

## GUIDE TO YOUTH PROTECTION HAZARDS AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Identifying and mitigating youth protection related hazards is a core component of a youth safe organisation. Regular review of youth protection hazard profiles is important to promote a culture of continuous improvement, identify new hazards and support ongoing, appropriate management of existing youth protection hazards.

Youth protection hazards can include environmental, operational and cultural hazards. The list of hazards identified below is not intended to be exhaustive. Commanders and managers should consider potential sources of hazards to youth in the context of each Youth program/activity to identify appropriate mitigation strategies.

Hazard	Potential Sources
<b>Accidental harm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- unsafe physical environment</li> <li>- unsuitable staff, contractors or volunteers</li> <li>- inadequate or inappropriate supervision</li> <li>- improper youth-on-youth behaviour</li> <li>- unsafe arrival and departure of youth</li> <li>- failure to respond adequately to youth protection events/incidents including support to the victim, perpetrator, families and personnel</li> </ul>
<b>Physical abuse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- use of physical punishment, or physical assault such as pushing or hitting</li> </ul>
<b>Psychological / emotional abuse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- inappropriate verbal or symbolic acts such as bullying, intimidation, threats, isolating or ignoring</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- exposing youth to, or involving them in, sexual acts, direct or indirect sexual exploitation and/or grooming</li> </ul>

<b>Abuse of power</b>	- inappropriate or unethical use of power or authority to harass, bully or discriminate
<b>Exposure to prolonged trauma</b>	- inadequate support provided after a youth protection incident - support services are not well known or used - staff are not trained in trauma informed practices or respond inappropriately to victims of abuse
<b>On-line grooming</b>	- misuse of online communication channels, such as messaging applications, emails or other social media
<b>Neglect</b>	- lack of supervision, not meeting specific needs of youth, or not providing basic necessities such as food, drink, shelter or medical attention - Youth are unaware of rights and responsibilities
<b>Cultural abuse</b>	- lack of cultural respect, youth exposed to racism or other vilification

	<b>Mitigation Strategies</b>
<b>Safe environment</b>	- provide personnel with youth protection training according to their level of contact with youth - manage identified risks, including minimising situations where a youth may be unsupervised - minimise one-to-one interactions between adult personnel and youth - model acceptable youth protection behaviours to embed behavioural and cultural change - regularly assess physical environments for youth protection risks - choose buildings or spaces that are well lit, open and visible to multiple people when planning youth-related activities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- adopt a continuous improvement approach to youth protection breaches</li> </ul>
<b>Safe recruitment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- include Defence's commitment to youth protection in recruitment documentation</li> <li>- personnel obtain and maintain mandatory Working With Children / Working with Vulnerable People / Police Checks IAW Defence policy and legislation</li> <li>- youth protection-specific questions are included when interviewing and conducting reference checks for Youth-related Work roles</li> </ul>
<b>Communications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- personnel are aware of Defence's youth protection policies</li> <li>- youth are informed of their rights and responsibilities (including codes of conduct)</li> <li>- youth, their parents and other members of the community know where to find information about how Defence keeps youth safe</li> <li>- feedback and confidential complaint mechanisms are in place and accessible</li> </ul>
<b>Responding to issues/disclosures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- personnel interacting with youth are aware of the signs of abuse and know how to appropriately respond to a disclosure of abuse</li> <li>- personnel are aware of their obligation to listen to and respect youth concerns</li> <li>- personnel complete youth protection training and report all events (incidents) IAW YOUTHPOLMAN</li> <li>- personnel have access to information about services and support available to them if they need it</li> </ul>