

3. Presence of sexual abuse or neglect in the individual's background.

4. Characteristic immaturity; person is shy, withdrawn, passive, non-assertive.

5. If the individual is married, is the spouse inadequate, handicapped, or of such character that the individual applicant has to go elsewhere to have his needs met?

6. Work history: Is the individual's work history unstable or has he tended to seek jobs where he has little or no responsibility or is always told what to do?

7. Does the individual have a psychiatric history, or one where he has had contact with mental health agencies or personnel?

8. Is the individual one who has difficulty making decisions, non-assertive and generally obedient to all requests?

9. Does the person have a criminal background which is verifiable by police or FBI reports?

10. Person is overinvested in children, overidentifies with children, or does he have specific requirements in terms of the type of child he prefers to be around. How effective is the person in setting limits with children? Does volunteer prefer to be around a certain type of child? Relinquishes

adult role and responsibility, tends to become more like the child.

11. Places a premium on doing one to one activities with the child versus social activities with other people, low visibility activities preferred to group activity.

12. Are the activities he does with children visible to others?

13. Does the individual become more animated around children, i.e. the persons eyes light up, person becomes more expressive versus being shy, passive and quiet around adults?

14. Does the person display any signs of anxiety about adult sexuality, i.e. does he talk about sexuality, does not date.

15. How often does the individual describe children as clean, innocent, pure, especially in comparing children to adults?

16. Adverse or extremely judgmental attitude towards homosexuality, revulsion.

17. How much of the individual's other life activities bring them into contact with children such as, i.e. scouting, church activities, teaching, general over-investment in working with children?

18. Failure to set limits for child - overindulges child, allows child to act without constructive supervision.

19. Describes desired match very specifically - emphasizing interest in children with certain physical or emotional characteristics, e.g. wants "clean cut" kid, one with no brothers or sisters.
20. Overly anxious to obtain match.
21. Moved around a lot.
22. Scapegoat as child or claim of deficient parenting.
23. Indefinite reasons for dissatisfaction with other youth activities.
24. Exclusive interest in child who has reached puberty.
25. Complains of distant father yet idolized mother.
26. Premature separation from service.
27. Abuse of alcohol or drugs.
28. Low self esteem.
29. Major disappointments in life.
30. Never been married.
31. Live alone or with parent/parents.
32. Want to work with child who is in great need of a Big Brother/Sister-deprived-little concern on the part of mother or guardian.
33. Concentrates on children between the ages of 8 and 12.
34. Children chosen tend to be small, frail children.

35. Volunteer provides own graphic physical description of child desired. This is often a sign of being sexually fixated on a specific or particular type of child.

36. Volunteer has hobbies and interests very appealing to children.

Now that we have examined some of the many possible tell-tale or warning signs, the following are recommended screening procedures to utilize for discovering these warning signals:

1. Make a home visit; see how the individual lives his or her life away from work.

As many of you know, I have long been an advocate of home visits of our applicants. Such a visit would verify application information concerning the home environment and, furthermore, present the social worker with an excellent opportunity to observe firsthand the applicant's living conditions. Items for specific interest should be pictures of youthful persons, overemphasis in photography equipment, and video equipment, swimming pool and gym-type facilities.

2. During the application interview present situations in which the applicant is asked how he/she would handle inappropriate behaviors on the part of the child, and observe how the volunteer presents handling such situations, i.e., how would the volunteer handle the child reporting that he or she

had been sexually abused, physically abused, etc.

3. Get reference from other agencies that the individual may have worked with, i.e. clergy, school, work and scouting.

4. Require children and parents in the program to go through an orientation where they are instructed as to how to identify and report inappropriate behavior of volunteers or others, how to say 'no' to requests that violate organizational rules or go against child's values. There should be additional training given in this area at further meetings.

5. Have volunteers go through an orientation type program where they are informed that children in the program have been instructed to report any kind of abuse and further informed as to what kinds of behavior are considered to be appropriate. Again, volunteers should be advised that we must and will report all alleged incidents and we will recommend prosecution in all abuse situations.

6. Interview family members of the potential volunteer and attempt to secure other's opinions on the volunteer's behavior and attitude, particularly the spouse.

7. Instruct volunteers how to work with children who have been sexually abused, physically abused and neglected.

8. Follow-up procedures in which meetings with both the volunteer and the child occur separately; document number of contacts and contents of remarks for both child, parent and volunteer. Have the child's mother fill-out periodic

questionnaires to determine her impression of the volunteer and her involvement in the program.

9. Incorporate training concerning sexual abuse into caseworker orientation and establish training workshops.

The above lists of warning signs and recommended screening techniques are a compilation of reviewed material.⁵ See the Bibliography for more complete list of resource materials. This information should be used as part of a total screening process knowing that isolated conditions may not be indicative of potential molestations without more.

One organization which openly admits to favoring sexual relationships between adults and children is NAMBLA, which is the North American Man/Boy Love Association. This group was formed in the late 70's and, although it represents a small number of men, I have been hesitant to emphasize their importance. However, I do recommend that questions in the applications or questions by the interviewer include inquiry as to membership in this organization, familiarity with concepts, sympathy with its goals and aims.

⁵ Robert E. Longo, President, Sexual Assault Research Association, Inc., Melrose, Florida;
Bill Hobson, Board of Directors, BB/BS of Greater Hartford, Inc;
Region VI, Professional Staff Council, Hal Smith, Chairman.

SUPERVISION

The area of detection of molestations through proper supervision is an extremely critical area. While most agencies are aware of the need to screen out the potential abuser, few are knowledgeable on how to detect those who will get through even the most severe screening procedure. Here again there is no foolproof or positive detection device, but the following is a list of characteristics and behaviors common to both the abused child and the potential abuser.

Areas to watch during supervision to detect occurrence of molestation:⁶

1. Volunteer is anxious to have child spend the night or overnight trips early in the match. Camping seems to be a repeated pattern of risk.
2. Volunteer finds his/her own child and comes to the agency to have the match legitimized.
3. Volunteer involves other children other than own on outings with his/her matched child.
4. Majority of activities at volunteer's home or apartment.
5. Volunteer is very cooperative with his/her caseworker, stops by the office to talk.
6. The match seems to have more outings in the evening hours.
7. Volunteer shows child sex magazines, adult movies, or wants to introduce ideas of sex "education" to the child.

⁶ Sexual Assault of Children and Adolescents, Ann Wolbert Burgess, A. Nicholas Groth, Lynoa Lytle Holmstrom & Suzanne M. Sgrui, Lexington Books.

8. Any rapid or significant change in the child's behavior at home, with volunteer, in school performance, etc.
9. Volunteer is going through stressful period in own life.
10. Volunteer or child wants to terminate the match without specified reasons.
11. Excessive physical contact with the child, i.e. wrestling, tickling or touching.
12. Volunteer asking child to pose for pictures.
13. Volunteer does not seem to respond to child's complaints about too much sedentary time, i.e. spending time in front of television at volunteer's apartment.
14. Over investment in child - arguing or threatening mother to take child away.
15. Volunteer gets into "childish" arguments with child, acting at the child's level, not adult.
16. Excessive or expensive gifts giving, particularly gift giving not associated with birthdays and religious holidays.
17. Child becomes secretive about match activities.
18. Sudden unexplained changes in relationship between volunteer and child.
19. Volunteer involves other adults on outings with child.
20. Volunteer expresses strong need to exercise discipline or authority over child.
21. Volunteer who does not want to leave town to take another job because he/she does not want to leave child.
22. Mother of child is uncomfortable about the volunteer.
23. Volunteer fails to set limits on child's behavior - over indulgence.
24. Volunteer allows child to do many things that usually are for other children. Volunteer lacks sense of age appropriate limits.

25. Volunteer involves child with other adult.
26. Volunteer violates agency rules or mother's wishes.
27. When the caseworker is uneasy or has a hunch about the match. When this occurs, go with your "gut" and terminate the match.

How to identify the child who has been sexually abused:

Not all children who are sexually abused will tell someone what has happened to them. This is most likely to occur when the child does not have trusting relationships, fears being punished for the activity, or has been instructed or threatened not to tell anyone by the offender. The following list of items are warning signals and behaviors that may indicate that the child in question has been the victim of sexual abuse/assault.

1. Most children do not possess the language to tell us that they have been sexually abused. They may make certain comments, however, that we need to inquire about more closely, i.e. "Mr. Jones bothers me", "I don't like Mr. Jones anymore". "Mr. Jones and I have a special secret, Mr. Jones told me not to tell", "Don't leave me alone with Mr. Jones", "I don't want to go with Mr. Jones to the store", and so forth.

If the child makes statements such as these and you are not sure why the child is saying them or don't understand what the child means, INQUIRE!

2. Many children will exhibit any number of behaviors

that may indicate that he/she has been sexually abused such as:

- Age inappropriate sexual behavior.
- Age inappropriate questions or statements pertaining to sex.
- Reluctance to go to certain places such as the park, school, neighbor's house, or a particular area of the child's home.
- Avoidance of persons he or she has typically enjoyed being around in the past.
- Child does not want to be left alone.
- Child has problems in school, cannot concentrate in class, avoids peers, arrogant behavior, etc.
- Child begins to dislike or turn against parent.
- Fear of the dark.
- New fears not present in past behavior.
- Regressed behavior, child begins to display behaviors that were present when the child was younger.
- Shy and withdrawn, child spends more time alone.
- Recent disruptive or aggressive behavior toward adults or older adolescents.
- Recent poor peer relationships - absence of friends - gender role confusion
- Recent inappropriate sexual self-consciousness, or pseudo seductive behavior.
- Recent sexual promiscuity or frequent masturbation.
- Recent inappropriate sexual behavior with dolls or toys.
- Young girl assumes maternal responsibilities inappropriate for age and family circumstances.

3. Physical symptoms that are often present in children who have been abused:

- Sharp increase or decrease in appetite.
- Sleep problems, i.e. nightmares, inability to fall asleep. Wakes up and cannot go back to sleep, bed-wetting when it was not present before, does not want to sleep in the dark.
- Irritable, cranky, arrogant.
- Presence of venereal disease or fear of same.
- Injury, trauma, or irritation to the genital areas including the rectum.
- Any unusual behaviors that were not present in the child's history.

Any of these warning signals and symptoms should be taken seriously by the parent or volunteer as evidence of possible sexual abuse, or child abuse in general. Run-away behavior, truancy from school - wanting to change schools suddenly, etc. are all indicators that something may be wrong in the child's life.

During the match, the child should be aware of and told to report any of the following:

- Unusual requests by volunteer.
- Things that go against family rules.
- Anything that involves a secret.
- Unearned special favors from volunteer.
- Bullying
- Vulnerable situations.
- Games involving sex and touch.
- Going on outings with other kids or staying with volunteer at his place or elsewhere with other kids.

When the caseworker, parent or volunteer sees the above signs or symptoms then there should be proper follow-through procedures. Certainly the child should be talked and listened to and I do further recommend the use of a trained child psychologist to help communicate with the child at this time. The agency is encouraged to seek out such a research person in the community. One agency recently identified a potential molester through skilled supervision. After initial staff interviews with the mother, the police were brought in and steered the volunteer into treatment before any molestation occurred. It is our hope and desire that our agencies will serve as a helpmate for discerning potential abusers before we become the target and our kids the victims.

Careful supervision is most important to assure a proper and healthy match. In my personal opinion, this type supervision cannot be properly assured by mere telephone or non personal questionnaire contact with the child, parent or volunteer. Periodic personal contact is strongly recommended.

ALLEGATION AND INVESTIGATIVE PROCEDURES

The allegation that the child has been abused by the volunteer arises in many different ways. The most common of which is for the parent to notify the agency concerning the allegation. It is also very common to learn of the accusation through the police and prosecution authorities when investigating the criminal complaint.

When the matter is brought to our attention, it is essential to report the allegation immediately to the proper authorities. This is required by state law in every jurisdiction. When the allegation is reported to us from whatever source an accurate written report should be immediately prepared and filed. I have recommended in every instance that the match, if still in existence, should be immediately suspended, if not revoked, pending further investigation by either the authorities or the office itself. The staff should arrange an appointment with the child, parent and volunteer so that separate interviews can be conducted as soon as practicably possible. These interviews should be for the purpose of ascertaining the facts surrounding the allegation and for the suspension of all activities between

the volunteer and the child pending further investigation. It is important for staff to understand that it should not assume the role of police, prosecutor or defense lawyer in these situations. Rather, it should always be kept in mind that the agency is concerned first and foremost with the protection of the child and the best interests and welfare of that child. With the increasing number of reported abuse situations and legal complications which result from those accusations, it is natural to expect that many of our agency personnel will act in a defensive manner once the accusation is reported. However, I can't stress enough the importance that professional staff not act defensively, but rather that it acts in a positive manner so as to inform the child that it believes and trusts that child and that it is concerned and caring on behalf of that child and the experience.

It is extremely important that we support the child and the parent immediately concerning the accusation and assure them of our cooperation in the subsequent procedures. The manner and method in which we follow-up on the reported accusation will have important and critical impact, not only on the child and the parent but on the entire, unfortunate situation. It is very important that the child and parent be reassured that we are going to work this problem out together and that we will do our best to protect and support that child.

As soon as practically possible, the issue of professional

assistance for assessment for the child and parent should be discussed and considered. If the agency has professional persons available for assessment and intervention concerning the experience, then those should be offered to the child and the parent free of charge or at as reasonable a rate as possible under the circumstances as soon as possible. If such facilities are not available to the agency, then the agency should seek out cooperating community mental health agencies, family and youth services or other child protective services in the community. Cooperation with the police and prosecuting authorities is essential; however, both the agency professional and the law enforcement professional must realize the "privileged" nature of the records of BB/BS work. I have long recommended that the subpoena power of the prosecution be requested and recommended to protect our agencies in their desire to cooperate with the authorities. The records and case files dealing with the volunteer as well as the child should not be presented to the investigating authorities without first having obtained a legal subpoena properly issued. When the records are subpoenaed and turned over to the authorities, make certain that complete copies are made of all documents so that you can continue to retain for your own benefit a copy of the records released through the subpoena process.

During the follow-up interview with the volunteer, emphasize the immediate suspension of all contacts with the child and advise the volunteer concerning the child's complaint in such a way as to leave no doubt concerning the supporting role of the agency for that child. Remember, it is not the role of the agency staff member to judge the accused

volunteer and we should conduct a fair, fact-finding investigation and recommend support services to the volunteer as well. In some recent cases the investigation has revealed not only allegations against the accused volunteer, but also against others brought into the program upon their recommendations. It is therefore recommended that your investigation include this possibility.

Recent experiences have involved accusations against caseworkers, executive directors, board members, staff and volunteers who work with children on the waiting lists, as well as active volunteers. We also have had several experiences where the child was molested by others outside our program and reported only to the Big Brother/Sister. When the child or parent reports this allegation to our volunteer, we should aid them in every possible way. It is still our responsibility to report these allegations immediately, but a conflict situation can occur when the child/parent doesn't want the incident reported. There are other instances of abuse which may come to our attention such as parental abuse, improper living conditions and violating health and welfare regulations. Volunteers should receive orientation on how to handle these delicate situations.

As part of your supervision, you may learn from the child that an abuse or molestation has occurred. We have had many children report these outside incidents to their Big Brothers,

Big Sisters and the professional staff. In one case recently the child reported the molestation to the volunteer because the volunteer was the only one the child could trust. We need to be prepared to deal with the child victim of abuse. This abuse may occur outside our activities, yet the child will look to us for help and support.

When the child brings this abuse to your attention:

- Support the child - you will do your best to protect.
- Comfort the child - express your sadness and your anger at the abuser - place responsibility of abuser.
- Believe the child and show this belief, both orally and visibly.
- Advise child - not his/her fault - help avoid guilt feelings.
- Reassure child "we will work this out together". Be understanding and supportive. Do not reject, punish disapprove of the child.
- Report to police and/or abuse hotline. Remember we are mandated reporters.
- Seek professional assistance with children and family services, mental health agencies, child protections agencies and medical and mental professionals.

Occasionally I receive inquiries concerning the activities of a former volunteer whose illegal activity is not related to our program. When information becomes known that a former big

brother has been charged or convicted of an abuse with someone not in our program, do we have a legal or moral obligation to notify the former little brother's mother? There may be no legal obligations to inform the little brother or his mother of this information, but I have consistently advised executive directors to personally contact the mother. There is always the possibility that a former volunteer will recontact the child and it can be argued that if we have information of this nature and don't share it with the volunteer's former match or parent of the child, then we could be held negligent should a later additional abuse occur. Our obligation to protect our kids certainly dictates that we inform the participants in our program even if they are no longer involved in the program. It is proper police procedure for investigators to contact such persons for information so why not contact them first in such a way that will best serve the client and the agency. In such a situation recently those mothers contacted were very appreciative and surprised that the agency cared enough to contact them, even though they did not believe the charge and felt no improper conduct occurred with their children. These comments were properly noted in the case files.

With the advent of new programs such as cross gender and couples matching, we must consider these same potential problems with additional care.

PRESS/MEDIA RELATIONS

As soon as an abuse situation has been officially alleged and reported, it is likely to receive much media attention. The staff of the agency will likely be contacted immediately for comment and reaction. At this crucial time in the proceedings, it has been my advice to be friendly and appear cooperative; however, no official position statement is advised. I generally support the following:

"BB/BS of _____, is most concerned with the welfare of the child and all children in our program. We are cooperating with the investigation and we have suspended the match (or the individual) pending the investigation."

Media reaction is sometimes very critical of the incident and our program. Our position is defensible and can and should be properly told at the right time, but that time is not when the incident is first reported. I have participated in many TV programs where the opportunity is given to defend/present our program. Most media persons are responsible and they will be responsive to the needs of the community in the continuation of our program and in the important realization that no perfect system for detection of potential abusers yet exists. The public needs to know

that we faithfully and properly serve hundreds of thousands of children from single parent homes with the help of our volunteers in every community. We are concerned and we continue to study and evaluate new and improved methods of selecting these volunteers. Consult your "emergency press kit" where we suggest assigning one official spokesperson to speak for the agency.

PROSECUTION AND TRIAL

During the trial of the accused, it may be likely that the agency will be involved either as a witness for the child/victim or the accused. The official position of the agency should remain unchanged in its support and concern for the welfare of the child. However, professional staff may be involved for either party in the "search for the truth" and should be a willing participant upon the delivery of a proper subpoena to appear in court and testify truthfully to matters within personal knowledge or to produce required records.

Agency personnel should be careful to avoid placing the agency in an adversarial position with the child and for that reason should be reluctant to appear as character witnesses for the accused, particularly when requested to serve as witnesses as to the reputation for truthfulness and veracity. Furthermore, requests of the accused for staff to appear personally or write letters of reference for the accused during the sentencing procedures in extenuation and mitigation should be denied.