



# TRAINING HANDOUT

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## Glossary

*For the purpose of this document:*

*“Adult” refers to anyone in a position who works with children.*

*“Children” refers to anyone under 18 years old.*

*“Misconduct” refers to behaviours that may be seen by a reasonable observer to be violating reasonable boundaries between an adult and a child.*

*“Child sexual abuse” refers to a range of behaviours, from obvious contact offences such as sexual touching, to less obvious non-contact offences such as making sexually explicit comments or exposing a child to pornography.*

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## The Important Role of Adults Working with Children

When working with children, adults have a unique opportunity to contribute to child development and shape their attitudes and beliefs. Generally, individuals who work with children are in a position of trust, and it's through professional boundaries that this foundation of trust between children and adults is built.

The adult-child relationship is characterized by a power imbalance in favour of the adult. Children are taught to respect and listen to adults, and they are dependent upon the adult's knowledge and training to further their education or skills depending on the context of the adult-child relationship.

Those who work with children have the responsibility of protecting them. This training will empower adults to help create safe environments and protect the children in their care.

## The Purpose of Commit to Kids Training

Commit to Kids training will help organizations reduce the likelihood that individuals who possess a sexual interest in children will successfully gain access to and sexually abuse a child. The training is also designed to help organizations more quickly identify and intervene if abuse has occurred. Employees/volunteers who take the training will benefit from learning about clearly defined behavioural expectations when interacting with children. This sends a clear message to all — the protection of children comes first.

## The Purpose of Commit to Kids Training Handout

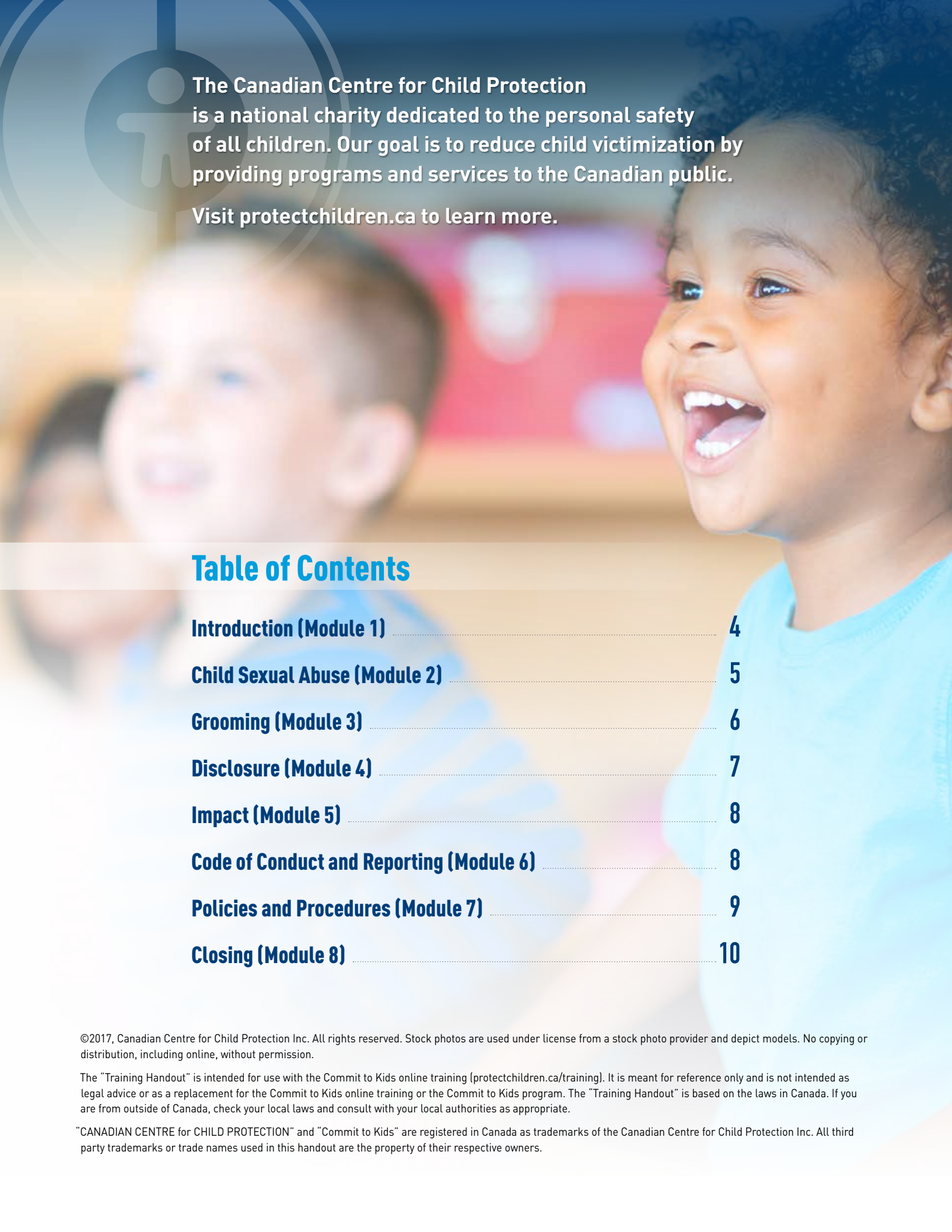
The *Commit to Kids Training Handout* is intended as a reference for those going through Commit to Kids Child Sexual Abuse Prevention online training, as well as a resource once training is complete.

The *Commit to Kids Training Handout* is meant for reference only and is not intended as legal advice or as a replacement for Commit to Kids Child Sexual Abuse Prevention online training or the Commit to Kids program.

## Training Outcomes

Commit to Kids training will teach employees and volunteers in child- and youth-serving organizations to:

- Better understand what constitutes child sexual abuse and exploitation
- Learn ways to avoid crossing boundaries and violations with children
- Recognize power dynamics (i.e., power differential in adult-child relationships)
- Understand the serious harm resulting from sexual boundary violations
- Recognize red-flag behaviour and what to do when they become aware of it



The Canadian Centre for Child Protection is a national charity dedicated to the personal safety of all children. Our goal is to reduce child victimization by providing programs and services to the Canadian public.

Visit [protectchildren.ca](http://protectchildren.ca) to learn more.

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction (Module 1)</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Child Sexual Abuse (Module 2)</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Grooming (Module 3)</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Disclosure (Module 4)</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Impact (Module 5)</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Code of Conduct and Reporting (Module 6)</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Policies and Procedures (Module 7)</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Closing (Module 8)</b> .....	<b>10</b>

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The "Training Handout" is intended for use with the Commit to Kids online training ([protectchildren.ca/training](http://protectchildren.ca/training)). It is meant for reference only and is not intended as legal advice or as a replacement for the Commit to Kids online training or the Commit to Kids program. The "Training Handout" is based on the laws in Canada. If you are from outside of Canada, check your local laws and consult with your local authorities as appropriate.

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# MODULE 1: INTRODUCTION

## Child Sexual Abuse: The Scope of the Problem in Canada

The Canadian Centre for Child Protection (Canadian Centre) operates Cybertip.ca, Canada's tipline for reporting the online sexual exploitation of children. On average, the tipline now receives over 4,000 reports monthly and it's through these reports Cybertip.ca gleans important information to help protect children from sexual exploitation.

Cybertip.ca accepts reports from the public regarding:

- Child pornography (child sexual abuse images, videos and other content)
- Online luring
- Child exploitation through prostitution and related offences
- Travelling to sexually exploit children (child sex tourism)
- Child trafficking
- Making sexually explicit material available to a child
- Agreement or arrangement with another person to commit a sexual offence against a child
- Non-consensual distribution of intimate images

**In Cybertip.ca's study of over 43,000 unique images and videos, it was found that<sup>i</sup>:**

- 50% of images involve sex assaults or extreme sex assaults against children.
- 78% of the images are of pre-pubescent children under 12 years of age; of those 63% are under eight years old.
- The younger the child, the more likely the content depicts either a sexual assault or extreme sexual assault being perpetrated against the child.
- 80% of victims in the images were girls.
- 70% of the images and videos appear to be taken in a home setting.

### Adults Must Act

Of all sexual offences reported to police, 58% are against children<sup>ii</sup>:

- Sexual offences among the most underreported crimes in Canada.
- Majority of cases, offender is NOT a stranger.

Majority of children do not disclose—according to one often-cited study <sup>iii</sup>:

- 30% of children report the abuse during childhood.
- 70% do not report at all or only report in adulthood.

# MODULE 2: CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

## What is Child Sexual Abuse?

Child sexual abuse includes a range of behaviours, from obvious contact offences, such as sexual touching, to the less obvious non-contact offences, such as making sexually explicit comments, voyeurism, exposing a child to pornography or inviting a child to touch themselves.



**It is important to note that children can experience sexual abuse and harm **without a contact offence occurring.****

## What is the Age of Protection in Canada?

The age of protection (also called age of consent) is the age at which a young person can legally consent to sexual activity. The age of protection in Canada is generally 16 years old, but the *Criminal Code* increases that age to 18 in the context of certain relationships. If the child is:

### **Under 12 years old**

No person can engage in sexual activity with the child under any circumstance.

### **12 or 13 years old**

The age difference must be **LESS THAN 2 years** AND the relative positions of the parties must be such that a child is able to give consent.\*

### **14 or 15 years old**

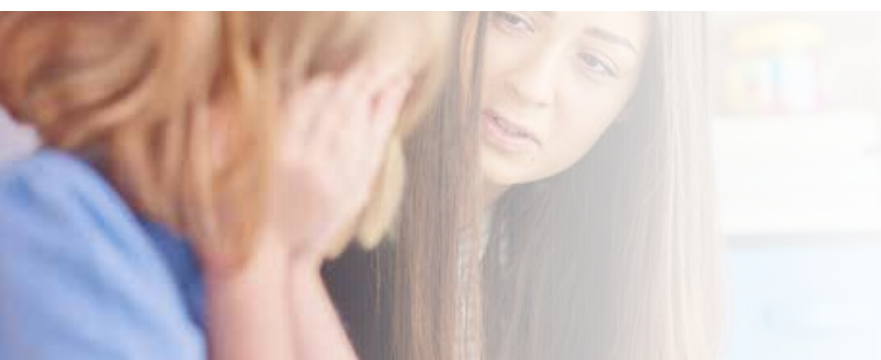
The age difference must be **LESS THAN 5 years** AND the relative positions of the parties must be such that a child is able to give consent.\*

### **16 years old or older**

The relative positions of the parties must be such that a child is able to give consent.\*

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*\* For all children aged 12-17: if the other person is in a position of trust or authority over the child (e.g., a coach, teacher), the child is dependent on the other person or the relationship is exploitative of the child, the child is **NOT** able to give consent, making sexual activity in the context of such relationships illegal. In these situations, only a person aged 18 or older is capable of consent. The increased age takes into account the inherent vulnerability of the child and is meant to protect the child in situations that involve a power or other imbalance.*



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### **Remember:**

- It is **ALWAYS** up to the adult to protect the child.
  - Sexual abuse is **NEVER** a child's fault.
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Models in image and intended as illustrative.

# MODULE 3: GROOMING

## Offenders and the Grooming Process

Offenders often use a process called grooming to gain sexual access to children. The purpose of grooming is to manipulate the perceptions of children and adults around the children to gain their trust and cooperation. Offenders may use a combination of attention, affection, kindness, privileges, recognition, gifts, alcohol, drugs, status and/or money as part of the process to coerce the child to help gradually move the relationship to a sexual level.

Grooming usually begins with subtle behaviours that appear harmless and can be mistaken as behaviours that demonstrate care and commitment to the children. However, there are slow boundary transgressions that often require professional boundary violations to move the relationship to the next emotional level. Children do not recognize the grooming process as they do not read the intent of adults and do not read into the deception and insincerity of the interactions. This misuse of trust and distortion of the relationship has serious impacts on children — cognitively, emotionally, physically and socially.

In order to protect children from child sexual abuse, protective adults working with kids need to know what behaviours and situations present as high risk. Professional boundaries when working with children are integral to creating healthy relationships and safe environments for kids.



Models in image and intended as illustrative.

**BOUNDARY VIOLATIONS:** Acts that breach the intent of the relationship between an adult and a child.

### How to Maintain Professional Boundaries:

- Interactions with kids should be based on the child's needs and safety
- Boundary transgressions occur when adults:
  - Put their needs above those of children
  - Go to children to have their needs met

## Standard of Measure

- Behaviours considered inappropriate, or as misconduct, are those that may be seen by a reasonable observer to be violating reasonable boundaries.
- Would it be acceptable if this interaction was made public?
- Would it be acceptable if other adults within the same context did this?

**Remember:** Adult-child relationships are not reciprocal. Children can go to adults to have their needs met; adults go to other adults to have their needs met.

Contact with children should be transparent, authorized and accountable — not secretive.

# MODULE 4: DISCLOSURE

## Disclosure of Sexual Abuse

Most personal safety programs instruct children to tell a safe adult if someone touches them inappropriately. However, disclosure is not always obvious, and can be missed by adults. It is important to know how to recognize the signs of a child who may be in distress.

Disclosure happens in many different ways. The disclosure of child sexual abuse is much more of a process than a one-time event. It often begins with a few hints to test the reaction of the person the child is telling. It is very difficult for children who have experienced abuse to tell someone what happened to them. Many children do not disclose until they are adults or if they do disclose during childhood, it isn't to someone who actually does something about it and stops what is happening (i.e., a peer, an adult who doesn't believe them).

Research shows that a child who feels supported and believed when they disclose has the most successful recovery. While it is upsetting to receive a disclosure an appropriate reaction to the disclosure is critical as it affects the severity of the child's overall trauma. Sometimes we are not aware that we are receiving disclosures from a child, but when a child is sharing information that seems important to them we need to take time to listen. It's also important to pay attention to a child's behaviour when they seem out of sorts, to let them know that you notice and that you are there for them if they need anything.

## How to Support a Child During a Disclosure

**Listen:** What a child needs when disclosing is for you to listen. It takes incredible courage to share such an experience. Listen attentively and avoid sharing your own stories or experiences.

**Control Your Reaction:** Do not over or underreact. If the child believes they are being judged by you or that you do not believe them, they are likely to shut down and stop the disclosure.

**Take It Seriously:** Let the child know that what they are telling you is very important to you.

**Praise a Child for Telling:** It takes tremendous courage to disclose sexual abuse and a child will often assume responsibility for the abuse. Assure the child that it is not their fault and that they did the right thing by telling you.

**Protect the Child and Other Children From Overexposure:** Respect the child's need for privacy and confidentiality, and make sure that no other children are around to hear the child's disclosure. Only adults who will be directly involved in taking action should be present.

**Show Warmth and Caring:** Use a calm voice and get down to the child's level in order to make eye contact with them and provide appropriate support.

**Report to an Authority:** Be honest with the child about the levels of confidentiality and that you have a duty to report the situation. Let them know you are there to support them through. Give them the option to be there with you when you make the report so they feel some sense of control over what happens to the information shared.

# MODULE 5: IMPACT OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

## Symptoms and Coping Behaviour

There is an emotional, cognitive, physical and social impact on children who experience child sexual abuse. The impact of child sexual abuse on its victims is differential. A child may suppress the abusive experience and cope with the significant emotional disruption in a variety of ways. Some children show few to no symptoms, some show significant impairment (e.g., missing school, inability to focus or self-regulate) and others may cope with adaptive behaviour (e.g., overachieving).

The child may experience any of the following as a result of abuse<sup>iv</sup>:

- More withdrawn than usual/agitated
- Emotional dysregulation
- Difficulty with concentration and memory
- Physical symptoms such as stomach aches, headaches, muscle aches and pain and fatigue
- Difficulty with sleeping
- Depression and/or anxiety
- Engage in self-destructive behaviour

# MODULE 6: CHILD PROTECTION CODE OF CONDUCT AND REPORTING

## What is a Child Protection Code of Conduct?

A child protection code of conduct is a set of guidelines that outlines the expectation of adult boundaries between staff personnel and children for all employees/volunteers in an organization. A key component of a child-safe organization is the code of conduct. It should be:

- Included in a Child Protection Manual
- Well-promoted, open and available to everyone, including parents
- Given to all new employees/volunteers, along with training on its content
- Referred to on an ongoing basis through refresher training for long-term employees/volunteers



Models in image and intended as illustrative.

**A CHILD PROTECTION CODE OF CONDUCT** clearly outlines boundaries and expected behaviours for employees/volunteers.



## Reporting Child Sexual Abuse and Misconduct

### What do you do if you have concerns about possible child sexual abuse?

When a person becomes aware that a child may be or has been abused, there is a legal and ethical responsibility to take action. The legal responsibility comes from child welfare legislation within each province and territory and may also be a duty of a person's profession or workplace (such as schools, daycares, after-school programs, religious organizations).



People are responsible for **reporting concerns**, not proving abuse.



Reporting knowledge about potential child abuse is not a personal decision; it is often **mandatory under the law.\***

### How to Report Concerns About Child Sexual Abuse

The responsibility to report means that a person who has knowledge or information that a child is or might be in need of protection must report it to someone.

Abuse by:

- Child's parent or guardian **MUST BE** reported to child welfare (in some provinces or territories, a report to police is also acceptable).
- In addition, if a person other than the child's parent or guardian is potentially abusing a child, at minimum you should inform the parent or guardian of the child. Depending on the circumstances and your province or territory, you may also be required to contact child welfare.

### How to Report Concerns About Misconduct

Any employee/volunteer who suspects or becomes aware of another employee/volunteer's inappropriate behaviour should follow internal reporting procedures. The appropriate level of management must be informed of the incident. Procedures for internal reporting will vary among organizations.



Documentation of misconduct is **just as important** as documentation of child sexual abuse incidents.



Documentation of misconduct should be **immediate, detailed, objective, first-hand and confidential.**

## MODULE 7: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Module 7 is optional and is only recommended for individuals who are responsible for creating policies and procedures within their organization.

\*The exact requirements for reporting vary by province and territory. Consult your province or territory's child welfare legislation, child welfare authorities, law enforcement and/or legal counsel as appropriate in a given situation.

## MODULE 8: CLOSING

### Case #1

A Grade 5 teacher has pet animals for the classroom. Tasks are assigned to students to help take care of the animals. One weekend another teacher comes in to pick up keys she left at work and sees the Grade 5 teacher in his classroom with a student.

1. Does this constitute misconduct?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Not enough information to make a decision

2. How should this situation be handled by the teacher who walked into the classroom?

- a) Check in with the teacher about why they are in the school to get more information
- b) Report it to the principal
- c) Report it to child welfare
- d) Both a and b
- e) No response is necessary



## Case #2

At a school-age daycare, a child care worker asks the six-year-old children for volunteers to pick up garbage around the playground. He offers to pay the kids a nickel for each bag they fill. Once their bags are full, the kids ask him for their money. His hands are full of bags from the children, so he tells the children reach into his pocket for the money. Another child care worker is outside with a group of kids and sees what has happened.

1. Does this constitute misconduct?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Not enough information to make a decision

2. How should this situation be handled by the child care worker who witnessed the situation?

- a) Check with the child care worker about what is going on to get more information
- b) Report it to the director of the daycare
- c) Report it to child welfare
- d) Both a and b
- e) No response is necessary



### Case #3

An education assistant who works at a middle school and at a drop-in centre in the neighbourhood has a student over to his apartment. Another education assistant from the school drops by his apartment and sees the student from the school there. The EA tells his friend/colleague that the youth is a family friend and is like a nephew to him and that is why he is over at his apartment.

1. Does this constitute misconduct or potentially a child in need of protection?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Not enough information to make a decision

2. How should this situation be handled by the EA who visits his colleague's apartment?

- a) Check with the adult about what is going on to get more information
- b) Report it to the principal
- c) Report it to child welfare
- d) Both a and b
- e) No response is necessary



## Case #4

A youth counsellor from a church notices that a youth he regularly works with is frequently absent from youth group. After speaking with her parents, he finds out that there has been a noticeable change in her behaviour and she is more withdrawn than usual. The counsellor receives a call from the parents who say their daughter wants to drop out of youth group. When the counsellor speaks to the youth, she denies she is having any problems. Late one evening when the counsellor is leaving the church, he sees this girl driving away from the parking lot with the church pastor.

1. Does this constitute misconduct or potentially a child in need of protection?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Not enough information to make a decision

2. How should this situation be handled by the counsellor?

- a) Check with the adult about what is going on to get more information
- b) Report it to the child's parents and to the deacon
- c) Report it to child welfare
- d) Both a and b
- e) No response is necessary



## Case #5

A swimming instructor is approached by a 17-year-old high-performance athlete who swims at the club. The youth shares how she has become very close with her swim coach. She tells the instructor that they secretly meet late at night at his place and hang out. She asks the swimming instructor not to tell anyone.

1. Does this constitute misconduct?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Not enough information to make a decision

2. How should this situation be handled by the swimming instructor?

- a) Check with the adult about what is going on to get more information
- b) Report it to the director of the swim club
- c) Report it to child welfare
- d) Both a and b
- e) No response is necessary



## Case #6

A teacher stays at school after hours to finish some work. As she's leaving the school around 7 p.m., she hears laughter coming from a Grade 7 classroom. She peeks in as she's walking by and sees her colleague eating pizza with one of his students.

1. Does this constitute misconduct or potentially a child in need of protection?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Not enough information to make a decision

2. How should this situation be handled by the teacher?

- a) Check with the adult about what is going on to get more information
- b) Report it to the principal
- c) Report it to child welfare
- d) Both a and b
- e) No response is necessary



## Case #7

A lifeguard at an outdoor pool is just beginning his shift. He notices a woman sitting alone on a picnic blanket on the other side of the fence who is using her smartphone. A few hours later, the woman is still there but is talking to a couple of children and taking pictures of them. The lifeguard knows the children aren't her own.

1. Does this constitute misconduct?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Not enough information to make a decision

2. How should this situation be handled by the lifeguard?

- a) Check with the adult about what is going on to get more information
- b) Report it to the lifeguard's supervisor
- c) Report it to child welfare
- d) Both a and b
- e) No response is necessary





## Case #8

A wrestling coach hears an assistant coach talking to an athlete about a conversation they had the night before and laughing about their posts on social media. They talk about getting together on the weekend to go to the gym.

1. Does this constitute misconduct?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Not enough information to make a decision

2. How should this situation be handled by the wrestling coach who hears the conversation between the assistant coach and the athlete?

- a) Check with the adult about what is going on to get more information
- b) Report it to the director of the club
- c) Report it to child welfare
- d) Both a and b
- e) No response is necessary



## Answer Key

- 1.1** C — There is no way to know if the interaction has been authorized without further information.
- 1.2** B or D — Reporting to the principal who oversees teacher performance is necessary for accountability. The principal will know if the teacher was authorized or not and if it will require corrective measures.
- 2.1** A — This is behaviour that may be seen by a reasonable observer to be violating reasonable boundaries.
- 2.2** B — The director of the day care will be able to pursue the appropriate course of action for this situation.
- 3.1** C — There is no way to know if the interaction has been authorized without further information.
- 3.2** B — Reporting to the principal who is responsible for the EA is necessary for accountability. The principal will know if the EA was authorized or not and if it will require corrective measures.
- 4.1** C — There is no way to know if the interaction has been authorized without further information.
- 4.2** B or D — Reporting to the deacon who is responsible for the pastor is necessary for accountability. The deacon will know if the EA was authorized or not and if it will require corrective measures.
- 5.1** A — Contact with children should be transparent, authorized and accountable — not secretive.
- 5.2** B — The director will be able to pursue the appropriate course of action for this situation.
- 6.1** C — There is no way to know if the interaction has been authorized without further information.
- 6.2** B or D — Reporting to the principal who is responsible for teacher performance is necessary for accountability. The principal will know if the teacher was authorized or not and if it will require corrective measures.
- 7.1** C — There is no way to know if the interaction has been authorized without further information.
- 7.2** D — It's not the lifeguard's duty to make a decision or correct the behaviour. Reporting the situation to the supervisor ensures it's dealt with according to the pool's policies and procedures.
- 8.1** C — There is no way to know if the interaction has been authorized without further information.
- 8.2** D — While communication should be transparent it's up to the director of the club to determine if this constitutes misconduct and needs correction.

# THE CANADIAN CENTRE FOR CHILD PROTECTION

The Canadian Centre for Child Protection has developed materials to help youth learn about personal safety and navigate complex situations, such as:

**Kids in the Know:** A national, interactive safety education program for increasing the personal safety of children and reducing their risk of victimization online and offline. Designed for children from kindergarten to high school, it focuses on building self-esteem through teaching critical thinking and problem-solving skills. This program has been purposefully designed to create a common language to help facilitate the way we teach kids about their own personal safety. For more information visit [kidsintheknow.ca](http://kidsintheknow.ca).

**NeedHelpNow.ca:** Created for youth, [needhelpnow.ca](http://needhelpnow.ca) is a website designed to help teens stop the spread of sexual pictures or videos and provide support along the way. The website also offers guidance on the steps that youth can take to get through a self/peer exploitation incident and for parents and other adults to respond to youth in crisis.

**Activity Books for Youth:** As part of their free resource offerings, the Canadian Centre has developed several activity books that can help parents start conversations with their kids about safety online and offline. Activities are intended to teach youth about boundaries, healthy relationships, sexual consent, safe and respectful online behaviour and the risks associated with certain actions and behaviours.

**Thank you for your organization's commitment to child protection. We encourage you to visit our website at [commit2kids.ca](http://commit2kids.ca) to learn more. Together, we are building safer communities for our children.**





Learn more visit [commit2kids.ca](http://commit2kids.ca)

<sup>i</sup> Canadian Centre for Child Protection (2016). *Child Sexual Abuse Images on the Internet*. Winnipeg: Canadian Centre for Child Protection.

<sup>ii</sup> Department of Justice Canada, "Backgrounder – Sexual Offending Against Children and Youth" based on statistics related to police-reported crimes, February 2013 (accessed online December 3, 2013)

<sup>iii</sup> Finklehor, D. (1984). *Child sexual abuse: New theory and research*. New York: The Free Press, as cited in Robins, S. (2000). *Protecting our students: A review to identify & prevent sexual misconduct in Ontario schools*. Toronto: Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General

<sup>iv</sup> Not meant to be an exhaustive list