

Living Up To Our  
Commitment:  
Introduction to  
U.S. Affiliate  
Safeguarding





**Habitat**  
for Humanity®

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# Learning Objectives

- Articulate what safeguarding is, why it's important and who it affects
- Recognize power dynamics within the affiliate
- Grasp the importance of the Behavior Commitments and Volunteer Code of Conduct
- Be aware of safeguarding resources
- Explain your role in reporting
- Bring clarity to some of the hard questions related to safeguarding
- Feel empowered to speak on your commitment to safeguarding

A few quick reminders before we get started....

No specific affiliate or personal examples

Content can be triggering

Respect confidentiality

No one has to talk if they don't want to






# Agenda: The Flow, part 1

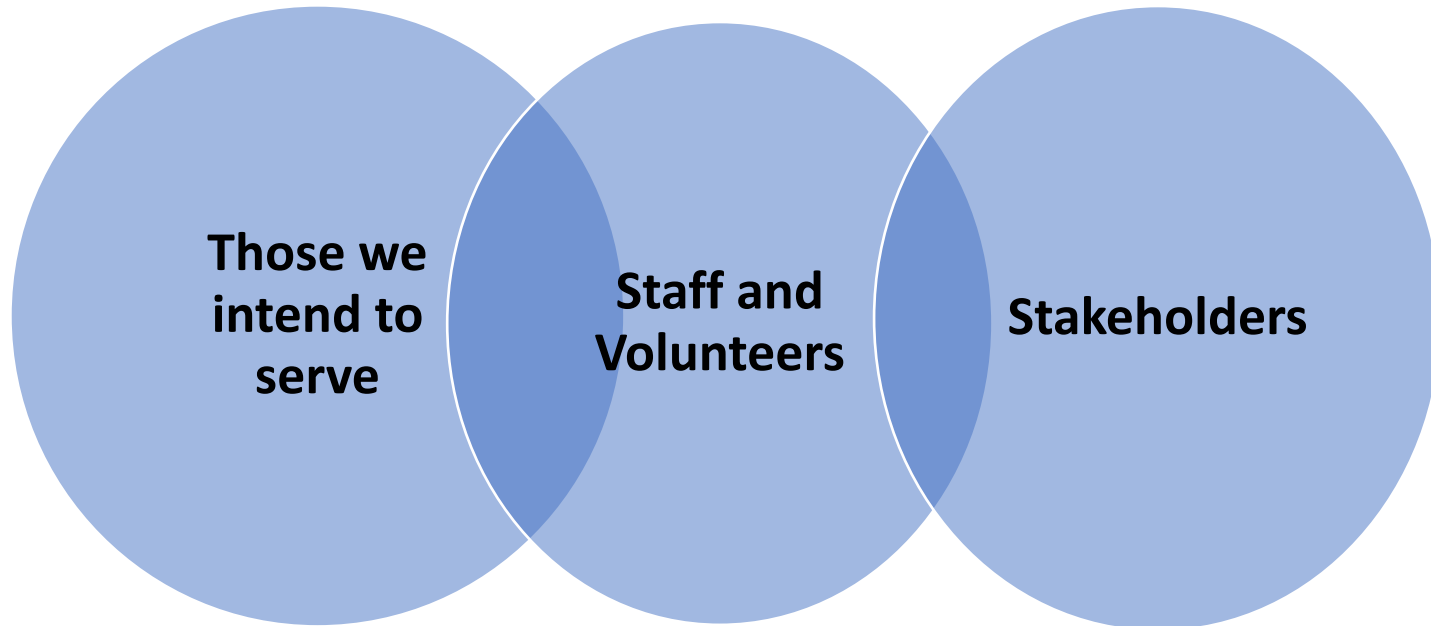
- What is safeguarding? Who is impacted?
- What is the Habitat safeguarding policy (Policy 34)?
- Why is safeguarding important in our work?
- What happens if safeguarding policies, procedures, and culture changes fail?

# What is safeguarding?

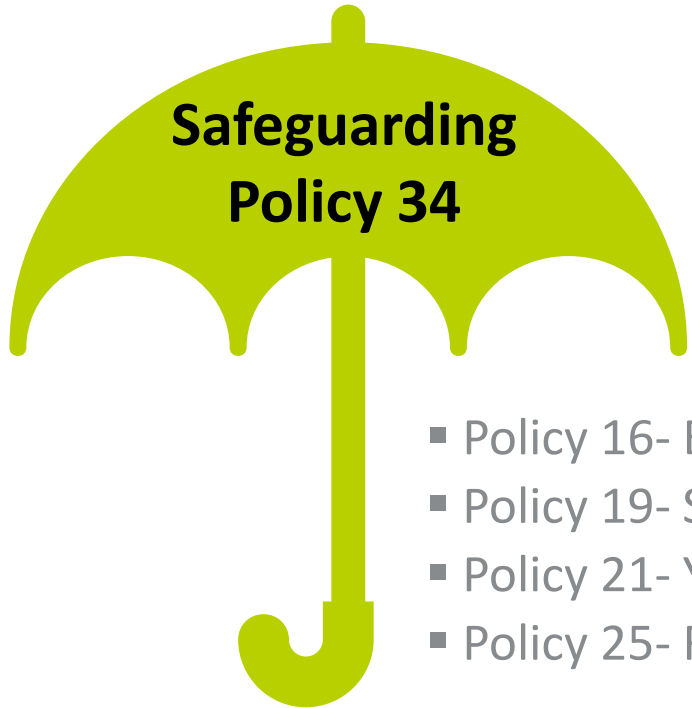
**Safeguarding** is preventing and responding to harm caused by physical/sexual abuse or exploitation, harassment and bullying of the people in the communities we serve (especially vulnerable adults and children) and the people we partner and work with.

-  No Sexual Abuse or Exploitation
-  No Harassment, Bullying nor Discrimination
-  Foster a safe, productive and respectful environment

# Who is impacted?



## Policy 34 is an Umbrella Policy



### Safeguarding Policy 34

Central to all that we do, is our commitment to **DO NO HARM** to our staff/volunteers, those we intend to serve and those that we partner with

- Policy 16- Employment and volunteer practices
- Policy 19- Sexual offender registration check
- Policy 21- Youth involvement on Habitat affiliate work sites
- Policy 25- Family support



# Why are we even having this discussion?

2018:



NGO disclosures of sexual abuses

- Major NGOs started establishing parameters around all their interactions.
- NGOs needed to address the misconception that comes with charitable organizations and safeguarding issues.
- Donors/Investors had begun requesting assurances that non-profit orgs. are doing everything possible to protect the people we serve.
- Opportunity for Habitat for Humanity to be an industry leader in cascading safeguarding throughout our entire network.

What happens if we ignore or just go through the motions of safeguarding?



Loss of local/national trust



Loss of donors



Potential litigation



Low staff/volunteer morale



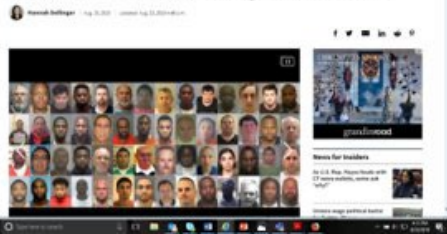
Staff/Volunteer turnover

## What happens if safeguarding policies, procedures, and culture fail or are non-existent?

- ❖ Entertainment Industry- **Actors, Singers, Comedians, Producers**
- ❖ Religious institutions/Churches- **No faith has been spared**
- ❖ Educational institutions- **UC Berkley**
- ❖ Finance World- **Morgan Stanley**
- ❖ Political realm- **Both sides of the aisle**
- ❖ Silicon Valley- **Uber, Google**
- ❖ Sports World- **Gymnastics, Cheerleading**
- ❖ Medicine- **Physicians, massage therapists, registered nurses**
- ❖ Journalism- **former CEO's of NBC and Fox News, reporters, newscasters**
- ❖ Military- **In 2018, 20,500 service members reported a sexual misconduct**
- ❖ Animal Advocacy – **National Humane Society**

# This could be Habitat for Humanity

At risk: Sexual abuse and Boys & Girls Clubs



'Unacceptable workplace behaviors' at UNICEF, leaked report summary says



Prominent Canadian aid worker charged in Nepal with sexually abusing children



One in four Save the Children staff 'suffer discrimination or harassment'



**RED CROSS**  
**The Red Cross Helped an Executive Get a Job at Save the Children After Forcing Him Out for Sexual Harassment**  
 A senior Red Cross official harassed a subordinate and was accused of raping another. The charity's now general counsel David Mulrow praised him on his way out for "dedication" and "dedication."



# Risks to Habitat without a policy and adoption

- Moral
- Reputational
- Legal
- Enterprise- One Habitat



# Agenda: The Flow, part 2

- Power dynamics
- Culture change
- Habitat's safeguarding commitment and Volunteer Code of Conduct
- Resources – available now and coming soon
- Reporting
- Next steps

# Power Dynamics are Key



## Examples:

- A partner family who feels that they can't tell the affiliate “no” about doing a television interview because the affiliate is “holding” their home.
- A staff person who feels that they can't tell their boss that they can't work overtime because the boss is “holding” their job.
- A community service worker who feels that they can't turn down sexual advances because the ReStore is “holding” their freedom.

# Culture Change

“The safeguarding crisis was not about policy and procedure failings but failings in culture. How did we allow people to behave like this and think they could be without consequences?”

-Safeguarding Specialist UNICEF



# Why is culture change so hard?

- Affiliate network operations are complex
- Nuances of working with volunteers & ensuring alignment
- Requires introspection
- May cost us people
- Good intentions can go very wrong

*HFHI is going through these same changes as well*



# How to begin the culture change?

- Lead by example
- Review policies
- Retrain the behavior that you want to see
- Socialize the complaint process
- Think about risks





# Handout

## Safeguarding Behavior Commitments



We build strength, stability, self-reliance and shelter.

### Habitat for Humanity's Safeguarding Behavior Commitments

September 2021

Habitat for Humanity is opposed to any form of discrimination, exploitation and abuse, including slavery, coerced conscription, prostitution, trafficking of persons for any purpose, vulnerable adult or child abuse, and dangerous or exploitative child labor. In the design and implementation of programs and policies, we seek always to work without bias, to do no harm and to reduce (rather than contribute to) the consequences of discrimination, exploitation and abuse.

All Habitat for Humanity representatives commit to respecting and safeguarding the rights and dignities of all people, and protecting our staff members, volunteers, partners, beneficiaries, research participants, and community members (especially vulnerable adults and children) from exploitation and abuse. This includes the following general standards of behavior:

- Habitat representatives will respect, promote and safeguard the rights and dignities of all people (with particular attention to those we intend to serve, vulnerable adults and children) without discrimination or bullying of any kind.
- Habitat representatives will treat all intended and actual individuals we serve with respect, courtesy and dignity.
- Habitat representatives will not engage in any form of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behavior toward those we intend to serve in any circumstances.
- Habitat representatives will not engage in any abuse of authority, position or influence by withholding humanitarian assistance or manipulating selection or targeting processes for those we intend to serve.
- Habitat representatives will help to create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and that safeguards the rights of those we intend to serve, research participants, and community members (especially vulnerable adults and children).
- Habitat representatives will never engage in sexual exploitation or abuse.
- Habitat representatives will never engage in sexual activity with a child (anyone who is not yet 18 years old) regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defense.
- Habitat representatives will never exchange money, employment, goods or services (including assistance that is due to those we intend to serve) for sex, sexual favors or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behavior.
- Habitat representatives will not engage in a sexual relationship with those we intend to serve, since it is based on inherently unequal power dynamics and undermines the credibility and integrity of Habitat for Humanity's charitable mission.

# Available Resources

- Me, a dedicated staff member for the US and Canada affiliated network
- US/Canada Safeguarding E-learning Course
- Availability of free H.E.A.L. posters in the Resource Warehouse
- Safeguarding officer resources
- Reporting and Investigation processes on MyHabitat



## Knowledge Center

### Living into our commitment

#### Familiarize

all staff, board members and key volunteers with Safeguarding Commitment and operational standards

Coming soon

#### Designate

a Safeguarding Officer for your affiliate

#### Review, update and inform

staff and key volunteers on local reporting and investigation processes

#### Provide training

for board members, staff, and key volunteers – training available on HabitatLearns



COMING  
SOON!

## Future Resources

- ✓ Safeguarding Yammer channel
- Continuing the conversation toolkit
- Risk Assessments for affiliate and your partners
- Safeguarding Officer Community of Practice
- Affiliate Best Practices
- Webinars/Conference calls/Workshops

## Reporting Processes:

- Report, not investigate
- Let investigators determine validity
- Ensure that all reporters understand that they will not be retaliated against
- Report anonymously and confidentially, if needed
- Allow for appropriate correction
- As the reporter, don't expect updates
- Make reports in good faith
- Remember the process is survivor centered; they are the focus

### Two ways to report a concern

Habitat Ethics and Accountability  
Line (formerly MySafeWorkplace<sup>®</sup>)

Affiliate Support Center

# Next Steps

- For your affiliate
- For you as a Habitat representative
- Areas of risk
- Potential questions





## Next steps for your affiliate:

- Engage Board of Directors
- Abide by policy 34, as is
- Safeguarding training
- Appoint a Safeguarding Officer
- Transparent complaint process
- Begin to think about areas of risk
- Lead by example: **“See something, Say something”** culture



## Next steps for you, as a representative of your affiliate:

- Understand your personal role in safeguarding
- Know your affiliate's policies
- Take safeguarding training
- Find out if your affiliate has appointed a safeguarding officer
- New obvious risks, correct them
- See something, Say something**



## Based on the nature of our operations, what are some areas of risk?

Are we encouraging partner families to watch each other's children so sweat equity can be done?

Does the affiliate complete sexual offender and criminal background checks as well as reference checks on every new staff member, board member and key volunteers, per policy 19, especially if they come from another affiliate?

Are youth and adults on the same worksite (ReStore, office, construction site)?

Do we have volunteers watching children while parents are in homeownership classes?

Is there ever just 1 person covering the ReStore? The office?

Are there times when people are 1 on 1 or secluded with beneficiaries?

## What other questions do you think you might get from staff, board members and volunteers who were not in this workshop?

- We're a Christian organization, could this really happen to us?
- We all know one another, and no one here would ever do anything like that, would they?
- Is this really a problem in our state and/or local community?
- Aren't some of these expectations an intrusion on my private life?
- Does all of this apply to interactions between staff members too?
- Does all of this apply to our contractors/donors/partners, etc.?

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## Questions, Thoughts, Concerns....

You are not alone...Call/Email me

[USCanadaSafeguarding@habitat.org](mailto:USCanadaSafeguarding@habitat.org) 229-410-7556

## See something, Say something

MyHabitat Knowledge Center

Search “Safeguarding for U.S. affiliates”



[USCanadaSafeguarding@Habitat.org](mailto:USCanadaSafeguarding@Habitat.org)