes on for too long.

Strategies of Abusers

Molesters tend to use three basic strategies: Seduction, Force, and Secrecy

Seduction

"Most often the molester is known to the child and is in a position to spend lots of time with the child. The molester engages in a process called grooming, where the initial overtures are nonsexual and gradually grow more intrusive. The molester is usually very patient during this process. A molester usually has a relationship with the child and that ensures the secrecy and it also allows them to have legitimate physical access to the child. Many times a molester will use pornography, whether it be adult or child pornography, to lower the child's natural inhibitions toward sex."

Detective Mike Johnson

Force

"There's usually very little a child can do to resist force. There are unquestionably some occasions when strangers just accost children or snatch them or get them by some means into a car or whatever, abduct, and have sex with them. But that's a relatively infrequent kind of act compared with what I just described of what basically is a process of developing friendship and seduction."

Dr. David Chadwick, M.D. (retired)

Secrecy

Molesters take great pain not to be caught. Some of the ways they maintain the secrets are:

- **Bribery.** They'll actually give gifts or other favors to the child they are interested in.
- **Blame.** The child molester tells a child it's their fault the molestation took place.
- **Embarrassment.** During the molestation, the children realize that what is taking place is wrong and want to hide the fact it actually took place.
- **Loss of affection.** Ninety-eight percent of the time, the molester is a wonderful person in a child's life. It is that other two percent of the time that he is molesting the child.
- **Displaced responsibility.** In this case, the child blames themselves for the molestation or the acts that are taking place.
- **Threats.** The molester may actually threaten the child with physical harm to the child or to someone in the child's family.

Section Summary

- A child is more likely to be abused by somebody they know or someone in their family than by a stranger.
- Molesters tend to use three basic strategies: seduction, trickery and force combined with an overall goal of secrecy. The aim of the molester is to isolate the child from supervision and any other kind of protection.
- Probably a third of all sexual abuse of children occurs at the hands of other children, primarily adolescents.

Texas District Camp On-Site Protection and Prevention Policies

The Texas District has adopted the following policies to provide additional security for our campers. These policies are primarily for the protection of the campers; however, they also serve to protect our adult leaders from false accusations of abuse.

General Guidelines

1. **Avoid One-on-One Contact**
 - a. **Adult to Camper:** Adult leaders should use extreme care in avoiding one-on-one encounters with campers. In situations that require personal conferences, the meeting is to be conducted in view of other adults and campers. If a camper approaches you when you are alone, move quickly to an area where there are others or ask the camper to meet you somewhere else *in a public area* in a few minutes.
 - b. **Camper to Camper:** Care should also be taken to minimize one-on-one encounters between campers.
2. **Respect Campers' Privacy.** Adult leaders must respect the privacy of campers in situations such as changing clothes and taking showers at camp, and intrude only to the extent that health and safety require. Adults must respect their own privacy in similar situations.
3. **Constructive Discipline.** Discipline used at camp should be positive and constructive. Corporal punishment is not permitted. If behavioral problems escalate, involve another adult Camp worker as soon as possible in the process.
4. **Hazing Prohibited.** Physical hazing and initiations are prohibited and may not be included as part of camp activity.
5. **Camper's Responsibilities.** All campers are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the principles set forth in the Camp Guidelines. Physical violence, hazing, bullying, theft, verbal insults, and drugs and alcohol have no place at camp and may result in the removal of a camper from camp.

Responding to and Reporting Abuse

If a child discloses abuse to you

"You want to keep your cool by not panicking or overreacting. Don't criticize the child. Be careful to avoid making him feel guilty by your line of questioning such as, "Why didn't you tell me earlier?" "Why didn't you say no?" "Why didn't you do this or that?" Remember to respect the child's privacy. They're not going to feel comfortable discussing this in large groups with a lot of people milling around. Assure the child that he or she is not to blame, that they are the child, they are the victim, and that what was done to them is wrong and the abuser is the guilty party. And last, listen to the child carefully. Be patient. They'll eventually tell you what you need to know."

Jim Chavis

"Listen. And listen. And listen. And be supportive. Allow the child to thoroughly express whatever he or she wishes to. Get it all out as much as possible; but unless you have had prior experience in interviewing sexually abused children, I recommend that people not try to elicit a lot more information than what is coming spontaneously. I think it's a good idea that after the conversation has ended to make a note or two on a piece of paper so that you've recorded what has happened. You've got documentation later if it's needed. And then proceed along with reporting procedures, leaving the detailed interviewing of the child to people who have been trained to do that."

Dr. David Chadwick, M. D.

A. For a child abused at camp

1. If the suspected abuse occurs at the youth camp, the suspected abuse must be reported to the Camp Director or Camp Principal. The Camp Director or Camp Principal must report the suspected abuse to the Texas Department of Health & Human Services Commission (HHSC) utilizing the online form at: https://wafers.hhsc.state.tx.us/Abuse_Fraud_Reporting_IR.asp. Local authorities should also be contacted about the suspected abuse.
2. To the extent possible, the name of the informant should be kept confidential.
3. The child should be removed from ALL contact with the accused.
4. The Camp Director or Camp Principal will confront the suspected child abuser.
5. Once the above-mentioned persons have reason to believe that any child abuse has or will occur, they shall report the suspected abuser to the proper authorities.
6. The child's parents and Pastor will be contacted to inform them of the situation.

B. For a child abused before coming to camp:

If a child is determined to be an abused child, either by observation or through confiding in a Camp Worker that he/she has been abused, the following steps should be taken:

1. The Dean/Matron/Worker should counsel the child according to the guidelines set forth in "Helping a Victim of Child Abuse." (see below)
2. The Dean/Matron/Worker should inform only the Camp Director or Camp Principal of the situation.
3. The Camp Director or Camp Principal is required to report to the parents, Pastor and proper authorities such as the Texas Department of Health and Human Services, and/or local law enforcement agencies.

C. Helping a Victim of Child Abuse

After it has been disclosed that a child has been abused, certain steps should be taken to help the child.

1. **Listen** – don't panic or overreact. You should show real concern, but not alarm or anger. Give the child permission to talk about the abuse to you. Listen carefully to everything the child says, and note his or her behavior. Don't fill in words for them. Don't ask leading questions. Have another adult present when you talk to the child.
2. **Believe** – Never criticize the child or claim that the child has misunderstood what happened. Support the child for disclosing. It is not your responsibility to determine whether the allegation is true. Children seldom lie about abuse.
3. **Protect** – Along with another trusted adult, take the child to a private place. Discuss the situation only with these individuals. Encourage the child to tell the proper authorities what happened, but try to avoid repeated interviews about the incident that can be stressful to the child. Never promise that everything will be okay. You can promise that you will do what you can to help.
4. **Affirm** – Children who have been victimized may feel sad, angry, fearful, anxious, and depressed. Accept and understand the child's feelings. Avoid telling the child how he or she "should feel." Rather, emphasize that the child is not to blame for what happened. Praise him/her for courage and honesty, and promise you will get help.
5. **Refer** – DO NOT attempt to handle the problem alone. This is important for the well being of the child as well as for your own protection. As a childcare custodian, you are mandated by the law to report child abuse.

Reasonable Suspicion

For reporting child abuse, all the state requires is that you have reasonable suspicion that abuse occurred; and any person who has knowledge of physical or sexual abuse is required to report this to the Camp Director or Camp Principal. The Camp Director or Camp Principal is required to report to proper authorities such as the Texas Department of Health and Human Services, and/or local law enforcement agencies. Those reporting are protected civilly if their reports are based on factual information. When a report is received, an investigation will be carried out by the proper official agency. It is not the Camp's responsibility to investigate these allegations.

The intention of this training is that we want to create an environment where both adults and children are aware of the abuse and ready to stop it by recognizing it and reporting it to the proper authorities. We want you to care

about the welfare of children and realize it is not up to you, Texas District Camps or the church to investigate but report to the proper authorities who are trained in that area. You do not have to make any decisions about it; all you have to have is reasonable suspicion.

Section Summary

- If a child discloses to you that he or she has been abused, you should respond by remaining calm, listening to the child, and reassuring the child that he or she is not to blame for the abuse. Then report the child's disclosure only to the proper authorities.
- If you suspect abuse or a child discloses abuse to you, contact the Camp Director or Camp Principal. It is the Camp Director and/or Camp Principal's responsibility to contact the parents, Pastor and proper State authorities.
- The goal of this training is to create an environment in which both adults and children are prepared to recognize abuse and report it to the proper authorities.

NOTE: Permission is granted for other organizations to utilize this material. Thank you to the Boy Scouts of America for permission to use material from their training course for this document.