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Praesidium Top 10 Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Essentials for Emergency Childcare

In unprecedented times and crisis situations, Praesidium commends Ys for providing an incredible service to your communities. We are here to help you navigate difficult situations and questions while continuing to maintain a safe environment for all youth in your care.

1. When possible, provide emergency care in Y facilities with YMCA screened, trained and supervised staff.
2. If this is not possible, when providing emergency care **away from the Y facility or with non-YMCA** staff, at a minimum:
 - a. Require at least 1-2 supervisor/director level staff who are **screened and trained in abuse prevention** per the YMCA's policies to always remain on site with staff and youth in programming.
 - b. If utilizing non-YMCA staff in the childcare program, ensure that staff are **supervised at all times** by a YMCA supervisor/director level staff.
 - c. Provide non-YMCA staff with the **YMCA's Code of Conduct** and contact information for reporting policy or boundary violations.
3. Because circumstances will be rapidly changing, hold **pre and post day meetings** each day.
 - a. Pre-meeting should include a review of these Top 10 Essentials and reminders of the day's schedule. Remind them to report violations to you or Praesidium's Anonymous Helpline: **1-855-347-0751**.
 - b. Post-meeting should include a review of the days' incidents, any potential youth-to-youth or bullying issues, and procedure adjustments that may need to be made for the following days.
4. Create and strictly adhere to an organized **daily schedule** where youth are split into **small age-level groups** (for supervision and social distancing) for the program each day. This greatly minimizes the risk of youth-to-youth abuse and ensures consistent supervision of staff and volunteers.
5. Remember how **adult offenders** operate: **Access, Privacy, and Control**. Knowing how adult offenders operate allows you to minimize opportunities for offenders to engage in policy violations and red flag behaviors.
 - a. **Access:** Adult offenders need access to children so they will take jobs working or volunteering with children. Offenders do whatever is necessary to gain access to children.
 - b. **Privacy:** Offenders do not want to get caught so they look for ways to be alone with children. For example, they look for places like rooms without windows, empty stairwells, bathrooms, locker rooms, etc. Offenders will frequently volunteer to work one-on-one with a child.
 - c. **Control:** Offenders gain control of a child and other adults by manipulating others to believe they are trustworthy and kind. Offenders are very patient and systematic in their attempts to gain control over the children they want to target for abuse. Offenders often exhibit red flag behaviors such as spending time alone with a specific child,

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violating physical boundaries, giving gifts, and violating electronic communications boundaries and/or policies.

6. Know the essentials for **preventing youth-to-youth sexual activity**:
 - a. Adult supervision is key: Require line-of-sight supervision for all children and youth
 - b. Provide structured activities at all times to ensure proper supervision
 - c. Maintain approved ratios
 - d. Create plans for transition times
 - e. Remember that there is no standard definition for “normal sexual curiosity”
 - f. Remind staff that their behavior sets the tone for how youth interact with one another
 - g. Interrupt, respond, report and document all incidents of youth-to-youth sexual activity

7. Require best practice procedures for **bathroom supervision**:
 - a. When supervising restroom use, adult staff members should first quickly scan the bathroom before allowing youths to enter.
 - b. For “Group Bathroom Breaks”:
 - Require staff to take groups of two or more youths to the bathroom – following the “rule of three” or more.
 - If the bathroom only has one stall, only one youth should enter the restroom while the others wait outside with the staff.
 - If there are multiple stalls, only send in as many youths as there are stalls.
 - Minimize youths of different ages using the bathroom at the same time.
 - Require staff to stand outside the bathroom door but remain within earshot.
 - c. For single use restrooms:
 - Require youths to ask permission to use the bathroom.
 - Require all staff to frequently check bathrooms.
 - d. Prohibit staff from using the bathroom at the same time as youths.
 - e. If assisting young youths in the stalls, the staff should keep the door to the stall open.

8. In all areas of the facility and in all activities, always require staff and youth utilize the **“Rule of 3”**:
 - a. No one-on-one interactions between staff and youth or between two youth.
 - b. One staff always maintains two or more youth in their care (including during drop-off and pick-up); if necessary, two staff may be with one youth.

9. Despite potential changes in licensing requirements, **continue to follow** state and/or YMCA approved ratios.

10. Require parents to **sign all youth participants in and out of the program** so the Y maintains a record of all youth in programming.

Lastly, Praesidium encourages Ys to contact Praesidium to schedule a call to discuss the specifics of their program. Please call 817-801-7773 and ask for Erica Smith or email esmith@praesidiuminc.com.