

Free Beach Ambassadors

GENERAL INFORMATION



Monitoring urban clothing-optional beaches

Protecting family-oriented clothing-optional beaches

Protecting Skinny-Dipping in New Zealand

NATURISTS believe that nude recreation is a legitimate and traditional activity, which can be pursued, in the proper setting and context, without inconvenience or affront to those who do not choose this option for themselves. We encourage tolerance, family values, and respect for others, and oppose lewd or offensive conduct in all circumstances. We believe that the natural choice for the enjoyment of activities such as swimming and sunbathing is without clothing. In our society today the minimal attire evident can be quite suggestive. We believe that eliminating this often provocative emphasis on sexuality by slight and selective concealment can create an altogether more relaxed and wholesome atmosphere. To the Nativist, nudity is neither an act of exhibitionism, nor an invitation to promiscuous sexual activity, but an attempt to promote an atmosphere of mutual acceptance and respect for each other as fellow human beings and as children of nature.

CLOTHING-OPTIONAL BEACHES are usually well known areas, traditionally sanctioned, where nude swimming and sunbathing are permitted. *Free Beaches NZ Inc.* aims to preserve the “places where it’s known to occur” – where skinny-dipping is an innocent and joyful activity. Nativist beaches are increasingly in common in Australia and the US, and have long been a feature of many European countries, and an increasing number of tourists are making the availability of such beaches a prime factor in their holiday decisions. The benign nature of clothing-optional beaches, and their beneficial impact on the tourist industry, is evident the world over.

Although we believe mere nudity is neither offensive nor provocative, we do recognise that incidents of discourteous and improper behaviour can occur at any public place, so we are keen to encourage genuine users to ensure and uphold exemplary behaviour at all times.

BEACH AMBASADORS are the volunteers encouraged by *Free Beaches NZ Inc.* to monitor appropriate use of a particular clothing-optional beach. As a Beach Ambassador acts as a representative of Nativism, care is taken that only those committed to working within the established and recognised standards of Nativist philosophy, behaviour and etiquette are selected. We will revoke the ‘ambassador’ status of any who intentionally violate its standards, or otherwise show unsuitability after selection.

Ideally, Beach Ambassadors would have distinctive identification. The best choice is likely to be headgear with a distinctive logo and wording (e.g.: “Beach Ambassador”) reserved solely for such use at the beach, and not offered for sale or randomly distributed. Clear recognition of the presence of Beach Ambassadors on the beach can in itself go a long way toward maintaining a friendly family atmosphere.

Since 1992, the clothing-optional status of popular St Leonards Beach, has been apparently compromised by North Shore City’s by-law attempting to prohibit the exposure of the “pubic area” of those over 12.

Given that public places are often reserved for the pursuit of specialised recreational activities pursued by minority user groups (skateboarders, walkers, water-skiers, etc); we think it only reasonable for a small, isolated section of the North Shore’s extensive beaches to be sanctioned for clothing-optional use by those who have made this their recreational choice. Aside from the simple fact that conditionally, nudity is allowed at St Leonards, no activity that would be deemed inappropriate in a comparable public place will be encouraged, permitted, or tolerated.

Postscript

Below is an estimate of nude urban beach usage in New Zealand over the last half century.

The sum of the weekday averages is over 200 per day, with over 1500 at the weekend. Over the 15 localities and adjusted for weather by dropping one day in three, about 1700 naked people are on the beach each summer week – over 50,000 occurrences per year. (Another 200 places are used, but they are mostly further than 40km from populated centres.) Accounting for the numbers of years that it’s known to have occurred, there have been about 1¼ million occurrences of unpros-ecuted public nakedness in or near suburbia during the last 50 years.

	Place	Usual weekday	Usual weekend	Useable weeks	Years used	Totals
Whangarei	Uretiti Beach	20-30	50-200	35	50	437500
Waiheke Is	Little Palm Beach	20-70	25-150	35	25	233333
Auckland	St Leonards Beach	20-30	50-150	30	30	195000
	Ladies Bay	15-25	20-50	30	40	136000
	Long Bay	0-10	15-50	35	30	63000
	Orpheus Bay	0-5	0-20	25	20	10833
	Mellons Bay	0-5	0-15	25	20	9167
Whangamata	Opoutere Beach	0-5	10-15	25	20	12500
Waihi	East Waihi Beach	0-3	0-3	26	15	585
Tauranga	Papamoa Beach	10-40	20-150	35	30	206500
	Omanu	0-2	0-5	30	5	1000
Taupo	Five Mile Bay	0-3	0-10	20	15	3500
New Plymouth	Tapuae Beach	10-20	10-40	25	20	41667
	Back Beach	0-5	0-10	25	25	9375
Wanganui	Ototoka Beach	0-3	0-8	15	20	310
Hawkes Bay	Ocean Beach	3-10	10-40	25	25	34375
	Waimarama Beach	0-10	3-10	20	25	12667
Kapiti Coast	Pekapeka Beach	0-5	5-30	20	25	15833
Wellington	Breaker Bay	10-30	20-100	30	40	176000
Nelson	Rabbit Island	5-15	10-25	20	35	39667
Christchurch	Taylor’s Mistake	0-2	0-15	20	15	4000
	Waimari Beach	10-20	10-50	20	50	90000
	Waikuku Beach	0-10	0-20	20	15	9000
Dunedin	Murdering Beach	0-5	3-10	15	20	5100
<i>Averages</i>		<u>10</u>	<u>31</u>	25	26	<u>76076</u>
	Average day sums:	242	717	Grand Total:		1,749,762

The High Court has determined that happening in a place “where it is known to occur” or “is not uncommon” is an accepted defence (AP 76/91 & 131/95) to the only charge occasionally applied to innocent nakedness: “disorderly behaviour.”

Commenting on the spreadsheet above in September 2000, police Superintendent of Ministerial Services in the Office of the Commissioner and chief of the Prosecution Service, Graham Thomas, acknowledged that legally, these occurrences can be “said to be ‘not illegal’.”

Conclusion: Nudity Is Beneficial to Family & Society

The results of the research presented would seem to speak clearly and with force:

Children's exposure to nudity is not only not harmful, it appears to be beneficial. Children who are raised as nudists (or in nude-friendly families) grow up to be adults who are comfortable with their bodies and their sexuality.

However, this seemingly clear relationship is not at all clear to most parents, nudist or non-nudist.

Yates (1978) theorizes that most parents are unaware of these studies or the patterns they reflect for two reasons.

- First, nudists are still widely (and erroneously) perceived in our society as sexual deviants. Those who are not nudists generally have no direct personal experiences to disprove the fallacy; many nudists are afraid to reveal their status for fear of being ridiculed, prosecuted or persecuted.
- Second, research into human sexuality provided amazing advances in our knowledge of adult sexuality in the last one hundred years and this was seen as appropriate, as adults are clearly sexual beings. Parallel research with regard to children has advanced much more slowly, as researchers are loath to study this topic.

What little research has been done has generally not been replicated. The neglect of replication has led to a general absence of credence among those who rely on the literature for their professional opinions – and these people are the ones who directly advise parents.

Thus, we are left with the advice of Dr. Spock, who warned us of dire consequences resulting from children's exposure to nudity but who performed no research of his own – apparently his conclusions were based on one anecdotal incident involving his own son.

Dr. Joyce Brothers, who warns parents of "terrible guilts and frustrations" that children suffer from being exposed to normal nudity, also performed no research of her own and apparently based her conclusions on her work with emotionally disturbed children (Smith and Sparks, 1986).

We see from Smith and Sparks that some widely published "experts" are not experts at all, but rather individuals with personal opinions who also happen to be widely read by parents who trust that those opinions are based on formal research.

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Adapted with permission from the Beach Education Advocates for Culture, Health, Environment & Safety

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Beach Ambassadors at a clothing-optional beach are there to...

- Present naturism as a positive, mainstream, non-sexual and life-enhancing social and recreational activity.
- Assist visitors who are new to clothing-optional activities, both by making them at ease and comfortable with their surroundings, and by explaining the accepted standards of Naturist etiquette and courtesy.
- Actively watch for those individuals who, whether through ignorance or intent, violate the accepted standards of Naturist behaviour.
- Take prudent, restrained and legally sanctioned action to counter those who are violating the accepted standards of behaviour or the privacy of others.
- Respect the prerogatives of, and to assist, and not hinder authorities such as police, lifeguards, and council officers.
- Help preserve and maintain the environmental quality, appearance and safety of the beach, and to encourage others to do the same.
- Provide information on naturism and Naturist activities and destinations to interested individuals.
- Present themselves as exemplary citizens, abiding by the standards of Naturist behaviour, etiquette and courtesy.

Potential Concern

Clothing-optional beaches are widespread in many Western countries, and exist with few problems. However, we accept that a public clothing-optional area can attract unwelcome attention by the sexually active. We are all concerned about this issue, but Naturists generally feel that it is unfair to blame isolated incidents of sexual activity that may occur at a clothing-optional beach, simply on the nakedness. Illegal sexual activity can occur at any public place, yet few would suggest closing that place because of the actions of a few individuals. Understandably, the public may seek assurance that such an area will be an asset to the community, not a liability. A key aim of the Group is to ensure such an area is safe for families and females, especially.

Naturists know that the acceptance of our bodies in their totality, as the creation of nature and of nature's God, is wholesome, natural, and conducive to mutual respect for each other. Our advocacy of social nudity in appropriate situations and places is an exemplary message for society: morality inheres in the mind, and is made manifest through our actions. Morality does not reside in any portion of cloth.

Naturists recognise that nudity and sex are distinct. Sexual arousal does not require nudity, and conversely, nudity does not automatically generate sexual activity. While sexual desire is also natural, and sexual activity between loving individuals is wholesome, it is a private matter that has no place in a public setting. Our attitude of total body honesty bears no comparison with the voyeuristic, immature and salacious attitude toward nakedness commonly presented in the media; which research indicates does far more harm to the public than innocent Naturism. As exemplars of true Naturist family values, our intent is to have Naturist beaches as models of safety and propriety. We refuse to allow the actions of a few to interfere with the legitimate enjoyment of non-sexual social nudity. The Beach Ambassadors are there to assure the public of our serious intent to address their concerns.

Public Nakedness in New Zealand Law

First: there is no *statute* prohibiting nakedness in public. In cases of 'public nakedness' the police go to the *Summary Offences Act 1981* and consider:-

- **S27 Obscene/Indecent exposure**
Obscenity requires some element of lewdness or lasciviousness, so this charge is regarded as inappropriate for a case of mere nakedness.
- **S4 Offensive behaviour**
The Ceramalus case of 91 (an appeal to the High Court won) determined that the legal definition of 'offensive' was not met by mere nakedness (even in the presence of school children), in a place where nudity was 'not uncommon' or 'known to occur'.
- **S4 Disorderly behaviour**
The Ceramalus case of 95 (appeal to the High Court lost, appeal to the Court of Appeal declined) indicates that 'the street' is **not** a place where nakedness is known to occur.

So that's why it cannot always be specified that you can or can't go naked (ie: be forensically 'disorderly'). In your own backyard, for instance, if a neighbour decides to take offence and call the police, they may well 'act.' In general though, District Court judges in these cases tend to follow 'expectation', tested with the evidential reaction of those around.

Having said that though, there is a forceful argument worthy of note!

In 1990 New Zealand enacted a statute to affirm recognition of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; which both declare the human person to have inherent dignity and worth. That statute is the Bill of Rights Act.

That 'dignity and worth' obviously must apply to the complete human person – if it is not the whole person, it is meaningless.

Therefore no part of the being which has inherent dignity and worth, can be rationally determined to be an attack on society. No mere *part* of a human form can rationally 'offend' or 'disorder' the average reasonable person – as conflated with the Bill of Rights. If that average reasonable person, that is: the Bill of Rights Act; is not offended or disordered, a reaction that is inconsistent with that now defined norm, must be forensically unreasonable and thus disregarded.

In the case of a local body, any by-law can be enacted, but it cannot impose a penalty greater than that of statute.

Since there is no statute law forbidding nudity, no penalty should apply.

However, since the present situation is that current 'case law' rules, the fact that mere nakedness is legal 'in a place where it is known to occur' or 'is not uncommon' also means that no penalty can apply – as there is plenty of evidence that nudity is 'known to occur' at St Leonards!

For the police view of the matter, see the *Postscript* at the back of this booklet.

As age increases, the need for conformity becomes more apparent to children. It was evident through many children's answers that low-level thinking was conveyed through parents' modesty training. The "pseudo-practical" reasoning mentioned above is used. Rather than revealing parental discomfort with nudity and sexuality, the parent tries to appeal to a concrete, rational reason.

It does indicate, however, that the sex education process has to overcome myriad adult mythologies and rationalizations that prevent children from understanding, accepting, and enjoying the body and its sex organs as natural and normal.

Nudist and Non-Nudist Perceptions At Variance

Body self-concept is an important part of overall self-concept because individuals function within the boundaries of their physical bodies. Lower or negative body self-concept scores have been associated with undue anxiety, lessened ability to enter into intimate expressive relationships, and decreases in motor abilities.

Three- to five-year-old children can validly identify body self-concept. Numerous studies involving older children have indicated significant differences between male and female responses to body self-concept tests – but no such difference has been well defined in younger children. In addition, no earlier studies had examined the role of family social nudity classification on body self-concept development. This study may be the most useful resource for nudist families, as it tries to establish a relationship between the two.

Marilyn Story (1979) interviewed 264 three- to five-year-old children and their parents. These subjects were chosen and matched based on family nudity status: social nudist, "at-home-only nudist," or non-nudist. Subjects were all North Americans, with approximately equal numbers sampled from all geographic regions in the United States.

The parents were individually interviewed to determine the children's ages, sexes, weights, and birth order. Each child was given an individually administered test, consisting of the interviewer pointing to a body part on a line drawing of a nude child the same race and sex as the child being interviewed, and asking, "Do you like your _____?"

This was repeated for 16 body parts (although the study did not state which specific body parts were listed). While viewing the drawings, the child was also asked, "What part of your body do you like best? Why?" and "What part of your body do you like least? Why?" The answers to these questions were categorized and assigned numerical values.

For non-nudist children, answers to the questions "What part of your body do you like best?" and "What part of your body do you like least?" showed no relationship to race or geographical location. Gender was significant, with females most often liking their hair, eyes, nose or mouth, and boys liking their arms or genitals; however, non-nudist girls and boys most often named their genitals as least liked.

For nudist children (including "at-home-only" nudists), answers to the above questions yielded very different results. Both boys and girls most often stated that their genitals were the best liked part. Nudist boys and girls also most often answered that they had no body parts they did not like (although they often expressed dissatisfaction with their skin: not because of racial coloring or deformity, but because of sunburn or too little tanning).

Story also found that nudism was a more important variable in body self-concept than were sex, race, and geographical area. The relationship between nudism and body part least liked was significant (roughly a 1 in 10,000 probability of being only a random result), as discussed above.

In the analysis of the 16 body part test, nudist males scored higher than non-nudist males and females, and nudist females scored higher than non-nudist males and females. When nudity classification was not a variable, the differences in scores were far less significant, with nudist males scoring higher than nudist females, and non-nudist males scoring higher than non-nudist females.

Family nudism was found to have a higher correlation to increased body self-concept than did sex, race, or geographical area. Nudist children consistently scored higher than non-nudist children did in all areas of body acceptance, self-concept, and self-image.

measures on comfort included acceptance of lifestyles that some would consider immoral or undesirable (such as premarital sex, or acceptance of homosexuality).

The other factors (sleeping in the parental bed and parental comfort/acceptance of sexuality), while not germane to the narrow scope of this discussion, also demonstrated a positive correlation with childhood exposure and adult sexual adjustment and comfort.

For males aged 0-5 nudity was inversely related to reported discomfort about affection and physical contact; in other words, increased exposure to nudity was related to less discomfort regarding affection and physical contact. Nudity during 0-5 was not significantly related to any other adjustment variables. Nudity during ages 6-11 was positively related to increased self-esteem and knowledge about sex.

For females, nudity during ages 0-5 was related only to increased frequency of sex related to others (i.e., more frequent sexual encounters). Nudity during 0-5 was not related to any other adjustment variables. Nudity during 6-11 was positively related to an increased tendency to engage in casual sexual relationships.

These results suggest that children's exposure to sleeping in the parental bed and exposure to nudity are not related to sexual maladjustment. In fact, exposure to these events was correlated to higher self-esteem and comfort with sexuality. In addition, children whose parents were comfortable and accepting of sexuality had even higher levels of self-esteem and comfort.

These results would suggest that the anecdotal reports of "damage" caused by these childhood events are exceptions to the rule, and that commonly held beliefs and societal taboos need to be re-examined.

Children's Perceptions of Nudity & Society

Many parents are reluctant to allow their children to be naked during play or sleep. When they explain this to the child they often do not use moral reasons, but pseudo-practical ones (such as, "You might catch a cold").

Parents also transfer their discomfort with nakedness to the naming of body parts, often using vague terms such as "it" or "down there," rather than penis, scrotum, vulva, clitoris, and anus. Frequently, the genitals and perineum are not mentioned at all.

Ron and Juliette Goldman (1981) interviewed 838 children from North America, England, Australia, and Sweden. The children ranged in age from five to 15 years old. Each child was individually interviewed and asked questions designed to elicit responses indicating the child's understanding of wearing clothing, nudity (as viewed by society as a whole), and modesty.

Researchers asked the children three questions: "Suppose we all lived in a nice warm place; should we need to wear clothes?" "Why should this be so?" (i.e., what are the reasons for saying "yes" or "no") and, "Some people feel shy or funny about [revealing] certain parts of the body; why should this be so?"

There were variations in the exact wording for younger or slower [sic] children, but after trial interviews the above questions appeared to have little ambiguity for children of all ages. The responses were coded and scored in order to assess each child's level of cognitive reasoning for the answers given. No references were made to the family nudity status, although this may have been an influential factor.

This study found that English-speaking children were the most adamant that clothes were necessary, even in hot climates; and North American children were the most insistent of all. English speakers were also less likely to advance to the highest level of moral thinking with regard to reasons for embarrassment when nude, and reasons for wearing or not wearing clothes.

The Swedish children seemed to score consistently higher, and seemed to be much less clothes-insistent although they live in a colder climate and would have more reason to expect that clothing should be worn. The Goldmans point out that sex education in Swedish schools is compulsory after age eight, and the northern European traditions of sauna and FKK ("Freikörperkultur," or "free body culture") are well established in Sweden.

This cultural difference is not as evident when examining the reasons for wearing clothes and why people might feel embarrassed when naked. The picture revealed by children's perceptions was one in which nakedness, and especially sexual nakedness, is strongly tinged with guilt.

Working with Authorities

It is not our intent that Beach Ambassadors should usurp or interfere with the prerogatives of the police, or other public service officers. Our task is to be a citizen's watch, much in the manner that a volunteer neighbourhood crime patrol assists the police in any community. It is recommended that Beach Ambassadors develop a cooperative relationship with the police and council officers, and arrange meetings to define the role of the Ambassadors, as necessary. If possible, the Ambassadors should carry, or have readily available, mobile phones with which to summon the police, if necessary.

Working with Beach Goers

Beach Ambassadors must be diplomats. While we are there to watch for those few individuals who may spoil the beach experience for others, we don't want to do anything to ruin the experience for the decent and law-abiding majority. Beach Ambassadors should work to ensure the trust and respect of beach goers by being helpful when needed, and non-intrusive at other times. While watching for potential law-breakers is an important component of a Beach Ambassador's duties, in practice far more time will be spent on providing information and assisting the genuine beach users.

Ambassadors should actively seek the co-operation of all beach goers in bringing any questionable behaviour they may witness, to the attention of the Beach Ambassadors, the Council Patrol or the police, rather than simply tolerating any activity they find offensive. Regular beach users must be made to realise that they must assume some share with us in the task of maintaining a safe and friendly environment at the beach, if only by voicing their objection to those who violate the accepted standards of behaviour.

Naturist Tourist Information

Tourists, both domestic and international, are often short of time. So they commonly go for urban beaches. Beach Ambassadors therefore will sometimes function as a "Naturist tourist bureau."

A likely question is, "Where can I find other Naturist beaches and resorts?" So it would be useful for Ambassadors to have some familiarity with the 'national scene' by having a copy of the *Naturist-Friendly Venues* guide.

Visitors also seek information on local attractions, entertainment and dining. Keep in mind that we are open to sponsorship from establishments that aim to attract visiting tourists.

Some years ago, Bill Shelley, a well-known identity in Waiuku, was charged with indecent exposure when, from across the street, the paper-girl (13), saw him naked in his house, through an open door. The District Court judge threw the charge out and berated the police for bringing it.

During the nineties, Whangarei police hit national headlines by telling a caller they 'couldn't do anything' about her neighbour painting his house naked.

North Shore City, though, has reacted to complaints by trying to ban nudity. Result? A poorly worded by-law and sometimes over-zealous enforcement attempts by temporary Beach Patrols (primarily there to deal with dogs).

A prominent Civil Liberties barrister has given a formal opinion that, tested in court, the by-law would be proved *ultra vires* (illegal) on several grounds, including breach of the Bill of Rights Act 1990. In the meantime, Naturists and skinny-dippers at St Leonards should be aware of the by-law, and exercise due prudence.

Environmental Issues

Naturists are concerned that beach areas are preserved in a pristine condition. Beach Ambassadors should watch for individuals whose actions are detrimental to the beach environment.

- Beach Ambassadors should advise visitors not to intrude into environmentally sensitive areas such as dunes, and not to pick or otherwise damage dune flora. (Not a problem at St Leonards, of course, but useful at Papamoa and Uretiti, for example.)
- Beach Ambassadors should seek to prevent visitors from leaving litter at the beach. Glass containers are a particular hazard and should not be allowed on the beach at all. Other rubbish should be taken back for disposal. Fauna can be harmed if they ingest plastic, and can become hopelessly entangled in items such as six-pack rings and similar items.
- Cigarette filters and other small items are particularly problematic, as they are not easily removed from the beach. Smokers should be encouraged to dispose of their cigarette butts properly, and not leave them in the ocean or on the sand.

Code of Etiquette and Behaviour

Visitors to the beach are expected to behave in a civil and courteous manner, and not interfere with each other's privacy and ability to enjoy the beach experience. Aside from nudity being conditionally permitted, these are the same standards in effect at all comparable public places. For the overwhelming majority of beach visitors, these standards of behaviour come naturally and do not need to be detailed. A small percentage of people will come to the beach without a full understanding of the non-provocative nature of the Naturist experience, but most of these, when informed of the rules, will either go away disappointed, or voluntarily reform their behaviour. Unfortunately, a small number of true irremediable troublemakers will need to be dealt with, as is true in society at large. For this reason, it is necessary to discuss acceptable standards of behaviour in some detail, and how Beach Ambassadors should deal with specific activities and behaviours.

In evaluating behaviour, Beach Ambassadors should be fair and impartial, and neither practice nor allow, any discrimination based on considerations such as disability, gender, race, ethnicity, creed, or sexual orientation.



For over 50 years, traditional use of St Leonards has been without togs for most people. But a few who don't know the rules of courtesy here, put our freedom in doubt by making women and families feel uncomfortable.

The rules are simple and observance is crucial!

**KEEP YOUR DISTANCE
DO NOT STARE or GAWK**

Free Beaches NZ Inc.

Vital information

Pass on these cards to others

Radios

Keep at a low volume

Rubbish

Take out more than you brought in

Photo / Video taking

Only with permission

Causing discomfort to others

Breach of by-law: Patrol informed

Appearance of sexual contact

Not tolerated – police called

Above are both sides of a card available, describing the Naturist code of behaviour and etiquette, intended for newcomers. It can also be used to reinforce a verbal warning to anyone violating the code.

Social Nudism: The Effects on Children Three Studies

By Bill Peckenpaugh

"Is children's exposure to nudity harmful?"

This question looms large in the minds of nudists as some political and religious groups strive to ban social nudism, and even to classify artwork and photographs portraying mere nudity as "pornography."

Many popular child-rearing "experts" are quick to blame any number of childhood ills on a child's early exposure to nudity. Can this really be the case? One source of confusion is an inevitable discomfort of many people – parents and educators included – in respect to anything that smacks of childhood sexuality.

The researching of children's sexuality resembles a drive through the desert: long stretches of 'nothing,' interspersed with brief viewings of activity of some interest.

Alayne Yates (1979) has cited the sparse and confusing history of scholarly study of the general topic of children's sexuality, and specifically the paucity of concise reference materials for parents and educators.

In the United States, research of this nature has historically been seen as unnecessary (the mildest reaction), intrusive (a common belief among educators is that children's sexuality is the purview of the parents alone), or evil (especially among individuals and groups subscribing to certain religious codes and dogma).

The impediments to research present a special problem for families and groups that do not share the prevalent views regarding sexuality in general, and nudity/modesty in particular.

Smith and Sparks (1986) cite numerous examples of families who are nudists but who routinely hide that aspect of their lives for fear that others will find out and disapprove. They fear disapproval because they do not have any base of scholarly research to support their beliefs that the body is a normal and healthy entity, and that non-sexual nudity is not harmful for children (and in fact is beneficial).

Fortunately for nudist families, several researchers have taken an interest in the subject of nudity and children's development. Unfortunately, few others have chosen to replicate their research, possibly due to the reasons outlined by Yates.

This article will review and assess three relevant research studies:

- Robin Lewis and Louis Janda's 1988 study, "The relationship between adult sexual adjustment and childhood experiences regarding exposure to nudity, sleeping in the parental bed, and parental attitudes toward sexuality";
- Ron and Juliette Goldman's 1981 study, "Children's perceptions of clothes and nakedness: A cross-national study";
- Marilyn Story's 1979 study, "Factors associated with more positive body self-concepts in preschool children."

Childhood Influences On Adult Adjustment

Lewis and Janda (1988) examined the relationship between adult sexual adjustment and childhood exposure to nudity, sleeping in the parental bed, and parental attitudes toward sexuality. They pointed out that prior studies had presented conflicting findings: Some researchers had warned of dire consequences for children viewing nudity, while others had reported benefits.

A common theme was that if parents "forced" themselves to be nude in front of the child (in order to educate the child about basic anatomical differences), and the parents were not comfortable with this nudity, the experience would likely be neutral or negative. It seems that the issue, then, is not nudity per se, but family attitudes toward acceptable and comfortable behavior.

Lewis and Janda recruited 210 undergraduate university students as subjects for their study. All subjects completed an extensive questionnaire measuring three basic experiences during childhood (defined as the period from birth to eleven years): sleeping in bed with the parents; parental attitudes toward and comfort with sexuality; and viewing parents, siblings, and friends nude. Information on current sexual comfort and adjustment was also obtained using an extensive questionnaire.

The study found a positive correlation between childhood exposure to nudity and adult sexual comfort. The authors point out, however, that some would see this as a reason to prevent childhood exposure to nudity, as their

Littering and a lack of environmental awareness destroy pristine beaches.

Beach Ambassadors should set a good example by routinely picking up stray litter on the beach. Litter is unsightly and often hazardous. Deliberate offenders should be encouraged to clean up after themselves. Cigarette butts are a particular problem, and smokers should be encouraged not to throw their cigarette butts in the sea or the sand. Cigarette filters are not biodegradable! Beach Ambassadors should prevent damage to environmentally sensitive areas such as dunes by discouraging trampling or removal of plants, though again, that's not an issue at St Leonards.

Rude, inconsiderate, obnoxious or drunken behaviour is offensive to all beach visitors.

Often, such behaviour will elicit a spontaneous reprimand from fellow beach goers, and will stop without other intervention. Where such behaviour rises to creating disorder, the police should be called if a reprimand is not effective.

Beach Ambassadors themselves must maintain sobriety at the beach. Those whose beach visits routinely include overindulgence in alcohol should never be selected to be Beach Ambassadors. At a beach where drinking is permitted, a drink or two, such as would be within the standards for safe and legal driving, is acceptable. But a Beach Ambassador who wants to indulge beyond this on any occasion must do so as a private individual, and should cease to act as an Ambassador for that occasion, and take off his or her Beach Ambassador hat.

Conclusion

Free Beaches NZ Inc. welcomes the opportunity to demonstrate that a Naturist beach can peacefully exist, and help the local community prosper. We hope our honesty in discussing potential abuse is seen in the light of our genuine expectation that our presence can mitigate a situation which has arisen from a miss-targeted attack on nakedness rather than the inappropriate behaviour, which annoys everybody. Abuse may be statistically rare, but we are committed to ensuring that those incidents that do occur are dealt with decisively.

Our goal as Beach Ambassadors is to create a shared sense of community, and a feeling of safety and security for all beach visitors, especially females and families. As Naturists, we know that our chosen lifestyle is truly positive, tolerant of differences, and a genuine enhancement of our lives. The Beach Ambassadors try to convey this message to the public at large, to contribute toward a wider acceptance of Naturism as the pure, wholesome, and indeed completely natural lifestyle that we know it to be.

Surveys indicate the New Zealand public is fairly relaxed about mere nakedness outdoors – but you have to be careful about checking the survey question! Asked something like: 'If you saw a naked man reading a book in this park, would that be offensive?' up to 50% might say 'yes.' But if you ask: 'If you saw a naked man reading a book in this park, would that be offensive to you?' The likely response is only 2% - 8% saying 'yes.' There is also the matter of expectation: in a Broadcasting Standards Authority survey it was evident that 50% were concerned about TV 'sex' *on behalf of children*: only about 20% were concerned on their own behalf.

NATURIST BEACH ETIQUETTE

Respect non-Naturist neighbours. Use appropriate covering outside the accepted clothing-optional area.

Respect others' privacy. Sit at a comfortable distance from others. Respect your neighbour's space. Looking is normal, but staring is rude and unacceptable behaviour. Lewd or derogatory comments are immature and unwelcome. Keep music volume low.

No sexual activity is allowed. Responsible Naturist beach users have zero tolerance for lewd behaviour. We actively support the arrest and prosecution of all sexual offenders.

Photos: Ask first! Practice common courtesy, and ask for the consent of your subjects before taking any photos. Minors should never be photographed without the express consent of parents. All photography must be free of lewd content.

Keeping it clean & pristine. Don't litter. Keep the beach clean – pick up stray litter you find. Glass containers are NOT allowed on the beach. Smokers – cigarette butts do NOT belong in the sea or on the sand, dispose of them properly. Stay out of the dunes and other environmentally sensitive areas.

Do your part as a good citizen to keep the beach safe and secure for all. Don't tolerate inappropriate behaviour, but report it to a Beach Ambassador, council patrol or police at once. An effective hold-up for perverts is their own medicine – stare at them persistently!

Violations of Law and Cases of Imminent Danger

The term 'Ambassador' does not mean 'vigilante.' On our own, we can only seek to reprimand and correct minor offences and breaches of etiquette. Beach Ambassadors should refer cases of criminal activity and situations where there is a clear threat to any person's life, safety, or dignity, to the police. In such situations an ambassador is expected to stay on, if at all possible, to help police.

Minor Offences and Breaches of Etiquette

Be polite and firm, not aggressive. "Maybe you didn't realise it, but what you're doing isn't considered acceptable behaviour on this beach." If this message is received positively, and the behaviour stops, there may be an opportunity for a friendly introduction to Naturist philosophy. If at all possible, we want to make friends and not enemies. But be wary of those who say they agree with you, and then later resume their offensive behaviour; you should keep an eye open to make sure the message has truly been received.

If the message is ignored or received with indifference, then take a firmer stance. "I've warned you this behaviour isn't acceptable, and if you keep it up, I'll call the police." If the person becomes belligerent or continues to ignore you, keep your distance, and don't do anything to provoke violence. Summon the police immediately.

Be a Mediator

Sometimes beach goers themselves may react to what they consider inappropriate behaviour, and can over-react. For example, a photographer may be threatened with having his camera thrown into the sea, or a gawker may be threatened with bodily harm. So a Beach Ambassador might need to step in as a mediator, to defuse the tension in such a situation and try to calm things down. Avoid direct confrontation, and if the situation threatens to get out of hand, call the police.

Specific Activities and Behaviours with Recommended Beach Ambassador Intervention

Displays of affection, such as kissing and hugging, are accepted in many public situations. Such activities, as long as they do not include any specifically sexual activity, are permissible.

Beach Ambassadors should not intrude on those who are engaged in benign displays of affection. However, particularly with newcomers, there is a danger of such activity escalating to an overtly sexual level. Therefore a Beach Ambassador should monitor such situations to ensure they remain inoffensive. But should overtly sexual activity occur, immediate action should be taken.

Sexual activity, involving touching one's own or another's sexual organs, with the intent or effect of causing sexual arousal, must not be tolerated. (But note that the mere touching of the sexual organs, if done with non-sexual intent, such as to apply sun block, brush off sand, or to relieve an itch, is harmless.) Also, any activity leading to sexual arousal, even if no direct contact with the sexual organs is involved, is impermissible.

A Beach Ambassador should recognise that some people, through a misunderstanding of the nature and intent of the clothing-optional beach experience, may be led to activities which we would not condemn if pursued in private between caring individuals. In short, they may simply get carried away with their emotions, without a full realisation that a public beach is not an appropriate place for such activity. If these individuals are informed of the proper standards, and cease their behaviour, no further action may be necessary. On the other hand, a Beach Ambassador should not hesitate to call the authorities if criminal activity occurs.

Invasion of privacy in an intrusive or suggestive manner, whether involving an unwanted approach or worse: lewd and suggestive language; must not be tolerated.

In situations where an immediate threat to the safety or dignity of the offended party exists, a Beach Ambassador should not hesitate to call the police. In less threatening instances, as long as the offender is keeping his distance, he should be informed of the rules of conduct first, to see if he will voluntarily cease his behaviour. If he doesn't stop immediately, or if he gains unreasonably close contact with his target, a call to the authorities may be warranted.

Offensive language, either of a sexual or derogatory nature, is a violation of the Naturist code of tolerance and respect for all individuals.

In mild cases, such as a quick passing comment, ignoring the offender may be the best course of action, particularly if the person at whom the remarks are addressed is not upset. Rude people are often looking for attention, and if they are ignored they tend to move on. But if the remarks are clearly making someone uncomfortable, or are persistent, unreasonably suggestive or abusive, a Beach Ambassador should step in to mediate the situation.

Naturist families should be assured of a safe and protective environment at our beach. From the beginning of the modern Naturist movement, family values and the pure, wholesome nature of naked family recreation has been emphasised. We believe that by removing a temptation our children may otherwise have to explore gender differences on their own, in an uncontrolled setting, we are greatly reducing the likelihood of their engaging in precocious or promiscuous sexual activity (a view backed by research). As Naturists, we categorically condemn, and disassociate ourselves from any individual or group that would seek to harm or to exploit our children in any way whatsoever.

Any sexual approaches aimed at a minor must be dealt with promptly and decisively. This is emphatically not a situation where any attempt should be made merely at dissuasion. A Beach Ambassador should call the police immediately, and act to protect the child from harm. Further, a firm commitment is made by the Group to do the utmost to ensure the prosecution of any individual who would do harm to children, including being prepared to make an official complaint and testify in court at any criminal proceedings. We want all deviant individuals off our beach, off our streets, and out of society at large.

Gawkers (or 'perverts') are an annoyance to many beach visitors, who, while comfortable in the presence of other Naturist beach users, may be offended by visitors, clothed or not; strolling the beach or observing them from a distance.

Persistent loiterers should be asked to leave – they are breaking the first part of many councils' by-law by 'disturbing the enjoyment' of the area. Otherwise, there is no law against clothed visitors strolling a beach, as long as their behaviour is not otherwise offensive. Such visitors may not necessarily intend any affront; they may simply be curious. Some may be newcomers who are hesitant to sample the clothing-optional beach experience, and may just need time to reassure themselves, so it is in our own best interest to be tolerant unless there is a clear intent toward outright voyeurism evident. Intervention is necessary if the gawker fixes his attention on an individual, rather than just walking around.

Photography at clothing-optional beaches is a troublesome issue. Naturist etiquette, and indeed common courtesy; dictates that a photographer should first obtain the permission of his subjects. We have no issue with innocent photography at the beach, where the consent of the subjects has first been obtained.

Unfortunately, obtaining a subject's permission is not a legal requirement for an amateur photographer taking pictures in a public place. There's no legal basis to have such a person removed from the beach. Often, a spontaneous mass vocal reaction from beach users will drive a photographer from the beach. Otherwise, a Beach Ambassador can only use persuasion: presenting this as an issue of common courtesy and fairness, and by trying to evoke empathy in the photographer for the subject's desire for privacy and anonymity. It will probably also be necessary to explain the legal situation to offended beach users, who may want to know why we are not more aggressive in our actions. The authorities may need to be summoned if there is an impasse between a photographer and the beach users, particularly if the situation shows signs of escalating into a brawl or public disturbance.

News media photographers are allowed to take photographs of recognisable subjects in public places without their consent, if there is an issue or event of public interest. Here the freedom of the press and the right of the public to be informed has to be balanced with the rights to privacy of the subjects. In practice media organisations are usually fairly careful to avoid a potential court case.

If the local or national media has decided to cover a Naturist beach as a "newsworthy event," they are within their legal rights. Any Naturist group on the beach should then do their best to cooperate with the media to ensure a fair and reasonable presentation. Some beach users may fear negative repercussions from employers or their communities if they are photographed at a Naturist beach. This should be made known to the photographers, so such individuals have an opportunity to remove themselves from the limelight. Otherwise, unbiased and sympathetic coverage true Naturist values should be welcomed if it is to be presented in an honest and non-sensational fashion.