

Section 7: Abuse

7.1 Code of Conduct

Oct 2003

I will . . .

- not initiate contact with any camper outside of camp time.
- not change the sleeping assignments at camp without the approval of the Camp Director.
- avoid being alone with a camper in a closed room or in any remote part of camp.
- not touch a camper to satisfy my own emotional needs.
- not take part in or tolerate behaviour that frightens, degrades, humiliates or intimidates anyone.
- not allow physical aggression.
- not use profanity.
- not use or discuss the personal use of drugs, alcohol or tobacco in the presence of campers.
- not ask a camper to keep a secret.
- not promise a camper that I will keep a secret for him or her.
- adhere to the camp dress code.
- not borrow from or lend money to a camper.
- avoid treating campers as peers.
- avoid public displays of affection in front of campers.

I recognize that Camp Leaders are important role models and, as such, my action must reflect healthy values with regard to: personal hygiene, conflict resolutions, relationships and inclusiveness.

7.2 Camp Staff Training

Oct 2003

This policy is designed so that all staff . . .

- will be able to recognize signs of abuse or exploitation in any camper (*Section 7.2.2*).
- will thoroughly understand camp policies designed to help staff avoid putting themselves into compromising situations (*Section 7.2.1*).
- will thoroughly understand camp policy regarding the reporting of suspected cases of

abuse (Section 7.2.3)

- will thoroughly understand the Rock Lake United Church Camp Society's position that it will report any criminal conduct involving camp staff to the authorities immediately.

7.2.1 Fraternalization Policy

Oct 2018

Definitions: For the purpose of this policy:

- staff is defined as both paid and volunteer personnel.
- campers are defined as Junior Campers, Intermediate Campers, participants in the Cabin Leader Training Program and Mascots.

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to:

- ensure the safety of each and every camper.
- protect the Rock Lake United Church Camp Society and its Board from abuse issues.

Code of Conduct:

- *I will not initiate contact with any camper outside of camp time.*

During the period of your association with the Society, you are not to initiate contact with any camper outside of camp time. This includes direct contact or any contact through social media (the only exception being the Rock Lake Camp Group on FaceBook which will remain 'status closed' under the control of the current Camp Director.) This includes any child who is participating in a camp program or who has attended or will attend a program operated by a rental group at the Camp. It is acceptable to greet campers in public, but not to drop in for a visit or otherwise contact the family or the camper to invite them to join you for an outing or other social contact. No matter how innocent the intent, it is important to recognize that social contact with campers outside of camp can lead to accusations of inappropriate behaviour. Contacting campers outside of work hours is a common technique used by paedophiles to gain access to children. Do not give out your own or another staff member's phone number to a camper. All contact with campers should be made through the Camp Director.

- *I will not change the sleeping assignments at camp without the approval of the Camp Director.*

Sleeping assignments are planned in advance and should not be changed without discussion with camp leadership. This goes for campers, paid staff and volunteers.

- *I will avoid being alone with a camper in a closed room or in any remote part of the camp.*

This can be difficult or awkward under certain circumstances; however, care must be taken to minimize the chance that you are seen as taking advantage of a camper. Leave doors open. Invite more camper participants to join the activity. Use a quiet area of the camp, where you can be seen but not heard, for better privacy. Do not change clothes with the camper.

- *I will not touch a camper to satisfy my own emotional needs.*

This includes emotions such as anger, affection or comfort. Never discipline a camper by striking, shaking or squeezing. Never touch a camper in a way that may be interpreted as having a sexual connotation.

- *I will not take part in or tolerate behaviour that frightens, degrades, humiliates, or intimidates anyone.*

This includes the telling of scary bedtime stories, making threats (even in humour) and jokes or comments based on gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religious belief, physical appearance or any other personal characteristic or distinguishing feature.

- *I will not allow physical aggression.*

This includes shouting or threats. Everyone has the right to feel safe from either verbal or physical intimidation.

- *I will not use profanity.*

Swearing can offend and shows a level of maturity inconsistent with that expected of a camp leader.

- *I will not use or discuss the personal use of drugs, alcohol or tobacco in the presence of campers.*

Alcohol and drugs are not permitted in the camp and all prescription drugs must be stored and locked up in the camp hospital under the control of the Camp Nurse.

- *I will not ask a camper to keep a secret.*

This is a common method used by abusers to hide inappropriate relationships with children.

- *I will not promise a camper that I will keep a secret for him or her.*

We have a legal duty to report suspected abuse situations. This is a greater obligation than maintaining confidentiality. If a camper offers to share a confidence in secret, do not discourage him or her but let him/her know that there are some situations that you would be obligated to report to authorities.

- *I will not borrow from nor lend money to a camper.*

Borrowing money can be interpreted as yielding power to a camper. Money loaned may be seen as

payment for a bribe for his or her silence.

- *I will avoid treating campers as peers.*

Camp leaders are in a position of trust and authority over campers and have an obligation to conduct themselves in a manner that meets the needs of the campers rather than their own. Leaders that consistently spend their free time with campers, as opposed to their peers, can raise concerns about the age appropriateness of their socialization pattern.

- *I will avoid public displays of affection in front of campers.*

Continuous holding hands or hugging and kissing in public can make other people uncomfortable.

7.2.2 Detecting Abuse in Campers

Oct 2003

Some forms of Child Abuse may not leave physical evidence. However, there are behavioural signs that may indicate victimization. This is especially true of children who have been sexually molested. You should be alert to the following signs of sexual abuse:

- Changes in behaviour - extreme mood swings - withdrawal, fearfulness or excessive crying.
- Bed-wetting, nightmares, fear of going to bed or other sleep disturbances.
- Wearing lots of clothing to bed.
- Acting out inappropriate sexual activity or showing an unusual interest in sexual matters.
- A sudden acting out of feelings or aggressive or rebellious behaviour.
- A fear of certain places, people or activities, especially being alone with certain people.
- A fear of being touched. Campers should never be forced to give affection to an adult or teenager if they do not want to. A desire to avoid such affection may indicate a problem or the fact that parents have cautioned the camper against such actions.
- Abuse of animals.
- Pain, itching, bleeding, fluid or rawness in the private areas.

It should be noted that many of these behaviours may have other explanations. At camp, the camper is perhaps entering a strange environment and may experience homesickness or anxieties that can lead to behaviours similar to the signs of sexual molestation.

However, you cannot simply discount any such behaviour as homesickness. Bring any signs of the above behaviour to the attention of the Camp Director or Camp Nurse immediately. You are in a

position to be a comfort and friend to the campers placed in your care. Even if the camper's behaviour is a result of homesickness, his or her camp experience will be much more enjoyable if the cause is addressed.

7.2.3 Disclosure Policy

Oct 2003

It is possible that sometime during your stay at camp, a camper may tell you about abuse that he or she is suffering at home or elsewhere. You will probably find this a very disturbing experience; however, there are ways you can help the camper. Follow these guidelines:

- Do not panic or overreact to any information disclosed by the camper.
- Do not criticize the camper or claim that the child misunderstood what happened.
- Do respect the camper's privacy. Go to a private place where you cannot be overheard by others. It is important that discussions regarding the camper's situation be restricted to the Camp Director, the Camp Nurse and a representative of the Ministry of Social Services. It should NOT become the topic of conversation in the camp.
- Do encourage the camper to confide in the Camp Director or the Camp Nurse. Make sure the camper understands that he/she is not to blame for what happened. Tell him/her that no one should ask him/her to keep a special secret and that it is all right to talk with appropriate adults about what happened. Avoid repeated discussions with the camper about the incident.

After talking with the camper, there are additional steps to follow:

- We are legally obligated to report any suspected abuse to the Ministry of Social Services - Child Welfare Services (*Schedule 10*). You are permitted to talk to the Camp Director or you can contact the Ministry Directly. However, if you choose to contact the Ministry yourself, you are requested to advise the Camp Director as soon as is practical.
- Listen to the camper. Be supportive, but do not start questioning or investigating the circumstances yourself. This is best left to specially trained Social Workers.
- As soon as is practical, make written notes of what you were told or heard. Keep these in a secure locked place until you can pass them on to the authorities or the Camp Director.

7.2.4 Characteristics of an Abuser

Oct 2003

The following information provides clues useful to the Camp Director for assessing candidates for camp staff positions.

Characteristics of an Abuser:

Please note that these behavioural indicators alone mean little. They become more significant if the individual has more than one indicator and they form a pattern of behaviour.

- Sexually Abused as a Child: While many, if not most, boy victims of child sexual molestation do not become sexual offenders, research indicates that most convicted offenders are former victims of abuse.
- Limited Social Contact as Teenagers: Because the child molester's sexual preference for children usually begins in early adolescence, during his teenage years he may have exhibited little sexual interest in people his own age.
- Premature Separation from the Military: It is an all-too-frequent occurrence that individuals suspected of sexual molestation of a child have been discharged from the military (or seminary or teaching profession) without a specific reason.
- Frequent and Unexpected Moves: Upon discovery, the child molester will often leave town, either of his own volition or to avoid charges by an employer, a victim's parent or the authorities. The result is a pattern of living in one place for a period of time, possibly with a good job, and then, suddenly for no apparent reason, moving and changing jobs.
- Prior Arrests and Convictions: Any arrest or conviction for child abuse or child molestation is a significant indicator, especially if the arrest happened much earlier or has happened repeatedly. Arrests or convictions for other kinds of offences also may be indicators of possible child molestation - for example: impersonating a police officer, violating child labour laws or writing bad cheques.
- Over 25, Single, Never Married: This has significance only when considered with several other factors. Due to their sexual preference for children, child molesters typically do not marry.
- Lives Alone or with Parents: Taken by itself, the fact that a man lives alone has very little significance. If he also possesses many of the other traits and lives alone, it may be significant.
- Limited Dating Relationship if not Married: A man who lives alone, has never been married, is over 25 and does not date may arouse suspicion if other indicators are present.
- If Married, a "Special" Relationship with Spouse: Child molesters, if they marry, select spouses who do not have high sexual expectations or needs. Child molesters may marry for convenience or cover. They may also marry to gain access to their spouses' children from a previous relationship.
- Excessive Interest in Children: This is truly a dilemma for Camp Directors selecting camp staff. Of course, the Camp Director wants a staff that is interested in children; the question is when does this interest become excessive? Again this indicator is not proof that a person is a child molester but it may be significant when combined with other factors.
- Associates and Friends are Young: Child molesters attempt to socialize with children and they frequent places where children can be found, such as arcades, schoolyards and shopping malls.

- Limited Peer Relationships: Because they cannot share their sexual interests in children with most adults, child molesters may have a limited number of close friends their own age - possibly other child molesters - since only others like them will validate their sexual behaviour.
- Age and Gender Preference: Most child molesters prefer children of a certain sex and age range. Be sceptical of any individual expressing a strong desire to care only for a child of a very specific sex and age range.
- Idealizes Children: Child molesters often have a idealistic view of children that is expressed in their language and writing. They may refer to children as 'pure', 'clean', 'innocent' or 'impish'. Others may refer to children as if they were objects . . . "I've been working on this project for six months" or "This kid has low mileage".
- Skilled at Identifying Vulnerable Victims: Child molesters appear to have a talent for identifying the child that needs adult affection - a victim of child abuse or a broken home or a child experiencing some other form of emotional trauma - and then he provides the attention that the child needs.
- Communicates Better with Children than with Adults: Child molesters know how to listen to children, a trait that helps make them expert seducers. Many child molesters are described as 'pied pipers' who attract children.
- Seeks Legitimate Access to Children: This is one of the most important aspects of the pedophile's behaviour. In addition to seeking casual contact with children, as in arcades or playgrounds, child molesters often volunteer to lead youth groups or seek employment that will give them access to the children of the age and gender that provides sexual satisfaction for them. This is why the summer camp provides an ideal environment for a child molester.
- Engages in Activities with Children that Exclude Other Adults: The child molester tries to get children into situations in which there are no other adults. For example, the camp leader who volunteers to 'sacrifice' and stay behind with the kids while the other staff go to town for pizza, may have other motives.
- Seduces with Attention, Affection and Gifts: The child molester commonly attempts to seduce his victims through a kind of 'courtship' process. As stated previously, many child molesters have an uncanny ability to identify those children who have a need for attention or affection. Again, this is an area that Camp Directors will need to approach with some caution. The Camp Director wants staff members who enjoy spending time with campers and who attempt to meet their needs. Based upon experience and the information in our policies, the Camp Director must judge when the 'attention and affection' of the camp staff member is, in fact, child sexual exploitation.
- Skilled at Manipulating Children: The child molester uses a variety of manipulative techniques to lower the inhibitions of the child to obtain cooperation. In a camp environment this is easily accomplished. For example, a group of campers may be taken into the woods to be initiated into a 'secret society'. Part of the ritual may be nudity, which may lead to 'innocent' sex play

- thereby lowering the inhibitions of the children through the guise of legitimacy.

Listed above are some of the common traits exhibited by individuals who have a predominant sexual attraction to children. Because each individual characteristic has little significance alone, the Camp Director should attempt to determine any patterns that indicate the lifestyle of a child molester. However, even if such patterns exist, they do not necessarily mean that the individual is a child molester; but they may indicate immaturity that would not be desirable in a member of the camp staff.

Myths about Child Molesters:

- The Child Molester is a Dirty Old Man: Studies indicate that over eighty percent of child molesters are under 30 at the time of their first offence.
- The Child Molester is a Stranger to the Victim: More often than not, the molester is known to the child and to the child's family. Often the molester is in a position of authority, such as a schoolteacher, religious leader or relative.
- The Child Molester is Mentally Retarded: Molesters have shown no significant deviation from the general population when they have been tested on standard intelligence tests.

Molesters have been found to be generally competent, otherwise law-abiding, well-educated individuals.

- The Child Molester is an Alcoholic or Addicted to Drugs: Despite claims of alcoholism by many child molesters, studies have shown that ninety-eight percent are not drug abusers and less than one-third were alcohol dependent.
- The Child Molester is Sexually Frustrated: Approximately half of child molesters are married and thus have other sexual outlets available.
- The Child Molester is Mentally Disturbed: Few child molesters suffer from severe mental disturbance.
- Child Molesters Progress Over Time to Increasingly Violent Acts: Although many children are forcibly raped, the child molester commonly uses seduction techniques in the course of sexual exploitation.
- Children are at a Greater Risk of Sexual Victimization from Homosexual Adults than from Heterosexual Adults: Studies show that fifty-one percent of child molesters select only female children as victims. Twenty-one percent select both boys and girls to victimize and twenty-eight percent select only boys. It is a faulty assumption that, if an adult male selects a young boy as a victim, this constitutes a homosexual orientation on the part of the offender. Offenders attracted to boy victims are typically uninterested in or repulsed by adult homosexual relationships and find the young boy's feminine characteristics and absence of secondary sexual characteristics appealing.

By understanding the myths surrounding the stereotype of the child molester, the Camp Director should realize that child molesters have the same general characteristics as the rest of the population and it is a complex task to identify the individuals who constitute a risk to children in our camps.

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