



# PRAESIDIUM REPORT 2022

PRAESIDIUM

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# PRAESIDIUM REPORT

## 2022

Welcome to the Praesidium Report®. The purpose of this report is to share Praesidium's global experience and research findings and to provide industry trends relevant to our mission:

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

Our hope is that you will find this report useful in your work and that you will share it with your colleagues who embrace your, and our, passion for keeping children and vulnerable adults safe from abuse.

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# INTRODUCTION

Praesidium continues to see organizations in all industries and of all sizes work tirelessly to protect the children, youth, and vulnerable adults they serve. Despite continuing to cope with challenges to staffing and programming due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we know that organizations are still raising their standards on abuse prevention. Culturally, abuse prevention is now widely discussed, and more attention than ever has been placed on preventing and responding to sexual abuse. The national landscape of abuse prevention efforts is rapidly evolving, and diverse contributions across this landscape are collectively strengthening how we protect individuals from abuse.

## An Overview of the Current Sexual Abuse Prevention Landscape

The landscape of abuse prevention continues to shift and engage more stakeholders to address this complex issue. Universities, governmental bodies, national commissions, and think tanks are invested in research on how abuse happens and how it can be prevented. Survivor advocacy and support organizations work endlessly to provide survivor assistance and advocate for justice and reforms. The insurance industry continues to take more sophisticated approaches to underwrite this risk and incentivize organizations to have strong standards in place. Lastly, abuse prevention companies like Praesidium continue to lead the way in helping and supporting organizations to protect their most vulnerable populations.

Our 2022 Praesidium Report highlights the importance of bringing this array of information together to better understand the current landscape and how we continue to move forward. The report provides insight on data from our online self-assessment tool, Know Your Score! (page 6), new and cutting-edge data from Praesidium's Accreditation program (page 11), and new research Praesidium is conducting on youth protection standards in national youth-serving organizations (page 14). Additionally, you will find analyses of our helpline data (page 20) and a review of external sexual abuse cases from a national database of civil cases (page 28). We are encouraged by our findings and confident that organizations can use Praesidium's data and industry trends to continue establishing safe environments for all those they serve.

Much of the analysis in this report is contextualized within Praesidium's Accreditation Standards. These standards 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. Anchored by the Safety Equation, these standards provide a framework to help organizations focus their efforts where we know it makes the greatest impact.

There are a total of 23 standards across the eight operations of the Safety Equation, and they are designed for any organization that serves youths or vulnerable adults. Each standard has components that must be implemented to fully meet the standard. Components have specified criteria to identify a level of implementation.

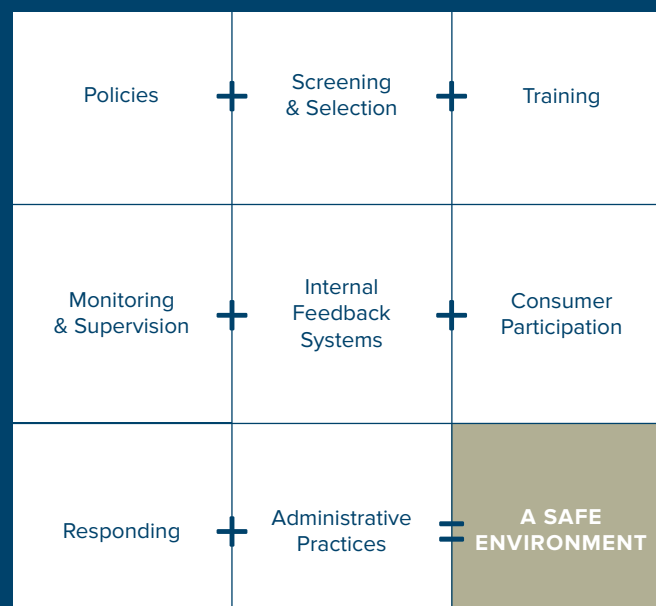
This year's report includes more data analysis than in previous years, and we intend to share more as our internal and external data sets grow. Thank you for taking the time to learn more and consider how these findings can shape your abuse prevention strategies.



# THE PRAESIDIUM SAFETY EQUATION®

By combining current research and root cause analysis of several thousand cases, Praesidium's dedicated team of researchers, psychologists, attorneys, social workers, and human resource analysts have developed an abuse risk management model, the Praesidium Safety Equation®.

Praesidium's root cause analyses and research demonstrated that risks fell into eight organizational operations: Policies, Screening and Selection, Training, Monitoring and Supervision, Internal Feedback Systems, Consumer Participation, Responding, and Administrative Practices.



## The Eight Critical Organizational Operations

### Policies

Policies define the bandwidth of acceptable behavior in an organization. When employees and caregivers know and understand policies, they can report policy violations that may foretell abuse.

### Screening and Selection

Comprehensive screening and selection requires organizations to discover and consider everything they can about applicants and to use what is known about how offenders operate to make thoughtful hiring decisions.

### Training

Effective abuse prevention training gives employees and caregivers the information and skills they need to keep those in their care safe. Training must be frequent, specific, and immediately useful on the job.

### Monitoring and Supervision

When employees and caregivers are adequately supervised, potential offenders are less likely to act on their impulses because they may face detection.

### Internal Feedback Systems

Information about program operations, such as incident reports, client complaints, or external licensing violations, can identify high-risk programs or individuals.

### Consumer Participation

If consumers—adults and youth alike—know how to recognize inappropriate interactions or policy violations, they can be a valuable part of the risk management team.

### Responding

How an organization responds to reports of inappropriate interactions, policy violations, or suspected abuse can dramatically affect the harm to the individual and to the organization.

### Administrative Practices

The board of directors must be well-informed of the risks the organization embraces and aware of the operational practices in place to ensure the safety of those in care and the reputation of the organization.



# KYS! TRENDS

Praesidium developed the Know Your Score!™ (KYS!) self-assessment tool using best practice standards in each of the eight operations of The Praesidium Safety Equation.® It is important to note that KYS! does not simply assess whether an organization has a best practice written in its policy. Before completing an assessment, assessors are trained to score based on the actual implementation of a best practice - i.e., do staff know the policy, and is it observed in practice? With that in mind, these scores more accurately reflect the reality of implementation and the degree to which organizations are willing to take an honest look at their practices.

To date, 988 organizations have completed at least one KYS! self-assessment. These organizations range from youth development programs, camps, social services agencies, university programs, and churches. The number of clients, variety of industries, and depth of data collected make KYS! the largest and most comprehensive benchmarking of consumer protection practices of its kind. As discussed below, many organizations complete KYS! regularly as part of their continuous quality and risk management process. This also allows Praesidium to identify how and where organizations are improving their abuse prevention operations as well as where they continue to see gaps.



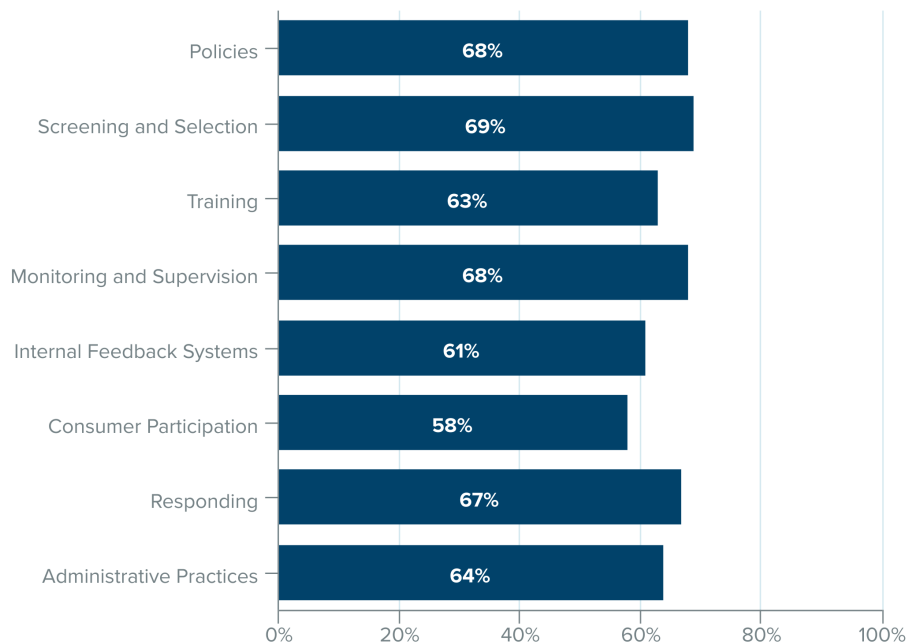


# KYS! TRENDS

## Average KYS! Scores by Operation

Figure 1 below shows the average percentage of points earned in each operation for all assessments completed between 2016 and 2021. Over the years, participating organizations have scored highest in Screening and Selection (69%), Policies (68%), and Monitoring and Supervision (68%). The lowest scores are in Consumer Participation (58%) and Internal Feedback Systems (61%). While many organizations may meet some standards in Consumer Participation and Internal Feedback Systems, we often find that organizations prioritize other areas in abuse prevention ahead of them. This analysis is extremely valuable in helping to identify needs and prioritize the development of resources such as live/virtual training, webinars, sample policies, and online courses.

**Figure 1. Average KYS! Self-Assessment Scores by Operation (2016-2021)**



## Average KYS! Score by Standard

Praesidium analyzed the self-assessment scores across all 23 of our best practice standards. See below for highlights of the three highest and three lowest-scoring standards.



# KYS! TRENDS

## Three Highest Scoring Praesidium Standards (2016-2021)

**Standard 5 (76% average):** “The organization carefully reviews applicant information gathered during the screening process to guide the final decision.” This includes components that the organization: 1) has a process for reviewing criminal convictions discovered through the criminal background check; and 2) has a process to systematically review and utilize all applicant information throughout the screening process to assess for abuse risk.

### Current Trends in Background Screening

The industry standard for a thorough search has evolved to not only include a national criminal database search, a Sex Offender search, and a Social Security Number Address Trace but also to conduct a county-level search for every jurisdiction where employees or volunteers have resided over the last seven years. The National Association of Professional Background Screeners reports that plaintiff lawyers have expanded the meaning of Negligent Hiring and Retention to include the background check not being comprehensive, namely that the criminal search was not sufficient. This includes not doing an address history and checking all reported counties thereby missing a record.

Praesidium has also seen a significant increase in organizations conducting background checks on a reoccurring basis post-hire as reported below in Praesidium’s benchmarking analysis.

**Standard 20 (74% average):** “The organization’s abuse risk management standards are consistently in place across all programs.” Components include that the organization: 1) has a point person or committee to manage all abuse prevention efforts; 2) monitors compliance with operational standards; 3) responds quickly to drift from operational standards; 4) has a written procedure for selecting and approving new programs and services; 5) develops and maintains an inventory of all consumer-serving programs and services within the organization.

**Standard 9 (71% average):** “The organization systematically monitors consumers.” Components include that the organization: 1) programs adhere to specific adult-to-consumer ratios; 2) monitors when consumers enter and exit programs; 3) monitors consumer-to-consumer interactions; 4) provides additional supervision for unique consumer needs; 5) has a policy for addressing staff cell phone use while on duty.



# KYS! TRENDS

## Three Lowest Scoring Praesidium Standards (2016-2021)

**Standard 19 (59% average): “The organization defines everyone’s role in responding to consumer-to-consumer sexual activity.”** Components include that the organization: 1) outlines the appropriate employee and volunteer response in writing; 2) outlines the appropriate supervisor and administrator response in writing.

The unique nature of consumer-to-consumer sexual activity requires a different response than adult-to-consumer abuse incidents. It is important to include in writing what constitutes consumer-to-consumer sexual behaviors, staff, and volunteers’ immediate steps to take if behaviors are identified, and who to notify about such behaviors.

**Standard 23 (56% average): “The organization has standards in place for its volunteers.”** Components include that the organization: 1) has a process for identifying if a volunteer is considered low-access or high-access; 2) has a screening and selection process for low-access volunteers designed to assess for abuse risk; 3) has an abuse prevention training delivery system for low-access volunteers as required.

To help determine whether volunteers are low or high access, consider the amount of privacy they may have with consumers, the duration of the program or activity, and the frequency of contact volunteers have with consumers of your organization.

**Standard 15 (52% average): “The organization provides consumers with information related to preventing abuse.”** Components include that the organization: 1) provides consumers with developmentally appropriate and age-appropriate information about protecting themselves from abuse; 2) provides consumers with information on their policies related to abuse prevention; 3) uses a variety of methods with consumers for maintaining awareness of abuse prevention.

Be sure to teach consumers about physical, emotional, and online boundaries. Let them know that the organization has specific appropriate boundaries between adults and youth— and that no one in your organization will ever encourage consumers to break the rules or keep secrets from other adults.



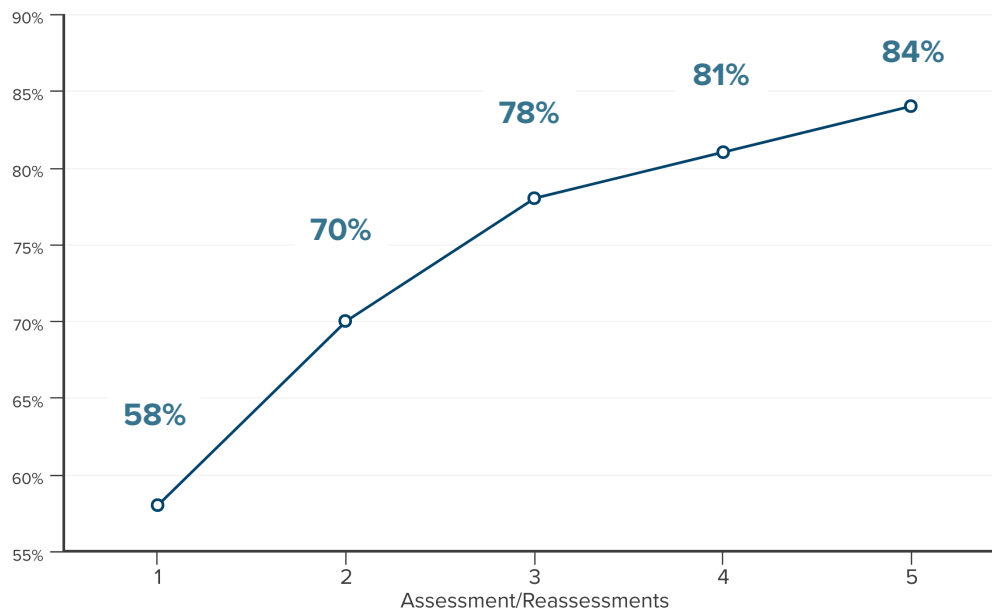
# KYS! TRENDS

## Average KYS! Score by Assessment Completions

Some organizations have implemented a requirement to complete self-assessments at regular intervals (i.e., annually, or bi-annually) to allow for tracking progress over time. Figure 2 below shows the difference in the total percentage of points earned for organizations completing KYS! assessments for the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth times.

Overall, there is a steady increase in the total average score when an organization completes multiple assessments. Not surprisingly, organizations increase their scores the most between their first and second self-assessments (12 point increase). These data are very encouraging because it suggests that organizations are implementing the resources provided in the KYS! tool and may be reducing the risk of abuse in their programs. An important part of maintaining a safe environment is responding to potential drift from abuse prevention standards and best practices. Data shows that regularly assessing is a great strategy for identifying and correcting drift from standard.

**Figure 2. Average KYS! Self-Assessment Scores by Completions**





# ACCREDITATION DATA

## Raising Abuse Prevention Standards in Organizations

Organizations that have created a true culture of safety understand that completing a self-assessment is not enough for maintaining a safe environment. As consumer protection awareness and standards continue to rise, the need for external verification and accountability is increasingly important. Praesidium's Accreditation data on consumer serving organizations offer insight into the lifecycle organizations undergo to truly implement abuse prevention standards and to create the safest environment possible.

At the time of publication, 164 organizations across various industries are Praesidium accredited. This number continually grows and changes over time as organizations achieve accreditation and become reaccredited. Currently, thirty-five consumer serving organizations are in the process of achieving Praesidium Accreditation.

Following is a summary of the Praesidium Accreditation process and how each phase contributes to the actual implementation needed for long-term change.

### 1. Initial Accreditation Self-Assessment

The first step of the Accreditation process is for the candidate organization for Accreditation to complete a self-assessment and to learn where opportunities for improvement exist in their current abuse prevention policies and procedures.

In total, Accreditation self-assessment data shows the average score of the first self-assessment is 69%. The following data will show the three highest-scoring areas and the three lowest-scoring areas identified through Accreditation self-assessments.

## Three Highest Scoring Areas

**Standard 1, Component 3:** “The organization annually reviews all abuse prevention policies for relevance, utility, and necessity and modifies as appropriate.”

**Standard 20, Component 1:** “The organization has a point person or committee to manage all abuse prevention efforts.”

#### Tip:

Praesidium finds that having a point person or committee responsible for leading the organization's abuse prevention efforts is key to achieving and maintaining accreditation.

**Standard 9, Component 7:** “The organization requires employees and volunteers to adhere to established methods for monitoring and supervising consumer-to-consumer interactions.”



# ACCREDITATION

## 1. Initial Accreditation Self-Assessment

### Three Lowest Scoring Areas

**Standard 22, Component 10:** “The organization requires all third-party organizations to read and sign a Code of Conduct, which includes information about behavioral expectations.”

**Standard 22, Component 12:** “The organization 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.”

**Tip:**

Provide third-party individuals with a one-pager on your organization’s policies for interacting with organizations and how to report any concerns immediately to the organization.

**Standard 11, Component 25:** “The organization systematically identifies and manages where architecture may compromise supervision.”

**Tip:**

While security cameras can support monitoring and supervision efforts, they cannot replace active supervision. It is critical to monitor and supervise private or out-of-the-way locations regularly in your facilities.

## 2. Corrective Action

Once an organization completes the self-assessment, the next step is to correct any standards that are not fully implemented. This phase of the Accreditation process allows organizations to take the next step in making organizational change. While completing a self-assessment is beneficial for an organization to know where they currently stand on their abuse prevention efforts, required corrective action elevates the accountability of the organization to make lasting change and impact. Before the next step, the site visit, organizations must score 95% on their self-assessment after completing corrective action. Praesidium verifies that organizations have met this score while conducting the site visit.



# ACCREDITATION

## 3. Site Visit and Verification

A site visit to verify the implementation of all standards is crucial for any accreditation or external review process. This phase includes interviews, reviewing records, conducting program observations, and architectural inspections. Organizations may need to engage in further corrective action after the site visit depending on the findings given in their final report.

After a site visit, the organization will typically have anywhere from zero to five requirements they need to meet.

## 4. Accreditation and Maintaining Accreditation

Organizations achieve accreditation once they have fully demonstrated implementation of all standards. Most importantly, organizations must maintain accreditation over time and ensure standards are consistently met. This is accomplished through an annual assessment where Praesidium verifies that the organization continues to meet all standards.

## 5. Reaccreditation

After three years, organizations complete the accreditation process again to become reaccredited. Achieving reaccreditation tends to be a simpler process for organizations than initial accreditation as long as leadership has remained committed and drift has been mitigated.

The average score of the self-assessment for organizations going through reaccreditation is 84%.



# BENCHMARKING ANALYSIS

Praesidium partners with a variety of national federated youth-serving organizations that require specific youth protection standards for their member entities. In federated organizations, the national body oversees state and local entities that are independently incorporated. Local entities are comprised of their own Board of Directors, CEO, staff, and volunteers. These federated organizations have a significant impact on what are considered “industry standards.”

Typically, in federated organizations, a national office provides local entities with strategic vision, resources, and membership requirements that all entities must comply with to be part of the national organization. Membership requirements cover a variety of areas such as finance, marketing and branding, risk management measures, and youth protection standards. Most federated organizations have drastically shifted their position on having youth protection requirements within the last several years. Changes range from some organizations establishing requirements for the first time to others significantly strengthening their current requirements.

## Methodology

Praesidium analyzed the membership requirements of ten national federated youth-serving organizations (YSOs) to compare what is required of all their local entities. Collectively, these YSOs have over 15,000 entities and serve more than 20 million youth. Praesidium first reviewed each of the YSOs’ membership requirements to identify trends, which were then organized by the relevant operation within the Praesidium Safety Equation®. Additionally, Praesidium analyzed each YSO’s national board member requirements. As described below, notable trends were identified in each operation.

Each organization receives a “yes,” “no,” or “partial” score for each Praesidium standard measured. “Yes” means the organization fully meets the standard, “no” means the organization did not meet the standard, and “partial” indicates the organization is meeting part of the standard.

Overall, the analysis indicates that national YSOs are raising their standards on abuse prevention. See below for highlights of findings across each operation, and see page 17 for more detail per each standard that was evaluated.



# BENCHMARKING ANALYSIS

## Highlights

**70%**

### Policies

70% of the YSOs reviewed currently require entities to have policies that define appropriate and inappropriate boundaries.

**80%**

### Screening and Selection

80% of the YSOs reviewed require their entities to conduct specific types of background screening.

60% of the YSOs reviewed require entities to complete reference checks on all applicants.

**80%**

### Training

80% of the YSOs reviewed require adults with access to consumers to complete comprehensive abuse prevention and responding training.

30% of YSOs require adults to repeat abuse prevention training regularly.

**50%**

### Monitoring and Supervision

50% of the YSOs reviewed require entities to have procedures for monitoring high-risk activities with consumers.

**50%**

### Consumer Participation

50% of the YSOs require their entities to provide organizational policies to parents.

**60%**

### Responding and Internal Feedback Systems

60% of the YSOs reviewed provide entities with a centralized reporting line where individuals (staff, parents, consumers) can report concerns and can report anonymously if desired.

60% of YSOs reviewed require entities to report all incidents of abuse to authorities.

**50%**

### Administrative Practices

50% of YSOs reviewed have Youth Protection Officers at each local organization.

30% of YSOs reviewed require local board members to complete abuse prevention training and receive organizational data and trends regarding abuse risk management.

**80%**

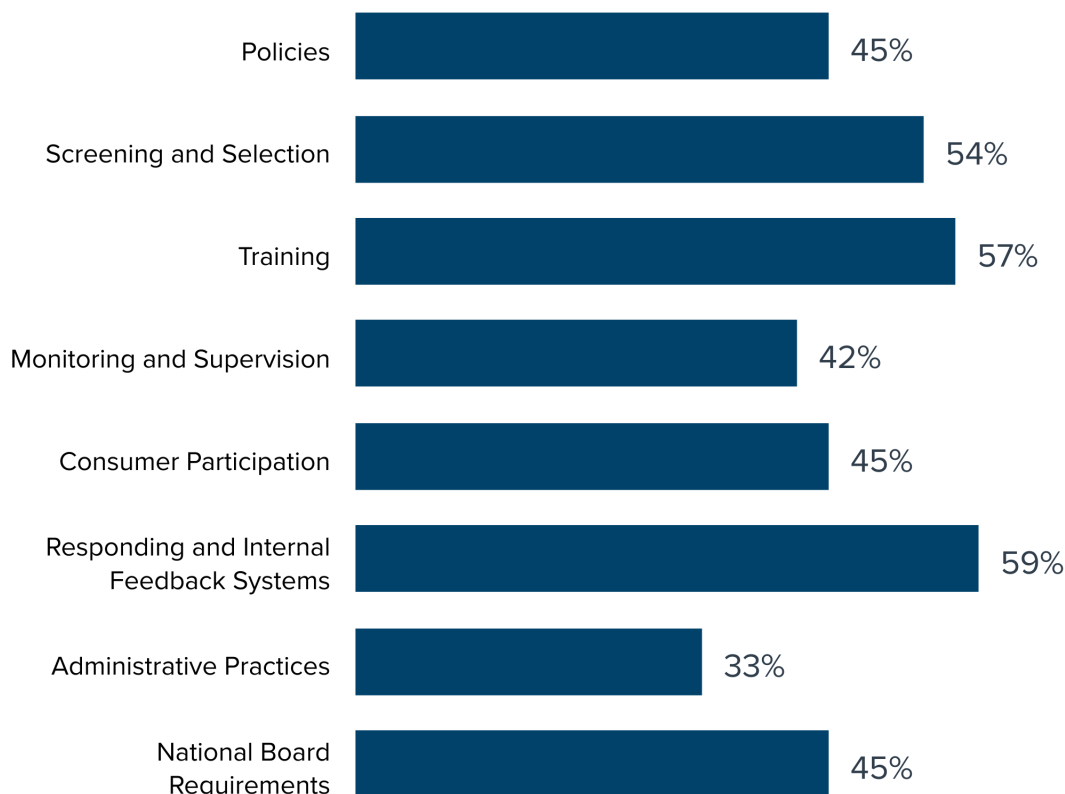
### National Board Requirements

80% of the YSOs reviewed have a National Youth Protection Officer.



# BENCHMARKING ANALYSIS

**Figure 3. Average Scores of All YSOs by Safety Equation Operation**



## Conclusion


Looking back on the past several years, national federated organizations were initially hesitant to create and enforce youth protection standards for their entities. Now, organizations are held to higher standards on abuse prevention by a variety of individuals including their national governing bodies, insurance companies, and grantors, to name a few. Additionally, Praesidium is seeing an urgency in national and federated organizations to continually raise their standards and enforcement; trends suggest that YSOs will continue to raise youth protection standards in the coming years.




# PRAESIDIUM'S BENCHMARKING ANALYSIS OF TEN NATIONAL YOUTH SERVING ORGANIZATIONS

## Policies

Percentage of Organizations with "Yes" (N=10)


Requires entities to implement policies defining appropriate boundaries with youth.  70%

Requires adults to sign off on a code of conduct for working with consumers.  20%


## Screening and Selection

Percentage of Organizations with "Yes" (N=10)

Requires entities to complete specific types of background checks on all staff.  80%

Requires entities to repeat background checks on all staff on a regular basis.  30%


Requires entities to complete reference checks on all applicants.  60%


Requires entities to complete reference checks on applicants if the applicant was previously employed with the organization at a different location.  10%

## Training

Percentage of Organizations with "Yes" (N=10)

Requires adults with access to consumers to complete comprehensive abuse prevention and responding training.  80%

Requires adults with access to consumers to complete training within 30 days of hire or before having access to consumers.  40%

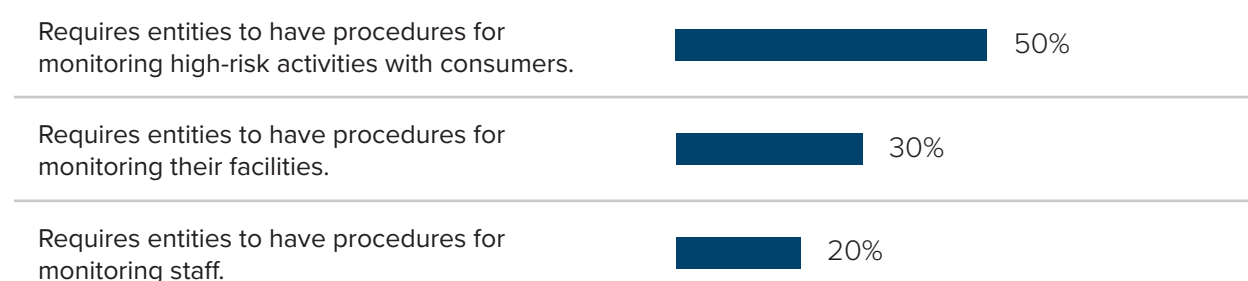
Requires adults with access to consumers to repeat abuse prevention training regularly.  30%



# PRAESIDIUM'S BENCHMARKING ANALYSIS OF TEN NATIONAL YOUTH SERVING ORGANIZATIONS

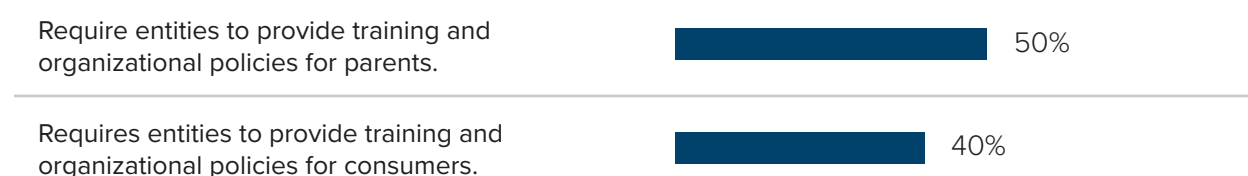
## Monitoring and Supervision

Percentage of Organizations with "Yes" (N=10)



## Consumer Participation

Percentage of Organizations with "Yes" (N=10)



## Responding and Internal Feedback Systems

Percentage of Organizations with "Yes" (N=10)

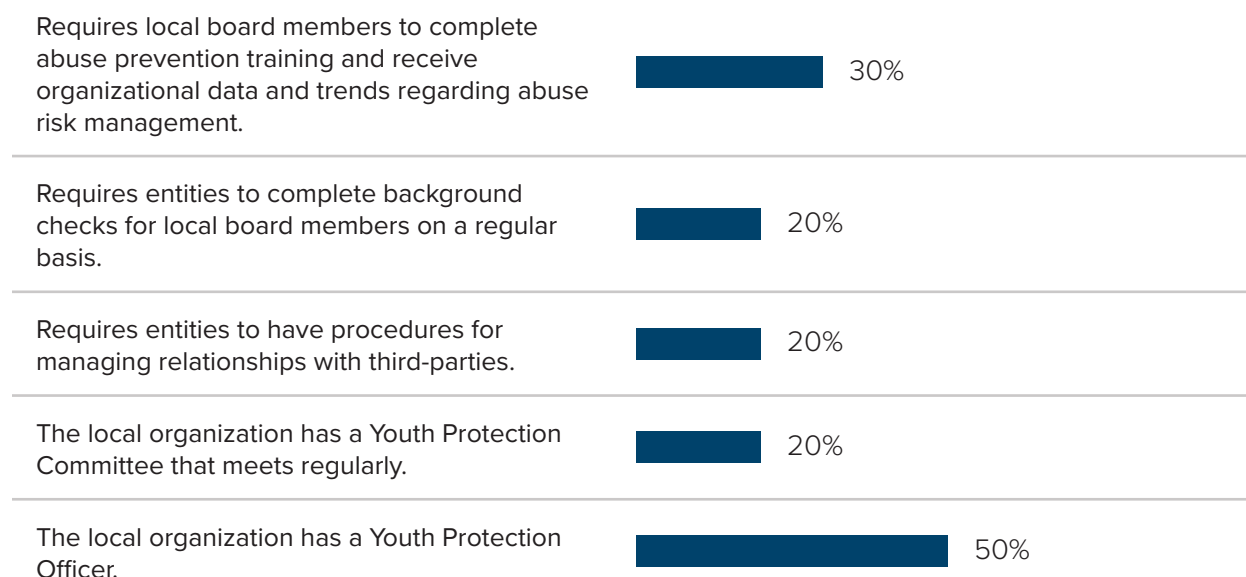




# PRAESIDIUM'S BENCHMARKING ANALYSIS OF TEN NATIONAL YOUTH SERVING ORGANIZATIONS

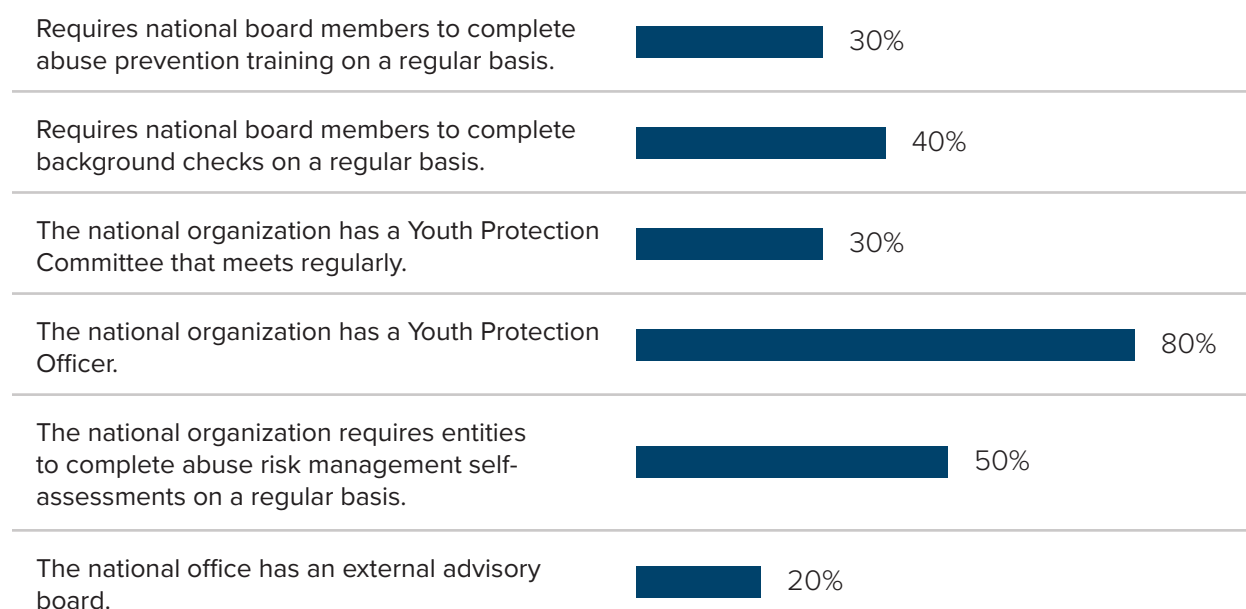
## Administrative Practices

Percentage of Organizations with "Yes" (N=10)



## National Board Requirements

Percentage of Organizations with "Yes" (N=10)





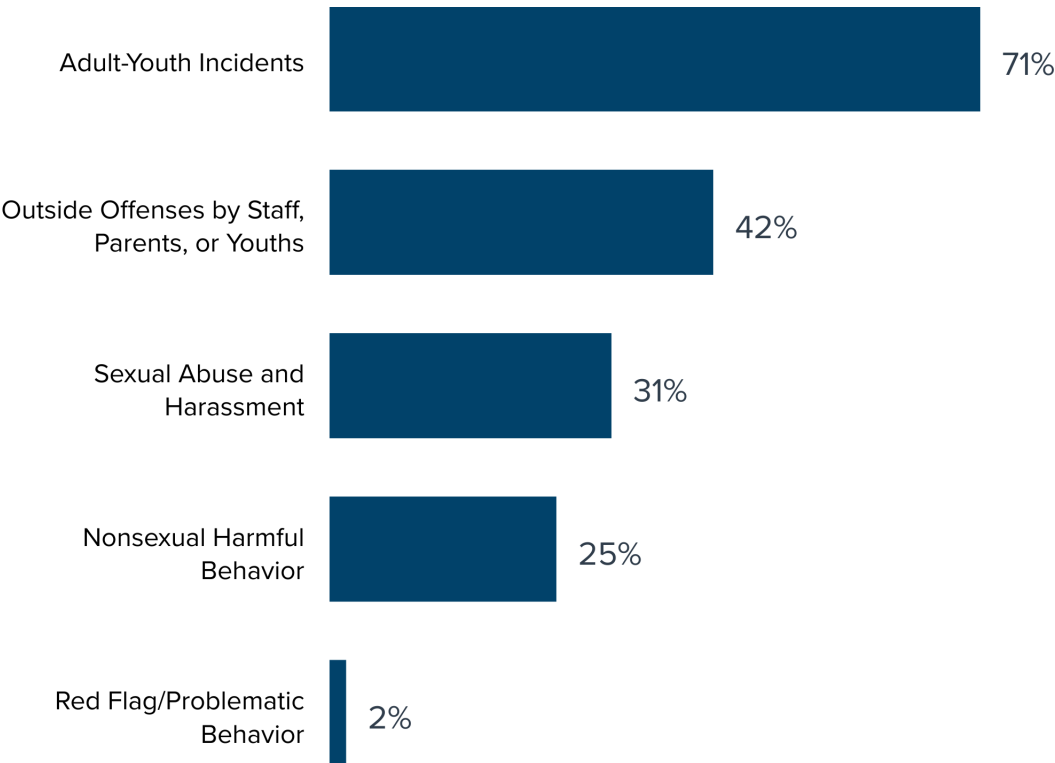
# HELPLINE TRENDS

Praesidium offers a Helpline service where authorized users from subscribing organizations reach out for consultation on situations where they are not sure how to respond. This can range from needing feedback on a policy to how to communicate with parents and the larger community in the wake of an incident. Our Helpline services have been available since 2013, and since then we have consulted with clients on more than 1000 calls on a wide range of issues.

## External Incidents

Roughly one quarter (27%) of all calls are related to incidents external to the organization, such as concerns about intrafamilial abuse, or a concern about a parent, youth, or staff with outside offenses or problematic behaviors. While these are not necessarily situations where the organization can implement measures to prevent a recurrence, they do present an opportunity to remind callers about critical response steps such as mandated reporting and demonstrating compassion to those who have experienced abuse. Figure 4 details the nature of these external incidents.

**Figure 4. External Incidents**



For the remainder of the analysis, we will exclude these external incident calls to focus on incidents that have occurred while consumers are in the direct care of the organization.

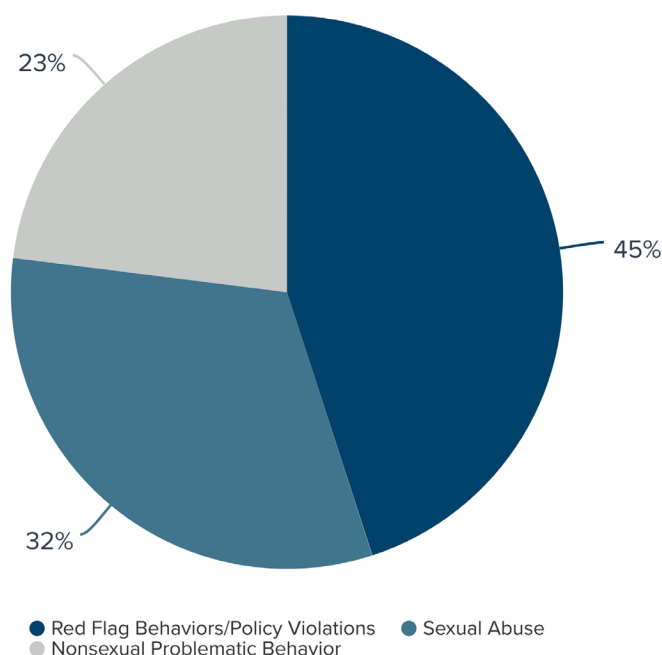


# HELPLINE TRENDS

## Types of Incidents by Nature

As seen in previous years, our data continues to reflect an almost even split between Adult-Youth (43%) and Youth-Youth (52%) incidents, with a slightly higher proportion of Youth-Youth incidents. The subset of calls related to Adult-Adult situations remains too small to share meaningful trends, and most are known historical sexual harassment cases that the organization is already responding to. We will present the findings of our deeper analysis of Adult-Youth incidents and Youth-Youth incidents below.

**Figure 5. Incidents by Nature (2013-2021)**



## Adult-Youth Incidents

Adult-Youth incidents span a broad spectrum from minor boundary violations to allegations of abuse of multiple youths. These behaviors may be perpetrated by employees, volunteers, or other adults with access to youths on the campus/facility such as fitness program members. We do not include here our calls related to external issues such as familial abuse.



# HELPLINE TRENDS

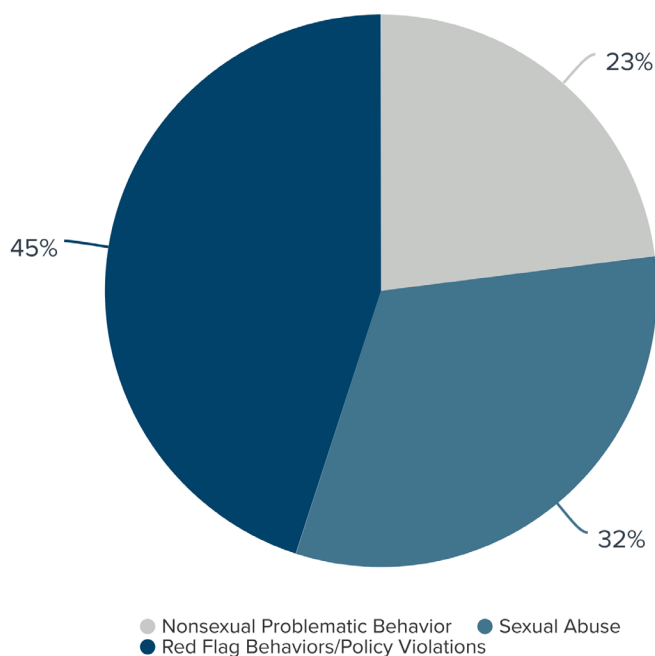
## Adult-Youth Incidents

### Types of Adult-Youth Incidents

Generally speaking, Adult-Youth incidents fall into three categories: 1) allegations of sexual abuse; 2) red-flag behaviors, which can range from low-level policy violations to egregious boundary violations that do not meet the threshold of abuse; or 3) nonsexual problematic behaviors, which primarily include inappropriate discipline or physical or verbal aggression. Figure 6 shows the breakdown of Adult-Youth incident types.

It is encouraging to see that inquiries about red-flag or low-level concerns are the highest percentage of calls (45%) as interrupting these situations is critical for prevention. It may also suggest that training has been impactful and effective. Allegations of sexual abuse represent one-third (32%) of the calls since 2013 and include incidents such as adult staff members molesting young children, having sexual contact with teens, or enticing youths to take nude photos. Most calls regarding nonsexual problematic behaviors are related to inappropriate or overly physical discipline, often reported by a parent or guardian.

**Figure 6. Adult-Youth Incidents by Type, 2013-2021**





# HELPLINE TRENDS

## Adult-Youth Incidents

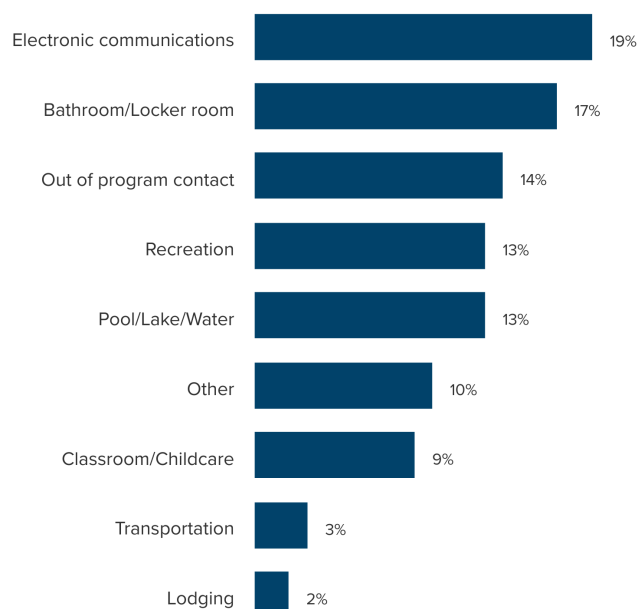
Since 2018, Praesidium has also tracked data from calls related to where incidents occur. This provides powerful insight into the types of locations where risk is higher and where additional resources are needed to mitigate it. Figure 7 breaks down locations for Adult-Youth incidents.

### Locations of Adult-Youth Incidents

The highest percentage of Adult-Youth incidents occur in the context of electronic communications (19%). For example, a younger adult staff member may be texting or communicating on social media with youths in the program, typically in violation of organizational policy. As virtual or hybrid programming is now a standard offering for more organizations, policies around electronic communications – and protocols to monitor and enforce them – are more important than ever. Similarly, we see that an additional 14% of incidents described in calls involve contact outside of the normal program space (i.e., at someone’s home), making for a combined one-third of incidents (33%) occurring in places outside the physical campus/facility. These interactions are extremely difficult to monitor, thus the need for more education for youths and parents on organizational boundaries.

As in previous years, bathrooms and locker rooms are also higher risk locations (17%), followed by pools/lakes (13%) and recreation areas such as playgrounds, athletic fields, or ball courts (13%).

**Figure 7. Adult-Youth Incidents by Location, 2018-2021**





# HELPLINE TRENDS

## Demographics of Adult-Youth Incidents

Where available, Praesidium also tracks demographic data on Adult-Youth incidents.

**80%**

Adults demonstrated red flag or abusive behaviors are **male**

**63%**

Youths subjected to red flag or abusive behaviors are **female**

**47%**

Youths subjected to red flag or abusive behavior are **aged 13-17**

**23%**

Youths subjected to red flag or abusive behavior are **aged 0-5**



# HELPLINE TRENDS

## Youth-Youth Incidents

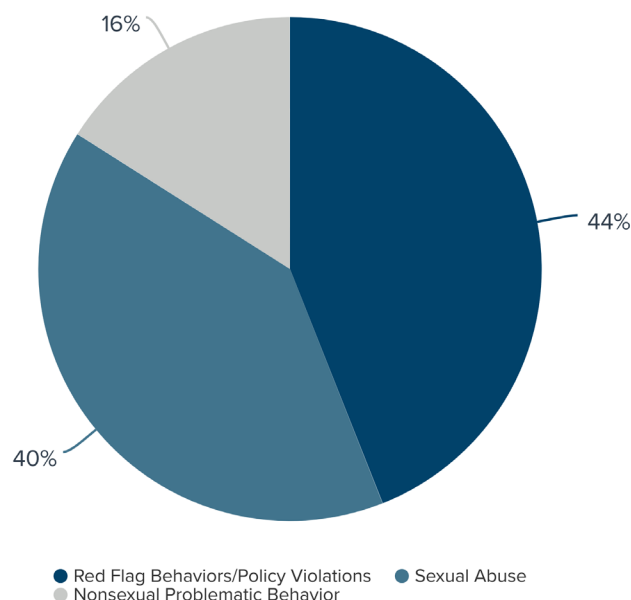
Incidents between youths represent a slight majority of calls related to incidents that occur in the context of programming. Incidents range from bullying or fighting to sexual acting out to inappropriate touch and/or abuse.

### Types of Youth-Youth Incidents

The highest percentage of calls of this nature were regarding red flag behaviors (44%), followed closely by incidents of alleged sexual abuse (40%). Calls about red flag and/or sexualized behaviors may look like youths having their phones out in the locker room, youths having sexualized language or behaviors, or engaging in games such as Truth or Dare. Youth-Youth sexual abuse allegations span from young children touching genitals in the bathroom to an older youth sexually assaulting a younger child. Nonsexual problematic behaviors (16%) are primarily related to bullying or fighting between youths.

Youth-Youth incidents of all types are best prevented through strategic supervision. Youths typically do not engage in grooming behavior like an adult might – incidents happen quickly and often in the presence of adults or other youths. Adults that are responsible for youths must remain vigilant and quickly interrupt youths who are acting out or trying to avoid supervision.

**Figure 8. Youth-Youth Incidents by Type, 2013-2021**





# HELPLINE TRENDS

## Locations of Youth-Youth Incidents

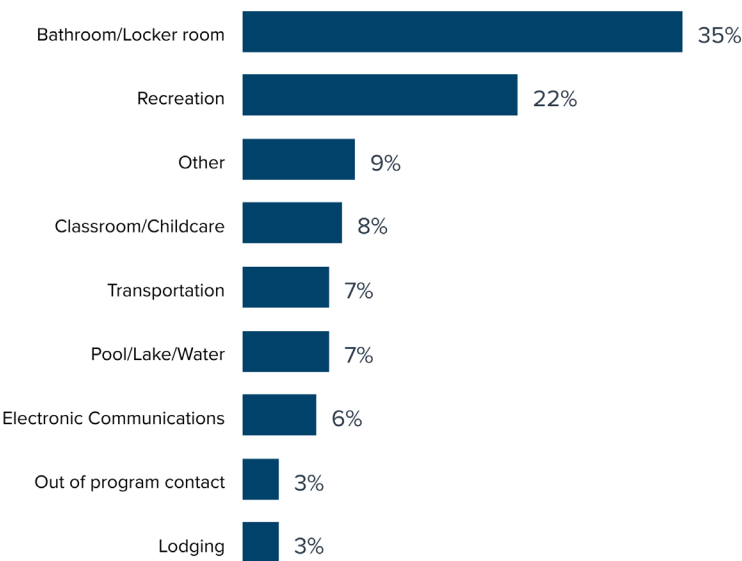
As with Adult-Youth incident data, we have tracked locations since 2018 to identify where risk is higher for Youth-Youth incidents. Figure 9 shows where incidents of all types are most likely to occur.

Not surprisingly, the highest risk location for Youth-Youth incidents is bathrooms and locker rooms (35%). These locations provide privacy and may involve stages of undressing, and they may seem harder to monitor as adults do not want to be in the same space with youths who are changing. When we break down the nature of incidents in bathrooms and locker rooms, these are the spaces where actual abuse is most likely to occur. Defining and training everyone on the rules for these spaces and having adults within earshot can help manage this high-risk location.

The second most frequent location for Youth-Youth incidents is in recreation areas - playgrounds, sports fields, basketball courts, etc. (22%). This is the most frequent location for incidents of a nonsexual nature, such as bullying or physical abuse. Keeping youths in line of sight can be a challenge in these spaces, and supervision requires defined strategies such as zone monitoring.

When we look specifically at locations of Youth-Youth incidents for 2021, the spread parallels the cumulative data except for a higher percentage of incidents in pool/lake/water (20% in 2021 compared to 7% the average since 2018). This increase is entirely speculative, but in our experience, boundaries frequently diminish during water activities, so this should always be regarded a high-risk area.

**Figure 9. Youth-Youth Incidents by Location (2018-2021)**





# HELPLINE TRENDS

## Other Notable Trends

### Time of Year

An analysis of calls related to the organization from 2013-2021 found that 43% were received in the summer months (June, July, August). This is consistent for every year we have data, and the numbers spike in July. This is expected as many organizations serve their highest numbers of youths during this time, and it is possible that by mid-summer, drift may begin to set in.

#### Tip:

One strategy to mitigate mid-summer drift is to conduct a refresher training with staff on policies and review any incidents that have occurred to discuss what can be learned. It is also a good opportunity to remind youth participants about boundaries and behavioral expectations in programming.

### Reporting to Authorities

Only 40% of callers presenting situations of abuse had already reported to authorities. Many of these callers are simply looking for a “gut check” because it is uncomfortable to make these kinds of reports, and they want to verify with an expert whether they need to make a report. Our consultants will provide the local abuse reporting hotline numbers and, in many instances, follow up with the parent organization so it can confirm reporting has occurred. This may indicate a need for additional training on mandated reporting and creating a support system for individuals when they need to discern if a situation is reportable.





# VERDICT ANALYSIS

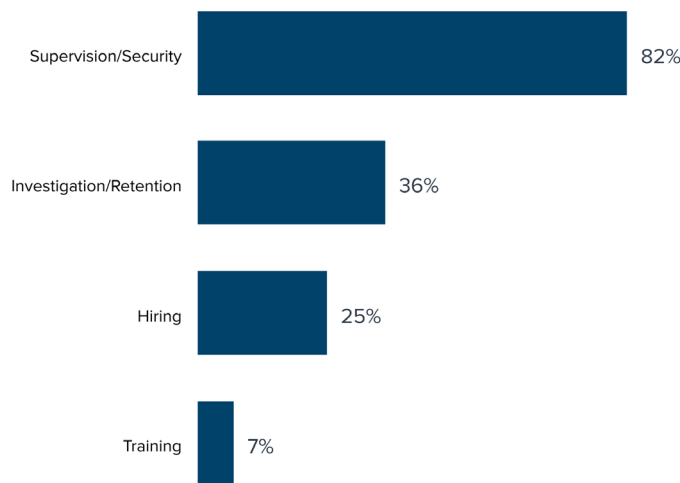
As part of our ongoing research efforts at Praesidium, our team recently analyzed data from a national database of civil cases where an organization was found at fault for the sexual abuse of someone in its care. We identified 44 cases from June 2018-February 2022 that fit these criteria ranging across several industries, including schools, youth development programs, and social and medical services.

## Institutional Faults

### Negligent Hiring

Figure 10 presents the operational areas where organizations were found at fault or considered negligent. Several cases included faults in more than one category.

**Figure 10. Institutional Faults, by Category**



Most of the cases reviewed (82%) found an institutional fault of negligent supervision and/or security. Organizations in these cases failed to supervise facilities, staff, and youths and consequently were found to have created environments where abuse was possible. Incidents occurred in public and private locations, including an aquatics center, empty classrooms, staff members’ homes, a hotel while on a mission trip, behind a building, a hospital room, and a juvenile detention facility. Abuse can happen anywhere supervision is lacking, which should create a sense of urgency for organizations to develop intentional supervision strategies and train staff to stay vigilant for red flag behaviors.

In the cases where negligent investigation or retention was found (34%), typically the organization was aware of some level of problematic behavior but may have minimized or downplayed it; in some cases, it did not report suspected criminal activity to the authorities. In one case, a high school water polo coach was accused of abuse in the prior year, but an internal investigation – which did not include interviewing the alleged victim – concluded it was not credible, and he was reinstated. He was ultimately criminally convicted of abusing at least five athletes, and the school district settled out of court for \$7.9M.



# VERDICT ANALYSIS

## Institutional Faults

### Negligent Hiring

Negligent hiring was found in 25% of the cases reviewed. While our data from Know Your Score! suggest this is an area where organizations perform well with employees, the cases reviewed where this is found suggest the need for more education and adoption of best practices in the screening of all adults who have access to consumers.

In a case that was settled for \$8.2M, a volunteer soccer coach was asked as part of his screening process to declare any felonies (he declared none) and provide consent to run a criminal background check, but a check was never actually run. Had a standard check been run, it would have revealed a domestic battery conviction which would have disqualified him from having access to youths in the program. Unfortunately, he used his position of authority to abuse a 12-year-old athlete. This is a tragic example of why organizations should always invest in criminal background screening of all adults who interact with youths or vulnerable adults – including volunteers and paraprofessionals – despite the costs and perceived limitations of the process.

Only a few cases found the organization to be negligent in its training practices (7%), yet the cases where it was established demonstrated a lack of comprehensive training content regarding recognizing red-flag behaviors and how to report them. Reporting low-level concerns is key in abuse prevention and should be foundational in any training program. An expert on one case also suggested that the organization provide training to youths and parents on Adult-Youth boundaries. It is important to note that while negligent training was the least common fault found, training plays a key role in mitigating the other faults. When staff members know how to recognize and respond to high-risk behaviors, locations, and activities, the organization is safer for everyone.

### Current Trends in Background Screening: Social Media

The rise of the social media age has introduced complex challenges to the employment process. It has become increasingly more important to monitor all available public information about a candidate when making a hiring decision. This is because a candidate may not have committed a criminal offense, but they may have exhibited potentially dangerous behaviors on their social media platforms. Social Media searches can identify problematic behaviors such as bullying, hate speech, drug use, racist or sexist speech, and violent statements or images. Being able to identify these red flags in the pre-employment phase may help prevent potentially problematic employees from joining your organization, as well as to protect your organization's overall reputation.



# VERDICT SEARCH ANALYSIS

## Institutional Costs

Organizations found to be at fault in the operational areas described above can face serious financial consequences, often limiting their short- or long-term ability to continue their mission. Of the 44 cases where faults were found, 27 were settled outside of court. The remaining cases were resolved by jury trials.

Below is a summary of the organizational payouts:

<b>Range (all cases)</b>	<b>Mean (all cases)</b>	<b>Median (all cases)</b>
<b>\$35,000-\$55,000,000</b>	<b>\$5,684,948</b>	<b>\$1,530,000</b>
<b>Average payout for cases settled out of court</b>	<b>Average payout for cases with jury verdicts</b>	
<b>\$2,500,000</b>	<b>\$10,300,000</b>	

Though no financial award can fully heal the trauma of those who have experienced abuse, the payouts for these cases may represent a small form of justice. Some cases may seem like outliers due to their high payouts, but the situations that led to these settlements and verdicts highlight the need for organizations to evaluate their internal standards across all operations for protecting those they serve.

Other notable findings in the cases reviewed:

<b>9%</b> Involved a youth offender	<b>7%</b> Involved a female offender	<b>49%</b> Victims were 13-17 years old
<b>24%</b> Victim was 6-9 years old	<b>35%</b> Victim was male	<b>65%</b> Victim was female



# CONCLUSION

Throughout the report, Praesidium has presented the analysis of a robust selection of internal and external data on abuse prevention practices. While the context for each data set may be different, it is evident that trends exist across all. For example, Praesidium's Know Your Score! and Accreditation data both show that Standard 20 (The organization's abuse risk management standards are consistently in place across all programs) and Standard 9 (The organization systematically monitors consumers), discussed above, are amongst the highest scoring areas for youth-serving organizations. Similarly, trends exist in the lowest scoring areas in both the Know Your Score! and Accreditation data. Standard 22 (The organization has a defined process for establishing and managing abuse risk management practices with third-party agreements) and Standard 23 (The organization has standards in place for its volunteers) are both in the Administrative Practices operation of the Safety Equation and address working with third parties and low-access volunteers. We continue to see organizations face and overcome challenges working with such individuals to ensure appropriate abuse prevention and risk management efforts are in place while they are interacting with or around consumers.

The federated YSO (Youth-Serving Organizations) benchmarking analysis also shows that Administrative Practices are an area where YSOs do not have requirements in place for their entities. Leadership is ultimately responsible for creating a culture of safety and that begins at the board of directors. Organizations must ensure board members are held to high standards as the governing body. Additionally, Monitoring and Supervision is an area where YSOs do not have requirements, but Praesidium's Know Your Score! data shows that many organizations are excelling in this area. Because Monitoring and Supervision are integral to preventing sexual abuse, it may be beneficial for national YSOs to add requirements for their entities in this area.

## What can we glean from all data sets?

It is important to recognize that stakeholders are continually bolstering efforts to hold organizations accountable. Creating a safe environment and culture of safety requires a lot of work but can be done one step at a time. Praesidium recommends reviewing this information in the context of your organization and choosing one or two areas where you can start improving your abuse prevention efforts. Additionally, as Praesidium continues to collect and analyze this data, we become better equipped to provide targeted abuse prevention strategies and resources.

Over the past few years, we have continued to reach new heights of public awareness of organizational sexual abuse, resulting in high demand for accountability in prevention and response efforts across industries that serve vulnerable populations. Mistakes from the past cannot be repeated, and there are plenty of best practices and resources to support a safer environment moving forward. Several high-profile cases have shed light on our overall understanding of the scope and dynamics of sexual abuse, making complacency unacceptable. Organizations that endeavor to make a lasting impact need to avoid the "compliance trap" and foster a culture of safety with a commitment to preventing abuse at its foundation.



A photograph of three children walking towards the camera in a brightly lit hallway. The child on the left is a young boy with blonde hair, wearing an orange button-down shirt and a red sash. The child in the middle is a girl with long dark hair, wearing a yellow and grey striped long-sleeved shirt and blue jeans. The child on the right is a young boy with dark skin and curly hair, wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt and blue jeans. They are all smiling and holding hands. The background shows a hallway with colorful artwork on the walls. The image is framed by a dark blue geometric design with overlapping triangles and diamonds.

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