Welcome to the Praesidium Report©. The purpose of this report is to share with readers Praesidium’s global experience and research findings and to provide industry trends relevant to our mission:

“To help you protect those in your care from abuse and help you preserve trust in your organization.”

Our hope is that you will find this report useful in your work and that you will share it with your colleagues who embrace your, and our, passion for keeping children and vulnerable adults safe from abuse.
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INTRODUCTION

Praesidium is encouraged to see that abuse risk management continues to be widely discussed, and more attention than ever is being placed on preventing and responding to sexual abuse. From researchers to insurance providers and organizations providing direct care to consumers, the national landscape of abuse prevention efforts is rapidly evolving.

Praesidium has the privilege of working with a variety of partners to collect and analyze data on how organizational sexual abuse occurs. We have spent the last two years taking a deeper look at our internal and external data on abuse incidents to show a broader picture of the issue and how we can collectively strengthen prevention efforts.

This report summarizes the analysis of an abundance of data on abuse incidents, insurance providers’ efforts, and organizational data at the local and national levels. While reviewing this amount of data may seem overwhelming, it is critical to understand the scope of the problem so we can learn how best to prevent and respond. No matter your industry, background, or the consumers you serve, our goal is to help all readers understand what this information means for you and your organization. Additionally, Praesidium will continue to use all the data to improve our own abuse prevention standards and resources.
PRAESIDIUM STANDARDS TRENDS

Know Your Score! Self-Assessment

Know Your Score! Self-Assessment Data and Trends
Praesidium developed the Know Your Score!™ (KYS!) self-assessment tool using best practice standards in each of the eight operations of The Praesidium Safety Equation®. KYS! allows organizations to assess the current strength of their policies and practices designed to keep those in their care safe from abuse. With that in mind, the following data more accurately reflects the reality of implementation and the degree to which organizations are willing to take an honest look at their practices.

Almost 3,000 of Praesidium’s client organizations have completed at least one KYS! self-assessment over the last six years. These organizations include youth development programs, camps, social service agencies, university programs, and churches. The number of clients, range of industries, and depth of data collected make KYS! the largest and most comprehensive benchmarking of consumer protection practices. As discussed below, many organizations complete KYS! regularly as part of their continuous quality improvement and risk management processes. This also allows us to identify how and where organizations are improving their abuse prevention operations and where they are most likely to see gaps.

PRAESIDIUM TIP:
Remember, drift is a natural occurrence in every organization. It’s not whether you have drift - it’s how quickly you can catch it. Assess your abuse prevention efforts regularly to ensure you can identify and respond to drift before it happens.
Average KYS! Scores by Operation

Figure 1 below shows the average percentage points earned in each operation for all assessments completed between 2016 and 2022. Throughout this time, organizations completing self-assessments have scored highest in meeting or exceeding Praesidium’s best practice standards in the Screening and Selection (71%), Policies (68%), and Monitoring and Supervision (68%) operations of the Safety Equation. The lowest scores are in the Consumer Participation (59%), Internal Feedback Systems (61%), and Administrative Practices (63%) operations. This information helps identify how organizations are prioritizing their abuse prevention efforts; it also helps us better identify the necessity and development of new resources such as live/virtual training, webinars, sample policies, and online courses to best support their overall safety measures.

Figure 1: Average KYS! Score by Area of Operation (2016-2022)
Average KYS! Score by Best Practice Standard

Praesidium also analyzed the self-assessment scores across all 23 of our best practice standards. See below for highlights of the three highest and three lowest-scoring standards.

Three Highest Scoring Praesidium Standards (2016-2022)

1. **Standard 5** (76% average): “The organization carefully reviews applicant information gathered during the screening process to guide the final decision.” Components include that the organization: 1) has a process for reviewing criminal convictions discovered through the criminal background check; and 2) has a process to systematically review and utilize all applicant information throughout the screening process to assess for abuse risk.

2. **Standard 20** (73% average): “The organization’s abuse risk management standards are consistently in place across all programs.” Components include that the organization: 1) has a point person or committee to manage all abuse prevention efforts; 2) monitors compliance with operational standards; 3) responds quickly to drift from operational standards; 4) has a written procedure for selecting and approving new programs and services; and, 5) develops and maintains an inventory of all consumer-serving programs and services within the organization.

3. **Standard 22** (73% average): “The organization systematically monitors consumers.” Components include that the organization: 1) adheres to specific adult-to-consumer ratios in programs; 2) monitors when consumers enter and exit programs; 3) monitors consumer-to-consumer interactions; 4) provides additional supervision for unique consumer needs; and 5) has a policy for addressing staff cell phone use while on duty.

“Commitment to abuse prevention and risk management must start at the top; accordingly, raising the standards for board members and governing leadership will aid the organization in effectively creating a culture of safety.”
Three Lowest Scoring Praesidium Standards (2016-2022)

1. **Standard 21** (58% average): "The organization’s abuse risk management is a function of its governing body." Components include that the organization’s governing body: 1) has a standing committee charged with abuse risk management; 2) receives information and training regarding the organization’s commitment to preventing abuse in programs; 3) routinely receives organizational data in a way that permits analysis and utilization for abuse risk management; and 4) has defined criteria for determining when the governing body is informed of abuse allegations.

**PRAESIDIUM TIP:**

The importance of leadership and Board of Director engagement cannot be overstated. If leadership and Board members are not bought in, everything else an organization does to prevent abuse has limited effectiveness. Ensure your Board of Directors and leadership are properly educated on the risk of abuse within your organization and their role in ensuring your organization is adhering to best practice standards.

2. **Standard 23** (56% average): "The organization has standards in place for its volunteers." Components include that the organization: 1) has a process for identifying if a volunteer is considered low-access or high-access; 2) has a screening and selection process for low-access volunteers designed to assess for abuse risk; and 3) has an abuse prevention training delivery system for low-access volunteers as required.

**PRAESIDIUM TIP:**

To help determine whether volunteers are low- or high-access, consider the amount of privacy they may have with consumers, the duration of the program or activity, and the frequency of contact volunteers have with consumers your organization serves.

3. **Standard 15** (52% average): "The organization provides consumers with information related to preventing abuse." Components include that the organization: 1) provides consumers with developmentally appropriate and age-appropriate information about protecting themselves from abuse; 2) provides consumers with information on their policies related to abuse prevention; and 3) uses a variety of methods with consumers for maintaining awareness of abuse prevention.

**PRAESIDIUM TIP:**

Be sure to educate consumers about physical, emotional, and online boundaries. Let them know that the organization has specific appropriate boundaries between adults and consumers – and that no one in your organization will ever encourage consumers to break the rules or keep secrets from other adults.
Average KYS! Score by Assessment Completions

Some organizations have implemented a requirement to complete self-assessments at regular intervals (i.e., annually or bi-annually) to allow for tracking progress over time. Figure 2 below shows the difference in the percentage of points earned for organizations completing multiple KYS! assessments.

Figure 2: Average KYS! Score by Assessment Completions (2016-2022)

An essential part of maintaining a safe environment is responding to potential drift from abuse prevention standards and best practices. Data shows that regularly assessing is an effective strategy for identifying and correcting drift from standards. Accordingly, organizations increase their scores most significantly between their first and second self-assessments; there is an 18-point increase between Cycle 1 and Cycle 2. This data is very encouraging because it suggests that organizations are implementing abuse prevention resources and strategies following their first completed assessment, and thus, may indicate that they are reducing the risk of abuse in their programs.

As the numbers in Figure 2 represent, Cycles 4-6 show overall scores leveling out for organizations. Specifically, Consumer Participation scores show a steady decrease in Cycles 4-6, and Internal Feedback Systems scores fluctuate slightly. These two operations tend to be areas that organizations focus on later in their abuse prevention efforts, which may explain the decrease and fluctuation of scores. Praesidium will continue to analyze how organizations score on Cycle 6 self-assessments, as the sample size is currently limited.
Praesidium partners with a broad network of researchers and experts in sexual abuse prevention, sexual grooming, and organizational behavior. Throughout the following pages, you will find a variety of researchers’ responses to the question: "Over the next five years, where do you see abuse prevention and risk management trends heading based on your work or area of expertise?"

"Highly specific child safety guidelines and elaborate safety interventions have been developed and disseminated widely over the last decade or more. However, extensive research has yet to be conducted to examine the efficacy of these innovations. As we see more outcomes researched and a larger breadth and depth of incident data from organizations, we have a greater opportunity to achieve a factual basis for improved child safety measures."

Dr. Donald Palmer
Professor | UC Davis Graduate School of Management
"I think that in the next five years, we will incorporate more research and data into abuse prevention and risk management. From a research perspective, we are learning more about how abuse is perpetrated, and as such, we can implement evidence-based strategies to prevent and detect it. Further, I believe that we will see more organizations collecting their risk data to analyze, which can inform organization-specific policies and procedures. Additionally, as the culture of prevention continues to grow, we will see increased implementation and standardization of policies designed to prevent abuse."

Dr. Elizabeth Jeglic
Professor of Psychology | John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York

Praesidium Accreditation®

Raising Abuse Prevention Standards in Organizations
Organizations that have created an authentic culture of safety understand that completing a self-assessment alone is not enough to maintain a safe environment for consumers. As consumer protection standards continue to increase, the need for external verification and accountability will also increase. Praesidium's Accreditation data on consumer-serving organizations offers insight into organizations' ongoing efforts to implement abuse prevention standards and maintain the safest environment possible.

At the time of publication, 193 organizations across 13 countries and various industries are Praesidium Accredited. This number regularly fluctuates as new organizations achieve initial Accreditation or are re-Accredited. Currently, 44 organizations are in the process of pursuing Praesidium Accreditation. On average, it takes organizations 12-14 months to achieve Praesidium Accreditation, and over 90% of organizations that start the process will complete it. Organizations have an average of nine additional requirements that they must meet after their verification site visit.
Accreditation Data and Trends
Candidate organizations for Praesidium Accreditation must first complete a self-assessment to identify where opportunities for improvement exist. Accreditation self-assessment data shows that the average score of the initial self-assessment is 67%, and the average score for organizations seeking re-accreditation is 85%. The following list shows the three highest-scoring and lowest-scoring Praesidium Standards identified in Accreditation self-assessments.

Three Highest Scoring Praesidium Standards

**Standard 1:** The organization’s policies communicate zero tolerance for abuse.

**Standard 13:** The organization has mechanisms in place for minimizing barriers to reporting concerns, complaints, or grievances.

**Standard 10:** The organization systematically monitors high-risk activities.

Three Lowest Scoring Praesidium Standards

**Standard 22:** The organization has a defined process for establishing and managing abuse risk management practices with third-party agreements.

**Standard 18:** The organization defines everyone’s role in responding to allegations or incidents of abuse.

**Standard 19:** The organization defines everyone’s role in responding to consumer-to-consumer sexual activity.
Trends that Impact Accreditation Success

In 2022, Praesidium supported 52 organizations through the Accreditation process and has identified several trends that may impact the overall success these organizations have in achieving Accreditation.

Contributing Factors to Successfully Completing Accreditation

Interestingly, there is no correlation between scoring higher on the self-assessment and completing the Accreditation process more quickly. Trends in data from the past two years show that when organizations more accurately score themselves on how closely they are meeting the standard, this may actually result in an overall lower score. However, these organizations were likely to achieve Accreditation more quickly than their higher-scoring peers.

Additionally, trends thus far show that no specific industry or size of an organization makes them more successful in achieving Accreditation. For example, larger organizations do not consistently achieve Accreditation more quickly than smaller organizations, even though they may have additional resources and staff to dedicate to the process. Praesidium will continue to analyze the factors that help organizations achieve Accreditation.

Benefits of a Third-Party Review

Praesidium is identifying notable trends during the site-visit phase of the Accreditation process. For example, organizations may score themselves on the self-assessment as meeting specific standards and components per their written policies and procedures. However, observations and interviews through our site-visit process show that, in practice, this policy or procedure does not fully meet the standard.

These trends indicate that while completing a self-assessment is impactful for organizations to improve their abuse prevention efforts, an external review or verification process is ultimately the most accurate way to identify where gaps still exist. An external perspective can be insightful for identifying how best to implement standards within the context of an organization’s unique circumstances.
INCIDENTS, VERDICTS, AND CLAIMS ANALYSIS

The subsequent three sections include the following information: an analysis of Praesidium's internal Helpline incidents; preliminary findings from a recent review Praesidium conducted of over 1,100 external incidents and verdicts; and lastly, an overview of the characteristics of individuals involved in incidents of abuse across all datasets and factors that play a role in these cases.

Praesidium Helpline Trends

Praesidium offers a Helpline service where authorized users from subscribing organizations reach out for timely consultation on situations or incidents in which they are still determining how best to respond. This support can range from providing feedback on a policy violation or how to communicate with parents and the larger community in the wake of an incident. Our Helpline services have been available since 2013, and over that time, we have consulted with clients on more than 1,200 calls on a wide range of safety issues.
External Incidents

Of all of calls we have received, 27% are related to incidents external to the organization, such as concerns about abuse that occurred outside of the organization and in which the offender was not connected to the organization (i.e., intra-familial abuse) or a concern about a parent, youth, or staff with offenses or problematic behaviors outside their role within the organization. This statistic is broken down further in Figure 3. While these are not necessarily situations where the organization can implement measures to prevent a recurrence, they do present an opportunity to remind callers about critical response steps such as mandated reporting.

Internal Incidents

For the remainder of the analysis, we will exclude these external calls to focus on incidents that have occurred while consumers are in the direct care of the organization.
As seen in previous years, our data continues to reflect an almost even split between adult-to-youth (44%) and youth-to-youth (51%) incidents, with a slightly higher proportion of youth-to-youth incidents (Figure 4 above). The subset of calls related to adult-to-adult situations remains too small to share meaningful trends, and most are historical sexual harassment incidents. We will present the findings of our deeper analysis of adult-to-youth incidents and youth-to-youth incidents below.

**Adult-to-Youth Incidents**
Adult-to-youth incidents cover a broad spectrum, from low-level boundary violations to allegations of abuse of multiple youths (Figure 5). Employees, volunteers, or other adults with access to youth on the campus/facility, such as fitness program members, can perpetrate these behaviors.

In Figure 5, the percentages are as follows:
- **Red Flag Behaviors**: 45%
- **Sexual Abuse**: 31%
- **Nonsexual Problematic Behaviors**: 24%

*Incidents of nonsexual problematic behavior include inappropriate discipline and physical and verbal aggression from an adult to youth.*
Since 2018, Praesidium has also tracked data from calls related to where incidents occur. This data provides powerful insight into higher-risk locations and additional resources needed to manage and monitor these locations. Figure 6 below breaks down locations for adult-to-youth incidents. Most adult-to-youth incidents occur in the context of recreation areas (18%). Incidents in these locations – such as playgrounds, sports fields, basketball courts, etc. – are typically boundary violations and do not rise to the level of suspected abuse.

Incidents include staff roughhousing with youth, inappropriate language, inappropriate discipline, and poor overall supervision. There is an increase in these incidents being reported in 2022, most of which were complaints from parents or guardians.

Incidents involving staff or volunteers and electronic communications with youth are the next most frequent type of calls Praesidium handles (17%). For example, a younger adult staff member may be texting or communicating on social media with youth in the program, most likely in violation of organizational policy. As virtual or hybrid programming are now standard offerings for more organizations, policies around electronic communications – and protocols to monitor and enforce them – are more critical than ever.
The third most common context for adult-to-youth incidents is bathroom/locker rooms (16%). These spaces see a higher rate of actual abuse incidents and remain problematic. Understandably, private locations such as bathrooms and locker rooms allow adults to gain easier access to youth and present monitoring and supervision challenges for the organization.

Youth-to-Youth Incidents

Situations between youths represent the majority of calls related to incidents that occur in the context of programming. Incidents range from bullying/fighting to sexually acting out to inappropriate touch and/or abuse (Figure 7).

As with adult-to-youth incident data, we have tracked locations to identify where there is a higher risk for youth-to-youth incidents (see Figure 8 below).
Unsurprisingly, bathrooms and locker rooms are the highest-risk locations for youth-to-youth incidents (34%). These locations provide privacy and may involve stages of undressing, and they can be more challenging to monitor as adults may be reluctant to be in the same space with youth who are changing clothes. Like the data on adult-to-youth incidents, when we break down the nature of incidents in bathrooms and locker rooms, these are the spaces where youth-to-youth abuse is most likely to occur. Defining policies, training all staff on monitoring these spaces, and having adults within earshot while youth use the facilities can help manage this high-risk location.

The second most frequent location for youth-to-youth incidents is in recreational spaces (23%). Keeping youth in direct line of sight can be challenging in these spaces, and supervision requires defined strategies such as zone monitoring. This location is the most frequent location for incidents of a non-sexual nature, such as bullying or physical abuse.

**Time of Year:** As Figure 9 shows below, 40% of calls from 2013-2022 occurred in the summer months (June, July, and August). This is expected as many organizations serve their highest numbers of youth during this time for out-of-school programming, and it is possible that drift may begin to set in by mid-summer. One strategy to mitigate this is to conduct refresher training with staff on policies and review any incidents. It is also an excellent opportunity to remind youth participants about appropriate boundaries and behavioral expectations in programs.

*Figure 9: Helpline Calls by Time of Year 2013-2022*
Verdicts and Claims Analysis

Praesidium continuously analyzes verdicts and claims data related to sexual abuse incidents (adult-to-adult, youth-to-youth, and adult-to-youth) from external sources. We recently analyzed over 1,100 cases dating back to the 1920s through 2021. These incidents range across several industries, including K-12 education, youth development organizations, social service agencies, healthcare, religious organizations, and government agencies, to name a few. This data, along with Praesidium's Helpline data, is integral in helping us identify important trends on how abuse happens in organizations so we can improve our prevention efforts and resources.

Researcher Insights

"To date, much of the work in our field has focused on the development of high-quality safety strategies in critical areas (e.g., screening & hiring, policies, supervision, training) designed for universal application across YSOs [youth-serving organizations]. While these strategies provide a strong foundation for organizational safety, critical differences in YSOs’ mission, structure, programs, populations served, resources, and settings can limit the effectiveness of these strategies. Over the next five years, I see our field striving to help YSOs better assess their safety needs as they change over time (often on a site-by-site basis) and assisting them in developing abuse prevention and risk management safety strategies better tailored to address the differential complexity of each YSO program/setting."

Dr. Keith Kaufman
Professor | Portland State University
**Incident Category and Type**

Data from verdicts is derived from an external database and includes a diverse range of incident types and overall case details, allowing for more granular analysis. See Figures 10 and 11 below for more information.

Figure 10: Incident Category (N=1,088)
"Combination" includes cases involving two or more incident categories (i.e., Adult-to-Youth and Youth-to-Youth incidents).

Figure 11: Incident Type (N=1,068)
"Combination" includes cases involving sexual abuse and red-flag behaviors/policy violations.
**Industries**

While we know that abuse can happen in any organizational setting, Figure 12 shows a breakdown of the industries where incidents resulted in litigation most and least often. This figure helps illustrate that any industry that places one person in charge of another is vulnerable to abuse and misconduct.

Figure 12: Breakdown of Industries (N=1,027)

1Religious organizations include churches, religious non-profits and Catholic men’s religious orders.
2Youth Development organizations include youth serving organizations, daycares, and youth summer camps (residential and day camp).

Trends in recent years show that healthcare and municipal governments continue to see a rise in claims.
Locations

Tracking and analyzing where incidents occur is critical to understanding the highest-risk locations and the risk mitigation efforts needed to prevent further abuse. Figure 13 breaks down the known locations of all the external incidents Praesidium analyzed.

Figure 13: External Incidents Locations (N=366)
Institutional Faults

Figure 14 represents the operational areas where organizations were found at fault or considered negligent. Most cases included faults in more than one category, while most were found generally negligent, which is defined as an institution being involved in "a situation in which a person acts in a careless (or "negligent") manner, which results in someone else getting hurt...".¹

Negligent Supervision

Behind general negligence (61%), negligent supervision (41%) was the most common type of specific institutional fault. In these cases, organizations failed to supervise facilities, staff, and youth, and consequently were found to have created environments where abuse was possible. Incidents occurred in public and private locations, including empty classrooms, staff members' homes, foster youth homes, hotels and cabins, school buses and vehicles, bathrooms, and outside recreation areas. Abuse can happen anywhere supervision is lacking, creating a sense of urgency for organizations to develop intentional supervision strategies and train staff to stay vigilant for red-flag behaviors.

Negligent Hiring
Negligent hiring was identified in 41% of the cases reviewed. Negligent hiring cases typically involve organizations completing insufficient background checks and/or no reference checks on applicants.

For example, in one case where negligent hiring was identified as a fault, the organization hired a pastor to develop churches without contacting his previous references. The pastor went on to develop several churches and abuse multiple individuals. Another example involved a staffing agency that failed to conduct a reference check at a previous hospital where a nurse had worked. Had the staffing agency completed a reference check with that former employer, they would have learned that the offending nurse had been accused of sexually assaulting a paralyzed patient three months prior. The staffing agency settled with the plaintiff for $900,000.

Negligent Retention and Investigation
In the cases where negligent retention (12%) and negligent investigation (7%) were the faults, typically, the organization was aware of some level of problematic behavior but may have minimized or downplayed it; in some cases, the organization did not report allegations of suspected abuse to the authorities. In one case, a seven-year-old girl was first sexually abused by her after-school care counselor, and the abuse continued for at least two school years. When she was ten, she reported the abuse to the school officials, who promptly sent her back to class and did not report the allegations to the authorities. The teacher was allowed to resign, and the jury eventually awarded the plaintiff $10 million.

Negligent Training
Only a few cases found the organization to be negligent in its training practices (7%), yet in those cases, the organization demonstrated a lack of comprehensive training content regarding recognizing red-flag behaviors and how to report them. Reporting low-level concerns is vital to abuse prevention and should be foundational in any training program. It is important to note that while negligent training was the least common fault found, training plays a key role in mitigating other faults. When staff members know how to recognize and respond to high-risk behaviors, locations, and activities, the organization is better equipped to foster a safer environment.
Financial Cost to Organizations

Praesidium analyzed the financial cost of the incidents, including settlement amounts and, when the cases went to trial, the verdict amount if accused of negligence. Organizations found responsible for any payout can face serious financial consequences and, in turn, limit their short- or long-term ability to fulfill their mission.

Our analysis identifies that the average payout is increasing. Figure 15 presents the range, mean, and median for all cases that resulted in a financial payout. When we evaluate payouts of $1 million or more over five-year intervals between 2000-2022, there is a clear and drastic increase over time (Figure 16).
Delayed Disclosures of Abuse and Statutes of Limitations

Research in recent years has confirmed that survivors of child sexual abuse are likely to wait several years or even decades before disclosing their abuse. The average age for adults to report is 52 years old (Sprober, et al., 2014). Praesidium analyzed the time between the incident date and claim filing date through our external data sources, identifying that the average time is 13 years before a case is filed.

Many states have recently changed or scaled back their statutes of limitations for filing a civil lawsuit or for pressing criminal charges in cases of child sexual abuse. Specifically, "window laws" are becoming more popular across states (currently 27 U.S. jurisdictions), which allow adults who suffered sexual abuse as a child the opportunity to file a civil suit against their offender (Child USA, 2022). For example, California enacted a law that provided child sexual abuse survivors three years to sue abusers or organizations for older claims.

Such laws continue to bring necessary attention to the challenges involved in reporting abuse and bringing due justice to abuse survivors. It is critical for organizations that care for consumers of all ages to be aware of these statutes and other societal changes that impact abuse prevention and response practices.

"Recognizing and understanding that historically marginalized groups are at higher risk for abuse and designing prevention efforts to meet their needs is an essential step to effective CSA [child sexual abuse] prevention. Over the past few years, I've seen a definite shift to using a health equity lens to frame prevention efforts and engaging in positive youth development prevention approaches.

I have also noticed more YSOs taking accountability for previous incidents of abuse within their organizations, and I'm starting to see a shift away from prioritizing the safety and reputation of the organization over the safety and well-being of youth. It is very exciting and encouraging to see the field trending more toward organizational accountability and inclusive prevention efforts, and I am optimistic that we will continue to see decreases in CSA incidents over the next five years."

Amber McKeen, MSW, MPH
Health Scientist | CDC Foundation
Characteristics of Individuals Involved in Incidents of Abuse

Our analysis also generated notable findings on the characteristics of accused individuals and the subjects of abuse involved in each case.

Characteristics of Individuals Accused

Age of Individuals Accused: Table 1 breaks down the age ranges of individuals accused of abusing or harming another adult or youth. For adult-to-youth cases, the most common age range of individuals was ages 18-24.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Adult-to-Adult</th>
<th>Adult-to-Youth</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ages 18-24</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 25-44</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 45-54</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 55+</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>17%</td>
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Table 1: Ages of Accused for Adult-to-Adult and Adult-to-Youth Incidents (N=101)
Table 2 breaks down the age ranges of youth accused of abusing or harming another youth, with the most common age range of individuals being ages 13-17. Praesidium has observed an increase in incidents involving minor employees accused of offending against a youth in their program or care in the last few years.

**Gender of Offenders:** Tables 3 and 4 show the genders of individuals accused in adult-to-adult, adult-to-youth, and youth-to-youth incidents. For all categories of incidents, male-accused are more common than female-accused; with 89% of accused being male for adult-to-youth cases and 84% being male for youth-to-youth cases. Interestingly, 3% of all cases involved both male and female-accused individuals.
Previous Concerns About Offenders

In over a third of the cases reviewed, there was an indication that the offender had previously abused someone before the reported incident, or the organization was aware of previous concerns. However, it is essential to note that the other 60% of cases reviewed did not have enough detail to ascertain if previous warning signs were present. The number of incidents with a previous low-level concern is likely much higher. The majority of cases of abuse occurred after missed or ignored warning signs, which is aligned with Praesidium’s experience and case analysis. Barriers to reporting remain a significant challenge to preventing abuse and are an area in which future studies would be beneficial.

In our experience, organizations and their employees might not respond to allegations of abuse or may minimize red-flag behaviors for three primary reasons:

1. **Offenders often groom their communities and other adults.**
   Offenders’ relationships with adults in their life are critical to their ability to abuse without detection. Typically, offenders will work to develop a reputation as a trustworthy authority in the community and present themselves as having exemplary character. Community or adult grooming provides several benefits to the offender:
   - Groomed adults are less likely to believe accusations;
   - Adult grooming increases access to vulnerable children;
   - The offender’s reputation makes the individual afraid to speak against them; and
   - Adult trust in the offender decreases the individual’s access to support

2. **Organizations fear negative impacts on their reputation.**
   Incidents of abuse can quickly become high-profile in the news and known around the community. Many organizations have tried to conceal known incidents of abuse or move offenders from one location or position to another to protect their reputation and mission.

3. **Organizations and their employees lack awareness or training on red flag behaviors and how to respond.**
   Effective training in your organization is crucial for preventing abuse; comprehensive training should provide your staff with the necessary skills and knowledge they need to minimize the risk of abuse. Additionally, organizations may be liable for negligent training if abuse prevention is not a part of employee or volunteer onboarding and continued education. Training should include the following content for employees and leadership:
   - How offenders operate;
   - How to prevent youth-to-youth sexualized behaviors or abuse;
   - How to recognize and report red flag behaviors, policy violations, and signs of abuse;
   - System-wide abuse prevention strategies; and
   - Appropriate response mechanisms for leadership
Characteristics of Individuals Abused or Subjected to Inappropriate Behaviors

Age of Individuals Abused or Subjected to Inappropriate Behaviors: Table 5 breaks down the age of adult individuals abused or subjected to inappropriate behaviors by another adult. While this is a smaller sample size of information, the most common age range is ages 18-24.

Table 5: Ages of Individuals Abused or Subjected to Inappropriate Behaviors for Adult-to-Adult Incidents (N=55)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Adult-to-Adult</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ages 18-24</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 25-44</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 45+</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 shows the age of youth abused or subjected to inappropriate behaviors by an adult or another youth. For adult-to-youth cases, 50% of subjects are ages 13-17, and 24% are ages 10-12. For youth-to-youth cases, 31% of subjects are ages 6-9. The data shows that, unfortunately, younger elementary and middle school students are most likely to be abused or harmed by another youth.

Table 6: Ages of Victims for Adult-to-Youth and Youth-to-Youth Incidents (N=633)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Adult-to-Youth</th>
<th>Youth-to-Youth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ages 0-5</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 6-9</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 10-12</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 13-17</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gender of Individuals Abused or Subjected to Inappropriate Behaviors:
Tables 7 and 8 show the genders of individuals abused or subjected to inappropriate behavior. Overall, females are more likely to be abused or harmed for each type of incident.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Adult-to-Adult</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Gender of Individuals Abused or Subjected to Inappropriate Behaviors for Adult-to-Adult Incidents (n=270)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Adult-to-Youth</th>
<th>Youth-to-Youth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male and Female</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Gender of Individuals Abused or Subjected to Inappropriate Behaviors for Adult-to-Youth and Youth-to-Youth Incidents (n=896)

Vulnerable Characteristics of Subjects of Abuse
Offenders often target individuals more vulnerable than their peers and others around them. Praesidium identified 283 instances of vulnerable characteristics of the subjects of abuse across 58 cases that included these types of details. The most common vulnerable characteristics included: physical or intellectual disability; foster care youth/history of abuse; receiving medical care/elderly or living in a nursing home; and criminal justice involvement. However, it’s important to note that most other cases reviewed did not have enough detail to ascertain if vulnerable characteristics existed. The number of incidents involving vulnerable characteristics is likely much higher and is an area in which future study would be beneficial.
PRAESIDIUM BENCHMARKING ANALYSES

Praesidium conducts ongoing benchmarking analyses of data relevant to abuse prevention practices. Visit the links listed below to read more about our current benchmarking projects.

Sexual Abuse and Molestation Insurance Benchmarking Analysis
In the Fall of 2022, Praesidium launched its inaugural survey to gather data directly from insurance carriers to benchmark the carriers’ underwriting expectations, market trend projections, and loss control measures offered to insureds. Overall, the analysis identified a trend of greater accountability and requirements for insureds. Click here to read our white paper summarizing the survey results and showing a detailed look into the current landscape and future trends of the sexual abuse and molestation coverage market.

Youth Serving Organizations Standards Benchmarking Analysis Updates
As featured in the 2022 Praesidium Report, we analyzed the membership requirements of ten national federated youth serving organizations (YSOs) to compare what they do or do not require for abuse risk management of all their local entities. Click here to view the analysis results updated based on this year’s evaluation of the ten YSOs.

National and federated YSOs in this study demonstrate they are continuously raising abuse prevention standards while increasing the overall accountability of their member entities to implement them.

See the Figure 17 on the next page for notable increases in the percentage of organizations analyzed meeting specific standards.
40% of YSOs require entities to repeat background checks on all staff on a regular basis. *Increased 10%*

50% of YSOs require adults with access to consumers to repeat abuse prevention training regularly. *Increased 20%*

80% of YSOs provide entities with a centralized reporting line where individuals (staff, parents, consumers) can report concerns and can report anonymously, if desired. *Increased 10%*

70% of YSOs require entities to report allegations and incidents of abuse to the national organization. *Increased 20%*

60% of YSOs require entities to implement policies for responding to boundary-crossing behaviors. *Increased 10%*

60% of YSOs require entities to implement procedures for responding to allegations of abuse. *Increased 10%*
CONCLUSION

This report reviews extensive data relevant to abuse prevention and response. Assessment data from *Know Your Score!* and Praesidium Accreditation gives insight into where organizations are performing well and where additional support is needed to meet best practice standards. Our benchmarking studies with insurers and YSOs indicate that national and local organizations, insurance providers, and other stakeholders are investing time and resources into preventing and responding to abuse. Stakeholders also continue to raise standards and increase overall accountability for organizations to implement loss controls.

Meanwhile, the data from our Helpline and legal cases provide a sobering reminder of the impact abuse can have on the victim/survivor, their family, the organization, and the community. From this analysis, we can more easily identify higher-risk programs, activities, locations, and individuals, and modify prevention efforts accordingly. Lastly, this data allows us to see how organizational liability, particularly in high-profile cases, raises public awareness of sexual abuse and drives legislative changes at the state and federal levels.
Staying informed on these trends is essential for maintaining momentum in organizational initiatives to protect consumers. Organizations must remain vigilant and nurture a culture of safety to support those efforts. In a healthy culture of safety, everyone embraces their role to protect consumers each day, and the organization provides support and resources to make that a sustained reality. Click here for a full article from Praesidium about Creating a Culture of Safety. We must also always keep the voices of survivors of abuse in the forefront to remind us of what is at stake.

In many ways, abuse prevention is still a rapidly evolving field. New information is regularly available from our internal data sets, the proliferation of peer-reviewed research, and information from legal cases. Praesidium will continue to closely monitor developments as part of our mission to help organizations safely provide critical services to their communities.

Researcher Insights

"Over the last decades, we have significantly advanced protective measures and policies to protect children in organizations that serve them. As the field continues to expand, I expect to see an increased synergy between scientists and practitioners as we grow the evidence base on what works to promote nurturing relationships and keep children safe in organizational settings."

Dr. Luciana Assini-Meytin
Assistant Scientist | John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
SOURCES


