



Strategies for Addressing Child Sexual Abuse in Prince Edward Island



Provincial Child Sexual Abuse Advisory Committee
Prince Edward Island
October 2017



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Contents

1.0	Introduction	3
2.0	Advisory Committee Terms of Reference	3
3.0	The Ecological Model of Prevention.....	4
4.0	Framework for Action Based on the Ecological Model of Prevention	5
4.1	Addressing Individual Influences	5
4.2	Addressing Relationship Influences	6
4.3	Addressing Community Influences.....	7
4.4	Addressing Societal Influences	8
5.0	Implementation	
5.1	Applying the Framework for Action	9
5.2	Conclusion	9
	Appendix A - Inventory of Resources/Reference Material	10

Strategies for Addressing Child Sexual Abuse in Prince Edward Island

Introduction

The PEI Provincial Child Sexual Abuse Advisory Committee (“Advisory Committee”) was formed in 1991 and includes representation from government, community organizations, law enforcement and adult survivors of child sexual abuse. The mandate of the Advisory Committee is to promote a coordinated, informed, cooperative, and collaborative response to child sexual abuse, and to promote public awareness and prevention strategies to reduce the prevalence of child sexual abuse in Prince Edward Island. The purpose of this document is to:

- provide guidance to the work of the Advisory Committee, through the development of a framework for action to prevent and respond to child sexual abuse; and
- document an inventory of the current resources developed and maintained by the Advisory Committee (Appendix A).

The work of the Advisory Committee is guided by the following Terms of Reference and the Ecological Model of Prevention:

Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

Vision: People working together productively toward eliminating child sexual abuse so that all can live a safe, secure, and valued life.

- Purpose:**
- 1) To promote a more coordinated, informed, cooperative and collaborative response to child sexual abuse in PEI;
 - 2) To respond to this criminal and social problem in our province through a partnership which promotes community, regional and provincial responsibility, and to serve as a coordinating body for the development of this partnership. This partnership will ensure that every participant’s voice will be heard, valued and respected;
 - 3) To ensure and monitor provincial implementation of the Child Sexual Abuse Protocol;
 - 4) To focus on prevention strategies to reduce the prevalence of child sexual abuse in PEI;
 - 5) To work together to promote consistent child-centered responses to the needs of child sexual abuse victims, offenders, and their families; and
 - 6) To focus on promoting public awareness of child sexual abuse in PEI.

The Ecological Model of Prevention

The Ecological Model of Violence Prevention describes four social levels that influence behaviour:

- **Individual Level** means biological and personal factors. These can increase the likelihood of becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence.
- **Relationship Level** means a person's friends, partners and family members. They can influence a person's behaviour.
- **Community Level** means places where social interactions occur including schools, workplaces, and neighbourhoods. Characteristics of those places can be associated with becoming victims or perpetrators of violence.
- **Societal Level** means general social factors that help create a climate in which violence is encouraged or inhibited. These factors include social and cultural beliefs as well as the health, economic, educational and social policies.



Engaging interacting levels of society requires a range of strategies and actions. Prevention activities need to correspond to different levels. Activities may target or include everyone, a selected group that faces particular risks, or the individuals most directly affected. Prevention can take the form of

- **Universal activities** that focus on the general population in order to try to stop violence from occurring in the first place.
- **Selected activities** that focus on people at risk of experiencing violence, such as those with anger or substance use problems, in order to prevent violence from occurring.
- **Indicated activities** that focus on people who have already experienced violence in order to reduce the trauma and long-term effects, and to break the cycle of violence.

Research worldwide has shown that the most effective violence prevention strategies focus at least some activities at each prevention level.

Prevention can also focus on:

- **Increasing Protective Factors** - building up characteristics that can increase resiliency, increase resistance to risk, and help reduce the likelihood of violence.
- **Decreasing Risk Factors** - reducing characteristics that can increase the likelihood of someone experiencing violence.

For more information on the Ecological Model and levels of prevention see the World Health Organization, <http://www.who.int/topics/violence/en/>.

Framework for Action Based on the Ecological Model of Prevention

The Provincial Child Sexual Abuse Advisory Committee promotes prevention of child sexual abuse as everyone's responsibility, and includes every level of society. The Advisory Committee relies on a model which recognizes that we act within a complex web of relationships – a human ecology. Prevention experts call this the “ecological model of prevention”. Violence and abuse exist within a context where individuals, relationships, communities and society all play a role. Preventing violence and abuse requires goals, strategies and actions to address the issues at all of these levels, understanding that the levels overlap and interrelate. The Advisory Committee promotes development and implementation of prevention activities across the levels of prevention with the long term goal of eliminating child sexual abuse.

The framework for action is divided into four sections in order to address the four areas of influence within the Ecological Model of Prevention: Individual, Relationship, Community and Societal.

Addressing Individual Influences:

This area proposes to address the biological and personal factors that can increase the likelihood of becoming a victim or perpetrator of child sexual abuse.

Outcomes include:

- prevention of child sexual abuse;
- prevention of perpetrator re-offending;
- reduction in the long term effects for survivors (health, employment, relationship, etc.);
- increased awareness of sexual exploitation in media messaging.

Strategies:

1. Promote programs that encourage healthy relationships at all ages.
2. Promote programs that raise awareness of sexual exploitation in media messaging.
3. Promote programs for those at risk of offending/re-offending.
4. Promote access to assessment and treatment programs for offenders (including sexual deviance assessment and treatment; mental health and addictions treatment; individual, group, family counseling).
5. Promote access to counseling, treatment, and support systems for survivors and at risk children and youth.

Addressing Relationship Influences:

This area proposes to address the relationship factors that increase the likelihood of becoming a victim or perpetrator of child sexual abuse.

Outcomes include:

- prevention of child sexual abuse;
- positive change in knowledge, attitudes and behaviour regarding interpersonal relationships, family dynamics and sexual boundaries;
- effective communication with children by educators, parents/caregivers and others, in relation to concerns or disclosures about child sexual abuse;
- adoption of institutional practices that promote respect and healthy boundaries, and explicitly prohibit sexually inappropriate, harassing or coercive behaviours;
- increased awareness of sexual exploitation in media messaging.

Strategies:

6. Monitor school curriculum to ensure it supports healthy social, emotional and sexual development using up-to-date evidence-based programming.
7. Promote inclusion of at-risk student populations in sexual education curriculum.
8. Promote training for parents, caregivers, educators and others, on how to recognize healthy and inappropriate sexual behaviour, and how to respond to children's sexual behaviour.
9. Promote tools for educators, parents/caregivers, and others to communicate with children effectively in relation to concerns or disclosures about child sexual abuse.
10. Promote efforts that influence bystander behaviour to prevent sexual abuse.
11. Promote information/training for youth on healthy relationships; relationships and technology; internet safety; and sexual exploitation in media messaging.

Addressing Community Influences

This area proposes to address community factors that can increase the likelihood of becoming a victim or perpetrator of child sexual abuse.

Outcomes include:

- prevention of child sexual abuse;
- increased community ownership of child sexual abuse prevention and intervention;
- improved service provision through collaboration;
- increased knowledge and positive attitude and behaviour change in survivors, perpetrators, society and those at risk;
- adoption of institutional practices that promote respect and healthy boundaries, and explicitly prohibit sexually inappropriate, harassing, coercive behaviours;
- increased awareness of sexual exploitation in media messaging.

Strategies:

12. Facilitate strong collaborative responses to child sexual abuse.
13. Promote awareness, education and engagement about child sexual abuse prevention and intervention.
14. Promote access to a range of services and supports for survivors, at risk individuals and perpetrators.
15. Promote professional education and training for service providers in recognizing and responding to victims and perpetrators of child sexual abuse.
16. Encourage service delivery that is trauma-informed, culturally sensitive, and sensitive to differences such as age, gender, race, ability and language.
17. Support the development of projects, campaigns or resources that promote awareness and education and encourage leadership in ending child sexual abuse.
18. Support and encourage development of local leadership in organizations, sectors and institutions (such as faith groups, business communities, sports organizations, etc.) in the effort to eliminate child sexual abuse.
19. Promote and encourage youth-serving organizations, sectors and institutions to implement organizational policies and practices to create a culture where child sexual abuse is discussed, addressed and prevented. (For more information: <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/preventingchildsexualabuse-a.pdf>).
20. Establish goals for partnership, including identifying gaps in our networks, priorities for partnership, and opportunities for mutual benefit and capacity building.

Addressing Societal Influences

This area proposes to address the societal influences that increase the likelihood of becoming a victim or perpetrator of child sexual abuse.

Outcomes include:

- increased public awareness and sensitivity about the extent, impact and nature of child sexual abuse;
- implementation of legislation, protocols and policies that promote appropriate responses to child sexual abuse for victims, potential victims and offenders;
- adoption of institutional practices that promote respect and healthy boundaries, and explicitly prohibit sexually inappropriate, harassing or coercive behaviours.

Strategies:

21. Collect data sets to monitor incidence of child sexual abuse and inform prevention programming and resource allocation.
22. Encourage the recognition of child sexual abuse issues and root causes in policy development and decision-making processes.
23. Promote the consistent use, application, enforcement and monitoring of existing laws and protocols related to child sexual abuse.
24. Remain informed on relevant research on the effects of child sexual abuse, as well as promising services, practices and interventions.
25. Ensure that those responding to child sexual abuse have appropriate training, policies and protocols in place, reflecting the principles of this strategy.
26. Identify and work towards the removal of gaps in, and/or barriers to the prevention of child sexual abuse, provision of services, and accountability of action.
27. Advocate for policy, protocols and legislation to fill identified gaps in provincial services.
28. Develop a rapid response media network to coordinate responses to breaking news with proactive prevention messages that include information on available supports and resources.
29. Create awareness of sexual media messaging to children.
30. Provide training for journalists in regard to reporting on cases of child sexual abuse, including appropriate use of language.
31. Promote initiatives that increase awareness and sensitivity about the extent, nature and short and long term impacts of child sexual abuse.
32. Promote forums where the voices of survivors are heard, honoured and considered.

Implementation

Applying the Framework for Action

Implementation of this strategy will be guided by the ongoing efforts of the PEI Provincial Child Sexual Abuse Advisory Committee and its partners to establish priorities and identify resources and opportunities. Implementation will include:

- work to promote new or expanded programs and services to prevent and respond to child sexual abuse, and
- evaluation and monitoring, to the extent possible, the initiatives and strategies expressed in this document.

Implementation will also include continuing many programs and services already in place that are working well and serving the needs of Islanders.

Conclusion

This strategy, along with previous work spanning several decades, has come about through the collaborative efforts of individuals, the community, government and law enforcement agencies. The strategy sets out a framework of collective action to address child sexual abuse in Prince Edward Island, with a number of outcomes and strategies identified under the following key areas: Individual, Relationship, Community and Societal Influences. It is recommended that the work be facilitated by the creation of a number of standing or ad hoc subcommittees with particular focus on:

- Awareness, Education and Public Engagement
- Coordination and Training
- Interventions and Service Delivery
- Policies, Protocols and Legislation.

Appendix A - Inventory of Resources/Reference Material

A1

Children's Sexual Behaviour - A Parent's Guide, Published by the Provincial Child Sexual Abuse Advisory Committee, Revised 2013, updated 2015.

English: https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/childrens_sexual_behaviours_2015.pdf

French: https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/childrens_sexual_behaviours_2015_fr.pdf

A2

What Happens Now is the title of a series of four booklets published by the Provincial Child Sexual Abuse Advisory Committee. The booklets provide information on child sexual abuse and what happens when child sexual abuse has been reported.

The booklets are available in English and French and include the following titles:

What Happens Now: For Children

<https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/whathappenseng.pdf>

What Happens Now: For Families

<https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/whathappensfam.pdf>

What Happens Now: For persons charged with a sexual offence involving a child

https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/whn_offenders.pdf

What Happens Now: For family or friends or a person charged with a sexual offence against a child

https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/whn_friendsfam.pdf

Et maintenant? pour les enfants

https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/families_fr_0.pdf

Et maintenant? pour les familles des enfants victims

https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/families_fr.pdf

Et maintenant? pour les personnes accusées d'abus sexuel d'un enfant

https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/charged_fr_0.pdf

Et maintenant? pour la famille ou les amis d'une personne accusée d'abus sexuel d'un enfant

https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/family_or_friends_of_person_charged_fr.pdf

A3

Child Sexual Abuse Protocol: Guidelines and Procedures for a Coordinated Response to Child Sexual Abuse in Prince Edward Island, Published by the Provincial Child Sexual Abuse Advisory Committee, Updated in 2013,

English: https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/csa_prot_2013.pdf

French: https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/csa_protocol_2013_fr.pdf

A4

Inventory of Counselling Resources for Survivors of Sexual Abuse and Sexual Assault in PEI, Published by the Provincial Child Sexual Abuse Advisory Committee, <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/publication/counselling-resources-survivors-sexual-abuse-and-sexual-assault>

A5

Care Pathways developed by the Provincial Child Sexual Abuse Advisory Committee to help service providers locate services and mandated interventions for children who have been sexually abused, as well as services for youthful offenders and their families:

1. Care Pathway for Youth who Have Sexually Offended

<https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/publication/care-pathway-youth-under-18-who-have-sexually-offended>

2. Sexual Abuse Victim Care Pathway for Children Under 18

<https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/publication/sexual-abuse-victim-care-pathway-children-under-18>



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**Justice and
Public Safety**