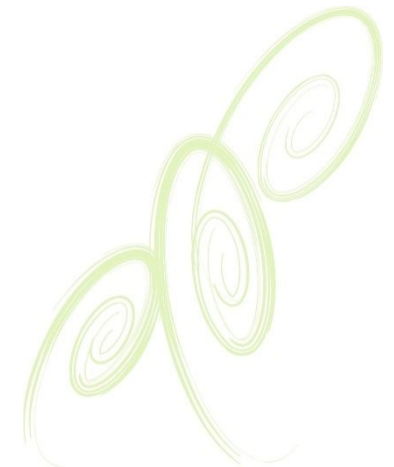


What Can Adults Do?

Strategies for Preventing Child Sexual Abuse

National Sexual Violence Prevention Hui
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Workshop Plan

- What is prevention?
- Obstacles to prevention
- Strategies to deal with them
- Sharing the load – a socio-ecological model of prevention
- A few principles for you to consider....
- Resources

What is Prevention?

- A public health approach
- Primary, secondary and tertiary strategies
- Keeping the focus on prevention:
 - *drift*
 - *who's responsible?*
 - *being harmed vs harming*

Obstacles to Prevention #1

What is normal/expected regarding children's sexual behaviour? What's not?



What is normal/expected regarding adult sexual behaviour?

SEXUAL BEHAVIOURS IN CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE



A guide to **IDENTIFY, UNDERSTAND** and **RESPOND** to sexual behaviours

Knowing how to identify and respond to sexual behaviours in children and young people helps adults to support the development of healthy sexuality and protect young people from harm or abuse.

Sexuality is integral to a person's identity and develops throughout life. It is natural for children and young people to explore their sexuality through their behaviour. Healthy sexual behaviour may be expressed in a variety of ways through play and relationships, and varies to the stage of development.

Sexual behaviours are not just about sex. They include any talk, touch, questions, conversations and interests which relate to sexuality and relationships.

When children or young people display sexual behaviour, professionals, their carers/families or support teams should take responsibility to take action to provide support and protection.

Children and young people who have disabilities have been abused or have experienced other disruptions to their development or socialisation, may be at increased risk of exposure to, or of displaying, unsafe or harmful sexual behaviours. Adults who care for these young people have a duty of care to provide relevant information and support.

1. IDENTIFY

What is the behaviour? Sexual development is a long process and the development of sexual behaviours has a significant relationship with the development of the brain. Professionals should establish whether the young person is sexual, based on the current level of development.

The chart on the next page (orange and red light) explains why and how to respond to sexual behaviours, taking into account the age and ability of the young person.

Use the traffic light model to identify the level of the behaviour and to plan the appropriate response. Professionals should consider the following:



red	sexual behaviours that require immediate response to provide immediate protection
orange	sexual behaviours that require a response, but do not require immediate protection
green	sexual behaviours that are not harmful and do not require a response

Responding positively to sexual behaviours: the Traffic Lights model

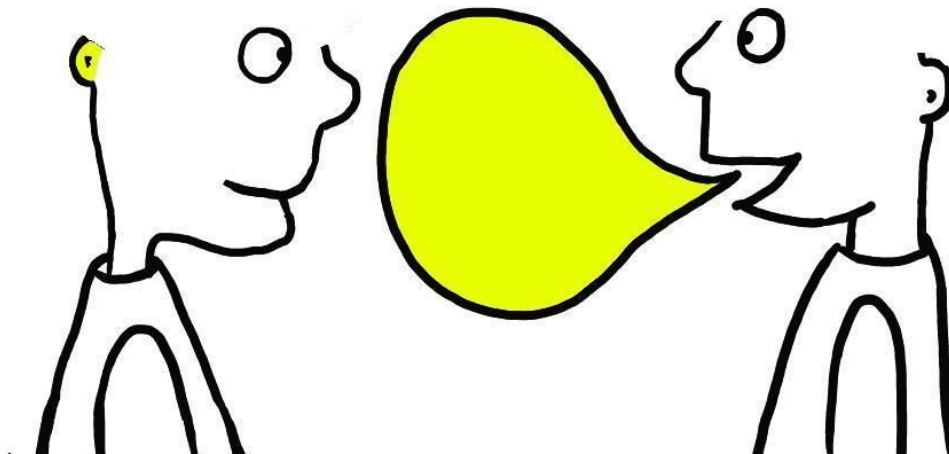
A guide for professionals to **IDENTIFY, UNDERSTAND** and **RESPOND** to sexual behaviours in special education settings



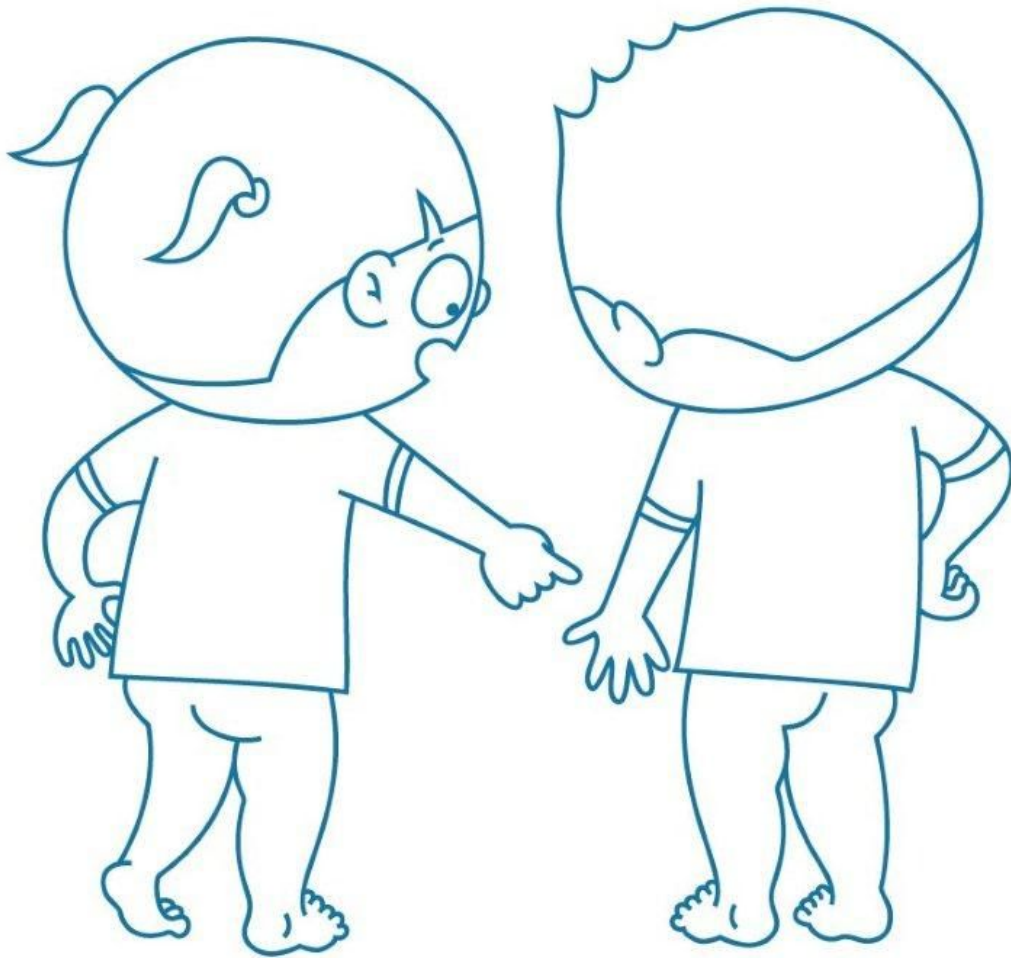
Obstacles to Prevention #2

How to have a 'difficult conversation'

- with kids about sex
- with adults about attitudes and behaviours
- with someone who can help



Whakatipu resource (SKIP)



Talk soon. Talk often.

Tips for parents talking to their kids about sex

1. Talk soon. Talk often. Listen too.



2. Offer lots of little conversations over time from toddlerhood to teenhood, not one 'big talk'.

3. Start talking about bodies when your child is an infant, and use the correct names for body parts: penis, testes, scrotum, vulva, vagina, breasts.

4. Sexual health is not just about having sex, it's bodies, babies, growing up, being a girl, being a boy, love, sexual expression, feelings, personal values, decisions and relationships.

FACT: Puberty can start at 8 (mostly at 10 or 11), and can continue until 18 (but can be later).

5. Do not just wait for your children to ask questions.

6. Take advantage of teachable moments. Use prompts from TV, magazines, experiences with friends, music and the Internet to start conversations and 'hypotheticals'.

7. Answer questions honestly and simply. Just a little bit of information is OK because you can always come back to it (and you should).

8. Good communication needs two-way talk, not one-way lectures.



FACT: By the end of high school, about 50% of young people have had sex. And 50% have not had sex.

9. Be a 'tellable' parent — make yourself available, unshockable and listen.



10. It's never too late to start. If you are feeling self-conscious, avoid eye-contact and start a conversation when you're in the car or doing the dishes.

11. Don't assume every child is heterosexual: about 10% of the population will be same-sex attracted.

12. If you don't know how to respond to a question it is OK to say so. Say something like, 'That's a good question. I don't know how to answer it. I'll find out and get back to you,' or 'We can find out together'.

FACT: Research shows: children who talk about sexuality with their parents start having sex later.

13. Continue to show your child affection even when they are going through puberty. Regular hugs can communicate a lot.

14. Find out when and what your child is learning at school about sexual health so you can be prepared.

15. Let your kids know about using condoms even if you disapprove of them having sex.

16. Leave age-appropriate brochures and books with accurate information on sexuality around for your children to read.

This tip sheet is adapted from Talk soon. Talk often., a publication for parents produced by the Western Australian Department of Health, based on research and development by the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society at La Trobe University, Victoria.

Helplines - national coverage

- Plunketline: 0800 933 922
- What's Up: 0800 WHATS UP
- Youthline: 0800 376 633
- CYF line: 0508 FAMILY
- Crimestoppers: 0800 555 111



Obstacles to Prevention #3

- language and labels



A Socio-Ecological Model of Prevention

- Many components to successful prevention
- Need comprehensive approach to planning, drafting, implementing and evaluating
- Burden of prevention distributed across community members, organisations and social structures

Adapted from National Sexual Violence Resource Centre bulletin, based on Townsend (2008)

The Role of Individuals

- Talking about CSA and passing on info they learn- **'Right2BSafe'**
- Challenging problematic viewpoints
- Raising concerns about risky behaviours or situations- **It's not OK campaign**
- Seeking early help for their own problematic thoughts or behaviours
- Encouraging those with problems to get help

Adapted from National Sexual Violence Resource Centre bulletin, based on Townsend (2008)

Parents/Caregivers

- Establishing healthy boundaries – **Aroha in Action**
- Promoting respectful interactions
- Monitoring children's interaction with others
- Supporting children and family members to challenge violence they see or experience
- Identifying and addressing warning signs of HSBs in children and adults – **Stop It Now!**

Adapted from National Sexual Violence Resource Centre bulletin, based on Townsend (2008)

Families/whanau/communities

- Modelling respectful, safe behaviour
- Creating open and loving lines of communication that allow children to disclose abuse and adults to talk about it
- Learning to identify risky behaviours and situations so they can connect children and adults to appropriate services and interventions-

Adapted from National Sexual Violence Resource Centre bulletin, based on Townsend (2008)

Advocates

- Working to educate society about CSA – Rape Prevention Education, Child Matters, local agencies
- Supporting communities to become actively engaged in prevention
- Working with at risk children and their families to lower the risk of abuse – A&D sector, Housing
- Assisting parents to access resources and support

Adapted from National Sexual Violence Resource Centre bulletin, based on Townsend (2008)

Researchers, Government and NGOs

- Conducting studies to learn more about CSA and evaluate prevention programmes - **Stop it Now! Scotland**
- Supporting those who work with parents to:
 - help them provide safe care
 - access practical resources to cope with challenges
 - identify risky behaviours and situations
 - know where to go for advice/help – [Children's Action Plan](#)

Adapted from National Sexual Violence Resource Centre bulletin, based on Townsend (2008)

The Criminal Justice System

- Demonstrating to potential offenders and the community at large that child sexual abuse is a serious crime and will be punished accordingly
- Provision of rehabilitation programmes which prevent reoffending and promote hope and change

Adapted from National Sexual Violence Resource Centre bulletin, based on Townsend (2008)

Some Principles to Consider...

- Child sexual abuse is preventable - not inevitable
- To stop child sexual abuse we need to talk about how we can prevent it
- Child sexual abuse requires a multi agency, comprehensive approach — we cannot simply ‘arrest’ our way out of it

Source: Stop It Now! UK and Ireland

Some Principles to Consider...

Continued

- Adults need to take responsibility for preventing child sexual abuse
- Adults who are worried about their own thoughts and behaviours need to come forward for help

Source: Stop It Now! UK and Ireland

