Circles of Safety: Understanding the Role of Healthy Sexuality Development and Education in Sexual Abuse Prevention

**Slide 1**

**Slide 2**

**Agenda - Objectives**

- Define the scope and impact of sex abuse
- Reflect on professional caregiver's role in prevention
- Describe key steps of prevention
- Understand safety planning as a prevention tool
- Enhance understanding of healthy sexuality information and support as a prevention tool
- Identify and respond to early signs of children's sexual problem behaviors
- Develop courage, comfort and communication tools to talk about sexuality
- Practice with new skills

**Slide 3**

**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
Slide 4

**Key Concepts for Prevention**

- HOPE
- ADULTS ARE RESPONSIBLE
- Learn about sex abuse
- Plan for safety
- Promote healthy sexuality development
- Recognize and Respond
- Develop confidence
- Take action - speak up
- Implement prevention focused, effective policies and procedures

---

Slide 5

**Adults Setting Boundaries**

---

Slide 6

**Won't Children Tell Us?**

---
The Facts

All sexual activity between an adult and a child is sexual abuse. Sexual abuse does not have to involve penetration, force, pain, or even touching. If an adult engages in any sexual behavior (looking, showing, or touching) with a child to meet the adult's interest or sexual needs, it is sexual abuse.

Sexual touching between children can also be harmful, and in some cases abusive.

Additional Forms of Sexual Abuse

• Online Illegal Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM)
• Sexual Exploitation and Internet Sex Crimes

The Scope of Sex Abuse

- 60% of child sex trafficking victims recovered through FBI raids across the U.S. in 2013 were from foster care or group homes.
- 1 in 6 of 18,500+ youth reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in 2017 were the victims of child sex trafficking.
- 15% of Youth/Young Adults experiencing homelessness had been trafficked for sex, and 32% had been involved in the sex trade in some way (Wolfe, 2017).
Slide 10

Family Safety Planning Rules

- Respect
- Consent
- Privacy
- Boundaries
- Body autonomy
- Touching behaviors

Slide 11

Healthy Sexuality and Sexual Development

- Infancy and Toddler
- Preschool (3-5)
- Young School Age (6-8)
- Pre-teen (9-12)
- Adolescent (teen)

Slide 12

Children's Sexual Behaviors

Children's sexual behaviors are different from adult sexual behaviors
Slide 13

Prevention Levels

- Safe, Healthy, Appropriate: Respond & Reinforce
- Concerning, Inappropriate: Protect & Respond
- Harmful Sexual Abuse: System Response & Safety Planning

Slide 14

What is your role?

What do you understand as your responsibility now?

What do you want, hope and do?

Slide 15

Appropriate – Healthy Sexuality

- Children:
  - Information gathering process
  - Looking and touching
  - Exploring With Peers
  - Playful quality
  - Ongoing friendship
  - Limited

- Teens/Young Adults:
  - Mutual, consensual
  - Exploration
  - Often within relationship

Respond & Reinforce
Slide 16

Healthy Sexual Development

Infant to Toddler
- Curious and explore their own and others bodies (incl. genitals)
- Self-touching
- Experience erections/vaginal lubrication
- Be able to say appropriate names for body parts
- Talk openly about their bodies; enjoys nudity
- Identify as male or female, recognize difference between boys and girls

Three to Five
- Touch genitals for pleasure
- Role experimentation and play
- Questions, questions, questions!
- Conscious of their own body

Six to Eight
- Continue sexual play and genital stimulation
- Prefer same-gender friends; affectionate behavior with peers
- Recognize taboos about sexuality, may not ask as many questions
- Engage in name-calling and teasing
- Stronger self-concept in terms of gender and body image

Nine to Twelve
- Enter puberty, especially girls; become more modest and private
- Romantic crushes; decision-making about sexual activity
- Concerned about being normal
- Shy asking questions of caregivers, especially regarding sexuality
- Seeks out sexuality information from the internet/media

Adolescent
- Self-conscious and self-secure
- Parental/authority relationships intense
- Pressure to become sexual
- Questioning family values and beliefs
- Advanced sexual behavior/relationships
- Practical dating matters

Slide 17

Healthy Sexual Development

Six to Eight
- Continue sexual play and genital stimulation
- Prefer same-gender friends; affectionate behavior with peers
- Recognize taboos about sexuality, may not ask as many questions
- Engage in name-calling and teasing
- Stronger self-concept in terms of gender and body image

Nine to Twelve
- Enter puberty, especially girls; become more modest and private
- Romantic crushes; decision-making about sexual activity
- Concerned about being normal
- Shy asking questions of caregivers, especially regarding sexuality
- Seeks out sexuality information from the internet/media

Adolescent
- Self-conscious and self-secure
- Parental/authority relationships intense
- Pressure to become sexual
- Questioning family values and beliefs
- Advanced sexual behavior/relationships
- Practical dating matters

Slide 18

Prevention Tasks

- Recognize developmentally appropriate practice and exploration
- Model and provide safe and warm environment
- Provide accurate information
- Identify safe people
- Teach and model consent and healthy touch
Slide 19
Prevention Tasks: Infants and Toddlers
• Teaching language for all body parts, including genitals
• Allow child to explore own body; do not shame them for being curious
• Responding to questions about sexuality honestly but simply
• Healthy physical contact
• Provide warm, safe and loving environment
• Allow them to say no to hugs, kisses, etc.

Slide 20
Healthy Touch
• Everyone needs to be touched!
• Healthy touch prevents sexual abuse
• How to provide healthy touch
• Teaches consent
• What do you need?

Slide 21
Prevention Tasks: Three to Five
• Teach and model privacy, respect, healthy boundaries
• Talk about “ok” and “Not ok” touches
• Provide age-appropriate sexuality education
• Encourage self-care
• Answer questions honestly and directly
• Teach and model consent
• Introducing surprises - NOT secrets
Slide 22

**Talking About Consent**

- Minors cannot give informed consent.
- Respect their physical boundaries.
- Teach respect for other's physical boundaries.
- Verbal and body language skills.
- Model!

Consent video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h3nhM9UlJjc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h3nhM9UlJjc)

Slide 23

**Prevention Tasks: Six to Eight**

- Provide age-appropriate information about sexuality.
- Utilize media, books, situational opportunities to discuss sexual matters.
- Model healthy and respectful boundaries.
- Reinforce family safety planning rules.

Slide 24

**Safety in the Cyber World**

- Active vs passive participation.
- What kids need to know.
- Using safety planning.
Prevention Tasks: Nine to Twelve

- Provide broad-based sexual health education
- Discuss and help develop problem solving, decision-making, and communication skills
- Develop own media literacy skills, and stay informed about child’s cyber activities – discuss internet safety
- Discuss and model family values
- Promote healthy relationships
- Enhance self-esteem

Prevention Tasks: Adolescents

- Will need information and have questions about:
  - Decision making
  - Social relationships and sexual customs
  - Personal values and consequences of sexual behavior
  - Encourage them to think for themselves
- Stay involved and engaged!
- Ask what they think

Actively Teach Healthy Boundaries

- Reinforce
- Redirect
- Model
Slide 28

Responding to Children’s and Teens’ Questions

Slide 29

Talking with Children and Teens

Slide 30

Family Safety Planning Rules

Safety Planning Resources:
- Everyday Solutions Three Kids Safe
- Create A Family Safety Plan
Slide 31

**Talking about Sexual Abuse with Children**

- Talk most about highest risk situations
- Use “practice scenarios”
- Use “child friendly” language

---

Slide 32

**Green – Response and Reinforce**

- Educate and Support
- Appropriate Sexual Behaviors
- Monitor
- Establish and Reinforce Safety Plan

---

Slide 33

**Your role now?**

- What do you understand as your responsibility now?
- What do you plan to do?
You may never know what results come from your action. But if you do nothing, there will be no result.

– Mahatma Gandhi