BACKGROUND

- This project examines current prevention policies, practices, and organizational theory in youth-serving organizations (YSOs) to determine which may hold the most potential for protecting youth and ensuring safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments.
- This project’s goal is to develop resources based on the best available evidence to support diverse YSOs in preventing child sexual abuse (CSA) and ensuring safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments for children and youth.
- Many YSOs have implemented policies and procedures based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) 2007 publication, Preventing Child Sexual Abuse Within Youth-serving Organizations: Getting Started on Policies and Procedures.
- Since the 2007 document’s release, many changes have occurred in the communities and contexts in which YSOs operate, especially related to technology and organizational responses to incidences of CSA.
- Findings from this project will be incorporated into an updated publication and used in the development of practice tools that will be available to all YSOs.
- CDC’s partnerships with YSOs are crucial. Our partners play a key role in ensuring that the resources we develop as part of this project take life in the field and are successfully implemented by organizations.
- This project is a collaborative effort funded and led by the CDC Foundation with technical assistance from CDC’s Division of Violence Prevention.
- CDC Foundation funding for the project is supported by grants from The Oak Foundation, Porticus, and World Childhood Foundation USA.

DEFINITION

Child sexual abuse (CSA) refers to the involvement of a child (person less than 18 years old) in sexual activity that violates the laws or social taboos of society and that he/she:
- does not fully comprehend
- does not consent to or is unable to give informed consent to, or
- is not developmentally prepared for and cannot give consent to
KEY ACTIVITIES & FINAL PRODUCTS

Environmental Scan
- YSOs are an integral piece of informing the work and bringing their real-world perspective to the project. YSOs across the country of different types and sizes and that serve diverse populations are contributing to the project in multiple ways, like:
  - Responding to questionnaires to share their experiences and challenges.
  - Participating in focus groups and interviews to identify gaps in current prevention and implementation guidance.
  - Helping connect us to other YSOs who serve special populations and communities that have been marginalized.

Update CDC’s Publication
- Findings from the activities above will be incorporated into a downloadable PDF of similar length as the 2007 report, and a live digital “extended” version with additional resources will be available on the Veto Violence website in Fall 2022.

Launch Resource on VetoViolence
- In addition to the updated PDF document, the online resource will include tools and worksheets that are customizable to meet organizations where they are in the planning and implementation process. The resource will also provide additional content based on each YSO’s specific needs and the unique populations it serves.
- As this project progresses, updates and links to the resources will be shared via partner announcements and posts on social media channels. Partners and YSOs are encouraged to share announcements, social media posts, and messaging with other partners and networks to raise awareness about these resources with YSOs in the U.S. and abroad.

**Timeline**
- **SPRING 2020 - SUMMER 2021**
  - Literature and Review
  - Environmental Scan
  - Interviews with YSOs
- **SUMMER 2021 - SUMMER 2022**
  - Update CDC’s Publication from 2007
  - Dissemination efforts begin
- **SUMMER 2022 - FALL 2022**
  - Launch Resource on VetoViolence
  - Ongoing dissemination efforts
CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AS A PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM

- CSA is a significant but preventable adverse childhood experience (ACE) and public health problem.
- Although estimates vary across studies, data show that about 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 13 boys across all ages and socioeconomic levels experience child sexual abuse at some point in childhood.
- Adolescent girls are at the highest risk, with many female adults reporting that their victimization first occurred before the age of 18.
- Experiencing CSA can result in short- and long-term physical, mental, and emotional health consequences like unwanted/unplanned pregnancies, posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms, and substance use.
- Experiencing CSA may also increase a child’s risk for experiencing violence later in life.

THE ROLE OF YSOs IN CSA PREVENTION

- Millions of youth in the United States participate daily in YSO activities and develop relationships with other youth, adult staff, and volunteers.
- YSOs play a vital role in promoting child well-being, youth connectedness, and resilience.
- YSOs are critical partners for preventing all forms of child abuse, including CSA.
- Currently we have only limited effective, evidence-based guidance for protecting children and youth from CSA.
- Organizations that serve youth across the United States need up-to-date research-based policies and procedures to prevent child sexual abuse.

For additional information, please contact Amber McKeen, Project Manager, at pvw5@cdc.gov

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