

Child Sexual Abuse Prevention and Response in Organizational Settings

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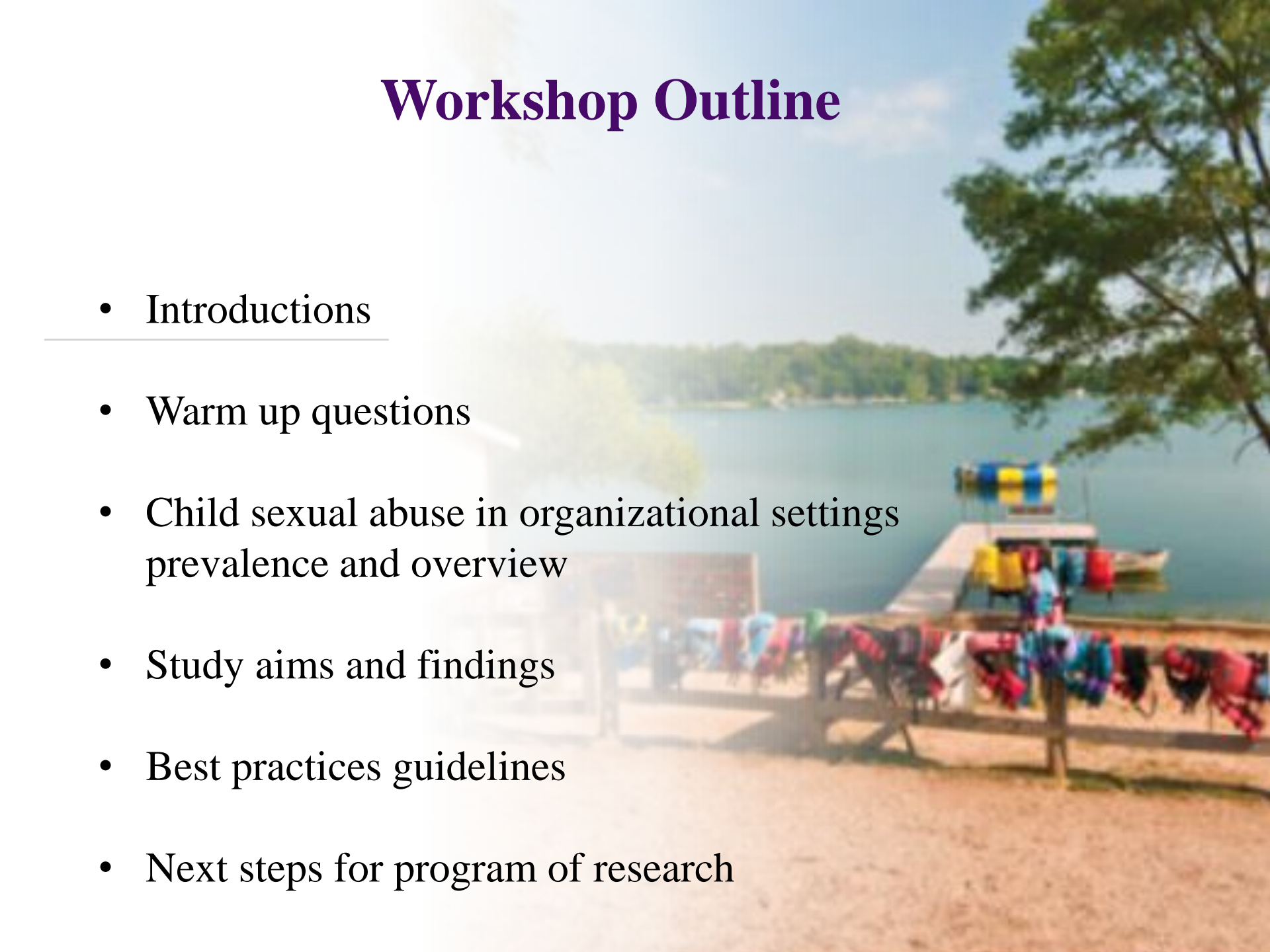


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Workshop Outline

- Introductions
- Warm up questions
- Child sexual abuse in organizational settings prevalence and overview
- Study aims and findings
- Best practices guidelines
- Next steps for program of research



Child Sexual Abuse Prevalence

-Zoom Poll-

What was the percent change in child sexual abuse rates
between 1992 and 2017?

No change at all

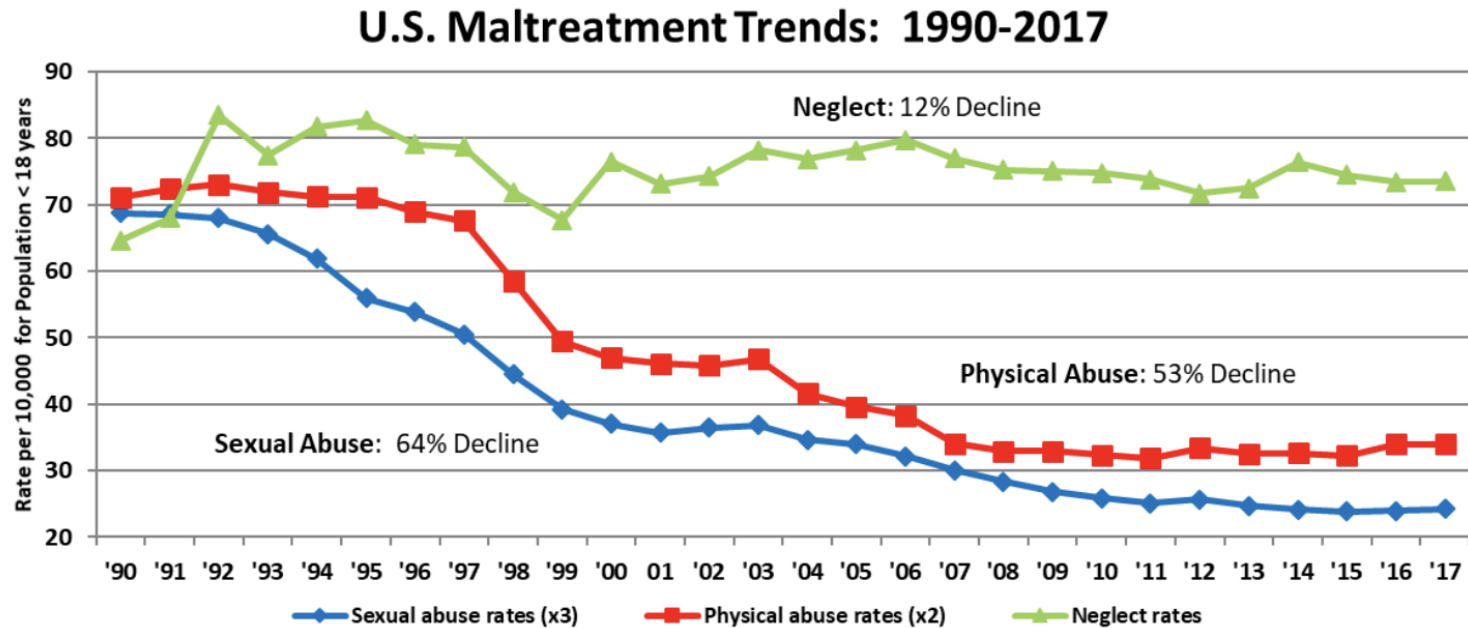
14% decline

64% decline

5% increase



Child Sexual Abuse Prevalence



Note: Trend estimates represent total change from 1992 to 2017. Annual rates for physical abuse and sexual abuse have been multiplied by 2 and 3 respectively in Figure 1 so that trend comparisons can be highlighted.

¹ The statistics in Table 1 and Figure 1 concern substantiated cases of sexual abuse, physical abuse and neglect. A substantiated case means a case that has been reported to a child protection agency, investigated and deemed to have occurred according to a “preponderance of evidence.” The child maltreatment cases referred and investigated by state child protection agencies primarily involve abuse by caregivers. The cases do not include many involving stranger abusers, unless some element of caregiver neglect was involved.

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Child Sexual Abuse Prevalence

Youth Serving Organizations

Study 1: Shakeshaft, 2004

Definition: *The behaviors included in the review are physical, verbal, or visual. Examples include touching breasts or genitals of students; oral, anal, and vaginal penetration; showing students pictures of a sexual nature; and sexually-related conversations, jokes, or questions directed at students.* (p. 1)



Findings: Up to 10% of children are victimized in educational settings



Child Sexual Abuse Prevalence

Youth Serving Organizations

Study 2: Shattuck et al., 2016

Definition: (1) *“Did a grown-up you know touch your private parts when they shouldn't have or make you touch their private parts, or force you to have sex?”*,

(3) YSO worker: *“a grown-up (your child/you) know(s) from some organization, such as a teacher, coach, or youth group leader”*

Findings: 1% responded reported CSA; US-based population estimate of **36,000** children victimized (95% CI, 10,000-125,000)



Child Sexual Abuse Prevalence

Youth Serving Organizations

Study 3: Witt et al., 2019

Definition: Sexual harassment or forced to perform sexual acts while in any type of institutional setting (school, group home, foster family, hospital, sports club, choir, Catholic org., Protestant Org., Scouts, other)

Results: 3% of adults reported experiencing CSA in an organizational setting



Child Sexual Abuse Has Impacted all YSOs

- Historically, all types of youth serving organizations (YSOs) have experienced child sexual abuse cases (CSA)
- CSA can have significant short- & long-term negative impacts on victims/survivors and their families
- The impact on YSOs can be devastating (e.g., lack of trust, bankruptcy, program shut down).



YSO Child Sexual Abuse Is Often Associated With...

Staff “drift” from organizational policies & practices

“Grooming” of parents, youth &/or organization staff

Abuse by “Powerful Perpetrators” in YSOs

Complacency resulting in lost prevention opportunities



YSOs Responses

- Some YSOs began addressing CSA in the 1970s; some are only just coming around
- Many YSOs now implement an array of CSA prevention measures
- The full array of prevention measures remain largely unknown



Preventing Child Sexual Abuse in the Context of Youth Serving Organizations



Investigators:

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Our Study



1. Index existing measures to prevent and respond to CSA;
2. Compare with existing best practices guidelines;
3. Improve existing best practices guidelines



Partnership with four national U.S.-based YSOs



Approx. 2 million staff and volunteers who serve close to 20 million children per year

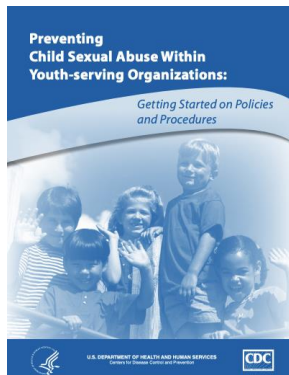


Goal 1: Index existing measures

- Organizational documents
 - 161 provided; 78 screened
 - E.g., Codes of conduct, policies, training manuals
- Indexing of measures
 - 1,400 distinctive prevention elements
 - E.g., “*Protecting youth from child sexual abuse is responsibility of everyone here*”
 - E.g., “*Staff and volunteers are not to transport children in their own vehicles*”



Goal 2: Compare with best practices



November 2016



Goal 2: Compare with best practices

- Indexing of measures
 - 260 specific best practices recommendations
 - E.g., “*The organization schedules reviews to update the code of conduct*”
 - E.g., “*The organization prohibits staff from asking children to keep secrets*”
- Crosswalk findings lack of overlap:
 - Inclusion of children and families in policy development
 - Design of physical environment

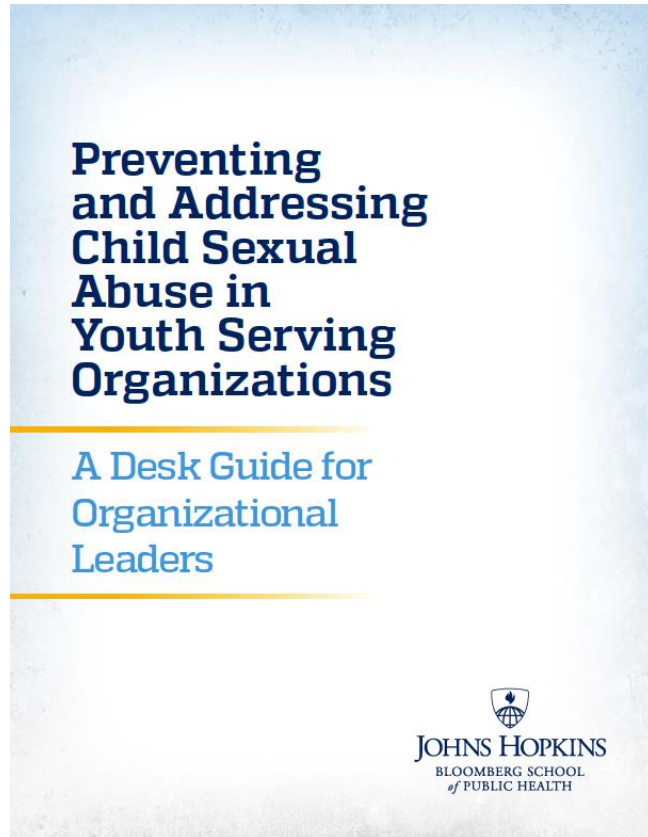


Goal 3: Improve existing efforts

- Observations:
 - Too many recommendations
 - An overemphasis on rules
 - The absence of an overarching framework
 - The need for tailored policy and practice



Leadership Desk Guide



- Shift away from a series of discrete rules towards overarching goals
- Core set of rational principals that flow from a unified framework
- Guide the development of *individualized protocols* to best meet local needs

Eight Practice Areas

1. Focus on child wellbeing
2. Build on training
3. Increase monitoring of adult-child interactions
4. Collaborate with children and parents
5. Identify and address safety concerns
6. Increase accountability
7. Address youth sexual behavior
8. Strengthen human resources



Practice Area 1: Focus on child wellbeing

Principles:

- Child wellbeing as a prevailing culture
- Professionalism within the context of caring relationships
 - Overtly address boundary violations
- Leadership by example
- Child-focused language



Practice Area 2: Build on training

Principles:

- Training can foster an organizational culture of child protection
- Training components include:
 - Knowledge about CSA
 - Attitudes about child protection
 - Awareness of key policies and procedures about CSA



Practice Area 3: Increase monitoring of adult-child interactions

Principles:

- Organization's physical space maximizes visibility of adult-child interactions
- Rules enhance the visibility of adult-child interactions
- Increase monitoring in mentoring programs
 - Monitoring of adherence to policies, rules, and healthy boundaries



Practice Area 4: Collaborate with children and parents

Principles:

- Children participate in decisions affecting them
- Children and parents are part of the solution to child sexual abuse prevention
 - Open conversations
 - Surveys
 - Situational Prevention Approach (Kaufman)



Practice Area 5: Identify and address safety concerns

Principles:

- Identify risks:
 - Personal characteristics
 - Environmental risks
 - Risky situations
 - Routine activities
 - Policies
- Stakeholder input
- Prioritize and generate solutions



Practice Area 6: Increase accountability

Principles:

- Regularly evaluate and review child safety practices
 - Surveys or interviews with organization's participants
 - Individual staff interviews
 - External independent oversight



Practice Area 7: Address youth sexual behavior

Principles:

- Move beyond a victimization focus
- Move beyond a zero tolerance approach
- Develop clear reporting guidelines
- Be alert for bias
- Involve youth and parents
- Use child-friendly language



Practice Area 8: Strengthen human resources

Principles:

- Sound recruitment and selection process
- Training vs. socialization
- Supervision



Sample Desk Guide Table

What Steps Does My Organization Take to Collaborate with Children and Parents?

This table identifies critical questions that are central to fostering collaboration among an organization, children, and parents. Leaders can use these questions and suggested strategies for addressing these questions to create their organization's approach for increasing collaboration with children and parents.

Critical questions	Goals	Actions to achieve goals
Does my organization collaborate with children and parents to develop our policies and procedures?	Organizational procedures require that children and parents be included in the development new policy and in the substantial revision of existing policy.	Use existing communication processes, or draw on other established methods, to ensure children and parents are involved in co-design of policy. Obtain input on statements from YSO's stakeholders (staff, volunteers, parents, children).
	Children and parents understand their role in the development of new/revision of existing policy.	Ensure that procedures include fundamental principles of democratic participation.
Does my organization view children and parents as part of the solution in preventing and addressing child sexual abuse?	Children and parents are provided with information and opportunities to prevent and address CSA.	Provide child- and parent-focused trainings on CSA. Encourage parents to make unannounced visits. Survey children and parents on organizational members' exemplary and problematic behaviors.



Desk Guide Strengths

The Desk Guide offers a potential path to better prevention. It reflects....

- **A solid evidence-informed foundation** – Rooted in best practice recommendations & YSO prevention practice findings
- **A shift toward efforts to achieve overarching prevention goals** – Instead of the endless cycle of the “more is better” ongoing addition of discrete rules
- A commitment to the development of caring and professional relationships between children and adult staff/volunteers

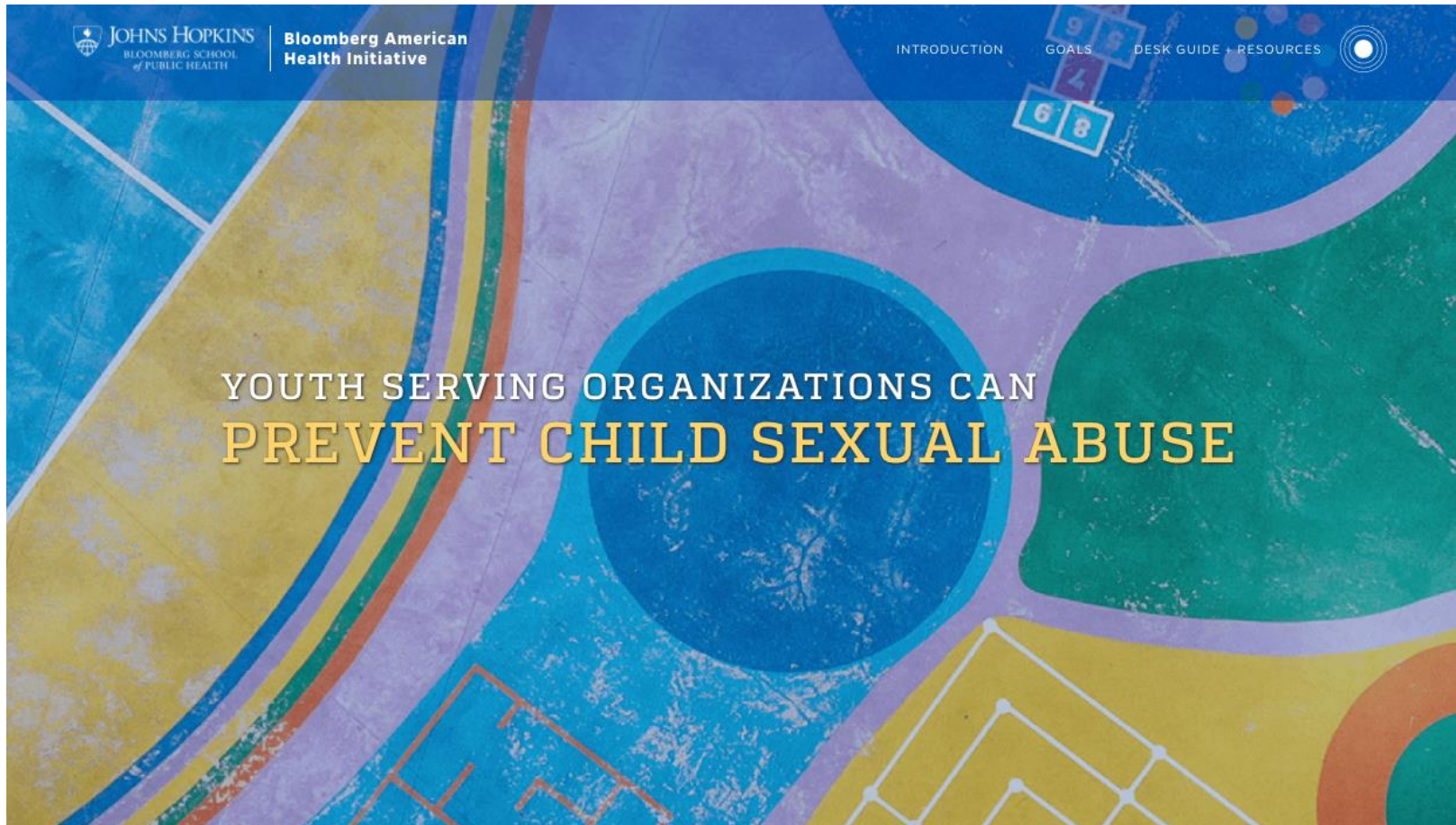


Desk Guide Strengths

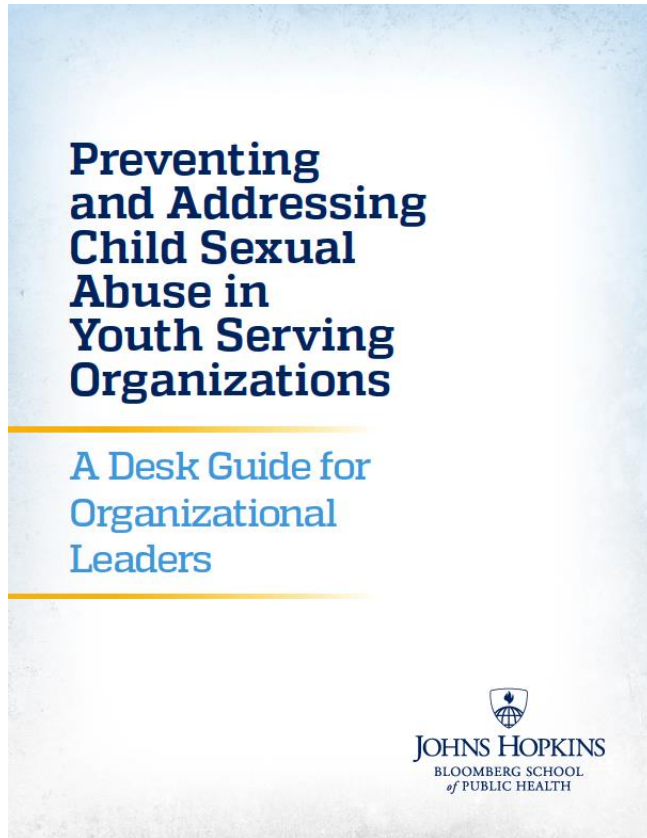
- Encouragement to tailored safety approaches to maximize effectiveness
- Several best practices guidelines are “place-based” centric and contain language contrary to mentoring programs
- Desk Guide acknowledges mentoring programs’ structure and corresponding safety strategies



Where to find it



Conclusions



- The Leadership Desk Guide is a result of a true collaborative effort
- Much is already reflected in many organizations' policies and practices
- Our goal is to protect children by increasing coherence and reducing complexity of child safe measures



What is next?

- Was there a decline in child sexual abuse victimization and boundary violating behaviors in youth serving organizations?
- National survey with over N=6,000 adults ages 18-28
- Survey items
 - Victimization by adults and peers
 - Variety of youth serving organizations types
- Estimated survey launch: Summer, 2021



Resources

Desk Guide:

Letourneau, E. J., Assini-Meytin, L.C., Kaufman, K. L., Mathews, B., & Palmer, D. (2020). Preventing and addressing child sexual abuse in youth serving organizations: A desk guide for organizational leaders. Baltimore, MD: Moore Center for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

Website:

<https://americanhealth.jhu.edu/youth-serving-organizations>

PreventConnect Podcast:

<http://www.preventconnect.org/2021/03/introducing-a-new-desk-guide-preventing-child-sexual-abuse-in-youth-serving-organizations/>

Results From Our Project's Aim 1 Are Presented Here:

Assini-Meytin, L.C., Kaufman, K., Mathews, B., Palmer, D., Ingram, M., & Letourneau, E.J. (2021). Preventing and responding to child sexual abuse: Organizational efforts. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 112, 104892.





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