



awareness to action
Wisconsin
Child Sexual Abuse Prevention



WISCONSIN COALITION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION

CURRICULUM REVIEW



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What is Awareness to Action?

Awareness to Action (A2A) is a program of Children's Wisconsin. It is dedicated to helping organizations and communities protect children from sexual abuse. A2A teaches adults to prevent abuse through:

- **Awareness.** Raise awareness of the prevalence of child sexual abuse.
- **Education.** Provide education and support to youth-serving organizations on best practice policies and procedures for prevention.
- **Advocacy.** Be active in public policy discussions about the prevention of child sexual abuse.
- **Action.** Help adults make decisions that will shift the conditions that allow child sexual abuse to happen.

The program is guided by a steering committee. Our steering committee is a group of people who help share our program across the state. This committee has members from:

- Wisconsin Department of Children and Families
- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
- Wisconsin Department of Health Services
- Wisconsin Department of Corrections
- Wisconsin Department of Justice
- Children's Wisconsin
- The Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board
- Thriving Wisconsin
- Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault
- Child Advocacy Centers of Wisconsin

Why Is A2A Looking at Curriculum for Kids?

Although A2A focuses on teaching adults, many states require schools to teach kids about child sexual abuse prevention. School personnel may need help choosing how they teach students about child sexual abuse. A2A wants to give schools and other prevention educators helpful information as they pick an effective curriculum on this sensitive topic. This guide compares the content of child sexual abuse prevention curricula. No endorsement of any specific curriculum is given.

How Was This Review Done?

In 2019, A2A and steering committee members created a tool to compare curriculum content. At that time, a review of lessons and curricula being used in Wisconsin and across the nation was done. Since then, A2A and the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (WCASA) worked together to update the review tool. In 2024, using the updated tool, members of A2A's steering committee reviewed 11 child sexual abuse prevention curricula. Two to three members reviewed each curriculum. The curricula were picked based on availability and use by local schools.

How Should This Review Be Used?

- Learn what it takes to keep kids safe.
- Consider what you need to do to responsibly teach about prevention.
- Compare the curriculum overviewed in this guide.
- Ask for support! Contact A2A or WCASA to talk more.

What Is Prevention?

There are many types of violence in our communities. Child sexual abuse is one of them. There are things we can all do to stop child sexual abuse from happening.

To keep kids safe and thriving, several types of violence prevention strategies are needed. These strategies fall into three categories — primary, secondary and tertiary.

Primary prevention takes place **before** violence and abuse occurs. These strategies take on the reasons that violence happens in the first place. They change the conditions that could allow violence to happen. Communities — including yours — can use primary prevention strategies to keep kids safe from child sexual abuse.

- Promote [protective factors](#)
 - Provide education, support and resources to families
 - Create safe environments for children through policy
- Reduce the impact of [risk factors](#):
 - Community poverty
 - Housing insecurity
 - Limited educational or employment opportunities

Secondary prevention uses early detection to **stop** further harm with intervention. For child sexual abuse, this may include teaching potential responders — such as teachers, doctors and parents — about the signs of child sexual abuse and how to manage disclosures.

Tertiary prevention consists of strategies that give ongoing support to kids and families **after** abuse is discovered. These include advocacy, counseling or social service supports, such as case management.

All three levels of prevention are needed. Each offers effective ways to address child sexual abuse. Primary prevention is uniquely valuable for getting to the root of the problem. These strategies are proactive rather than reactive. They aim to stop abuse **before** it happens. Responsible adults and community members can keep communities safe and supportive for kids and families through primary prevention strategies. This reduces the demand for secondary and tertiary services. Secondary and tertiary prevention take place **after** violence happens.

Where Does Prevention Happen?

The [social-ecological model \(SEM\)](#) is a public health tool. The model shows that for prevention efforts to be successful, individual, relationship, community and societal risk factors must all be addressed. When we use strategies that affect each level of the SEM, we are doing truly comprehensive prevention.



Social Ecological Model

The curricula included in this document focus on the individual level of the SEM. That is, they teach each child about child sexual abuse. Individual education is an important part of any prevention plan. Keep in mind that there are no clinical studies showing a direct correlation between a child-focused sexual abuse prevention curriculum and a decrease in victimization.

The SEM suggests that education alone is unlikely to prevent child sexual abuse if the child lives in otherwise unsupportive environments.

An unsupportive environment may include:

- **Relationship Level.** Living in a home where the family does not send clear messages about consent.
- **Community Level.** Attending a school without adequate policies to prevent abuse.
- **Societal Level.** Living in a society that treats children as though they have no autonomy.

Comprehensive child sexual abuse prevention can build supportive environments at each level:

- **Relationship Level.** Promote healthy relationships among youth and adults, as well as among youth peers.
- **Community Level.** Strengthen policies and practices in the places where kids spend time to remove the chance for abuse to happen.
- **Societal Level.** Change ideas about safe and healthy ways to treat kids.

Shaping relationships, communities and society is more effective at stopping violence before it occurs than education for children alone. It is also an excellent opportunity for schools, families, SASPs and other community partners to work as a team.

Who Is Responsible for Keeping Kids Safe?

It is the responsibility of adults to keep children safe and prevent abuse. Adults can affect primary prevention strategies at the community level. These strategies engage adults with different identities, experiences and roles. Examples include:

- Encouraging [community prevention education](#)
- Implementing policies and guidelines at schools and other youth programs
- Asking schools and youth programs how they prevent child sexual abuse
- Promoting positive norms and parenting in the community and community connectedness

These strategies are one layer of comprehensive prevention that help set up a shared community norm — that adults will protect children and are ultimately responsible for preventing harm.



What To Consider When Choosing a Curriculum?

As mentioned above, there are no clinical studies showing a direct correlation between a child-focused sexual abuse prevention curriculum and a decrease in victimization. However, some strategies have been studied to see what impact they do have on students. Each curriculum listed below is labeled by the level of evidence given to support its impact.

Evidence-based: It is based in research and has strong theory supporting it. They have been carefully studied to show their impact. This means that the curriculum has been evaluated and replicated multiple times with large samples. Doing this type of study means that what happens after a curriculum is likely the result of the curriculum, rather than another factor.

Evidence-informed: These curricula are based in theory and research, but also use a more practice-informed approach. In some cases, adaptations were made to reach an audience or population other than the one which the curriculum was originally evaluated with. It may also be a curriculum that doesn't yet have the evidence needed to designate it as evidence-based but has shown promising outcomes.

Theory-driven: These curricula typically have not been rigorously evaluated to show their effectiveness. The curriculum is supported by theoretical reasoning or logical rationale. While there is reason to believe this curriculum may be effective, the impact is not yet found.

Which Curriculum Will Meet Students' Needs?

When choosing a child sexual abuse prevention curriculum, see if a study has been done for use in a school setting.

1. **Regularly assess** the curriculum for relevance over time. Consider if the curriculum continues to reflect the school community. Look for any gaps in content.
2. **Evaluate** the impact of the curriculum. Schools should use evaluation tools provided with the curriculum or select other tools - such as pre-/post-assessments, satisfaction surveys or activity-based assessments - to collect data on the curriculum's effectiveness. Resources or guidelines for conducting evaluations within school settings can support this process.
3. **Adapt** and adjust based on emerging research, feedback and systemic reviews, such as this one.

Using ongoing evaluation and adaptation enhances the efficacy of child sexual abuse prevention efforts and better meets the needs of students.

What About Students With IEPs?

Guided by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI), this review does not include any curriculum specifically directed to students with special education services. Rather than using a separate curriculum for students who receive special education services, schools should ensure that all students are able to access the prevention lessons chosen by the district. Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) are designed to adapt the content, methodology or delivery of instruction to address a student's unique needs. Special education provides aids and services, such as added visual supports, text readers, sensory supports or organizers to allow the student to better access curriculum and instruction. Consider each individual student's needs. Then, adapt the curriculum so the student can receive and engage in the content.

For more information about meeting the needs of students with IEPs, [please visit the DPI website.](#)

What Needs To Be Kept in Mind When Implementing a Curriculum?

Preventing child sexual abuse is the responsibility of the adults. Even when providing a curriculum to educate children, adults have certain responsibilities.

Ask yourself these questions:

What is the experience of the person facilitating the curriculum?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be knowledgeable on the issue of child sexual abuse.• Be trained to deliver the curriculum in a trauma-informed manner. In any classroom, there may be kids who are being abused or have been sexually abused in the past.• Be taught how to handle disclosures of abuse. This includes supporting the child who discloses and others impacted by the abuse or disclosure.• Understand Mandated Reporter laws. All school staff should understand their responsibility to report disclosures or discovery of abuse.
What resources are available to implement the curriculum?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Financial resources are needed to cover the cost of the curriculum and staff time.• Classroom time will be needed to implement a full curriculum and any follow up.• Community partners, such as Sexual Assault Service Providers, may offer support or provide a curriculum.
Will this curriculum keep kids safe from child sexual abuse?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• See if the curriculum is evidence-based, evidence-informed, theory-driven or untested.• Consider if there is evaluation guidance or tools included, such as pre- and post-or satisfaction surveys.• Note if the curriculum has been assessed for use in a school setting.
Will the curriculum include and represent all members of the school community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider which dimensions of identity are represented, including but not limited to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Race• Ethnicity• Sexual orientation• Gender identity or expression• Religion• Citizenship• Ability• Decide how you can make the curriculum accessible to everyone, including students with special needs.• Be sure students who are absent during the lessons receive the prevention education.• Plan for students and families who choose not to take part in the curriculum.

How will you include adults in this prevention strategy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for telling parents and caregivers about the curriculum and information covered. • Provide materials about child sexual abuse prevention to parents and caregivers. • Offer resources for families in need of ongoing support after the lessons are taught.
What if we need support?	<p>Educating kids about child sexual abuse prevention requires care and attention to the well-being of students and educators. There are community organizations who can help.</p>

Who Can Support Child Sexual Abuse Prevention?

Sexual Assault Service Providers

Prevention education often results in disclosure of child sexual abuse. For these reasons, schools are strongly encouraged to partner with their local [Sexual Assault Service Provider \(SASP\)](#) for effective education.

SASPs are:

- Specialists in sexual assault services and prevention education
- Experts on sexual violence and abuse
- Trained to respond to disclosure of child sexual abuse
- Skilled at answering tough questions about this delicate subject
- Well-informed about local resources and systems processes

To find your local SASP, www.wcasa.org/survivors/service-providers/ or email wcasa@wcasa.org.

Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault

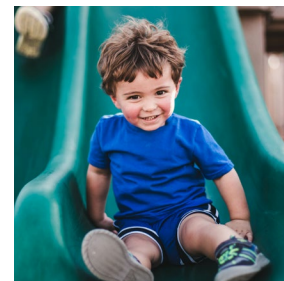
Preventing child sexual abuse takes all of us. WCASA supports and compliments the work of Wisconsin's community-based SASPs and others working to end sexual violence. They promote change in our Wisconsin communities through education, prevention and public policy work.

For more information, visit wcasa.org or email wcasa@wcasa.org.

Awareness to Action

Keeping kids safe is the responsibility of adults. Awareness to Action uses primary prevention to help adults and communities take actions that keep kids safe. They support schools and other youth-serving organizations learn about and put in place best practices for prevention.

To learn more, visit a2awisconsin.org or email a2a@childrenswi.org.



CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

This chart is a quick overview of all curricula reviewed for this document. The dot in each square shows if a curriculum covers the corresponding 10 Core Concepts in Sexual Abuse Prevention. Detailed information for each curriculum is in the summaries that follow.

		Our Whole Lives (OWL)	Mobile County Personal Safety Curriculum	Rights, Respect, Responsibility (3Rs)	Stay KidSafe!	Second Step Child Protection Unit	Kid Power	R.A.D. Kids	Play it Safe	Bravehearts	Keeping Kids Safe	Child Safety Matters
Curriculum Components	Target Age Group	K-1 4-6, K-12	K-12; Grades 5-8	K-12	K-5	Early Learn, K-5	Ages 3-7, 7-13, teens	Ages 3.5-5, 5-7, 8-12	K-1, PreK-5	PreK, K-12		K-5; Grade 5 Reviewed
	Facilitator Training	•		•*	•	•	•	•				•
	Organizational Training			•*	•	•						•
	Parent/Guardian Involvement	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•
	Active Learning Components	•		•	•	•	•	•		•		•
	Evaluation Component					•		•	•			•
	Sexual Health & Development	•		•								
	Gender Socialization	•		•								
	Identity Affirmation	•		•						•		•
	Boundaries	•		•	•	•	•			•	•	•
	Bodily Autonomy & Empowerment	•		•	•	•	•			•	•	•
	Pro-Social Behavior & Skills	•					•			•		•
	Understanding, Identifying & Responding to Trauma					•				•		•
	Bystander Intervention & Adult Responsibility	•				•						•
	Information about Sexual Abuse	•				•				•	•	•
	Safety & Situational Awareness		•	•		•	•	•		•		•
	Health Equity	•		•								

*available with additional purchase

CURRICULUM SUMMARY

Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Best Practices Assessment

Curriculum: Bravehearts – Ditto’s Keep Safe Adventure Show

Target Age Group	Foundations (ages 5 to 6) Reviewed Early Years (for children ages 3 to 4) and Years 1-2 (for children ages 7 to 8) available but not reviewed
Evidence or Theory	Evidence-informed
Number and Length of Sessions	One 30-minute video — can be separated into sections
Cost and Availability	\$300 per class
Facilitator Training	Yes
Organizational Training	Yes
Parent or Guardian Involvement	Yes — Resource guide for parents available
Active Learning Components	Strategy includes interactive instruction <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Worksheets• Songs and dance• Questions and scenarios for understanding
Evaluation Component	No — Evaluation is named as an essential element for implementation; actual methods for evaluation are not laid out or included.



Concepts Included:

Identity Affirmation

- Promotes respect and understanding for all cultures and communities
- Encourages and celebrates cultural diversity
- Demonstrates how to affirm and respect the identities of self and others

Boundaries

- Instructs how to say no or reject unwanted advances
- Teaches about setting and respecting boundaries
- Discusses concepts of consent — including consent as freely given, clearly defined, retractable and active agreement without coercion

Bodily Autonomy and Empowerment

- Asserts clear and absolute right to bodily ownership and decision-making related to body
- Promotes assertiveness and empowerment

- Teaches about right to privacy
- Distinguishes between public and private parts of the body

Sexual Health and Development

- Teaches anatomically correct terms for body parts

Understanding, Identifying and Responding to Trauma

- Promotes a trauma-informed environment and responses
- Identifies resources and strategies in response to trauma

Information About Sexual Abuse

- Primarily covered in additional materials for teachers

Pro-Social Behavior and Skills

- Teaches communication, empathy and problem-solving

Safety and Situational Awareness

- Provides general safety recommendations
- Teaches how to recognize safe and unsafe situations
- Teaches how to identify trusted adults and develop support networks
- Teaches self-protective strategies and skills

Curriculum Does Not Cover

Bystander Intervention and Adult Responsibility

- Teaches how to report and to say “no,” but does not discuss how to help others
- Promotes safety and individual responsibility for seeking help

Gender Socialization

Notes: The Pre K-Kindergarten curriculum of Bravehearts was reviewed and is developmentally appropriate for young children. However, the content is limited and not comprehensive. The video can be broken into different segments for learning.

Additionally, this curriculum was written for and by Australians, so some of the resources would need to be changed to reflect U.S.-based information regarding statistics and other measures.

Curriculum: Child Safety Matters — Monique Burr Foundation

Target Age Group	K-5
Evidence or Theory	Evidence-based <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on polyvictimization research
Number and Length of Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two lessons per grade level Range from 35-55 minutes Can be adapted to conduct 4 shorter lessons
Cost and Availability	1-Year Digital Subscription \$1,500
Facilitator Training	Yes, with purchase of the curriculum, facilitators receive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online self-paced facilitator training Curriculum book with facilitator manual and scripts Virtual facilitator guide Facilitator adaptation guide for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities
Organizational Training	Program provides staff PowerPoint training
Parent or Guardian Involvement	Curriculum provides: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent Welcome and Opt-Out forms Parent Information and Activity Sheets Parent PowerPoint Training Parent information available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian-Creole, Chinese, French and German
Active Learning Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum includes more than one teaching method Includes interactive instruction and hands-on learning experiences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interactive PowerPoints with lecture, group discussion, skills-practice activities, videos and games
Evaluation Component	Quizzes as part of instruction and evaluation provided by the Monique Burr Foundation



Concepts Included:

- Curriculum includes activities focusing on relationship, community, and societal risk and protective factors
- The curriculum offers sessions to be delivered at different grades
- Content is appropriate for the target population — developmentally, intellectually and cognitively
- Socio-culturally relevant: The lesson reviewed depicts children with various diversities, including children with physical disabilities

- Encourages positive, health-promotive language — not fear-based
- Communicates the adult’s responsibility for preventing sexual abuse

Identity Affirmation

- The lesson reviewed includes a video promoting acceptance and celebration of differences.
- Messages that everyone deserves to be accepted and treated equally.
- Everyone deserves to be safe.

Boundaries

- Teaches about touch on a continuum
- Teaches about setting and respecting boundaries
- Tells how to say “no”
- Includes being safe, valued and respected both physically and emotionally

Bodily Autonomy and Empowerment

- Curriculum teaches about assertiveness
- Teaches about needing privacy as compared to when needing help with a usually private task

Pro-Social Behavior and Skills

- Curriculum includes the concept of respect. Describes that trusted adults make a kids feel respected.
- Curriculum explains why kids focus on getting, rather than fighting back.
- The video around diversity includes empathy and inclusion concepts.

Understanding, Identifying and Responding to Trauma

- Curriculum addresses blame and shame.
- Talks about all forms of abuse, including emotional abuse.
- Emphasizes that it is not a child’s fault if abuse occurs, and it is never too late to tell.

Bystander Intervention

- Curriculum teaches how to help someone in need by intervening safely.
- Messages that a safe environment is for everyone and that friends deserve our support.

Information About Sexual Abuse

- Curriculum includes a clear explanation about child sexual abuse.
- Curriculum includes information about child sexual abuse materials, AI-generated child sexual abuse materials and sextortion.
- Educates on the manipulation that someone may use to groom a child — gifts, tricks, calling something unsafe a game
- Differentiates between how to know if something was an accident or done on purpose
- Discusses the stranger myth of child sexual abuse

Safety and Situational Awareness

- Curriculum teaches how to recognize safe and unsafe situations. Talks about how warning signs make a person feel with how they may look.
- Curriculum provides safety rules that are simple, concrete and developmentally appropriate.
- Discusses the importance of non-violent responses
- Discusses safe adults and how to select or identify them

Curriculum Does Not Include:

- **Sexual Health and Development**
 - Private parts are described as those covered by a swimsuit, rather than anatomically correct terms for body parts.
- **Gender Socialization**
- Consent
- Biases related to systems of oppression and sexual abuse

Notes: As demonstrated in the above outline, lessons include a variety of content in a relatively brief amount of time.

Curriculum: Keeping Kids Safe

Target Age Group	Three programs by grade level: K-2; 3-5; 6-8
Evidence or Theory	No theory listed
Number and Length of Sessions	There is no instruction on the number or length of sessions, or where to start. For each grade level, the curriculum is one 11-13-minute video, accompanied by some activities. There is little instruction on which activities to do when. All content available is estimated to take about 2 hours total.
Cost and Availability	Individual courses priced at \$80 (1-year license) healthworldeducation.org/sexual-abuse-prevention
Facilitator Training	No guidance on facilitation provided
Organizational Training	No
Parent or Guardian Involvement	No
Active Learning Components	There are activities, but not all of them are skill building. For example, coloring pages don't require practicing skills to complete. Additionally, some activities are practicing skills that aren't discussed in the training provided.
Evaluation Component	No evaluation or implementation guidance provided



Concepts Included:

- Varied teaching methods limited as described above
- Introductory concepts around boundaries and consent are included, but dosage is insufficient
- Clear messages about bodily autonomy and empowerment, for the length of the curriculum
- Activity for building disclosure skills
- Information on sexual abuse, but dosage is insufficient

Curriculum Does Not Include:

- Content does not change much from one age group to the next, making it difficult to think it is age appropriate. It seems appropriately timed for K-2.
- **Sexual Health and Development**
 - Anatomically correct terminology not used
- **Gender Socialization**
- **Identity Affirmation**
- While it touches on understanding emotions, content on this is too limited to build **Pro-social Behavior and Skills**
- **Understanding, Identifying and Responding to Trauma** is limited, not much beyond disclosure skills
- No training for adults on responding appropriately

- **Bystander Intervention**

- Youth are not taught specific behaviors or things to be aware of in their surroundings, but rather to listen to “uh-oh feelings.” This assumes youth will feel uncomfortable without being able to identify the behaviors that would make them feel that way. This messaging around safety allows space for bias against historically marginalized communities.

Notes: This curriculum could be a introduction for some specific safety skills, but the content limitations are significant. The areas of content that are included are not given adequate time.

Curriculum: KidPower

Target Age Group	Three courses — Starting Strong (ages 3-7), Confident Kids (Ages 7-13), Teenpower Independence and Healthy Relationship (teens)
Evidence or Theory	No theory clearly listed
Number and Length of Sessions	Six lessons per age group; 30 minutes of videos and an estimated hour of activities and discussion per lesson
Cost and Availability	Customized quotes for schools and organizations, \$75 per person as an individual; learn.kidpower.org/course/starting-strong
Facilitator Training	Teacher booklet included in Starting Strong was comprehensive for training. The information had little content focused on sexual abuse. Guidance provided throughout the curriculum on how the facilitator can support youth in practicing skills.
Organizational Training	No
Parent or Guardian Involvement	Take-home lessons for adults and families that included information and additional activities to practice skills at home.
Active Learning Components	Active skill-building throughout, most of which involve role-play practicing skills with adult facilitators. Very interactive curriculum with activities in every lesson.
Evaluation Component	Evaluation surveys after each session for the presenter to complete, but they are only focused on the presenter's perception of the lesson. Nothing outcome focused.



Concepts Included:

- Empowers youth to choose what affection they do and don't want
- Adults are encouraged to use anatomically correct terms.
- Gives some guidance for adaptations for students with disabilities
- Teaches social skills around respecting and setting boundaries, primarily outside the context of sexual abuse or sexuality
- Connects emotional regulation to youth's ability to practice other safety skills in Starting Strong. Strategies for self-regulation, impulse control and age-appropriate nonviolent conflict resolution present in Staying Strong and Teen Power.
- Staying Strong encourages getting help from adults.

- Teaches skill building and information around situational awareness, safety skills and self-protective behaviors
- Clear messaging about safe and unsafe situations, coercion, strangers, safety plans and help seeking behaviors without being fear based
- Some examples given around boundaries are intersectional and culturally relevant.
- Messages that relate to values underlying biases about safety, helping, community norms that connect to framing of sexual violence in our culture
- Bullying and harassment perpetration-prevention messaging

Curriculum Does Not Include:

- Specific information about sexuality and the connection to boundaries
- While adults are encouraged to use anatomically correct terms, it does not expressly have them in the curriculum.
- Has no focus on adult responsibility for preventing child sexual abuse beyond youth being told to get help from adults
- Some de-escalation strategies in TeenPower examples feel like they might encourage conflict avoidance or normalize some unhealthy relationship dynamics.
- Uses the term “triggers” loosely in TeenPower, particularly when they don’t give information about sexual violence and trauma
- Examples representing diversity should be reviewed as some may reinforce stereotypes
- No explicit information on child sexual abuse
- Some content for TeenPower feels more appropriate for a younger age group.

Notes: Information about sexual abuse is very limited in this curriculum.

Curriculum: Mobile County Personal Safety Curriculum

Target Age Group	K-12, grades 5-8 assessed for the purposes of this review
Evidence or Theory	No theory listed
Number and Length of Sessions	<p>Grades 5-6:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unit 1: 2 lessons Unit 2: 2 lessons Unit 3: 1 lesson <p>Grades 7-8:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unit 1: 1 lesson Unit 2: 1 lesson Unit 3: 1 lesson Unit 4: 1 lesson
Cost and Availability	Free, available online
Facilitator Training	Not required; resources with the curriculum provide basic guidance on facilitation
Organizational Training	No
Parent or Guardian Involvement	Some lessons include handouts for parents and a parent notice letter is provided.
Active Learning Components	There are activities and games to accompany each lesson, but do not engage youth in practicing new skills, behaviors, etc.
Evaluation Component	No formal evaluation plan provided; some lessons include assessments for students to determine fulfillment of lesson objectives



Concepts Included:

- **Safety and Situational Awareness**

Curriculum Does Not Include:

- Heavily emphasizes youth responsibility for keeping oneself safe and is very fear based throughout, even utilizing victim-blaming at times
- **Gender Socialization**
 - The curriculum is absent of inclusive representation, experiences and identities.
 - Language reinforces gender binary and rigid gender roles
- The language provided in the lessons is not relevant for youth of the given age (for instance, waiting until 6th grade to talk about using the Internet is no longer realistic; spending time on teaching vocabulary like 'blog' and 'instant messenger' is wasteful as these terms are hardly

relevant or applicable for youth today).

- Teacher individual responsibility and parent responsibility covered in a “mandated reporter” capacity

Notes: At the time of this review, this curriculum was outdated and unorganized. It would require substantial editing to bring the content up to date and to incorporate authentic and meaningful representation.

Curriculum: Our Whole Lives (OWL)

Target Age Group	K-1 and 4-6 — assessed for this review, OWL lessons span K-12; young adult (18-35) and older adult (50+)
Evidence or Theory	Evidence-informed Based on Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education produced by the National Guidelines Task Force
Number and Length of Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades K-1: 8 sessions, 1 hour each, plus 1.5-hour parent meeting and 2.5-hour parent/child orientation • Grades 4-6: 10 sessions, 75 minutes each, plus 1.5-hour curriculum information meeting and 2.5-hour parent/child orientation
Cost and Availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum (and accompanying materials) must be purchased online • Grades K-1 curriculum: \$40 • Grades 4-6 curriculum: \$40 • 'Sexuality and our Faith' (required for grades 4-6): \$20
Facilitator Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitation training is highly encouraged by OWL and may be completed online for \$250 (or in person). • Training is 35 hours over 3 weeks.
Organizational Training	Available to congregations implementing OWL (in addition to facilitator training)
Parent or Guardian Involvement	A parent orientation/information session is required for implementation in each grade; parent permission forms are encouraged.
Active Learning Components	Curriculum includes role-play, games, stories, videos, worksheets, journaling and discussion.
Evaluation Component	A basic assessment is available for lessons (to indicate content comprehension) but no formal evaluation process is provided.



Concepts Included:

- Gender Socialization
- Identity Affirmation
- Boundaries
- Bodily Autonomy and Empowerment
- Pro-Social Behavior and Skills
- Sexual Health and Development

Curriculum Does Not Include:

Information About Sexual Abuse

- While there is information about safe bodies and lessons for children on how to disclose to a trusted adult child sexual abuse, specific information is not always present or strongly represented, especially for K-1.
- The curriculum does emphasize adult responsibility for child sexual abuse safety and the parent being the child's primary educator on sexuality.

Safety and Situational Awareness

- This curriculum strives to teach body awareness, boundaries and how to identify a trusted adult when boundaries are violated.
- Self-protection and bystander intervention is lacking. One age group teaches about safety strategies within the narrow content of understanding how to not become pregnant or contract a sexually transmitted infection.

Notes: This curriculum is sex positive and body positive. OWL comes from a social justice framework and gives particular attention to LGBTQ+ identities.

Curriculum: Play It Safe!

Target Age Group	Elementary (Pre-K-5)
Evidence or Theory	No theory listed
Number and Length of Sessions	6 one-hour sessions — One for each grade level
Cost and Availability	Cost varies by grade level Kindergarten and 1st Grade each: \$229 Online \$329 Online and Hard Copy
Facilitator Training	No facilitator training provided <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources and facilitator scripts are provided Training videos are provided
Organizational Training	No
Parent or Guardian Involvement	Limited <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No clear parent/guardian training Curriculum includes a letter to send home to parents and guardians. A coloring book is sent home with the child.
Active Learning Components	No <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each lesson consists of a facilitator script and a video. This includes full group discussion at times, but there are no activities. Pre K - 2nd grade uses dolls and coloring page to accompany learning
Evaluation Component	A survey for K-5th grade is given before the training and Two weeks following training.



Concepts Included:

- Curriculum describes touch as safe, unsafe or confusing.
- The curriculum directs children to respect adults, but reminds kids they don't always have to do what the adult says.
- Overviews that kids should not be touched "for no good reason" and gives example of what good reasons may be
- Explains that sometimes tricks are used to hurt a child
- Some parts of the body are identified as private — curriculum identified those body parts covered by a swimsuit as private.
- Curriculum messages that sexual abuse is not a child's fault and it is never too late to tell about abuse.

- The videos viewed for this review present a family impacted by divorce and present a grandparent as a caring adult.
- Teaches how to recognize safe and unsafe situations

Curriculum Does Not Include:

- Age-appropriate **Sexual Health and Development**
- **Gender Socialization**
- **Identity Affirmation**
- Setting or respecting **Boundaries**
- Consent
- **Pro-Social Behavior and Skills.** For example, empathy, non-violent conflict resolution, or impulse control
- **Bystander Intervention and Adult Responsibility**
- Parent, caregiver or community's role in prevention
- Bias related to systems of oppression and sexual abuse
- Relationship, community, and societal risk and protective factors
- Anti-oppression or equity
- The curriculum uses limited teaching methods with a video and facilitator script.
- Although a coloring book is sent with the child, there is limited interactive or hands-on learning.
- The script and video delivery provides little flexibility for adaptation for student learning and language needs, or cultural beliefs, practices, or community norms.
- Each grade level is only engaging in this learning content once a year.
- Adult responsibility is limited to listening to a disclosure, rather than prevention.

Notes: While the videos associated with the lesson plans appeared to have high production value, they did not come across as trauma informed. In some cases, the videos shared stories of sexual abuse and ruminated on suffering. Other videos appeared to use scare tactics and worst-case scenarios to impact the behavior of young people.

Some lessons included information about sexual abuse, boundaries, empowerment and body ownership, and safety and risk reduction. The content on these topics was not strong enough or consistent enough to warrant listing as a concept included.

Curriculum: R.A.D. Kids

Target Age Group	Sessions for 3.5-5 years old, 5-7 years old and 8-12 years old
Evidence or Theory	No theory listed
Number and Length of Sessions	Eight hours of teaching or 10 hours with added simulations
Cost and Availability	\$625 per instructor certification
Facilitator Training	Yes
Organizational Training	No
Parent or Guardian Involvement	Limited
Active Learning Components	Curriculum includes case scenarios, role-play and practices, physical and verbal self-defense practice, parent education, coloring books and activities. Not all activities pertain to child sexual abuse prevention.
Evaluation Component	Evaluation form provided to child and parent



Concepts Included:

Provides general safety recommendations

- Curriculum is primarily focused on other types of safety, including fire, firearms and drug safety.

Promotes assertiveness and empowerment

- Curriculum focuses on kids physically asserting their boundaries. It does not give skills for identifying what boundaries are in place or what to do if they cannot physically fight out of a situation.

Curriculum Does Not Include:

- Age-appropriate **Sexual Health and Development**
 - Curriculum defines “private parts” as those covered by a bathing suit.
- **Gender Socialization**
- **Identity Affirmation**
 - The curriculum does not account for diverse family structures, economic and cultural backgrounds.
- Setting or respecting **Boundaries**
 - Curriculum tells kids that touch can be “good,” “bad,” or “uncomfortable.” Does not address that some abusive touch feels “good” to a person.
 - Touch is only one form of sexual abuse. Boundaries also need to be set in other ways.
- Consent
- **Pro-Social Behavior and Skills.** For example, empathy, non-violent conflict resolution or impulse control

- **Understanding, Identifying and Responding to Trauma**
- **Bystander Intervention and Adult Responsibility**
- **Information About Sexual Abuse**
 - Does not properly define sexual abuse. Information provided is inadequate and misleading at times.
- Parent, caregiver or community's role in prevention
 - Parents receive safety teaching tools materials. No discussion of community and adult responsibilities to prevent occurrence of sexual abuse.
- Bias related to systems of oppression and sexual abuse
- Relationship, community and societal risk and protective factors
- Anti-oppression or equity
 - The curriculum itself requires physical and verbal defense tactics. This does not consider special needs, language barriers, disabilities, etc.

Notes: Curriculum includes case scenarios, role-play, physical and verbal self-defense practice, parent education, coloring books and activities. This curriculum covers multiple types of safety, including safety from fires, drugs and firearms. Most of the information is not specific to child sexual abuse prevention.

This curriculum does not address a majority of child sexual abuse risk and protective factors. At times, it perpetuates myths about disclosure and sexual abuse. Setting an expectation that kids should fight back physically to prevent their own sexual abuse is harmful. This reinforces victim blaming, shame and self-blame. This is particularly harmful for youth who do not have the physical abilities to fight back or have a language or communication barrier. It also does not consider that often in cases of sexual abuse, an abuser gains trust by manipulating the child and their community with grooming behaviors.

Reviews did not assess the other areas of safety that this curriculum covers.

Curriculum: 3Rs (Rights, Respect, Responsibility)

Target Age Group	K-12
Evidence or Theory	<p>Evidence-informed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses Characteristics of Effective Sex and STD/HIV Education Programs • Aligned to the CDC's National Health Education Standards for Sexual Health and the National Sexuality Education Standards, authored by the Future of Sex Education • Website provides general information on research informing the curriculum.
Number and Length of Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length: Lessons are 40 minutes in length for K-5 and 50 minutes for 6-12 • 79 lessons available in total; 3 supplemental lessons • Number of lessons grades K-2: 10 • Number of lessons grades 3-5: 12 • Number of lessons grades 6-8: 28 • Number of lessons grades 9-12: 29
Cost and Availability	Curriculum is available for free online
Facilitator Training	While not required, training for facilitators is highly encouraged and may be requested online — costs vary
Organizational Training	Organizational and group training available online — costs vary
Parent or Guardian Involvement	There are family homework activities for most lessons in Grades K-9 to facilitate conversations among students and their parents or caregivers.
Active Learning Components	Activities in lessons allow role-play, problem-solving, skill practicing, discussion, etc.
Evaluation Component	A basic assessment guide for given lessons is available for facilitators, but detailed evaluation process is not included



Concepts Included:

- Sexual Health and Development
- Gender Socialization
- Identity Affirmation
- Boundaries

- **Bodily Autonomy and Empowerment**
- **Safety and Situational Awareness**

Curriculum Does Not Include:

- Explicit content on CSA is lacking in detail and depth, especially in later grades, specifically middle school and beyond.
- Trauma information and disclosure management does not appear to be included anywhere in the curriculum itself.
- Adult responsibility is underdeveloped as concept; there are only some activities that include parents in younger grades and a [general resource](#) on the website available to parents.
- Some language and information is outdated.

Notes:

- *While the website and accompanying resources/content are extensive, it may be difficult for some to navigate the site.*
- *Lesson plans incorporate varied teaching methods (videos, activities, etc.).*
- *Some lessons/curriculum is also available in Spanish.*

Curriculum: Second Step Child Protection Unit

Target Age Group	<p>Early learning, Kindergarten, Grade 1, Grade 2, Grade 3, Grade 4, Grade 5</p> <p>Each grade level has its own series of lessons that introduce the same skills at different development levels.</p>
Evidence or Theory	<p>Evidence-based</p> <p>Theory is well expressed and some research is provided regarding the structure of the curriculum. Logic model shows theory of how the content is intended to prevent CSA and each lesson has a blurb explaining why these specific skills are important.</p>
Number and Length of Sessions	<p>There are 5 lessons for each grade level — estimated to be an hour in length.</p>
Cost and Availability	<p>\$1449 for K-grade 5 bundle</p> <p>https://store.secondstep.org/purchase/product/second-step-child-protection-unit-early-learning-grade-5-bundle/</p>
Facilitator Training	<p>Provides supportive resources for staff and teachers. Contains guidance throughout the books and online for facilitation and very thorough training on these concepts for adults. Has information on disclosures, creating safe spaces, and tools for intentionally building strong relationships.</p>
Organizational Training	<p>There is also a training for school administrators and organizational tools like policy and procedures guidance.</p>
Parent or Guardian Involvement	<p>Take-home activities for each lesson</p>
Active Learning Components	<p>Skill-building activities throughout, as well as examples of how teachers can incorporate concepts into their core curriculum for additional practice</p>
Evaluation Component	<p>Implementation evaluation guidance is provided, along with some assessment tools, but no outcome-focused evaluation</p>



Concepts Included:

- **Boundaries**
- **Bodily Autonomy and Empowerment**
- **Understanding, identifying and Responding to Trauma**
- **Bystander Intervention and Adult Responsibility**

- **Information About Sexual Abuse**
- **Safety and Situational Awareness**
- Meaningful involvement of parents, caregivers, community members

Content Limitations:

- Other than using anatomically correct terms, there is no content related to **Sexual Health and Development**.
- **Gender Socialization**
- **Identity Affirmation**
- **Pro-Social Behavior and Skills** — some communication skills, but mostly just focused on refusal, reporting and a little bit on navigating consent; not sure it rises to the point of empathy building, impulse control and self-regulation skills
- Images are inclusive of diversity, but in some cases may be reinforcing stereotypes.
- Biases related to child sexual abuse
- Assumes system involvement is beneficial. Curriculum focuses on reporting to law enforcement and child protective services.
- Information about child sexual abuse is mostly covered in the teacher training and is minimally discussed with youth.

Notes:

- *The first activity in most grades involves a gun, and in most grades a child of color holding that gun — this reinforces stereotypes about violence and children who are Black, Indigenous and people of color. The use of this imagery adds another scary topic to an already intimidating topic. One of the grade levels used an example around petting a dog in place of the gun, which may be a better way to start the discussion about safety rules.*
- *In the 4th and 5th grade levels, the lesson plans include asking youth to raise their hands and share experiences with unwanted touch. While it doesn't explicitly ask for disclosures of abuse, we know children are likely to do so in their sessions, and so it feels like setting them up to disclose in a public way, without a lot of guidance on protective interruptions or handling disclosures outside of reporting abuse to systems. This is not trauma informed at all.*

Curriculum: Stay KidSafe!

Target Age Group	K-5
Evidence or Theory	No theory listed
Number and Length of Sessions	K-2nd grade: 5 lessons per grade 3rd grade: 4 lessons 4th-5th grades: 3 lessons per grade
Cost and Availability	Free for educators, available at their website with registration
Facilitator Training	Once registered, schools have access to 'Stay KidSafe! for Educators': An eLearn training for all school staff providing necessary knowledge about child sexual abuse, child trafficking, and school employee sexual misconduct and the role educators play in prevention.
Organizational Training	Additional training beyond online materials not available
Parent or Guardian Involvement	Each lesson includes a letter to be sent home to parents.
Active Learning Components	Games, worksheets, role-plays and discussion questions are utilized in addition to instruction. Illustrations and animated videos also included in several lessons (Younger grades also provide songs for instructors).
Evaluation Component	No formal evaluation plan provided; surveys are available for teachers/instructors to complete at the end of each lesson.



Concepts Included:

- Safe touch/unsafe touch
- **Bodily Autonomy and Empowerment**
- **Boundaries**
- Consent

Curriculum Does Not Include:

Gender Socialization

- The curriculum does not address gender or gender identity at all.

Identity Affirmation

- Racial diversity is represented through imagery. No other aspects of identity are addressed.

Safety and Situational Awareness

- Introduces building skills to safely intervene. Curriculum attempts to create a safe environment for kids to “tell a safe adult.”

Bystander Intervention

- No overt discussion about helping someone in distress nor promoting individual and community responsibility

Notes: Extra training and professional resources for instructors are accessible through the site, including trainings on ACEs, mandated reporting, handling disclosures and child sexual abuse prevention.

SAMPLE SCORING SHEET

Name of Curriculum _____

Target Population _____

Cost _____

Availability _____

Total Score: _____ / 140

9 Principles of Effective Prevention

Scoring Scale: 0-2 (0 = quality is not at all present in the program; 1 = quality is partially or inadequately incorporated in the program; 2 = quality is meaningfully incorporated throughout the program)

This section of the assessment is based on research about the components commonly found in successful programs, summarized by Maury Nation and colleagues as [the 9 Principles of Effective Prevention](#). These principles were developed to describe the qualities of an effective program across different public health issues.

Comprehensive: Strategies should include multiple components and affect multiple audiences to address a wide range of risk and protective factors of the problem.

Program includes multiple components (ex: information AND skill-building activities)	
--	--

Program includes activities focusing on relationship, community, and societal risk and protective factors	
---	--

Activities address risk and protective factors for sexual abuse	
---	--

Comments

Varied Teaching Methods: Strategies should include multiple teaching methods, including some type of active, skills-based component.

Program includes more than one teaching method	
--	--

Strategy includes interactive instruction, such as role-play and other techniques for practicing new behaviors	
--	--

Strategy provides hands-on learning experiences, rather than just presenting information or other forms of passive instruction	
Comments	
Sufficient Dosage: Participants need to be exposed to enough of the activity for it to have an effect.	
Strategy provides multiple sessions (1 session = 0 pts.; 2 sessions = 1 pt.; 3+ sessions = 2 pts.)	
Strategy provides sessions long enough to present the program content	
Strategy offers a variety of sessions to be delivered at different grades	
Comments	
Theory Driven: Preventive strategies should have a scientific justification or logical rationale.	
Program provides (or can you identify) a theory of how the problem behaviors develop	
Program articulates a theory of how and why the intervention is likely to produce change	
Based on the model of the problem and the model of the solution, you believe that the program is likely to produce change	
Comments	
Positive Relationships: Strategies should foster strong, stable, positive relationships between children and adults.	
Strategy provides opportunities for adults and kids to strengthen relationships	
Strategy includes a component for parents/guardians	

Strategy includes training for teachers/staff, including disclosures	
Comments	
Appropriately Timed: Strategies should happen at a time that can have maximum impact in a participant's life.	
Strategy happens before participants develop the problem behavior	
Strategy is timed strategically to have an impact during important developmental milestones (also appears in 10 Core Concepts)	
Strategy content is appropriate for the target population – developmentally, intellectually and cognitively	
Comments	
Socio-Culturally Relevant: Program should be tailored to fit within cultural beliefs and practices of specified groups, as well as local community norms. (Little to no socio-cultural relevance or room for adaptation = 0 pts.; Some socio-cultural relevance and flexibility for adaptation = 1 pt.; Program addresses socio-cultural relevance and/or potential adaptations = 2 pts.)	
Strategy appears to be sensitive to social and cultural realities	
Language is inclusive based on race/ethnicity and gender/gender identity	
Strategy is flexible to deal with special circumstances or needs of participants	
Comments	
Outcome Evaluation: Program should provide guidance on outcome evaluation in the form of learning objectives and sample evaluation tools.	
Plan for evaluating the strategy is provided	

Plan for receiving feedback throughout the strategy development and implementation	
Comments	
Well-Trained Staff: Strategies need to be implemented by staff that are sensitive, competent and have received training, support and supervision.	
Strategy provides training materials for staff delivering program (No materials = 0 pts., Training = 1 pt., Training and resources = 2 pts.)	
Encourages positive, health promotive language – not fear based	
Focuses on adult responsibility for preventing sexual abuse	
Comments	
9 Principles of Prevention Score Total (out of 52):	

10 Core Concepts in Sexual Abuse Prevention

Scoring Scale: 0-2 (0 = topic is not addressed at all or may promote misinformation; 1 = topic is partially addressed or addressed out of context; 2 = topic is fully addressed)

This section of the assessment is framed around the 10 Core Concepts in Sexual Abuse Prevention. This resource was developed by WCASA and A2A to summarize research on the subject matter of effective child sexual abuse prevention programming.

Sexual Health and Development

Teaches anatomically correct terms for body parts	
Teaches age and developmentally appropriate sexual development	
Teaches evidence-based sexual health	
Supports access to comprehensive reproductive health services and information	

Comments	
Gender Socialization	
Challenges gender-based stereotypes	
Supports skills and interests outside traditional gender expectations	
Discusses concepts of masculinity and entitlement	
Fosters an LGBTQ+ inclusive environment and supports gender exploration	
Comments	
Identity Affirmation	
Promotes respect and understanding for all cultures and communities	
Encourages and celebrates cultural diversity	
Demonstrates how to affirm and respect the identities of self and others	
Employs an intersectional lens	
Comments	
Boundaries	
Teaches about touching on a continuum (not good/bad)	
Instructs how to say no or reject unwanted advances	
Teaches about setting and respecting boundaries	
Discusses concepts of consent – including consent as freely given, clearly defined, retractable and active agreement without coercion	

Comments	
Bodily Autonomy and Empowerment	
Asserts clear and absolute right to bodily ownership and decision-making related to body	
Promotes assertiveness and empowerment	
Teaches about right to privacy	
Distinguishes between public and private parts of the body	
Comments	
Pro-Social Behavior and Skills	
Teaches communication, empathy and problem-solving	
Encourages nonviolent conflict resolution	
Promotes impulse control strategies	
Provides skills and tools for self-regulation	
Comments	
Understanding, Identifying and Responding to Trauma	
Teaches disclosure skills and encourages disclosure	
Teaches about ACEs and understanding trauma	
Promotes a trauma-informed environment and responses	
Identifies resources and strategies in response to trauma	

Comments	
Bystander Intervention and Adult Responsibility	
Teaches how to help someone in distress	
Builds skills on how to safely intervene	
Encourages creating a safe environment for everyone	
Promotes individual and community responsibility	
Comments	
Information About Sexual Abuse	
Clear explanations about child sexual abuse (CSA)	
Information about perpetration - including grooming	
Promotes a victim-centered response	
Dispels common misperceptions about sexual abuse	
Comments	
Safety and Situational Awareness	
Provides general safety recommendations	
Teaches how to recognize safe and unsafe situations	
Teaches how to identify trusted adults and develop support networks	
Teaches self-protective strategies and skills	

Comments	
Core Concepts Score Total (out of 80):	

Health Equity Assessment	
<p>Scoring Scale: 0-2 (0 = not at all true; 1 = somewhat true; 2 = completely true). Please include a brief explanation for how these concepts are accomplished in the curriculum. As points are awarded for actively promoting these concepts, concrete examples are helpful as justification for scores. Points should not be awarded if examples or justification cannot be provided</p>	
<p>It is imperative that our educational initiatives, including child sexual abuse prevention curricula, reflect a commitment to health equity principles. Health equity focuses on addressing systemic disparities and inequities in systems that result in unequal health outcomes. These questions are designed to assess the extent to which curricula embrace and promote principles of health equity. By examining key aspects, such as inclusivity, cultural competence and sensitivity to socioeconomic factors, we aim to ensure that the curriculum not only imparts valuable knowledge about sexual abuse but also contributes to dismantling health disparities.</p>	
Does the curriculum promote inclusive language and imagery, avoiding stereotypes and representing all children?	Score
	Explanation
Does the curriculum account for diverse family structures, economic and cultural backgrounds, ensuring that the curriculum is relevant to children and families from all backgrounds?	Score
	Explanation

Does the curriculum address biases related to systems of oppression and sexual abuse?	Score
	Explanation
Does the curriculum involve parents, caregivers and community members in prevention efforts?	Score
	Explanation
<p>Is there any messaging and/or content that could be harmful to any group of people?</p> <p>This might include messaging that reinforces stereotypes or systems of oppression, in addition to content that reinforces rape culture.</p> <p><i>No score required</i></p>	No
	Yes, please explain:
<p>What could we adapt or do differently in presenting this curriculum to be more sensitive to the cultural norms, values and beliefs of the intended audience? If you selected “Yes,” on the previous question, please be sure to directly address any harmful messaging identified.</p> <p><i>No score required</i></p>	
Health Equity Score Total (out of 8):	

10 CORE CONCEPTS FOR CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION

1 Healthy Sexuality and Development

- Teaches anatomically correct terms for body parts
- Teaches age-appropriate sexual development
- Teaches evidence-based sexual health
- Supports access to comprehensive reproductive health services and information

Research/Rationale

Healthy sexuality refers to the ability to express one's sexual thoughts, feelings, attitudes and behaviors in consensual and enriching ways. To develop a healthy sexuality, youth must be provided with accurate, informative and age-appropriate information about their bodies and sexual health. Developing and maintaining a healthy sexuality are important protective factors against sexual violence (NSVRC, 2012).

There are many ways to promote healthy sexual development, though chief among them is comprehensive sexual health education (CSE). CSE should be evidence based, medically accurate, and age appropriate across the lifespan, evolving to align with the physical, emotional and social development of adolescents and teens. Instruction for young children should cover the basic differences between male and female anatomy and provide the correct terminology for their genitals (NSVRC, 2013). Social-emotional concepts should also be introduced, such as how to interact with peers respectfully. Youth who receive CSE report feeling more positively about their body and overall safety, and have greater confidence in responding to unwanted and unsafe touch (Goldfarb and Liberman, 2021).

To be truly effective, CSE must incorporate multiple identities to represent the rich diversity of lived experiences and sexuality within our communities. Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC), LGBTQ+ people and people with disabilities should all be included in CSE instruction. Such representation only strengthens CSE as a tool for inclusivity and empathy-building (Dixon et al., 2021, Schneider and Hirsch, 2020). Through CSE, we not only foster healthy sexuality and development, but further promote values of respect, empathy and affirmation; all of which contribute to a greater culture of care and safety.

- Challenges gender-based stereotypes
- Supports skills and interests outside gender expectations
- Discusses concepts of masculinity
- Fosters an LGBTQ+ inclusive environment and supports gender exploration

Research/Rationale

Strict gender norms contribute to sexual violence due to expectations and beliefs associated with femininity and masculinity (Bertke et al., 2019; Casey et al., 2023; Gallagher, 2011; Ray & Parkill, 2021; Seabook et al., 2018). Gender-based expectations about gender, sex and sexuality, particularly hostile masculinity, may put an individual at higher risk of perpetrating sexual assault (Casey et al., 2023; Malamuth, 1991; Nguyen, 2014; Ranger, 2015). Further, cultures that endorse power, physical toughness and dominance as defining traits of masculinity may normalize aggressive behaviors, including sexual aggression, abuse and violence. A study by Bertke et al. (2019) suggests that acts of sexual violence may function as a performance of masculinity for some men, emphasizing the need for comprehensive interventions addressing gender socialization and norms. For instance, empowering women, girls and historically marginalized genders has been identified as a promising strategy for sexual violence prevention; such strategies may play a key role in creating social change to achieve gender and social justice (Basile, 2016).

The relevance of these findings extends beyond binary gender dynamics, emphasizing the connection between gender socialization and victimization across diverse gender identities. Rigid gender expectations are also very harmful to LGBTQ+ youth, because gender-based violence is more than violence against women. Gender exploration is linked to positive well-being outcomes for youth; but in the context of rape culture, challenging traditional gender norms may be met with social consequences. These consequences often include homophobic and other gender-based harassment and violence, reinforcing the need to conform to hostile definitions of masculinity for social acceptance. Research suggests a clear need to address gender socialization and expectations and emphasizes the importance of creating LGBTQ+ and gender-inclusive environments as a vital component of sexual violence prevention for youth of all gender identities (Bertke et al., 2019; Crooks et al., 2018).

In working with children, we see indicators of gender socialization that could be addressed; even as young as preschool ages, there is research to suggest that boys know which toys are “boy” toys and they can predict parental disapproval based on playing with “girl” toys (Freeman, 2007). As mentioned, youth also learn to assign those labels to a range of emotions, helping behaviors and aggressive behaviors; all of which impact their understanding of healthy relationships and sexuality across the lifespan. We believe that giving youth the skills to question and challenge gender stereotypes at a young age will allow youth of all genders to develop healthier concepts of gender and sexuality.

3

Identity Affirmation

- Promotes reverence for all cultures and communities
- Encourages and celebrates cultural diversity
- Demonstrates how to affirm and respect the identities of self and others
- Employs an intersectional lens

Research/Rationale

The dominant culture of our country—from norms and attitudes to our systems and institutions—is largely white, cis and heteronormative, and ableist. Historically marginalized communities—BIPOC, LGBTQ+ people and people with disabilities—experience higher rates of sexual violence (Finoh and Sankofa, 2019; Mortimer et al., 2019; McEachern, 2012) in large part because of the oppression and objectification of the dominant culture. In the face of such violence, identity affirmation and cultural preservation becomes a powerful tool of prevention (Shannon et al., 2022).

Identity affirmation ultimately promotes respect for all cultures, as well as respect for oneself. Young people introduced to these concepts may be less likely to hold discriminatory attitudes, such as homophobia, racism, ableism and other “isms” that can contribute to violence. One study showed that youth who participated in an inclusive, emotional capacity-building program were more likely to view racial and gender exclusion as wrong (Killen et al., 2022). They were also more likely to associate positive traits with peers of diverse racial, ethnic and gender identities, and play with those peers. Additional research has found that youth who held strong heteronormative, racist and sexist attitudes that went unchallenged were more likely to express hostility toward their gender and racially diverse peers and believe rape myths (Carrera-Fernandez et al., 2021; Aosved, 2006). It is therefore essential that young people are not only introduced to diverse cultures and communities, but are further shown how to respect and celebrate cultural diversity.

Further, the CDC identifies community connectedness as an important protective factor against violence (2019). For historically marginalized communities, community connectedness is especially significant. The opportunity to celebrate one’s identity, cultural practices and connect with fellow community members is invaluable not only for violence prevention but overall health equity and well-being (NSVRC, 2021).

- Teaches about touching on a continuum (not good/bad)
- Instructs how to say no or reject unwanted advances
- Teaches about setting and respecting boundaries
- Discusses concepts of consent

Research/Rationale

Teaching boundaries from the lens of mutual respect and care can help youth to build skills for practicing consent in many different settings throughout their lives. Developing skills for setting one's own boundaries as well as learning to respect others are the building blocks of practicing consent. Consent can be introduced at young ages related to nonsexual behavior and applied to sexual behaviors in adolescence. For instance, a national survey of youth exposed to violence prevention programs found that 88% of programming included instruction on telling an adult if the child had a problem, and 57% discussed the continuum of touch (Finkelhor, 2014).

It is vital that consent education be gender inclusive. Heteronormative sex scripts that present men as aggressors and women as submissive gatekeepers erase LGBTQ+ sex and relationships and leave LGBTQ+ youth without a set of norms to follow with regards to sex and consent (de Heer et al., 2021). Heteronormative sex education also reinforces harmful beliefs about gender socialization and can cause confusion for women, regardless of sexual identity, on their role in seeking consent from a partner (Hirsch & Khan, 2021). As a result of receiving sex education that was not relevant to their identities, LGBTQ+ youth were more likely to report that they were not taught “how to say no,” than heterosexual students, regardless of past sex education (Bloom et al., 2022). Research recommends sex educators be prepared and comfortable discussing LGBTQ+ identities with youth and fostering gender-inclusive conversations about sex to benefit the learning of all youth.

Recent research presents additional considerations for effective consent education (Bragg et al., 2020; Bloom et al. 2022; de Heer et al., 2021). We often teach consent as a legal concept, with criteria that are straightforward and concise. This understanding can be limiting in understanding concepts like coercion and power dynamics, which are often present in cases of child sexual abuse (Bragg et al., 2020). Research recommends engaging with the complexity of consent education by discussing power dynamics in relationships, coercive tactics and encouraging youth to share their feelings about boundaries as they relate to their lives. With youth, this can be accomplished by discussing scenarios relevant to children's lives, such as what to do if an authority figure is violating their boundaries, or if someone pressures them to do something by saying they love them. Discussing these concepts in a nonsexual context from an early age can set a foundation of understanding and practicing consent that prepares youth to safely practice it throughout their lives.

5

Bodily Autonomy and Empowerment

- Asserts clear and absolute right to bodily ownership and decision-making related to body
- Promotes assertiveness and empowerment
- Teaches about right to privacy
- Distinguishes between public and private parts of the body

Research/Rationale

“In law, bodily integrity, the body being undivided and not touched without consent, is the first and ‘most important of the civil rights’” (Alderson, 2023). Sexual abuse violates a child’s safety and well-being, as well as their right to their own bodily autonomy. One way to prevent such abuse is to ensure our larger community—children and adults alike—respects the bodily autonomy of children and upholds a child’s right to make decisions about their body.

Bodily autonomy serves to promote agency, physical and emotional well-being, all of which are crucial attributes that may mitigate vulnerability to sexual violence (Fox and Thompson, 2017). As one study demonstrated, adolescents who participated in bodily empowerment programming were more likely to recognize and refuse unwanted sexual contact, seek and give sexual consent, and exercise overall bodily agency (Kagesten et al., 2021).

It is important to demonstrate bodily autonomy and empowerment from an adult perspective as well. Adults can model this behavior and promote skills for youth to make their own decisions about their bodies at a young age. For example, this could mean giving children the right to decide when they will hug or kiss someone good-bye, and fostering the skills to help them set those boundaries at a young age.

- Teaches communication and problem-solving
- Encourages nonviolent conflict resolution
- Promotes impulse control strategies
- Provides skills and tools for self-regulation

Research/Rationale

Impulsive behavior is a documented risk factor for sexual violence perpetration (Centers for Disease Control, 2014; Mouilso, 2013; Voller, 2010). Promoting self-regulation and constructive problem-solving has the potential to regulate impulse control and target this risk factor before children become adolescents, as seen through programs such as I Can Problem Solve (Rooney, 1993). Addressing emotion regulation and impulsivity may also be important from a secondary and tertiary prevention perspective, as both impulsivity and child sexual abuse have been found to be separately associated with suicidality (Daray et al., 2016) and risk-taking behaviors later in life (Quinn & Fromme, 2010).

The relationship between emotion regulation and masculinity, as it relates to sexual assault prevention, is complex. Broadly, research indicates that emotion regulation skills are very promising for preventing aggression and violence; however, unhealthy concepts of masculinity may be a barrier to the development of emotion regulation skills (Bertke et al., 2019). This indicates that developing emotional regulation skills may be especially important and challenging for boys, though beneficial to all youth. Due to the strength of the relationship between unhealthy masculinity and sexual violence, emotion regulation strategies may be less effective for preventing sexual violence without a gender socialization component.

Social emotional learning (SEL) programs strengthen protective factors for youth, teaching things like communication skills to be assertive and ask for help (Committee for Children, 2014). SEL also may prevent youth from engaging in harmful sexual behavior by fostering empathy, healthy conflict resolution and healthy relationship skills (Basile et al., 2016). Several programs and curricula are available for the development of SEL skills during early childhood, a strategy which shows promise for preventing victimization and perpetration of child sexual abuse.

7

Understanding, Identifying and Responding to Trauma

- Teaches disclosure skills and encourages disclosure
- Teaches about ACEs and understanding trauma
- Promotes a trauma-informed response and environment
- Identifies resources and strategies in response to trauma

Research/Rationale

Survey research has shown that a large percentage of youth across the country are likely to experience adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) (Children's Trust Fund, 2010). Chronic exposure to ACEs—including abuse and violence—can be incredibly damaging to the physical and emotional development of children, and often follows them into adulthood, manifesting into physical illness or behavioral challenges (Woods-Jaeger, et al., 2018). In Wisconsin, 54% of adults who experience more than 4 ACEs are survivors of childhood sexual abuse (Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board, 2018). Further, ACEs are strongly associated with sexual violence: emotional abuse early in life is a risk factor for both sexual victimization and perpetration, while physical neglect and witnessing family violence are significant risk factors for sexual victimization. (Levenson and Grady, 2016; Vivolo-Kantor, 2013; DeGue, 2010; Salter, 2003).

In response to these documented risk factors, skill-building around understanding ACEs and trauma is an important element in prevention. In a 2018 study, a community attended a trauma-informed training that outlined the potential signs of childhood trauma and demonstrated how to create safe physical and emotional environments for children and families (Champaine et al., 2022). Upon completion of the training, participants reported a deeper understanding of their own childhood trauma and how it impacted their life, a greater capacity to recognize and understand trauma responses in children, and expressed more confidence in their ability to respond to trauma in the context of their family and relationships.

Increased understanding of an issue bolsters the response to it. In this instance, child sexual abuse prevention efforts can be augmented with specific instruction on what trauma is and how to respond to it. With a community-level, shared understanding of trauma, we are better prepared to serve survivors of all ages and are reminded of the need to prevent sexual harm in the first place.

- Teaches how to help someone in distress
- Skill building how to safely intervene
- Encourages creating a safe environment for everyone
- Promotes individual and community responsibility

Research/Rationale

Risk factors for sexual violence include weak sanctions against violence and social norms supporting violence at the community and societal level (Center for Disease Control, 2014). Bystander intervention teaches individuals to recognize unsafe situations where violence might occur and strategies to interrupt or prevent harm. Research and evaluation indicate that bystander interventions show promise for long-term change in knowledge, attitudes and behaviors for both men and women who participate in bystander programs in college settings (Banyard, 2007; Crooks et al., 2018; Mulla et al., 2022; Rothman et al., 2019; Storer, et al., 2016). Many bystander intervention programs centering on sexual violence are implemented in late adolescence or college, but bystander helping behaviors have been observed in children as young as 5 (Plotner et al., 2015). This study also observed diffusion of responsibility, a phenomenon in which people are less likely to act as bystanders when other people are present; reflecting social norms around bystander behaviors, both active and inactive, may begin to be adopted in childhood. By integrating bystander intervention throughout the lifespan, we believe children and youth can be well-equipped to be leaders in social change.

Bystander intervention is not equally accessible to or protective of all people, and this should be taken into consideration in use of this strategy. Trends in research suggest that those who more directly relate to the experience of a potential victim may be more likely to take action. In studies with middle and high school youth, girls were more likely to engage in bystander behaviors than boys were (Mulla et al., 2022; Rothman et al., 2019). In a hypothetical scenario assessing the risk for an incapacitated Black woman at risk of experiencing sexual violence, a 2017 study revealed that white women were less inclined to intervene, felt a diminished sense of responsibility and perceived the Black victim as experiencing greater pleasure when compared to a scenario where the victim was perceived as white (Katz et al.). Across gender, research suggest students who perceive their peers as being more supportive of rape myths are less likely to act due to perceived social consequences (Mulla et al., 2022). This research reflects a need for recognition of power dynamics, social norms and systems of oppression in conversations about bystander opportunities.

It is also critical to recognize the marginalized role of children in our society (Barth & Olsen, 2020), and relatedly, the importance of adult bystander intervention to interrupt child sexual abuse. It is important for adults to take responsibility for keeping kids safe and creating protective environments to prevent child sexual abuse. Cultural social norms often do not allow children autonomy and objectify them by treating them as the property of adults; this can create social barriers to engaging in bystander intervention around child abuse. Adults have an important role in preventing child sexual abuse by being conscious of the environments and situations youth are placed in, recognizing and responding to warning signs, and interrupting and reporting abuse when it happens. Educating adults

about their role in preventing violence against children is an important component in any child sexual abuse prevention program. In considering bystander intervention, it may also be valuable for schools and other communities to reflect on the power dynamics children experience and how that relates to their ability to be an active bystander.

Information About Sexual Abuse

- Clear explanations about childhood sexual abuse (CSA)
- Information about perpetration — including grooming
- Information about victims — emphasizing that abuse is never the fault of the victim
- Dispels common misperceptions about sexual abuse

Research/Rationale

In the United States, 1 in 4 women report attempted or completed rape in their lifetime and 49% are abused before their 18th birthday. Men are not excluded from the violence: 1 in 26 report attempted or completed rape in their lifetime, 56.6% of whom are abused before turning 18. (Basile et al., 2017). While these figures are harrowing, they demonstrate an important reality we must contend with: sexual violence is a serious epidemic demanding comprehensive prevention, especially improved knowledge and understanding of what sexual violence entails.

Our culture's lack of understanding can be attributed to many factors, including beliefs that normalize violence and support rape myths. 93% of childhood sexual abuse is committed by a person well-known to the child, such as a family member, coach or friend (Basile et al., 2017). This reality directly conflicts with a common rape myth that child sexual abuse is an issue of "stranger-danger." Demonstrative of this, one study found that observers perceived child sexual abuse victims as more credible when they were assaulted by a stranger, compared to a family friend (Denne et al., 2023). Equally concerning is how common it is for victims to not identify their experiences as abuse, subsequently putting them at higher risk of not seeking services and experiencing future revictimization (Siegel, 2003).

As primary caregivers to children, it is essential for adults to understand the dynamics of childhood sexual abuse. It is their responsibility to engage other adults in their networks to create a culture of prevention, as well as to speak to the children in their lives in an honest and appropriate way about sexual abuse. Adults should also emphasize that abuse is never the fault of the victim, and survivor responses to the abuse are always valid. By normalizing responses and providing a safe and secure place to disclose, adults can better support the CSA survivors in their lives.

- Provides general safety recommendations
- Teaches how to recognize safe and unsafe situations
- How to identify trusted adults and develop support networks
- Teaches self-protective strategies and skills

Research/Rationale

Self-protective strategies and education about safety for potential victims are hallmarks of injury and violence prevention. A national survey was conducted to assess the percentage of children in the U.S. who had been exposed to violence prevention programs and evaluate outcomes across the fields of bullying, sexual assault, gang avoidance, dating violence and general violence avoidance (Finkelhor, 2014). From these programs, over a third (37%) of program-exposed children said that they could think of a time they decided to tell an adult something “because of what they learned in the program.” Additionally, almost half (45%) could think of a time they used program information to help themselves or a friend. This research provides preliminary findings that prevention programs provide useful safety skills for secondary prevention outcomes.

Other studies suggest that teaching safety and self-protective behaviors can help youth to avoid unsafe circumstances and to take action to interrupt and avoid dangerous situations (Khalifeh Kandi et al., 2022). These interventions were found to be most effective when self-protective actions were reinforced by family and school communities as social norms, emphasizing the importance of community and adult support and intolerance of sexual abuse. One study found that children who had received education about general safety were more likely to make safe choices, both immediately and six months after the intervention (Dale et al., 2015). Parental knowledge of warning signs and other situational awareness topics were also found to be significant in youth choosing to use protective behaviors (Khalifeh Kandi et al., 2022).

We also must consider the barriers presented and the cultural messages we send to children about how to respond to abuse. Unhealthy concepts of masculinity discourage reporting of abuse and help-seeking behaviors (Ranger, 2015; Huntley et al., 2019), which theory suggests may contribute to the low reporting rates and help-seeking behaviors observed from male survivors of violence (Huntley et al., 2019), including child sexual abuse survivors (Lachmann et al., 2019). Girls are socialized to be submissive, which can create barriers to developing assertive communication skills, like setting boundaries. Adding to this the cultural norms of silencing and disregarding children’s autonomy, it is clear there are substantial barriers to youth practicing assertive communication skills. Traditional gender socialization and other forms of oppression create barriers for youth in understanding and applying other sexual assault prevention skills to take protective action. Teaching youth about how to recognize abuse, tell a trusted adult and take other protective actions on behalf of themselves and others is a necessary component for preventing child sexual abuse; however, it is critical we acknowledge and work to address the myriad of barriers our culture creates to their use of those skills.

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