

The Role of Educators/ Youth Workers in Preventing and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse

Author: Stelios Stylianou, Emphasys Centre



Every child has the right to be safe where he or she lives, learns and plays. While a parent may have the biggest influence on a child's life when it comes to educating about healthy sexual development and reducing the risk of sexual abuse, those who work with children in schools and youth organizations are in particularly powerful position to develop and implement policies and practices targeting the prevention of such incidents.

Firstly, there are a lot of myths about child sexual abuse, hence it is important for those working with children and youth to be adequately informed in order to be able to recognize the signs and take the appropriate action. For example, learning about age-appropriate sexual development can help educators to be sensitive to patterns of unhealthy sexual behaviour expressed by children/ youth, which might also be an indication of victimization.

Additionally, creating a safe environment in your classroom and be a trusted adult is really important, as there may be kids/ youths who are experiencing sexual abuse at their home or from someone they know. It is vital to let them know that if they are experiencing any problems, you are here for them and stress to them that secrets won't keep them safe.

The Erasmus+ project STOP aims to decrease sexual abuse and exploitation of children (9-18 years old) by offering an innovative learning methodology for youth workers and other professionals on sexual abuse prevention. The project wants to provide new approaches and tools to youth workers/ educators, based on an AR (augmented reality) game to fight child adverse experience both online and offline.

If you are an educator or a youth worker, and looking to learn more about how to prevent and protect children and youth from sexual abuse, visit our website here: <http://erasmusstop.eu/>. Here you can get access to the learning material developed, and to various tools and resources such as the AR game to help you implement such initiatives in your organization/ school.

If you would like to stay up-to-date with our activities and actions, you can also join our Facebook community @STOP child abuse ThrOugh effective training and augmented reality.