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For mail orders,
information about the Protective Behaviors Program and
details of new publications, contact:

Protective Behaviors Inc USA
211 S. Paterson, Suite 250
Madison, WI 53703
608-256-3374

By Jacquie Pass
Edited by Deb Baier, Linda Selk-Yerges, Allison Rainboth
and Carolyn Keeler with help from Marcia Kotnick,
Mary Zehren and Barb Ball



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Assist Survivors • Treatment • Outreach • Prevention

Parent Book

Our thanks to
Peg Flandreau West
for sharing Protective Behaviors with us.

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For More Information Contact
ASTOP Inc.
920-926-5393
430 E. Division Street
Fond du Lac, Wisconsin 54935



**Hi! My name
is Brittany!**



**Hi! My name is
Christopher!**

Together we'd like to tell you about a special program that is in our school called Protective Behaviors, Inc. - PBI for short. It began more than fifteen years ago with school psychologist Joan Levy and social worker Peg Flandreau West. Our teacher explained that it is an anti-victimization and self-empowerment process. We know those seem like really big words but after they were explained to us it made sense. The PBI process is designed to help kids and adults recognize when we feel safe and unsafe in different situations that may happen in our lives. It concerns trusting our feelings and being persistent in getting adult help. This is an important part of the process. Sound simple? It is! Come along with us and we'll explain what we've learned already.

The PBI Process consists of two themes and five strategies designed to encourage us to act on our feelings if we feel unsafe.

Theme One:

We all have the right to feel safe all of the time... and others have the right to feel safe with us.

Theme Two:

We can talk with someone we trust about anything, no matter how awful or small.



- One** Talk about feeling safe, adventurous, and unsafe.
- Two** Identify early warning signs.
- Three** Encourage talk about feelings.
- Four** Create a network.
- Five** Persist until early warning signs go away.



Step One

Safe ↔ Adventurous ↔ Unsafe

As children, we learn to identify the difference between the excitement of adventure and the bitter taste of danger. We agree that it is important to understand that as we grow older the situations we become involved in will change, but our right to feel safe will not change. There is a big difference between healthy excitement and being frightened more than we want to be.



Safe



Adventurous



Unsafe



Step Two

Early Warning Signs

We talk about how it feels when we know we are in danger as compared to when we are safe, and that helps us to recognize our Early Warning Signs or EWS. You see, our bodies don't lie; our minds can play tricks on us, but not our bodies. Our internal physical sensations or EWS go off, just like a red police light. When this happens our bodies' warning systems are trying to tell us maybe we are not safe. However it makes sense to take a deep breath & ask, "Do I have a choice here? Am I in charge/control? Will there be an end to feeling scared?" Because we are children, we are able to learn quickly to **identify** and **trust** our feelings. Paying attention to our EWS helps us to protect ourselves.

— 4 —



"There are butterflies in my stomach!"



"My heart is beating so fast!"

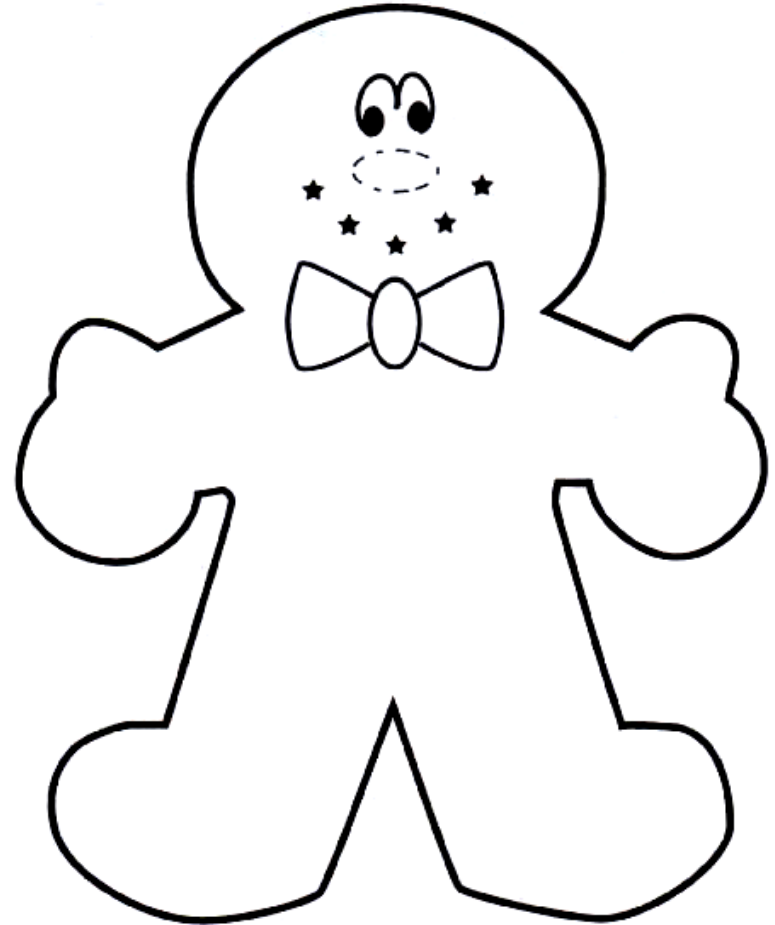


"My knees get so wobbly!"



"My mouth is so dry!"

Draw or write your **Early Warning Signs** on this Gingerbread person.



— 5 —



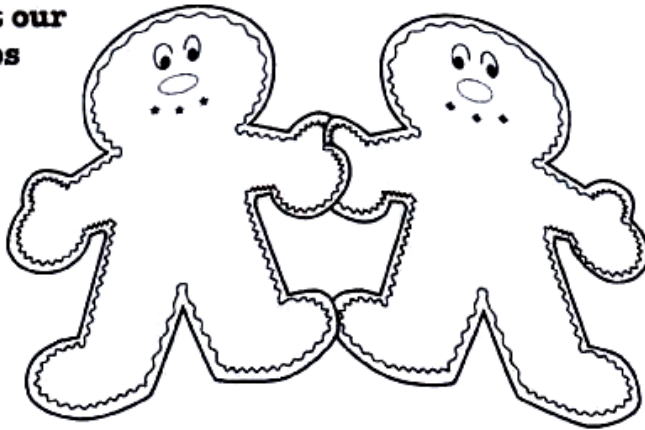
Step Three

Encourage Talk About Feelings

“Sometimes I feel scared when I’m alone... but talking to an adult who I trust helps me feel safe again.”

An important part of trusting our feelings means that it’s okay to share feelings.

“Encouraging us to talk about our feelings helps us feel safe again.”



Step Four

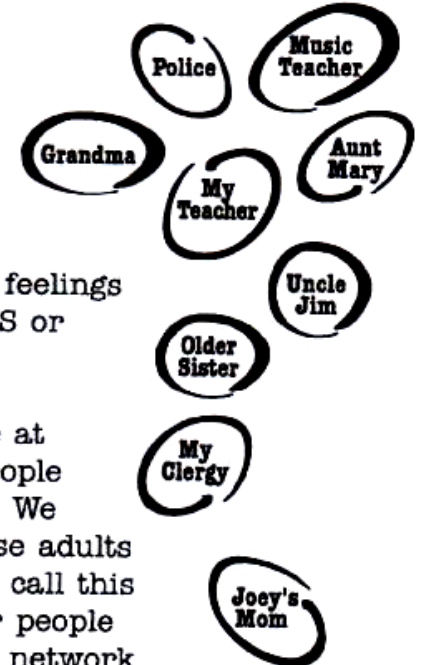
Networking

Just as we share our “day at school,” “day at the zoo,” or “day at Grandma’s,”

we are encouraged to “share” feelings with adults--especially our EWS or **Early Warning Signs.**

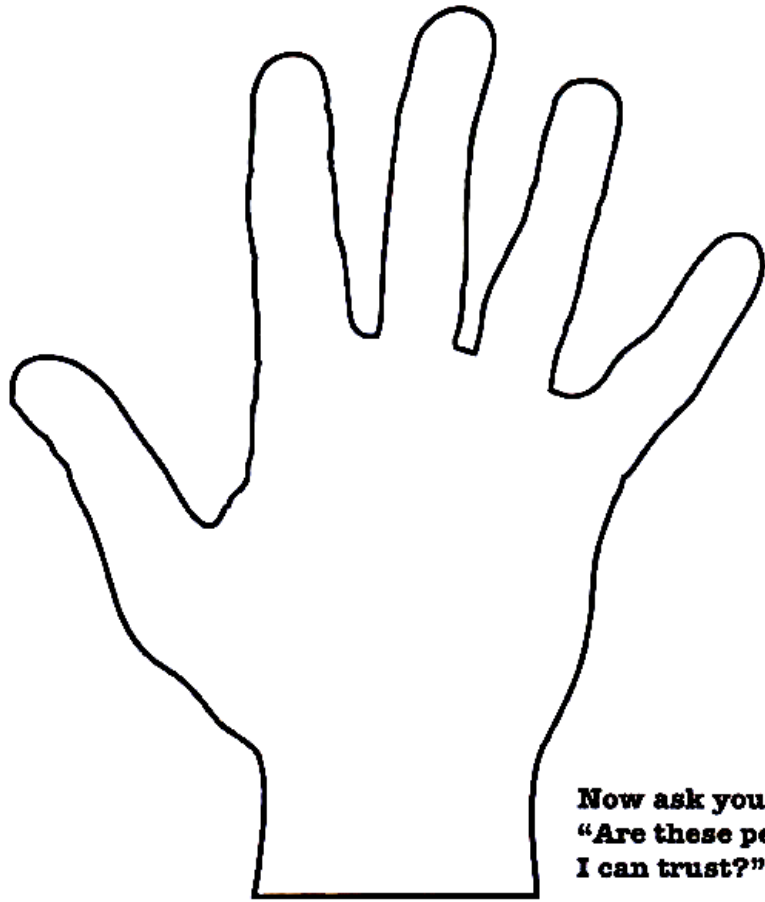
Everybody should try to name at least four adults besides the people at home whom they can trust. We feel comfortable talking to these adults about anything. Sometimes we call this our “helping hand.” These four people become an important personal network who help take away our fears. This helps us feel safe once again.

_____, if I wasn’t feeling safe, or if I wanted to talk with you about something wonderful, would you be willing to be one of my network people - someone I trust that I could talk with?



Caution: Some of the people shown may NOT be worthy of your trust -- they may even be part of the problem. Select your network with care.

This is My Network



Now ask yourself,
"Are these people
I can trust?"

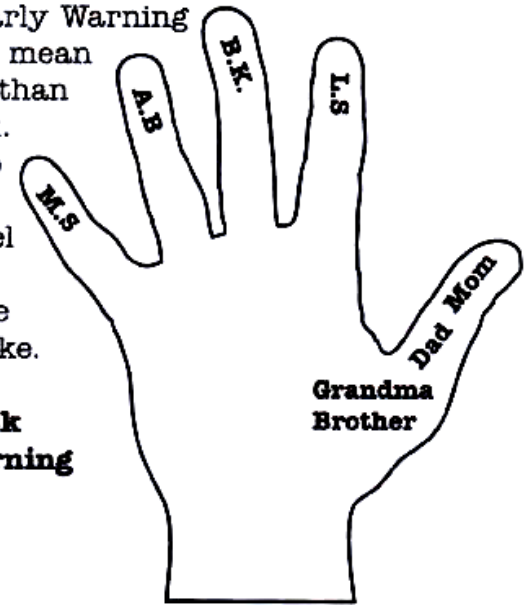


Step Five

Persistence

When we are learning to ride a bicycle, we keep trying and trying until we succeed. That is called persistence. What could we do when we don't feel safe and our Early Warning Signs are bothering us? We can speak out for ourselves until someone does something to help us feel safe. We will know we are safe when our Early Warning Signs go away. That may mean we have to talk to more than one adult in our network. Sometimes we need to go to ALL of the people in our network before we feel safe! This is called persistence too -- just like learning how to ride a bike.

"I'll continue to ask
until my early warning
signs go away!"



“Think About”

Even If...

Lost Key

“What could someone do to keep safe even if they come home from school and find that the door is locked, no one is home and they don’t have a key?”

Thinking about many problem situations helps us become good problem solvers. Sometimes, because we are a little bit scared, we only think of one idea, and that may not be safe. The aim is to have a range of suggestions and consider which one might be the safe option to take. Answers will be different for different people. This will help us to better handle real problems that may come along. Let’s **“think about”** others.

Touching

“How could someone keep themselves safe even if they were being touched in ways that feel uncomfortable / confusing / yucky?”

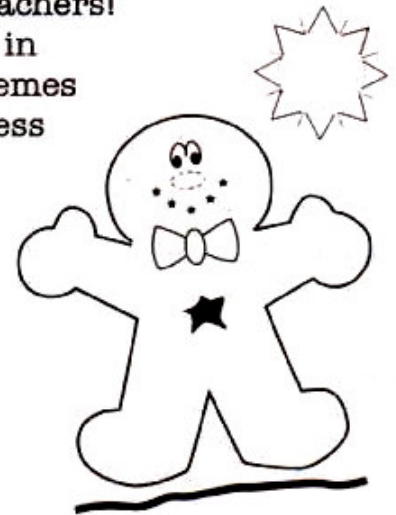
Hint for adults--PBI does not use the “Good touch-bad touch” language because often the touch feels good to the child even though the situation is abusive and exploitative. Also, at some point in a healthy sexual relationship, these same touches feel good.

Grown-ups Fighting

“How could someone keep safe even if two grown-ups were fighting?” (And later on you can tell some of your network people. You can tell until enough happens so that you feel safe again.)

Our teachers want you to know all about how we are learning to feel safer. They know you love us! Learning Protective Behaviors can help both adults and children -- it’s for everyone! Talk with our teachers!

As adults, helping all children in the family to learn the two themes and five steps in the PBI Process can be a valuable asset to the safety, well-being, and healthy attitude of all of us.



Glossary

Early Warning Signs or EWS - are the first ways your body lets you know that you are not feeling safe, or that the level of risk is changing. EWS are specific body sensations in specific body locations. See Page 4.

Networks - A Network is at least four people who are individually selected and checked out. They are persons whom we feel we can trust to turn to if we feel unsafe, or if we have something exciting to share. There are various kinds of networks: for example, personal, play, workplace, community. For optimal protection, people need to have more than one Network. See Page 7.

Network Review Strategy - means checking on a regular basis to be sure your Networks are intact and ready to use. See example on Page 7.

Persistence Expectations - provides a framework for one to persevere in seeking help, support and encouragement through a preselected Network of trustworthy people until enough happens so that one's Early Warning Signs go away. See Page 9.

PBI - Protective Behaviors, Incorporated. PBI is used as an abbreviation in order to minimize confusion between PBI and other more limited safety programs that are also generically designated "protective behaviors."

Safe Even If . . . - We talked about how it is possible to help children feel safe without scaring them. We can do this by using a one-step-removed approach or, "safe even ifs..." This talks about desired positive outcomes. Let's try it! See Page 10.

Safety - Feeling safe is what we offer, not being safe. Feeling safe is always determined individually by internal criteria and involves risk taking. It is not a passive state of locked doors, staying off the streets after dark, or external reassurance. Safety is linked with adventurous. Knowing how to say "Yes!" as well as "No!" and being heard is part of the PBI concept of safety. See Page 3.

Themes - The two themes are two affirmative statements that form part of the conceptual base of PBI. They are: "We all have the right to feel safe all the time... and others have the right to feel safe with us" and, "We can talk with someone we trust about anything, no matter how awful or small." See Page 2.

Resources

Zing and Zipp: The Troggs of Wongo Wongo Wood
Stories for primary school children which reinforce the ideas found in this booklet.

Nolly and Groogle: The Gillows of Crimpley Creek
Stories for primary to introduce the ideas of feeling safe and talking about feelings.

Try Again Red Riding Hood
An activity book for primary school children helps children to develop their problem solving skills.

The Brown Bear Who Wasn't
A tale about expressing feelings.
Written by Carol B. Kaplan and
illustrated by Midge Quenell.
Milliken Publishing Company

The Picky Pig
A tale about trying new things.
Written by Carol B. Kaplan and
illustrated by Midge Quenell.
Milliken Publishing Company.

The 18th Emergency
Betsy Byars, A Puffin Book. (Ages 8-12)

Jelly Legs
Colin Barney, illustrated by Colin Cameron,
Published by Essence Prevention Network

The Protective Behaviors Process is outlined fully in **The Right to Feel Safe** (available from Protective Behaviors, Inc.) and is the resource from which this book was developed.