

# SAFETY BULLETIN

**PRAESIDIUM** Our passion. Your protection.

Spotlight on Boundaries | Issue 8

## In the News...

### **Volunteer Coach Fondles Athletes**

At the end of each practice, a volunteer coach for an elite soccer program routinely had the kids “dogpile” on him. When a parent spoke with the head coach about it, the coach told her the kids really loved the attention. After the season ended, three players disclosed that the volunteer coach fondled them during the dogpiles.

### **Social Worker Embezzles from Adult with Disabilities**

A social worker at an organization that operates group homes for adults with developmental disabilities ran into a co-worker who was out having lunch with one of the residents. Her co-worker reported that she took the resident on outings to reward his good behavior, but she asked the social worker not to mention it because she didn’t want the other residents to get jealous. Three months later she was arrested for embezzling money from the resident’s bank account.

### **Teacher’s Aide Fails to Report**

A teacher’s aide noticed that the biology teacher met frequently with one of her students after school and that she sometimes gave him a ride home. The aide thought the teacher was showing favoritism but she didn’t know whether it was her place to say something about it and she didn’t really know who to go to. When the biology teacher was caught having sex with the student, the teacher’s aide came forward with her observations, but by then it was too late.



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## Safety Tips

We all have physical, emotional and behavioral boundaries. Our physical boundaries determine who can touch us, how much they can touch us, and where they can touch us.

Our emotional boundaries determine how close we feel to someone, how much time we spend with them, and the types of information we share.

Our behavioral boundaries determine what we will and will not do.

By understanding boundaries, you can spot and interrupt boundary violations before they become serious!

1. Establish clear policies about the types of physical and verbal interactions that are permissible between employees, volunteers and program participants.
2. Make sure everyone—employees, volunteers and program participants—knows your policies.

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3. Systematically respond to reports of suspicious or inappropriate behaviors or interactions or policy violations.
4. Make it easy for employees, volunteers and program participants to report their concerns; include a way for them to report anonymously.
5. Specify the types of outside contact that are permitted between employees and volunteers and program participants and what approval and documentation is required.



## Best Practices Tip

If you'd like to learn the six most common boundary violations to watch for, please send us an e-mail at [info@PraesidiumInc.com](mailto:info@PraesidiumInc.com).

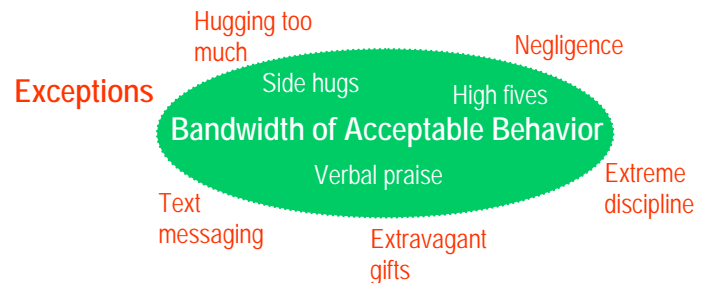
## Exception Monitoring

If you've ever received a call from your credit card company asking you to verify "exceptional charges" to your account, you understand "exception monitoring." Your credit card company has noticed something out of the ordinary—something exceptional—in your spending. You can use the principle of exception monitoring to keep your organization safe.

Here's how: first, develop standard policies that specify the types of behaviors and interactions that are acceptable. These policies define the bandwidth of acceptable behavior in your organization. Second, make certain everyone knows and understands the policies. Third, teach your employees and volunteers to report exceptions: when they see behaviors or interactions that violate the policies.

In many incidents of abuse, employees or volunteers near to the situation have observed suspicious or

inappropriate behavior or policy violations. But, they aren't quite sure what to do about it, so they do nothing. When an organization has clearly defined policies and has trained its employees and volunteers how to respond, all the observer has to do is report the policy violation. They don't have to accuse anyone of anything!



## Do Your Policies Work?

Having solid policies that define the bandwidth of acceptable behaviors allows everyone in the organization to monitor for exceptions. A Praesidium Policy Analysis will make sure your bases are covered. We'll review your policies to determine which ones work, which need fine-tuning, and which policies are missing.

To find out if your policies work, call Praesidium at 817.801.7773 **before September 1** to receive a Policy Analysis—a \$1,500 value—for just \$995.



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## About Praesidium

Praesidium is the national leader in abuse risk management offering a full range of products and services to help you protect those in your care from abuse and to preserve trust in your organization. [www.PraesidiumInc.com](http://www.PraesidiumInc.com).

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