

Children with Concerning and /or Harmful Sexual Behaviours

Supervision and Safety Planning

Whilst we take the position that the young person who has displayed harmful sexual behaviour is responsible for their own actions, we recognise that working with that young person to take responsibility for their own and others' safety can take time. In the short term, a home safety plan is required where family members take a leading role by clarifying family rules, developing boundaries and increasing supervision within the home.

Safe care planning is an opportunity to communicate openly about what has happened and what needs to be done differently for the future. We encourage families to recognise what values are important for them and in particular how they can show respect in their relationships with each other, show age-appropriate responsibilities and allow each other privacy. This is facilitated through whole-family negotiation. Safety is achieved through attention to detail, such as the management of play dates and sleepovers, everyday rules such as safe use of the internet, respect for privacy in bedrooms and bathrooms, and whether or not a baby alarm is needed in the early stages. In addition, the process provides a platform for safety stories to be heard and celebrated. To encourage co-operation and participation we phrase the agreed rules using words and phrases that are future orientated and positive rather than negative, that is "will be doing" rather than "won't be doing".

It is important to involve the family in the process of increasing and maintaining levels of safety. Family members provide insight into how individual members conduct themselves independently, the overall functioning and culture of the family and the values and attitudes that are held.

A fully developed safety plan is not a quick fix. It is a robust detailed reflection of what the family will be doing differently in the future, reviewed and amended accordingly to fit ongoing assessed levels of safety.

1. Decrease the opportunity for behaviours to emerge by ensuring:
 - Adequate supervision of your child while interacting with other children.
 - Supervision means your child is in the sight of an informed adult.
 - Discourage games your child may have used during the sexualised behaviour.
 - Your child is sleeping in their own bedroom.
2. Teaching sexual safety and privacy rules
 - Development of house rules with all family members, regarding privacy, bathing, toileting and nudity.
 - Reinforcement of these in the school setting.
 - Consideration of referring siblings residing in the family home to SECASA for protective behaviour education.
3. Checking in with your child
 - Spend time talking with your child about their feelings, both positive and negative, and their problems.
 - Discuss, educate and reinforce strategies developed in counselling, with your child, emphasising open communication and safe ways to express their feelings.
4. Interrupt and redirect misuse of power and problem sexual behaviours.
 - Give clear messages about privacy and personal boundaries.
 - Interrupt and identify the impact the behaviour has or could have on others.
 - Discuss with and educate your child with appropriate ways of expressing themselves, rather than acting out with problem sexual behaviours.
 - Discourage bossiness or aggression in your child in their interactions with other children.
 - Encourage your child to give their best rather than be the best or the first in the activities.

5. Support your Child
 - By staying calm when intervening and talking with your child shows support and encouragement.
 - Role modelling healthy boundaries, communication and expression of feelings.
 - Giving praise and encouragement for your child's efforts.
6. Limit experiences that increase sexual thoughts
 - Avoid exposure to violent, pornographic or sexually explicit material.
 - Interrupt sexual jokes or stories that detail harm to others.
 - Give clear consistent messages about what is sexually acceptable and appropriate.
 - If you are unsure seek professional help and support.

Where to get help?

SECASA Crisis Line (24 Hours)

03 9594 2289

secasa@monashhealth.org

DHHS Child Protection – Southern Region

1300 65 795

DHHS Child Protection – After Hours

13 12 78

Additional sources of information

Age appropriate sexual behaviour in children and young people – Information Booklet for Carers and Professionals June 2018

SECASA

www.secasa.com.au

E-Safety Commission website

esafety.gov.au