

Understanding and Preventing Youth-on-Youth Abuse



Training for Unit Leaders and Staff

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BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

Learning Objectives

- Discuss ways to reduce or prevent inappropriate youth-on-youth behavior.
- Recognize inappropriate youth-on-youth behavior, including inappropriate sexual behavior.
- Respond to inappropriate youth-on-youth behavior.
- State the BSA requirements for reporting inappropriate youth-on-youth behavior.
- Demonstrate the ability to accurately assess and respond to youth-on-youth incidents.



BSA Policy

All adult leaders and youth members have a responsibility for acting in accordance with the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

Physical violence, sexual activity, emotional abuse, spiritual abuse, unauthorized weapons, hazing, discrimination, harassment, initiation rites, bullying, cyberbullying, theft, verbal insults, drugs, alcohol, and pornography have no place in the Scouting program and may result in revocation of membership.

For more information, please see the BSA's *Guide to Safe Scouting* and other Youth Protection resources available at www.scouting.org.

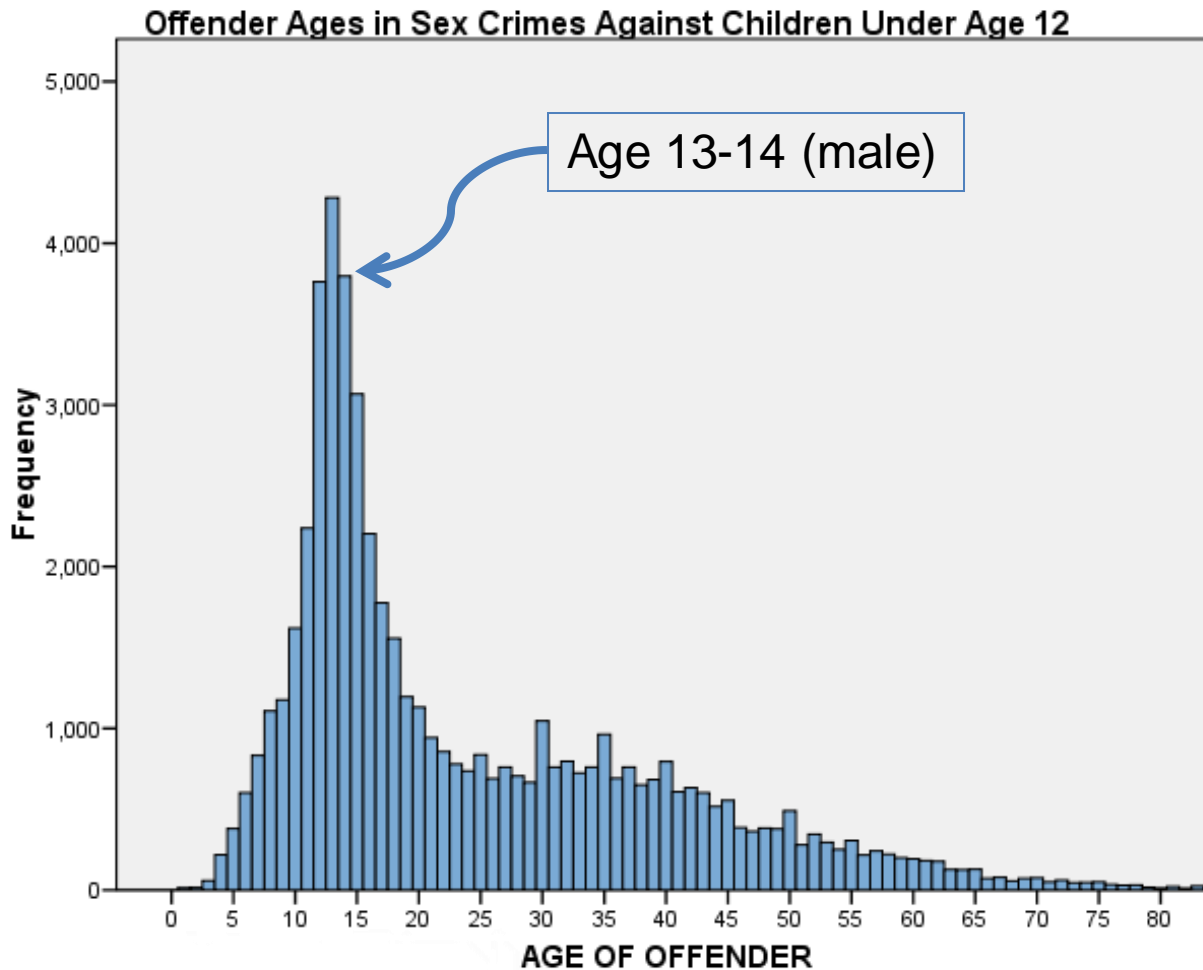


The Facts

- More than one-third of serious physical and sexual abuse incidents are committed by youth
- Nearly one out of every four students (22 percent) report being bullied during the school year
- As of 2014, over 19% of high school students report being bullied at school in the past year and over 14.8 % reported being bullied online
- The peak age range for male youth offenders is age 13 to 16
- Youth engaging in criminal sexual behavior tend to be boys and girls three to five years older than the victim
- Sexual experimentation can lead to abuse
- Youth offenders groom victims much the same as adult offenders
- Abusers can be of any age or demographic



Ages of Individuals Committing Sexual Abuse of Children Under 12 Years



About 36 percent of known sex crimes against children are committed by other youth, peaking in early adolescence.



Now is the Time

- Youth safety can be leveraged into a culture.
 - Youth watching out for youth
 - Willingness to tell adults what they see and fear
- Leaders and staff must foster a safe environment by building on the youth-driven culture of keeping peers safe from harm.
- Youth have become acutely aware of safety issues due to school shootings and media coverage of national abuse cases.



Youth and Medication

It is a fact that more and more youth are taking medication for behavioral and cognitive issues.

Unit leaders and staff should be aware that medications can be a factor in behavioral issues.

Unit leadership should coordinate and communicate with Camp Directors and need to know staff on any medication and behavior issues.



Situational Awareness

- Being mindful of activities – sounds, actions and other factors and that could indicate inappropriate activities
- Adult/youth and gender separation for all camping, bath and shower facilities is always required
- Youth sharing tents must be no more than two years apart in age
- Monitor showers and latrines and other areas where youth may congregate and other high risk areas



“Youth-Led”

Requires Appropriate Supervision

BSA Policy:

- Youth leadership and Scout behavior is monitored by adult leaders

Areas of Concern:

- Increasing number of youth abuse incidents, damage to property, fights, and code of conduct violations
 - Group and cyber bullying
 - Sexual experimentation
 - Harassment (gender, gender identity, race, religion, nationality, etc.)
 - Invasion of privacy



“Youth-Led” at Camp Requires Appropriate Staff Supervision

Areas of Emphasis:

- Youth protection is not a check the box training
- Continuous presence
- Unsupervised and inappropriate discipline
- “That’s just kids being kids” attitude
- Incidents increase as camp progresses
- Impermissible traditions and rituals



“Youth-Led” at Camp Requires Appropriate Supervision

Recommendations:

- Facilitate a youth-led but adult supervised program.
- Monitor youth leadership and behavior.
- Provide adequate leadership including the investigation of “sights and sounds.” Especially at night.
- Actively engage and intervene.
- Discuss lights out and bed checks.
- Present pre-camp Youth Protection sessions.
- Discuss differences in the roles of camp staff and adult unit leaders.
- Leaders serve in a guidance capacity and may never abdicate that responsibility.
- Leaders anticipate, identify, and monitor high-risk areas specific to programs.
- Encourage a “when in doubt” ask questions culture
- Random tent/bed checks adhering to Youth Protection policies



Camp Traditions vs. the BSA Program

Particular areas of concern:

- Some rituals and traditions constitute abuse, harassment, bullying, hazing, initiations, or violations of the Scout Oath, Scout Law, as well as state law
 - Initiations and humiliating acts such as paddling, blindfolding, nudity, etc.
 - Tying up or restraining
 - Requiring singing or other acts to recover lost items
- Even innocent challenges can get out of hand
 - Taunting due to physical inability to swim, run or do push-ups
 - Loss of competition due to individual performance



Bullying Is a Growing Problem

- Nationally, more than one-third of serious physical and sexual abuse incidents are youth on youth and the number is increasing
- In Scouting, outdoor settings may provide opportunities when continuous adult supervision is not possible
- All forms of bullying can be contributing factors to self-harm and suicidal thoughts
- Bullying can occur in latrines and showers or other areas where there is limited adult supervision



Bullying

BSA Policy:

- No hazing
- No bullying
- No initiations
- No secret organizations
- Discipline must be constructive
- Scout Oath and Scout Law
- Scout Code of Conduct



Bullying at Camp or Training: Situational Awareness

Areas of Concern:

- Roving groups of youth
- Pushing youth out of meal lines
- Pinning, threatening, touching youth in restroom or shower facilities
- Targeting youth with disabilities or other perceived differences: obesity, gender orientation, minority or social status, religious faith, personal appearance, intelligence, habits, hobbies, school performance, physical size, ability, family history, etc.
- Pantsing, pulling back/down shower curtains
- Name calling
- Insulting nicknames
- Derogatory statement about social status, religion, national origin, race, color, ancestry, sexual orientation, disability,



Bullying at Camp or Training: Situational Awareness

Recommendations:

- Create a Scout-like culture based upon the Scout Oath and Law
- Encourage Scouts to watch out for each other
- See it, stop it, report it
- Explain the difference between buddy groups and “roving gangs”
- Increase adult supervision in target areas (latrines, changing areas, showers)
- Emphasize to youth it is safe to speak up
- Ask youth whether they have seen anything that they think is inappropriate
- Pass the information up the chain



Recognize the Upstander

- An upstander is someone who takes action to stop prohibited conduct when the easiest course would be to stand by and do nothing
- An upstander lives by the Scout Oath and Scout Law and protects others from bullying and prohibited conduct
- Recognize the upstander appropriately



Scouts First Helpline

1-844-SCOUTS1 (1-844-726-8871)

Bullying is a serious issue that requires immediate intervention by adults.

In instances where there is a threat of physical harm or serious mental health concerns, immediately report to law enforcement. Report the matter to the Scout executive, and if unavailable, contact the Scouts First Helpline at 844-Scouts1 (844-726-8871).

Ensure notification has been made to the parents/guardian.

CALL 1-844-SCOUTS1 (1-844-726-8871)



Lack of Respect/Harassment of Coed Staff and Participants

Intentional or immaturity

- Unwanted sexual or suggestive advances and harassment
- Verbal harassment and use of disrespectful terms
- Unwanted touching
- Jokes, smirks, photo taking, pointing, ogling, leering especially during swimming and physical activities
- “Peeping Tom” or recording in areas where privacy is expected
- Adult statements
 - “Females don’t belong at camp”
 - “Females are inferior counselors”
 - “Females are a distraction”
 - “Females dress that way to get attention”



Harassment

Define Expectations:

- Immediately and appropriately call attention to the behavior – be obvious that action is being taken without causing shame or embarrassment
- Use the Scout Oath and Scout Law and Code of Conduct as a tool
- Require respectful conduct by all leaders, staff and youth
- Make it clear - sexual matters of any type have no place in Scouting – including relationships, discussions and on-line content



Create a Culture for a Safe Environment

Recommendations:

- Display information on the Scouts First Helpline (1-844-726-8871), which offers 24/7 reporting and support
- Encourage youth to report unsafe/harmful behaviors
- Explain the difference between bystanders and upstanders
- Recognize upstander behavior *in an appropriate manner*
- Encourage group reflection on expected behavior



Invasions of Privacy

- Have and enforce BSA and camp policies on the use of cellphones, tablets and cameras
- Do not allow the use of devices in restrooms
- If an incident occurs, secure the device
- Immediately notify the camp director or Scout Executive



Privacy Invasions by Youth

BSA Policy:

- Inappropriate use of smartphones, cameras, or imaging or digital devices is prohibited.
- Respect privacy of all.

Areas of Concern:

- Youth taking inappropriate pictures of themselves, other Scouts, and staff.
- Adult cyberpredators could be involved, posing as a youth, without the youth's knowledge.
- Images uploaded to the internet become available worldwide and are permanent.
- Uploaded images can lead to embarrassment, extortion, and sextortion.



Inappropriate Behavior

Unit leaders and staff understand that teenagers and young adults are confronted with complicated social norms that can create risky and even dangerous situations in the form of inappropriate games, experimentation or other activities. These do not belong in Scouting and violate Youth Protection guidelines. Scouting, camps and training courses must be safe spaces free from this behavior.



Consensual and Non-Consensual Relationships – Youth-on-Youth

- It is natural for youth to create relationships and friendships
- Supervision, monitoring, and communication by adult leaders are key elements in preventing the following:
 - Youth engaging in any form of sexual activity;
 - Youth engaging in abusive non-consensual sexual activity or relationships; and
 - Youth attempting to meet up
 - Inappropriate public displays of affection and **ALL** sexual activity is prohibited in Scouting.



Reporting

All incidents of inappropriate activity involving sexual matters, regardless of whether it is consensual, must be investigated and reported to the program, camp or course director. Non-consensual or abusive conduct must be reported to law enforcement. Inappropriate consensual conduct should normally result in parental notification and immediate removal from the program activity. Inappropriate activity may also result in revocation of membership.



Question

When dealing with youth about consensual and abusive sexual activity, which of the following youth protection policies reduce opportunities for sexual activity to occur? (Choose all that apply)

- Buddy system
- Adult supervision of risk areas
- Prohibition of drugs and alcohol
- Program leader communicating sexual activity is prohibited
- Lack of adult supervision
- Allowing youth of opposite sex to be alone and get to know one another
- Allowing much older youth to take younger youth



Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse

- In most states camp staff are mandatory reporters
- BSA requires that all persons involved in Scouting must report to local authorities any good-faith suspicion or belief that any child is or has been: physically or sexually abused; physically or emotionally neglected; exposed to any form of violence, threat, sexual exploitation, pornography, online solicitation, enticement, or showing of obscene material
- This duty cannot be delegated to any other person
- Persons who fail to report are subject to being permanently removed from the program
- After notifying authorities, a report to the camp director and Scout executive is required. If unavailable contact the **Scouts First Helpline**



Reporting Serious Violations of BSA Youth Protection Policies

- If you have reason to believe a BSA's Youth Protection policy has been violated and that a youth was put at risk you must notify Scout executive and if unavailable contact the Scouts First Helpline (1-844-SCOUTS1/1-844-726-8871)
- If you have reason to believe a BSA's Youth Protection policy has been violated but no youth was put at risk it still must be reported to the leader of the unit, program or event
- Policies include Scouting's Barriers to Abuse



Remember

Youth protection is not about the training ...



It is about YOU using the training
to protect youth!



Questions

