



As **National Child Abuse Prevention Month** comes to a close, Blue Octopus is proud to be leading a new statewide initiative in partnership with the Virginia Department of Health's Injury and Violence Prevention Program.



The **Inclusive Play and Prevention Initiative Collaborative** is focused on preventing sexual abuse of youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in social, sports, and recreation settings.

Together with organizations across the Commonwealth, we're embedding prevention practices into youth-serving environments in ways that center inclusion, accessibility, and relationships — not just policy. This work is about creating spaces where safety is part of the everyday culture.

With [recent federal cuts to prevention funding](#), this kind of local, collaborative action is more urgent than ever. Abuse prevention can't wait for perfect systems — and it doesn't belong to any one agency. It belongs to all of us.

[Tell Me More](#)

team update: welcome, carter barker



We're excited to welcome **Carter Barker** as our new **Partnerships and Programs Manager**! Carter brings years of experience in youth programming, disability inclusion, and coalition-building — and will be working closely with our statewide partners to advance prevention frameworks that are practical, community-driven, and sustainable.

what's in our net?

Each month, we share a free resource designed to support the incredible work you do. Something useful, practical, and ready to share with your team or community:

[5 Everyday Practices That Build Safer Programs](#)

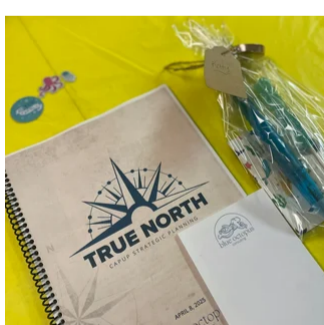
This one-page guide outlines simple, powerful ways to build safety into team culture and programming — no major policy changes required. It's designed for youth-serving organizations, volunteers, and anyone working in disability-inclusive spaces.

finding CAPUP's true north

This spring, we had the privilege of facilitating a two-part strategic planning process with the team at CAPUP (Capital Area Partnership Uplifting People) — starting where all great strategy should begin: with the people doing the work.

The first session brought together staff for a hands-on, high-energy retreat themed All In: Building CAPUP's Future Together. Their ideas, insight, and honesty laid the foundation for the board's later work, ensuring that the final vision reflects the realities on the ground — not just goals on paper.

The board then gathered for a full-day retreat guided by the theme True North. Together, they aligned on long-term priorities and charted a path forward — grounded in what they heard from staff and the communities they serve.



That's it for this edition of *The Inking*! Have thoughts? Hit reply—we love hearing from you.