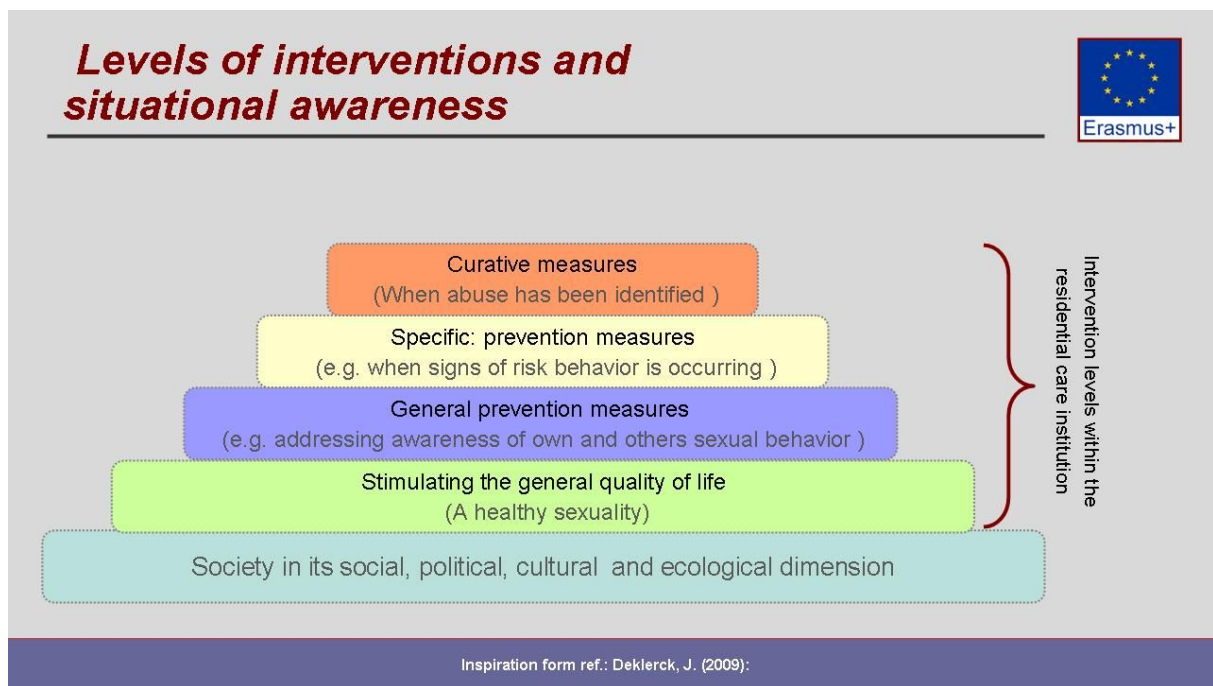


# THE PREVENTION PYRAMID<sup>1</sup>



This prevention pyramid was designed by Johan Deklerck (2010). It serves as a model for an integrative approach to safety. This model helps you to prioritize and sort your measures and check if you are using them in an integrated way. Within the frame of healthy sexual development, we focus on measures concerning sexual behavior in its many forms (positive and negative).

The first step in the process is to assess the current situation by making a risk analysis or doing an appreciative inquiry. Based on the results this provides you, you can develop an action plan to take measures.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from: Icobra (2013). Infociche Preventiepiramide [pdf] via <http://tijdvooragressiebeleid.be/test/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Preventiepiramide-ICOBA.pdf> and: Sensoa (2012). Raamwerk seksualiteit en beleid. [pdf] Via [https://www.seksuelevorming.be/sites/default/files/digitaal\\_materiaal/raamwerkseksualiteitenbeleidschool.pdf](https://www.seksuelevorming.be/sites/default/files/digitaal_materiaal/raamwerkseksualiteitenbeleidschool.pdf)

Next, you put every measure up against the prevention pyramid and check if your measures cover all levels of the pyramid.

The concept goes beyond the mere prevention of problematic behavior. It can be used to evaluate your measures and see how your organization is doing. That way you get an idea at which level you are performing and on which other levels actions or measures should be taken.

Organizing your measures leads to organized solutions. The prevention pyramid serves as a frame of reference for the development of a prevention- and safety policy with specific and general measures.

The model consists of several hierarchical levels: the higher you go in the pyramid the more specific you work and the more directly you address the problem. On the lower levels, a broad and positive approach is the key. This provides fertile ground on which measures on the higher levels can flourish.

The lower levels are broad. A lot of measures can be associated with these lower levels. The higher you go in the pyramid, the smaller and narrower the levels get and the more specialized the measures get.

## THE HIERARCHICAL LEVELS

### LEVEL 0: SOCIETY AT A SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND ECOLOGICAL DIMENSION

This level has to do with the general policies of the organization. This policy is built on the current view on humanity in society, social developments, political policy decisions, legislation and subsidies. Furthermore, infrastructural facilities and how an organization is embedded in the neighborhood also impacts the prevention strategy.

For example, an organization situated in the city has to deal with different issues compared to an organization located in the countryside.

Organisational policy describes the vision of the organisation on how all people involved deal with each other concerning physical and sexual integrity, and how these qualities can be embedded in daily practice. These policies act as the starting point, all next levels fit in to it. All too often an organisation will develop a policy after an incident. The risk is high then that the organisation only focusses on prevention and does not have enough attention for healthy sexual experiences.

### LEVEL 1: IMPROVEMENT OF THE LIVING ENVIRONMENT

These measures are the backbone of your entire prevention policy. They are essential for providing good outcomes of the measures on the higher levels.

The measures on level one are meant to improve the quality of life and to increase involvement of employees and users to what is happening in the organization. The connection to problematic behavior is indirect. These measures can have a preventive impact on problematic behavior, but this is not the primary goal. A positive context contributes to a swift and easier solution for problems.

### LEVEL 2: GENERAL PREVENTION

At this level you direct your attention to reinforcing the abilities/opportunities and capacity of peoples and structures. You look for a broad and positive answer to problems. That way they can be managed and disappear more quickly.

This can be done by stimulating collegiality, an open team spirit, systematically having meetings, making sure there is continuity in coaching and clear rules and regulations.

The **preventive policy** of the organization consist of level 1 and 2. Here we think about risks for the physical and sexual integrity, that are undesirable and therefore better prevented. Examples are: sexual offensive behaviour or sexual abuse, gender-related violence, frustrations, bullying... Preventing risks is also one of the responsibilities of the organisation and can be translated in the following basic assumptions.

- Children and youngsters have the right to safety and health concerning their physical and sexual development.
- Children and youngsters are protected against sexual experiences that are without mutual consent, that are not voluntary or equal, or not in line with the age or context, or may be harmful for themselves.
- Attention is given to strengthen children and youngsters against any possible risks.
- There is an easily accessible contact person where children and youngsters can get help or make complaints.
- There is a policy against exclusion and bullying.
- The organisation takes all measures needed and advisable to lower all risks in this area.

### LEVEL 3: SPECIFIC PREVENTION

From level 3 on, you're working preventively in the true sense of the word. You eliminate risks or minimize them. Your approach is problem- and goal oriented and you're tackling several areas.

This a direct approach in order to prevent problems repeating themselves.

Specific prevention could also mean organizing surveillance and training employees to deal with sexually problematic behavior.

### LEVEL 4: CURATIVE MEASURES

At this level your interventions are aimed at preventing any incidents.

You apply verbal, nonverbal and physical intervention techniques. You address the clients who are displaying inappropriate or offensive behavior and in dialogue you take a look at how they could behave in a more suitable way.

By implementing curative measures you try to repair damages done as effectively as possible and you secure aftercare. Curative means caring for. This could be the shelter of victims or compensating and repairing damages.

Level 3 and 4 together serve as the **reactive policy** of the organization. This policy indicates what an organization should do when an incident takes place.

These are some indicators of a good reactive policy:

- Children, youngsters and parents have the right to the thorough and objective management of a complaint.
- There are clearly set out measures to be undertaken following an incident.
- There is scope for serious follow-up of incidents in the longer term.
- There is a frequent evaluation of the procedures after an incident.
- The organisation takes all measures necessary and desirable to prevent incidents and an attempt to handle them correctly.

## WORKING ON ATTITUDE AND STRUCTURAL MEASURES

To be really successful, every measure needs to be structurally embedded in the organization and its policy. At the same time the measures have to be in the head, heart and hands of employees. Therefore raising awareness, providing information and training are key.

Employees will only live by and apply agreements and measures if they are convinced of their importance, if they feel confident enough to do so and if they feel supported on a practical, material and emotional level.

THE PREVENTION  
PYRAMID

