



Slide 1



Awareness to Action

*for Professionals Working with Parents
and Professional Caregivers*



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- 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
- Identify and respond to warning signs in adult behaviors
- Develop courage, comfort and communication tools to talk about children's sexual behaviors
- Practice with new skills







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



Taking Care of Yourself

-  ABCs of Vicarious Trauma
-  You as the "tool"
-  Re-grounding




Stop It Now!’s Approach

Focus on **primary prevention** – **before** abuse happens


- Challenge people at-risk and abusing children to stop their abusive behavior and reach out for help
- Shift prevention focus from children **to** adults and from people who have been sexually abused **to** people who sexually abuse youth

Program Areas

1. Prevention Education
2. Technical Assistance/Training
3. Prevention Advocacy
4. Help Services



1.888.PREVENT
helpline@stopitnow.org
stopitnow.org/help

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Activity:
I Want, Hope and Do

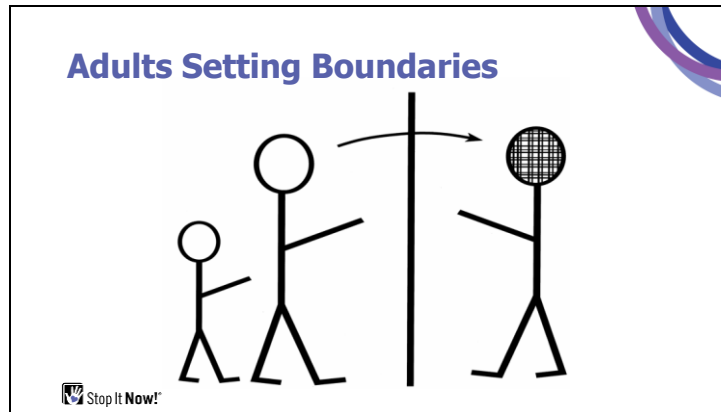
- What do you want children and adolescents to know about sexuality?
- What do you hope they don't experience sexually?
- What is your responsibility? What do you do now?

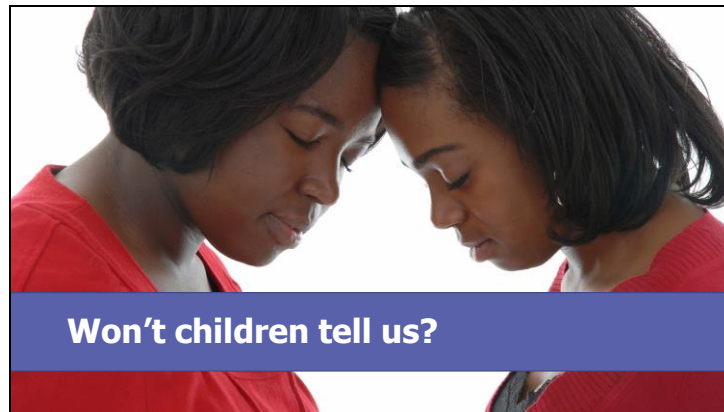


Key Concepts for Prevention

- **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







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.



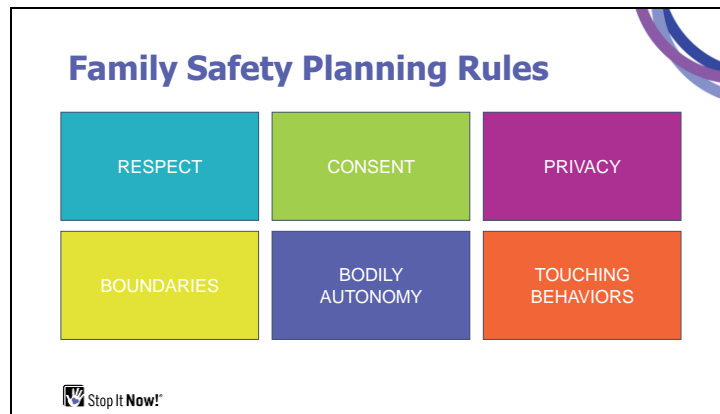
Additional Forms of Sexual Abuse

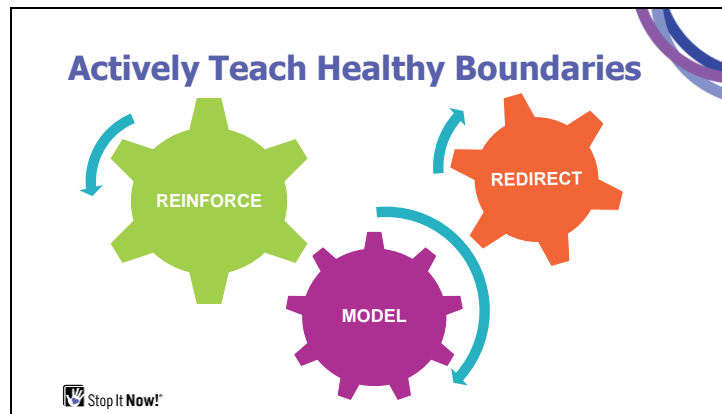
- Child sexual abuse material (CSAM)
 - Multiple platforms
- Sex trafficking
- Sexual exploitation and internet sex crimes

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Activity: Family Safety Planning

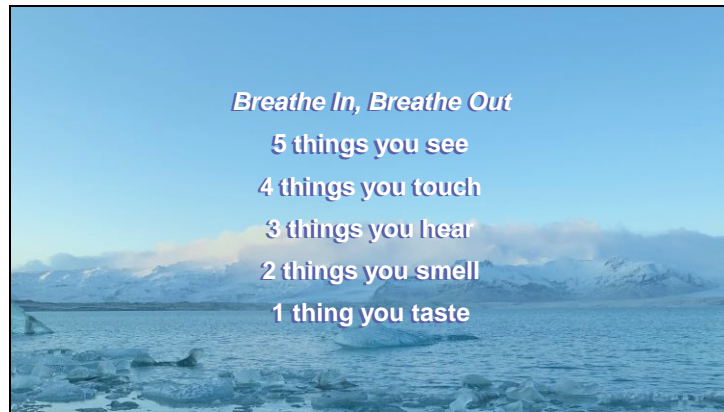
Instructions:


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)

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Healthy Sexuality & Sexual Development


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

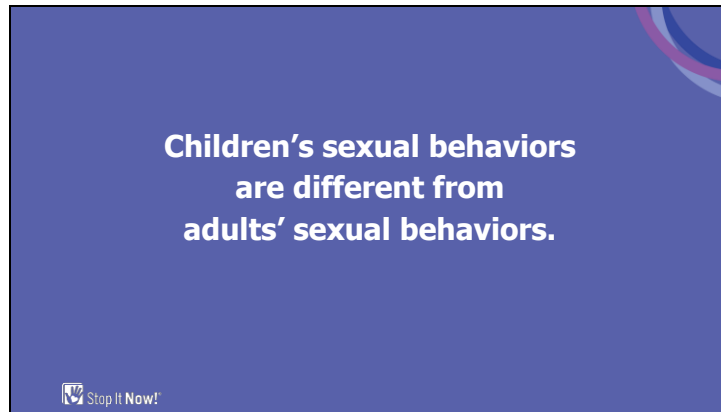


Activity: Learning About Sex




Instructions: Discuss one of the following, practicing your self-care:


1. How you learned about sex?
2. How you wish you had learned about sex?
3. How children should learn about sex?

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Prevention Levels

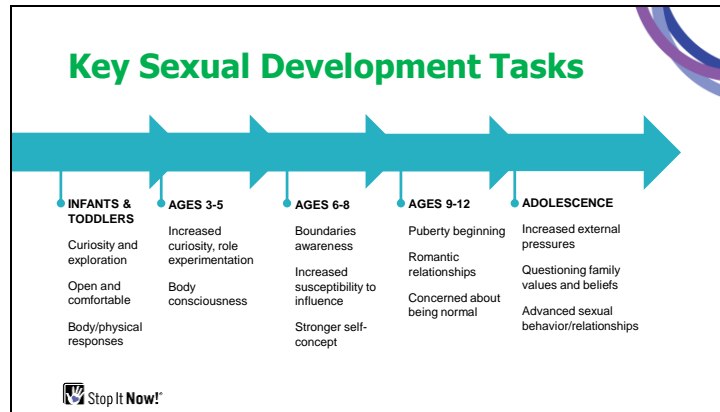
	Safe, healthy, developmentally-appropriate	Respond & Reinforce
	Concerning, inappropriate	Protect & Respond
	Harmful, sexual abuse	System Response & Safety Planning

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What Healthy Sexuality Looks Like

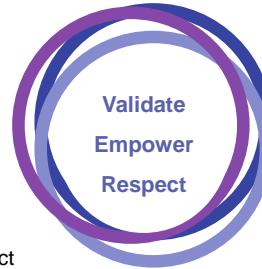
Children	Adolescents
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information-gathering process• Looking and touching• Exploring with peers• Playful quality• Ongoing friendship• Limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mutual, consensual• Exploration• Often within relationship

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Prevention Tasks

- Recognize developmentally appropriate practice and exploration
- Model and provide safe environment
- Be a safe person
- Provide accurate information
- Teach and model consent
- Identify, model boundaries and respect



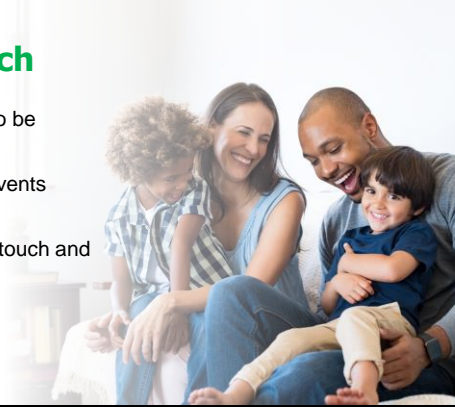
Prevention Tasks: Infants & Toddlers

- Teach language for all body parts, including genitals
- Allow child to explore own body; don't shame for being curious
- Respond 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.



Healthy Touch

- Everyone needs to be touched!
- Healthy touch prevents sexual abuse
- Providing healthy touch and teaching consent



Special Considerations

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



Prevention Tasks: 3-5

- 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



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?




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Talking about Consent

- Minors cannot give informed consent - EVER
- Respect children's physical boundaries
- Teach respect for other people's physical boundaries
- Know the laws – talk with teens!
- Verbal and body language skills
- Model

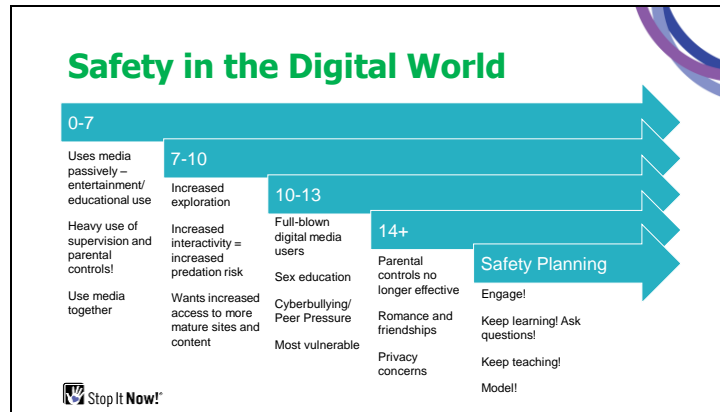
CONSENT

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Prevention Tasks: 6-8

- 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





Prevention Tasks: 9-12

- 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



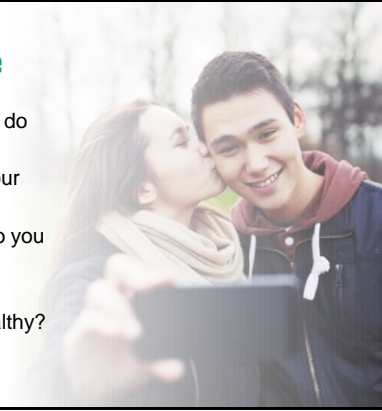
Prevention Tasks: Adolescents

- 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



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?



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 teenager 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?



Talking with Kids about Sex Abuse

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



Activity: Designing Safety Plans

Use the Handout: Your Family Safety Plan

1. Individually: Start with your five most basic/important rules – what would you want to add?
2. In groups: Share and listen. Is there anything you'd like to adopt or phrase differently after hearing other's responses?



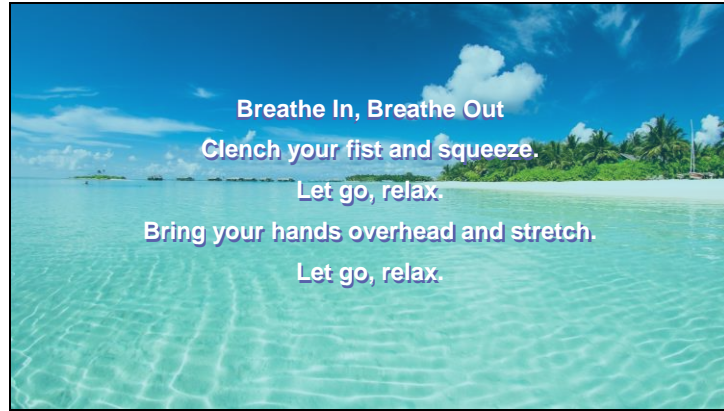
Response to Appropriate Sexual Behaviors


- Respond and reinforce
- Establish and reinforce safety plan
- Educate and support
- Monitor



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**CIRCLES
OF SAFETY**

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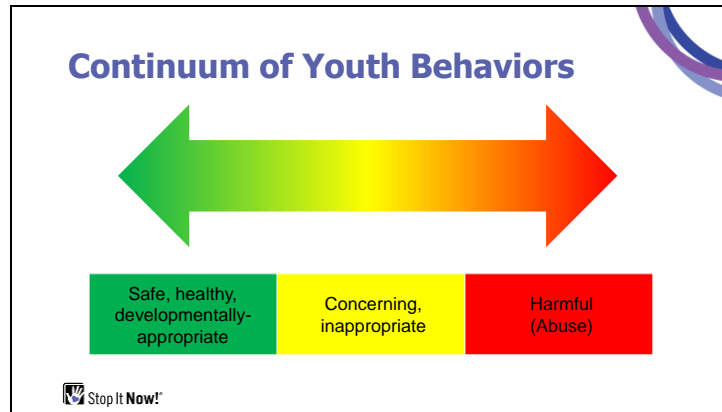


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Which cat best describes you right now?



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Healthy	Variable	Unhealthy
Curiosity, Discovery, Processing	Motivation	Coercion/control, Emotional Need, Reactive
Mutual consent, Equal power, Spontaneous	Dynamic	Manipulation, Threats, Unequal dynamic, Repetitious, Strategized
Looking, Touching, Showing	Activity	Adult sex-like activity, Repeated behavior
Fun, Silly, Spirit of play	Affect	Fear, Shame, Entitled, "Sneaky"





What information do you need? What do you want to know?

- 
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Consider the Context

- Is the behavior developmentally expected?
- Have you seen these behaviors before?
- Have you set limits before?
- Differences in age, size, development?
- Between playmates - playful quality?
- Coercion, manipulation, threats? Obsessiveness?
- How did the children react when discovered?




Warning Signs of Possible Sexual Abuse in Children

- Unexplained changes in routines and habits
- Regressive behaviors
- Unexplained fears, mood swings
- Risky behavior
- Secrets
- Leaves "clues"
- Unexplained money or gifts
- ❖ Sexualized behavior



Warning Signs of Youth Causing Sexual Harm

Confused about social rules and interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drugs and/or alcohol involved• History of violence, own abuse
Impulsively sexual or aggressive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Behavior elicits complaints/continues after limits set• Uses threats and coercion

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Talking with Youth about Warning Signs

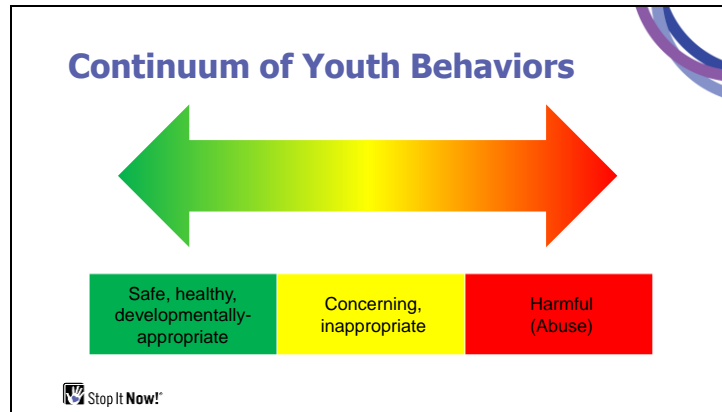
- Stay calm, don't shame or label
- Talk about behaviors – not intent
- Refer to safety plans and rules
- Redirect and talk about alternatives
- Help kids build communication skills
- Let them know that adults are responsible for helping them and their environment stay safe



Response to Warning Signs

- Protect and respond
- Take action
- Follow up
- Trust yourself
- Find an ally
- Review and follow the safety plan

A photograph of a woman and a young girl sitting at a desk, looking at a laptop screen. The woman is leaning over the girl, pointing at the screen. The scene is brightly lit, possibly by a window in the background.



Harmful Sexual Behaviors between Children

- Shows vulnerable (younger) child explicit sexual images, videos or content
- 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



Discovery of Abuse or Sexual Harm

- Disclosure
- Accidental
- Intentional
- Evidence
- Adult's reaction




Next Steps

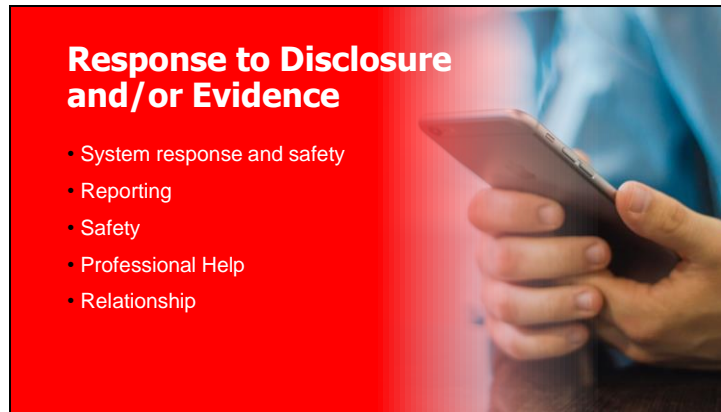
**FOR CHILD WHO
EXPERIENCED ABUSE**

- Response
- Talking with others,
i.e. parents
- Professional help
- Resume safety
- Protect relationship

**FOR CHILD WHO
HAS SEXUALLY HARMED**

- Response
- Resume safety
- Talking with others,
i.e. parents
- Professional help
- Protect relationship

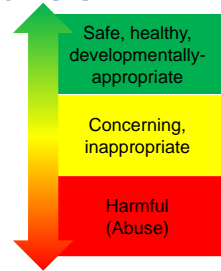
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**Response to Disclosure
and/or Evidence**

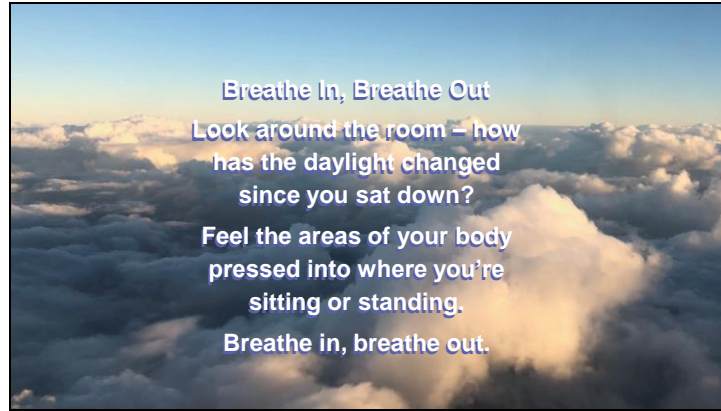
- System response and safety
- Reporting
- Safety
- Professional Help
- Relationship


- Consider:
 - Motivation
 - Dynamic
 - Activity
 - Affect



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Awareness to Action

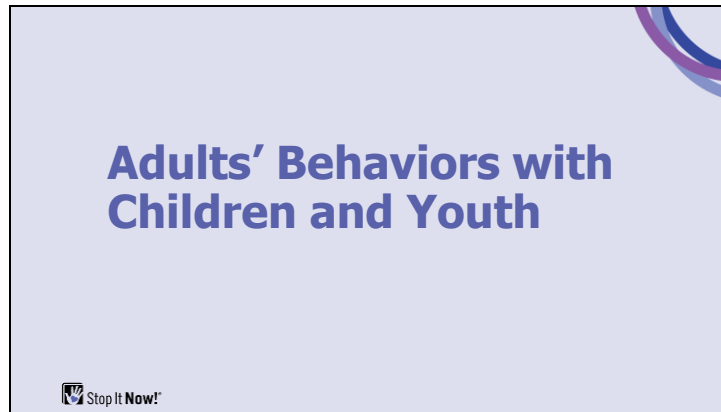
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Continuum of Adult Behaviors

	Safe, Healthy, Developmentally Appropriate
	Concerning, Inappropriate
	Abusive




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The Importance of Breaking Down Myths



I am probably well known and liked by you and your child: a nice guy offender.
I can be a man or a woman, married or single.
I can be an adult, adolescent or a child.
I can be of any race, hold any religious belief, and have any sexual orientation.
I can be a coach, teacher, family friend, parent, step-parent, relative, clergyman, babysitter, or anyone who comes in contact with children.
I am likely to be a stable, employed, respectable member of the community

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Observing Behaviors – Not Intent

If we only knew when someone was walking down the wrong road, we might be able to stop them in their tracks, turn them around, and get them help before they harmed a child.



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Consider the Context

- Whose needs are being met?
- Do behaviors continue after clear limits have been set?
- Is parental authority being undermined?
- Is one child singled out?
- Can a child say “no”?




Concerning, Inappropriate Behaviors in Adults

Child-focused	"Too good to be true."
Boundaries	Don't recognize what is appropriate Make excuses for harmful behavior
Relationships	Secret or excessive interactions




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Barriers to Speaking Up

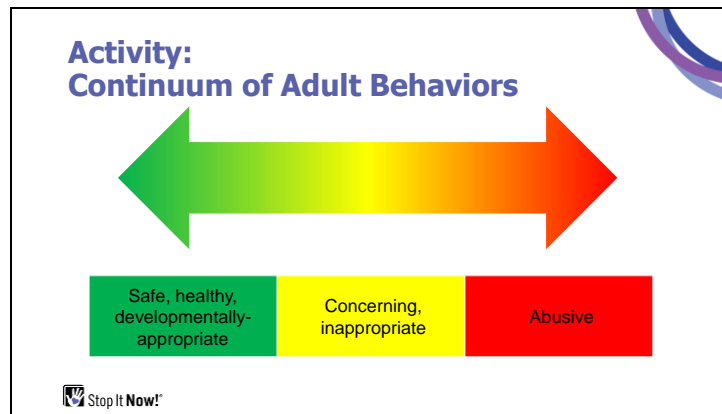
FEARS	BELIEFS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Misinterpreting situation• Worry about offending others• Make things worse• Safety concerns• Family disruption• Financial loss• Shame and guilt	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They're the "perfect" family• They are a "good" person• Every family has issues• They wanted it• That's how they show affection• They are "too old"

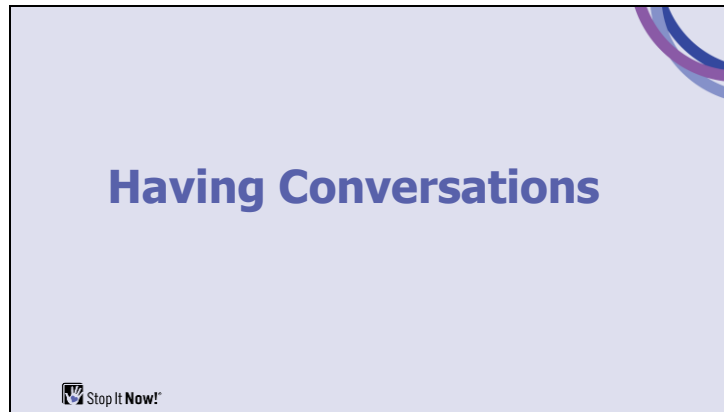
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Continuum of Adult's Behaviors

	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.

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Speaking Up - Model

- Set the tone - shared responsibility and accountability
- Be honest and genuine
- Describe the behavior
- State what you want
- Speak up and set boundaries



Communication Skills

- Language and Tone
- Avoid Labels and Intent
- Stick to the Facts
- Calm and Confident
- Respectful
- Listening Skills
- Follow up



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



Successful Conversations

DOs


- Set the stage
- Stick to the facts
- We're on the "same side"
- Be honest about your feelings
- Include positives
- Be prepared with information
- Create safety plan together

DON'Ts

- Avoid labels
- Avoid judgment
- Avoid comparisons

AFTER

- Thank the adult
- Follow up

 Stop It Now!



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- Stop It Now!**[®]

Exercise:
Adults Crossing Boundaries

1. Set the tone - shared responsibility and accountability
2. Describe the behavior
3. State what you want
4. Speak up and set boundaries



	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.

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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??



What Are We Asking You to Do?

- **Plan** ahead for safety
- **Act** *before* children are harmed or to prevent further abuse.
- **Recognize** both prevention opportunities and concerning situations
- **Imbed** prevention into the setting
- **Sustain** prevention actions



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Thank you!

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