



Adult Responsibility Project

### Summary

The Adult Responsibility Project provides empirically informed, primary prevention training to adult audiences. Though adults want children to be safe, they may not always know how to prevent child sexual abuse. Research indicates that adults who are trained can better provide a safe environment, free from sexual abuse, for children. The Adult Responsibility Project is a series of eight trauma informed trainings. Each training promotes protective factors that are indicated by research and engages adult responsibility to protect children. Topics range from the basics of prevention, fostering healthy sexual development in children, brain development and teaching children consent, identifying grooming tactics and intervening, implementing online safety practices for youth, and more. These trainings are delivered virtually in a discussion-based, interactive format.

### Target population

The Adult Responsibility Project is for adult audiences. These trainings are useful for infant through after-school teachers, educators, social workers, volunteers for children, mentors, coaches, professionals in many fields, parents, caregivers, grandparents, foster parents, and more.

Some participants attend to fulfil mandatory child sexual abuse education that some statutes require for specific professions. Parents often learn about the trainings from sources such as schools, childcare centers, or by search engines. Some trainings that are closed to the public are held for the staff of organizations. Other trainings are open to the public. Attendees benefit from learning from other attendees with different lived experiences, so mixed groups, some professionals and some parents / caregivers are quite productive.

### Delivery organisation

Prevent Child Abuse Vermont is a not-for-profit organization that began as Parents Anonymous in 1976. The mission is "Prevent Child Abuse Vermont promotes and supports healthy relationships within families, schools and communities to eliminate child abuse." This is accomplished through three departmental focuses: a) Family Support Programs b) Safe Environments for Infants and Toddlers and c) Child Sexual Abuse Prevention.

The Family Support Program has been utilizing the Nurturing Program for Parents and Children (ages 4-12) and has carried out more than 650 Nurturing Programs. PCAVT began working with incarcerated parents from the corrections system in 1998. We carried out Circle of Parents groups, Nurturing Parenting Programs for Fathers' and Nurturing Parenting Programs for Parents in Recovery from Substance Abuse in prisons. The goals of the program are to increase the likelihood of family reunification after release whenever appropriate, reduce recidivism, support family nurturing skills, and create the framework for healthy parent, child and partner relationships.

The Safe Environments for Infants and Toddlers program began in 1997, with the Shaken Baby Syndrome/Abusive Head Trauma Prevention program. This program teaches parents, childcare providers,

and medical professionals the facts and consequences of Shaken Baby Syndrome along with safe ways of comforting a crying infant and managing parental stress. This department also provides educational materials to new parents about safe sleep practices to reduce risk. Training to increase detection of physical abuse by training mandated reporters and community members is another prevention strategy of this department.

The Child Sexual Abuse Prevention department has three focuses a) Healthy Relationships Project (school-based prevention) b) Adult Responsibility Project (adult-focused training), and c) Training trainers in both the Healthy Relationships Project and the Adult Responsibility Project. The Healthy Relationships Project began in the early 1990s and is updated to keep pace with advances in the field. Technology safety was added to the program in 2008 in response to growing risks of technology-facilitated child exploitation and peer-to-peer aggressive behaviors among youth. With collaboration from generous partners, the program has established a positive approach emphasizing empathy among youth, adult involvement, and community engagement. The Adult Responsibility Project has eight topics currently with content ranging from how to nurture healthy sexual development in children to how to identify and intervene to protect children from groomers. Technology safety is another important topic that is covered to prepare adults to keep children safe in digital environments.

### Mode and context of delivery

These trainings are delivered through live, interactive, discussion-based events held virtually.

### Level/Nature of staff expertise required (e.g. professional background)

All Prevent Child Abuse Vermont Facilitators have specialized degrees and training in child sexual abuse prevention. The Director of Child Sexual Abuse Prevention, Dr. Marcie Hambrick, holds a Ph.D. from Georgia State University in Sociology as well as a Master of Social Work from Florida State University. She has 13 years of experience working in child abuse prevention, five years working as a therapist for foster care youth and at-risk adults, and has taught at three different colleges. Senior Trainer, Kirstie Grant, holds the Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice and a master's Level Certificate in Mediation and Applied Conflict Studies, both from Champlain College. She has experience providing specialized mental health services for an investigative unit of child protective services. Trainer Joy Kitchell has a Master of Education degree from Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts and a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education. She has experience as the Director of a Child Advocacy Center, has taught at two colleges, as well as having been an Elementary Principal and Educator.

### Intensity/extent of engagement with target group(s)

Each training is a discrete 2-hour training. A person could choose to attend only one training or to attend them all.

### Description of intervention

Each training is interactive and discussion-based, offered virtually, and is trauma informed.

**Everything Everyone Needs to Know to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse** - Participants in this training will: a) learn interactive tools that work to keep children safe from sexual abuse b) learn what grooming is and ways to respond to protect children c) discover how to talk to children at different developmental stages about healthy behaviors d) determine how to respond to incidents of potential child sexual abuse (including understanding the mandated reporter expectations in your state).

**TECHNICOOOL: Keeping Kids Safe on the Internet** - Participants in this training will: a) learn the digital risks for children and strategize ways to keep children and youth safe in digital environments and b) learn effective strategies for dealing with children exhibiting concerning digital behaviors.

**Overcoming Barriers to Protecting Children from Sexual Abuse** - Participants will: a) distinguish healthy behaviors from boundary violations and pre-offending behaviors; and b) practice directly addressing concerning behaviors.

**Nurturing Healthy Sexual Development** - Participants will: a) summarize healthy sexual development in children at different developmental stages; and b) give examples of how to nurture healthy sexual development in children.

**Understanding and Responding to the Sexual Behaviors of Children** - In this training participants will: a) understand the skills involved in respecting consent b) learn the developmental connections between childhood empathy and adult actions c) learn brain science findings on empathy and the optimal developmental window to acquire it d) learn about primary prevention strategies beginning in early childhood to prevent child sexual abuse and perpetration.

**Understanding and Responding to the Sexual Behaviors of Adolescents** - In this training participants will learn to: a) be able to distinguish between expected, problematic, and abusive behaviors of adolescents b) know the risk factors and protective factors associated with harmful sexual behaviors in adolescents c) be prepared to respond to prevent harmful sexual behaviors in adolescents and to be proactive when these behaviors are observed.

**Brain Development and Learning Consent During Childhood** - In this training participants will: a) understand the skills involved in respecting consent b) learn the developmental connections between childhood empathy and adult actions c) learn brain science findings on empathy and the optimal developmental window to acquire it d) learn about primary prevention strategies beginning in early childhood to prevent child sexual abuse and perpetration.

**Nurturing, Valuing, and Protecting LGBTQIA+ Youth** – Participants will: a) discuss ways to nurture the formation of gender identity b) examine why LGBTQIA+ youth may be at an increased risk of experiencing child sexual abuse c) learn primary prevention skills with LGBTQIA+ youth in mind.

### Evaluation

Evaluation results collected by Prevent Child Abuse Vermont (PCAVT) show improvement in knowledge and skills as well as satisfaction with the trainings:

[Everything Everyone Needs to Know to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse](#)

[TECHNICOOOL: Keeping Kids Safe on the Internet](#)

[Overcoming Barriers to Protecting Children from Sexual Abuse](#)

[Nurturing Healthy Sexual Development](#)

[Understanding and Responding to the Sexual Behaviors of Children](#)

[Understanding and Responding to the Sexual Behaviors of Adolescents](#)

[Brain Development and Learning Consent During Childhood](#)

[Nurturing, Valuing, and Protecting LGBTQIA+ Youth](#)

### References

[Empirical Basis and Evaluation Results for the Adult Responsibility Project](#)

### Contact details

For more information or to sign up to train as a Facilitator, please contact Marcie Hambrick, PhD, MSW [mhambrick@pcavt.org](mailto:mhambrick@pcavt.org) or visit our website [www.pcavt.org](http://www.pcavt.org) or phone us (+1) 802-229-5724.