

2025 PRAESIDIUM REPORT



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PRAESIDIUM

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PRAESIDIUM



Welcome to the Praesidium Report®

The purpose of this report is to share insights from Praesidium’s global experience, research, and data to highlight emerging trends and promising practices—advancing our mission:

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

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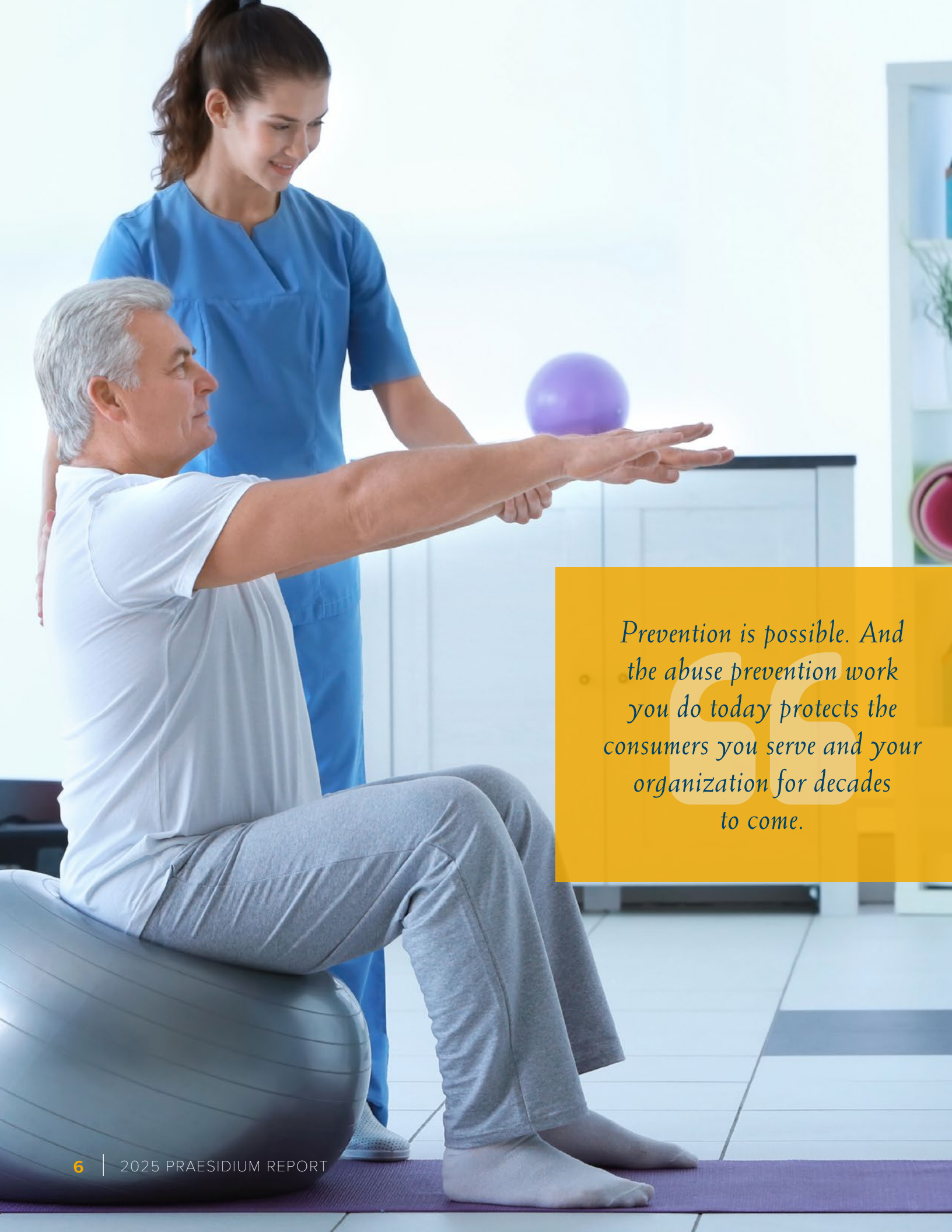
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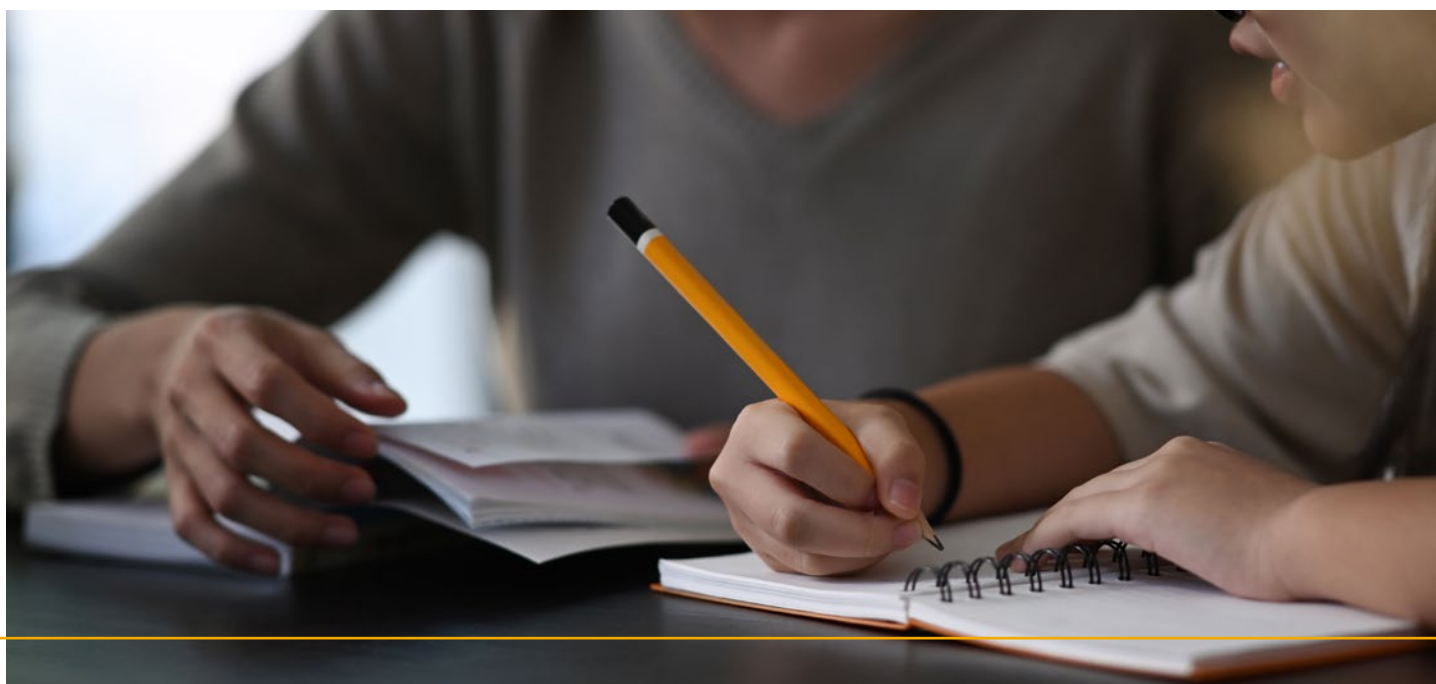


Prevention is possible. And the abuse prevention work you do today protects the consumers you serve and your organization for decades to come.

Introduction

In a society that increasingly demands accountability, building a culture of safety is the cornerstone of responsible organizational practice. This year's report underscores the critical need for comprehensive abuse prevention strategies, mirroring the established systems that safeguard against other significant risks. Organizations like yours diligently implement protocols for risks that are easy to see and understand on a day-to-day basis – things like patient safety, behavior management, drowning prevention, or even armed intruder preparedness. Yet, the pervasive threat of abuse can linger out of sight, demanding an equally robust and proactive response. True safety requires more than policy; it necessitates a deeply embedded culture where accountability permeates every level, from executive leadership to frontline staff.

This report delves into emerging trends and data across diverse industries, highlighting the importance of fostering environments where abuse is prevented and survivors are supported. Cultivating a culture of safety is not a singular event, but a continuous journey of education, training, and resource development. It requires a shared commitment to vigilance, transparency, and a willingness to challenge ingrained norms. By fostering open communication and empowering individuals at all levels to recognize and report potential abuse, organizations can create lasting, impactful change, ensuring that safety is not just an ideal, but a tangible reality.



Beyond the Front Lines: Leadership's Role in Cultivating a Culture of Safety

When abuse occurs within an organization, all eyes are on leadership. We look to the leaders to respond, to hold individuals accountable, and to publicly address the crisis. This might be the CEO, the Executive Director, or perhaps a Board Chair. That leader will set the tone, shape the response, and become the face of the organization to anyone learning about the organization or the incident for the first time.

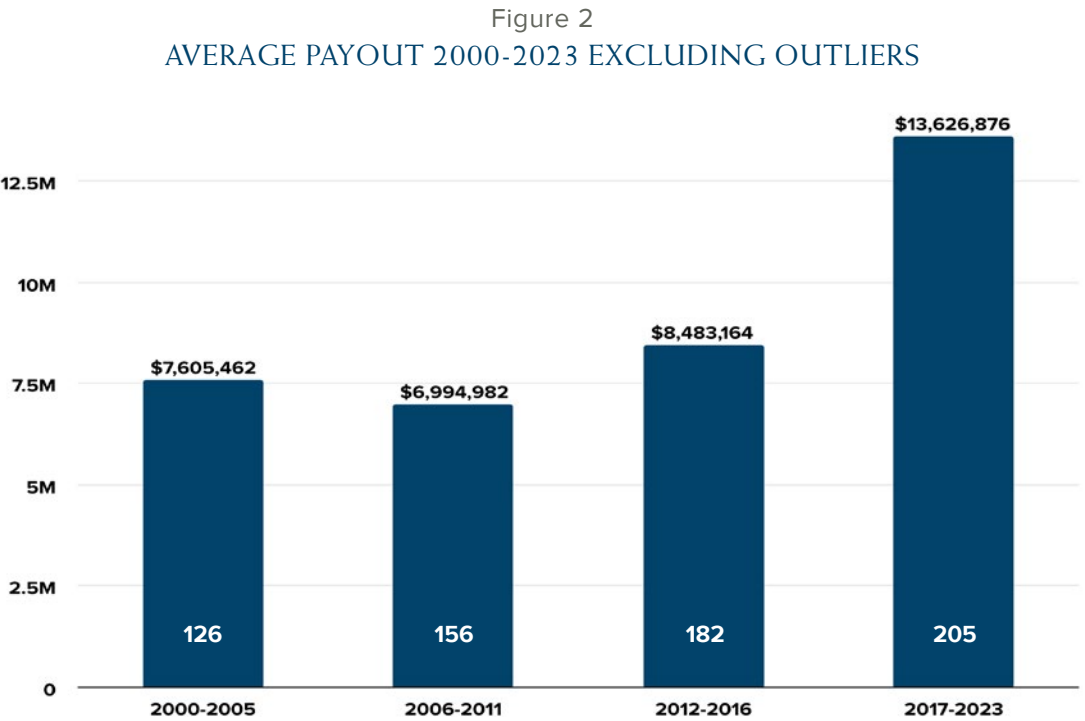
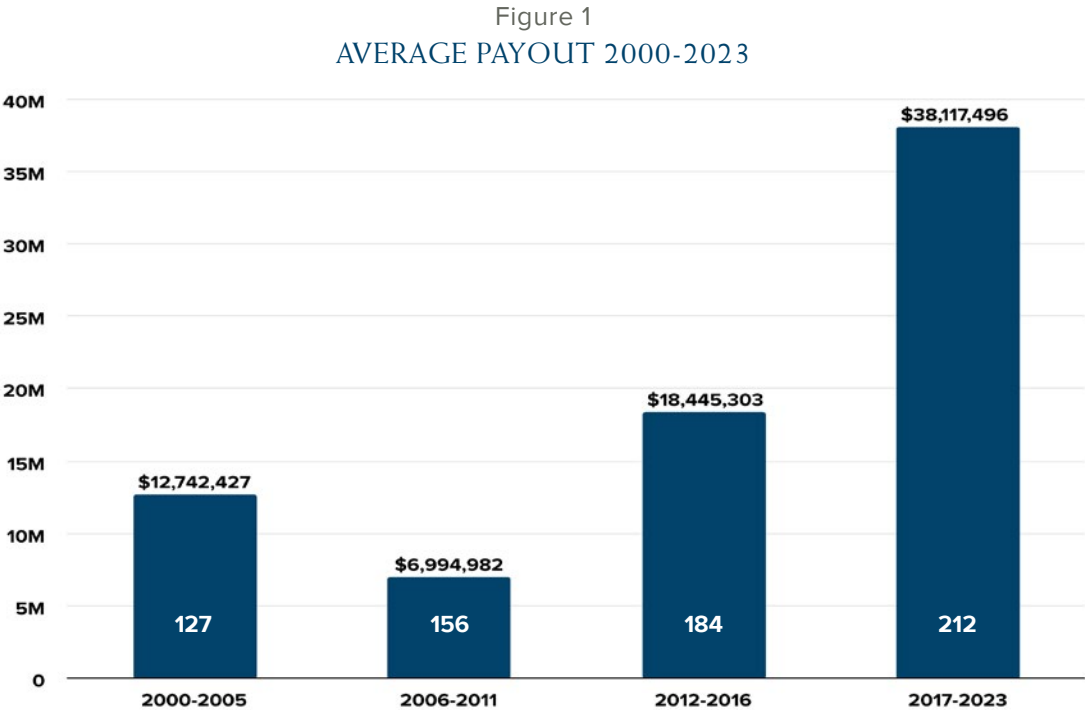
But when it comes to prevention, we often jump straight to the front lines, focusing on the day-to-day interactions with consumers and the community. We emphasize training, ongoing supervision, and how we screen and select the employees and volunteers that will work with our consumers in the moment. Each of these are critical to abuse prevention best practices but miss a crucial step: leadership's role in building a culture where safety thrives.

And beyond the human impact, the financial repercussions of abuse cases can be devastating. Settlements in these cases can reach tens, even hundreds, of millions of dollars, not to mention the irreparable damage to your organization's reputation, which can impact your ability to attract consumers or donors for years to come.

Praesidium analyzed over **2,200** organizational cases filed between 2000 and 2003 involving sexual abuse, harassment, or misconduct. **679** of these cases included reported payout data—offering critical insights into patterns and consequences. Judgment and settlement figures are on the rise. Of the **212** reported payouts for cases filed between 2017-2023, the average payout jumped to over **\$38MM**. Even when we remove significant nuclear verdict outliers (payouts of over **\$215MM**), we see the same general trend, with the most recent average payouts over **\$13MM**.



Figures 1 and 2 below show the increasing average payout amounts for sexual abuse and misconduct cases over time. **Figure 1** includes all reported judgments and settlements. **Figure 2** excludes the statistically significant outliers (cases with payouts over **\$215M**). Even with those outliers removed, the average payout has increased by **79.2%** since 2000.



Leaders set the tone every day – by fostering, developing, and expecting excellence. This does not happen by accident, and it is necessary to protect your consumers, your employees and volunteers, and your organization. A true culture of safety requires intention, consistency, and, above all, committed leadership. How do you know if you are creating a culture of safety, and not just a robust policy manual? Consider how your organization would do measured against these key indicators:

LEADERSHIP IS COMMITTED AND VOCAL

This is absolutely critical, and not without its risks – by publicly sharing your consumer safety policies and expectations, you also clearly state the risks inherent in the work you do. That’s why it’s not enough for the CEO to give lip service to abuse prevention. Your organizational leadership, including your Board or other governing bodies, must also demonstrate genuine risk awareness. To best serve your consumers and your organization, they must understand the potential legal, reputational, and financial ramifications of failing to prioritize safety.

This commitment to abuse prevention must be visible and pervasive. It will be demonstrated in budget allocations for training and prevention programs, in the time dedicated to safety discussions at board meetings, and in the consistent messaging from leadership at all levels. You are articulating your safety story to your consumers and your community through every interaction and relationship.

Is your Board aware of the risk of sexual abuse for children or vulnerable adults in your program or care? Do they have a response plan in the event they receive a call from someone disclosing that they or someone they know have been abused by someone in your organization? Are they receiving and reviewing information about critical incidents within the organization and the steps taken to close any identified gaps? Do they understand how abuse happens, and how your organization works every day to create an environment where abuse cannot occur?

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF:

Consider how you communicate about safety in internal memos, during staff meetings, and in public statements.

- *Do you consistently reinforce the message that abuse prevention is a top priority?*
- *Are you transparent about incidents and near misses, using them as learning opportunities?*
- *Are you actively soliciting feedback from staff and stakeholders on consumer safety concerns?*
- *Do you communicate about your abuse prevention commitment and standards publicly and consistently to your consumers and community?*

In the last five years, multiple high-profile organizations across sectors including youth services, education, healthcare, and athletics have faced collective settlements exceeding **\$8 billion** due to failures in preventing or properly responding to the sexual abuse of consumers. These failures have not only resulted in massive financial liability but also in widespread leadership consequences, including:

- Entire boards stepping down or being replaced
- CEOs, presidents, and commissioners forced to resign
- Senior leaders being terminated after internal or external investigations
- State and federal attorney general investigations and oversight

In many cases, leadership was held accountable not for direct abuse, but for systemic failures—things like ignoring credible reports, failing to implement safeguards, or prioritizing reputation over safety.

This underscores a clear and growing expectation: leaders and boards are responsible for creating safe environments, and the consequences for inaction or negligence are real, public, and costly.



STANDARDS ARE CLEAR AND STANDARDS ARE ENFORCED

Accountability matters. Clear, comprehensive policies and procedures are essential, but they are meaningless without consistent enforcement. Every member of the organization, from the CEO to the newest hire, must understand the expectations regarding appropriate behavior, reporting procedures, and the consequences of violations. We've seen far too many public cases where leaders have been implicated in fostering a culture of silence, failing to report incidents, or neglecting to conduct thorough investigations.

The fallout from countless cases – some high profile, many closer to home – serves as a stark reminder of the consequences of failing to prioritize safety, act compassionately, and respond effectively – not just for the organization, but for the individuals charged with oversight and leadership. Beyond the risk of harm to consumers or employees, organizational leaders such as CEOs and board members, face significant legal, employment, and reputational risks when they fail to follow through on prevention, reporting, and responding best practices.

Leaders must remain vigilant, staying aware of the risks inherent in the organization's interactions with consumers. They must serve as the backstop for accountability and enforcement of standards at every level of the organization – all of the time. Clarifying the organization's standards and demonstrating accountability over time is critical to the ongoing success of your safety efforts. Your commitment to abuse prevention is not merely an onboarding topic; it must be part of your ongoing operations.

High-profile cases quickly come to mind when we think about leaders who have faced consequences for actions “downstream” in their organizations – but cases don't have to make national news for leaders to be held responsible for abuse committed by others.

In fall 2024, parents in Colorado sued their local school district and four administrators after a school bus paraprofessional abused a minor during school-supervised transportation. The suit claims administrators knew the employee had a disqualifying criminal history—including child abuse and DUI convictions—but still allowed him to supervise children. It also alleges that administrators failed to act on parent reports. Eventually, district officials reviewed bus video footage showing multiple instances of abuse. The family holds both the district and individual leaders responsible, arguing that timely action could have prevented the harm.



Praesidium provides a Culture of Safety survey to all employees at organizations who have pursued Praesidium Accreditation. After compiling over **2000** unique survey responses, we observe clear connections between employee tenure and their commitment to/understanding of the organization’s safety culture.

Figure 3
CULTURE OF SAFETY SURVEY RESULTS
"The Organization's Policies for Abuse Prevention Have Been Clearly Communicated"

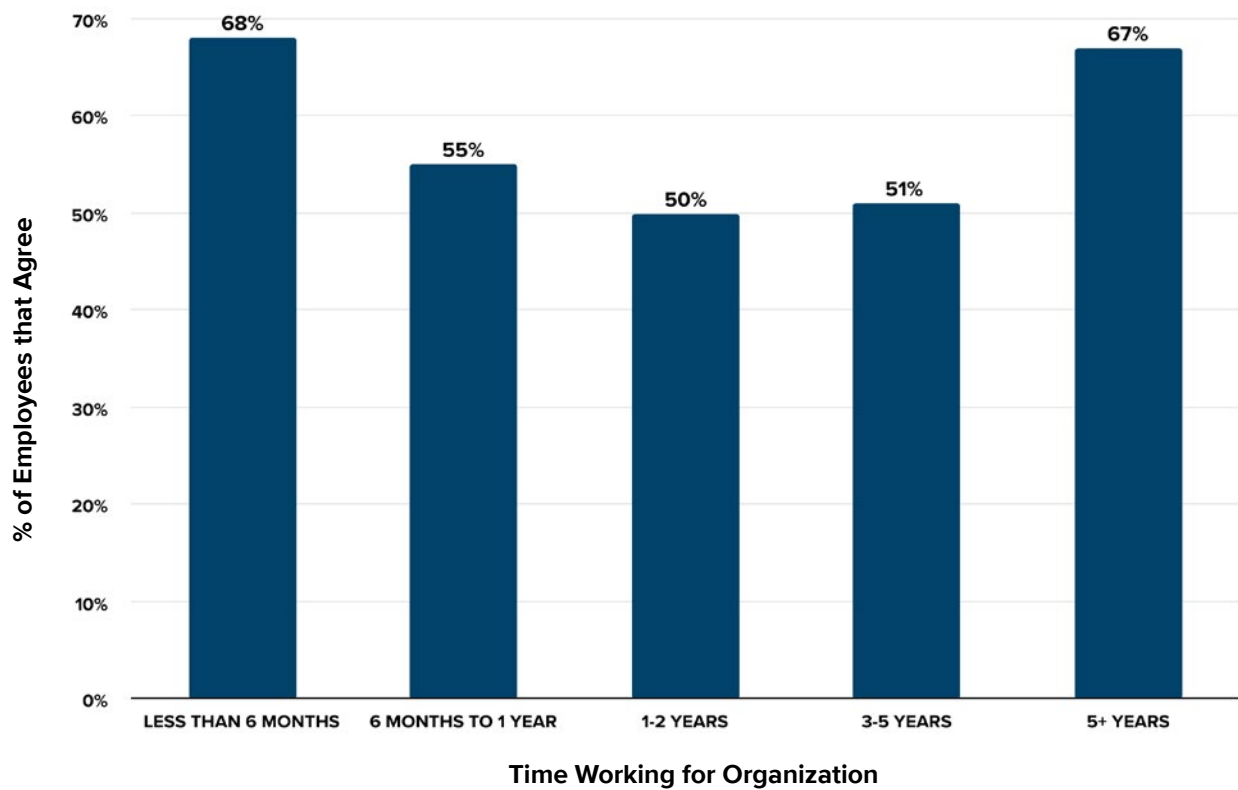


Figure 3 shows that over two-thirds of new employees agree that the organization’s abuse prevention policies have been clearly communicated, but that number drops to only half of employees once they have been with the organization for a year, ticking back up for employees who have been with the organization 5 years or more. Consistent messaging and refresher trainings beyond on-boarding are required to maintain engagement and understanding among all employees.

In addition to your commitment to abuse prevention, it's crucial to explicitly define what constitutes a boundary violation and to make it clear that such behavior will not be tolerated. Everyone in your organization, including your consumers, needs to understand the expectations and what is considered appropriate and inappropriate behavior for both verbal and physical interactions. This includes training on professional boundaries, power dynamics, and the importance of maintaining appropriate relationships.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IS HIGH, AND EVERYONE KNOWS SAFETY IS PART OF THEIR JOB

When employees feel supported and morale is high, they are more likely to be engaged in their work and committed to the organization's mission. They are also more likely to speak up if they see something wrong.

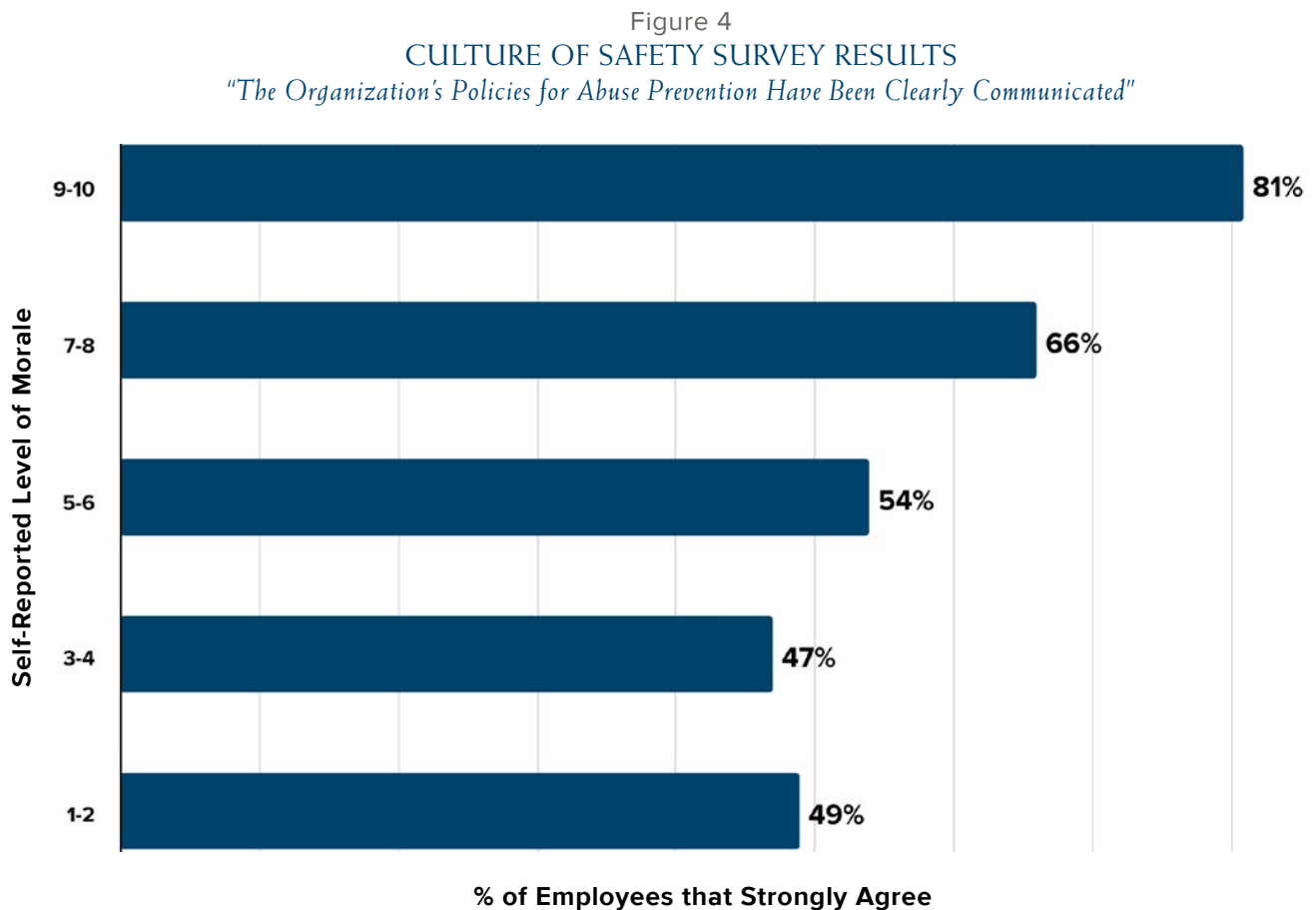
Consider how you use employee engagement surveys and evaluate how engagement is impacting your culture of safety. Do your employees feel valued, respected, and empowered? A positive and supportive work environment is essential for fostering a culture where individuals feel comfortable raising concerns.

In Praesidium's Culture of Safety survey data cited above, we also observe clear connections between employee morale (self-reported on a scale of 1-10) and their commitment to/understanding of the organization's safety culture.





Figure 4 indicates that individuals with higher self-reported morale on a scale of 1-10 are more likely to strongly agree that they understand their responsibilities for abuse prevention.



Positive employee morale has been found to improve safety across various industries and metrics. For example, research highlighted by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality ([AHRQ](#)) emphasizes that a positive safety culture which includes high employee morale significantly improves patient outcomes across a variety of measures, including lower rates of surgical site infections, falls, and medication errors.¹ Lockheed Martin completed a safe workplace study and found that by “developing a safety culture, they were able to increase employee productivity by **24%** and reduce factory costs by **20%**.”² A key driver was redirecting employee “focus on reducing errors that lead to job hazards and accidents.”³ By reducing employee errors and maintaining a safety focus that includes abuse prevention, consumer-serving organizations can reduce gaps that may permit the access, privacy, or control needed for abuse to happen.

Ensure that abuse prevention is integrated into not just ongoing training, but also performance evaluations and job descriptions, reinforcing the message that consumer safety is a core responsibility of everyone on the team. Provide regular training on safety procedures and best practices and create opportunities for employees and volunteers to discuss safety concerns and share ideas regularly and openly. By improving ongoing communication and responsiveness to low-level concerns, leaders demonstrate and acknowledge the value of their front-line staff and the key role they play in keeping consumers – and the organization – safe.

EVERYONE TAKES WARNING SIGNS SERIOUSLY, AND EMPLOYEES REPORT THEIR CONCERNS

When open communication is the norm, “big things” don’t get a chance to become big because they were addressed when they were small. This requires creating a culture where people feel safe speaking up without fear of retaliation. Leaders must actively encourage reporting and demonstrate that they take all reports seriously.

Make it the norm to discuss feedback – both positive and negative – and demonstrate how you respond to both. By normalizing communication, you build confidence that you will listen when employees or other leaders come to you with more significant concerns.

Check out our blog [The Reporting Problem: How to Remove Barriers to Reporting to learn more about removing barriers to reporting in your organization.](#)

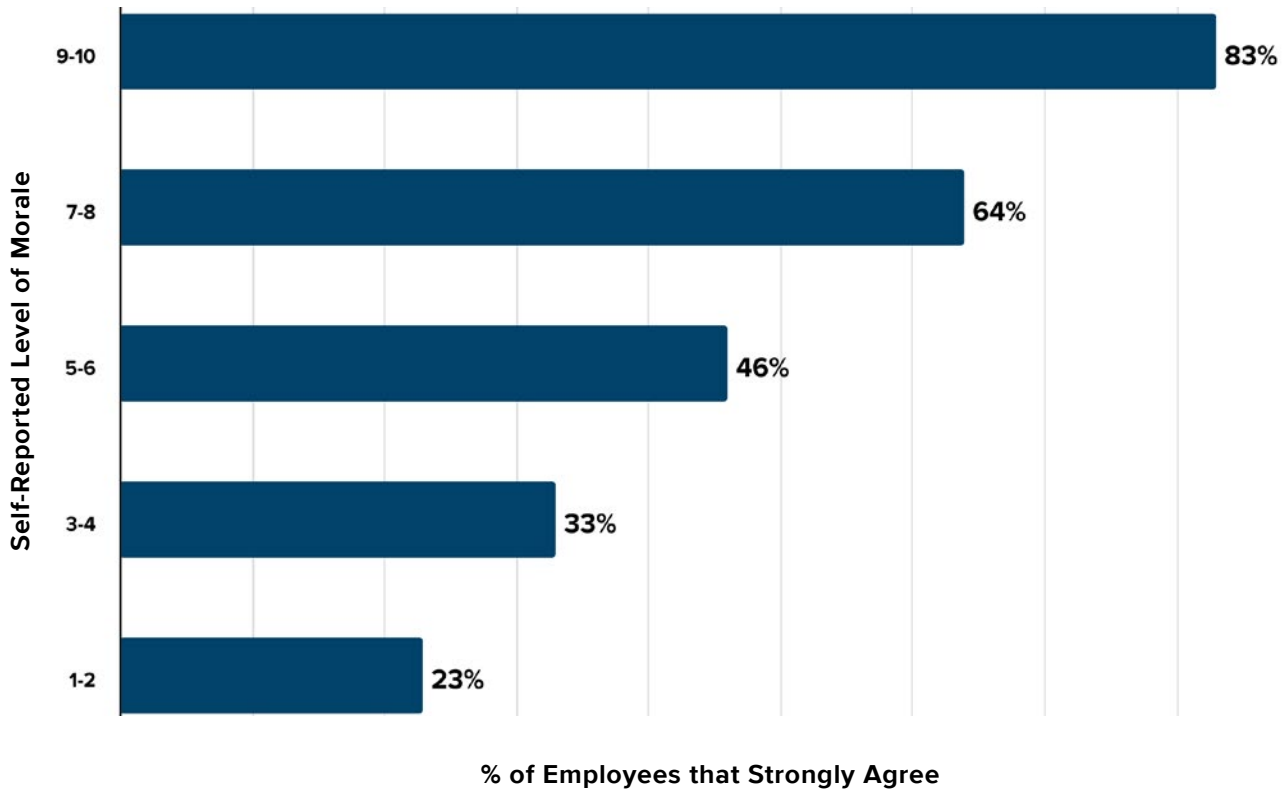
88% of high-morale employees (self-reported at a 10) strongly agree that their organization would take consumer safety concerns seriously, compared to only **14% of lowest-morale employees** (self-reported at a 1). See **Figure 5** on the next page.

Reporting should be easy and expected, not intimidating or career threatening. Establish multiple reporting channels, including anonymous options, to ensure that individuals can report concerns without fear of reprisal. Follow up on all reports promptly and thoroughly, and communicate the results of investigations to the reporting party to the extent possible while maintaining all appropriate confidentiality.

Regularly communicate about the types of concerns raised and the actions taken, demonstrating that reporting is valued and effective. This includes reporting not only suspected abuse, but also boundary-violating behaviors. A seemingly minor infraction, if left unchecked, can escalate into more serious misconduct.

Figure 5
CULTURE OF SAFETY SURVEY RESULTS

"The organization would take my concerns related to the safety of consumers seriously"



We observe clear connections between employee morale (self-reported on a scale of 1-10) and their confidence that the organization would take their concerns seriously.

QUALITY IS INSTITUTIONALIZED

When your organization's culture of safety is strong, quality is institutionalized. Safety has permeated the organization – it's the way things are done, not a policy gathering dust on a shelf. It's not about checking the box on your next compliance audit, and it never demonstrates complacency; instead, it's a commitment to continuous improvement.

A culture of safety cannot exist without committed leadership. So, we look to the leaders – at every stage – to build and champion this vital culture. The cost of inaction is simply too high.

Praesidium Investigates: Incident Analysis

When faced with an allegation or incident of abuse, consumer-serving industries are forced to look backwards: What happened that day? What policies did we have in place? Who was working? What records do we have? Did our procedures match our policies? What did we miss?

For some industries and organizations facing historic allegations, the difference between how you prevent abuse today and how you managed this risk then – ten, thirty, fifty years ago – can be hard to quantify. You strive now for a commitment to abuse prevention and continuous improvement. Can you say the same of the leadership thirty years ago? How do you know?

Your current culture of safety represents a significant stewardship opportunity: by committing to protect those in your care today, you also protect your organization for years to come.

As leaders, take time to balance looking backward – focusing on the risk factors that have led to abuse cases in the past – with investigating incidents in the present. We must understand both to protect our organizations' futures.

THEN & NOW

To better understand how the dynamics of sexual misconduct and abuse cases are changing, Praesidium Research & Analytics analyzes data related to filed, settled, or adjudicated cases, as well as our own internal Helpline reports.

To explore who, what, and when below, we used our analysis of over 2,200 cases filed between 2000-2023 to determine which industries are being implicated frequently in filed cases, what type of cases are occurring most frequently, and how the time between the incident and legal filing dates impacts outcomes. To better understand where abuse, boundary violations, and rule breaking may be occurring in your programs and facilities, we use Praesidium Helpline data that captures more granular details about reported incidents from client organizations.

Who: Identifying Involved Organizations

The vital work of protecting consumers and survivors, past and present, is of paramount importance, and we must be aware of current trends to avoid blind spots or complacency.



Faith-based organizations have faced persistent public scrutiny due to the prevalence of high-profile, high-dollar cases filed on behalf of multiple victims. These cases often encompass allegations and incidents spanning decades. The changing statutory landscape in recent years – expansions and eliminations of statutes of limitations, reviver windows, etc. – has created an environment that forces organizations to face the realities of past abuses within their programs while working continuously on a commitment to abuse prevention to protect those in their care today, and that work continues in all sectors.

But it may surprise some to learn that in Praesidium’s analysis of sexual abuse and misconduct case data, we see that while cases filed against faith-based organizations continue to be among the costliest on average, they make up a much smaller proportion of the cases post-2015 than pre-2015.

Conversely, cases filed against K-12 organizations continue to have among the lowest average payouts among heavily youth-serving industries but make up an expanding proportion of the filed cases since 2015.

K-12 cases make up the highest proportion of cases, pre- and post-2015. In the next section of this report, we conduct a deeper dive into some of the dynamics of K-12 environments that may influence – and sometimes create barriers to – consistent abuse prevention efforts. We can also understand intuitively that K-12 schools are structurally more at risk than other organizations for cases involving youth problematic sexual behaviors and instances of youth-to-youth abuse, which we discuss further below.

Figure 6
CHANGES IN K-12 AND FAITH-BASED SECTOR PROPORTION OF CASES AND AVERAGE PAYOUTS: Pre-2015 vs. 2015-Present

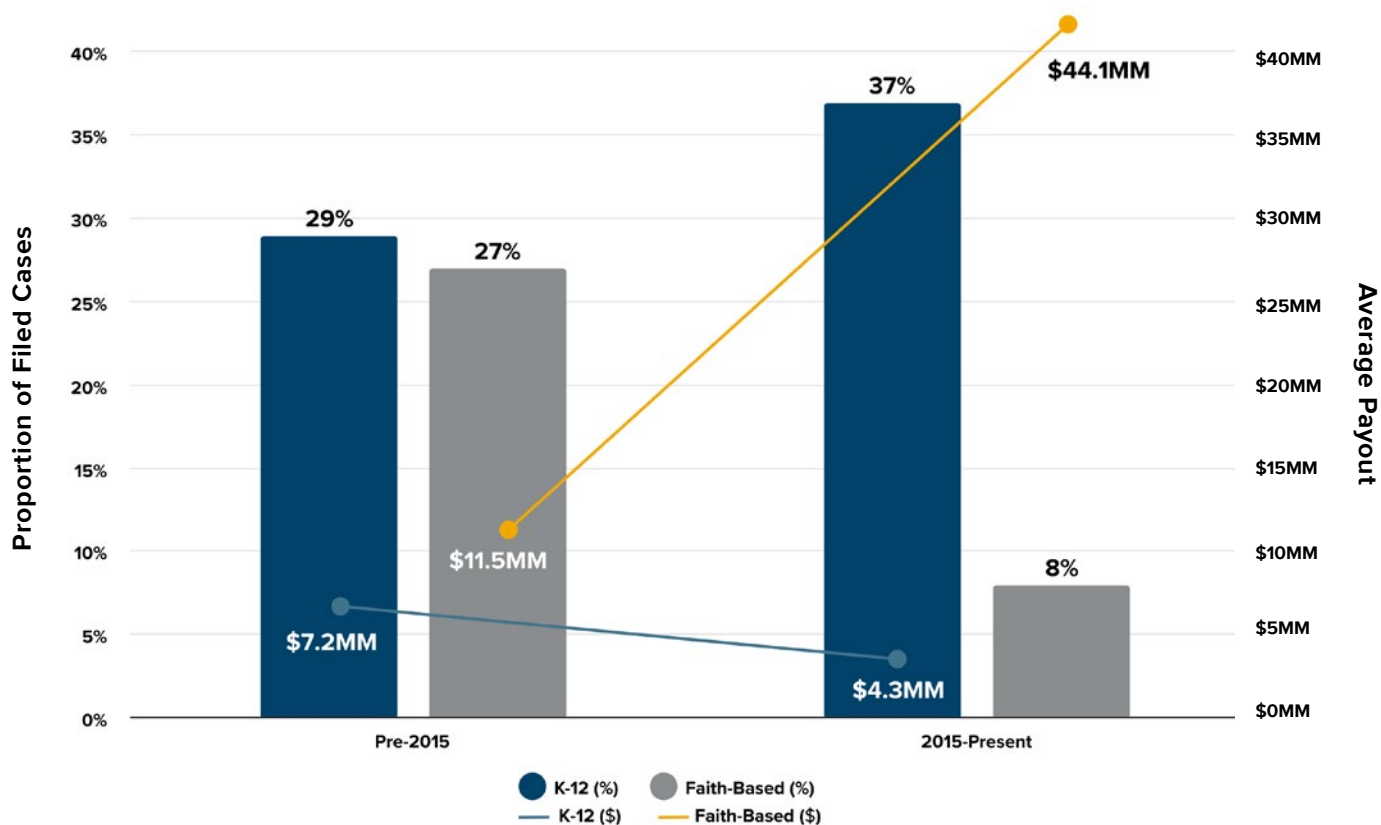


Table 1
INDUSTRY COMPARISON – PROPORTION OF FILED CASES PRE- & POST-2015

INDUSTRY	Pre-2015 (%)	2015-Present (%)
K-12	29%	37%
Faith-Based	27%	8%
Social Service	7%	4%
Healthcare	6%	6%
Higher Education	6%	12%
Government Entities	5%	8%

Although the share of cases involving healthcare organizations seems steady, many lawsuits against higher education institutions since 2015 are tied to their medical departments—indicating a rise in healthcare-related cases. Ongoing data analysis will help us better distinguish overlaps between industries.

While the proportion of cases filed against faith-based organizations has declined dramatically, we also observe that the proportion of higher education cases has doubled pre- v. post-2015. This breakdown of filed cases will be interesting to watch in the future as we continue to leverage the learnings across industries to maintain and enhance best practices across all sectors. **Appendix B** contains a full list of changes in cases filed by industry pre- vs. post-2015.

The work of abuse prevention is never done. In any industry, a single case is too many. But as we look to learn from one another and thoughtfully evaluate the unique ways organizations must serve vulnerable individuals in their care, we cannot assume that we know where the next big case will come from. Instead, we must continue to raise the bar collectively.

What: Adjusting Our Perception of Risk

Over time, we have had to adjust our understanding of abuse risk. In the 90s, the “stranger danger” stereotype prevailed, but today, we understand that the vast majority of abusers know their victims and have built a trusting relationship with them.

Now, the onslaught of historic abuse allegations in organizational settings has reinforced the idea of serial adult offenders in positions of power. And while adult-to-youth abuse remains a critical risk, we must also consider how our culture of safety guards against youth-to-youth and adult-to-adult abuse, misconduct, and problematic sexual behaviors.



In Praesidium's recently released [2024 Insurance Carrier Benchmarking: Sexual Abuse & Molestation Liability](#) report, insurance carriers responded to survey questions regarding their current coverage offerings and underwriting requirements, as well as what they project for the SML market over the next three years. We asked carriers if they expect to decline to write SML coverage at any level for any of the following industries in the next three years. Among the **62%** that said they may decline to provide SML coverage over the next three years, here are the industries they identified as at risk:

- 38%** Childcare
- 25%** Day Camps, Foster Care, Overnight Camps, and Youth Sports
- 13%** Faith-Based, Health Care, Hospitality, Non-Profits, Schools, Senior Living/Long-Term Care, and Youth Development

The survey results tell a clear story: carriers and consumer-serving organizations are already feeling the impacts of a hard market for SML coverage; and looking ahead, all consumer-serving sectors may be at risk of continuing to lose coverage options.

For more, download your free copy of the [2024 Insurance Carrier Benchmarking: Sexual Abuse & Molestation Liability](#) report.

Comparing the number of sexual abuse and misconduct cases that occurred prior to 2015 to cases that occurred since 2015, the proportion of youth-to-youth cases have doubled from **7% to 14%** and adult-to-adult cases has doubled from **19% to 38%** (**Figures 7 and 8**).

Figure 7
INCIDENT CATEGORY PRIOR TO 2015

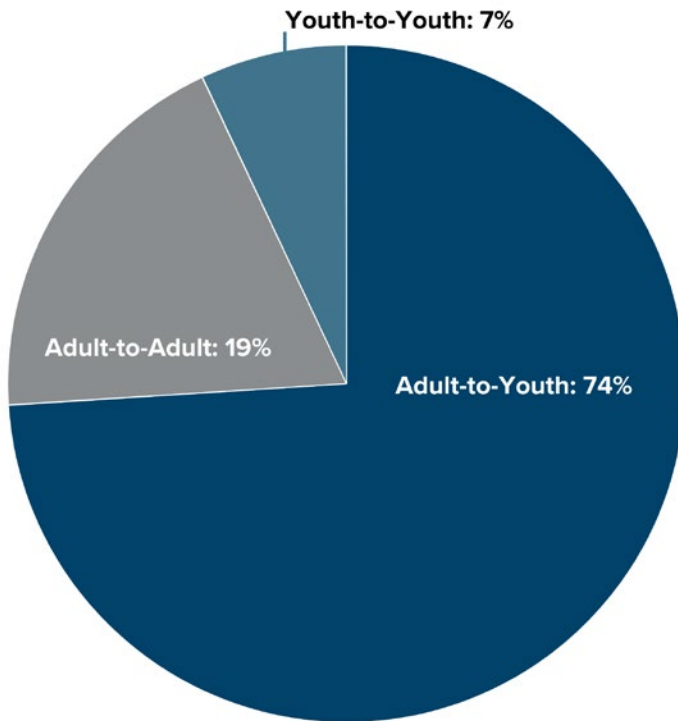
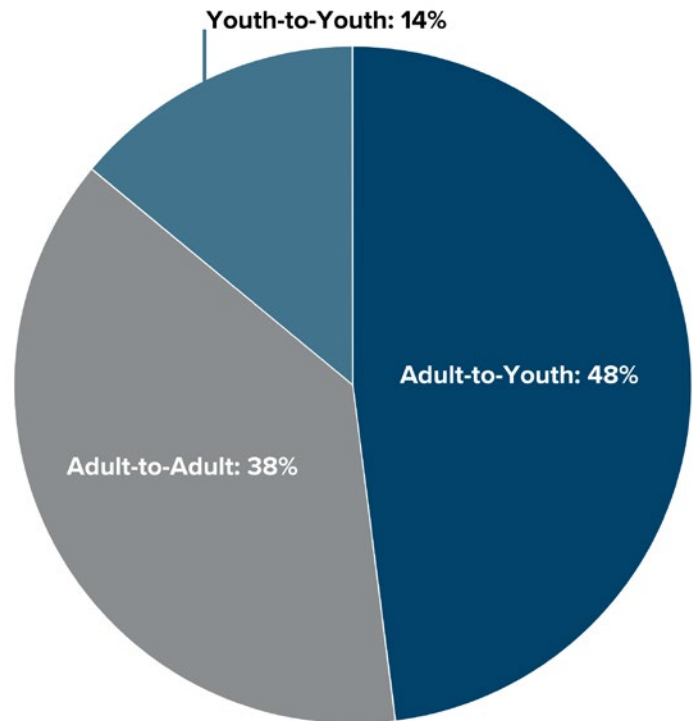


Figure 8
INCIDENT CATEGORY SINCE 2015

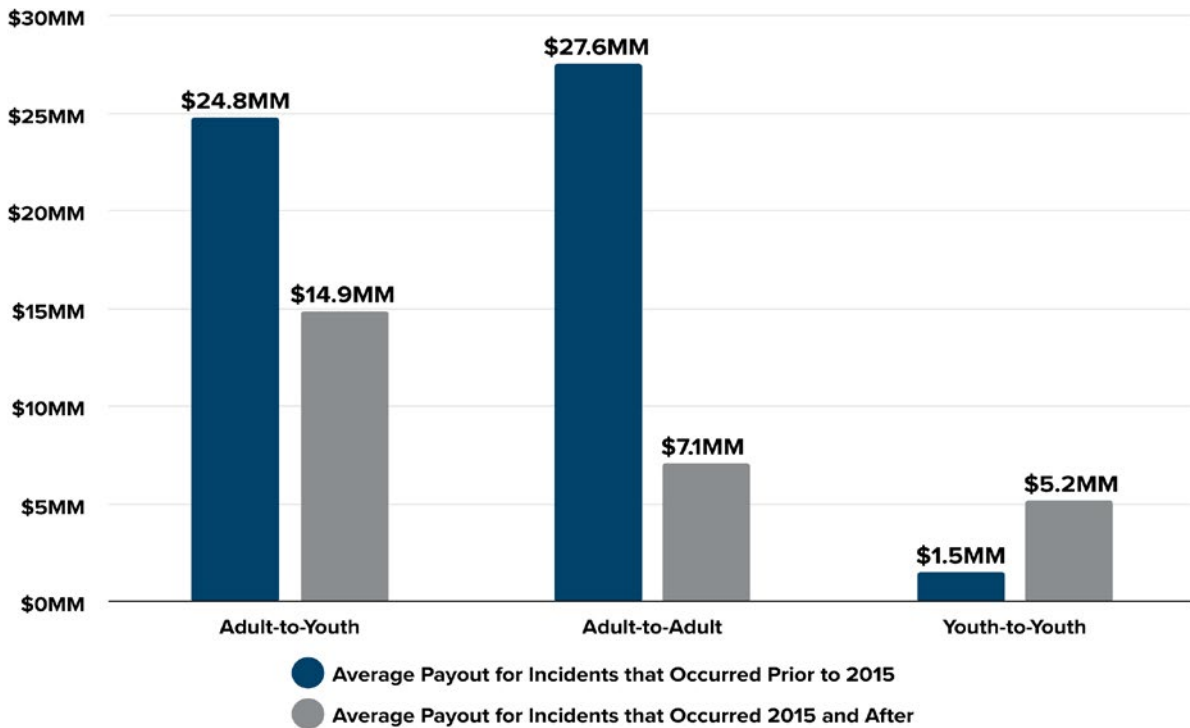


As we discussed in the [2024 Praesidium Report](#), we continue to observe the impacts of the Me Too movement, statute of limitations and reviver statute changes like the Adult Survivor Act (ASA) in New York, shifting societal attitudes towards survivors, reduced stigmas surrounding trauma, and an increased willingness to hold perpetrators accountable. Adult survivors are coming forward, and organizations must respond accordingly.

In addition, youth problematic sexual behavior (YPSB) is no longer considered an exploratory or developmental-behavioral issue to be managed like any other instance of rule-breaking. Families and communities expect more from organizations serving young people, and organizational entities are being held responsible for youth-to-youth claims in the same way they are for adult-to-youth abuse claims that occur within their programs.



Figure 9
AVERAGE PAYOUTS BY INCIDENT CATEGORY



And while the number of filed youth-to-youth cases are on the rise, so are the payouts.

Surprised by the sharp decline in average payouts for cases with adult offenders? We were too, so we dug a little deeper. Pre-2015 cases include significantly more class action lawsuits—both for recent and historic allegations—with a larger number of victims represented, leading to higher payouts.

Even when we remove cases that are statistical outliers with payouts of over \$215MM, the average payout for youth-to-youth cases still increases by over **200%**, from **\$1.6MM** to just under **\$4.9MM**.

Your organization's commitment to preventing adult-to-youth abuse, identifying red-flag behaviors, and interrupting boundary violations has never been more important, but now, we must also demonstrate the same level of commitment towards the recognition and prevention of youth-to-youth and adult-to-adult abuse.

Further, high-profile cases in the media have heightened our awareness about the danger of prolific serial offenders who use their position of power or trust to gain access to multiple victims – sometimes dozens or hundreds. That risk exists, and your organization's culture of safety must be so ingrained, pervasive, and publicized that those individuals not only cannot function within your program but do not even attempt it.

However, when we analyze the case data, the majority of cases tend to involve a single victim rather than multiple. For example, class action lawsuits related to sexual abuse by doctors and healthcare workers in hospital and nursing care settings are becoming increasingly prevalent, prompting increased scrutiny by the public and even changes in how medical malpractice coverage is being offered. These cases are significant and have devastating impacts, but in our case analysis, we examined **177** healthcare cases. Of those, **113** cases – **64%** – involve one named victim of abuse.

In our overall analysis across industries, **74%** of filed cases involve a single victim, and that proportion is increasing over time. Prior to 2015, **72%** of cases pertained to a single victim. Post-2015, that proportion has increased to **79%**.

In all spaces, we must ensure that prevention efforts and risk identification training emphasize the prevalence of one-off, opportunistic offenses in addition to the risk of more prolific offenders. Denying any would-be perpetrator the access, privacy, and control required to abuse requires consistent monitoring, supervision, and accountability across the entire organization.

When: Responding As Soon As Possible

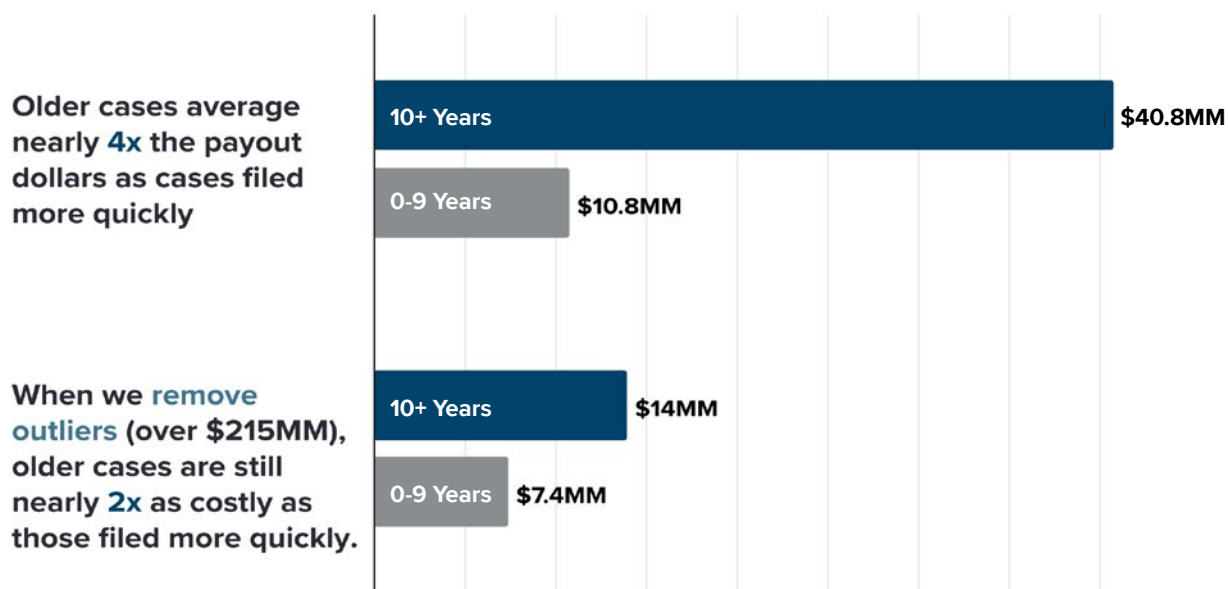
Early support for survivors of abuse is critical to reduce the impact of trauma. Early identification also allows the organization to more quickly identify and remedy any gaps in practices or protocols, as well as preserve any evidence needed to aid in an investigation.

As you’ve likely heard from your insurance providers, early identification and action in the event of an abuse claim or allegation can also reduce potential costs for your organization. Our analysis of cases filed 10+ years after an incident occurs compared to those filed within 9 years of the incident date demonstrates the value of early interventions.

Check out our white paper [Providing a Compassionate Response](#) to learn more about how timely and appropriate apologies make a positive difference to outcomes.



Figure 10
AVERAGE PAYOUT BASED ON YEARS BETWEEN INCIDENT AND FILING DATE



Encouragingly, **88%** more cases (**435** compared to **231**) in the data analyzed here fell into the “newer” category – filed within 9 years of the date of the incident of abuse. While 9 years, or even 1 year, feels too long for someone to either discover or report abuse, we are optimistic that these windows will keep getting shorter as organizations and the legal system continue to make changes that normalize and encourage [reporting while eliminating barriers](#).

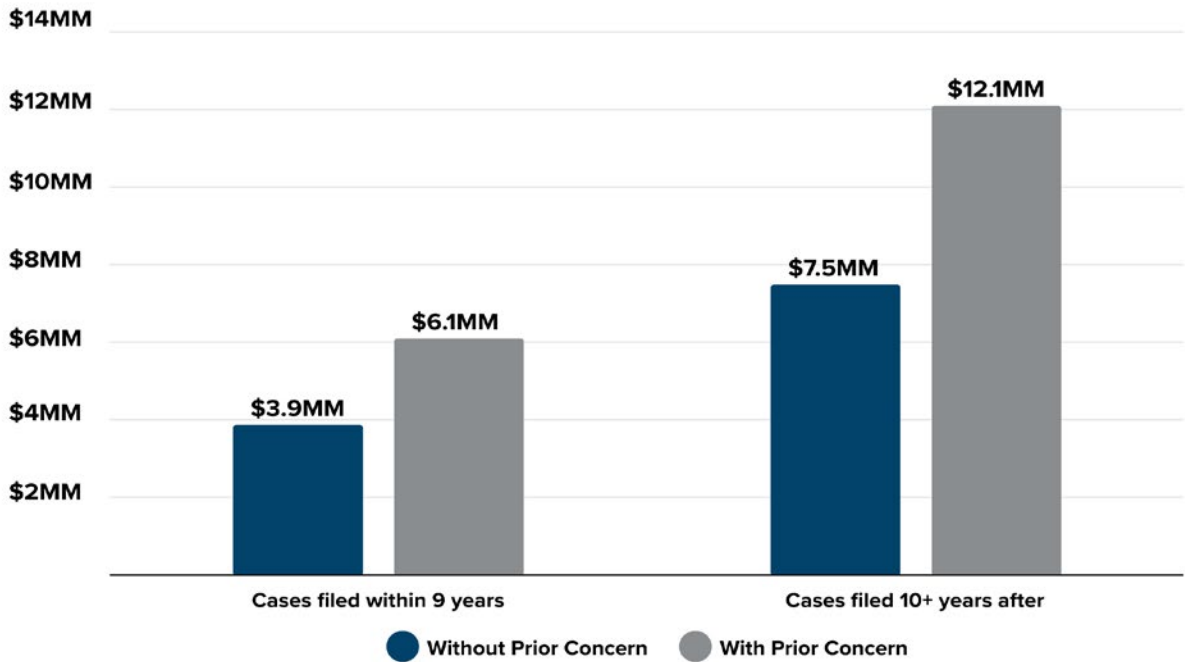
Reporting is essential, but its effectiveness depends on organizations responding swiftly and compassionately. If a concern has been reported about an individual with high-risk behaviors, decisions need to be made about whether that person is appropriate to be part of the organization, regardless of whether the individual is an adult on staff, or an adult or youth served by the program” adult on staff or an adult or youth served by the program.

We evaluated all single-instance cases filed 10+ years post-incident to those cases filed within 10 years of an incident, looking *specifically at those cases where the organization had recorded a prior concern about the involved offender*. The average payouts jump up significantly.

For cases filed within 9 years of an incident, the average payout increased by **56%** when the organization had a previously recorded concern (from **\$3.9MM** to **\$6.1MM**). For older cases, those filed 10+ years after the incident, the increase is even more dramatic at **61%**, jumping from **\$7.5MM** on average to **\$12.1MM** if the organization had noted a prior concern.



Figure 11
 AVERAGE PAYOUT COMPARISON WITH AND WITHOUT PRIOR CONCERNS REPORTED



Whether or not an incident or allegation turns into legal action is not at the discretion of your consumer-serving organization. However, by creating a culture in which reporting is easy, expected, and common and where responses are swift, compassionate, and comprehensive, you promote two valuable outcomes: reducing the potential for additional trauma for a survivor and an opportunity for quicker resolution for your organization.

Where: Moving Out into the Open

[Praesidium's Helpline](#) started in 2013 and usage has grown steadily in the years since. Helpline data relates to incidents that can include boundary violations and safety concerns, all the way up to incidents of sexual abuse that may result in legal action.

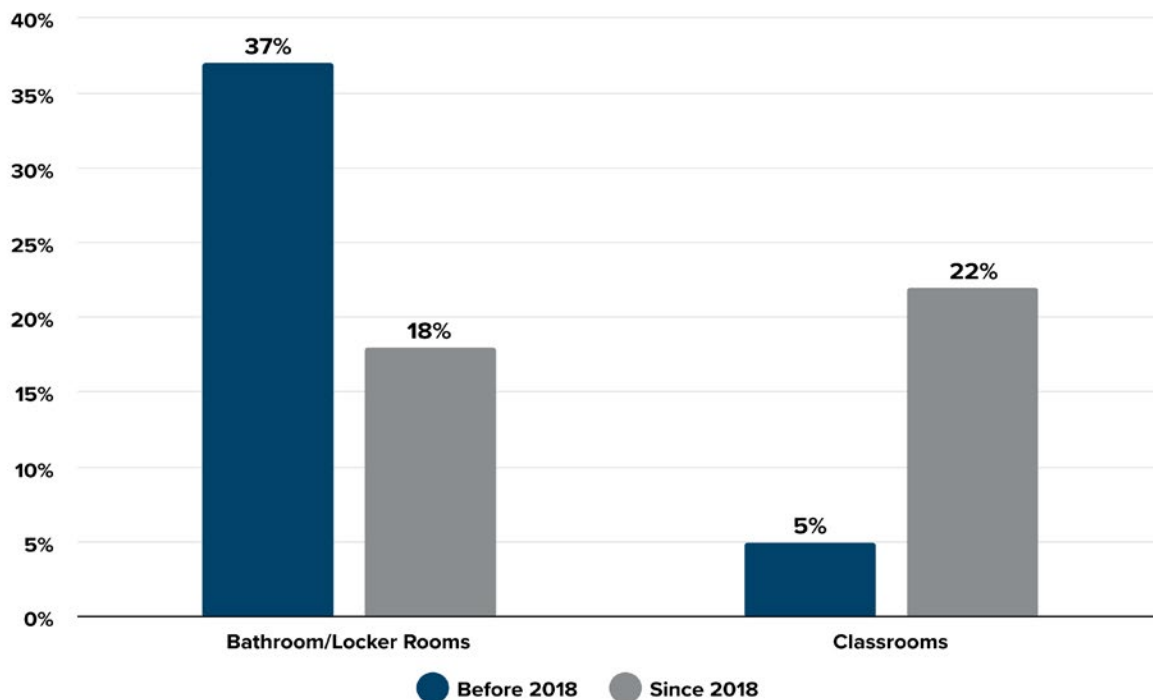
Helpline reports capture more granular detail about locations and involved parties than may be available for legal case data.





Here's what we see, comparing incident reports prior to 2018 and 2018–present: **Figure 12** demonstrates that there is a **51% decrease** in reported incidents in bathrooms and locker rooms and **300%+ increase** in incidents in classrooms and other programming areas.

Figure 12
PROPORTION OF INCIDENTS REPORTED BY LOCATION



We are using 2018 as a reference point to include approximately 5 complete years of incident information on either side of the comparison. Because so many programs closed or severely reduced/modified operations during 2020 and 2021 due to COVID, the Helpline data also reflects diminished program activity.

Figure 13
PROPORTION OF INCIDENTS REPORTED BY LOCATION COMPARING
ADULT-TO-YOUTH AND YOUTH-TO-YOUTH

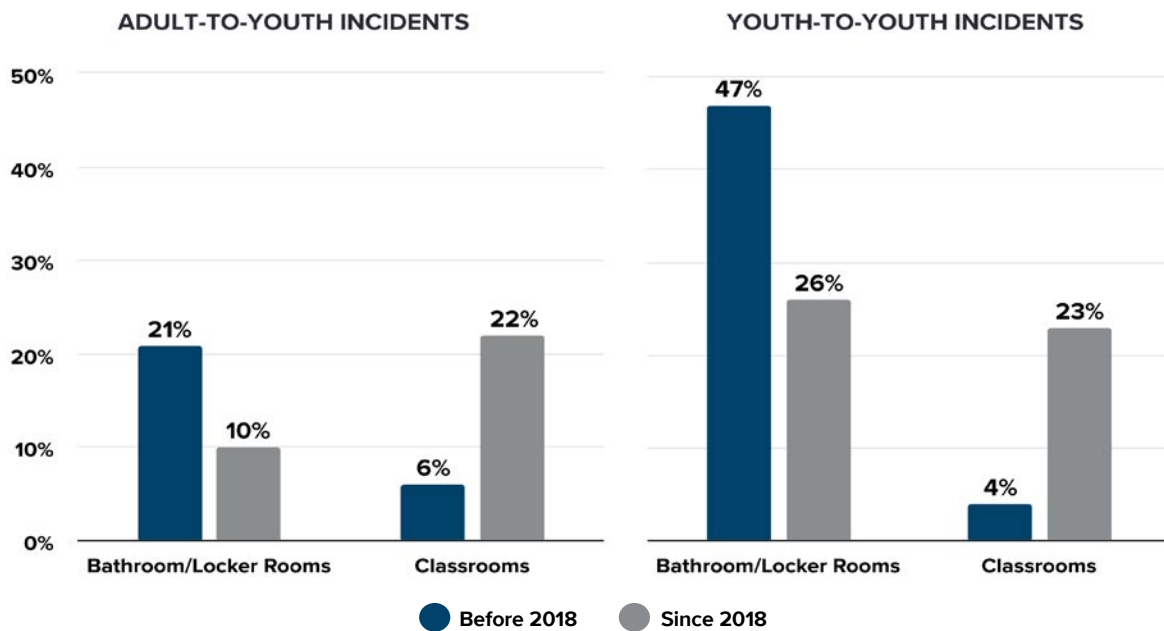


Figure 13 indicates similar trends when comparing adult-to-youth incidents and youth-to-youth incidents. Incidents in classrooms rise by more than **250%** and **450%** for adult-to-youth and youth-to-youth incidents, respectively.

Initially, this data might seem alarming – we’re now having boundary-violating behaviors and abuse out in the open! But this is actually a signal that organizations have responded to a known challenge by identifying and deploying improved supervision tactics.

Whether you are working with youth or vulnerable adults, bathrooms, locker rooms, and other changing or personal care spaces pose unique challenges. Consumers desire and deserve privacy while organizations must also consider appropriate supervision. Organizations should have clearly written and understood policies about supervision in these spaces, and must tailor those policies to create workable solutions that fit the physical layout of the facility or activity.

If your organization does not yet have adequate procedures in place to manage this risk, Praesidium can help. Reach out to discuss your particular question or program, or check out [Monitoring High Risk Locations and Activities](#) to help get you started.

Bathrooms, locker rooms, and other out-of-the-way spaces have long been considered potential “hot spots” – places where privacy is baked in, providing easy access and opportunity for abuse or other rule-breaking. By creating robust systems to supervise those areas, we have decreased the prevalence of incidents in those locations.

This data shows us we can’t let our guard down in those private spaces, and we also need to monitor and supervise less obvious locations with the same focus – maintaining ongoing supervision and sight lines in all spaces, not just known hot spots.

Why: Now & Tomorrow

Since 2015, the unprecedented uptick in historic abuse claims, the related legislative changes, high-profile cases garnering national and international attention, and increasing payout numbers have been impossible to ignore. This trend has been instructive and alarming. For many organizations, it’s been a wake-up call.

It would be easy to pull away from serving those who need it most because the risks can seem overwhelming, but instead, we should be encouraged by how organizations are rising to the challenge. Third-party research is also propelling abuse prevention efforts and providing instructive insights into what is working.

A recent study found a **20% decline** over time in the prevalence of child sexual abuse (CSA) in the so-called “Big 6” youth-serving organizations.⁴

This is a “significant finding that indicates the capacity of all YSOs to better prevent CSA,” specifically highlighting the importance of an overall organizational culture of

safety.⁵ There is no single policy or practice to credit for this decline. Instead, researchers identified **over 1400** “prevention elements” adopted by YSOs, exemplifying a commitment to abuse prevention that begins with leadership and permeates every layer of the organization’s interactions with consumers.⁶

In this context, the “Big 6” refers to 4-H, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of the USA, and YMCA of the USA.

If we focus only on the past to drive current action, we won’t protect those in our care today to the best of our ability. Changes in trends let us know that there is still more work to do – impacted industries are not static, filed youth-to-youth cases are increasing in number and severity, offenses and boundary violations are happening outside of the assumed “hot spots,” and addressing cases as early as possible is leading to improved outcomes.

Prevention is possible. And the abuse prevention work you do today protects your organization in the decades to come.



Raising the Bar:

Insights into Navigating Abuse Prevention Challenges in K-12 Schools

K-12 schools face rapidly increasing standards for student safety and protection. While protecting students from abuse is of the utmost importance, protecting the educational institution and its reputation is also essential.

A CHALLENGING ENVIRONMENT – INSIDE & OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

According to Praesidium’s case analysis, K-12 schools are named in **30%** of child sexual abuse litigation cases, more than any other type of youth-serving organization. Private and independent schools tend to have fewer incidents of sexual abuse that result in filed cases as compared to public schools; however, the average payout for cases involving private or independent schools is more than twice as high (**\$14.9MM**) as those in public schools (**\$6.2MM**). Furthermore, cases in schools are not limited to single-instance or single-offender incidents. **27%** of cases in private schools involved more than one offender, and **83%** of all school cases involved multiple incidents of abuse. Approximately **one-third** of all school cases cited previous concerns that had not been appropriately addressed to prevent abuse from occurring or continuing.

Recent studies on the prevalence of abuse in schools indicate that approximately **10%–11%** of students experience sexual misconduct by a school employee.⁷ Another study that surveyed **more than 6,000** respondents about their experiences as participants in youth-serving organizations found that while other youth-serving industries like organized sports and music & arts programs have experienced a decline in boundary violations, only K-12 schools have seen an increase.⁸

These numbers, while concerning, underscore the unique challenges that K-12 schools face in maintaining safe environments for students. As school safety continues to gain attention on a national scale due to the ongoing and well-publicized threat of school shootings, educators and administrators are grappling with how to maintain open, observable environments to minimize opportunity for abuse with the need to quickly lock down and eliminate visibility in the event of an active assailant. Finding innovative and effective strategies to implement best practices requires a school-wide commitment to balancing increasingly demanding priorities from the public and their own communities.

A DELICATE BALANCE

Some of the most frequent challenges Praesidium encounters in our work with schools involve educators striving to achieve balance – maintain appropriate boundaries, engage in age-appropriate and supervised electronic communication with students, prevent abuse within higher-risk communities, navigate preexisting personal relationships between employees and volunteers and students, and meet training requirements – while also providing high-quality educational experiences.

COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

Like many other youth-serving organizations, schools struggle with helping employees navigate preexisting or ongoing social or familial relationships. Many employees have children who attend the school where they work, are close friends with others who have children at the school, belong to the same faith or congregation and participate in activities together, or may even live in the same buildings on residential campuses.

Praesidium's analysis reveals that adult-to-youth filed cases constitute a higher percentage in independent schools (**86%**) as compared to public schools (**75%**), likely stemming from the fact that independent schools often pride themselves on their strong sense of community and fostering a feeling among employees and students that they are like a family. While this sense of closeness and camaraderie can serve as a unique benefit, it can also create opportunities for boundary-crossing behaviors if the school lacks a policy on pre-existing relationships and a robust culture of safety. It is essential to maintain boundaries between personal and professional interactions, and to determine if and how exceptions to school rules might apply (e.g., rides to/from school or events, visiting homes, babysitting, or sleepovers, etc.).

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

It is no surprise that many schools are expressing concerns about where to draw the line on electronic communication between employees and students. Reliance on technology is only increasing, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many schools are struggling to keep their electronic communication policies and monitoring practices aligned with the pace of technological developments.

Recent research indicates an increase specifically in **non-contact abuse** behaviors (acts that do not involve direct physical contact), such as asking students to talk about sexual things, sending sexual pictures over the internet or cell phone, or showing pornography. Research suggests that the increase in boundary-violating behaviors may partly be explained by greater access to electronic communication in the absence of strong child safety policies.⁹ Strong, effective policies should be clear about what behaviors and which communication platforms are acceptable and must also be well understood and enforced by the entire school community, including students and their caregivers.



YOUTH AT INCREASED RISK

Schools also struggle with managing abuse risk among vulnerable and other at-risk populations. Youth with disabilities are at increased risk of experiencing abuse and neglect, which may be due to pervasive beliefs that they are vulnerable, trusting, unlikely to recognize they are being abused, or may not be believed if they do report the abuse.^{10,11,12} Many youths who identify as LGBTQ+ experience discrimination and stigma and are also at higher risk for CSA.¹³

According to the United States Census Bureau, over three million children (**4.3%** of the under-18 population) in the United States have a disability.

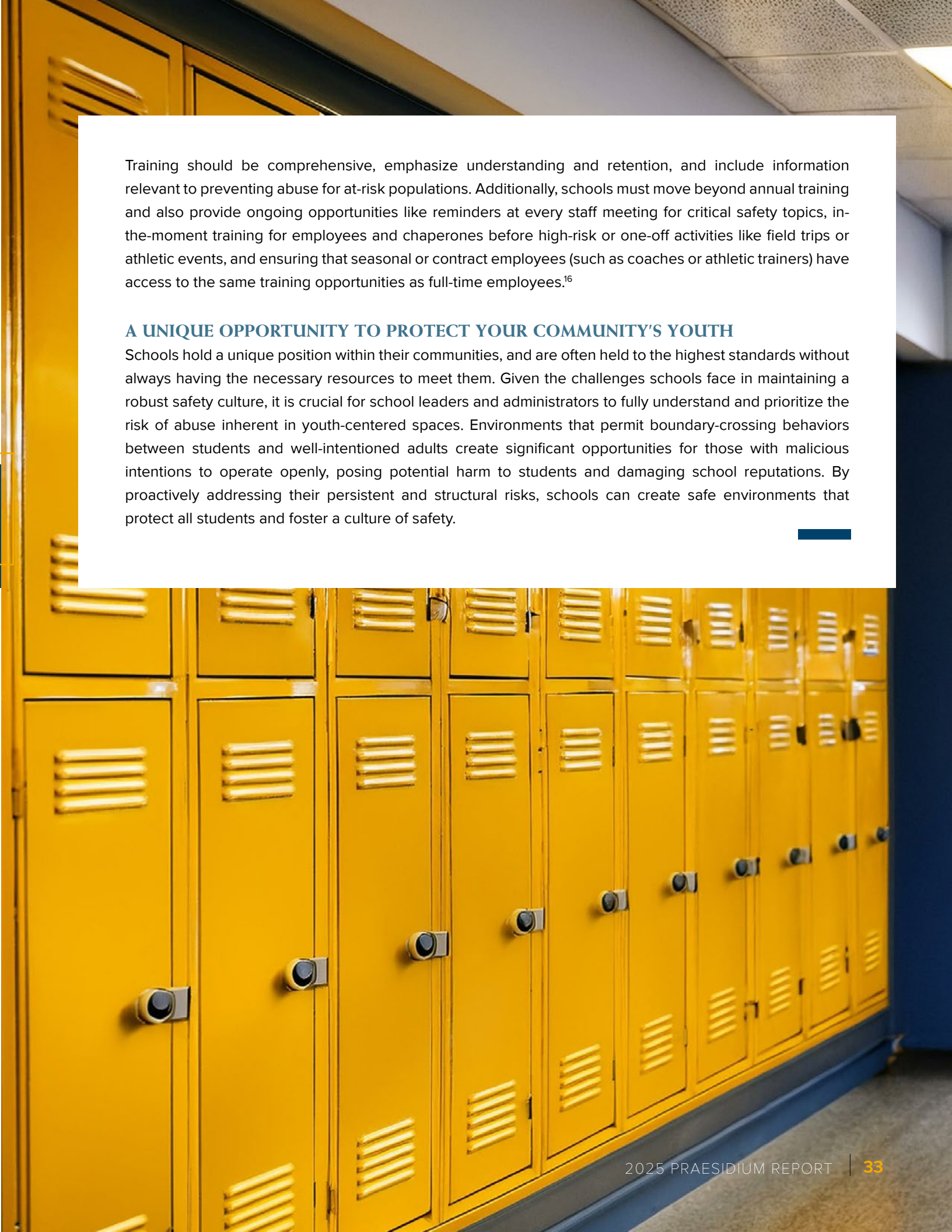
According to Darkness to Light, LGBTQ+ youth are almost **4 times** as likely to report child sexual abuse as compared to heterosexual youth.¹⁴

Youth who belong to minority races, ethnicities, religions, and intersecting marginalized identities are also at a higher risk of being targeted for abuse.¹⁵ Nearly **19%** of K-12 cases resulting in litigation involve youth in higher-risk populations. Of those cases, **75%** involve youth with a physical or mental disability/health issue, **13%** involve youth who identify or are perceived as belonging to the LGBTQ+ community, and **12%** involve youth who belong to a minority race/ethnicity or religion, have experienced previous abuse/trauma, or have other higher-risk characteristics. Designing inclusive, welcoming environments with active youth participation can reduce their risk of experiencing abuse, as well as increase trust and the likelihood of reporting boundary-crossing or abusive behaviors.

VARIABLE TRAINING NEEDS

Many schools also face employee and volunteer training challenges, whether it's considering training as merely a "check the box" exercise or balancing training needs for seasoned vs. new or less experienced individuals. Experienced employees and volunteers need more advanced training to avoid repetition and boredom, while less experienced individuals may need to start with the basics. Meeting both their needs at the same time poses a tangible challenge. Schools may want to consider offering introductory and advanced-level training options for their employees to increase engagement, improve retention, and prepare them to operate at the highest level.



A photograph of a row of yellow school lockers in a hallway. The lockers are arranged in two rows, with the top row slightly offset from the bottom row. Each locker has a silver handle and a small vent near the top. The hallway has a white ceiling with a grid pattern and a blue baseboard.

Training should be comprehensive, emphasize understanding and retention, and include information relevant to preventing abuse for at-risk populations. Additionally, schools must move beyond annual training and also provide ongoing opportunities like reminders at every staff meeting for critical safety topics, in-the-moment training for employees and chaperones before high-risk or one-off activities like field trips or athletic events, and ensuring that seasonal or contract employees (such as coaches or athletic trainers) have access to the same training opportunities as full-time employees.¹⁶

A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO PROTECT YOUR COMMUNITY'S YOUTH

Schools hold a unique position within their communities, and are often held to the highest standards without always having the necessary resources to meet them. Given the challenges schools face in maintaining a robust safety culture, it is crucial for school leaders and administrators to fully understand and prioritize the risk of abuse inherent in youth-centered spaces. Environments that permit boundary-crossing behaviors between students and well-intentioned adults create significant opportunities for those with malicious intentions to operate openly, posing potential harm to students and damaging school reputations. By proactively addressing their persistent and structural risks, schools can create safe environments that protect all students and foster a culture of safety.

Addressing Emerging Issues in Abuse Prevention

Protecting adults and youth from sexual abuse requires a dynamic and evolving approach. Understanding the fundamental framework of **Access**, **Privacy**, and **Control** is paramount. These three elements form the foundation upon which abusers operate, and by dissecting them, we can develop more robust prevention strategies.

Over the past year, we have continued to deepen our understanding of how abusers can gain access, privacy, and control in consumer-serving settings through our work with organizations like yours and by learning from outside experts and new research in the field. We see staffing challenges that increase reliance on third-party contractors and volunteers; we observe the effects of advancing technology and electronic communication as it further permeates our daily lives; and our understanding of power dynamics and grooming deepens as new research confirms and unpacks the prevalence of these behaviors.

By identifying the ever-evolving dimensions of abuse risks, organizations can add additional layers of protection to their cultures of safety.

ACCESS: STRATEGIC OVERSIGHT OF INTERACTIONS

*In October 2024, Seattle Public Schools settled a **\$16MM** lawsuit, the largest-ever tort settlement paid by the district.¹⁷ The survivor, now an adult, disclosed that two volunteer athletic coaches at her high school sexually abused her, one through forcible rape and the other through a coercive sexual “relationship” while she was a minor and they were an adult. The lawsuit claimed “the district was negligent for allowing Jones to coach because he was barred from working anywhere in the district after being fired from another coaching job” at another school. The athletic director at the time “thought he recalled an issue coming up regarding Jones’ background check which prevented him from being vetted as a volunteer,” and the police report said that he was “not supposed to have access” to the school’s facilities but that he “used the facilities anyway.”¹⁸*

Access, in the context of sexual abuse prevention, extends beyond mere physical proximity; it encompasses the duration and frequency of opportunities an individual has to interact with consumers, the nature of those interactions, and the level of trust involved. Appropriately controlling access requires recognizing how routine organizational functions can inadvertently create or exploit vulnerabilities.



We continue to hear from organizations we serve that staffing challenges are leading to changes in how they operate and supervise consumers, with many having to adjust ratios, rely more on volunteers for primary responsibilities and supervision, or use third parties to oversee programs or operations that would have been managed by employees in the past. At the same time, data from the [Praesidium Assessment Tool](#) indicates that *only 72% of organizations thoroughly screen volunteers, and only 61% provide comprehensive abuse prevention training for volunteers* on par with how they would train employees. Third-party contractors tend to be even less rigorously vetted, with only *52% of organizations ensuring third-party contractors are screened*.

Additional [Praesidium Accreditation](#) data reveals that *volunteer screening and training are two of the most prevalent areas in which organizations drift over time from their own implemented standards*. By permitting and using volunteers and other non-employees within your programs and facilities, your organization signals to consumers that these are trusted members of your community. It's critical that interactions between consumers and volunteers and other third parties are handled with the same level of scrutiny and care as those with employees.

UNDERSTANDING ACCESS IN YOUR PROGRAMS & FACILITIES:

Recognizing the varying levels and types of access available through your operations is critical for developing effective abuse prevention strategies. Having access does not make someone an abuser, but access creates an opportunity for abuse that your organization must be aware of. Consider the number of volunteers and other third parties who have access to the consumers in your care or under your organization's supervision. Each interaction, however brief, represents a potential point of access.

- Sexual abuse occurs most often within trusted environments and relationships. This highlights the critical need for rigorous screening and oversight of individuals who have access to the consumers you serve, particularly those outside of your normal layers of supervision.
 - How often are non-employees left alone with a consumer or considered responsible for close supervision or personal care?
 - What type of relationship-building (for example with coaches, mentors, or personal aids) is required as part of your service model, and how do you provide oversight?
- Facility usage and controls can also provide or prohibit access to consumers. We see frequent examples of mixed-use spaces and shared services, all of which are in place to advance your organization's mission – for example, a Community Center may let the clinic next door use their pool or locker rooms, or social service agencies may partner with a local school district to provide opportunities for teachers to mentor their clients. These partnerships are practical and authentic but may require additional screening, training, and supervision procedures.
 - Does your program operate in spaces owned or used by other organizations?
 - Does your organization let other businesses or non-profits use any of your facility space?
 - How do you supervise or limit outside interactions with your consumers?

Prevention Practices:

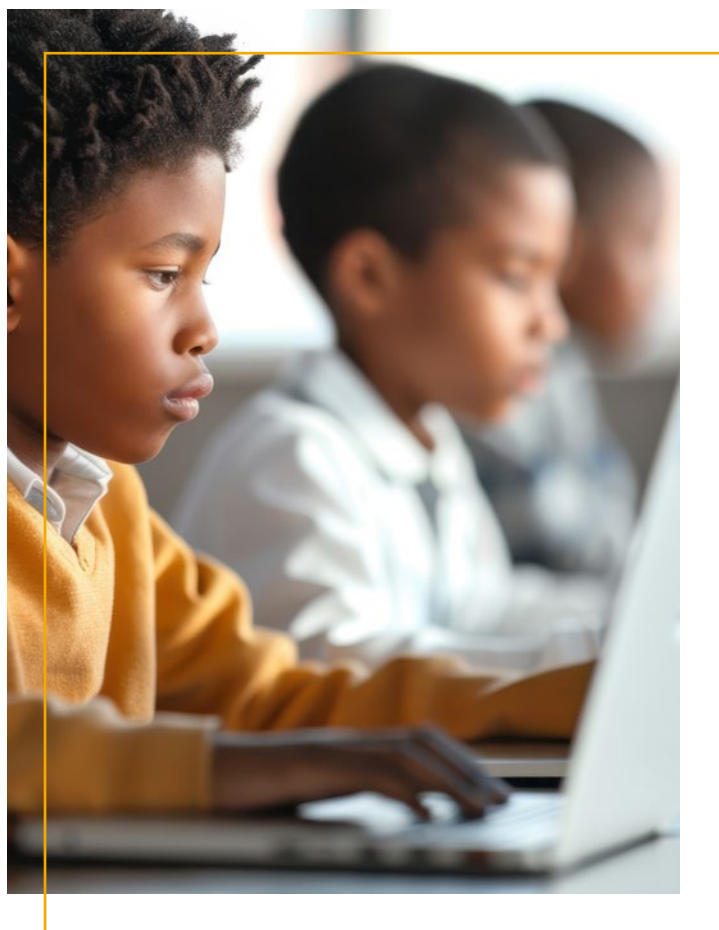
- ✓ **Comprehensive Screening:** Implement thorough background checks, including criminal history and reference checks, for all individuals who will have access to children or vulnerable adults, not just employees.
- ✓ **Limiting Unsupervised Access:** Establish clear procedures regarding unsupervised interactions, particularly in private or isolated settings. Implement policies prohibiting 1:1 situations whenever possible, and specifically outline appropriate interaction policies for high-access volunteers and situations where one-on-one is unavoidable.
- ✓ **Training and Education:** Provide regular training for both employees and volunteers on appropriate boundaries and reporting procedures. Determine how to incorporate abuse prevention training and reporting requirements into third-party contract arrangements as appropriate, depending on the contractor's level of access.
- ✓ **Policy Review:** Frequently review and update access policies to reflect evolving best practices and address any new or observed risks or incidents.
- ✓ **Third-party oversight:** When using third-party vendors, ensure that those vendors have their own stringent screening and oversight policies. Include these expectations in contracts and spot check often.

PRIVACY: AVOIDING UNOBSERVABLE VIRTUAL INTERACTIONS

In November 2024, kid-friendly video gaming giant Roblox announced significant changes to their safety and parental controls in response to concerns from experts and reports from parents and users that minors were easily able to message others both inside and outside of games.¹⁹ In one lawsuit filed in 2022, the claimant's family alleged that "Roblox facilitated the sexual and financial exploitation of a California girl by adult men, who allegedly encouraged her to drink, abuse prescription drugs and share sexually explicit photos."²⁰ Sexual harassment and abuse in online environments has exploded with the expansion of video gaming platforms and esports leagues, and users, parents, and organizations are seeking solutions to these pervasive risks.

Privacy, in the context of abuse, isn't just about physical isolation; it's about creating spaces, both real and virtual, where interactions can occur without observation or accountability. In a healthcare environment, it could be an employee who initiates private conversations with a patient on social media, blurring professional boundaries. In a school or higher education setting, this might involve a teacher who communicates with a student through private messaging apps, circumventing school-monitored channels.

The digital world has expanded the scope of privacy, allowing abusers to use or create unseen spaces for manipulation and exploitation. The rise of esports, with often-unmonitored communication channels through gaming and chat platforms, provides a prime example. These unsupervised private spaces, whether physical or virtual, allow potential abusers to build trust and rapport and exert control without the same risk of detection as in-person interactions.



For more information about electronic communication and online abuse, check out Praesidium's blog post: [Unseen Threats: Online Child Sexual Abuse and Opportunities for Preventing it.](#)



THE DIGITAL THREAT:

- Statistics indicate a significant rise in online sexual exploitation. Law enforcement agencies report a growing number of cases involving online grooming and the distribution of child sexual abuse material. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children ([NCMEC](#)) reports that *reported incidents of online enticement increased by **more than 300%** from 2021 to 2023,*²¹ and [Child Rescue Coalition](#) has identified **72.5 million** unique IP addresses worldwide that have shared or downloaded child sexual abuse materials (CSAM).²²
- The anonymity and accessibility of online platforms make it easier for abusers to establish contact with potential victims and conceal their activities, but stranger danger is not the most prevalent online threat. Recent findings from the National Juvenile Online Victimization Survey (NJOV) conducted by the University of New Hampshire Family Research Laboratory indicate that **62% of online CSA is perpetrated by individuals known to the victims**, and that **increased to 79.5%** in cases of online grooming – **nearly 8 out of 10 online grooming victims were groomed by someone they knew.**²³

Prevention Practices:

- ✓ **Digital Safety Education:** Provide comprehensive digital safety education for children, vulnerable adults, and employees/volunteers. Teach them about the risks of online grooming, cyberbullying, and inappropriate online interactions. Research into education best practices recommends incorporating this training as an expansion of existing abuse prevention efforts to emphasize increasingly interconnected online and real-world relationships and environments.
- ✓ **Monitoring and Oversight:** Implement appropriate monitoring of online communications, particularly in settings like esports or online youth programming. Balance efficiency concerns with the need for safety by allowing monitored, group communication options that acknowledge the reality of today's communication expectations like texting and social media use.
- ✓ **Technology Solutions:** Utilize technology solutions, such as monitoring software and filtering tools, to detect and prevent online abuse or inappropriate communication.
- ✓ **Policy Development:** Establish clear policies regarding online communication, including social media and messaging apps. Address the use of personal devices and the sharing of personal information, and spot check for accountability.

CONTROL: DISRUPTING GROOMING AND POWER DYNAMICS

*In January 2025, the Governor of Ohio signed a bill into law criminalizing grooming, making Ohio the **6th** state in the country with such a law on the books.²⁴ The bill prohibits adults from “engaging in a ‘pattern of conduct’ with minors” for the purpose of building a relationship intended “to entice, coerce, or solicit the minor in sexual activity.”²⁵ Most grooming laws in the US are specific to electronic communication or other online behavior, but this new law encompasses any pattern of behavior, in person or virtual. The legislation passed in response to a grassroots effort spearheaded by parents in the Cincinnati area.²⁶ Their children had been targeted for abuse by a former priest in the Cincinnati Archdiocese, who was ultimately convicted of rape in 2020 after being accused of grooming potential victims for **over 5 years** with no legal recourse.*

Control, in the context of sexual abuse, is the ability to manipulate a potential victim, eroding their autonomy and sense of safety. It’s about establishing a dynamic where the abuser dictates the terms of the interaction. In a school environment, a teacher might use their authority to isolate a student, offering special attention and favors while subtly undermining their self-esteem. In a healthcare setting, a provider might exploit a patient’s vulnerability, offering false promises or manipulating their emotional needs. In a childcare facility, a worker might use fear or intimidation to silence a child.

Grooming is a key tactic in gaining and wielding control, involving the gradual building of trust, creating emotional dependence, and normalizing physical interactions. Abusers often target individuals who are already vulnerable or at risk by exploiting existing power imbalances. Despite the generally understood frequency of grooming, it has been challenging to quantify and study over time – instances of boundary-violating or ingratiating behaviors can often only be recognized or confirmed as grooming after an instance of abuse has happened.

A powerful new study published in August 2024 found that **99%** of adult survivors of child sexual abuse experienced at least one grooming behavior while in contact with their abuser; on average, they experienced **14 grooming behaviors** – most of which are observable and interruptible in well-supervised settings.²⁷ That means organizations have, on average, **14 opportunities** to identify and interrupt these boundary-violating behaviors before they escalate to sexual abuse.

This dynamic is not only present in instances of child sexual abuse. Additional recent research suggests that grooming is observable in adult-to-adult sexual abuse as well, with similar patterns: selecting victims based on perceived vulnerabilities, gaining access and isolating potential victims, developing trust, normalizing sexual topics and physical contact, and maintaining the relationship post-abuse to discourage reporting.²⁸

By understanding these dynamics, organizations can develop strategies to disrupt the abuser’s control and empower potential victims.



THE DYNAMICS OF CONTROL:

- Studies on sexual abuse consistently highlight the role of grooming in establishing control. Abusers often spend considerable time building trust and emotional connection before initiating abuse.
- Real or perceived power imbalances, such as those between adults and children, or healthcare providers and patients, create opportunities for exploitation.
- Statistics show that the vast majority of sexual abuse is perpetrated by someone known to the victim in both adult-to-adult and adult-to-youth abuse cases.

Prevention Practices:

- ✓ **Grooming Awareness Training:** Provide in-depth training on grooming tactics, helping employees and volunteers recognize the subtle signs of manipulation that often manifest as inappropriate physical or verbal boundary violations.
- ✓ **Power Dynamics Education:** Educate individuals about the importance of healthy boundaries and the dangers of abusing power.
- ✓ **Culture of Reporting:** Foster a culture of open communication and reporting, where individuals feel safe to report concerns without fear of retaliation. Actively solicit feedback.
- ✓ **Clear Reporting Procedures:** Establish clear and accessible reporting procedures, ensuring that individuals know how to report suspected abuse and boundary-violating behavior. Ensure an anonymous method to report is available.
- ✓ **Independent Oversight:** Implement independent oversight mechanisms, such as hotlines or ombudsman programs, to provide confidential channels for reporting concerns and triggering responses.
- ✓ **Review and learn from incidents:** When incidents do occur, review them thoroughly, and make changes to policies and procedures to prevent future incidents within all programs with similar dynamics or risks.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the work of abuse prevention is a collective endeavor. No single individual, organization, or industry can eradicate abuse in isolation. The data, trends, and research presented in this report underscore the interconnectedness of our efforts, highlighting the necessity for ongoing collaboration, open dialogue, and shared learning. We must continue to engage with one another by sharing best practices, confronting challenges, and fostering a culture and expectation of continuous improvement. By embracing a spirit of partnership and recognizing that our collective strength lies in our shared commitment to safety, we can build a future where abuse is not tolerated, survivors are supported, and every individual feels safe and valued.



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Appendix A

Glossary of Terms

Adult-to-Adult Abuse refers to abuse incidents involving two or more adults over 18. These incidents can be between or among adult staff, volunteers, or consumers.

Adult-to-Youth Abuse refers to abuse incidents in which an adult over 18 offends against a minor age 17 or younger.

Boundary Violating Behaviors refer to actions that cross appropriate physical, emotional, or relational limits, often used to manipulate, groom, or gain access to someone in a way that can lead to sexual abuse.

Filing Date refers to the date the organization is officially named in legal action.

Grooming refers to the process used by an individual to build trust and emotional connection with a potential victim—and often their caregivers or community—in order to manipulate, isolate, and desensitize the victim, making it easier to commit sexual abuse and harder for the victim to report or be believed.

Incident Date refers to the specific date or dates on which an alleged event or act—such as abuse—actually took place. This is distinct from the date the incident was reported or when legal action was filed.

Judgment refers to the formal decision made or affirmed by a court at the conclusion of a lawsuit. It determines the outcome of the case, including whether the defendant is liable and what remedies—such as monetary damages or other actions—are awarded to the plaintiff. A judgment can result from a trial to the court or to a jury, a default (when one party does not respond or appear), or a settlement approved by the court.

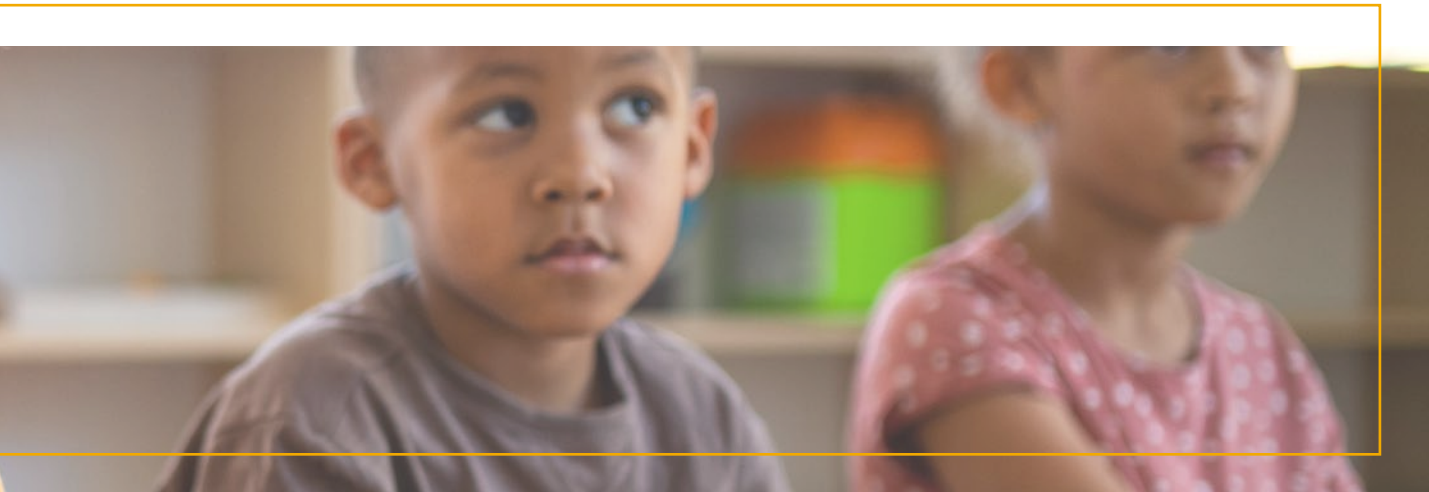


Negligence refers to the legal concept invoked when an organization fails to provide a reasonably safe environment for its consumers. It can be defined most succinctly as the failure to exercise a reasonable level of care.

Payout refers to the amount of money paid to a plaintiff or claimant party as a result of a legal settlement, judgment, or court order. This payment is typically made by the defendant, their insurance company, or another responsible party to compensate for losses, damages, or harm suffered.

Praesidium Helpline refers to Praesidium's consultation 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 on 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

Settlement refers to a formal agreement between parties to resolve a legal dispute without proceeding to a trial. The agreement may be reached informally between parties or more formally in a court-ordered mediation or arbitration setting. Settlements often involve the payment of money by the defendant to the plaintiff and may include other terms or conditions. Once a settlement is reached, the case is typically dismissed or closed, and the matter is considered resolved.

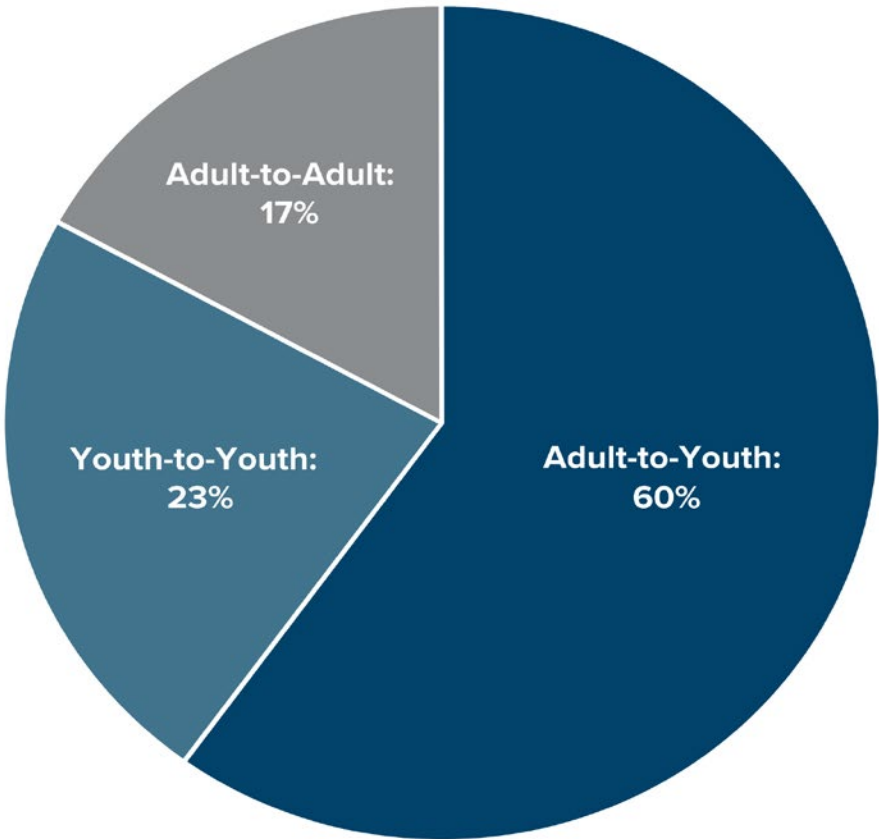


Appendix B

Praesidium's Incident Analysis Highlights

Praesidium’s Research and Analytics team regularly conducts a detailed analysis of all incidents from the Praesidium Helpline and of publicly available incident data. All data is combined to provide the detailed breakdown. Praesidium analyzes various factors and characteristics to help further its understanding of how abuse occurs within organizations across industries and how future incidents can best be prevented. **Appendix B** provides highlights of Praesidium’s latest analysis, which includes 3,112 incidents.

Figure B.1
INCIDENT CATEGORY BREAKDOWN



Adult-to-Youth Incidents Key Highlights

INCIDENT TYPES

Sexual Abuse	79%
Red Flag Behaviors	15%
Nonsexual Problematic Behaviors	6%

PAYOUTS

Range	<\$1,000 - \$2.28B
Average	\$20,440,000
Median	\$2,350,000

SECTORS WITH MOST INCIDENTS

Youth Development	27%
K-12 Schools	26%
Faith-Based	34%

TOP 3 LOCATIONS

Classroom, Childcare, or Other Program Areas
Out of Program Contact
Lodging

TOP 3 INSTITUTIONAL FAULTS

General Negligence
Negligent Supervision
Negligent Hiring

CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED

Individuals Accused	81% Male
Individuals Abused	50% Male 40% Female 10% Combination
Individuals Abused	74% Ages 10-17

Youth-to-Youth Incidents Key Highlights

INCIDENT TYPES

Problematic Sexual Behaviors	81%
Nonsexual Problematic Behaviors	19%

PAYOUTS

Range	\$4,250 - \$27MM
Average	\$2,460,000
Median	\$700,000

SECTORS WITH MOST INCIDENTS

Youth Development	74%
K-12 Schools	19%
Faith-Based	2%

TOP 3 LOCATIONS

Bathroom/Locker Rooms
Classroom/Childcare/Program Area
Recreation/Playground

TOP 3 INSTITUTIONAL FAULTS

General Negligence
Negligent Supervision
Negligent Hiring

CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED

Individuals Accused	81% Male
Individual Accused	55% Ages 6-12
Individuals Abused	54% Female
Individuals Abused	59% Ages 6-12

Adult-to-Adult Incidents Key Highlights

INCIDENT TYPES

Sexual Abuse	94%
Nonsexual Problematic Behaviors	5%
Red Flag Behaviors	1%

PAYOUTS

Range	\$750,000 - \$852MM
Average	\$23,200,000
Median	\$1,000,000

SECTORS WITH MOST INCIDENTS

Higher Education/University	22%
Healthcare	17%
Government	12%

TOP 3 LOCATIONS

Lodging/Residential
Medical/Exam Room
Transportation

TOP 3 INSTITUTIONAL FAULTS

General Negligence
Negligent Supervision
Negligent Hiring

CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED

Individuals Accused	42% Ages 25-44
Individual Accused	91% Male
Individuals Abused	79% Ages 18-24
Individuals Abused	61% Male

Table B.1
INDUSTRY COMPARISON – PROPORTION OF FILED CASES PRE- & POST-2015

INDUSTRY	Pre-2015 (%)	2015-Present (%)
K-12	29%	37%
Faith-Based	27%	8%
Social Service	7%	4%
Healthcare	6%	6%
Higher Education	6%	12%
Parks & Recreation	6%	5%
Government Entities	5%	8%
Youth Development	4%	1%
Hospitality & Fitness	2%	4%
Entertainment	1%	1%

Appendix C

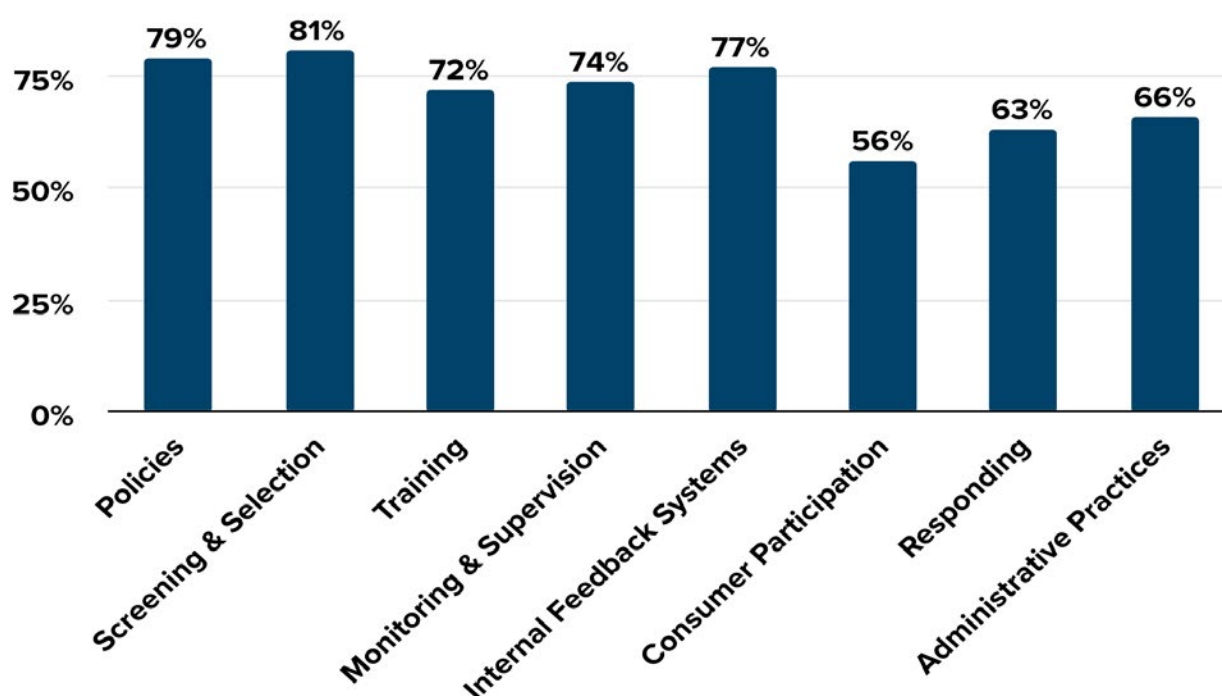
Praesidium Standards Trends

[The Praesidium Standards for Consumer-Serving Organizations](#) are informed by thousands of root cause analyses, continuous scientific research, and over three decades of field experience with more than 4,000 organizations that serve children, youths, and vulnerable persons or “consumers.” Anchored by the Praesidium Safety Equation®, these standards provide a framework to help organizations focus their efforts where we know they make the greatest impact.

There are a total of 23 standards across the eight operations of the Safety Equation that are designed for any consumer-serving organization. Each standard has components that must be implemented to meet the standard, and each component has specified criteria to identify the degree of implementation.

The Praesidium Assessment Tool was designed to allow organizations to assess the current strength of their policies and practices in relation to the standards. Assessors are encouraged to score their organization or program on not just the existence of a policy or a practice, but the degree to which it is implemented. With that in mind, the results more likely reflect the reality of implementation and the degree to which organizations are willing to take an honest look at their practices.

Figure C.1
AVERAGE SELF-ASSESSMENT SCORES BY AREA OF OPERATION (2023-2024)



Three Lowest Scoring Praesidium Standards (2023-2024)

- 1. Standard 22 (Average score - 53%):** “The organization has a defined process for establishing and managing abuse risk management practices with third-party agreements.” Components include that the organization 1) requires all third-party organizations to read and sign a Code of Conduct, 2) requires all third-party organizations to conduct a minimal level of screening on all individuals who may have access to the facility or consumers, 3) requires all third-party organizations to provide all individuals who may have access to the facility or consumers with minimal abuse prevention and responding training, 4) uses a variety of methods for monitoring and supervising third-party organizations, and 5) requires all third-party organizations to follow its responding requirements.
- 2. Standard 19 (Average score - 54%):** “The organization defines everyone’s role in responding to consumer-to-consumer sexual activity.” Components include that the organization has a written procedure outlining 1) the appropriate employee and volunteer response to consumer-to-consumer sexual activity and 2) the appropriate supervisor and administrator response to consumer-to-consumer sexual activity.
- 3. Standard 16 (Average score – 55%):** “The organization provides parents and guardians with information related to preventing abuse.” Components include that the organization 1) provides parents and guardians with information about how to protect their consumers from abuse, 2) provides parents and guardians with information on the organization’s policies and procedures related to abuse prevention, and 3) uses a variety of methods for maintaining ongoing awareness of abuse risk and prevention among parents and guardians.

WAS THIS REPORT HELPFUL TO YOU?

Get even more insights at our 2025 Impact Summit!

Join us at our bi-annual Impact Summit September 3-4, 2025

Taking place in the Dallas area, this two-day gathering is designed to go beyond compliance and help organizations strengthen their commitment to safety. Through expert panels, interactive breakouts, and keynotes from industry leaders, we'll explore critical topics, including:

- How to maintain and strengthen organizational best practices
- Strategies to prevent drift before it starts
- The connection between best practices, risk management, and insurance
- Keeping leadership engaged and proactive
- And more!

<https://hubs.ly/Q03gQwgm0>



A blurred background image showing two people from behind, walking down a hallway. The person on the left is wearing a dark blue shirt, and the person on the right is wearing a white shirt. They are both holding papers or folders. The hallway has a white wall and a metal handrail in the foreground.

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Have questions about the data presented in this report?

Please contact us at: Research@PraesidiumInc.com