

LECTURE 4

Health & Safety

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- **Safeguarding Legislation**
- **Staff Recruitment and DRB checks**
- **Safeguarding Children**
- **Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults**
- **Suspecting Abuse & What to Do**

Safeguarding

Although it's a very difficult subject to discuss, it is important that you understand the policies and procedures surrounding abuse, and the responsibilities of the organisation to safeguard against such incidents.

The duty of care for anyone working with children is to keep them safe from sexual, physical and emotional harm. And in terms of vulnerable adults, for clarity we are discussing any person from age 18 who receives or is in need of community care, and is unable to protect themselves from exploitation or harm.

The key aspects of any organisation's policy relating to safeguarding are as follows:

- To demonstrate appropriate conduct and behaviour at all times.
- To explain the steps that your organisation will take to keep children and young people safe and what to do when there are concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing.
- Adults must always respect the rights of everyone who participates in leisure activities.
- How staff and volunteers should respond to concerns about a child and/or young person, and how you will make sure you recruit the right people to work with children and young people.
- Adults must develop a trust-based relationship with children and vulnerable adults based on openness, honesty and respect.

The Policy Should Also Pay Attention to the Following...

Procedures In Response to Abuse Allegations

Each health club should have a policy outlining the procedures laid-out for the recording and reporting of allegations. Not everyone will feel comfortable in receiving this kind of information and it is important to remember that your role will typically be to record and report the allegation confidentially to the appropriate authority.

Specific Procedures Relating to Vulnerable Groups

The reporting procedure may differ depending upon the group of concern. If it is a child, it is likely to be reported to a different authority than a vulnerable adult.

What Legislation is There in Place for Safeguarding Purposes...?

There are lots of various pieces of legislation that are in place for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. Among them...

- **The Children Act 1989** – manages what local authorities, courts, parents, and other agencies in the UK are doing to ensure that children are safeguarded.
- **The Police Act 1997** – this act states it is a criminal offence for an employer to not undertake a background check on staff working with children or vulnerable adults. Or give a job to someone who is known to be unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults.
- **The Protection of Children Act 1999** – states that childcare organisations must make use of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in their recruitment and is intended to ensure people identified as unsuitable to work with children are prevented from gaining access to children through their work. Sponsored by the Home Office, helps employers make safer recruitment decisions.)
- **Every Child Matters and The Children Act 2004** – This act aims to maximise opportunities and minimise risk for all children and young people. The key elements are supporting families and carers, ensuring the necessary intervention takes place if needed and ensuring that people working with children are well trained.
- **The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 and 2004** – These two acts make it unlawful to discriminate against people based on disabilities in relation to employment, provision of goods, services, education and transport.
- **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006** – Provides a new vetting and barring requirement for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults from harm. This act extends to the health service and social care sector.

Staff Recruitment

The recruitment of appropriately qualified, and screened staff is vital as an initial step to ensure the safety of children and vulnerable adults. We will now discuss the background checks in more detail...

DBS/CRB Check

Safeguarding and protecting children and vulnerable adults covers many areas including sexual conduct, physical contact, social contact, communication and confidentiality. In order to ensure that staff employed and working with vulnerable groups are appropriate to do so, there exists the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), which run background checks on people prior to them working with such groups.

A DBS check encompasses a cross-reference against the background of an individual to ensure they are an appropriate candidate to work with groups who may be vulnerable.

It is likely that you will have a DBS check prior to employment. If you already have had a check, it is up to your employer if they want you to have a new one when you join their employment

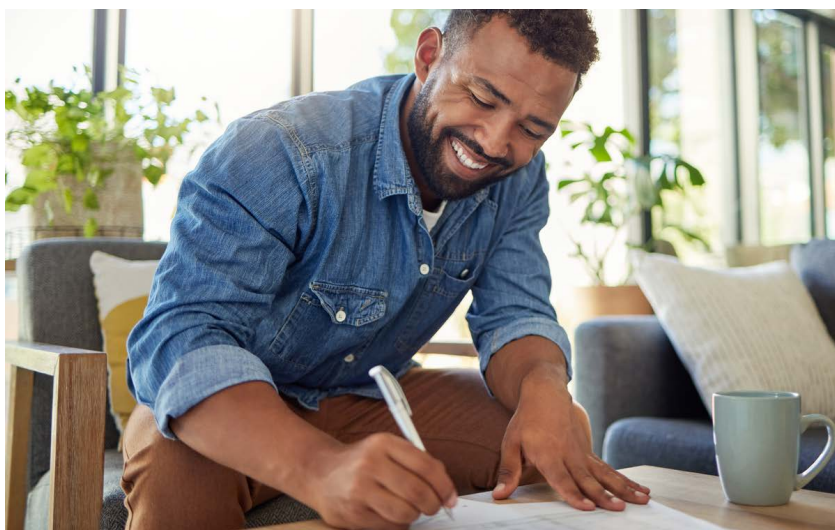
There are FOUR levels of DBS Check ...

Basic Check



A basic DBS check is for any purpose, including employment. It will contain details of convictions and conditional cautions that are unspent.

Standard Check



A standard DBS check is suitable for certain roles, including security guards. It will contain details of both spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings

Enhanced Check



An enhanced DBS check is suitable for people working with children or adults in certain circumstances such as healthcare or personal care.

It will contain the same details as a standard check and may also contain non-conviction information supplied by relevant police forces.

Barred List



Similar to the enhanced check but if the role is eligible, an employer can request that one or both of the DBS barred lists are checked in addition.

What are Your Roles and Responsibilities?

How can you best ensure the safety of vulnerable people under your care in your role as a fitness professional?

Here are a few things that will enhance how you safely operate in your role...

Uniform

Wearing a company uniform, with a name badge, will introduce the instructor as an employee to parents, carers and children, and make you recognisable and identifiable.

Follow All Rules, Policies & Procedures

Read and understand the safeguarding policy at your place of work. It is there for the safety of vulnerable parties as well as your own safety.

Working Space & Environment

If you are working in an open environment there are people seeing what is happening in your session. In the case of an allegation, you are more likely to have witnesses. If you work in an environment that is more secluded it is important always to have another person with you.

Privacy & Photography

Video and photography are a large part of the fitness industry now. It can be easy to start taking photos and videos of your sessions without thinking about the privacy of others. Ensure you have written consent from all parties (or guardians) prior to taking any photographs or videos.

Never Be Alone With A Child

This will help to make sure you can avoid allegations and have witness to your actions. False allegations or misconstrued actions can be incredibly problematic so it is important to ensure you are never in a situation where you are alone with a child or vulnerable adult.

Safeguarding Children & Recognising Abuse

Unfortunately, in your role you may be told about, or witness signs of abuse. It is a sad fact but it is a very real possibility. Being aware of the types of abuse, and the signs is important so that you are adequately prepared for what you may see.

Abuse can exist in a wide variety of forms. Typically, child abuse can be categorised as follows...

Physical

Hitting, shaking, bruising, burning and internal injuries are signs of physical abuse. Other forms include alcohol and drug provision.

Emotional

Chronic belittling, embarrassing, humiliating or ridiculing a child.

Sexual

Acts of sexual assault and exploitation of minors by parents, caregivers or strangers. This can be an isolated incident or a series of events over a period of time

Neglect

Emotional neglect - consistent failure to provide a child with appropriate support, attention and affection.

Physical neglect - failure to provide children with food, clothing, shelter or medical care.

Bullying & Harassment

Deliberate hurtful, offensive, malicious, intimidating or insulting behaviour.

What To Look For

Physical Abuse

- Unexplained bruising or injury.
- Frequent injuries.
- Subdued behaviour.
- Signs of malnutrition.
- Depression.
- Anger and outbursts.
- Scarring.
- Signs of poisoning.
- Eating disorders.

Sexual Abuse

- Pain, itching or bleeding of genital area.
- Frightened of a specific person.
- Bruising.
- Pregnancy.
- Sexually transmitted infections.
- Self-harming.
- Explicit sexual language.
- Alcohol or drug misuse.
- Changes in eating habits.
- Poor sleep or concentration.

Bullying & Harassment

- Depression and anxiety.
- Wary and suspicious of others.
- Insecurity.
- Not accepted by peers.
- Problems eating or sleeping.
- Physical injuries.
- Nervousness or lack of confidence.

Emotional Abuse

- Isolated or withdrawn behaviour.
- Insomnia.
- Self-harming.
- Change in appetite.
- Anger and aggression.
- Low self-esteem.

Neglect

- Being clingy.
- Constantly hungry.
- Depression and anxiety.
- Missing school.
- Obsessive behaviour.
- Regular illness.
- Unwashed clothes.
- Poor appearance and hygiene.
- Being aggressive.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults and Recognising Abuse

Adult abuse may differ from child abuse. Safety, recording and reporting is vital with vulnerable adults, as it is with children.

In addition to the above categories of child abuse there are also further types of abuse more related to adults. We have highlighted some of the ones you may see...

Financial

- Missing personal possessions.
- Unexplained lack of money.
- Unexplained withdrawal of funds.
- Signs of financial hardship.
- Recent changes in deeds or title to property.
- Rent arrears and eviction notices.

Sexual

- Bruising to the thighs, buttocks and upper arms.
- Bleeding, pain or itching in the genital area.
- Difficulty in walking or sitting.
- Infections, unexplained discharge, or sexually transmitted diseases.
- Pregnancy.
- Explicit sexual language.
- Self-harming.

Continued...

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- Infections, unexplained discharge, or sexually transmitted diseases.
- Pregnancy.
- Explicit sexual language.
- Self-harming.

Psychological or Emotional

- Withdrawal.
- Insomnia.
- Low self-esteem.
- Uncooperative and aggressive behaviour.
- Weight loss/gain.
- Signs of distress.
- Anger.

Domestic Violence Or Abuse

- Low self-esteem.
- Feeling that the abuse is their fault.
- Physical evidence of violence.
- Verbal abuse and humiliation.
- Fear of intervention.

Modern Slavery

- Signs of physical or emotional abuse.
- Appearing to be malnourished.
- Isolation from the community.
- Always wearing the same clothes.

Physical

- Bruising, cuts, welts, burns, loss of hair in clumps.
- Frequent injuries.
- Unexplained falls.
- Changed behaviour in the presence of a particular person.
- Signs of malnutrition.

Discriminatory Abuse

- Withdrawn and isolated.
- Anger, frustration, fear or anxiety.

Continued...

Neglect

- Poor environment.
- Poor physical condition.
- Poor hygiene.
- Malnutrition.
- Injuries.

Self-Neglect

- Poor personal hygiene.
- Unkempt appearance.
- Lack of food, clothing or shelter.
- Malnutrition.

What should you do if you suspect abuse?

This is really difficult, as you are not an expert and can't be expected to judge this easily.

You need to be aware of the signs of abuse so that you can be reasonably certain that abuse is taking place before you act.

If someone approaches you regarding abuse you should listen and then record the information. This, alongside reassurance can be the first step towards protecting them.

Possible Steps To Take

If someone is in immediate danger you should call the emergency services. If you are unsure, then you should follow your organisational procedures. This may involve talking to the person if you are able to, in order to see if there is anything you can do to help.

This may also involve reporting to a senior manager so that they may contact the relevant statutory agency for help.

There is an obligation to act but also to ensure you do so with sensitivity and care so that you protect the person.

- Listen to what is being said.
- Inform your manager of what you have been told.
- Record the information accurately.
- Report the situation to the appropriate statutory agency.
- In an emergency dial 999.

Statutory Agencies

In terms of reporting any issues, the following are some of the statutory agencies available:

- Police.
- Crown prosecution service.
- Local authority.
- Local child safeguarding services.
- National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC).
- Probation service.
- Child welfare agency.
- Childline.
- Child protection officer or appointed person.
- Social care.

Confidentiality

It goes without saying that confidentiality is of paramount importance in these instances:

- All documents must be securely stored.
- Do not involve people who do not need to be involved.
- Contact a senior manager.
- Inform anyone on a need-to-know basis only.



In Summary

Abuse of any kind is awful to consider but it is unfortunately something we must be adequately prepared to face and deal with. Hopefully this lecture will help you in the event that you are faced with any incidents.

