



Awareness to Action

Ground Rules

- Take care of yourself
- Full participation to the extent you feel able and comfortable
- Use "I" statements
- No such thing as a stupid question
- Stay afterwards if you want to talk privately
- Respect privacy



Learning Objectives

- Learn about the scope and impact of sexual abuse.
- Understand key prevention steps.
- Recognize children's healthy sexual development behaviors and how this knowledge promotes protective factors
- Learn about safety planning to keep children safe from sexual harm
- Identify and respond to warning signs in children, youth, and adults.
- Apply prevention steps, safety planning, and supportive strategies across situations.
- Practice and strengthen skills for engaging in difficult conversations about safety and sexual behaviors.
- Practice and build confidence with new prevention skills.



Stop It Now!

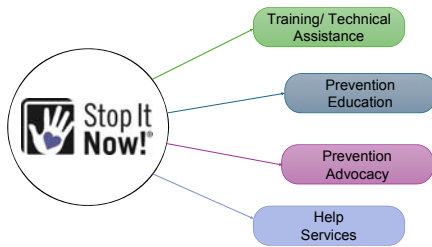


PRIMARY PREVENTION

ADULT
RESPONSIBILITY

PERPETRATION
PREVENTION

Our Services



Stop It Now! Helpline

- Talk, chat or email with an expert counselor.
- 1.888.PREVENT
- stopitnow.org/helpline
- Free and confidential for any adult.

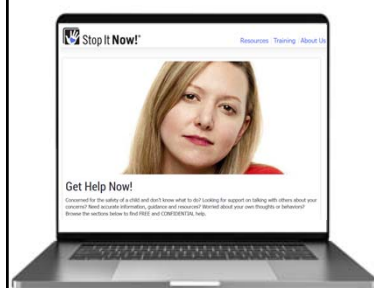


WhatsOK? Helpline

- Talk, chat, text or email with an expert counselor.
- 1.844.WHATSOK
- whatsok.org
- Free and confidential for youth and young adults ages 14-21.

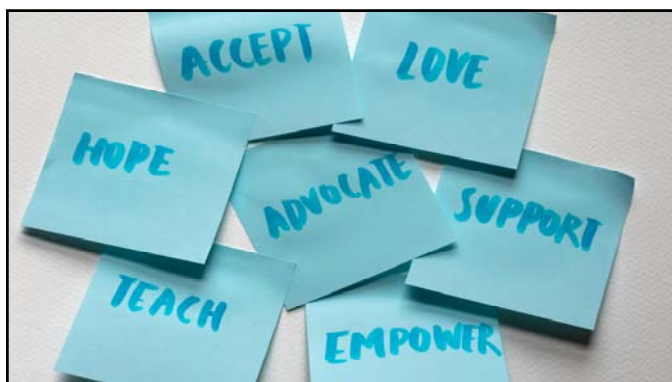


Website & Resources



Resources

- ◉ [Help Services](#)
- ◉ [Prevention Tools](#)
- ◉ [Advice Column](#)
- ◉ [FAQs](#)
- ◉ [Trusted Partners](#)
- ◉ [Search By Concern](#)
- ◉ [Resource Guides](#)
- ◉ [Get Help Now!](#)
- ◉ [Website Feedback](#)
- ◉ [Help For Youth](#)



Your Experience

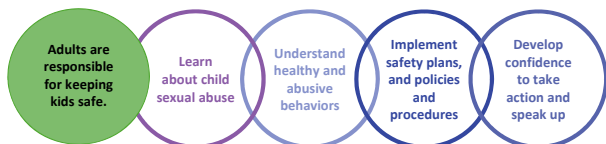
What do you already do to keep children safe?

What are your concerns now about your ability to engage with child sexual abuse prevention?

What are the barriers that you have encountered and observed?



Key Concepts for Prevention



This can help you act in the best interests of children and youth.

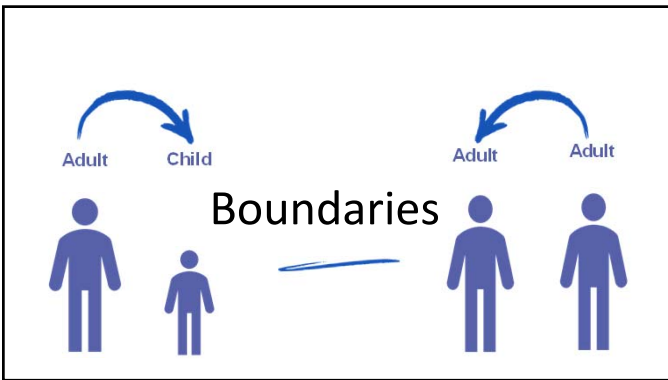


Prevention is possible.



Hope







Setting Boundaries

Hey, please keep those types of jokes for when kids aren't around.

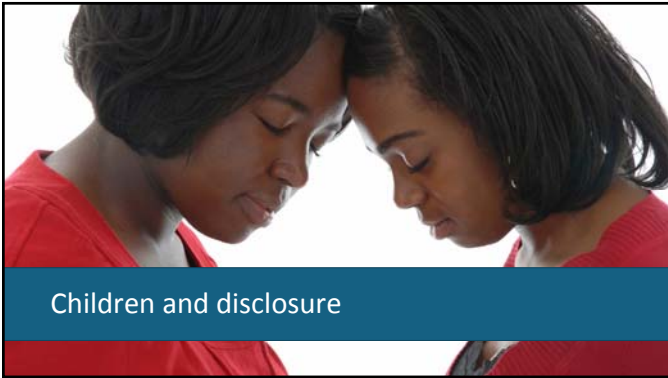
That's not appropriate for kids, please save it for another time.

Setting Boundaries

Setting boundaries includes speaking up.

Setting Boundaries





Children and disclosure

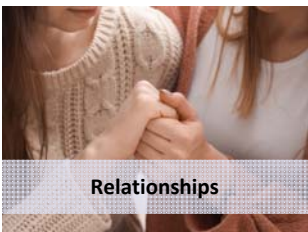
Reasons Children Don't Disclose



Threats

- Withholding love
- Loss of basic needs (home, food, etc.)
- Family break-up
- Non-abusing caregiver's feelings
- Physical harm
- Will turn to another child

Reasons Children Don't Disclose



Relationships

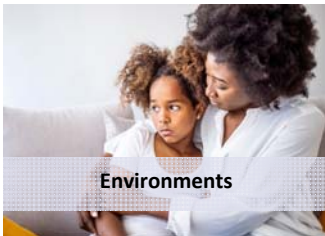
- Dependence
- Love
- Attention/gifts
- Power imbalance

Reasons Children Don't Disclose



- Fear
- Shame
- Guilt
- Self-blame
- Lack of awareness
- Confused feelings

Reasons Children Don't Disclose



- Lack of opportunity
- Lack of healthy sexuality education for children/youth
- Lack of adult awareness or availability

Rates of Child Sexual Abuse

28%
of teens experience sexual abuse online or in person

15 - 25%
of girls experience sexual abuse

5 - 10%
of boys experience sexual abuse

Rates of abuse are really estimates because gathering accurate data is difficult.

Child Sexual Abuse

**Any sexual activity between an adult and a child
(online or in-person) is sexual abuse.**

Includes contact
(touching) and non-
contact behaviors or
activities.

Children cannot
consent to sexual
activity.

All child sexual abuse is
illegal.

Child Sexual Abuse (Contact & Non-Contact)

CONTACT SEXUAL ABUSE

- Touching a child's genitals or private parts for sexual purposes
- Making a child touch someone else's genitals
- Play sexual games
- Putting objects or body parts (like fingers, tongue or a penis) inside the vagina, in the mouth or in the anus of a child for sexual purposes

NON-CONTACT SEXUAL ABUSE

- Showing pornography to a child
- Deliberately exposing an adult's genitals to a child
- Photographing or videotaping a child in sexual poses
- Encouraging a child to watch or hear sexual acts
- Watching a child undress or use the bathroom

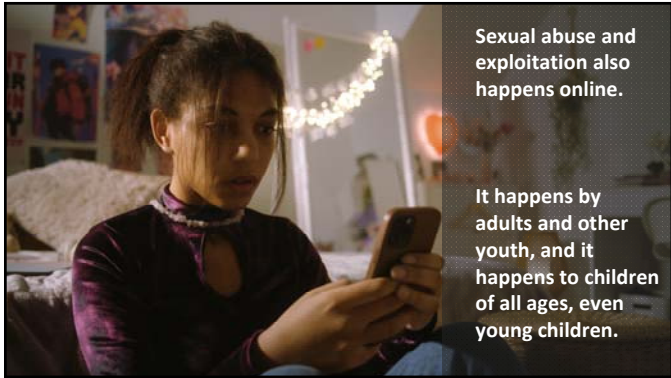
Who is Abusing?

More than 90% of
sexual abuse is
perpetrated by
someone the child
knows.

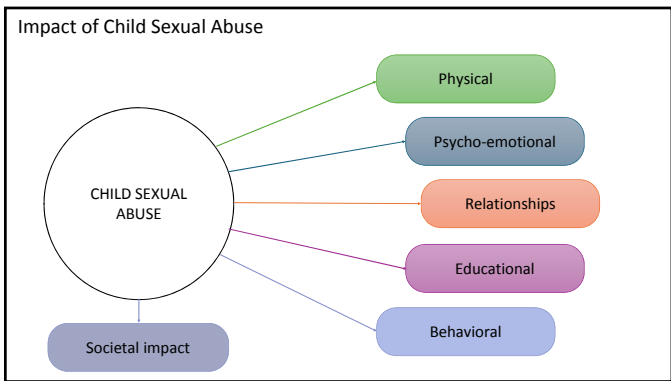
More than 50%
of the time, abuse is
by a parent or another
relative.



70-77% of sexual
abuse or assault
is perpetrated by
other youth.



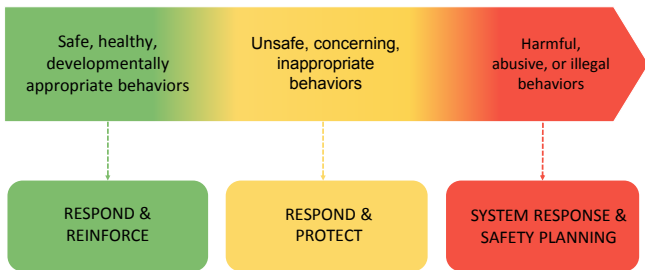
Types of Online Abuse	
Online child sexual abuse	A general term that refers to any sexual activity that occurs online or using technology.
Technology-facilitated sexual abuse	Sexual abuse that is initiated or facilitated through online interactions or using technology.
Child sexual abuse materials	Images and videos of children of a sexual nature posted online or shared via technology. Can be produced and shared by others or can be self-generated and produced/shared by children/youth themselves.
Exploitation	Sexually abusing a child in exchange for something of value (money, material items, food etc.).
Sextortion	Extorting a child for money or for sexual images, materials, or activities.



Prevention Continuum



Prevention Continuum



Prevention Continuum

	Safe, healthy, developmentally-appropriate behaviors	Respond & Reinforce
	Unsafe, concerning, inappropriate behaviors	Protect & Respond
	Harmful, abusive, or illegal behaviors	System Response & Safety Planning



Safe, healthy, developmentally appropriate behaviors

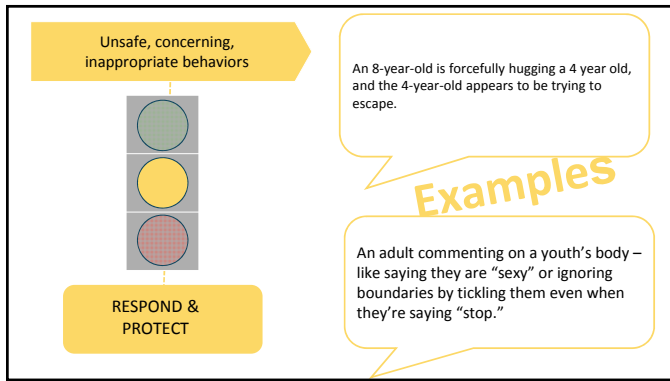
RESPOND & REINFORCE

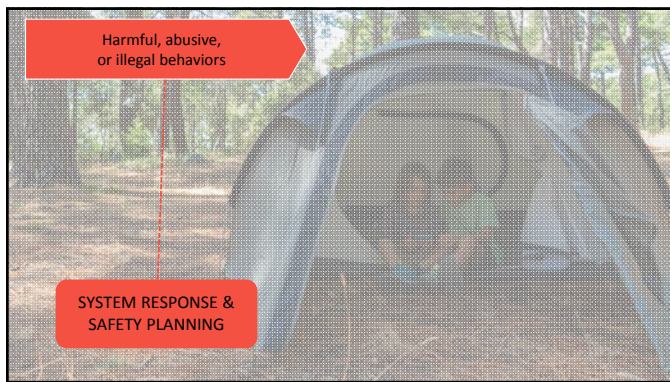
Two friends, both 5 years old, are found giggling while playing alone in a bedroom. They are discovered with their pants down and are "sword fighting" with their penises. They seem to be having fun, are easily redirected to another activity, and this is the first time this has happened.

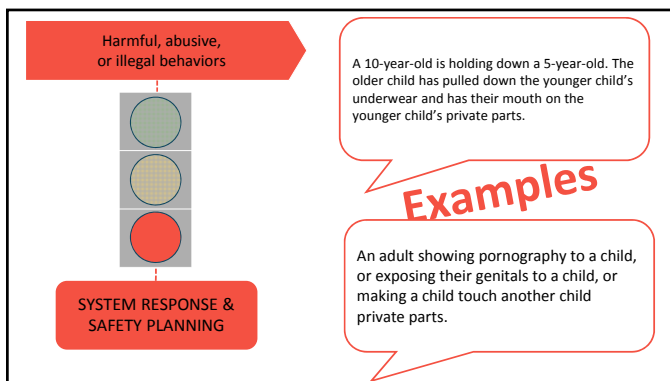
Examples

A 14-year-old asks out a same-aged classmate on a date, and then later asks them for a kiss on that date – asking for consent, (and is okay with whatever answer they receive).









Planning for Safety

Safety planning involves establishing guidelines and rules to protect children.

Safety plans are important so everyone knows and follows safety rules.

They make it easier to hold adults accountable.

They are a proactive way to protect children.

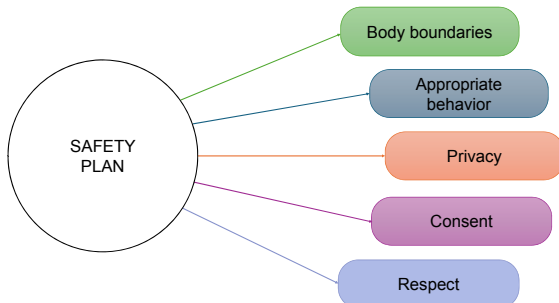
Planning for Safety

Safe, healthy, developmentally appropriate behaviors

Unsafe, concerning, inappropriate behaviors

Harmful, abusive, or illegal behaviors

Important Parts of a Safety Plan





Activity: Family Safety Planning

Instructions:

1. Review Sample Family Safety Plan
2. What rules are you aware of in your home and/or program (individual)
3. Discuss your reaction/thoughts (group)

Examples of Family Safety Rules:

No sexual contact or touching between children or with adults

No touching or showing of another's private parts

Respect personal space, like bedrooms and bathrooms

All physical touching requires consent and respect



Safety planning is also important for organizations...

...including policies/procedures, codes of conduct, and training for employees and volunteers working with kids.



It is critical for kids to see adults modeling appropriate behaviors and setting and enforcing boundaries.

Teaching Healthy Boundaries

REINFORCE

MODEL

REDIRECT

Activity: Teaching Healthy Boundaries

REINFORCE

I think you know Susie well enough to give her a hug without asking.

Great job respecting Susie's boundaries and asking for her consent.

I like how you asked Susie before you hugged her.

Activity: Teaching Healthy Boundaries

MODEL

You knock on the door, and let them know that you don't want to bother them in the bathroom but you have good news for them when they get out.

You knock on the door, and then you open the door, yelling as you go in, "it's just me."

You burst into the bathroom, knowing that your child will be as excited as you are to get the news.

Activity: Teaching Healthy Boundaries

REDIRECT

Geez, can't you see he's over it. And he asked you to stop so you better stop or else

Kenny seems to be over the tickling. Come help me set up the sprinkler so we can do the slip and slide.

Kenny, come on, he's just playing, don't be so dramatic.

Activity:
What do you wish you knew then?

Instructions: Talk with your partner(s) about the **one thing you wish an adult had told you as a youth about sexuality and relationships**. What do you wish you knew then? What could've been said to help you better navigate your sexuality and relationships?

How can learning about healthy sexual development help us prevent harmful behaviors or sexual abuse?

Helps us understand the difference between healthy and concerning behaviors

Helps us set safe boundaries

Helps us provide safe and accurate information





Sexual Development

Infants and Toddlers (Ages 0 – 2)

- Curious and explore their own and others’ bodies (including genitals)
- Experience erections/vaginal lubrication
- Self-soothing through self-stimulation common
- Talk openly about their bodies; enjoys nudity
- Able to say the appropriate names for body parts (head, nose, stomach, penis, vulva, etc.)



Sexual Development

Ages 3 – 5

- Touching their genitals feels good
- Curious about naked bodies
- Comfortable with being naked but begin to better understand privacy
- Begin asking questions about bodies, sex, babies, etc.
- Interested in gender roles and role play



Sexual Development

Ages 6 – 8

- Learning more about sex and sexuality
- Continue sexual play and genital stimulation
- Prefer friends of their own gender
- Begin to conform to dress and speech of peers
- Affectionate behavior with peers
- May engage in name-calling and teasing
- Stronger self-concept and body image
- Recognize taboos surrounding sexuality, may not ask many questions

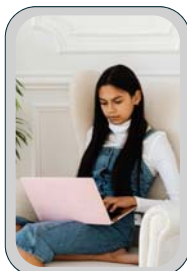


Adapted from SIECUS and Advocates for Youth

Sexual Development

Ages 9 – 12

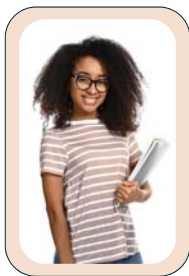
- May be entering puberty
- Become more modest and private
- Have romantic crushes
- Have mostly same gender friends
- Feel concerns about being normal
- Feel shy asking questions of caregivers
- Seek out sexuality info from internet/media
- Some may become sexually active even this young



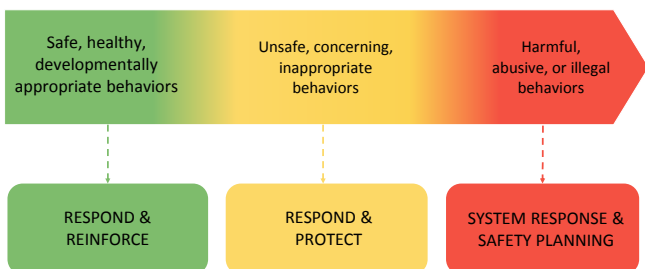
Sexual Development

Adolescents (Ages 13 – 17)

- May be self-conscious and insecure
- Pressure to act more mature
- Decisions shift from parents to peers
- May question family values and beliefs
- Exploring sexual behavior and relationships
- Often lack information about healthy relationships and sex but may be hesitant to ask questions
- Need to know making mistakes is okay



Prevention Continuum





Healthy sexual play between younger children is a normal developmental task.

Healthy Sexual Behaviors

Healthy, normal sexual play is characterized by:

Behaviors between peers

Behavior that is playful

Behavior that is limited in type and frequency

Safe, healthy, developmentally appropriate behaviors

RESPOND & REINFORCE

Reinforce safety plan

Educate and support

Monitor

Prevention Tasks

PREVENTION TASKS FOR CHILDREN OF EVERY AGE

Educate with accurate information

Provide a safe, loving environment

Talk about safety rules & expectations

Help children identify safe adults

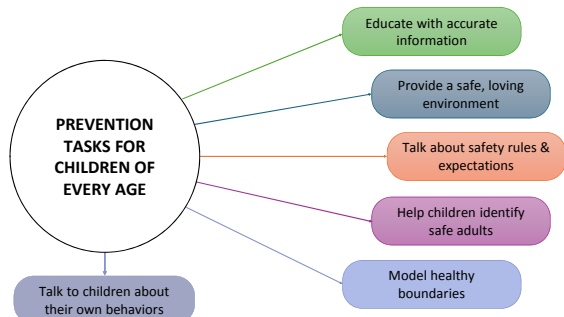
Model healthy boundaries

Model Healthy Boundaries

- Model healthy boundaries
- Demonstrate/teach kids about personal space
- Teach kids to respect others' personal space
- Model respect for personal space ourselves



Prevention Tasks



Teaching Consent to Children

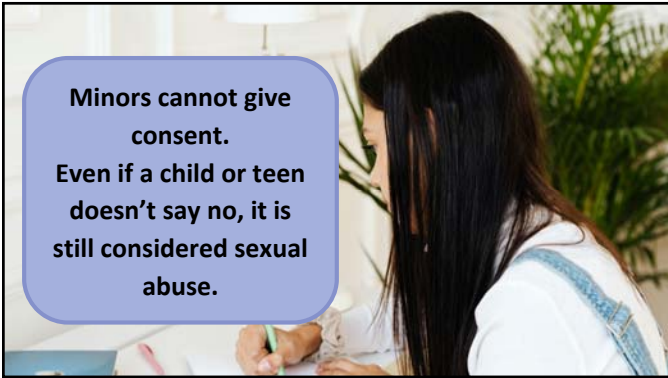
Respect children's physical boundaries

Teach children bodily autonomy

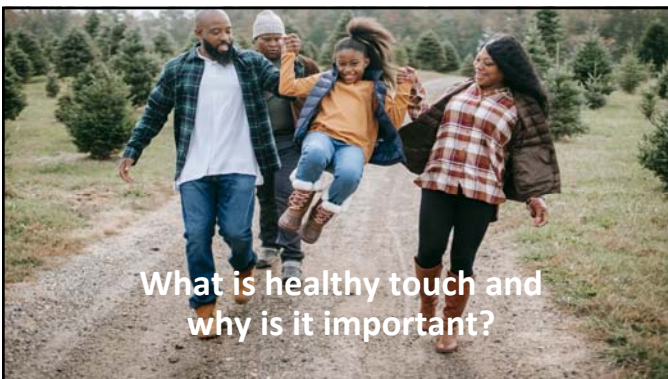


Reinforce healthy boundaries and consent

Teach kids to respect others' boundaries









Special Considerations

- Youth with disabilities
- Survivors
- As a professional with foster children, students and/or clients

Prevention Tasks

Infants through Preschool

If a child doesn't know the names of their body parts, it can be harder for them to disclose if they have been sexually abused.



Providing honest, accurate information is a good protective tool.



Prevention Tasks

Infants through Preschool

Use the term safe or unsafe touches (or okay or not okay, or healthy or unhealthy).

Teach the difference between secrets and surprises.



Prevention Tasks

School-age through Pre-teen

Provide education and information.

Model open communication, healthy boundaries, and healthy relationships.



Prevention Tasks

Adolescents

Stay engaged and help teens think about their own safety and develop good decision-making skills; help them learn to make safe and informed decisions and think through the consequences of their decisions.

Help them learn to safely navigate relationships with friends and romantic partners.



Prevention Tasks

Adolescents

Talk about healthy vs harmful behaviors in relationships.

Have open conversations about uncomfortable topics, including sex.



Questions to Use

- What are your limits? What do your boundaries look like?
- How will you know when your boundaries are crossed?
- What kind of relationship do you want?
- How will you know that a relationship is safe and healthy?

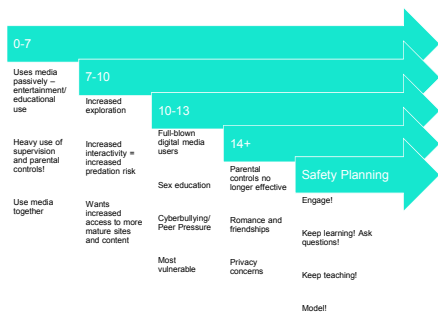
Prevention Tasks

Prevention and Technology

Stay informed about their technology and online activities.

Include tech safety rules in your family safety plan and teach them about online safety.

Technology Use Through A Developmental Lens



Teach youth about online risks

- Sexting
- Self-generated images
- Sextortion

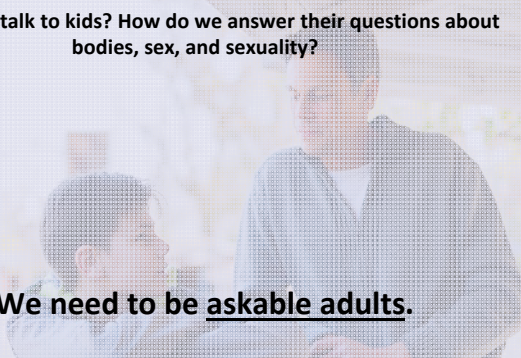


For more information, check
out our tip sheet:
Keeping Children and Youth
Safe Online



How do we talk to kids? How do we answer their questions about
bodies, sex, and sexuality?

We need to be askable adults.



How Would You Answer?

- How are babies born?
- What is S-E-X?
- Why do I have a penis/vagina?
- What is porn?
- What does gay mean?
- What does “*&%\$” mean?



Use accurate, child-friendly language

Share the risks honestly without scaring kids

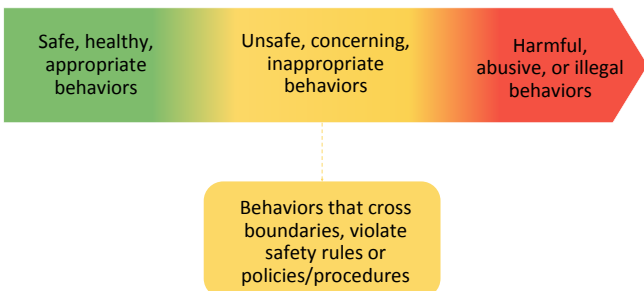
Share examples and practice scenarios of highest risk situations

- People they know
- Family members
- Other kids/youth

Ensure kids know they can always come to you

How do we talk to kids?

Prevention Continuum



Risk Factors



- Secrecy is permitted
- Lack of privacy and boundaries
- Increased stress
- Equating children to adults
- Exposure to pornography
- History of sexual abuse
- Substance use/abuse
- Exposure to violence

Risk Factors



- Lack of connection
- Feeling emotionally isolated or neglected
- Lack of healthy sexuality education
- Developmental disabilities
- Parenting adults
- Physical/emotional abuse





Disclosure

Hint

"If I tell you something, do you promise not to tell?"

Disclosure

Question

"What would happen if I told you someone was hurting my friend?"

Disclosure

Conditions

"I don't like going over to my friend's house when their older brother is there."

[illegible][illegible]

Warning Signs of Abuse

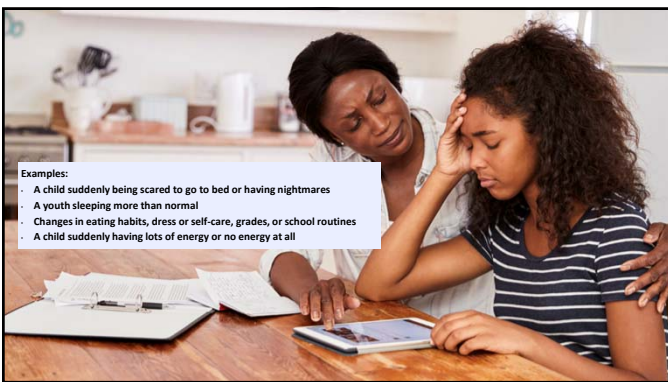


Handout:

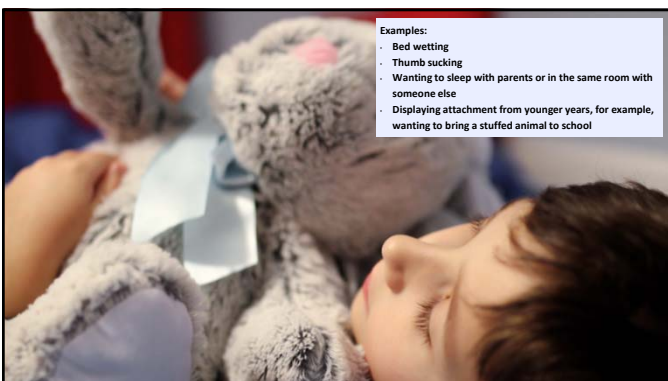
Warning Signs in Children of Possible Sexual Abuse

[illegible]





- Examples:
- A child suddenly being scared to go to bed or having nightmares
 - A youth sleeping more than normal
 - Changes in eating habits, dress or self-care, grades, or school routines
 - A child suddenly having lots of energy or no energy at all



- Examples:
- Bed wetting
 - Thumb sucking
 - Wanting to sleep with parents or in the same room with someone else
 - Displaying attachment from younger years, for example, wanting to bring a stuffed animal to school









Examples:

- A child or teen who brings up sex constantly or at inappropriate times, to inappropriate people, or in inappropriate settings
- A child who has more knowledge of sex than is appropriate for their age
- A child viewing sexual material online or sharing such material with others
- A child or teen who is acting in sexual ways with others, especially once they've been educated about appropriate behavior and boundaries

Warning Signs

Warning signs could mean a child or youth is being abused, but may also be signs that something else is going on.

Warning Signs

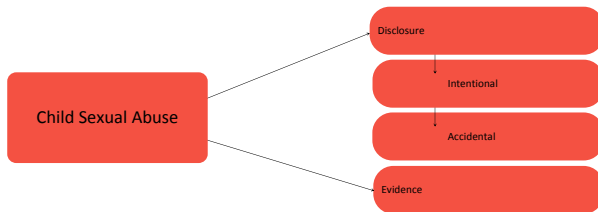
Either way, when we see indicators, we need to pay attention and respond.

Responding

Respond and Protect

- Check in with the child or teen
- Affirm you are there to support them
- Determine if other adults have concerns
- Review and strengthen safety plan
- Report and get help and support

Discovery of Abuse or Sexual Harm



Responding

RESPOND & PROTECT

- Show belief and care
- Foster trust
- Ensure safety
- Report and support

Responding

Responding Tips

Be careful with your words — offer support without making assumptions or promises. Instead of saying things like “this will never happen again” or “I won’t tell anyone,” focus on reassurance and safety.

Ask simple, open-ended questions and allow the child to share in their own words. Don’t continue to press for information if the child needs a break or doesn’t want to share more.

Speak with care about the person involved, remembering that it is often someone the child loves and trusts.

Stay calm and composed when listening, so the child can feel safe continuing to share.

Don’t assume someone else will follow up or report abuse.

Mandated Reporters

A person who, by law, is required to report suspected abuse or neglect against children or vulnerable adults.

In some states, these are people who protect or work with children/vulnerable adults only (like therapists, doctors, etc.) and in other states all adults are mandated reporters no matter their profession.

RED BEHAVIORS THAT SHOULD BE REPORTED

A child or adult shows warning signs of abuse or being at risk to abuse.

A child has stated that they are being abused by an adult.

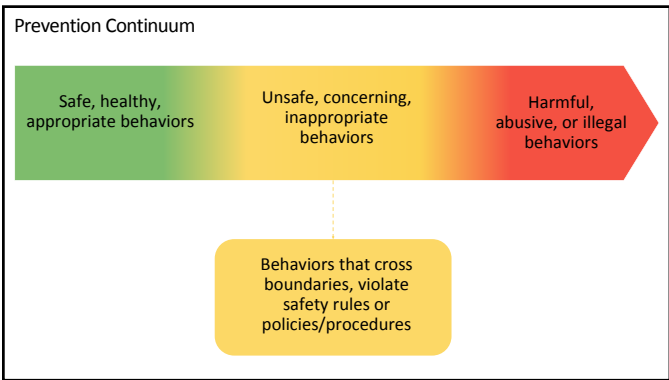
A child has stated that another child has been engaging in sexually harmful behaviors with them.

An adult or youth states they have sexually harmed a child.

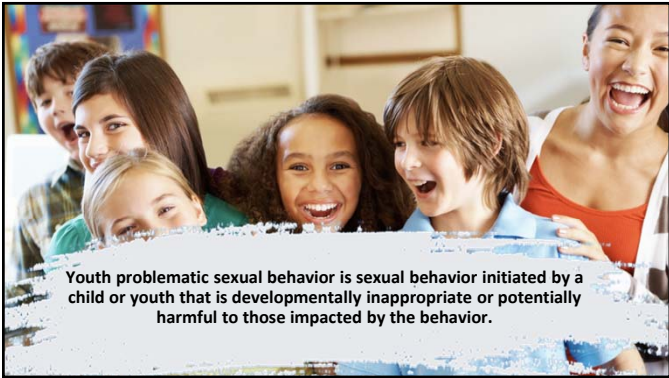
Child sexual abuse materials online or someone viewing these materials.

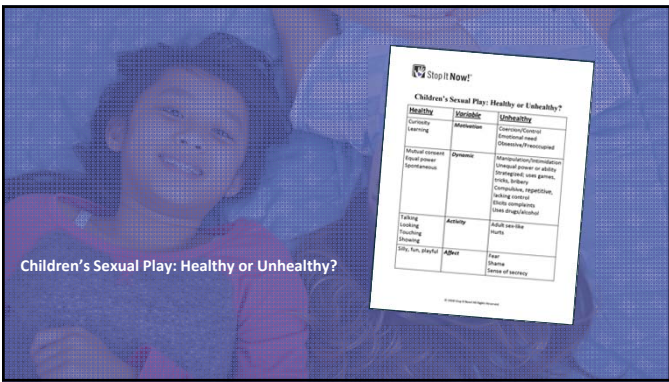
ANYTIME YOU HAVE CONCERNS!

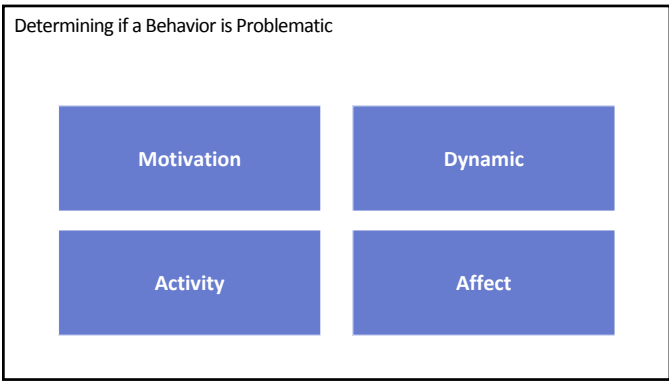












Determining if a Behavior is Problematic

Motivation	Why is this behavior occurring?
Dynamic	Are there power differentials? Is there any coercion or manipulation? Is the behavior spontaneous? Are kids agreeable?
Activity	Is the behavior developmentally-appropriate play or is it more mature or adult-like?
Affect	How do the children seem when they are caught engaging in the behavior? How do they respond? Are they playful or worried or afraid? Are they defensive or sneaky?

Healthy or Unhealthy?

A group of 5-year-olds were playing together. The mom of one of the children found them together and two of the kids were partially undressed.

The mom was worried but when she asked the kids what they were doing, one of them said they were making a movie and some of kids were changing their costumes.

Determining if a Behavior is Problematic

Motivation	The reason offered by the kids was reasonable and age appropriate indicating this is likely a green, normal, healthy behavior.
Dynamic	There were no power differences in the children and no apparent coercion.
Activity	The activity was playful and was a normal, developmentally appropriate behavior for 5-year olds.
Affect	All of the kids seemed to be happily playing together.

Safe, healthy, developmentally appropriate behaviors

RESPOND & REINFORCE

Reinforce safety plan

Educate children

Monitor and supervise

Activity

Select the action steps that would be appropriate based on the following situation:

Your 6 year old and their 6 year old friend were found playing together in the living room. One had their pants down and was looking at the other child's penis. When asked what they were doing they said they were playing doctor.

What should you do?

Why Children/Youth Engage in Sexual Behaviors

Curiosity

Misunderstanding about bodies and boundaries

Life stressors

Exposure to sexual content

Behavior problems

Why Children/Youth Engage in Sexual Behaviors



A child or youth's sexual behavior may be a reaction to their own abuse.

A youth may be struggling with sexual thoughts and feelings about younger children.

A child or youth may struggle with mental health conditions which can influence their behaviors

Warning Signs of Youth Causing Sexual Harm

Confused about social rules and interactions	· Insists on physical contact/alone time with child · Age-appropriate sexual behaviors in inappropriate settings · Spends time with much younger children
Anxious, depressed, needs help	· Drugs and/or alcohol involved · History of violence, own abuse
Impulsively sexual or aggressive	· Behavior elicits complaints/continues after limits set · Uses threats and coercion



Tipsheet:

Signs A Child Is At-Risk to Harm Another Child

Determining if a Behavior is Problematic

A 12 year-old continually grabs their 6 year old sibling in hugs and walks in on them when they are changing.

Both parents and the 6 year old have told the 12 year old to stop, but the behavior continues.

Determining if a Behavior is Problematic

Motivation	We need to understand the motivation: is this curiosity, an attraction, a problem with impulse control, difficulty understanding boundaries?
Dynamic	There is a significant age difference here and a power imbalance.
Activity	No consent, the behavior is not mutual, and it is crossing boundaries
Affect	The behavior is eliciting complaints and has prompted requests for the behavior to stop, which have been unsuccessful.



Talking with Youth about Warning Signs

- Stay calm, don't shame or label
- Talk about behaviors – not intent
- Refer to safety plans and rules
- Redirect and talk about alternatives
- Help kids build communication skills
- Let them know that adults are responsible for helping them and their environment stay safe

Activity

Select the action steps that would be appropriate based on the following situation:

Your 12 year old told their 6 year old cousin that he can show him naked pictures online. The 6 year old said "ew no." Your 12 year old brought it up again the next time they saw each other. The 6 year old came to you with this information after the second time.

What should you do?

Safe, healthy,
appropriate behaviors

Unsafe, concerning,
inappropriate
behaviors

Harmful,
abusive, or illegal
behaviors

System Response &
Safety Planning

Abusive Behaviors

- Uses force, aggression, bribes, coercion or manipulation paired with sexual behavior
- Mature sexual behavior between young children or between an older youth and a younger child
- Does not respect another child's "no" or elicits complaints from another child when playing sexual games
- Shows vulnerable (younger) child explicit sexual images, videos or content, or offers alcohol or drugs
- Views harmful and/or illegal online content



Sexuality and Technology



Youth may:

- Explore sex or sexual identity
- Find, view, or produce sexual content
- View pornography
- View child sexual abuse images
- Extort peers for sexual images or money

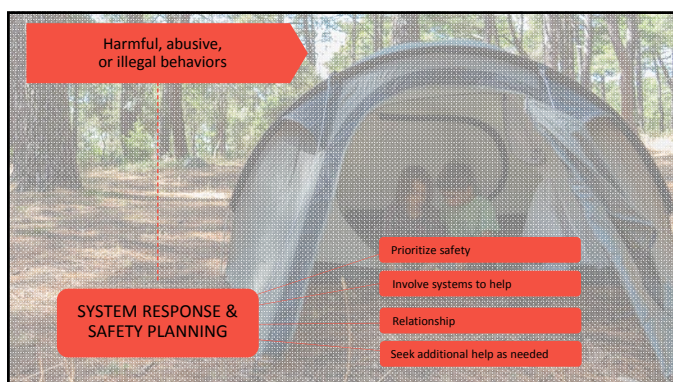
Determining if a Behavior is Problematic

Alex has friend Jesse over playing. They are both 9. Alex's 16 year old sibling, Cary, has forced Jesse to undress and put her mouth on his penis.

Alex walks in after this incident and sees Jesse upset, and after Jesse discloses what happened, Alex tells their parent. After talking to Alex and Jesse, the parent learns that Cary threatened to hurt Jesse's younger sibling to get them to undress. Cary begins to cry and says they didn't want to get caught.

Determining if a Behavior is Problematic

Motivation	Not yet known
Dynamic	Power imbalance, forced through threats, nonconsensual
Activity	Sexually mature, not typical developmental sexual behavior
Affect	Children are crying, fear about getting caught



Activity

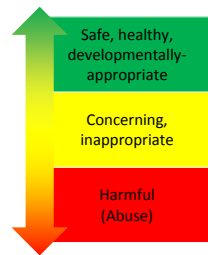
Select the action steps that would be appropriate based on the following situation:

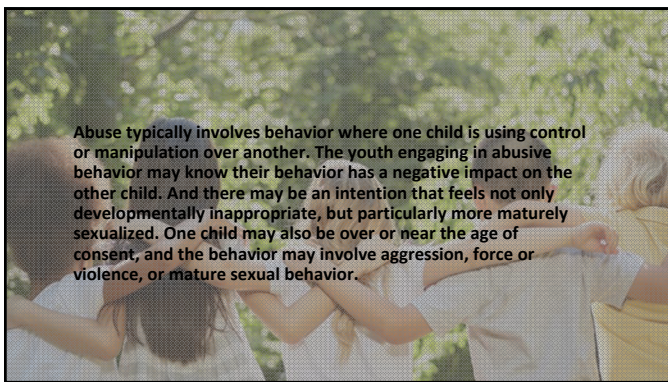
Your 11 year old told you their twin forced them to have oral sex.

What should you do?

Activity:
Continuum of Youth Behaviors

1. What is the prevention level?
 2. What is your response?
- Consider:
 - Motivation
 - Dynamic
 - Activity
 - Affect





Talking with Other Parents



Tipsheet:

**Talking with Parents about
Children's Sexual Behaviors**

Why Talk to Other Parents?

Parent is unaware

Parent has not educated their child



Parent thought behavior would stop

Parent needed prompt to get child help



Continuum of Adult Behaviors

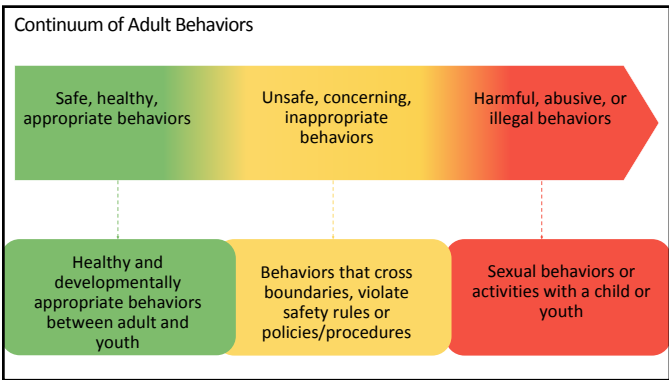
	Safe, Healthy, Developmentally Appropriate
	Concerning, Inappropriate
	Abusive



We need to talk about the people who are at risk to sexually harm children or who have sexually abused a child.

By learning who abuses children and youth, and why, you will be more effective in your safety planning and overall efforts to prevent child sexual abuse.





Who Sexually Abuses Kids?

Any age, including another youth

Any economic status

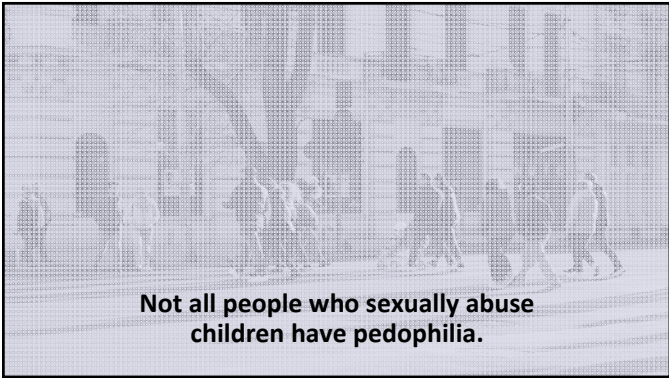
Any educational background

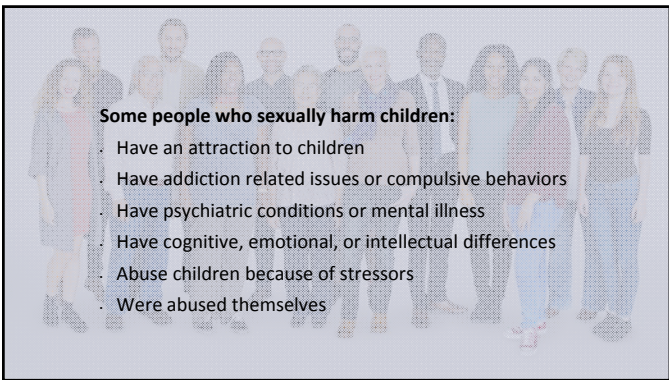
Any race or culture

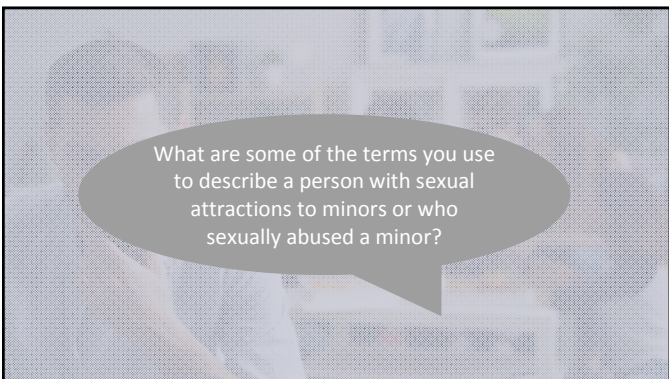
Any religious belief

Any gender or sexual orientation









Defining Terms

Pedophilia

Diagnostic term

A disorder characterized by recurrent, intense sexually arousing fantasies, urges, or behaviors involving sexual activity with prepubescent children.

Pedophile

Descriptive term

Someone who has been diagnosed with pedophilia.

Sex Offender

Legal term

A person convicted of a sexual offense.

**Not all people with pedophilia
sexually abuse children.**

Impact of Language

The language we use can impact safety, how caring adults think about safety, and how to help those in need.

Person-First Language Examples



A person who sexually abused a child, or a person who is at-risk to abuse a child



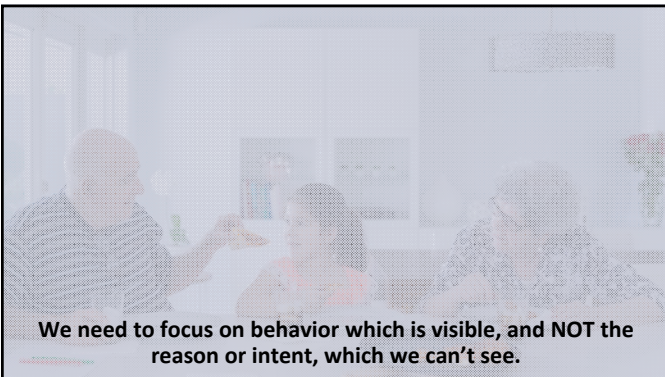
A person with sexual behavior problems



A person who has committed a sexual offense (or a registered sex offender)

Why Language Matters

If we only focus on people who seem to fit a mold, we are better informed, but we are also more likely to miss people who are creating more harm. Safety planning actually prepares us to harm a child.

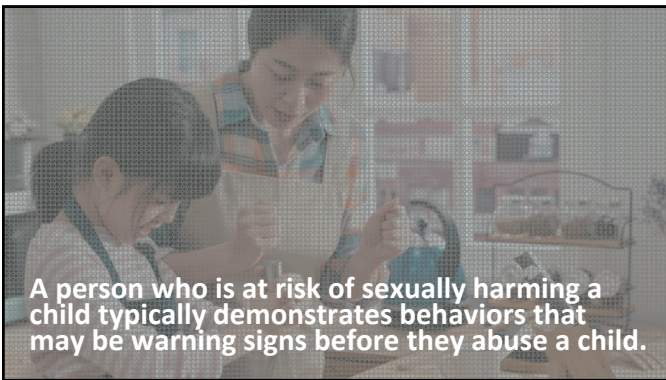


We need to focus on behavior which is visible, and NOT the reason or intent, which we can't see.

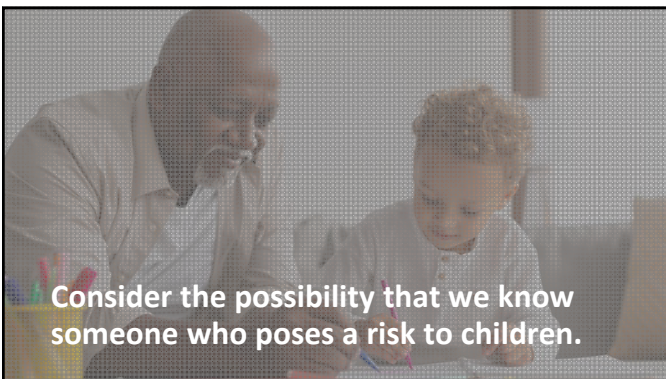
Activity



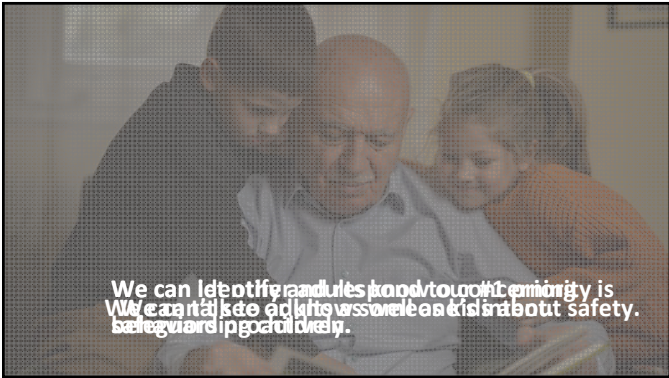
How confident are you?

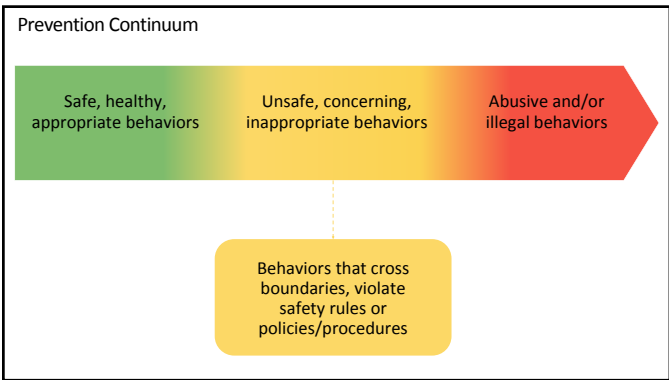


A person who is at risk of sexually harming a child typically demonstrates behaviors that may be warning signs before they abuse a child.



Consider the possibility that we know someone who poses a risk to children.





Yellow Behaviors in Adults

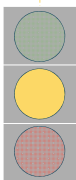
People often think they can't speak up or act unless they have "proof" that someone has done something wrong.

However, we don't need proof to act within our safety plan or within our organization's policies and procedures and act to protect children.

Signs that an adult is at-risk to abuse a child



Unsafe, concerning, inappropriate behaviors



Focus on Children

- "Too good to be true"
- Seeks 1:1 time with children
- Singles out a particular child
- Difficulty with same-age peer (adult) relationships

Unsafe, concerning, inappropriate behaviors



Boundaries

- Don't follow rules & codes of conduct
- Violate boundaries, like not respecting privacy or ignoring social cues about personal or sexual limits and boundaries
- Makes excuses for harmful behavior
- Tries to control a child's behavior through secrecy and doesn't allow a child to say no to unwanted touch or activities

Unsafe, concerning, inappropriate behaviors

Relationship Difficulties

- Treats children as peers
- Turns to children for comfort
- Undermines parental authority and relationship

Consider the Context

NEEDS

Whose needs are being met?

BEHAVIORS

Do behaviors continue after clear limits have been set?

PARENTAL AUTHORITY

Is parental authority being undermined?

FOCUS

Is one child singled out?

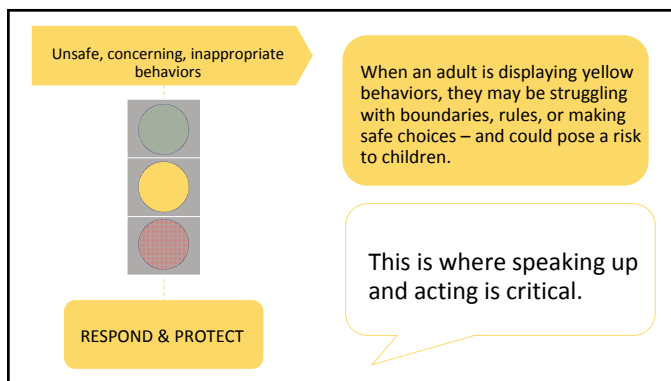
CONTROL

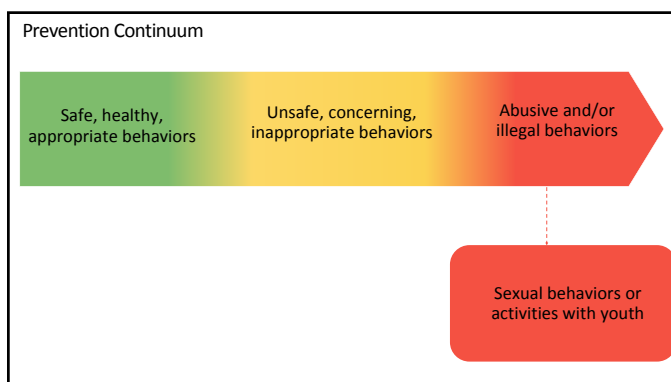
Can a child say "no"?

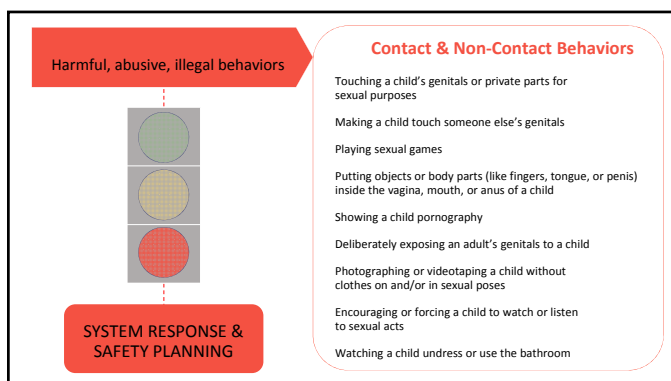
Trust your instincts!

Review Stop It Now!
tip sheets.

Talk with others about
your concerns to help
you get clarity and
support.







We encourage all adults to report suspected or disclosed abuse.

stopitnow.org/helpline

Activity: Continuum of Adult Behaviors

Safe, healthy, developmentally-appropriate	Concerning, inappropriate	Abusive
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Continuum of Adult’s Behaviors Examples

	Praise, high-fives, child-initiated hugs, pats on the back or shoulders, etc.
	Playing favorites, adult initiated hugs, patting the buttocks, sexual or suggestive comments, “dirty” jokes, asking for personal telephone or e-mail, taking individual photos, etc.
	Showing porn, watching youth undress, asking a child to touch another child sexually, any sexual activity with minor.

Why it's Important to Speak Up



Chance for adult to correct behavior and allows us to set expectations



Alerts adults that other people are looking out for children's safety



Opportunity for adult to seek help and support



Barriers to Speaking Up: Fears

- Misinterpreting situation
- Worried about offending others
- Make things worse
- Safety concerns for child
- Safety concerns for themselves
- Family disruption
- Financial loss
- Embarrassment/Shame and guilt



Barriers to Speaking Up: Beliefs

Impossible in theirs or other's families
They're a "good" person
Every family has problems
They shouldn't get involved
They wanted it
That's how they show affection
They're "too old"
Nothing will happen anyway



Overcoming Barriers



What helps you overcome barriers?

Feeling Prepared



Feeling prepared can help us speak up to another adult about their behavior if the need arises.



We overcome barriers by acknowledging them.

Preparing for Difficult Conversations

Let's talk.
A guide to speaking up to prevent child sexual abuse.

Let's talk:
Talking about this is never easy. Talking about sexual abuse is even harder, especially when you care about someone. But you may also be worried about a child being in a situation where an adult's behavior has caused them to feel uncomfortable or unsafe. If you're worried about a child's safety, it's important to talk to them about what's happened and what they need to feel safe.

ONLY HAVE THIS CONVERSATION IF IT SEEMS SAFE TO DO SO.

Communication

Communication is a key prevention tool. Whether you're being proactive or addressing concerning behaviors.

Communication

Tone and Setting

- Body language and tone
- Time and place
- Calm, confident, and respectful
- Pause and restate things to show you are listening

Communication

Language

- Avoid labels and intent
- Use “I” language
- Stick to the facts

Communication

Listening

- “Tune in”
- Avoid jumping to conclusions or criticizing
- Ask for clarification if needed
- Be aware of your own personal triggers

Communication

Other Tips

- Practice what you might say
- Anticipate their response and how you might continue
- Have resources available

Framing the Conversation

Set the tone / share the responsibility to keep kids safe

Be honest and genuine

Describe the behavior

Describe how it made you feel/impact on the child involved

Set boundaries

Activity:
Low Risk Situations

- Your dentist is regularly ½ hour late
- Your neighbor's dog digs holes in your yard
- Grandma lets children stay up past bedtime
- Your roommate always leaves a mess
- Your food has arrived cold at a fancy restaurant

Practice Speaking Up

You’ve noticed an adult family friend is behaving in an unsafe or inappropriate way with your child, for example you’ve seen them whisper and ask your child to keep a secret.

Set the tone / responsibility	"I know we both want the best for the kids. It's important for both of us that our children feel and stay safe."
Be honest and genuine	"I feel uncomfortable bringing this up but it's important to me and I'm sure it's important to you as well."
Describe the behavior	"I notice you often whisper to Lee, and I've heard you mention to them to remember to keep the secret."
Describe how it made you feel/impact on the child involved	"That makes me feel uncomfortable, and it sets an unsafe precedent for Lee around how adults should treat and interact with them. If they think it's okay to keep secrets, they may not understand that potentially puts them at risk."
Set boundaries	

Practice Speaking Up

You’ve noticed an adult family friend is behaving in an unsafe or inappropriate way with your child, for example you’ve seen them whisper and ask your child to keep a secret.

Set the tone / responsibility	"I know we both want the best for the kids. It's important for both of us that our children feel and stay safe."
Be honest and genuine	"I feel uncomfortable bringing this up but it's important to me and I'm sure it's important to you as well."
Describe the behavior	"I notice you often whisper to Lee, and I've heard you mention to them to remember to keep the secret."
Describe how it made you feel/impact on the child involved	"That makes me feel uncomfortable, and it sets an unsafe precedent for Lee around how adults should treat and interact with them. If they think it's okay to keep secrets, they may not understand that potentially puts them at risk."
Set boundaries	"I want you to follow our family's rules and guidelines and stop whispering or keeping secrets with the kids. Please follow our safety rules going forward."



Helpful tips and reminders:

- Focus on observed behaviors vs intent
- Speaking up is proactively keeping children safe
- Demonstrating that a child is supervised helps protect them
- It's okay to be nervous; you don't have to be perfect
- It may be helpful to write down what you want to say
- Honor your own feelings and take care of yourself, seek support when needed
- Follow up!

Activity: Adults Crossing Boundaries

Set the tone - shared responsibility
and accountability

Describe the behavior

State what you want

Speak up and set boundaries

Role Play Scenarios

	PARENTS & FAMILIES	PROFESSIONAL CAREGIVER/EDUCATOR	COMMUNITY MEMBER
1	Your child tells you your spouse asked them to keep a secret about buying them something.	A parent tells you that your assistant teacher texted their 14-year-old that they are "sexy."	You have noticed that your neighbor has been standing at the bus stop with a group of children since school started.
2	You are concerned that your spouse may be looking at illegal images.	A parent in your day camp has been bringing gifts to another camper (not his own child) and asking about the child's home life.	You've noticed a religious leader taking a special interest in a 13-year-old, often bringing them alone to their office.
3	While visiting for 2 weeks, Aunt Mary tells your 6-year-old that he is going to break lots of hearts and jokes about being younger so she can take a "roll in the hay with him."	In the teacher's lounge, you overhear the librarian talking on the phone about an overseas trip, and how cool it was to see so many young, pretty girls "dating" older men.	Your supervisor brings his 9-year-old to work daily after school. A colleague has been spending a lot of time with her. You observed him telling her that her dad doesn't understand her the way he does, and he has been talking about dating websites he visits.

Role Play Debrief

- What was challenging to talk about?
- What did you notice about switching roles? How did it change your perspective? How was it to observe?
- What skills came naturally?
- What skills did you notice need strengthening?
- What else??

Wrap Up



Breathe In, Breathe Out
Take off your shoes and socks
Feel the ground with your feet.
Notice textures, temperature,
and sensation.
Breathe in, breathe out.

Thank you!



**CIRCLES
OF SAFETY**

stopitnow.org
Helpline: **1.888.PREVENT**
