

INSIGHT

Personal Safety Australia Newsletter

June - July 2007

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Practical strategies to maximise your safety

Personal Safety Australia MISSION STATEMENT

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.



WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

CHILD PROTECTION WORKSHOP LAUNCHED

Many parents comment that children don't come with an instruction manual, making the job of parenting challenging, to say the least, and often involving a lot of guess work. In our pursuit to do the best for our children's long term health and happiness we often rely on the time-honoured advice and strategies. But could we be putting our children at risk in the process?

Personal Safety Australia is excited to launch the *Empowering Children To Stay Safe Workshop* providing parents, carers and people working with children with essential information to empower children of all ages and maximise their safety.

One of the most ominous threats to our children's safety is sexual abuse, with 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 7 boys likely to experience sexual abuse before they reach 18 years (*Childwise 2006*). It is crucial that parents are aware of methods used by offenders, indicators of abuse and steps they can take to empower children, particularly when they aren't around. Armed with such information, parents and carers can minimise the known risks and the limit the effectiveness of offenders' methods.

For example, did you know that child sex offenders:

- Are mostly known to the child (approx. 90%);
- Actively seek access to children and place themselves in positions where they can obtain legitimate, unrestricted, unsupervised access to children;
- Work hard at being liked, accepted and trusted;
- Are very unlikely to have a criminal history (approx 5%);
- Target vulnerability (e.g. children who are passive; emotionally needy; have a low self esteem; naïve children with no sex education; children who are less likely to object or put up a fight);
- Adopt a grooming process to not only groom the target, but the target's parents/carers to reduce the risk of detection.

The two hour workshop includes key empowering messages that parents/carers are encouraged to relay to children in addition to a range of other strategies to maximise children's safety. The workshop also addresses the shortcomings of common messages relayed to children including 'stranger danger', which fails to account for the vast majority of abuse (90%) perpetrated by a known person.

For further information about the *Empowering Children to Stay Safe Workshop*, please contact us via details listed on p.3.

Personal Safety Australia 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:

Based on the international personal safety program, *Protective Behaviours*. 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 participants' awareness and enhancing their understanding of the dynamics of child abuse, to enable them to recognise and report 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 identify and minimise potential risks of harm.

CHILD PROTECTION WEEK: SPECIAL OFFER

National Child Protection Week 2007 commences on Fathers' Day, 2 September and runs through to 8 September. Child Protection Week provides individuals and communities with a range of opportunities to participate and contribute to the prevention of child abuse and neglect. The coordinating body, NAPCAN, the National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, challenges all Australians to make a positive difference to children's lives.

To assist organisations and community groups to meet this challenge, *Personal Safety Australia* is offering a **20% discount** on all children's safety services booked up to and including Child Protection Week. Bookings must relate to services provided before 31 December 2007, including the following:

- Empowering Children to Stay Safe Workshops;
- Protective Behaviours Awareness Sessions and Workshops;
- Recognising and Reporting Child Abuse Workshops; and
- Child Protection Policy Development.

For further information or to make a booking please contact us via the details listed on p.3.

12 STEPS TO A CHILD SAFE ORGANISATION

While the vast majority of people working with children are safe, we now know sex offenders target child related organisations as a means of approaching children and young people. *Childwise*, an Australian charity dedicated to protecting children, have just released a free booklet outlining 12 key steps to building a child safe organisation.

According to *Childwise*, a child safe organisation is committed to protecting children in its care. It understands the nature and risks of child abuse and has an open and aware culture. Through awareness and action organisations can develop and implement effective prevention strategies and policies to minimise the risk of child abuse.

Another invaluable and FREE service provided by *Childwise* to children's organisations is the 'Choose with Care Help Desk'. Help Desk staff can assist by reviewing your organisation's child protection and code of conduct policies and procedures and providing consultation and advice regarding a range of topics and situations.

The Help Desk is contactable on 1800 99 10 99 or email: lisa@childwise.net. The 12 Step Booklet is available on the *Childwise* website: www.childwise.net

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 damaging behaviour appropriately and prevent it from re-occurring.

Dealing with Aggressive and Difficult Clients Workshops:

Equipping clients in customer service roles with threat assessment, 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 Seminars:

Incorporating preventative and responsive 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.

Drink Spiking An Emerging Concern

For many people, attending cafes, nightclubs, bars and other entertainment venues is a regular part of their social routine. The increasing regularity of drink spiking is a growing concern, particularly considering the victim is often left with little or no memory of events and is vulnerable to sexual assault, rape or robbery.

The most common victims of drink spiking are young women, aged 15 – 30 years. It is also occurring more frequently in the gay and lesbian community. To reduce the likelihood of having your drink spiked:

- Take your own drinks to parties
- Avoid leaving drinks unattended
- Only accept drinks from trusted people – watch bar staff prepare your drink
- If someone offers to buy you a drink, accept it at the bar
- Avoid drinking from a container being passed around
- Watch for anyone acting suspiciously

If you start to feel very intoxicated in a disproportionate amount of time to the drinks you have consumed, your drink may have been spiked. It is vital to take immediate action to preserve your safety, such as alerting a friend, security or the bar manager. Waiting even a few minutes may put you in serious danger. You are also encouraged to seek medical attention immediately and insist on providing urine and blood samples.

If you have been physically or sexually assaulted as a result of drink spiking you can contact the police for advice or to make a report. You can also report anonymously via Crimestoppers. If you don't want to speak to the police, you can contact your local sexual assault service for support and advice.

For further information about drink spiking, contact us via the details listed below.

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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