

SAFEGUARDING IN SCOUTING.

Young People First

WORKING SAFELY WITH YOUNG PEOPLE TRAINING RESOURCE – EXERCISE

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE?

Statement 1

Child abuse is a problem that exists in all ethnic, social, economic and religious groups.

Response:

There is no single, definitive cause of child abuse, and any child – regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, cultural identity, socio-economic status, spirituality, sexual orientation, physical or mental abilities, or personality – may be vulnerable to abuse.

Statement 2

The stereotype image of a child sex offender as a stranger and a gay man, is false.

Response:

Children are more often abused by someone they know and trust, someone who seemingly does not represent any threat to the child. In 80 percent of cases of sexual abuse, men are the perpetrators of the abuse. Studies mainly define the male as heterosexual.

Statement 3

Many young people are used to having their experiences disbelieved or ignored.

Response:

Many victims have recounted in their personal testimonies to having told someone in their childhood and having either not been listened to or heard. Some of the inquiries, for example into abuse in children's homes, have recorded similar findings.

Statement 4

Some children and young people abuse other children.

Response:

Research studies show a striking level of consistency of about 35% of allegations involving children or young people abusing another child or young person. Generally, abusive behaviour begins to show during late primary to early adolescence. The earlier these behaviours are picked up the more likely a positive outcome will be, providing appropriate support and counselling are available.

Statement 5

Boys and girls are almost equally at risk of being physically abused.

Response:

Boys are slightly more at risk of physical abuse according to Department of Health statistics for children on child protection registers (2002) by sex and category of abuse. Physical abuse: boys 2.3

(thousands); girls - 1.9 (thousands). Boys may present more challenging behaviours to parents and generally it is felt that it may be more acceptable for parents to hit boys.

Statement 6

Abused children often feel that they are to blame.

Response:

Children tend to blame themselves for the things the adult world lays on them – for example in the research findings on divorce, children have said that they are to blame for their parents separating, eg it was because I fought with my brother.

Statement 7

Child sex offenders are often respected members of their communities.

Response:

Abusers come from a wide range of social and intellectual backgrounds and may be married, well liked and respected members of society. They will often be in positions where they can have substantial access to children, for example teachers, youth leaders.

Statement 8

Young people with disabilities are at greater risk of all forms of abuse.

Response:

Children with disabilities are more vulnerable to abuse. They may be unable to tell, or their attempts at telling may be misunderstood. They are often dependant upon adults for intimate care and medical treatments, making the task of distinguishing between appropriate and inappropriate touch difficult. They can come into contact with multiple carers and the opportunities to abuse are therefore increased.

Statement 9

Bullying is a normal part of growing up and does no harm.

Response:

The lives of many people are made miserable by bullying. Victims of bullying can feel lonely, isolated and deeply unhappy. It can have a devastating effect on a young person's self-esteem and they may become withdrawn and insecure. They may feel that it's their fault, or there's something wrong with them. Any suspicions or allegations of bullying of a young person should be acted on.

Statement 10

Young people are unlikely to make up allegations.

Response:

Children rarely lie about abuse, and their greatest fear is that they will not be believed. Abusers often tell their victims that no one will believe them if they report what has happened. All allegations should be treated seriously whether they support or refute an allegation of abuse.

Statement 11

The media have sensationalised abuse and it is not as bad as they would have us believe.

Response:

British statistics show that one in 10 children will be sexually abused by the time they are aged 16. Of these 1 in 12 are boys and 1 in 8 girls.

Statement 12

Children abused by their parents are always taken into care.

Response:

Child protection professionals recognise that it is often in the best interests of the child that the family remains together so that work can begin to address the particular causes of the abuse. They therefore try to protect a child within the home where at all possible.