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Protecting God's Children for Adults



Ideas for Reducing Sexual Abuse by Adolescents

A unique article by a former adolescent child molester provides an insight into ideas for reducing sexual abuse by adolescents. In an article originally submitted for consideration in 2005, the author, who has successfully completed multiple treatment programs, proposes a specific approach to affect this serious problem in society.

Regardless of our natural resistance to dealing with the scope of the problem of adolescent sex abusers, preventing child sexual abuse requires that we confront this issue head on.

Studies in the United States indicate that juveniles are responsible for 40 percent of the sexual assaults on children under the age of 6 and 39 percent of the attacks on children ages 11-16.[i] In fact, one study in the US shows that 13 to 14 year olds are responsible for more than three times the number of sexual molestation cases of children under the age 12 than any other age group over 16.[ii] Research figures from Canada and the United Kingdom show similar results in those countries.[iii]

The article's author is a student in criminal justice and suggests that there are three steps society can take that would dramatically influence this particular aspect of the problem. The article further reinforces the messages of Protecting God's Children™ for adults (PGCA). They are:

Talk to youth about the harm sexual abuse causes.

The author speaks out about the lack of communication to young people about the harm sexual abuse causes. He suggests that straightforward conversations with young people entering puberty about appropriate sexual boundaries regarding their own actions. Teach them what's acceptable and not acceptable—calmly, yet firmly let adolescents know that sexual contact between them and young children is abuse, not play or curiosity.[iv]

Protecting God's Children for Adults, Step 4—"Be Aware" admonishes parents to listen to, talk to, and observe their children. One of the main focuses of this step has been to encourage adults to teach children how to protect themselves from sexual advances of others.



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By: Sharon Doty, J.D., M.H.R.



Ms. Doty is an effective speaker and accomplished trainer. Ms. Doty also has a Masters Degree in Human Relations and a diploma from the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine Department of Pediatrics in Interdisciplinary Training in Child Abuse and Neglect, and she graduated with distinction with a Juris Doctorate from the University of Oklahoma College of Law. Ms. Doty has 10 years experience as a litigator and approximately 20 years as a staff person and volunteer in agencies advocating for victims of abuse and neglect. She has more than 25 years of experience in organizational development and management of not-for-profit organizations. She has created and conducted training in the areas of advocacy services to victims of abuse, investigation training, creative problem solving, sexual harassment, dealing with domestic violence in the workplace, communication skills, fund raising, staff training, program

This former adolescent offender suggests that there is another subject for discussion. Parents and responsible adults must be willing to talk with young people about appropriate boundaries in relationships and encourage these young people to talk with an adult if they experience having thoughts or urges involving sexually touching children.

development, assessment, and legislative advocacy. She has also conducted training for the National Youth Resource Center in creative problem solving for high-risk cases and how to prepare to testify in court.

Talk to youth about the danger of dwelling on child-oriented fantasies.

Studies show that dwelling on sexually oriented fantasies are highly related to the risk of recidivism for adult child molesters.[v] In this case, the situation is the same for adolescents. Young people need to know that even if these are only fantasies, they should talk to an adult about it. And adults need to listen and get the at risk youth the help and information they need to deal with these fantasies in a healthy way. Once again, it is imperative that adults talk to, listen to, and observe the children and young people in their environment.[vi]

Intervene when at risk youth exhibit warning signs

Often adults ignore the behavioral warning signs of at risk children. These warning signs are not substantially different from the warning signs of potential adult offenders. Among the warning signs the author identified were:

- a. Spending a lot of time with younger children (PGCA adult warning sign—someone who is more excited to be with children than their own age.)[vii]
- b. An adolescent who talks about being sexually attracted to children. (PGCA adult warning sign—uses sexually explicit language and tells sexual jokes around children.)[viii]
- c. Spending time alone with children, insisting on hugging children or wrestling and tickling them, and threatening the children to keep them silent. (PGCA adult warning sign—goes overboard touching children including wrestling and tickling them and convinces children to keep silent.)[ix]

Parents, teachers, guardians, and others who care about young people often overlook the warning signs that an adolescent is at risk of becoming a molester. It is hard to imagine that a young person we know and love could be a potential child molester. However, this unwillingness to confront the issue is one of the ways that child molestation is perpetuated. According to this former adolescent offender, if adults can overcome their fears and resistance and apply the tools of Protecting God's Children to high risk adolescents, the community can make a difference in keeping troubled youth from becoming child molesters.

It is in our best interest and the best interests of our children to listen to what this writer has to say and broaden our application of the PGCA tools to include the adolescents in our environments. Take time to notice and intervene if the warning signs are present. These actions protect both the children who are victims and the young people who are starting down the wrong path.

1) The author is an advocate of talking to children about specific sexual issues. Which of the following subjects does he recommend including in conversations with adolescents?

- A) The risks of sexually transmitted diseases when adolescents are sexually active.

- B) The physical, psychological, and emotional damage caused by sexual abuse.
- C) The need to avoid dwelling on sexual fantasies of any kind.
- D) The legal ramifications of sexually abusing someone.
- E) B and C only
- F) A, B, and C

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[i] Oliver, B. (2007) Child Abuse & Neglect, "Three steps to reducing child molestation by adolescents", Vol 31, 683.

[ii] Ibid.

[iii] Ibid.

[iv] Ibid. at 684.

[v] Ibid. at 685.

[vi] Ibid. at 686.

[vii] Ibid. at 687.

[viii] Ibid.

[ix] Ibid. at 688.

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