



UNITARIAN
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ASSOCIATION

Online RE Safety Guideline workshop

September 19, 2020

Disclaimer: This is an evolving set of guidance and this webinar may have a short-shelf life. You can get up to date guidance:

<https://www.uua.org/leadership/library/re-distance/child-safety-online-programs>

<https://www.uua.org/youth/adults-ministry/safety-guidelines/online>



[uua.org](https://www.uua.org)



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Thank you LeeAnn Williams, Annie Parker and the UU Church of
Arlington for making this happen!



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Chalice Lighting





Find the chat and say hello!



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What We'll Do Today:

- Concrete guidance from the UUA
- Importance of culture shift
- Nuances that UUA staff observe aren't being heard





What We Won't Do:

- Training on every technical detail and setting
- Decide what is right for your congregation for you





Nuance!

- UUA guidance is guidance.
 - Some guidance we believe in very strongly
 - Some guidance is what we do in our programs
- Local congregation implementation is also discernment about what's best for you
- A culture of safety is more critical than rules
 - Transparency, inclusivity, consent, advocacy





Challenges

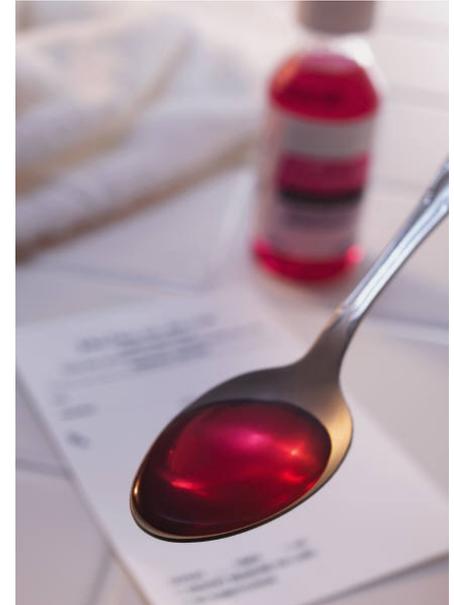
- Nothing is perfectly safe, but isolation is life-threatening
- If we avoid platforms that aren't safe, do we become irrelevant in our teens' lives?
- We can't supervise across the internet
- Parents/guardians have a very hard time supervising their children's online activities
- Covenant is as important as ever, but harder to talk about





Antidotes: Equip our children

- Transparency: children and parents/guardians should understand what the safety expectations are, especially what safe adult behavior is and is not
- Parents/guardians need support to have ongoing conversations about internet safety with their children.
- Parents/guardians need to know what grooming looks like
- Set high expectations and document when something falls short





Best practices before

- Have a parent/guardian permission form
- Hold an orientation
- Be clear about parent/guardian responsibilities to supervise
- Be clear about what technology you're using
- Be clear about the adults' role in the space
- Clearly communicate to parents the safe congregations expectations of adult leaders
- And who to go to when they have a concern





Tech tips!

signNow

SignNow.com – Legal online signatures

\$8/mo or \$39/yr

Upload your form and easily create a template for one or more signers. Invite to sign by email.

Zapier.com – integrates everything.

Use a google form or wufoo entry to start a workflow that automatically creates a document invitation on SignNow.

100 free tasks a month

zapier



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Information for Children and Youth

- Be clear why the rules are the rules. Let children and youth ask questions and propose other solutions
- Hold a conversation about what a safe adult looks like. Ask them. And tell them what the congregation's expectations are
- Tell them who to go to if an adult's behavior is strange or uncomfortable
- Tell them who to go to if *anything* is uncomfortable
- Work to create a culture where the children and youth will name uncomfortable things and trust you to help them feel safe and trust that their peers are safe.





Covenant: Vital to a safer program

- Center consent
- Include how the technology is used
- Talk about side chats during programming
- How is contact information shared, what are the expectations between youth about contact?
- Camera on/off with inclusion for neurodiversity and anxiety

This is never a one time conversation! There are lots of ways to do it, but especially with evolving technology use, you'll need to come back to it.





Recommended Policies

- Background check all adult leaders; require at least 6 months of participation in the congregation
- Two or more unrelated adults for every session including breakout rooms
- Adults should not send 1:1 messages to minors

Children and youth need to know this

But it is the adult's responsibility to redirect a message to an appropriate channel

Hint: have a group text solution for your youth group so they can easily send a message without the adults struggling to avoid 1:1 messages.





Perfection is not consistently possible

- Two adult rule – plan for imperfection
 - Have three adults if possible
 - Or have a backup adult on call in case
 - Have one or two parents stay temporarily
- One to one messages will happen
 - Adults must redirect
 - Have a process for volunteers to alert staff that this happened
 - Document any significant exchanges
 - Screenshots can be taken
 - If staff need to do 1:1 pastoral care by video, the session can be recorded and saved



Instead of expecting perfection, have high standards and document when things fall through.





Tech tips: Google forms makes a great incident report form submission option

CER Youth Event Incident Report

Incident report form for volunteers and staff at Central East Regional Youth Events. Final incident report for insurance purposes will be prepared by CER staff.

* Required

Email address *

Your email

Your Name and Position *

Your answer



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Adult volunteers: you need to know

- The two person policy protects you
- Following policies protects you
- Documenting protects you
- Over-communicate to the staff
- Situations that need communication:
 - A youth wants to talk to you outside of the program
 - A youth's parent wants you to talk with them
 - A youth friends you on Facebook
- Remember your behavior not only needs to be above board—but look above board.





Adult volunteers: Ask these questions!

- Who do I contact if I believe a child or youth is facing an emergency?
- What if I can't get hold of them?
- When should I call the parents?
- When should I call 911?
- What do I do if a child or youth contacts me for emergency pastoral care?
- Who do I contact if I suspect child abuse? Or if a youth discloses abuse?
- What do I need to report?

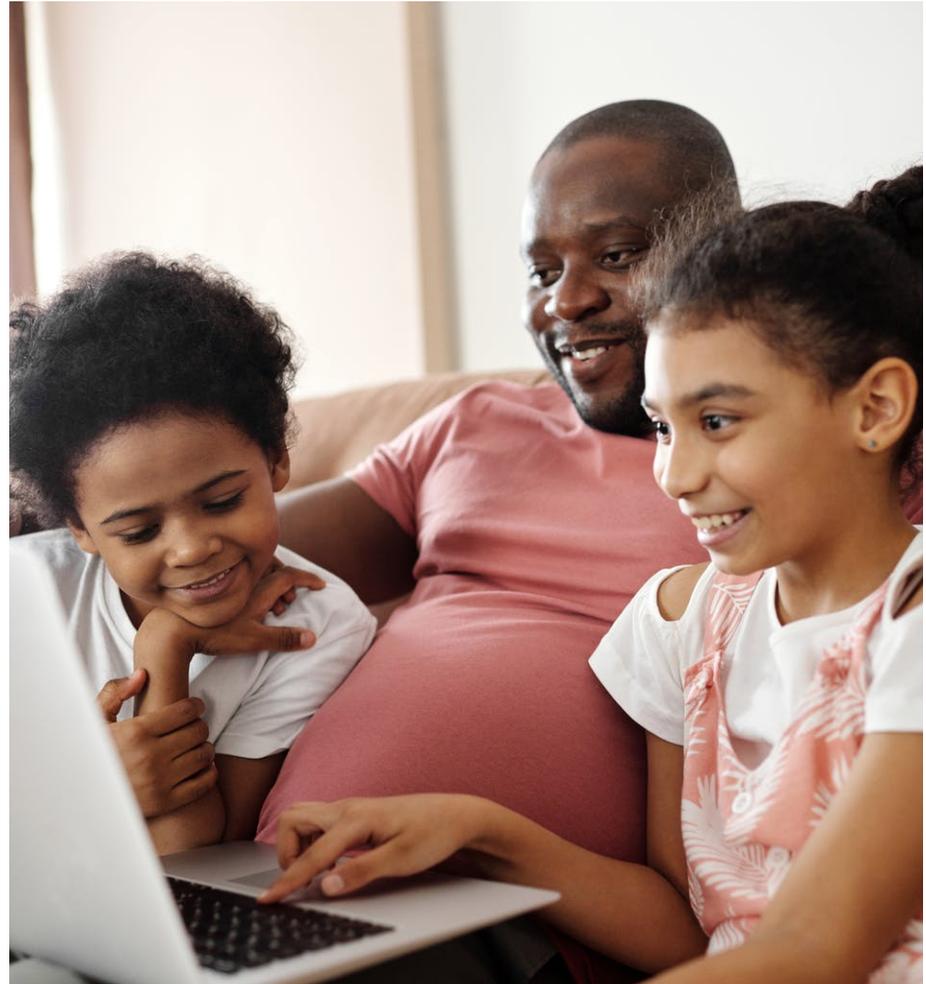




Adult volunteers

In an era where we have
legitimate worries
About our children and
youth online...

...your behavior teaches
children and youth how
safe adults behave.





Zoom safety

- Have a unique link for each session and share it shortly before the session and include in your covenant not to share the link with those not registered.
- Use the waiting room and only let in those who are registered
- Depending on age and covenant, set chat to only be to everyone.

Hint: give a number participants can text if they're having technical difficulties





Breakout rooms

- Recommend 2 adults.
- UUA policy includes possibility of a youth leader— we check references and train our youth leaders
- Cannot record breakout rooms
- Could rotate one or more adults from room to room randomly (this is not included as a UUA policy)

What level of trust does your group have?





Why concerned about chat settings?

- Potential for adults to message 1:1 with youth
- Potential for youth to message each other inappropriate or bullying content without adults seeing

Could it happen outside our hosting platform anyway?

Yes.

But – outside a youth could block another youth. An adult would be more clearly out of line. It wouldn't feel like it's inside our safe space.

Pssst!!!

Use covenant!



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Evin's dream platform...



.... doesn't exist.



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UUA decision making on platforms

- Our programs to be as inclusive of as many different youth as possible, whose needs we do not know until they show up
- We don't know their families
- We are creating community for a short time
- We need our programs to be trusted by congregations
- Some youth have restrictions. Examples:
 - Parent distrust of discord and the alt-right information and indoctrination in some servers
 - Youth who have made poor decisions in communication with strangers or online relationships and are rebuilding trust





UUA decision making on platforms

You know your youth and families. And--the needs of your youth and comfort of your families will change.

We share with you what we do to build transparency. Not to tell you what to do.





Asynchronous platforms

- Connect youth between real time events
- Share photos, have special interest conversations, create caucus space
- Harder to supervise:
 - How often do adults check?
 - Will youth alert an adult if a youth shares something concerning?
 - What needs to be in the covenant to make this a safer space?
- Not all groups are ready: move at the speed of trust.

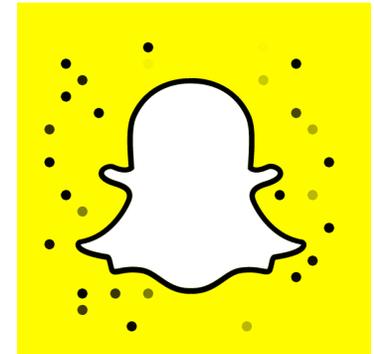




Social Media!

- Adult boundaries are key. Adults in adult “role”
- Consent: what platforms do youth want to be in relationship with adults?
- What platforms are parents comfortable with?

 **TikTok**





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