

BSA Youth Protection

Understanding and Preventing Youth on Youth Abuse



Steps in the BSA Process

- Prevent
- Recognize
- Respond
- Report

What is Youth on Youth Abuse?

What is problematic behavior?

What are some potential examples of Youth-on-Youth Abuse?

- Bullying
- Hazing
- Inappropriate physical contact
- Sexual talk
- Initiations and games
- Inappropriate online interactions
- Sexting
- Exposure to inappropriate materials
- Sexual contact and assault

Youth-on-youth abuse and problematic behavior can occur in Scouting during any activity, but especially where observation or adult supervision is limited.



Types of Scouting Participants

- **Youth Member:** Individuals under the age of 18 who, with the approval of a parent or guardian, becomes a member of a unit. They may be registered in one or more Scouting programs.
- **Adult Program Participants:** Individuals aged 18 or older (most often aged 18-20) who are registered as program participants in which youth members are also eligible to participate. Critical reminder – these adults program participants are subject to the same policies and guidelines as adult Scouters.
- **Adult:** Unless otherwise stated, the word “adult” refers to a person 18 years of age or older.



The Magic 18 Date

When someone turns 18 in the BSA they become an adult. A few things to consider:

- Things change when you become an adult
- No one on one contact with youth (even if you are friends).
- Ramifications for inappropriate relationships/interactions.
- Using adult showers and restrooms.
- These changes happen on the birthday
- Meeting with anyone who this applies to during the season.

Facts About Youth-on-Youth Abuse

- **More than one-third of serious physical and sexual abuse incidents are committed by youth** according to the U.S. Department of Justice, Juvenile Justice Bulletin, 2009, “Juveniles Who Commit Sex Offenses Against Minors”.
- **Nearly one out of every four students or 22 percent report being bullied during the school year** according to the National Center for Education Statistics, 2015.

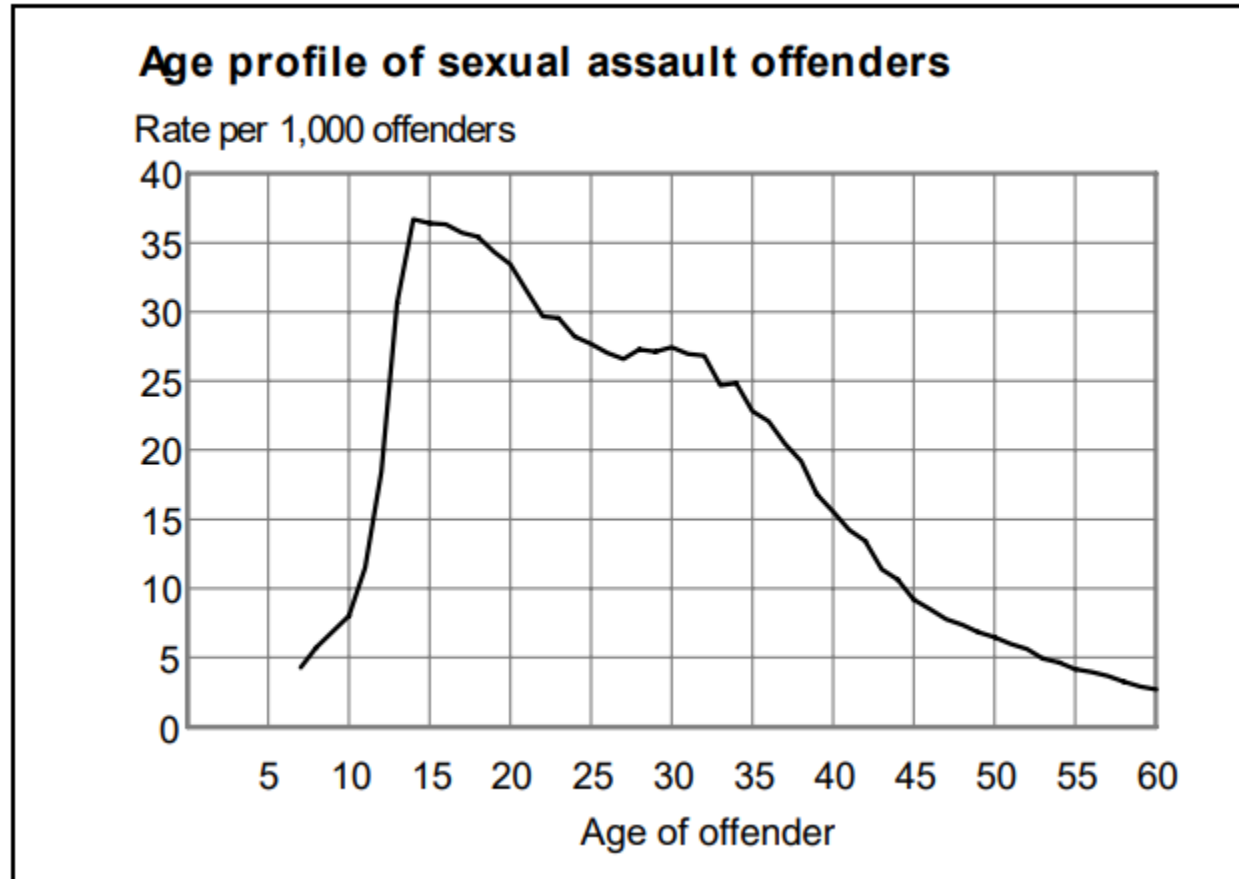
Facts About Youth-on-Youth Abuse

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, Juvenile Justice Bulletin, 2009, “Juveniles Who Commit Sex Offenses Against Minors”:

- **Research indicates the peak age for male youth offenders is age 13 to 16.**
- **Females constitute 7 percent of juveniles who commit sex offenses.**
- **Targets of (sexual) abuse tend to be boys and girls three to five years of age younger than the perpetrator.**



Facts About Youth-on-Youth Abuse



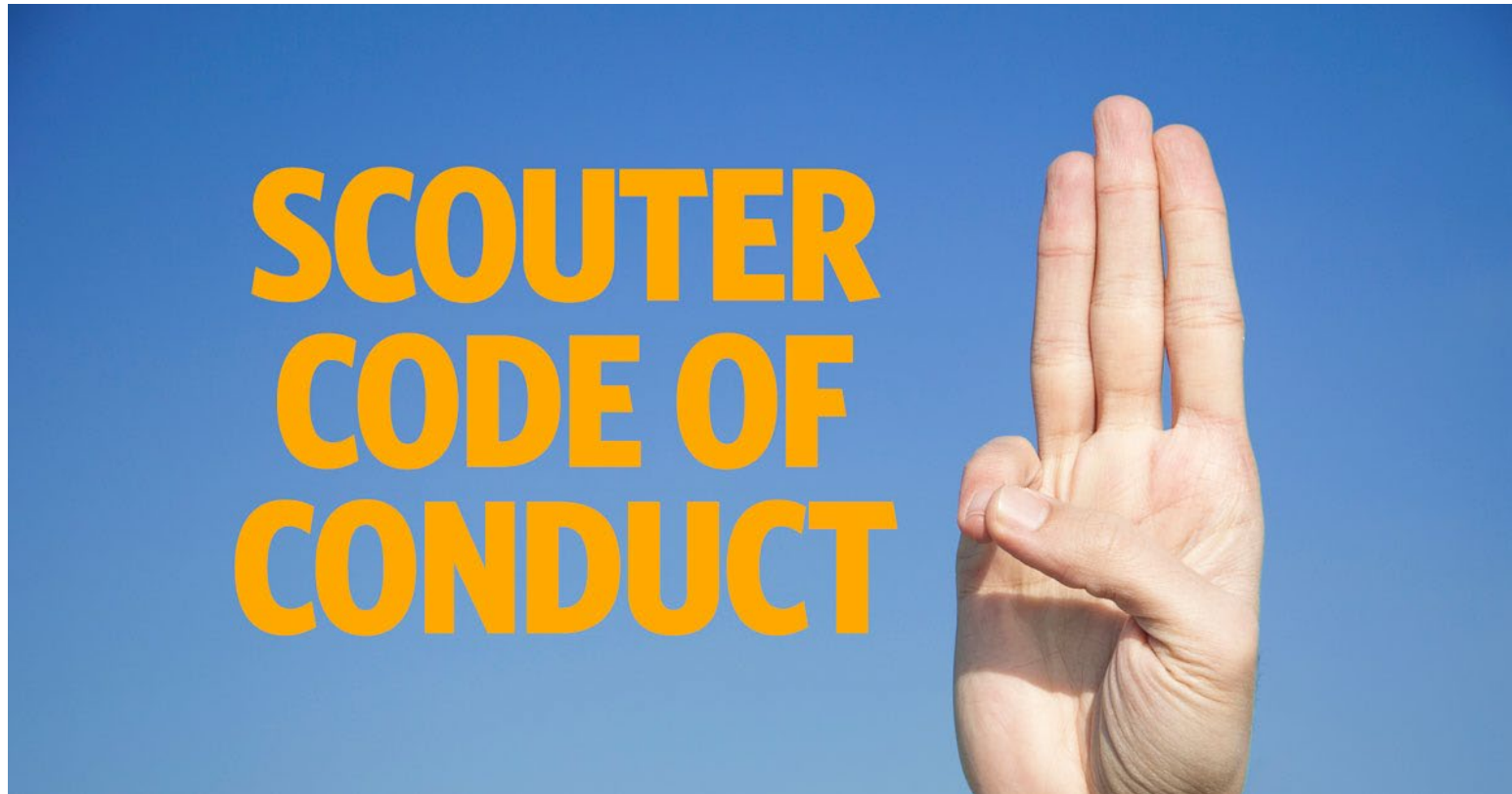
Youth Safety Culture



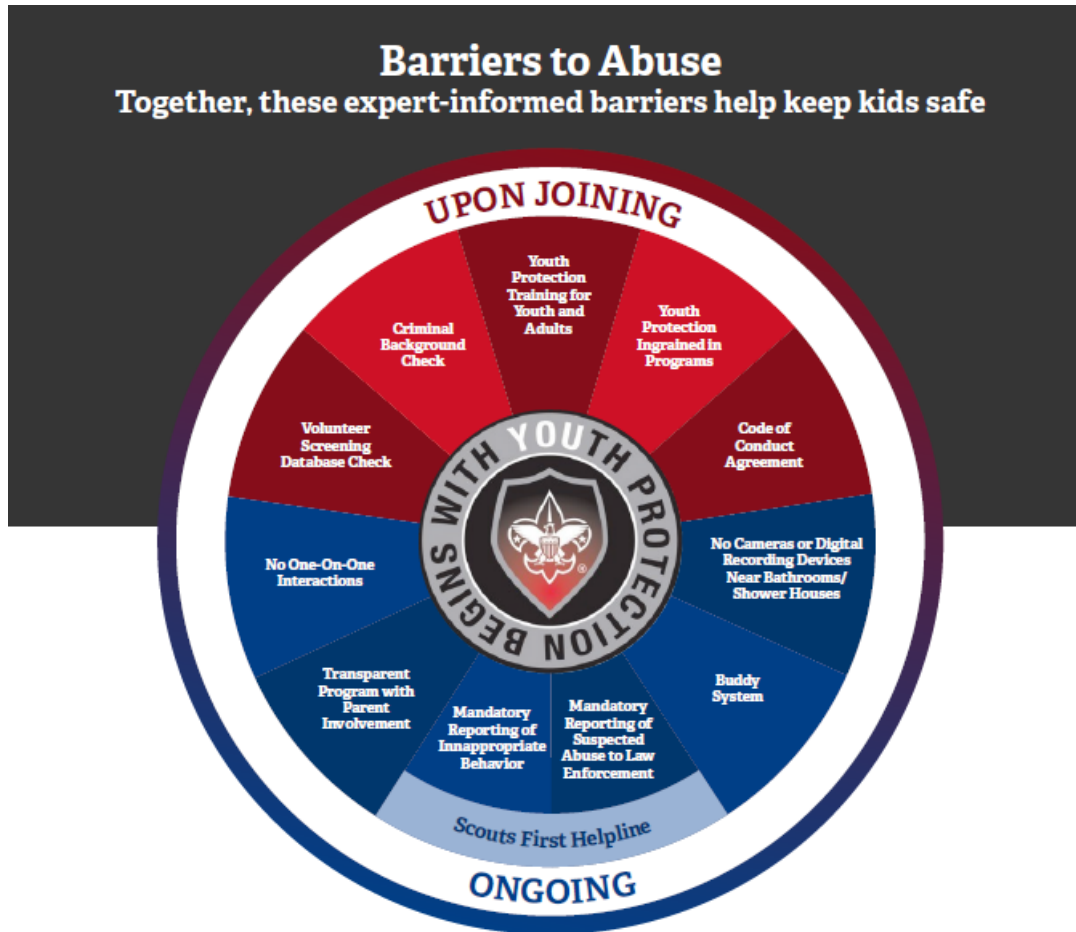
- Expect youth to watch out for other youth
- Be willing to tell adults what you see and hear
- Using and modeling Scouting's Barriers to Abuse



Preventing Youth on Youth Abuse



Preventing Youth on Youth Abuse



Adult Supervision



Scouting Barrier to Abuse: Adult Supervision

Adult supervision doesn't just refer to registration status– it means active supervision of youth.

Areas to consider:

- Incident numbers rise as camp progresses.
- Leaders at camp may feel they can take a break/backseat during the camp experience.
- This could include leaving discipline to the Scouts or the camp staff.
- Do not turn a blind eye to pranks/vandalism – these pranks and vandalism can include an element of youth-on-youth abuse. We will discuss more about this a bit later.
- Cannot adopt a “That’s just kids being kids” attitude.

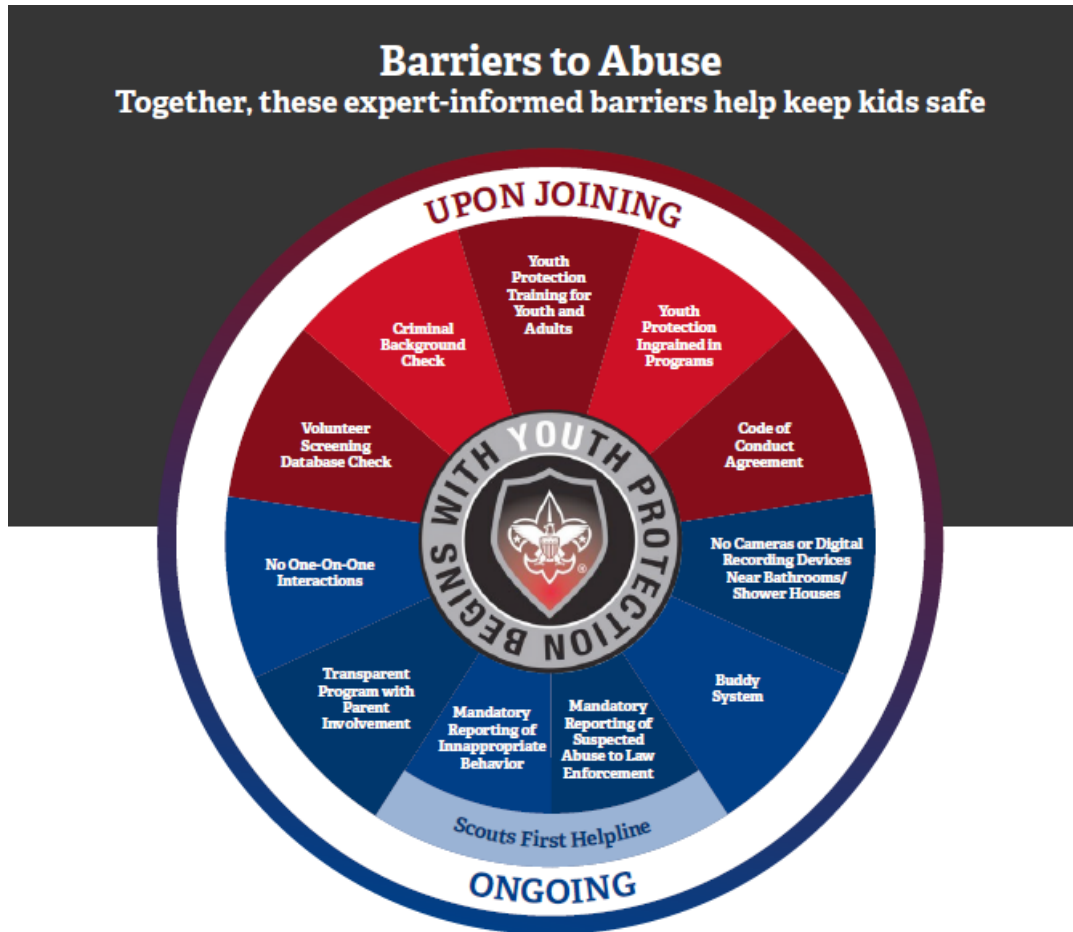
WHAT ARE SOME STRATEGIES YOU CAN USE TO ENSURE PROPER ADULT SUPERVISION OCCURS AT YOUR CAMP?



Proper Adult Supervision

- Facilitate a youth-led but adult-guided program.
- Monitor youth leadership.
- Provide adequate ACTIVE leadership including the investigation of “sights and sounds.”
- Understand differences in the roles of camp staff and adult unit leaders.
- Remind everyone that adults serve in a guidance capacity and may never abdicate that responsibility.
- Anticipate, identify, and monitor high-risk areas specific to programs.

Preventing Youth on Youth Abuse



Buddy System

- Always single gender
- Should be no more than 2 years apart
- Only be made between youth members
- Adult program participants cannot be paired with youth - this includes staff
- The buddy system must always be followed during Scouting activities.



Scouting Barrier to Abuse: Buddy System

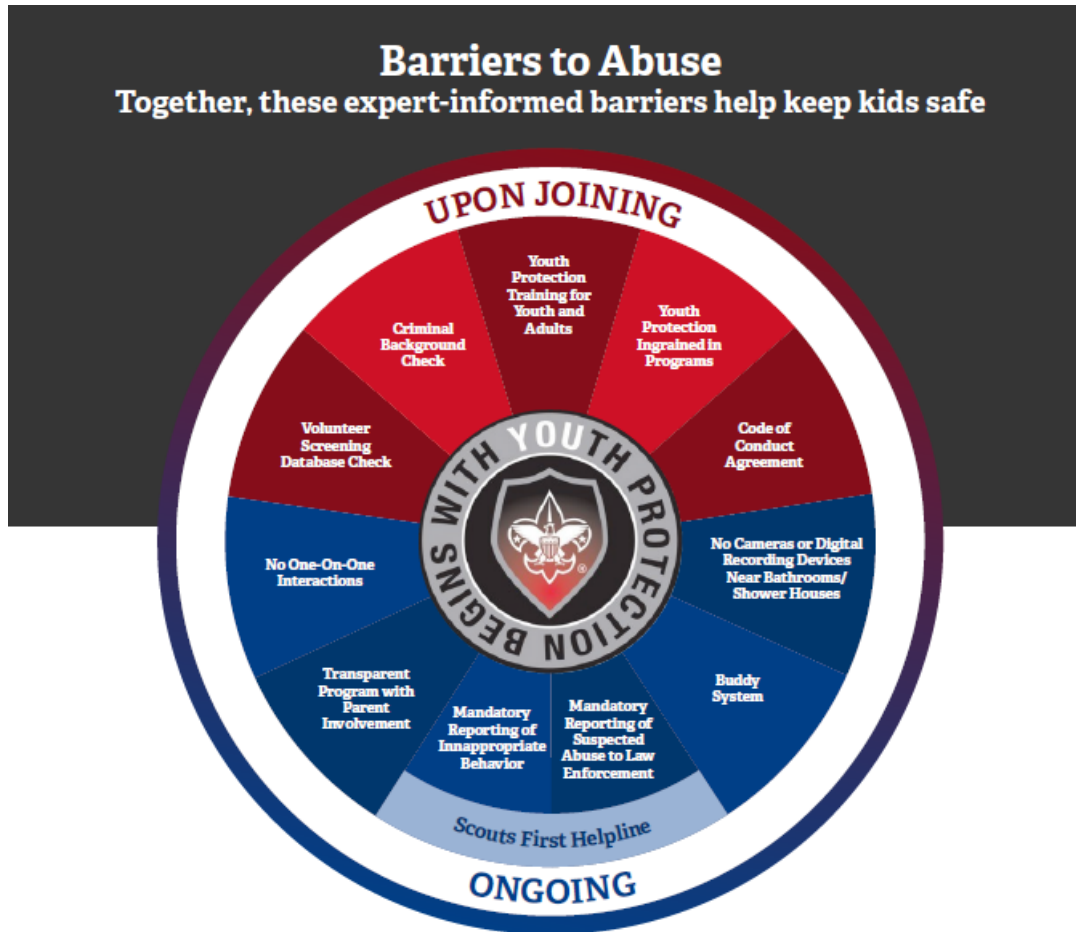
The Buddy System:

- Ensures that one-on-one adult and youth contact does not take place.
- Re-emphasizes the age and genders that should interact, keeping buddies to no more than two years apart in age.
- Is a prevention strategy for bullying or hazing.

HOW CAN YOU RE-EMPHASIZE THE BUDDY SYSTEM AT YOUR CAMP PROGRAMS?



Preventing Youth on Youth Abuse



Separate Accommodations

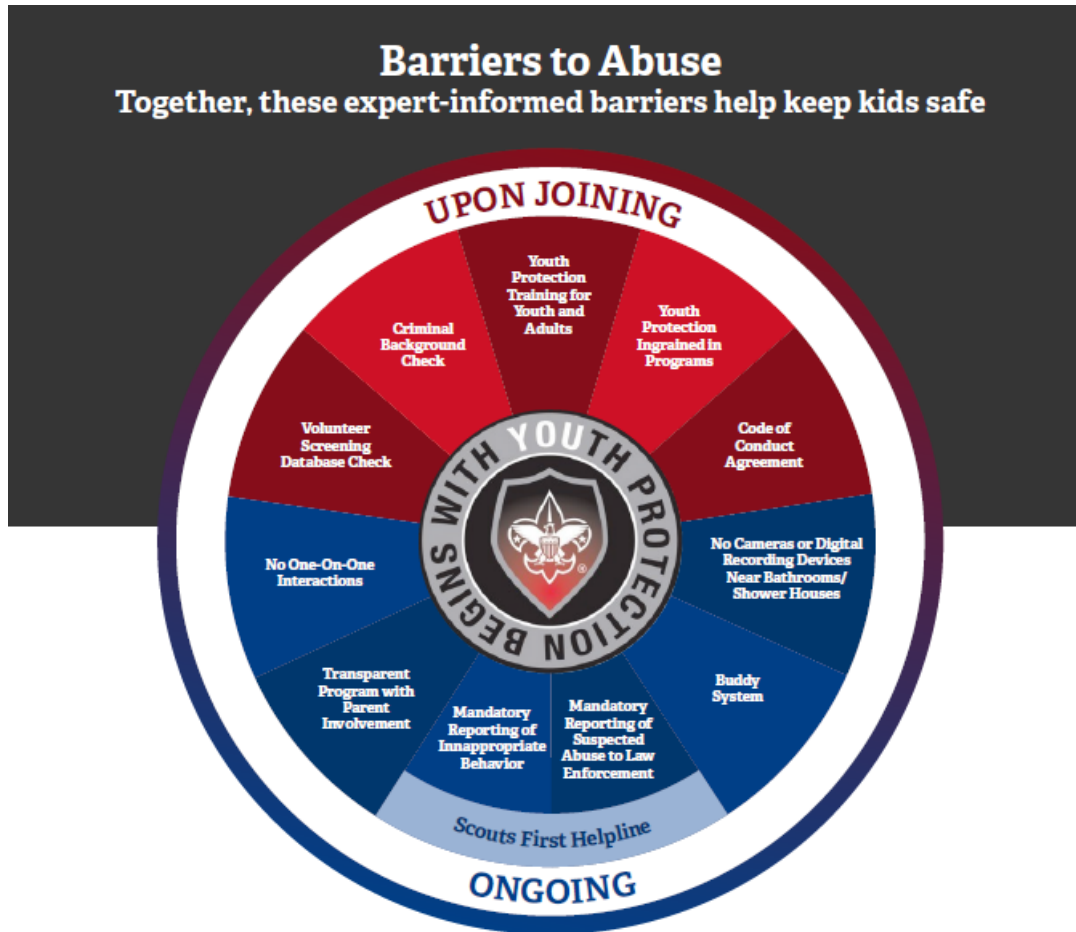
- Youth sharing tents must be no more than two years apart in age.
- In Cub Scouting ONLY, parents and guardians may share a tent with their family.
- In Scouts BSA, Venturing, and Sea Scouts, youth and adults tent separately.
- Spouses may share tents.



Scouting Barrier to Abuse: Separate Accommodations

- NO adults or adult program participants (over 18) are to be in youth (under 18) lodging.
- Youth staff or campers should not enter a tent or cabin that is not theirs – especially if they are more than two years apart in age.
- Staff and unit leaders should be mindful of older staff and youth members going into the tents or cabins of younger staff and youth members and performing an “initiation” or other inappropriate activities.

Preventing Youth on Youth Abuse



Separate Accommodations - Restrooms

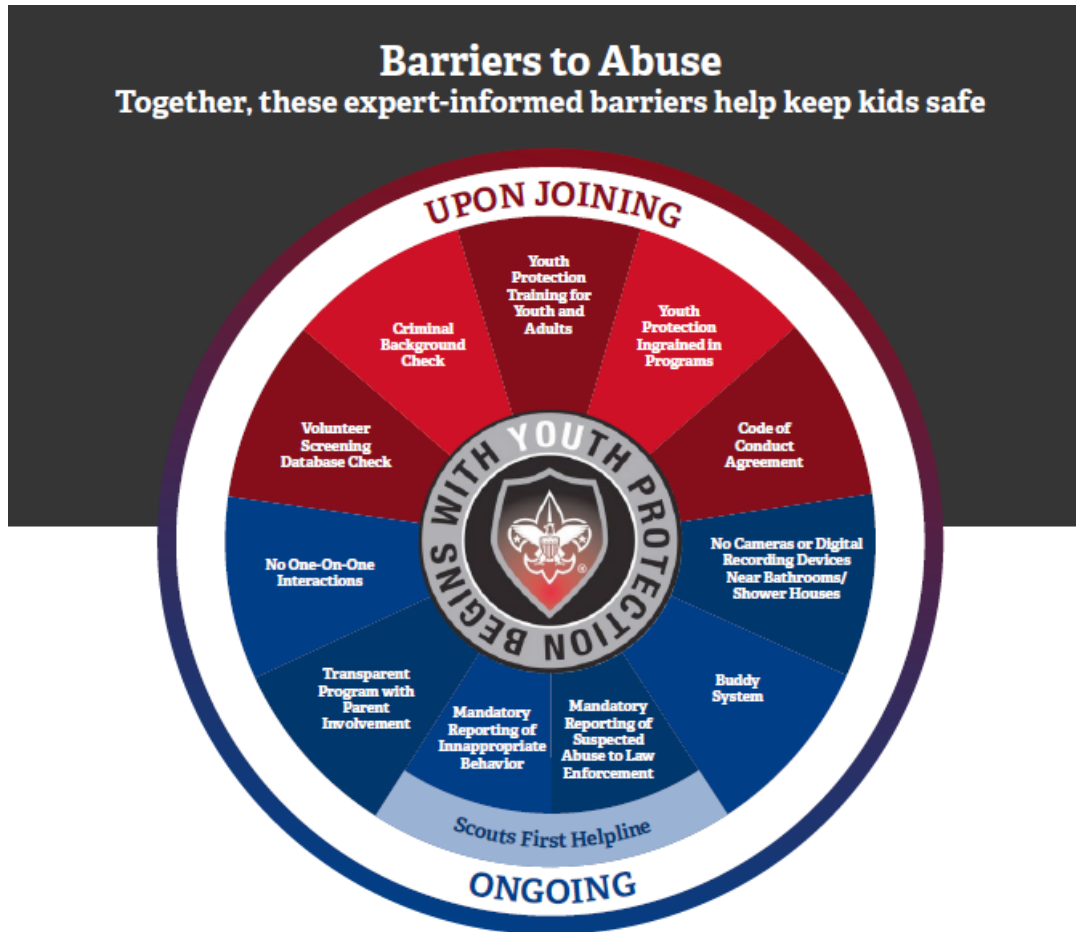
- Separate shower and toilet facilities for youth and adults and male and female
- If not, available separate times should be scheduled and posted
- Privacy must be respected by both youth and adults



Separate Accommodations

- Monitoring the restrooms/shower houses or other changing areas.
- Reinforcing usage guidelines to youth staff and campers.
- Not allowing digital recording devices or cameras in shower and changing areas. (Have separate charging stations available for electronics, away from bathrooms or shower areas.)

Preventing Youth on Youth Abuse



Digital Privacy

- Inappropriate use is prohibited
- Respect privacy even on digital platforms



Scouting Barrier to Abuse: Digital Privacy

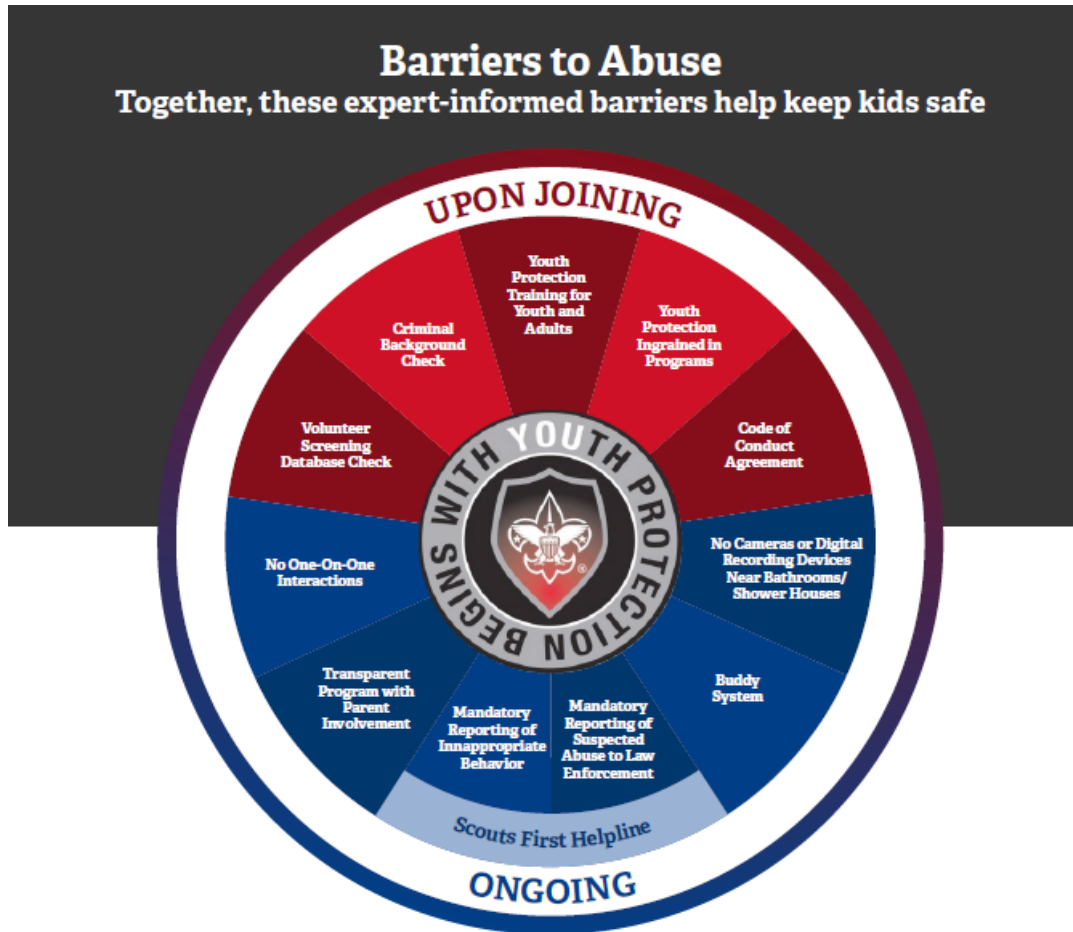
What are some areas or ways that youth can interact inappropriately online or on digital devices?

- Taking inappropriate pictures of ourselves, other Scouts, or staff.
- Viewing pornography
- Online bullying or hazing
- Sexting
- Youth only interaction (with no adult supervision) on online apps or servers such as Discord, Slack or even on gaming platforms.
- Reminder - adult cyber predators could be involved, posing as a youth, without our knowledge.
- Images uploaded to the internet can become available worldwide and are permanent. Uploaded images can lead to embarrassment, extortion, and sextortion.

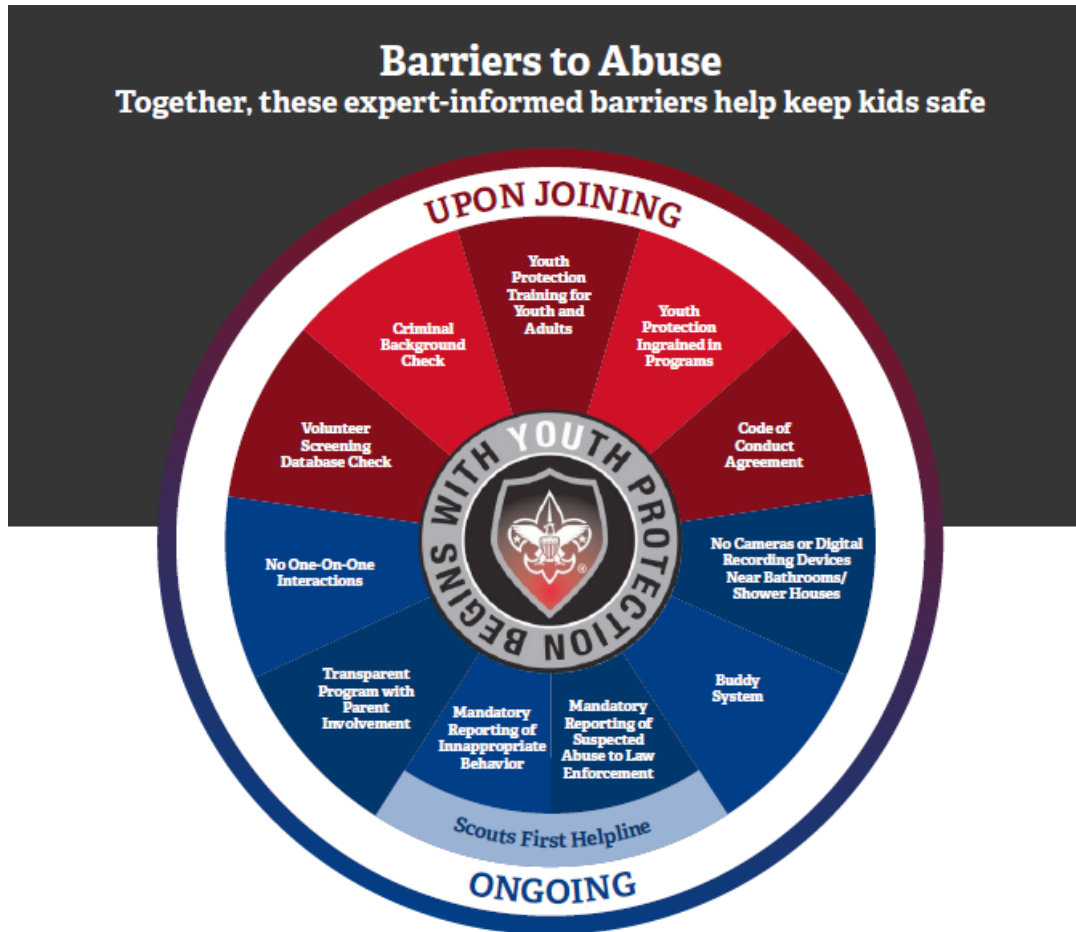
Preventing Youth on Youth Abuse

Sexual Activity Prohibited

- Sexual activity is prohibited in Scouting



Preventing Youth on Youth Abuse



Hazing, Initiations, and Bullying

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



Scouting Barrier to Abuse: Hazing, Initiation, Bullying

How can we prevent hazing, initiations and bullying at camp?

- Remind all youth that Scout-like behavior does not include any form of abusive behavior.
- See it, stop it, report it.
- Bystander/upstander responsibility
- Recognize those who report/upstanders.
- Emphasize to our campers and staff that voicing opinions is OK and safe.



BE AN
UPSTANDER,
NOT A ~~BYSTANDER~~

Upstander

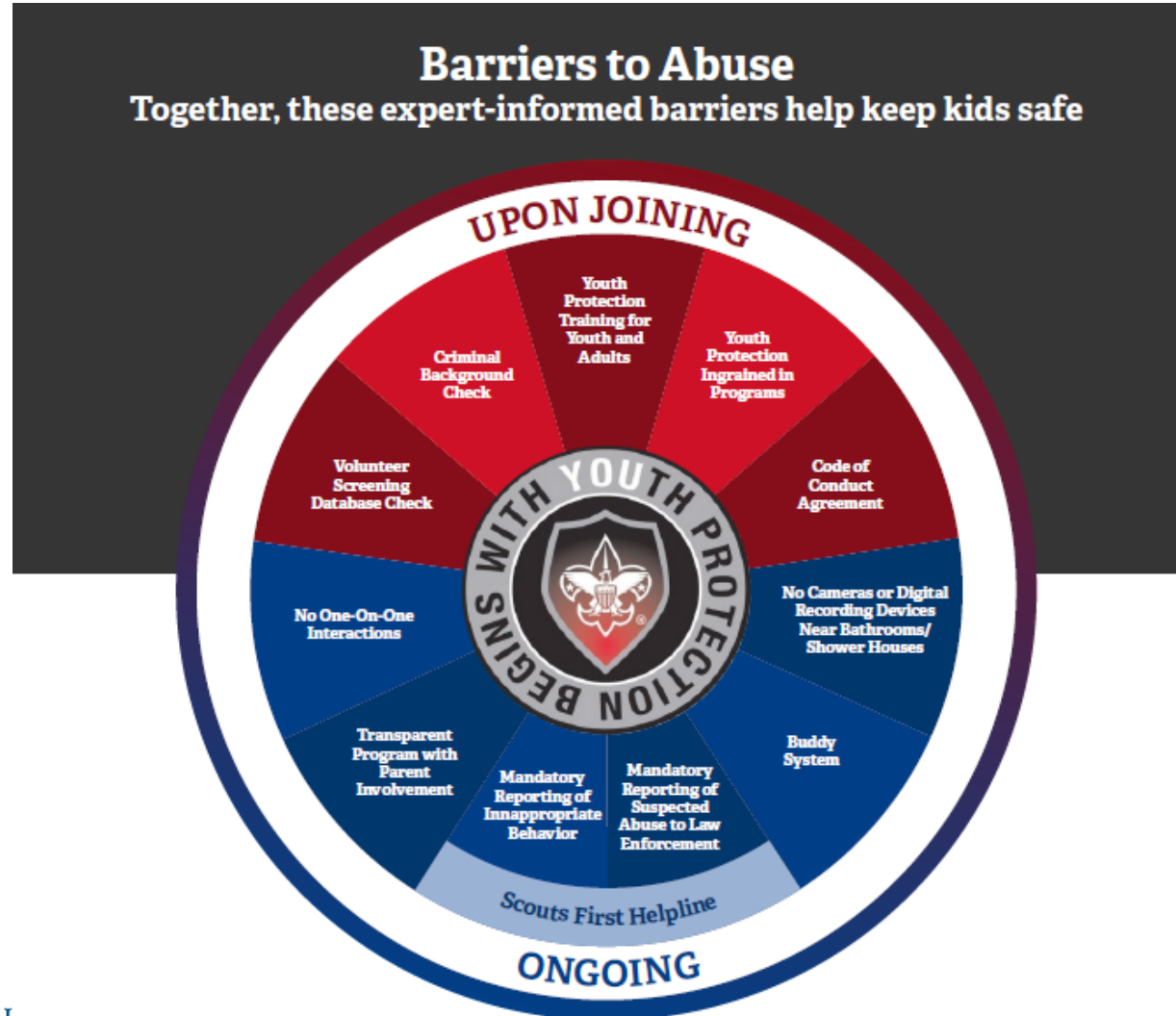
- Someone who acts, particularly when the easiest or most acceptable course is to be a bystander and do nothing.
- An upstander gets involved.

Scouting Barrier to Abuse: Upstander

What are some ways you can encourage upstander behavior at camp with your youth?

- Model upstander behavior as camp staff members.
- Point out and recognize upstander behavior when it occurs.

Preventing Youth on Youth Abuse





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Recognize

Some things you should be familiar with to be more situationally aware

- “Games”
- Youth slang
- Texting
- Hashtags
- Apps and online messaging
- Public displays of affection
- Inappropriate buddy groups

Recognize Harassment Behavior

Unwanted Behaviors

- Unwanted advances and harassment of staff (in person or online)
- Unwanted sexual advances or suggestive advances (in person or online)
- Verbal Harassment (in person or online)
- Unwanted touching

Recognize Harassment Behavior

How do these manifest at camp?

- Jokes, smirks, photo taking, pointing, gawking or eyeing
- Voyeuristic activities in private areas
- Leering or staring
- “Ranking” members of any gender
- Comments
- Harassing transgender Scouts

Medication Abuse

How might medication lead to youth-on-youth abuse?

- Misusing prescription medicines.
- Taking a medicine that was prescribed for someone else
- Taking a larger dose than prescribed
- Using the medicine in a different way than it is intended. For example, instead of swallowing tablets, one is crushing and then snorting or injecting them.
- Using the medicine for another purpose, such as getting high.
- Misusing over the counter medicines, such as cold medicine.



Camp Traditions vs BSA Program

What are some examples of traditions that can be abuse, harassment, bullying, hazing, etc.?

- Initiations and humiliating acts such as paddling a Scout
- Forcing Scouts to sing or complete a task to retrieve lost items
- Taunting due to physical limitations
- Youth who are new-to-Scouting and younger youth being victimized by older youth seeking retaliation for when they were abused, hazed, or initiated.
- Activities or patrol / camp staff events where no adults are present
- Cultural appropriation

Bullying Behavior

What are some examples of bullying behavior you might see at camp?

- Group/gang bullying (roving bully groups) of youth away from their home unit
- Pushing youth out of meal lines
- Pinning down, threatening, touching youth in restroom or shower facilities
- Making fun of/targeting youth with disabilities and other perceived differences
- Pantsing

Bullying Behavior

What are some examples of bullying behavior you might see at camp?

- Pulling back/down shower curtains
- Ridicule or group verbal abuse, including serious or excessive teasing
- Name calling
- Insulting nicknames
- Derogatory statement about youth identities



How to Recognize Signs & Symptoms of Abuse



Responding to Youth-on-Youth Abuse



RESPOND

Scenario 1

A 17-year-old staff member is texting with a 15-year-old staff member over the course of a week.

The 15-year-old becomes uncomfortable when the 17-year-old begins texting suggestive emojis to the 15-year-old.

How do you respond?

Scenario 2

An 8-year-old camper comes to your office with his buddy looking for the “left-handed smoke shifter” that the 14 -year-old den chief from his unit had sent them to find.

The next item on the list is “50 feet of shoreline”. They were told that “everyone in this unit has to find these things or they do not eat tonight”.

What do you do?

Scenario 3

You walk into a program area where a group of 16-year-old campers are talking with some 13-year-olds of the opposite gender.

You hear them invite the 13-year-olds to a party they are having at the campsite tonight after dinner.

What do you do?

Scenario 4

You are the 18-year-old Handicraft area director and have been assigned one camp staff member who is 16-year-old to work in your program area.

During the breaks between merit badge class sessions, it is just you and your 16-year-old staffer. Is this a problem?

What should you do?

Scenario 5

You walk into your program area and there are a group of Scouts all huddled together looking at someone's phone.

The youth are giggling and saying, "show me, show me." These youth are a mixed group of genders and ages.

Something doesn't feel right to you and as you get closer the youth quickly put away the phone and take a seat.

What do you do?

Scenario 6

You are the troop guide for a NYLT patrol. You visit your troop's patrol site and notice that the same Scout has been doing the dishes at every meal.

This is the youngest Scout in the patrol. The patrol duty roster was filled out and didn't indicate that this Scout was assigned to this task each time.

What should you do?

Responding to Youth-on-Youth Abuse



RESPOND



BSA Reporting Policies



Mandatory Reporters

- All adult Scouters must report good-faith suspicion
- The agency is on the camp emergency contact list
- No one may abdicate this responsibility
- Know additional state laws



Steps in Reporting Abuse

- **First** – Immediately stop the policy violation. May include finding an adult if you are a youth.
- **Second** – Notify your camp director. If they are not available, then the program director or camp ranger.
- **Third** – The camp director will follow the remaining steps

REPORT IT.

Scouts should report suspected youth protection violations and abuse. Be sure to tell a Scout leader about the situation immediately. You can also call 1-844-SCOUTS1.



Scouting is Safer than Ever Before

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BARRIERS
TO ABUSE

MILLIONS OF PARENTS TRUST
THE BSA TO PROVIDE
**MEANINGFUL
PROGRAMMING**
IN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

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**RESPOND
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