

## Copies of Presentation Materials & Articles



## Intentional Safeguards for Vulnerable People

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## Intentional Safeguards

### Definition of Intentional Safeguards:

“Intentional safeguards can be thought of as conscious design or practice features that can variably be added on, built in or strengthened in order to preserve or enhance something of value in a situation and thereby better manage the vulnerabilities of people and situations”

Michael J. Kendrick PhD

## Examples of Some Common Limitations in Addressing Human Needs Inherent in Organizations

- The organisation may not wish to serve others
- There may be too many who have been chosen to serve
- It may not be clear what is to be done
- What needs to be done is too difficult for the organisation
- What needs to be done cannot be done by an organisation
- It may be that many in the organisation dislike those being served
- The organisation may be filled with conflicts of interest
- The organisation may put other needs first
- Those being served are not well understood by the organisation
- The organisation's own bureaucratic functioning dissipates its service potential
- The service organisation is unprepared for its role
- The serving organisation cannot gain the cooperation from both within and without for what is needed
- The serving organisation lacks leadership
- The service acts incorrectly and harmfully
- The service has too few of the needed strengths
- The serving organisation was established for another reason
- The service lacks steadfastness and fidelity to those being served

## Examples Of Issues That Can Serve As Points Of Struggle For Competing Interests In Service

- Control of clients
- Designation of clients
- Access to authoritative decision making
- Setting of policy
- Priority setting
- Control of resources
- Distribution of resources
- Access to “perks”
- Hiring/dismissal of personnel
- Location of services
- Character of services
- Status assignments

## Examples Of Some Common Limitations In Addressing Human Needs Inherent In Human Beings

- People may not want to serve others
- There may be too many to serve
- It may not be clear what needs to be done
- What may need to be done may be too difficult
- It may be that one can't serve well
- It may be that one loses interest
- One may serve erroneously
- One may dislike those who need to be served
- One may have conflicts of interests
- One may be too weak to withstand temptations to serve insufficiently
- One may be encouraged to serve by many of the wrong motivations
- One may fail to prepare for the demands of serve to others
- One may not be aware that one serves poorly
- One person may have too much pride to seek help from others
- One may overlook or discredit the wishes of those to be served
- The needs of others may be insatiable
- The needs of the server may be unhelpful to the served
- The complexity of understanding others may defeat others
- The server cannot get along with other crucial servers

## Examples of Vulnerabilities That May Be Present For Person With Disabilities

- Reliance on others for critical life functions
- Non-recognition of dangers
- Inability to fully communicate their needs and wants
- A tendency to be patronised or be overlooked
- Neglect
- Exposure to agency failures and dysfunctions
- Sexual exploitation in isolated and controlled residential settings
- Utilisation as a pawn for vested interests
- Misunderstanding of their crucial needs by decision makers
- Stereotypes especially stigmatising ones
- Being forced into irrelevant and even life wasting programmes
- Rejection
- Segregation
- Death making, brutality and violence
- Poverty and powerlessness

## Common Vulnerabilities Of Groups Who Are At Risk Of Social Devaluation That May Need Safeguarding

- Risk of impoverishment
- Risk of neglect
- Risk of social exclusion or isolation
- Risk of rejection
- Displacement from familiar surroundings and supports, eg. family, neighbourhood
- Lack of rights, autonomy, freedom
- Ignorance of their options, choices, possibilities
- Little say in the structures, authorities that control their lives
- Deprivation of supports crucial to their health and wellbeing, eg. food, medicine
- A misrepresentation of their needs, identities, wishes, etc.

## General Features of Safeguards-Oriented Thinking

- Safeguards can be thought of as intentional adaptive design features that can variably be added on, built in or strengthened in order to preserve something of value in a situation
- Recognition that there are desirable elements in situations/services that should be preserved or enhanced
- Recognition that all human activities are vulnerable to failure, perversity, entropy, goal displacement, etc.
- Recognition that many such shortcomings can be consciously anticipated
- Recognition that conscious safeguards can be installed in advance to minimise likely shortcomings and to detect and counterbalance novel shortcomings as early as possible
- Recognition that safeguards themselves can default and hence the value of:
  - Multiple safeguards
  - Independent safeguards
  - Safeguard redundancy
  - Safeguard renewal
  - External as well as internal safeguards
  - Safeguards evolution

- Recognition that intensive safeguarding, while valuable is not in itself, as valuable as doing the job well in the first place. Hence preventative safeguards should be given greater weight than corrective ones
- Multiple safeguards can combine to either complement each other for greater effect or disfunctionality constrain each other
- Recognition that taking shortcuts with safeguards will often succeed because good luck has favoured those involved. Nevertheless, this cannot be counted on (good luck) and it models carelessness to novices
- Recognition that high consciousness of latent possibilities for error/perversities is the most fundamental of all safeguards
- Recognition that individuals, groups, organisations and even systems require different orders of safeguards
- Recognition that safeguards must be as potent and ingenious as the evil they are anticipating
- Eventually changing conditions may intake many safeguards obsolete or in need of significant rethinking. Particularly if people have been able to circumvent the safeguard, ie. "de facto immunity" to safeguards
- The presence of seemingly potent safeguards can, in itself, lead to a relaxing of the need to be alert to dangers as can long periods of favourable conditions - the potency of safeguards may be revealed in whether they will work when crisis tests them

- Many safeguards occur “naturally” in cultures and society in the form of values, alliances, customs, structures, etc. These can be recognised and protected even if at the outset they go unappreciated
- Safeguarding needn’t be seen as a separate or additional activity but can be embedded in the process of constructing/managing activities
- Safeguards are not just to oversee or protect, they may also be oriented to the enablement of underdeveloped positive potential to emerge, ie. they may be a spur to constructive efforts or renewal
- Some individuals and organisations may wilfully resist valid safeguards to their detriment
- Basic assumptions concerning human nature need to be examined as essential underpinning vulnerabilities of many projects and activities
- Some perverse aspects of human conduct may be very difficult to fully safeguard against, eg. drive-by shootings, manipulation by sociopathic persons, self-destructive conduct, etc.
- Complacency is universally worrisome from a safeguarding point of view

## Examples Of Safeguards That Are Embedded In Everyday Life

- The care, knowledge and commitment of a family to its member with a disability
- The inclusion of a disabled family member in all aspects of the family life
- The tradition of hospitality and welcome by community groups
- The relationships that come from “growing up” together
- The presence of well placed friends and acquaintances
- The tradition of respect for human rights, especially those of minorities
- The espousal of values which emphasise the equality and worth of all people
- A public tradition of critique, dissent and pluralism
- An unwillingness to turn over responsibility and obligation to unknown others or systems
- A tendency to check with the person before decisions are made that affect their lives

## Some Common Reasons Why Internal Safeguards Are Often Weak Or Ineffectual

- Those implementing them ultimately work for the organisation and are loyal to it
- The cost of fomenting internal conflict can be substantial for the perpetrator
- The organisation may be blind to the danger it transacts
- The organisation's ideologies and mythologies may prohibit or inhibit contrasting assumptions and values
- They may bring no particular advantage to the organisation to compensate for the difficulties they may create
- The safeguards may be due to external requirements and lack agency endorsement and commitment
- They may be denuded of requisite authority, talent, leadership, resources and status vis-à-vis mainline operations, ie. "a frill"
- They benefit more from being weak, than being effective
- The organisation is corrupt to start with and thus corrupts its own safeguards
- There is no constituency outside the organisation calling for safeguards

## Some Reasons Why External Safeguards Can Be Stronger Than Internal Ones

- They are independent of the control of the agency
- They are usually better insulated from the agency's self-serving ideologies
- They are often created by groups who are fundamentally wary of the agency
- They usually develop the capacity for legitimising points of view excluded by the agency
- They usually have less fear of reprisal if conflict is precipitated
- They usually have greater credibility due to their independence and externality
- Their livelihood is usually not beholden to the agency and its preferences
- Distances can often provide greater clarity and objectivity
- External safeguards need not be quite as circumspect and can be more incisive of their naming of problems
- External safeguards often can obtain broad constituencies and advice outside the agency including the media

## Suggested Criteria For Evaluating The Likely Potency Of Advocacy Or Safeguards

- Fit of the measure to the person/groups fundamental needs and vulnerabilities
- Thoroughness and rigour in the implementation of the measure
- Presence of the capacity to redefine the situation and the measure
- Appropriate resources to implement the measure
- The value base of those implementing the measure
- Compromise of the measure through the conflicts of the people involved
- Fatigue, degree of renewal of the measure
- Extent/strength of the problem to be addressed

## Some Possibly Perverse Uses Of The Concept Safeguarding

- Presumption that life can be safeguarded so well as to eliminate tragedy
- That people do not proceed with urgent and valid actions because not all negative eventualities can be safeguarded against
- Installation of weak safeguards as if they were strong safeguards, eg. boards of visitors, advisory committees, internal complaint systems
- Preoccupation with safeguards at the expense of doing things well enough so that safeguards may not be needed
- Nonrecognition that safeguards can have their own unintended dysfunctions
- Not linking the discussion or implementation of safeguards to a scrupulous examination of the actual dangers present
- Emphasis on the mechanics of safeguarding at the expense of the cultivation of the “safeguarding mentality”
- Implementation of potentially valid safeguards by people who lack the proper perspective and will optimise them

## A Global Process To Prepare Safeguards For An Individual Being Served

- Discussion with the person about what is important to him/her and what is most needed from the service
- Clarification of the vulnerabilities the person may have
- Identification of both the immediate and remote dangers that are or may be present for the person
- Prioritise the dangers the person now or may face with a view to their vulnerabilities
- For each key area of concern, note the safeguards that may exist
- For each key area of concern that lacks safeguards, try to imagine measures that would lessen the danger for that person
- Critically evaluate both the existing and proposed safeguarding measures
- Identify any possible non-adaptive effects that may inadvertently be present in the process of installing, operating, or strengthening safeguards