



## **Session 11**

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## Session Eleven

**Overview:** This session begins with procedures to access local resources and referrals agency limitations and best practices for warm referrals. We will conclude with exploring how to best support male survivors.

# **Procedures To Access Local Resources and Referrals And Agency Limitations When Referrals Are Appropriate**

## **Procedures To Access Local Resources**

When you are providing direct services to a client, you will be providing emotional support as well as resources and referrals.

### **Resource and Referral Procedure**

Assess the caller/client's immediate need. For example:

- Is the person primarily in need of emotional support and peer counseling?
- Does the person state they need shelter?
- Does the person seek a restraining order?
- Does the person have questions about law enforcement?

*Tip: The primary focus for a crisis line caller is often emotional support, so do not bombard them with referrals...time to listen.*

Once assessed, provide the person with appropriate resources.

- Refer all crisis line callers to the Stand Up Placer Client Services Office. Our advocates will be able to help them more extensively than on the crisis line.
- Let the caller know all of our services are confidential, non-discriminatory and free.
- No appointment is necessary to meet with an advocate at the Client Service office.

*Tip: Know what we do! Familiarize yourself with Stand Up Placer services.*

*Tip: Familiarize yourself with the Resource Book and get a feel from the variety of resources in the area.*

## **Agency Limitations – When Referrals Are Appropriate**

There may be times with Stand Up Placer cannot meet a caller's needs. For example:

- A caller is not experiencing or has experienced interpersonal violence and has other pressing needs.
- A caller may reside out of the county and need referrals closer to where they live.
- Another agency may better handle the caller's needs. For example, the caller may need to be assessed by Behavioral Health or in need of substance dependency recovery options.

*Tip: If you assess the caller may be helped by other agencies more effectively, listen first and then refer.*

# Best Practices and Strategies For Warm Referrals and Community Referrals

Referrals can be categorized as cold and warm.

Since we work with clients with complex needs, we may need to refer them to another agency in addition to the Stand Up Placer services we provide.

## Cold Referrals

A cold referral means providing the client with contact information about another agency or services with the encouragement and expectation that the client will contact directly. This would entail providing the client with a phone number or website of the agency or service.

## Warm Referrals

A warm referral is defined as contacting another agency or service on the client's behalf and may include the following:

- Speaking directly to the service provider you are referring the client to and checking it is appropriate for them.
- Introducing yourself and the client to the service provider.
- Setting up joint meetings with the person and the new service for initial appointments.
- Following up with the service provider to see how the referral is working out.

## Stand Up Placer Crisis Line

On the crisis line, you will primarily be providing warm referrals to our agency. For example, information about our support groups, the TRO process, etc.

Depending on the client's needs, it might be appropriate for you to provide the caller/client with referrals to outside resources. Keep in mind: you can only contact an outside agency on behalf of a client if you have written consent.

*To make your referrals "warmer", here are some tips:*

- Know our local resources: Utilizing our resource referral list, feel free to call any of the agencies directly. Ask about the services they provide and other details. For example, who is the best contact person there for clients experiencing domestic violence and/or sexual assault?
- Visit agencies directly and get a "feel" for how they operate. You can use this information to reassure the caller/client. Being able to provide details can be very comforting to a caller/client and may increase the likelihood they will make contact.

## Awareness of Male Survivors



### About Men, Boys And Sexual Assault:

- Sexual assault and abuse can happen to anyone, no matter their age, sexual orientation, or gender identity.
- **Researchers estimate that at least 1 in 6 men have had unwanted sexual experiences, including abuse and assault.** This statistic is supported by solid scientific research, including a study conducted by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, and is likely an underestimate of the actual prevalence.
- Men and boys who have been sexually assaulted or abused may have many of the same feelings and reactions as other survivors of sexual assault, but they may also face some additional challenges because of social attitudes and stereotypes about men and masculinity.
- Perpetrators of sexual assault against men and boys can be male or female, any sexual orientation, or age, and they can have any relationship to the victim. Like all perpetrators, they might use physical force or psychological and emotional coercion tactics. The boys are not “lucky,” but exploited and harmed.
- If a boy liked the attention he was getting, got sexually aroused during abuse, or even sometimes wanted the attention or sexual contact, this does not mean he wanted or liked being manipulated or abused, or that any part of what happened, in any way, was his responsibility or fault.
- Whether he is gay, straight or bisexual, their sexual orientation is neither the cause nor the result of sexual abuse. By focusing on the abusive nature of sexual

abuse rather than the sexual aspects of the interaction, it becomes easier to understand that sexual abuse has nothing to do with a boy's sexual orientation.

## Myths and Facts

### MYTH 1: Boys can't be sexually abused.

**FACT: Boys and men can be sexually used or abused, and it has nothing to do with how masculine they are.**

*Everyone absorbs the myth that males aren't victims, to some extent. It's central to masculine gender socialization, and boys pick up on it very early in life. This myth implies that a boy or man who has been sexually used or abused will never be a "real man." Our society expects males to be able to protect themselves. Successful men are depicted as never being vulnerable, either physically or emotionally.*

*Whether you agree with that definition of masculinity or not, boys are not men. They are children. They are weaker and more vulnerable than those who sexually abuse or exploit them – who use their greater size, strength and knowledge to manipulate or coerce boys into unwanted sexual experiences and staying silent. This is usually done from a position of authority (e.g., coach, teacher, religious leader) or status (e.g. older cousin, admired athlete, social leader), using whatever means are available to reduce resistance, such as attention, special privileges, money or other gifts, promises or bribes, even outright threats.*

### MYTH 2: It was his fault, especially if he got aroused.

**FACT: If a boy liked the attention he was getting, or got sexually aroused during the abuse, or even sometimes wanted the attention or sexual contact, this does not mean he wanted or liked being manipulated or abused, or that any part of what happened, in any way, was his responsibility or fault.**

*Many boys and men believe this myth and feel lots of guilt and shame because they got physically aroused during the abuse. It is important to understand that males can respond to sexual stimulation with an erection or even an orgasm – even in sexual situations that are traumatic or painful. That's just how male bodies and brains work. Those who sexually use and abuse boys know this. They often attempt to maintain secrecy, and to keep the abuse going, by telling the child that his sexual response shows he was a willing participant and complicit in the abuse. "You wanted it. You liked it," they say.*

*But that doesn't make it true. Boys are not seeking to be sexually abused or exploited. They can, however, be manipulated into experiences they do not like, or even understand, at the time.*

*There are many situations where a boy, after being gradually manipulated with attention, affection and gifts, feels like he wants such attention and sexual experiences. In an otherwise lonely life (for example, one lacking in parental attention or affection – even for a brief period), the attention and pleasure of sexual contact from someone the boy admires can feel good.*

*But in reality, it's still about a boy who was vulnerable to manipulation. It's still about a boy who was betrayed by someone who selfishly exploited the boy's needs for attention and affection to use him sexually.*

### **MYTH 3: Sexual Abuse is less harmful to boys than girls.**

**FACT: Sexual abuse and assault harms boys/men and girls/women in ways that are similar and different, but equally harmful.**

*Most studies show that the long-term effects of sexual abuse and assault can be quite damaging for both males and females. One large study, conducted by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, found that the sexual abuse of boys was more likely to involve penetration of some kind, which is associated with greater psychological harm.*

*The harm caused by sexual abuse or assault mostly depends on things not determined by gender, including: the abuser's identity, the duration of the abuse, whether the child told anyone at the time, and if so, whether the child was believed and helped.*

*Many boys suffer harm because adults who could believe them and help are reluctant, or refuse, to acknowledge what happened and the harm it caused. This increases the harm, especially the shame felt by boys and men, and leads many to believe they have to "tough it out" on their own. And that, of course, makes it harder to seek needed help in the midst of the abuse, or even years later when help is still needed.*

### **MYTH 4: Only gay men sexually abuse.**

**FACT: Boys can be sexually abused by both straight and gay men and women. Sexual abuse is the result of abusive behavior that takes advantage of a child's vulnerability and is in no way related to the sexual orientation of the abusive person.**

*Studies about this question suggest that men who have sexually abused a boy most often identify as heterosexual and often are involved in adult heterosexual relationships at the time of abusive interaction. There is no indication that a gay man is more likely to engage in sexually abusive behavior than a straight man and some studies even suggest it is less likely. But sexual abuse is not a sexual "relationship," – it's an assault. The sexual orientation of the abusive person is not really relevant to the abusive interaction. A man who sexually abuses or exploits boys is not engaging in a homosexual interaction – any more than men who sexually abuse or exploit girls are engaging in heterosexual behavior. He is a deeply confused individual who, for various reasons, desires to sexually use or abuse a child, and has acted on that desire.*

### **MYTH 5: Being a male survivor means you're gay.**

**FACT: Whether he is gay, straight or bisexual, a boy's sexual orientation is neither the cause nor the result of sexual abuse. By focusing on the abusive nature of sexual abuse rather than the sexual aspects of the interaction, it becomes easier to understand that sexual abuse has nothing to do with a boy's sexual orientation.**

*There are different theories about how sexual orientation develops, but experts in human sexuality do not believe that sexual abuse or premature sexual experiences play a significant role. There is no good evidence that someone can “make” another person be homosexual or heterosexual. Sexual orientation is a complex issue and there is no single answer or theory that explains why someone identifies himself as homosexual, heterosexual or bi-sexual.*

*It is common, however, for boys and men who have been abused to express confusion about their sexual identity and orientation, whether they identify as straight, gay or bi-sexual. Some guys who identify as heterosexual, fear that, due to their experiences as boys, they must “really” be homosexual. They may believe this would mean that they can’t be a “real man,” as defined by the larger society. Even men who clearly identify as heterosexual, and men who project very traditional heterosexual traits, may fear that others will “find them out” as gay or not real men. Men who identify as gay or bi-sexual may wonder if their sexual orientation was influenced in any way by the abusive experience or may even be the cause of their orientation.*

*Also, many boys abused by males wonder if something about them sexually attracted the person who abused them and will unknowingly attract other males who will misuse them. While these are understandable fears, they are not true. One of the great tragedies of childhood sexual abuse is how it robs a person’s natural right to discover his own sexuality in his own time.*

*It is very important to remember that abuse arises from the abusive persons’ failure to develop and maintain healthy adult sexual relationships, and his or her willingness to sexually use and abuse kids. It has nothing to do with the preferences or desires of the child who is abused, and therefore cannot determine a person’s natural sexual identity.*

### **MYTH 6: Males abused by females “got lucky”.**

**FACT: Girls and women can sexually abuse or assault boys and men. The boys and men are not “lucky” but exploited and harmed.**

*This myth, like several of the others, comes from the image of masculinity that boys learn from very early. It says not only that males can’t be sexually abused, but that any sexual experience with girls and women, especially older ones, is evidence that he’s a “real man.” Again, the confusion comes from focusing on the sexual aspect rather than the abusive one – the exploitation and betrayal by a more powerful, trusted or admired person (who can be a child or adult).*

*In reality, premature, coerced or otherwise abusive or exploitive sexual experiences are never positive – whether they are imposed by an older sister, sister of a friend, babysitter, neighbor, aunt, mother, or any other female in a position of power over a boy. At a minimum, they cause confusion and insecurity. They almost always harm boys’ and men’s capacities for trust and intimacy.*

*A gay man who experienced sexual arousal when abused by a female may wonder whether it means that he is actually straight or wonder what it means that he was chosen by a woman or older girl.*

*Being sexually used or abused, whether by males or females, can cause a variety of other emotional and psychological problems. However, boys and men often don't recognize the connections between what happened and their later problems. To be used as a sexual object by a more powerful person, male or female, is never a good thing, and can cause lasting harm.*

### **MYTH 7: Male survivors will abuse others.**

**FACT: Most boys and men who are sexually abused or assaulted will not go on to sexually abuse or assault others.**

*This myth is especially dangerous because it can create terrible fear in boys and men. They may not only fear becoming abusers themselves, but that others will find out they were abused and believe they're a danger to children. Sadly, boys and men who tell of being sexually abused often are viewed more as potential perpetrators than as guys who need support.*

*While it is true that many (though by no means all) who sexually abuse children have histories of sexual abuse, it is NOT true that most boys who are sexually abused go on to sexually abuse others. The majority of boys do not go on to become sexually abusive as adolescents or adults; even those who do perpetrate as teenagers, if they get help when they're young, usually don't abuse children when they become adults.*

**These are myths that everyone absorbs growing up, and continues to hear as adults, usually without even thinking about it. So of course, some boys and men will, at least for a while, believe them and suffer the consequences.**

**So long as societies believe these myths, and teach them to children from their earliest years, many men harmed by unwanted or abusive sexual experiences won't get the recognition and help they need.**

**So long as boys or men harmed by unwanted or abusive sexual experiences believe these myths, they will feel ashamed and be less likely to seek whatever knowledge, understanding and help they need to achieve the lives they want and deserve.**

**So long as boys, men, and society as a whole believes these myths and males don't get the help they need, males are more likely to join the minority who end up hurting others.**

**And so long as these myths are believed, it increases the power of another devastating myth: that it was the child's fault. It is never the fault of the child in a sexual situation – although some people are skilled at getting those they use or abuse to take on a responsibility that is always, and only, their own.**

## Common Male Survivor Concerns

- In the most basic way, unwanted and abusive sexual experiences totally contradict the masculine ideal.
- **Male survivors may have been indoctrinated that sexual abuse or assault is not supposed to happen to males. And if it does, they are not a 'real man'.**
- **Many may fear their masculinity has been compromised, that they'll be exposed as a 'fake' – even if no one has a clue about what happened or thinks twice about their masculinity.**
- **For some men, their confidence and self-esteem can greatly depend on how 'manly' they feel and how manly they believe other men and women see them as being. For some transmen, these issues can be further compiled.**
- **If the abuse or assault involved another male (or males), they may have major doubts and confusion about whether they are gay.**  
Some of the common questions can be:
  - Did it happen because I'm (really) gay?
  - Am I gay because it happened?
  - If anyone finds out, will they think I'm gay?
  - Can I ever be a real man if I was sexual with another male?
- **For cisgender straight men, they may doubt that they are 'really' heterosexual.**
- **For gay and bisexual men, they may wonder if their attraction to men was caused by their sexual assault or abuse.**

Adapted from and provided courtesy by the following sources:

*Sexual Assault of Men and Boys*. Accessed 3-28-20 from <https://www.rainn.org/articles/sexual-assault-men-and-boys>.

*The 1 in 6 Statistic*. Accessed 3-28-20 from <https://1in6.org/get-information/the-1-in-6-statistic/>

*Myth and Facts*. Accessed 4-28-24 from <https://1in6.org/myths/>