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Much has come to the national stage recently regarding sexual abuse.

Larry Nassar. Brett Kavanaugh. Michael Douglas. Les Moonves. Morgan Freeman. Gerard Depardieu. Cristiano Ronaldo. Asia Argento. Steve Wynn. David Copperfield. Corey Lewandowski. Travis Smiley. Donovan McNabb. The list goes on and on and these names are just the latest since our last newsletter on employment practices published in December, 2017.

The #METOO movement has rocked the country to its core and has empowered people everywhere to speak out and bring perpetrators to justice.

The recent CBS News Report on Abuse at Camps puts you squarely in the crosshairs. But that is not news to you. And you know all of the processes and procedures you go through to ensure a safe environment at your camp and we believe most all of you have the answers ready at hand to answer any inquiring parents about them. We think it is important however that you review those processes and procedures regarding sexual abuse prevention and detection.

At Sobel, we partner with the best in the business to help you in risk management issues and crisis response for your camp. One of the key players of the Sobel Camp Team is Firestorm, a nationally recognized leader in crisis management and crisis communications. They have helped many of our camps through myriad difficult issues and have provided critical decision support to our camp insureds.

We have enclosed an excerpt from an upcoming article in Camping Magazine by Suzy Loughlin of Firestorm that speaks to this very issue. Are your processes and procedures up to date? What do you need to do differently? How can you stay at the forefront of sex abuse prevention and assure your families?

As always we are here to help you in any way we can.

The Sobel Camp Team

The following information is reprinted from the upcoming Risk Management column in *Camping Magazine* authored by Suzy Rhulen Loughlin, co-founder of Firestorm Solutions.

### Think Differently

We live in times of the #METOO movement and the next chapter of reported sexual abuse spanning decades in the Catholic Church. Sexual abuse of children is your number-one exposure. Because of that, you cannot take too many precautions. It is time to think differently.

- **Hiring practices:** Interviews, reference checks, background checks. Do you conduct these annually? You should. People change. More is learned by others over time.
- **Policies, procedures, and training:** Boundaries. What is appropriate/inappropriate touching? Practice the rule of three (always two plus me). Consider new policies (e.g., no home visits or babysitting of campers).
- **Staffing assignments:** Just because your camp has always conducted operations in a certain way doesn't mean you have to in the future. For example, consider pairing male and female counselors for the youngest of children, who are the most vulnerable.
- **Anonymous reporting methodology:** Have a system that encourages staff, campers, and alumni to come forward and anonymously express concern about another person. Reports must reach someone in real time, and there must be a process for investigating and responding to each report. If you hear rumors or jokes, do not laugh them off — investigate.
- **Decisive action:** When in doubt, terminate the employee. Go with your gut. Jokes about a staff member? Take them seriously. Many a true word is spoken in jest. You can't afford to be wrong.

Managing a sexual abuse crisis is an art, not a science. Firestorm has assisted many camps in these situations and have learned many lessons. Reach out and learn some of these lessons before you have an incident at your camp.

**#yourcamptoo?** We hope not. Take steps now.

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