

INSIGHT

Personal Safety Australia Newsletter

Dec 07 – Jan 08

FEATURES

2007 PSA Update

**Surviving Christmas
Shopping Chaos**

The REAL Risk to Boys:
Child protection and
empowerment series No.3

OUR MISSION

Personal Safety Australia is a Brisbane-based personal safety consultancy with a mission to equip, empower and inspire individuals, organisations and their clients to maximise their safety, enhance their wellbeing and advocate for the safety and wellbeing of children and other vulnerable groups.

OUR COMMITMENT

As part of *Personal Safety Australia's* commitment to equipping, empowering and inspiring those most vulnerable, 10% of all income is donated to charities supporting children living in extreme poverty.



Merry Christmas!

Wishing all *Insight* subscribers an exceptionally happy and healthy Christmas and New Year. We hope 2007 has been a successful year for you and that you enjoy this festive season. If, like most people, you find this time of year somewhat stressful, check out 'Surviving the Christmas Madness' article on p.2.

2007 has been a very productive year for Personal Safety Australia (PSA). Our highlights include:

In January PSA committed to donating 10% of *all* income to charities supporting children living in extreme poverty. Since this time we have also become a **UNICEF Champion for Children**, assisting UNICEF's development programs in 156 countries and territories with the establishment of schools, clean water supplies and the protection, survival, health and well-being of children.

Several new PSA services have been developed this year including:

Empowering Children to Stay Safe Workshop: This two hour workshop is highly recommended for all parents, teachers and other professionals working with children. It focuses on the essential safety messages for children and young people to maintain their safety, while providing an awareness of risks and indicators of abuse. Participants are alerted to a number of time-honoured 'safety' messages and practices that can place a child in harm. A range of supportive strategies are also shared to ensure children receive a loving and safe upbringing. Participant comments include: 'I am relieved to know what I should be telling my kids to keep them safe'; 'Excellent. Learnt so much'; 'I'll be pushing this at my P & C.'

Dealing with Difficult and Aggressive Clients Awareness Sessions:

Due to popular demand, the one day workshop has been condensed into a 2 – 3 hour awareness session. Participants are provided with an awareness of threat assessment, communication and problem-solving skills to assist them to maintain their personal composure, safety and wellbeing and to provide an excellent standard of customer service when dealing with difficult and aggressive clients. This session has been particularly popular with those working in community health, family day care and child care settings and custom-made to include organisational policy, procedures and work environment considerations. Participant comments include: 'Overall one of the best in-services we have had'; 'Great workshop – enjoyable and educational'.

Personal Safety Strategies Workshop: This one day workshop provides participants with a range of practical preventative and responsive strategies to maximise their safety and enhance their wellbeing in any situation. It includes a range of group activities, role plays, brainstorming, discussions, demonstrations and practicing physical self defence techniques to ensure participants possess a clear understanding of concepts and develop essential safety skills. This workshop has been most popular with those working in community health and Year 12 students.

OUR SERVICES

Children's Safety:

Empowering Children to Stay Safe Workshops:

Equipping parents, carers and those working with children with key information to empower and maximise the safety of children. Topics include: awareness of risks; indicators of abuse; and essential safety and empowerment messages.

Protective Behaviours Workshops and Awareness Sessions:

Equipping participants with communication, problem-solving and networking skills to relay to their children and clients to enable them to feel safe and to take effective action in any threatening situation.

Recognising and Reporting Child Abuse Workshops:

Increasing awareness and enhancing understanding of the surrounding issues to enable participants to recognise and report child abuse and to implement preventative measures to protect children in their care.

Child Protection Policy Development: Maximising the safety of children in care and providing a supportive work environment for staff and volunteers by implementing policies and procedures that: minimise access for child abuse offenders; and deal appropriately with abuse or suspicion of abuse that may occur.

Participant comments include: 'Very enlightening'; 'It was so much fun learning how to keep yourself safe.'; 'I'm sure I will use these strategies throughout my life'; 'I learnt a lot'; 'The workshop taught me a lot of new things and cleared up some myths about self defence'; 'Fun and interesting'; 'Best and most appropriate training we have done'; 'A fantastic session - personally and professionally'.

2008 Goals:

PSA is currently undertaking a number of other exciting ventures which we look forward to pursuing in 2008:

Children's Safety Book: This interactive book has been designed to be read by lower to middle primary school students with their parent/carer or teacher. It includes fundamental children's safety concepts, a range of activities enabling the practical application of safety concepts, a quiz, and notes for parents and teachers. Look out for its release in 2008!

Children's Safety Program for Schools: Key components of this initiative, based on CMC recommendations and child protection experts input, include: progressive, developmentally-appropriate content for prep – year 12 students; user-friendly lesson plans and support materials to assist teachers to implement regular training sessions; a multi-systemic approach, targeting children, teachers and parents; and meeting the needs for both boys and girls, appreciating gender differences and subsequent content and delivery requirements. This initiative is a longer term prospect requiring significant input from a broad range of parties. If you are interested in becoming involved, please contact us.

Non-Profit Children's Safety Organisation: PSA is in the process of establishing a non-profit organisation to promote the awareness of children's safety concepts to parents, carers, teachers and other professionals working with children. Look out for further details in early 2008.

Website Update: The PSA website is currently being updated to reflect our full range of services. It will also include our bi-monthly *Insight* newsletters and information on current projects. Look out for the new and improved site in early 2008!

We also look forward to providing you with more safety and wellbeing information and advice via *Insight*. If you have any suggestions for articles or personal safety questions you would like answered, please contact us.

Surviving Christmas Chaos

Most people will readily admit that Christmas Shopping is not the most relaxing or enjoyable undertaking. The lack of car parking, crowds and impossible mission of finding the perfect gift for all of our loved ones often leaves us feeling less than festive. To cope with some of the common challenges Christmas shopping brings, here are a few strategies to help you maintain your safety, sanity and festive spirit:

Car Park Rage: Try not to let your temper flare in the car park. For your safety's sake it is a better idea to surrender a sought after car park than partake in a verbal or physical argument. If someone behaves inappropriately and threatens your safety or damages your or another vehicle, note the description of the offending party and their vehicle, in particular registration number, and report the matter promptly to police.

Women's Safety:

Women's Self Defence Courses:

Incorporating practical, non-strength related, physical self defence techniques and preventative and responsive safety strategies to gain defensive skills, maximise safety and increase confidence.

Workplace Safety:

Workplace Bullying Prevention Workshops and Awareness Sessions:

Raising awareness of the workplace bully and dynamics of bullying in the workplace to address this behaviour appropriately and prevent it from occurring.

Dealing with Aggressive and Difficult Clients Workshops and Awareness Sessions:

Equipping clients in customer service roles with a range of communication and problem-solving skills to maintain their personal composure, safety and wellbeing and provide an excellent standard of customer service when dealing with difficult and aggressive clients.

Safety for Everyone: Personal Safety Workshops and Awareness Sessions:

Incorporating preventative and reactive strategies to deal with any threat to one's safety including: at home, in the workplace, out and about, in the social scene, on public transport and in the car.

Lost Children: Many parents will agree you can shop about ten times faster without young children, particularly during the pre-Christmas rush. If you aren't able to leave your brood with a trusted adult while you escape for some shopping mayhem, here are a few pointers:

If shopping with young children, write their name, your name and a contact telephone number (preferably your mobile) somewhere easily identifiable, e.g. on a makeshift ID bracelet. Ensure your child is aware of what to do should they become lost, e.g. stay where they are, go to a particular meeting place or approach a shopkeeper/the help desk.

For older children who are able to be left to their own devices while you shop, clearly outline when and where to meet. Mobile phones are the greatest portable safety invention of our time, so if you can, make the most of them to monitor your charges.

Other **general strategies** include:

- Try to shop during quiet times, which become less frequent as the 25th approaches;
- If you have an enormous shopping list, try not to leave it for the one shop. Instead break it up over several trips;
- Research what you want and where you can get it before you arrive (e.g. from catalogues);
- Make the most of internet shopping, which saves much of the stress of shopping;
- Shop with a list and plan your expedition to avoid returning to Target for a fourth time to collect yet another forgotten item;
- Reward yourself with regular rest, toilet and snack breaks. It is handy to have some nutritious snacks and water on hand to keep your energy levels up.
- Avoid carrying ridiculous amounts of shopping with you by using a trolley or periodically returning bags to the car.

If it's all getting too much and your temper and stress are getting the better of you, try some calming techniques such as sitting down, focusing on your breathing and using positive self talk 'I can do this. I am in control'. If that doesn't help, it's probably time to call it a day and head home.

Above all, remember this is a special time of year. Try to enjoy it and, before you strangle the person holding you up at the checkout, remember the words of Helen Steiner Rice, 'Bless us Lord this Christmas, with quietness of mind. Teach us to be patient and always to be kind.' Or you might be more inclined to agree with Grace Kriley who once said, 'One good thing about Christmas shopping is that it toughens you for the January sales'.

CHILD PROTECTION AND EMPOWERMENT SERIES:

The REAL Risk to Boys

Australian child protection experts agree that boys are disadvantaged because parents, teachers and other professionals working with children do not realise their vulnerability to child sexual abuse. As a result greater freedom and independence is often granted to boys but there is a general failure to also equip them with the safety knowledge they require to effectively respond to sexual abuse. Professors Freda Briggs and Russell Hawkins have outlined a number of reasons for, and repercussions of, this fact in

Christmas Words of Wisdom

'Blessed is the season which
engages the whole world in
a conspiracy of love'

Hamilton Wright Mabie

'Christmas gift suggestions:
To your enemy, forgiveness
To an opponent, tolerance
To a customer, service
To all, charity
To every child, a good
example
To yourself, respect'

Oren Anold

The best of all gifts around
any Christmas tree: the
presence of a happy family
all wrapped up in each
other.

Burton Hillis

What do you call people
who are afraid of Santa
Claus?

Claustrophobic

Unknown



their book *Child Protection* (1997). This article provides an outline of their argument. An acknowledged Australian statistic is that 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 7 boys will be the victim of sexual abuse before they reach 18 years of age. However many child protection experts agree that the risk to boys has been grossly underestimated due to boys' failure to report abuse for a number of reasons. These include:

- Boys believe they must be self-sufficient, brave and strong;
- Boys are most frequently molested by members of their own sex. When boys are old enough to understand that what is happening is wrong, they are aware of the taboo of homosexuality. They assume they were chosen because they are gay and anxiety about their own sexuality silences them;
- Sexual abuse by men is presented as normal male behaviour;
- Abuse of boys by females (approx. one third of abuse) is often not regarded as abuse, but as a beneficial, educational experience;
- Boys often accept responsibility for the abuse because, even when they are unwilling participants, their bodies respond sexually (i.e. they have an erection);
- When the sex was non-violent or in the context of affection and attention, boys are often unwilling to blame the perpetrator;
- Boys may believe the abuse was insignificant and did them no harm. However research indicates that men who had been abused as boys and were now in jail for sexually abusing children themselves still saw no connection between their own abuse and their disastrous lives (p.123).

Because the risks to boys have been underestimated, child protection programs have focused on the needs of girls. Boys need an awareness of risks, sexuality education and an understanding of body ownership and what constitutes inappropriate behaviour.

It is estimated that a quarter of male victims become offenders. It is therefore imperative that we, as parents, schools and the community, take this problem seriously and act to break the cycle. If not, there will be an increase in the incidence of child sexual abuse from generation to generation and all of the damaging effects this abuse brings with it.

For more information contact us or refer to *Child Protection: A guide for teachers and child care professionals* (Briggs, F and Hawkins, R 1997, Allen and Unwin, Sydney).



CONTACT US

Please contact us if you:

- would like further information regarding PSA services;
- wish to subscribe or unsubscribe to *Insight*;
- have a personal safety question or topic of interest you would like included in a future edition of *Insight*.

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