



**CENTRE AGAINST
SEXUAL ASSAULT**
CENTRAL VICTORIA

REFOCUS **program**

For parents and carers



What is the REFOCUS Program?

REFOCUS Program is a therapeutic program for children and adolescents (less than 18 years) who display problem sexual behaviours.

The law distinguishes between problem sexual behaviours exhibited by children under ten years of age, and legally accountable sexually abusive behaviours for children ten years of age and over.

For children over ten years of age there are diversionary pathways for treatment if the child is deemed suitable (rather than the criminal law pathway).

REFOCUS has been developed to support children, young people and their families understand the function, meaning and consequences of problem sexual behaviours. The approach is non shaming or stigmatising. It promotes responsibility and develops insight into the young persons motivation, creates a healthy sense of self, builds resilience, and explores ways to change and repair damaged relationships.

The program comprises of two phases: the assessment phase and treatment phase.

1. Assessment

This phase includes interviews with parents/carers, educators and the young person. Siblings may also be included in this phase if needed. The 6-8-week process includes a feedback session to parents/carers and child protection if needed.

The aim of the assessment is to work with the young person and family to form an understanding of the issues, challenges and protective factors for the young person and their family. A safety plan is developed to ensure safety of all children in the home and other

environments, such as school. If child protection has put a safety plan in place, this will also be reviewed.

In consultation with parents, carers and the young person at the end of this phase a decision will be made about whether to continue the REFOCUS program or if another service is more suitable.

2. Treatment

The treatment phase is based upon goals identified during the assessment phase and may consist of a variety of therapeutic modes, including Play Therapy, Family therapy, Art therapy, EMDR and Sensorimotor Therapy. Treatment generally takes up to 12 months depending on goals identified, attendance, progress made and conditions of Therapeutic Treatment Order (if relevant). Sessions may vary from weekly to fortnightly and will include a mix of individual, parent and family sessions.

Referral

Referral into the REFOCUS program can be made through parents/carers, school staff, Victoria Police, or DHHS - Child Protection.

Participation is either voluntary (family directed) or as a requirement of a Therapeutic Treatment Order (court directed) or Therapeutic Treatment Referral (Victoria Police or Child Protection directed). Where orders to participate are in place, feedback to Child Protection is required and is discussed with parents/ carers in the first session.

A lot of young people who have completed our REFOCUS program say they feel relief afterwards and ready to enter adulthood with a better understanding of how to treat other people and how they should be treated and respected.

What is the REFOCUS Program?

REFOCUS is a program where you can come and talk about behaviours that are causing problems for yourself and that are sexually based. Sometimes these problems include things you say, do, or the way you think about sexual things. This is especially important if you are ten years of age or older as it can sometimes help to divert you from criminal courts and help with therapy.

Sex can be confusing for all young people (even though they usually don't admit it). It can be rude or funny and so it's awkward to talk about. These funny feelings can lead to us to doing and saying things that can cause us problems in our lives.

Young people are often given mixed messages about sex and sexual acts. We know that TV, movies, pornography, sexting and video games send some very confusing messages. It can be hard to find someone you can trust to talk to about these things.

In a REFOCUS session you can talk about everything!

We won't be shocked, and we won't judge you. We've had thousands of conversations with young people about sex, sexual behaviours, fantasies, friendships and expectations. We've helped heaps of young people go on and lead a fantastic and fun filled life.