

FACT SHEET — *This fact sheet is for parents, carers, educators and members of community groups.*

## Children and young people with concerning or harmful sexual behaviours

At CASA we take the view that the young person who has displayed harmful sexual behaviours is responsible for their own actions. However, we also recognize that children and young people display problem sexual behaviours as a result of several factors and that they need support and redirection to re-establish appropriate behaviours.

### Home safety plan

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. It's important to involve the whole family in this as different family members can provide

insight into how others conduct themselves. The safety planning conversation is an opportunity to talk openly about what's happened, and what needs to be done differently in the future.

We encourage families to recognize what values are important for them and how they can show respect towards each other, show age-appropriate responsibilities and give each other privacy. 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 a baby alarm is needed.

This whole family approach process provides a way for safety stories to be heard and acknowledged. To encourage everyone to get involved, we suggest the use of words and phrases that are future orientated and positive. For example: "will be doing" rather than "won't be doing".

A fully developed safety plan is not a quick fix. It details what the family will be doing differently in the future and should be reviewed and amended accordingly.

### How to create a home safety plan

Don't allow situations where problem behaviours can occur

- Ensure 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 sexualized behavior; and
- Make sure your child sleeps in their own room.

#### Limit or stop 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; and
- If you are unsure seek professional help and support.

#### Interrupt and redirect misuse of power and problem behaviours

- Give clear messages about privacy and personal boundaries;
- Interrupt and identify the impact the behaviour has or could have on others;
- Discuss with your child with appropriate ways of expressing themselves, and educate them about how they act out with problem behaviours;
- Discourage bossiness or aggression in your child in their interactions with other children; and
- Encourage your child to 'give their best' rather than 'be the best' or the first in the activities.

#### Teach sexual safety and privacy rules

- Develop house rules with all family members, regarding privacy, bathing, toileting and nudity;
- Reinforce these in the school setting; and
- Offer siblings (living in the family home) protective behaviour support and education.

#### Check in with your child

- Spend time talking with your child about their feelings, both positive and negative, and their problems; and
- Discuss, educate and reinforce strategies developed in counselling, emphasizing open communication and safe ways to express their feelings.

#### Support your child

- Stay calm when intervening and show support and encouragement;
- Role model healthy boundaries, communication and expression of feelings; and
- Give praise and encouragement for your child's efforts.

#### **Help is available**

Our REFOCUS program helps children and young people (aged 0-17 years) who display sexualized behaviours, or sexually abusive behaviours, to stop their problematic behaviours and re-establish age and stage appropriate sexual development. Please get in touch to find out more.