



**GSTOP Child Abuse and Neglect
Prevention Policies and Procedures
“Protecting our Girls”
PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK**

Guarding Against, Recognizing & Reporting Child Abuse

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Course Information

Girl Scouts of Texas Oklahoma Plains is devoted to the well-being of children through safe, positive camp experiences. GS-TOP complies with Texas State Law by providing curriculum that focuses on prevention of sexual abuse and child molestation for persons who work at youth camps, or volunteer with youth in the State of Texas. This program is mandated by the Health and Safety Code of the State of Texas. The Department of Health has established certain criteria and guidelines for these training and examination programs, and must approve such programs in accordance with 25 TAC 265.12(g)

This curriculum is intended to be part of a comprehensive program including, but not limited to:

- Staff screening to include the use of application forms, reference checks, personal interviews, work histories and background checks.
- Staff training to include education camp staff regarding child abuse prevention, behavior management techniques, procedures for round-the-clock supervision, safety regulations and emergency procedures.
- Staff and Camper Supervision that includes regular and frequent observation of all staff while on duty, training for supervisors and specific performance guidelines.
- Volunteers must be registered members of Girl Scouts of Texas Oklahoma Plains, complete a background check and have completed this course.
- Volunteers who work with girls, take girls on day trips, troops trips, camping or even a cookie booth chaperone are required to take this course.

Note: The subject matter covered in this course is heavy and can be disturbing to some. If you experience feeling sad or uncomfortable, this is natural. It is perfectly natural to recoil or even feel angry about some of the avenues of abuse that children encounter. If you are triggered by the material, please know that it is okay to mentally and emotionally separate yourself from the material for self-protection.

Because we know that people who wish to do children harm are attracted to places that serve youth, we *must* ensure that our volunteer and staff know that any form of abuse will not be tolerated. And because we also know that girls who have been abused in other places will attend our camps, we want to give you a better understanding of abuse and teach you what to do should you suspect or have a child disclose that they are being abused.

Training Procedures

This curriculum is divided into 5 modules and EXAMINATION after most modules. You must obtain a passing grade of 80% in order to be certified by GS-TOP. This is NOT an open book test.

One of the most effective ways for visual learners to retain information is to engage with the information by highlighting, underlining, and writing notes. If you have not downloaded the Participant Guide, please do now, either on the website or through Shared Resources in gsLearn. The exception is for you to silently read sections. As you read, take the time to underline, highlight and mark what you feel are the most important parts of the material. At the end of each section, you are going to come to a symbol that looks like this:



One of the most effective ways for auditory learners to retain information is to speak it. Through gsLearn there will be a series of questions. Take advantages of the opportunity to discuss what you highlighted, and why. If you have unanswered questions please write them down and submit to customercare@gs-top.org, note that these questions on the GSTOP Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Policies and Procedures. The ability to verbalize key concepts moves the information over to long term memory. Write notes on your pages.

When you see this symbol:



Stop Pause and reflect on what you have just heard or read.

Section 1: Understanding the 4 Types of Abuse:

1. Neglect
2. Physical
3. Emotional
4. Sexual

1. What is neglect?

Neglect is a failure to provide for the child's basic needs Two types of neglect are:

- Physical
- Emotional

a. Physical neglect

Physical neglect is not providing for a child's physical needs, including:

- Inadequate provision of food, housing, or clothing appropriate for season or weather
- Lack of supervision
- Expulsion from the home or refusal to allow a runaway to return home
- Abandonment
- Denial or delay of medical care
- Inadequate hygiene

b. Emotional (psychological) neglect

Emotional neglect is a lack of emotional support and love, such as:

- not attending to the child's needs, including need for affection e failure to provide necessary psychological care
- domestic violence in the child's presence, such as spousal or partner abuse
- drug and alcohol abuse in the presence of the child, or allowing the child to participate in drug and alcohol use

When authorities examine emotional neglect, they take into consideration cultural values and standards of care, as well as the level of family income, which may interfere with proper care. Some overlap exists between the definitions of emotional abuse and emotional neglect; regardless, they are both child abuse.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF NEGLECT TO LOOK FOR?

If you suspect neglect, but aren't sure, look for clusters of the following physical and behavioral signs. Some signs of *neglect* are:

- Unsuitable clothing for weather
- Being dirty or unbathed
- Extreme hunger
- Apparent lack of supervision



2. What is physical abuse?

Physical abuse is any non-accidental physical injury to a child. Even if the parent or caretaker who inflicts the injury might not have intended to hurt the child, the injury is not considered an accident if the caretaker's actions were intentional. This injury may be the result of any assault on a child's body, such as:

- Beating, whipping, paddling, punching, slapping, or hitting
- Pushing, shoving, shaking, kicking or throwing
- Pinching, biting, choking, or hair-pulling
- Burning with cigarettes, scalding water, or other hot objects.
- Severe physical punishment that is inappropriate to child's age.

Corporal (physical) punishment is distinguished from physical abuse in that physical punishment is the use of physical force with the intent of inflicting bodily pain, but not injury, for the purpose of correction or control. Physical abuse is an injury that results from physical aggression. However, physical punishment easily gets out of control and can become physical abuse. Corporal punishment is against the law in schools in some states, but not in others. In many families, physical punishment is the norm.

Hundreds of thousands of children are physically abused each year by someone close to them, and thousands of children die from the injuries. For those who survive, the emotional scars are deeper than the physical scars.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE TO LOOK FOR?

If you suspect physical abuse, but aren't sure, look for clusters of the following physical and behavioral signs. Some signs of *physical abuse* are:

- Unexplained burns, cuts, bruises, or welts in the shape of an object
- Bite marks
- Anti-social behavior
- Problems in school
- Fear of adults
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Self-destructive or suicidal behavior
- Depression or poor self-image

3. What is emotional abuse?

Emotional abuse is any attitude, behavior, or failure to act on the part of the caregiver that interferes with a child's mental health or social development.

Other names for emotional abuse are:

- Verbal abuse
- Mental abuse
- Psychological maltreatment or abuse

Emotional abuse can range from a simple verbal insult to an extreme form of punishment. The following are examples of emotional abuse:

- Ignoring, withdrawal of attention, or rejection
- Lack of physical affection such as hugs
- Lack of praise, positive reinforcement, or saying "I love you"
- Yelling or screaming e Threatening or frightening
- Negative comparisons to others
- Belittling: telling the child he or she is "no good," "worthless," "bad," or "a mistake"
- Using derogatory terms to describe the child, name-calling
- Shaming or humiliating
- Habitual scape-goating or blaming
- Using extreme or bizarre forms of punishment, such as confinement to a closet or dark room, tying to a chair for long periods of time, or terrorizing a child
- Parental child abduction

Emotional abuse is almost always present when another form of abuse is found. Some overlap exists between the definitions of emotional abuse and emotional neglect; regardless, they are both child abuse. Emotional abuse of children can come from adults or from other children:

- Parents or caregivers
- Teachers or athletic coaches
- Siblings
- Bullies
- Middle- and high-school girls in social cliques

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE TO LOOK FOR?

If you suspect emotional abuse, but aren't sure, look for clusters of the following physical and behavioral signs.

Some signs of *emotional abuse* are:

- Apathy
- Depression
- Hostility
- Lack of concentration
- Eating disorders



4. What is sexual abuse?

Sexual abuse of a child is any sexual act between an adult and a child. This includes:

- Fondling, touching, or kissing a child's genitals
- Making the child fondle the adult's genitals
- Penetration, intercourse, incest, rape, oral sex or sodomy
- Exposing the child to adult sexuality in other forms (showing sex organs to a child, forced observation of sexual acts, showing pornographic material, telling "dirty" stories, group sex including a child)
- Other privacy violations (forcing the child to undress, spying on a child in the bathroom or bedroom)
- Sexual exploitation
- Enticing children to pornographic sites or material on the Internet
- Luring children through the Internet to meet for sexual liaisons
- Exposing children to pornographic movies or magazines
- Child prostitution
- Using a child in the production of pornography, such as a film or magazine

The above acts are considered child abuse when they are committed by a relative or by a caretaker, such as a parent, babysitter, or daycare provider, whether inside the home or apart from the home. (If a stranger commits the act, it is called sexual assault.)

Sexual relation with a person younger than the **legal age of consent** is against the law. Even if the two parties agree to the sexual relationship, it is still against the law.

Sexual abuse is especially complicated because of the power differential between the adult and child, because of the negotiations that must occur between adult and child, and because the child has no way to assimilate the experience into a mature understanding of intimacy. Regardless of the child's behavior or reactions, it is the responsibility of the adult not to engage in sexual acts with children. Sexual abuse is never the child's fault.

Sexual abusers can be:

- Parents, siblings, or other relatives
- Childcare professionals, clergy, teachers, or athletic coaches
- Neighbors or friends
- Strangers

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF SEXUAL ABUSE TO LOOK FOR?

If you suspect sexual abuse, but aren't sure, look for clusters of the following physical and behavioral signs. Some signs of *sexual abuse* are:

- Inappropriate interest in or knowledge of sexual acts
- Seductiveness
- Avoidance of things related to sexuality, or rejection of own genitals or bodies
- Nightmares and bed wetting
- Drastic changes in appetite e Over compliance or excessive aggression
- Fear of a particular person or family member
- Withdrawal, secretiveness, or depression
- Eating disorders
- Self-destructive or suicidal behavior

Sometimes there are no obvious physical signs of sexual abuse, and a physician must examine the child to confirm the abuse.

WHAT ARE THE SHORT- AND LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF SEXUAL ABUSE ON CHILDREN?

Child sexual abuse can have a number of effects, both physical and psychological, that last both in the short and longer term. Early identification and effective intervention can lessen the initial effects and long-term consequences of child sexual abuse and promote the recovery of victims.

Outlined below are some common effects which can occur as a result of childhood sexual assault.

Psychological Effects

- **Fear.** The offender may swear the child to secrecy and say something bad will happen if they tell. Coercion, bribery or threats usually accompany sexual abuse. Overwhelmingly, the child is afraid to tell because of what the consequences might be. The child lives with fear of punishment, blame, not being believed and ultimate rejection or abandonment.
- **Helplessness/powerlessness.** Children in this situation often feel that they have no control over their own lives or even over their own bodies. They feel that they have no choices available to them.
- **Guilt and Shame.** The child knows something is wrong but blames him or herself not others. The offender will often encourage the child to feel that the abuse is his or her fault and therefore is a "bad" person.
- **Responsibility.** The offender coerces the child to feel responsible for concealing the abuse. The child then believes they are responsible for preserving the secret in order to keep their family together and to maintain appearances at all costs. The burden of this responsibility, however, interferes with all normal childhood development and experiences.
- **Isolation.** Incest victims feel different from other children. They must usually be secretive. This further isolates them from non-offending parents and brothers and sisters. This isolation often leads to the child being labeled as 'different', 'a problem' or in some way different from their siblings.
- **Betrayal.** Children feel betrayed because they are dependent upon adults for nurturing and protection and the offender is someone who they should be able to love and trust. They may also feel betrayed by a non-offending parent who they believe has failed to protect them.
- **Anger.** Children most often direct their feelings of anger in several ways.
 1. They may direct it outward at perceived little things.
 2. They may more often direct it inward affirming their feelings of low self-worth or value; and

3. Almost never direct their anger towards the abuser whilst still in close relationship with them. The issue of anger is most often dealt with in the longer term, as an adult.
 4. Children may feel anger towards others whom they believe have failed to protect them.
- **Sadness.** Children may feel grief due to a sense of loss, especially if the perpetrator was loved and trusted by the child.
 - **Flashbacks.** These can be like nightmares which happen while the child is awake. They are a reexperience of the sexual assault as it occurred at that time. As an adult, a survivor may experience the same type of omnipotent fear that they experienced as a child. Flashbacks can be triggered by many things. By a smell, a mannerism, a phrase, a place or a wealth of other environmental factors that may have significance.

Other short-term impacts may include:

- Medical problems, such as Sexually Transmitted Infections, pregnancy or physical injuries.
- Behavioral problems such as aggression, clinginess, phobias, eating and sleeping disorders, school problems and school refusal.

In the long term, the child may also experience a number of effects as an adult. These may include:

- Depression, anxiety, trouble sleeping.
- Low self-esteem.
- "Damaged goods" syndrome. i.e., negative body image due to self-blame. This may be intensified if physical pain was experienced during the abusive incidents.
- Vulnerability to subsequent abuse and exploitation.
- Dissociation from feeling.
- Social isolation.
- Relationship problems such as an inability to trust, poor social skills or a reluctance to disclose details about themselves.
- Self-destructive behavior such as substance abuse or suicide attempts.
- Eating disorders.
- Parenting problems such as fear of being a bad parent, or fear of abusing the child or being overprotective.
- An underlying sense of guilt, anger or loss.
- "Flashbacks" and/or panic attacks.
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Section 2: Understanding How Child Molesters Behave

WHAT ARE THE BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS OF MEN OR WOMEN WHO HAVE MOLESTED CHILDREN?

Because people who wish to do harm to children regularly seek employment or volunteer opportunities with programs involving children, it is important to focus on some of the behavioral indicators that child molesters exhibit so that every member of our staff has the knowledge to help prevent campers from being abused or molested.

Persons who molest children often:

- 1) Are aware, in many cases, of their preference for children before they reach age 18. Most offenders are adult males, but some women also molest children.
- 2) Are usually married. A small number never marry and maintain a lifelong sexual and emotional interest in children.
- 3) Relate better to children than adults and may feel more comfortable with children and their interests.
- 4) Have few close adult friends.
- 5) Prefer children in a specific age group.
- 6) Prefer one gender to the other; however, some are bisexual in their preference.
- 7) Seek employment or volunteer opportunities with programs involving children
- 8) Pursue children for sexual purposes and may feel emotionally attached to the extent that emotional needs are met by engaging in relationships with children. Example: An adult man spends time with neighbor children or relatives and talks at length about his feelings for them or his own feelings of loneliness or loss in order to get the child's sympathy.
- 9) Photograph or collect photographs of their victims, dressed, nude or involved in sexual acts.
- 10) Collect child erotica and child-adult pornography which may be used in the following ways:
 - a. To lower the inhibitions of victims.
 - b. To fantasize when no potential victim is available.
 - c. To relive past sexual activities.
 - d. To justify their inappropriate sexual activities.
 - e. To blackmail victims to keep them from telling.
- 11) Possess alcohol or narcotics and furnish them to their victims to lower inhibitions or gain favor.
- 12) Talk with children in ways that equalize their relationship.
- 13) Talk about children in the same manner as one would talk about an adult lover or partner.
- 14) Seek out organizations (such as North American Man-Boy Love Association/NAMBLA) and publications that support their sexual beliefs and practices.
- 15) Offer to baby-sit or take children on trips in order to manipulate situations to sleep with or be near children or bathe or dress them.
- 16) Are seen at parks, playgrounds or places frequented by children or teenagers.

WHAT ARE THE METHODS OF OPERATION OF CHILD MOLESTERS?

No one has been able to predict which factors will cause someone to abuse or molest a child. A significant factor tends to be intergenerational - those who were abused as children are more likely to repeat the act when they become parents or caretakers like camp staff. In cases of molestation, some people who have molested or plan to molest a child exhibit no observable behavior pattern that would be a clue to their future actions. However, there are some methods or strategies that child molesters commonly use to gain access to a child that you should be aware of.

Signs:

- Watch for an adult staff member who consistently singles out one child for special attention.
 - This person may give presents or special rewards to a single child.
- Watch for an adult staff member who prefers the company of children to adult relationships.
 - This person may speak of close friends who are children.
 - This person may speak of or have child related items like books, games and toys even though he/she has no children.
- Isolation
 - Molesters will isolate a child from adult supervision where they will be more vulnerable to molestation.
- Grooming
 - Grooming can also be referred to as "seduction". Child sexual abuse usually begins with a sex offender gaining the child's trust and friendship. Once a relationship has been established, the offender will begin to test the child's knowledge and ability to protect themselves. Sexual jokes, back rubs, "accidental" sexual touching, and hugging, often done in the presence of others, are utilized to 'test the waters." If these behaviors are not received with alarm, the offender will increase the amount and type of sexual exposure while rewarding the child for tolerance of that behavior. To adjust the child to sexual activity, offenders commonly utilize casual or accidental exposure to pornography or sexually explicit conversations.

WHAT TRICKS DO CHILD MOLESTERS USE TO GET CHILDREN TO COMPLY?

- **The Trust Trick**
 - Trust is easily established in a close setting like camp where the adult role model relationship is an important part of camp. Children see adults as authority figures and as protectors. Children are also naturally curious and need attention and affection. A molester may use these natural tendencies of children and the camp environment to trick a child into a situation where molestation can occur.
- **The Secret Trick**
 - Sometimes victims are warned to keep physical and sexual harassment or assault a secret because: no one will believe them, it is the victim's fault, their parents and friends will be angry or reject them if they knew, or that something awful will happen to them or loved ones if they tell. Even the threat that the abuser will withdraw affection in some cases is an effective strategy. Often the victimization continues because the victim is afraid these threats might be true.
- **Force**
 - While force occurs more often in situations where the child does not have a relationship to the molester, it is a method of operation of a child molester. In the camp setting this may happen with staff members who do not directly supervise the child who has been forced.

Section 3: Understanding how to protect against Peer Abuse

Abuse of children can come from other children. The most common type is emotional abuse with bullying and hazing as the most recognized forms.

BULLYING is any intentional hurtful act, committed by one or more persons against another. Bullying occurs when there is an imbalance of power between a bully and a victim. The main types of bullying include:

- **Physical** punching, hitting, shoving, stealing personal things, or getting into someone's personal space when asked not to
- **Verbal** — name calling, hurtful teasing, taunting, unwanted nicknames, gossiping
- **Relational** — exclusion, humiliation, blackmailing, manipulating friendships

HAZING is any activity expected of someone joining a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses or endangers, regardless of the person's willingness to participate. Initiation rites that are abusive in any manner fall under hazing.

WHO ARE THE "BULLIES" & "HAZERS"?

These folks are often smart, popular, well-liked, and have good social skills. They may look like leaders and be liked by counselors and other campers, but they lack empathy. The "victims" on the other hand show some vulnerability that makes them easy targets. As a counselor, you need to be aware of those kids that may be left out or have a difficult time fitting in or making friends.

As a counselor, your role is to be a hero! You need to discuss camper rules and role model the behavior that you ask them to follow. Let campers know that bullying and hazing is unacceptable and won't be tolerated. Do not play favorites with some campers since that would show them that it is okay to "exclude" others. Bullying usually occurs in places when counselors are not around, so it is important to make bullying a regular topic of discussion with your campers on a weekly basis at a minimum, so they know you take it seriously.

When a counselor observes bullying of any kind, they must intervene by stepping in and separating the children involved. Support the victim and report any bullying behavior to your leadership team immediately. Teach your campers to be a real "caring" community and let you know when they see someone left out, teased, or upset by someone else.

Teach campers the difference between reporting & tattling:

- Reporting means getting kids out of danger and into safety.
- Tattling means telling on others with the intent to get someone in trouble.
- When a camper reports that he or she is being picked on, support him or her and keep an eye on the situation.

When you role model to your campers that you want them to be heroes themselves and step in to help another camper or find a counselor when there is a bullying problem, you have done a great job! Campers follow your actions much more than they follow your words. Make camp a place where everyone feels valued by how you bring everyone together.

Potential for Consensual and Nonconsensual Sexual Activity Between Campers

Due to the sexual activity of teens today, staff members also need to be aware of the possibility of consensual and nonconsensual sexual activity between campers. Being aware of certain risk factors will help minimize the potential.

Risk factor 1: Isolation

Most sexual abuse and consensual sexual activity occur in isolated settings.

Four factors that affect isolation are:

- The number of people present
- The time of the activity
- The location of the activity
- The physical arrangements

Minimize the isolation factor in all activities. All activities should be approved and properly supervised by two or more qualified staff members.

Risk factor 2: Accountability

Accountability involves justifying one's actions.

Three factors that affect the accountability of staff and campers:

- The personal character and integrity of the staff/child
- The number of people present for the activity
- The degree of openness and approval associated with the activity

Risk factor 3: Power and Control

Children are vulnerable to sexual predators because of the imbalance of power related to size, strength, control, and authority. Balance does not exist between a child and an adult abuser.

Research indicates one-fourth of abuse cases involve another child. Risk increases when there is a large age difference between children. Provide a proper balance of power in all activities.

Preventative steps:

- All activities should be approved
- Have two or more adults at each activity
- Model appropriate dress and language
- Avoid teasing and jokes with sexual overtones
- Keep physical affection appropriate
- Watch for and correct any sexually suggestive behavior from campers and between campers
- Watch for any developing relationships between campers, especially older and younger
- Deter isolated one-on-one encounters between campers
- Minimize one-on-one encounters between staff and campers
- Avoid isolation (use visible, well-lighted areas)
- No one-on-one sessions
- Minimize times when only one adult is in the cabin with campers
- Do not pair younger campers with older campers in an unsupervised activity or location
- Keep your campers together as a group
- Do not allow campers to remain in the cabin during scheduled activities
- If a camper is not feeling well, they need to be taken to the nurse's cabin

- Campers are not allowed to rest in the cabins alone. This is for the safety of the camper. No exceptions should be made to this rule.
- Keep to your scheduled assigned activities to provide appropriate supervision for our campers
- Always report anything to Camp Director who will immediately investigate

Section 4: GSTOP Policies, Procedures & Reporting Suspected Abuse

2.5 ANTI-CHILD ABUSE POLICY

Because some positions within GS-TOP have direct contact with children, GS-TOP supports and maintains environments that are free of child abuse and neglect. All 50 states have passed some form of mandatory child abuse and neglect reporting law in order to qualify for funding under the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA).

Child Abuse or neglect is defined as:

Any recent act of failure to act resulting in imminent risk of serious harm, death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation of a child by a parent or caretaker who is responsible for the child's welfare (the definition of 'child' may vary from state to state, but is usually a person under the age of 18).

Sexual abuse is defined as:

Employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct, or rape, and in cases of caretaker or interfamilial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children, or incest with children.

Sexual abuse may also include sexual touching and bodily contact, exhibitionism, voyeurism and/or involvement of children in pornographic material.

In accordance with these statutes, GS-TOP will neither condone nor tolerate:

- Infliction of physically abusive behavior or bodily injury upon girl members.
- Physical neglect of girl members, including failure to provide adequate safety measures, care and supervision in relation to Girl Scout activities.
- Emotional maltreatment of girl members, including verbal abuse and/or verbal attacks.

GS-TOP reserves the right to refuse membership, to dismiss or to exclude from affiliation with the organization any employee or volunteer who is found guilty of child abuse or neglect or has been convicted of child abuse or neglect. Local (more stringent) prevailing statutes may supersede Girl Scout policies.

From the TX Department of State Health Services: Reporting Alleged Abuse, Neglect or Exploitation at Texas Youth Camps.

If a person, including any member of volunteer leadership team, camp staff, a camp counselor, or camp director has cause to believe that a minor has been or may have been abused or neglected at a youth camp, then that person shall immediately make a report to one of the following agencies:

- any local or state law enforcement agency
- the Department of Family and Protective Services Abuse Hotline, which may be contacted at (800) 252-5400 or through the secure web site <http://www.txabusehotline.org/>
- Department of State Health Services' Policy, Standards and Quality Assurance Unit by phone at (512) 834-6788 or submitting the Reporting Abuse and Neglect Form, by fax at (512) 834-6707 or email at PHSCPS@dshs.texas.gov

A person making a report, to local law enforcement or the Department of Family and Protective Services, of alleged abuse or neglect at a youth camp, must also notify the Department of State Health Services' Policy, Standards and Quality Assurance Unit by phone at (512) 834-6788, by fax at (512) 834-6707, or by email at PHSCPS@dshs.texas.gov

For troops in Oklahoma:

- Call the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS) at 1-800-522-3511 to provide details about your concern, and you may remain anonymous.
- A report can also be submitted through the ourOKDHS.org portal.
- Under Oklahoma law, anyone can report child neglect or abuse, and there are legal protections for those who make reports in good faith.

HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF AGAINST THE ACCIDENTAL APPEARANCE OF ABUSE?

1. BE COGNIZANT OF GOOD TOUCH –vs.—BAD TOUCH

- Do not touch a child where his/her bathing suit would be
- If a child recoils at simple touch, boundaries need to be respected
- Limiting “clingers” for the sake of development of independence and minimize confusion

2. RESPECT PERSONAL SPACE

- Do not (if at all avoidable) go off with a child alone. Ensure that there are other staff and campers in plain view
- Give kids privacy when they are changing clothes/showers

3. AVOID SITUATIONS WHERE YOU ARE ONE ON ONE WITH A CHILD

If a situation occurs that you cannot avoid being alone with a child (i.e., forgotten bathing suit, first aid, etc.) Examine other possibilities —

- Can the whole group go?
- Can you send a buddy pair and keep them in plain view?
- Can you go with the child and remain within view or hearing range of other adults?

If all other possibilities have been exhausted, report to an adult in the following recommended fashion. "It is necessary for me to go back to the pool area with Susan — it is now 10:07" then immediately upon return, report to the same adult, "we have returned — it is now 10:11." This way you can ensure another adult knew where you were and for how long.

4. USE GOOD JUDGEMENT

Children have tendency to be impulsive and become over stimulated. Over stimulation can occur physically by wrestling, tickling, or in other ways such as by hearing suggestive stories or by hearing about the private lives and romantic involvements of staff members. **Romantic lives of volunteer or staff can, under no circumstances, be shared with campers.**

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF A GIRL DISCLOSES THAT SHE HAS BEEN ABUSED IN SOME WAY?

- Remain calm
- Assure privacy but not confidentiality
 - You did the right thing by telling me
 - This is NOT your fault
 - We need to tell someone else who knows more about this
- Believe the child
- Gather facts without interrogating
 - Determine if have they have told anyone else
 - Get help — notify your Camp Director
- Use caution in what you say or promise
 - Do NOT tell them it will be ok
 - Do NOT tell them that you can fix this

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I BELIEVE A GIRL WAS ABUSED WHILE SHE WAS AT CAMP?

This is a very serious situation, and you are obligated by law to report if you come to know or suspect that a child has been or is being abused.

Share your concerns directly with your Camp Director. To limit the possibility of changing the behavior of others toward the girl or starting the spread of gossip, limit your discussion about your concerns to your Director only, unless directed to do otherwise. Your Camp Director is required by State Law to report the concern to the Office of Inspector General, Internal Affairs.

Specifically:

If a person, including any member of camp staff, a camp counselor, or camp director has cause to believe that a minor has been or may have been abused or neglected as those terms are defined in the Family Code, Chapter 261, and the abuse or neglect occurred at the youth camp, then that person shall immediately make a report, in accordance with Family Code, 5261.101(a) to the Health and Human Services Commission Office of Inspector General, as required by Family Code, 5261.103.

To make an online report go to https://oig.hhsc.state.tx.us/Fraud_Report_Home.aspx.

A report intake form, entitled HHSE Office of Internal Affairs: Texas Youth Camp Waste, Abuse and Fraud Referral Form can be entered online OR it may be printed and faxed to the Office of Inspector General, Internal Affairs, fax # (512) 833-6493. A report shall be made to the Health and Human Services Commission Office of Inspector General and may also be made to a local or state law enforcement agency or other agency listed in Family code, 5261.103.

After receiving an allegation, Internal Affairs will conduct the investigation according to the Texas Administrative Code Sections 1.201 — 1.207 Investigation of Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation of Children or Elderly or Disabled Persons.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I BELIEVE A GIRL WAS ABUSED WHILE SHE WAS SOME PLACE OTHER THAN CAMP?

This is ALSO a very serious situation and if you come to know or suspect that a child has been or is being abused Texas State Law requires that it MUST be reported.

Share your concerns directly with your Camp Director. To limit the possibility of changing the behavior of others toward the girl or starting the spread of gossip, limit your discussion about your concerns to your Director only unless directed to do otherwise. Specifically:

If a person, including any member of camp staff, a camp counselor, or camp director has cause to believe that a minor has been or may have been abused or neglected as those terms are defined in the Family Code, Chapter 261, and the abuse or neglect did not occur at the youth camp, then that person shall immediately make a report, in accordance with Family Code, 5261.103.

A report shall be made to:

Any local or state law enforcement agency; or

The Department of Family and Protective Services Abuse Hotline, which may be contacted at (800) 252-5400 or through the secure web site at <http://www.txabusehotline.org>

**WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I BELIEVE A GIRL WAS ABUSED WHILE SHE WAS SOME PLACE
OTHER THAN AT GIRL SCOUT MEETING OR EVENT?**

All GSTOP volunteers must immediately report any good faith suspicion or belief of child abuse, neglect, or sexual exploitation. This reporting responsibility is personal to the volunteer and may not be abdicated to someone else.

In Texas such reports must be made to the state or local law enforcement authorities or to the Texas Abuse Hotline (1-800-252-5400 or www.txabusehotline.org).

In Oklahoma reports must be made to local law enforcement or to the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (1-800-522-3511 or www.okdhs.org)

Any volunteer making such a report must also immediately notify the council Chief Mission Delivery Officer and/or the CEO.

If the conduct occurred during a Girl Scout activity, the volunteer must also file an accident/incident report with GSTOP. Failure to timely report suspected child abuse can result in criminal and/or civil liability.

Please reach out the Customer Care at customercare@gstop.org or call 1-800-582-7272.

Additional information can be found on these resources:

Volunteer Essentials

Creating a Safe Space for Girl Scouts

Report Concerns

https://issuu.com/gs-top/docs/volunteer_essentials

Pages 45 – 46

Safety Activity Check Points
Overall, Health, Well-Being and Inclusivity

Emotional Safety

Physical or Sexual Abuse

Youth Violence and Bullying

Child Abuse

Mental Health and Safety

<https://issuu.com/gstop/docs/safety-activity-checkpoints/233>

Pages 18 - 20

If the conduct occurred during a Girl Scout activity, the volunteer must also file an accident/incident report with GSTOP.

Failure to timely report suspected child abuse can result in criminal and/or civil liability.
The form link below needs to be completed and sent in within hour 48 hours.

https://gstop.formstack.com/forms/accident_incident

of texas oklahoma plains

Accident/Incident Report

To report an accident during business hours Monday – Friday, call 817-737-7272 or 1-800-562-7272;
During evenings and weekends, please call our Emergency Line at 682-551-0281.

Report prepared by _____ Date prepared _____

Title _____ Did preparer witness accident/incident? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Date of Accident/Incident _____ Time _____ am/pm

Person Affected _____ ☐ Female ☐ Male Home # _____

Address _____ Work # _____

City, State, Zip _____ Date of Birth _____

Member: ☐ Girl ☐ Adult Volunteer ☐ Employed Staff	Non - Member: ☐ Girl ☐ Adult Volunteer
--	--

Location of Accident/Incident _____ Activity _____

Address _____

Describe Accident/Incident (use back if necessary) _____

If injured, which part of body affected: _____

Initial care provided _____ By Whom? _____

Referred to Doctor or Clinic? ☐ Yes ☐ No

How transported from site? ☐ Ambulance ☐ Friend ☐ Parent ☐ Self ☐ Other _____

Did the employee lose any time from work? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Is the employee back at work? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, date returned to work? _____

Return to work status: ☐ Light ☐ Modified ☐ Regular

Witness _____	Witness _____
Address _____	Address _____
City, State, Zip _____	City, State, Zip _____
Phone # _____	Phone # _____

- ANY accident/incident, whether physical, mental or emotional should be reported to the Supervisor or Adult/Volunteer-in-Charge immediately, includes reports given over the phone from troop leaders, event directors and parents.
- The Supervisor or Adult/Volunteer-in-Charge should complete this

STAFF USE ONLY

Referred to: _____

Date: _____ By: _____

If Staff, date of hire: _____