



Awareness to Action: Key Steps and the Role of Healthy Sexuality Education in Sex Abuse Prevention

Workshop 1

Suggested script:

Welcome everyone to Circles of Safety: Awareness to Action, the first of two workshops on child sexual abuse prevention.

➤ **Handout pre-survey**

Review:

- *(for virtual workshops) Zoom Housekeeping, asking that participants have their picture, first name, pronouns, and the agency they are representing. Share whether class will be recorded. Review chat functions*
- *Homework announcement – will be assigned at end of each day, mostly reflective*
- *Breakout or small groups*
- *Website manual: www.stopitnow.org/workshop1 - Includes the table of contents, slides, handouts and resources*
- *Option: End of day meditative debrief, noting that because this can feel like an intense topic, an opportunity to mentally debrief with a brief exercise right at the end of each day will be provided, this is similar to a meditation, just a*

way to bring you out of workshop/training mode and back into your day. Your participation is voluntary.

- *Introductions*
- *Icebreaker recommended*
- *Note if you be available after the workshop for any private questions, and if appropriate invite participants reach out through chat (if virtual) or email to the trainer(s) privately.*

Introductions: *Use any format to have both trainers and participants introduce themselves. For your consideration, here is how Stop It Now! leads our introductions:*

Now, let's get to know each other a little bit. We're going to ask everyone for a brief introduction, but let's do us first. My name is [Trainer, share brief bio, and I've been responsible for the safety and well-being of children for X years]. And my name is [other Trainer, brief bio, and I've been responsible for the safety and well-being of children for X years].

Now, I'm going to call on one of you and I'd like for you to share your name, pronouns, what you do, and how long you've been doing work related to child safety and care (yes, parenting and babysitting both count, too!). Then, after you introduce yourself, call on someone else. We'll work around the group this way.

Trainer's note: *trainer should note # of year each participant shares that they've been caring for and/or working with children. After everyone introduces themselves, one of the trainers reflects: "X amount of years, wow. That's a lot of experience, a lot of knowledge, that's a lot of wisdom about how to keep children safe. We're so grateful to be here with you all, and to get to talk about this important topic over the course of the next four days."*

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

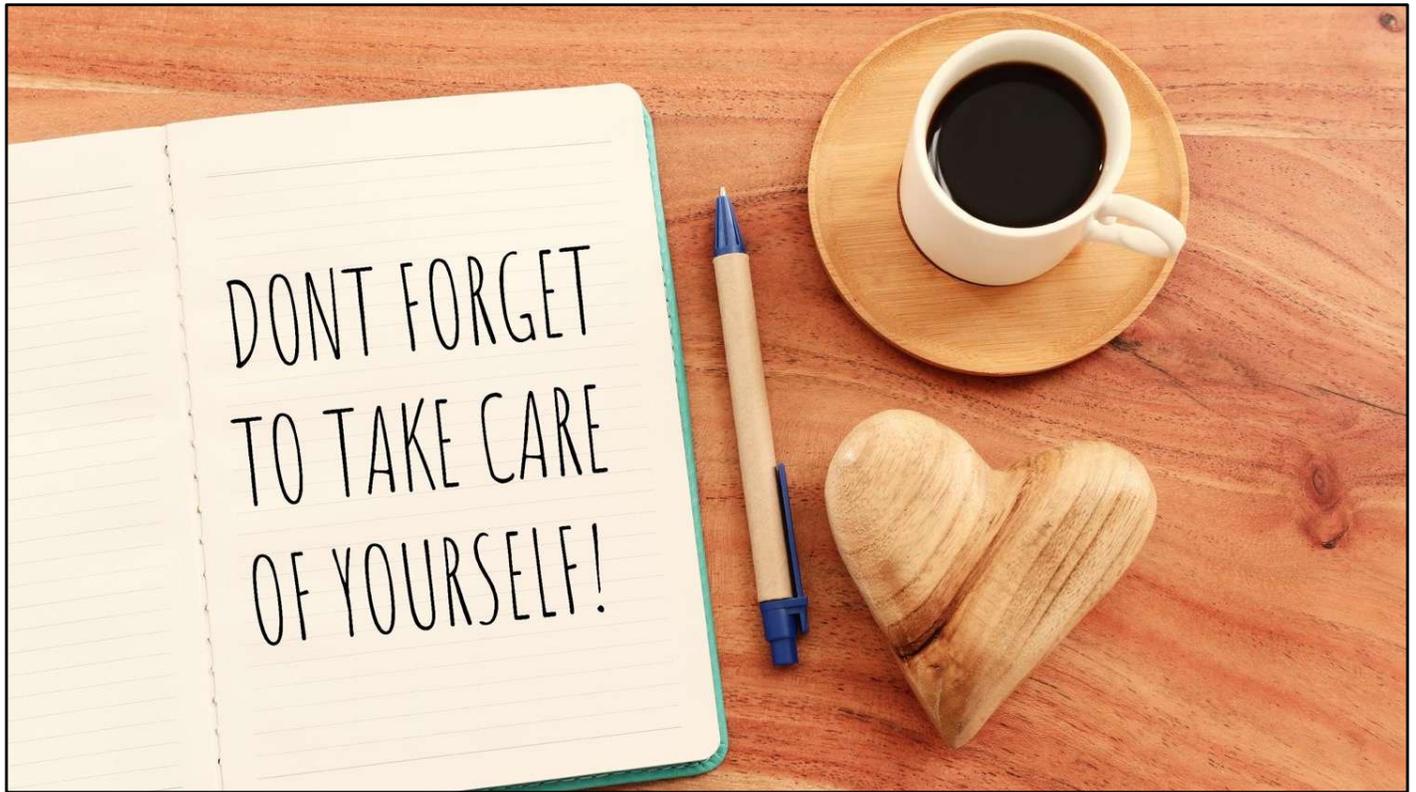
Suggested script:

Talking about sex is not easy – even for professionals. Talking with other adults about healthy sexuality is not easy, let alone talking about inappropriate sexual behaviors. We have found that even professionals in the field find it difficult to talk together about sex. It is also likely that there are some of us in this room that have a personal connection to this issue. For these and many other reasons, we always like to start with a few ground rules for our time together so that each of us feels able to participate in a way that feels most comfortable to them. These are ground rules that have worked for groups in the past. After we’ve gone over these, if anyone wants to comment or add one, please feel free to do so. Just raise your hand.

➤ Review each bullet:

- **Take care of yourself.** It’s very possible that at least one of you has personally been impacted by child sexual abuse. Some of us may be survivors or know a survivor. Some may know someone who has caused child sexual abuse, or who is at risk. It’s important to be aware of the emotions this can stir up and to take care of yourself. We want you to take a minute to think about who you can turn to if the presentation brings up some things for you either during this workshop or later.
- **Full participation** - to the extent that each of us is able or feels comfortable. We all have a lot of experience and information. Having everyone participate allows us to learn from each other, and to increase what each one of us gets out of today’s workshop.
- **Use “I” Statements.** Please speak for yourself, not for all parents, or for all teachers, etc.

- **There is no such thing as a stupid question.** We encourage any and all comments and questions, this is the way to start the prevention process, we need to start talking together and listening to each other. We all have important things to share and we want to hear from everyone.
 - **Stay afterwards.** If you'd like to share a personal experience or don't feel comfortable talking about a particular issue in front of the group, please feel free to stay after to talk with one of us.
 - **Respect privacy:** we find that folks often share personal stories of their own parenting experiences, in their community and families, etc. Please hold confidence stories that are told here.
 - Before we begin, I want to acknowledge that personal stories are an essential part of why this work matters; the voices of survivors shape our understanding and our commitment. At the same time, these training sessions are not the right setting for sharing personal experiences of victimization or causing sexual abuse or harm. This is to protect everyone's safety and emotional well-being and to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. Do focus instead on sharing professional experiences—the situations you've encountered in your work with children and how those scenarios relate to the material we're discussing. Those perspectives are extremely valuable and welcome.
- **Ask:** Any other rules folks would suggest? Are there any concerns? Does this make sense to everyone?



Suggested script:

Please know that during the training we may use language or discuss situations that may be uncomfortable. We trust you all so if you need to step out and take a break or a breather, or turn off your camera please do so. There can be an emotional, mental, or even a spiritual cost to this work, so taking care of yourself in the ways you need can actually make you more resilient, and better able to show up for the rest of your life.

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.

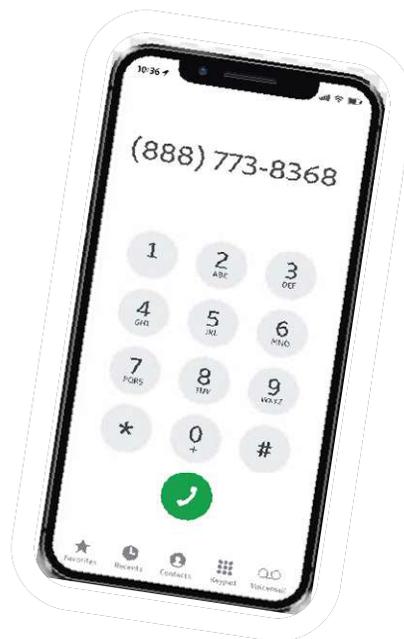
Suggested script:

Here are the broad objectives this class. Our goal with this training is to help all adults who care for children learn how we can better protect children from sexual abuse through safety steps and prevention tools. This isn't a workshop that will help you solve the sexual behavior problems of the children you serve. Instead, we talk about how to keep them safe through understanding basic healthy sexuality information and the role that you and all adults can play in children's protection.

Again, we recognize that talking about sex and children is never easy. However, we must talk about the sexual development and behaviors of children if we are to understand what is necessary to help them. We need to develop our confidence and comfort level to bring up questions and concerns about children and sexual development – so that we can help them develop their own safe sexual behaviors.

Stop It Now! Helpline

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



Suggested script:

Stop It Now! has operated a free, confidential helpline for adults since 1995 – they’ve had more than 30,000 conversations with parents, professionals, and community members. Please check their website for available hours to speak to someone live either through a phone call or chat, or email us with your questions.

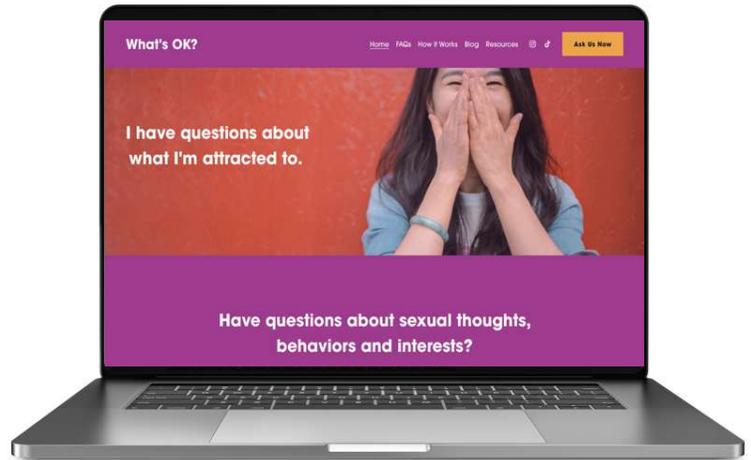
The helpline is available for anyone with any concern at all about keeping children and teens safe from sexual harm, whether you are a parent wondering how to plan for safety before any concerns have come up or you are addressing concerns that a child is being abused.

The helpline counselors talk with callers about how to create safe environments and keep kids safe, how to identify concerning behaviors about sexual abuse, and how to report abuse and seek support.

They are also the only organization in the US, that helps people with their own concerning thoughts and feelings toward children. They offer resources and support so that everyone can be accountable for their role in keeping children safe.

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.



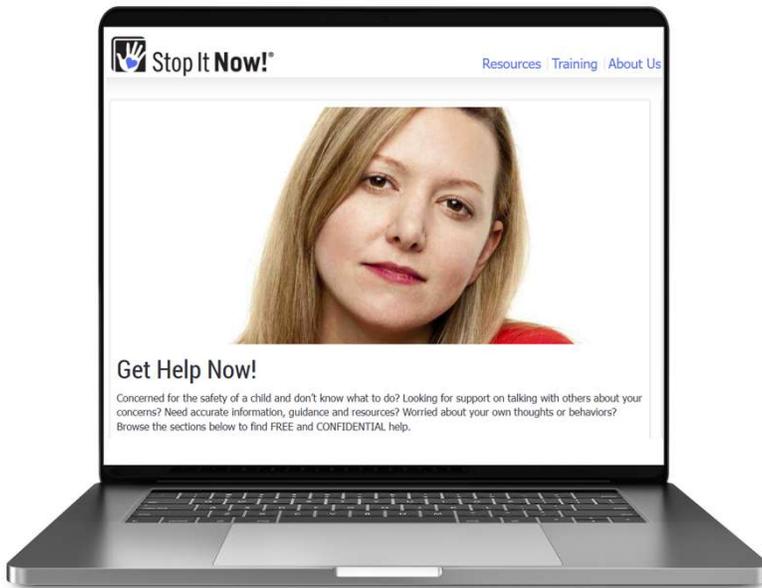
Suggested script:

In 2020, Sto It Now! launched whatsok.org, a website and helpline for youth and young adults ages 14 to 21. In order to fully realize their goal of a world where children do not experience sexual harm, they know that reaching youth with support and resources that help them develop their own safe relationships and healthy behaviors is vital.

So, they created this youth-focused service to provide teens and young adults a resource where they can ask the questions that are often outside of the so-called normal sexual development type of questions. This is a resource for young people who are worried that their own sexual thoughts, feelings and behaviors they are experiencing or that someone else's sexual thoughts, feelings and behaviors could be unhealthy, illegal and/or harmful.

WhatsOK? is a great resource to share with the young people in your life and we encourage you to visit the site.

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](#)

Suggested script:

And finally - Check out the Stop It Now! website for lots of free resources available.

Your Experience

What do you already do to keep children safe?

***What feels difficult or uncertain about doing
CSA prevention work?***

***What are the barriers that you have
experienced and observed?***



Suggested script:

Activity:

Trainer's note: *This activity will first be some solo reflection time, and then you will put people in breakout groups or pairs to share their thoughts with their small groups. You can then have the big group discuss broader reactions/reflections This can be brief, and also OK to have people 'opt-in'—no need to call on one person from each group if that doesn't feel appropriate*

Activity Instructions:

We're going to do an activity now.

Now, I'd like you all to take out the **handout**, called **Your Experience**. Take a moment and write down an answer to the first question: what do you already do to keep children safe? How are you helping them grow up healthy, free of harm, and feeling secure and cared for? This can be in all your roles, not just work or family. As you move through the world, what are you doing to make sure that kids are safe? Write freely, it doesn't have to be formal or full sentences.

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Next, look at these next two questions.

(Read the questions out loud):

Right now, what feels difficult or uncertain about doing CSA prevention work?

What barriers have you experienced or noticed that make CSA prevention work harder? – whatever your observations and experiences are, jot down some thoughts answering each question, notes that you'll feel comfortable sharing in a small group.

Next we're going to split you up into small groups (or pairs)

Before we go into our groups, let's take a moment to ground ourselves in some shared guidelines that we'll follow whenever we are in groups or pairs. These are here to help make the space feel as safe, respectful, and welcoming as possible:

Start by introducing yourselves, if you haven't met the folks in your group, take a moment to say your name and where you're from, what you do that brought you here.

Here are some basic tips to help:

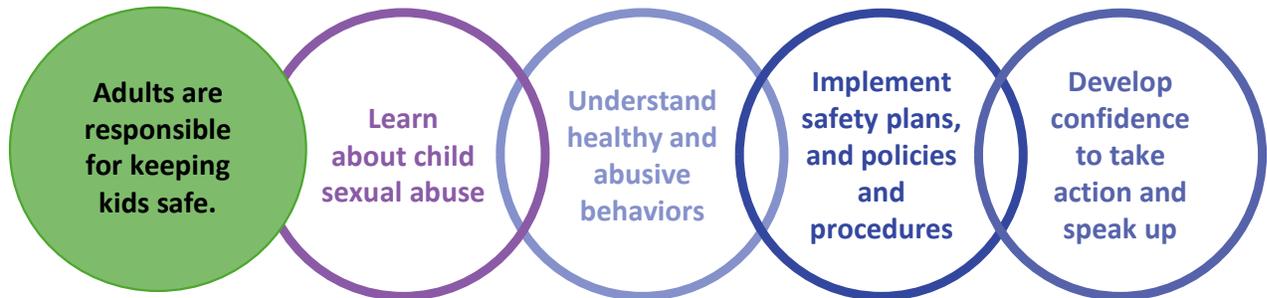
- Use "I" Statements: Speak from your own experience rather than making generalizations. Stereotypes can often lead to inaccurate conclusions and could even be insulting.
- Confidentiality: what gets shared stays within our training. This is very important, whether you are a professional or parent – or both – we want to respect everyone's information, experiences and story – so please do not share confidential information, not only when you are not in this training, but even within the training itself. So if you want to share something you heard in a group, think about the reason why, what impact did that shared experience or information make on you – and that is what you want to share. So not that someone else in the group has a child who has been sexually abused, but that you realized through other group members' experiences that folks were not only working as professionals but had personal experience as well...etc, etc.
- Make space for everyone—try to be mindful of how much you're speaking and invite others in. If you tend to hang back, consider stretching into sharing (to your comfort level). If you notice someone not speaking, ask them if they would like to share.
- Express Appreciation: Thank each other for sharing.
- Let's now go into our groups, and discuss not only what you wrote for the first

question, but what thoughts came up for you with the 2nd two questions. We're going to give you 8 minutes [*trainer: can offer more or less time as needed, depending on the group*]. We'll give you a two minute warning, and then will take some time to gather as a large group and hear a few reflections.

Once back in large group

- **Ask:** Is there anyone who would want to share anything about this experience for them, what their answers and thoughts were to these questions or anything about the impact someone else's sharing had on you? Or anything else that's jumping out to people which might be valuable to share with all of us?

Key Concepts for Prevention



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

Suggested script:

Trainer's note: *thank participants for participating in previous activity, perhaps noting that what they shared demonstrated principles, concerns, and actions that are central to preventive approaches*

Let's look now at key concepts for prevention – we'll talk more about all of these, but to give you an overview:

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- *Adults* are responsible for keeping kids safe. Even if we think we've provided children with information and instructions about how to deal with risky situations, children and teens may not always know when or how to say no or when or how to share when they feel unsafe, adults can help them stay safe with safety planning, education and healthy adult engagement. We can help them make safer choices.

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- Learn about sex abuse – it's important to know what you are talking about. To

be able to act in a child's best interest, we need to understand what child sexual abuse is. This including understanding contact and non-contact abuse, online abuse and exploitation.

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- Adults also need to understand healthy behaviors and behaviors that present risks. This includes understanding and helping children and youth experience healthy sexual development, and understanding behaviors that are normal and age-appropriate sexual behaviors so we can identify behaviors and situations that are warning signs. We also need to understand the importance of talking about healthy and safe behaviors with adults, children and youth, and when someone's behaviors may cross boundaries.

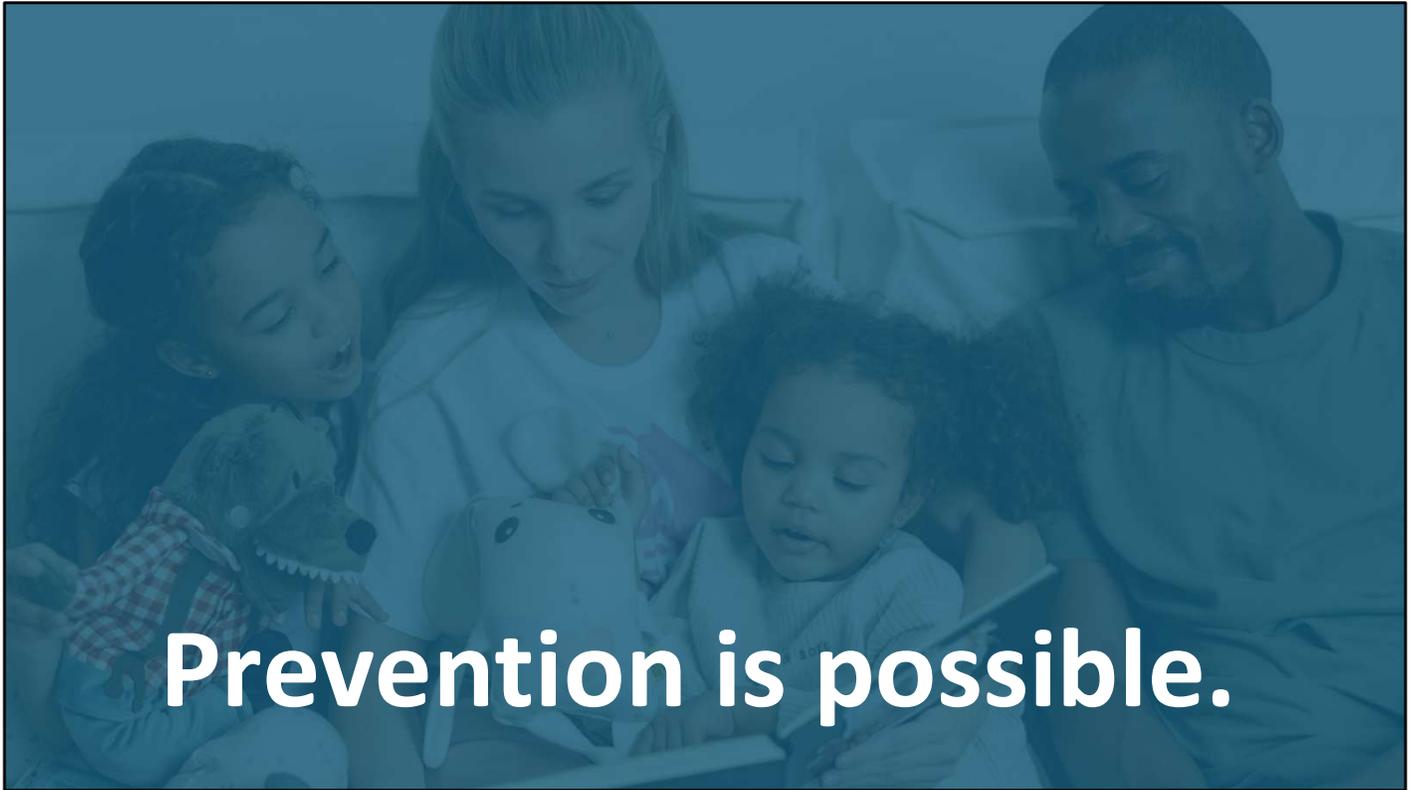
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- Plan for safety – this means planning before something has happened. Too often, sex abuse prevention conversation is after something has happened. We can have a safety plan in our homes, our programs and community that is calm, rational and actually just a lot of good common sense. It doesn't have to keep people in a paranoid place – like, "don't touch anyone, don't hug anyone" – but rather just helps state what is expected around safe behavior. This also includes understanding what is healthy sexual development. We can have safety plans in our homes and in places within our community that serve children. For youth-serving organizations, this also means having strong and enforceable policies and procedures.

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- And finally, we need to develop confidence to take action. Adults need to feel comfortable, be practiced enough, be informed enough, and generally ready to speak up and take appropriate actions when a child's safety is of concern. That can mean speaking up, seeking help, reaching out and talking to someone else. It's not about doing it perfectly—it's about doing it! This is about knowing enough about warning signs to trust your gut, trust what you're observing, and have someone you can check in with, have an action plan around how to take action to prevent harm and abuse.
- Also, I want to add the importance of reducing and voiding both isolation and shame – whether you are an adult worried about a child or another adult, or even if you are an adult worried about your own boundaries and behaviors – staying quiet, alone and embarrassed – helps actually increase the risk. Isolation and shame acts like water to the seed of sexual abuse. So in all of these key steps, we want to seek out support and

feeling more confident helps reduce shame in even addressing this topic.



Prevention is possible.

Suggested script:

It *is* possible to prevent child sexual abuse.

Primary prevention means stopping abuse before someone harms a child.

Mandatory reporting training and sex offender registries are sometimes considered prevention, but actually, these are responses after a child has been harmed.

With primary prevention, we take steps before a child has been hurt to reduce the risk of sexual abuse.

While there are many barriers to prevention, our hope is that after taking this training you will feel more confident and able to talk openly about CSA and to do what is needed to protect children.



Suggested script:

Lastly, let's emphasize hope – because hope means we believe changes, safety, and prevention are possible - maybe one child at a time – but that is enough, and that is where we start.



Optional for workshop

Suggested script:

This is a shared learning environment where we honor the diversity of perspectives & experiences that make each of us unique. Our varied approaches to life, and to this work, make us even more powerful when we come together to talk about tough subjects like this one. We approach this work with a commitment to having an ongoing practice of self-reflection, openness, and respect.

We also want to acknowledge that the scenarios and strategies discussed in this training may not fully reflect the diverse experiences, values, beliefs, living situations and cultural backgrounds of all individuals or families.

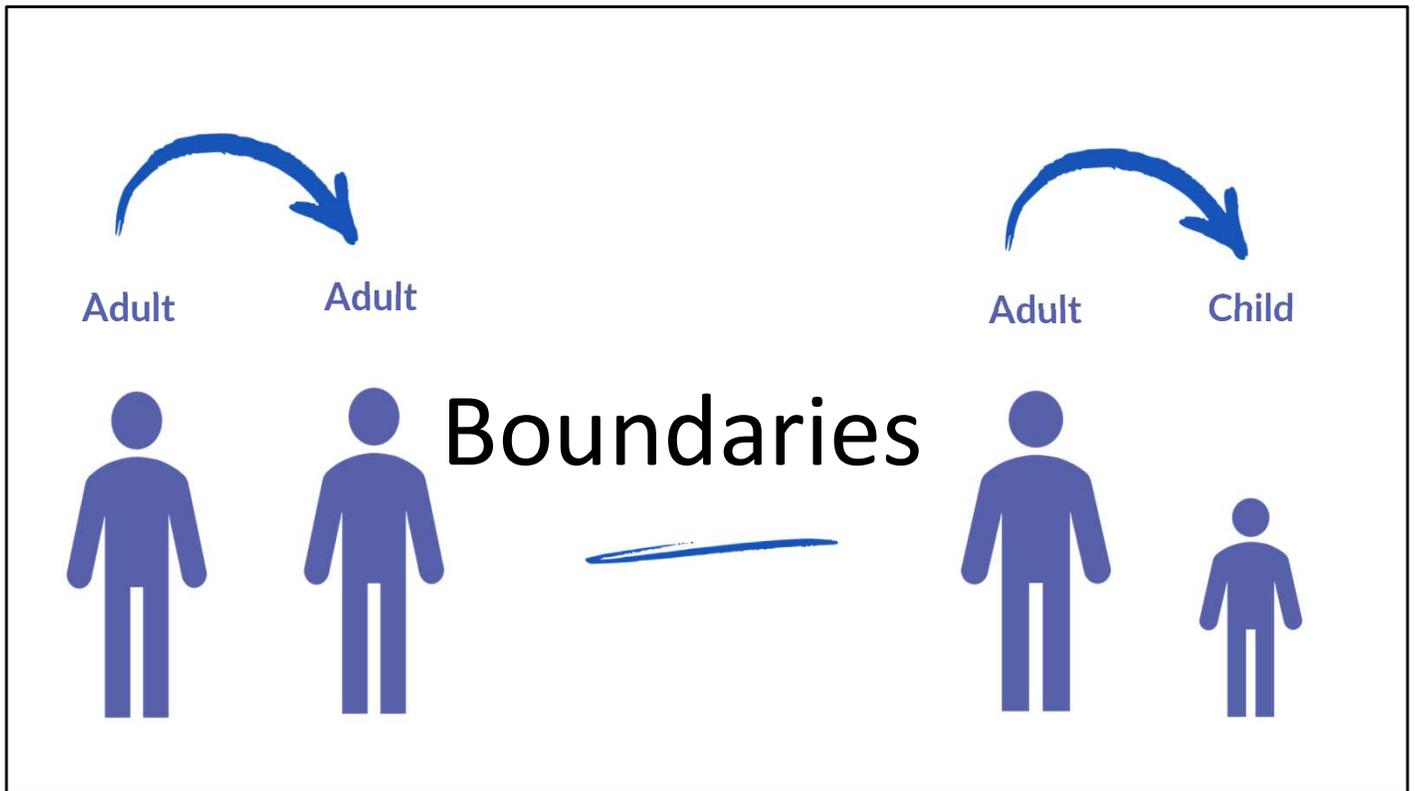
We encourage you to approach the material with an open mind, recognizing that each person's situation is their own. And, we invite you to adapt these concepts in ways that fit with your own experiences and the children you care for & about.

Though we're all different, one thing we all have in common is that we all believe

every child has a right to be safe. Our hope is that everyone can learn information they can use to help them protect the children in their life.

We strive to keep our language up to date. And, we recognize the possibility that some words or phrases may have changed over time. During our training if you hear language which makes you wonder, please ask about it. Though we have a script, this is a living document in a lot of ways and we endeavor to keep on pace with timely language and terms as they evolve.

Finally, we know right now you have more challenges than ever. You may be working under conditions we're not addressing—if this is the case for you, then please take extra care of yourself during this training. Cliché as it may be, you can't pour from an empty cup. And, thank you for engaging in this vital, powerful work with us.



Suggested script:

Let's talk more now about the importance of adults and their role in prevention, one key factor in prevention is adults setting boundaries.

For many adults, it's easier to think about setting boundaries with children than with another adult.

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We already often set boundaries to let children know what they're allowed to do, what they're supposed to do, and what consequences are.

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Talking about and setting boundaries with adults is often more difficult. But, both of these types of conversations are essential for prevention. We cannot expect children to speak up about *their* boundaries if we can't do it.

So, these conversations between adults are essential for prevention.

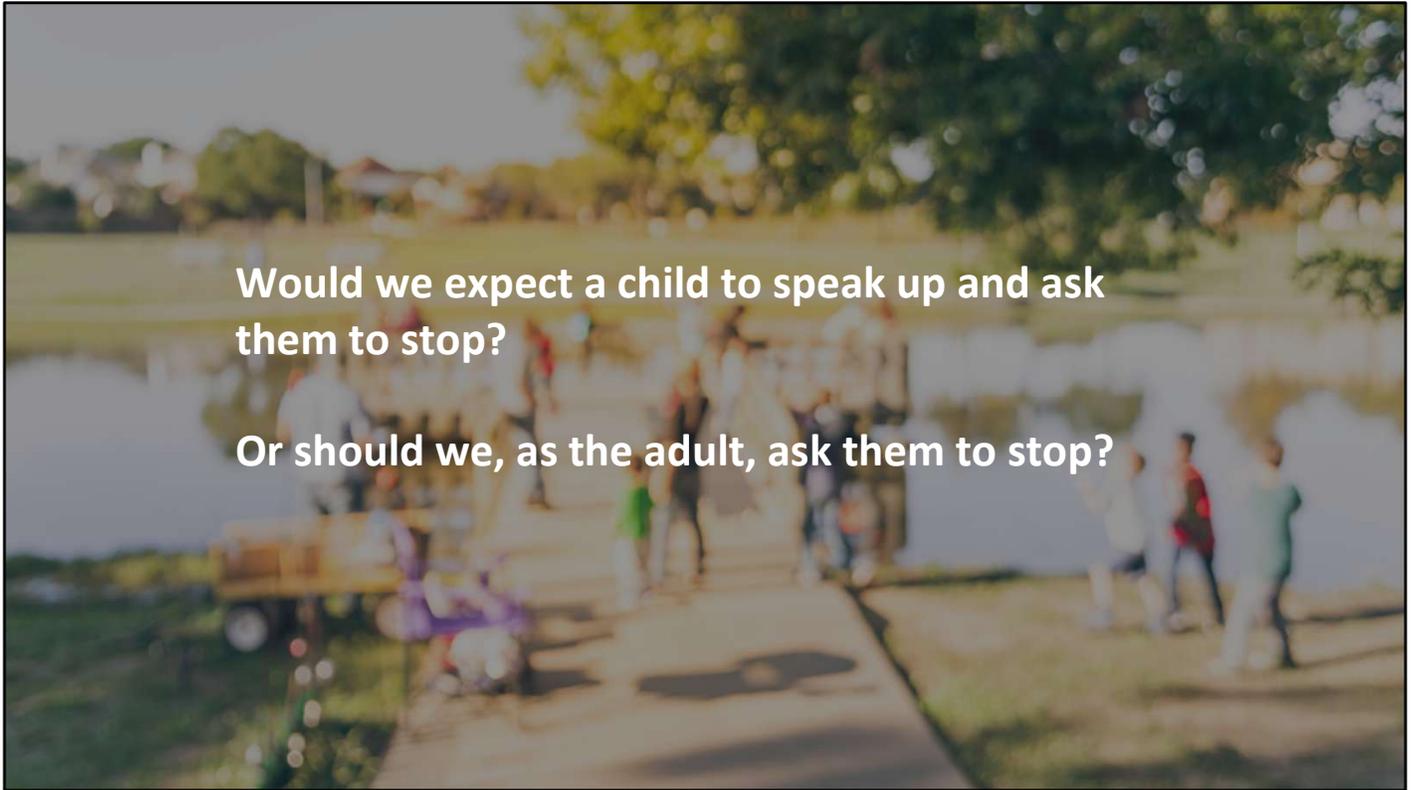
Adults set the expectations for safe behavior around children. We cannot depend on children to always know when to say no, when to tell someone, when they're being manipulated, when they are scared because they are being threatened. This is why we say that adults are responsible – adults need to be accountable for keeping children safe.

Also it's hugely important for children to see and hear us set boundaries. While an adult setting boundaries with another adult will likely do it in private, if there is boundary setting which happens within earshot or in front of children this can also be a powerful lesson. This shows kids that it's safe to set boundaries. And, it shows kids that you, the adult setting safe boundaries, can be counted on.

➤ **Reflection/Ask:** Have you ever seen an adult doing something in front of a child that you thought was inappropriate? What did you do? What do you wish you had done?
Anyone wish to share?

And this is not just about setting boundaries with adults, but between children. This will be covered more later

In many ways, a core objective of this training is really to help you feel more confident and knowledgeable about setting boundaries in your own behavior and in other's – both adults and children's, and with folks both in your family – your personal, intimate environment AND in your professional environment; with your colleagues, bosses, etc.



Would we expect a child to speak up and ask them to stop?

Or should we, as the adult, ask them to stop?

Suggested script:

Now, imagine that you're at a backyard barbecue, sitting at a picnic table with children and a few of the parents. One parent is telling a joke that is sexual in nature, mature content not appropriate for children. Do we expect the child to say, "Excuse me, you're breaking one of our program (or family) safety rules. Can you stop telling the joke in front of children please?"

No – we do not. As the adult, we need to speak up and tell this parent that the jokes being shared are inappropriate and change the topic.

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Should we expect a child to tell this adult to stop? Or should another adult be the one to tell them to stop?

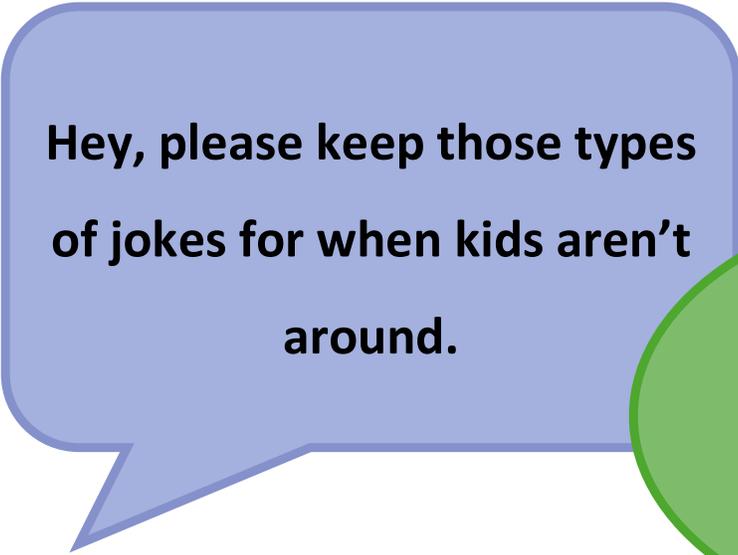
No, this is an adult's job.

While we want children to know how to avoid risks, we cannot expect them to

always spot the risk or even “confront” an adult. We should not and cannot expect a child or youth to be the one to speak up and set a boundary; we as adults have a responsibility to do it.

It's important in these types of situations that we do speak up.

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.

Suggested script:

We can pull someone to the side; we don't have to be rude (or accuse them of anything), just be matter of fact and say something like

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"Hey, please save those types of jokes for when kids aren't around,"

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or, "that's not appropriate for kids, please save it for another time."

Setting Boundaries

Setting boundaries includes speaking up.

Suggested script:

This person's intentions may not be harmful, but either way, we want to be clear that how they (and other adults) behave around and talk with children is important – and that inappropriate behavior is not acceptable. And we can ask that person to help us keep children safer.

Setting Boundaries



Optional exercise

Suggested script:

Now, let's do an activity about how you might respond to different situations.

Activity:

On your screen, select whether you think each statement is TRUE or FALSE.

Trainer's note: These polls can be times for further lecture from trainers, and they can also be openings for discussion. As you run the training this script is a guideline. Feel free to open questions up for discussion—either after each poll, after one or two, or perhaps consider running through the poll questions relatively swiftly and then having a group debrief.]

Poll 1:

The adult sharing inappropriate jokes requires attention, and I should speak up. – T
If most people pick 'True': OK, most people are choosing True. This is correct. This adult is creating a vulnerable environment for the children present and it's

important for children and youth to see adults set and reinforce boundaries.

If most people pick 'False'—I get where people might pick false, it is uncomfortable to do this, but if we see concerning or inappropriate behaviors, we should speak up. This adult is creating a vulnerable environment for the children present and it's important for children and youth to see adults set and reinforce boundaries.

Poll 2:

Based on his behavior, I can assume that this adult will sexually abuse a child. – F

If most people pick 'False': Yes, this is false. We cannot know someone's intentions or what they will or won't do. However, it's important to speak up and model healthy, appropriate interactions with children and youth.

If most people pick 'True': Actually, we can't know someone's intentions or what they will or won't do. Acting this way could be a signal that something is coming up for this adult. It's important to speak up to get this behavior to stop, and to alert this adult that this isn't safe nor appropriate. This adult, like all adults, has a responsibility to have safe interactions when they're around children and youth. This includes their humor.

Trainer's note: Respond to what you're seeing. If it's an even split then this could be a great discussion point. Are some people not responding? If not, this might mean that they aren't sure, feel split, or need a little more time with the concepts to feel comfortable responding.

Poll 3:

I don't need to say anything, just giving an adult a stern look is enough. – F

If most people pick 'False': Yes, you're right, a look is not a sufficient response. Maybe that would be enough for certain people, but when it comes to youth safety it's important to be clear: that means talking about the behavior with this adult, not leaving it up to a look.

Poll 4:

If I don't speak up, kids may think it's okay for adults to break rules, even when it involves something sexual in nature. –

If most people pick 'True': Correct, by speaking up, you are modeling safety rules and healthy boundaries for kids. You're also showing other adults how to speak up and set boundaries.

We should speak up in situations where we see unhealthy behaviors so we can model for kids appropriate safety rules and boundaries, and for other adults how to speak up and set boundaries.

Poll 5:

If the child is uncomfortable, they will speak up. – F

For discussion: This statement is false, because this is an adult’s job to speak up (not a child’s). While we want children to know how to avoid risks, we cannot expect them to always spot the risk or even “confront” an adult. We should not and cannot expect a child to be the one to speak up and set a boundary; we as adults have a responsibility to do it.

Poll 6:

If the child is not my child, I should mind my own business – F

For discussion: Correct, this statement is false. All adults are responsible for creating a safe environment for children. If we wait for someone else to say something, nothing might ever be done and the adult will never get the information that their behavior is not acceptable or safe for children.

Extra language for this response: We may think it’s not our business, but all adults are responsible for creating a safe environment for children. If we wait for someone else to say something, nothing might ever be done and the adult will never get the information that his behavior is not acceptable or safe for children.

Trainer's note: Possible debrief here if the group seems to want to talk further about this activity and the concepts



Children and disclosure

Suggested script:

Continuing to build on this concept of adult responsibility, it's important that we understand that we cannot depend on children to disclose sexual abuse.

Researchers estimate that only **38%** of child victims disclose the fact that they are being sexually abused (this means that 62% of incidents involving sexual harm to a child are not reported).

And why don't the majority of children disclose?

Because children are still developing, still learning about communication, boundaries, etc, we can't depend on them to clearly express when something uncomfortable or unsafe is going on. Often kids don't know something's wrong. If they do know something is wrong, they aren't sure how to talk about it. And if they do know something is wrong, they might not know how to talk about it, and they might not know who to talk to about it.

Sometimes children may say *something*, though these comments may only

make sense in hindsight. For example, a child may say, "I don't wanna go to Mary's house if her brother is there," Seems small, but this child might actually be signaling that something is really wrong. We may miss the clue that they don't feel safe in that setting and situation.

And, there are a variety of barriers which stop child from speaking up. Let's look at some of these barriers kids face which may stop them from telling someone they are being harmed.

Reasons Children Don't Disclose



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

Suggested script:

We're going to look at a few categories of these reasons over the next few slides. One of the most compelling barriers is that the person who is abusing a child may use threats to ensure that child's silence and to keep the abuse a secret. So what are some of the threats?

Activity:

Let's list some of the threats that kids might be experiencing.

Trainer's note: Use either zoom white board, newsprint, etc to capture responses. Write responses as they come in, and then return to slide, using and expanding the information for further discussion on the types of threats children hear.

Additional notes in script below

Note that over the next four slides and activities, there will be overlap and to reference participants' responses as appropriate. Be prepared to provide examples as needed. Also note as participants reviews threats, relationships, feelings, and environments, you might get suggestions which are better suited for a different reason category. If you do, it is worth pointing out that you're glad

someone has offered up the suggestion, and “it sounds like that really would be a feeling/threat/relationship which would absolutely be a barrier to disclosure” (gentle correction).

This activity will continue over the next 3 slides for each of the different categories of reasons

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Threats can take many forms such as threatening to withhold love or care.

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And it can include threats to withhold or basic needs like food and clothing.

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Other threats target the family, for example, “if anyone finds out, the family will fall apart.”

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The person abusing may threaten to hurt the child’s parent, or say things like “if you tell anyone, the police will come and I’ll go to jail and you’ll get put in a foster home”; “Your mom will be so sad and hurt.” Imagine having to choose between speaking up or keeping the home together. This is the choice many children face, and so they stay silent.

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And sometimes there is even the threat of physical harm to the child or another family member.

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Finally, many children who are being abused are told that the person abusing them will start abusing someone else – like their younger sibling – if they tell. Sometimes it’s stated directly, while other times it’s just a vague threat - but both can be equally powerful.

Trainer’s note: *Other suggestions you may hear could be threats like ‘no one will believe you’, ‘I will make up a story about you and you will be shipped away’, ‘I’ll take pictures/video and share them with people you know/share them online’ (escalation of current abuse).*

Other suggestions which aren’t threats may be feelings like guilt, shame, fear. These will come later, and you can say something along the lines of, “those are absolutely feelings a child may experience when they’re being abused, and it could stop them from speaking up.

We're actually getting to feelings a few slides ahead, so hold that for now'.

Reasons Children Don't Disclose



Dependence

Love

Attention/gifts

Power imbalance

Suggested script:

Relationships can be powerful motivators for silence.

Activity:

Let's list now relationship factors that can affect what children will disclose.

Trainer's note: Use either zoom white board, newsprint, etc. to capture responses. Write responses as they come in, and then return to slide, using and expanding the information for further discussion on the types of threats children hear.

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Sometimes children don't share what's happening because they depend on this adult. They might be getting abused by a parent or other close caregiver; someone they most likely love, and need for day-to-day survival. So, the child being abused stays quiet for fear of all the complexities a disclosure would bring: not getting love, not having basic needs met. Many families also stress the concept of loyalty, and children often do not want to 'let others down' by sharing something which is

perceived as private.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

Children can still love the person who is sexually abusing them, and this just makes it even more confusing for them. Children and youth – as can adults – can still love someone who is harming them. We don't all always hate everything about a person, just the things they do that are wrong – even in the serious case of sexual abuse. And if children care about the person abusing them, they still don't want bad things to happen to that person, and this further complicates their decision on whether to tell anyone what is happening.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

Also, children and youth can be influenced and manipulated by their desire for attention or gifts. Sometimes the person harming a child spends a lot of time with them or might manipulate them with gifts such as video games, candy, money, or other valuable items. This often confuses the child because they might enjoy the extra attention and gifts.

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Another common barrier is a power imbalance between the child and the person abusing. For children, this power imbalance can involve another youth abusing them, an adult or a *professional (like a coach, teacher, faith leader, etc.)* who is behaving abusively.

When there is a power imbalance with another youth, this can involve a difference in age, development, or maturity level. It can also include a difference in physical development or strength.

Reasons Children Don't Disclose



Fear

Shame

Guilt

Self-blame

Lack of awareness

Confused feelings

Suggested script:

What about feelings that might get in the way?

What are some feelings which might stop a child from disclosing?

Activity:

Now let's think about feelings children have that might make it difficult for them to talk about what they are experiencing.

Trainer's note: Use either zoom white board, newsprint, etc to capture responses. Write responses as they come in, and then return to slide, expanding and using the information for further discussion on the types of threats children hear.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

Fear can stop kids from speaking up. They may be scared of the person doing this to them, scared of what might happen if they share this, scared of what this means about them.

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Many kids feel shame and guilt – they think what happened is their fault, they caused it, or they deserve it. They might be worried how others will see them if they find out.

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People who sexually abuse children can be very skilled in creating a false sense of comfort and even normalcy for youth they abuse, and the child or teen being abused may not recognize that actual sexual abuse is happening.

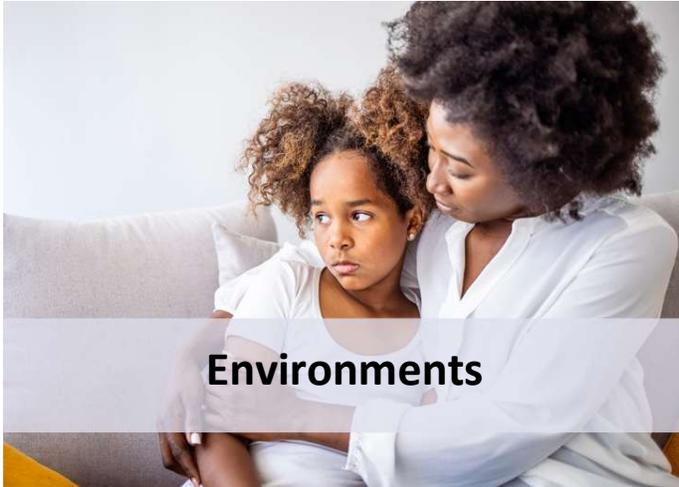
>ADVANCE SLIDE

Also, people cannot always control how their body reacts to a sexual touch, and this can be confusing for a child or teen. Most children will lack awareness around the fact that abusive touch can still feel physically good.

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Sexual abuse raises a range of feelings, and for many this can be deeply confusing. can range from very subtle to obviously violent. For some it is scary and traumatic, and other times it is strange, weird, or uncomfortable. For most children it raise many feelings at once. This leads to complexity and confusion

Reasons Children Don't Disclose



Lack of opportunity

Lack of healthy sexuality education for children/youth

Lack of adult awareness or availability

Suggested script:

And finally, what are some environmental factors and circumstances that might stop a child from disclosing?

Activity:

What situations are there that increase the likelihood that a child won't disclose?

Trainer's note: Use either zoom white board, newsprint, etc to capture responses.

Write responses as they come in, and then return to slide, expanding and using the information for further discussion on the types of threats children hear.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

Sometimes there is simply a lack of opportunity to disclose. No one has actually asked the child if they are safe. Or maybe the child has tested the waters and said something to an adult hinting about abuse, but the adult missed it or didn't pay attention and follow up.

For example, suppose a mom is taking her daughter for a playdate at her best friend's house. The daughter asks her mom if her friend's uncle is going to be there

and then says I don't want to go if he's there. This might be a warning sign and mom might want to see this as an opportunity to explore and ask further questions; this is an opportunity for the child to disclose something – if something harmful or concerning is happening.

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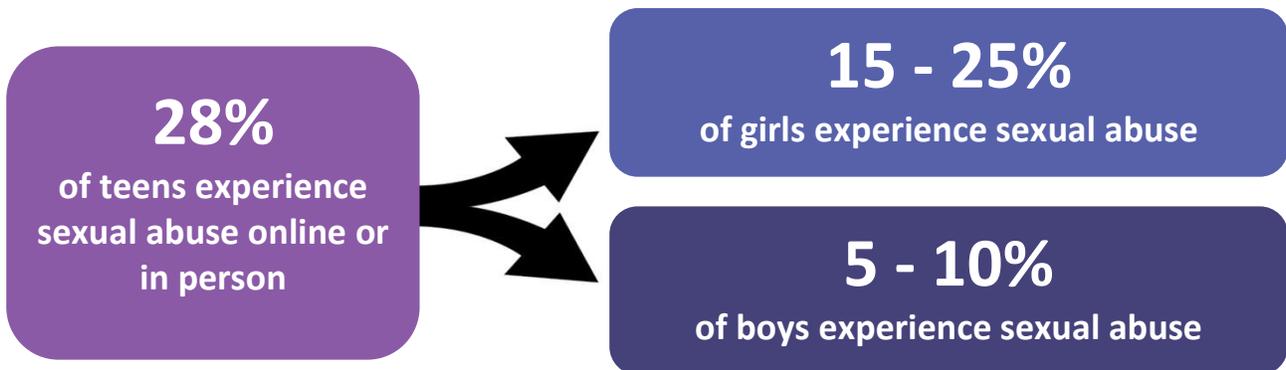
And some kids don't disclose because they haven't been taught about healthy sexuality and communicating with safe adults. Abused children and teens are often told that what is happening is "typical" or how love is expressed. If they haven't been taught anything different, they don't know this behavior/activity isn't normal.

So, if an adult isn't aware of healthy sexual development behaviors, they might miss the warning signs in their child is not safe or they may not want to bring up concerns to the child.

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The child may also feel like they don't have a safe adult to tell. Research shows that access to someone they trust is the biggest motivator for children to disclose sexual harm. The child or youth may think that because their parent or safe adult doesn't bring it up, that they don't care or don't want it to come out. Or they may think the adult isn't able to handle the disclosure or won't believe them if they tell.

Rates of Child Sexual Abuse



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

Suggested script:

Now that you've seen the importance of adults setting boundaries, let's look at the scope of child sexual abuse.

In the U.S., about 28% of teens experience sexual abuse online or in person.

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Approximately 15-25% of girls experience child sexual abuse.

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And 5-10% of boys experience child sexual abuse.

Many people think sexual abuse only happens to girls, but that's not true. Boys and non-binary youth are also affected. While there is a growing body of research talking about the impacts boys and girls face from sexual abuse, there is still not a lot of research around gender non-conforming children. In terms of biological sex,

intersex youth are also impacted by sexual abuse---though, again, the research is minimal here. What we do know is that child sexual abuse affects children and teens across all sexes and genders.

It's also important to note that kids who are in any way different, such as kids with disabilities, kids who experience homelessness, or those with incarcerated or absent parents, are also more vulnerable to abuse.

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Approximately 60% of child sexual abuse cases are not reported until long after the abuse has happened.

So even more children than we know may experience some form of sexual abuse; rates are likely higher than what sources have estimated.

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It's also important to note that these numbers are really estimates. It is difficult to gather stats due to lack of disclosure as well as the following two reasons

- Different sources use different data collection methods – often targeting specific age groups (i.e. teens) or subsets (those abused by a caregiver. In fact approximately half of child sexual abuse victims report sexual victimization later in life.
- There is no ongoing comprehensive national effort to document all CSA incidents in the US.

What we do know from the type of data that has been collected:

In the U.S., one in ten children is estimated to be sexually abused, often the statistics “1 in 10” are typically referenced but because of low disclosure rates, we don't truly know.

Actually, we most often find out about abuse long after it has happened, often when the child becomes an adult and then discloses what happened.

What all of the stats tell us, unequivocally, is that all kids are vulnerable and need safe adults looking out for them and helping to keep them safe.

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.

Suggested script:

So what is child sexual abuse specifically?

Any sexual activity between an adult and a child (online and in person) 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.

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Sexual abuse includes contact and non-contact behaviors. It is essentially any sexual behavior (looking, showing, or touching) with a child to meet an adult's interest or sexual needs. Sexual abuse does not have to involve penetration, force, pain, or even touching.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

Children cannot consent to any type of sexual activity.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

And 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

Suggested script:

So let's talk about the types of sexual contact. Child sexual abuse includes both contact and non-contact situations.

Contact sexual abuse involves touching offenses while non-contact abuse is when there is no physical contact.

Note to trainer: Use whiteboard, or even just put notes from this discussion in the chat. Give guidance and ideas as needed.

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- **Ask:** Can someone share an example of contact sexual abuse? One example of this would be touching a child's genitals. What's another example of contact sexual abuse? *(Wait for answers. If none, OK to give other examples)*

>ADVANCE SLIDE

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

>**ADVANCE SLIDE**

- **Ask:** Then, what about examples of non-contact sexual abuse? *(Again, OK to give an example, and then see if the group shares other examples)*

>**ADVANCE SLIDE**

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

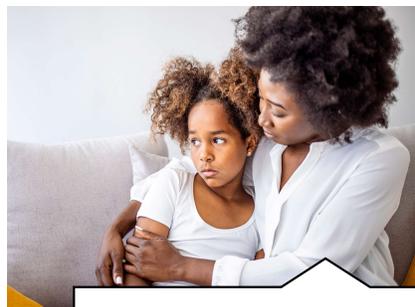
Remember, regardless of whether the behavior involves contact or not, all sexual activity between an adult and a child is child sexual abuse.

And it doesn't matter if deception is involved, or if the child understands the sexual nature of the activity, a child can never consent to any sexual activity with an adult.

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.

Suggested script:

Now let's talk about who causes the harm, who sexually abuses children. It's important to know that sexual abuse does not usually happen by a stranger.

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More than 90% of sexual abuse involves someone a child or teen and their family knows – possibly loves, respects, trusts.

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More than half the time, when a child is abused by an adult, that adult is a parent or other family member.

You may hear about sexual abuse happening in large institutions like large churches, schools, or athletic programs.

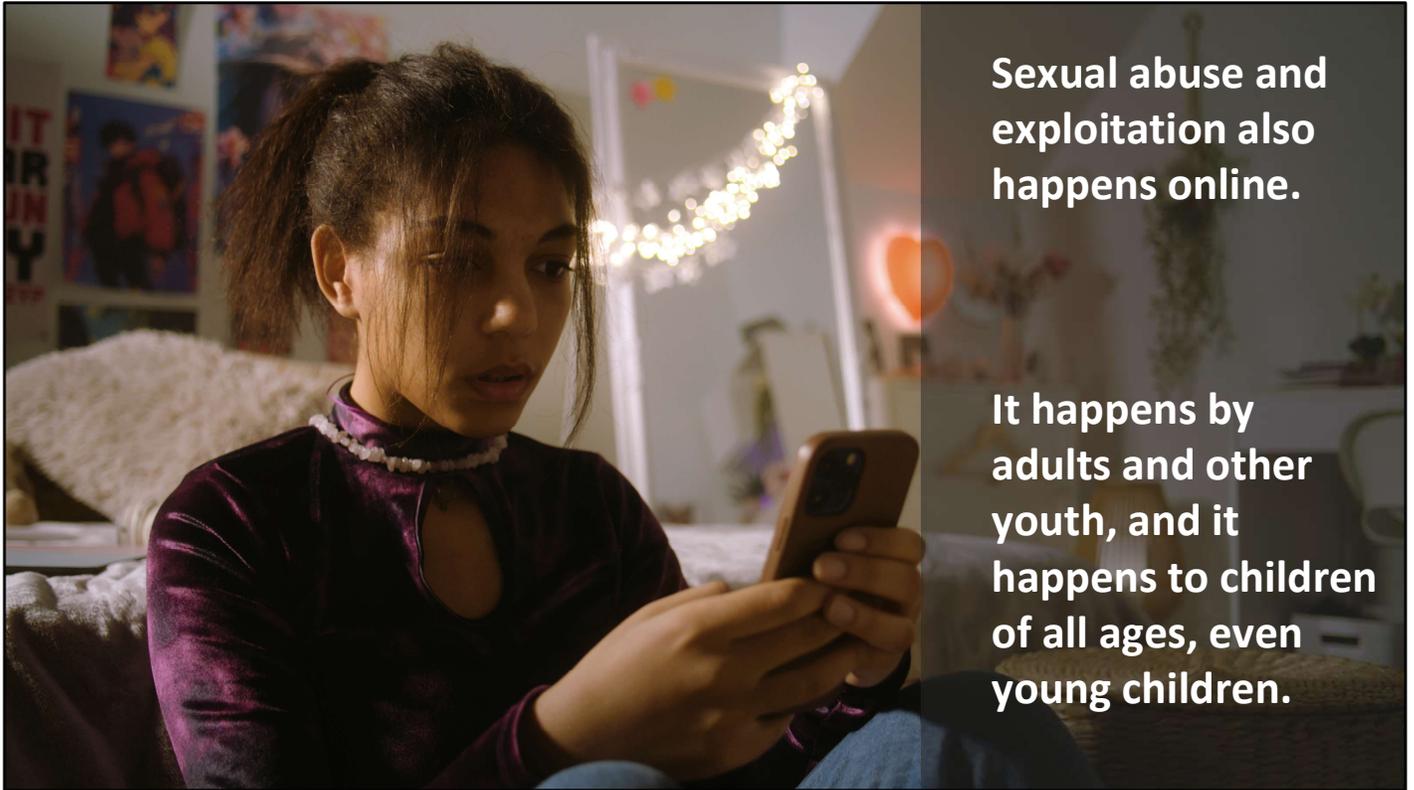
But the reality is that most sexual abuse happens in the home.

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And it's also critical to know that a large percentage of sexual abuse is done by other juveniles. Sexual activity between children and teens can be harmful or abusive, and research estimates that as much as 70 – 77% of all reported cases of child sexual abuse involve a youth harming another young person.

85-95% of children and adolescents with PSB who receive well matched interventions will not repeat/reoffend and are at no greater risk to offend than the general population

Knowing this information can help us be proactive and prepared. By knowing that most abuse happens by someone we know, within the family, or from other youth, we can ensure we are prepared and aware.



Sexual abuse and exploitation also happens online.

It happens by adults and other youth, and it happens to children of all ages, even young children.

Suggested script:

It's important to know that sexual abuse and exploitation happens online as well.

Research shows that more than 20% of youth are having online sexual interactions with adults, and about the same number are having online sexual interactions with 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.

Suggested script:

There are many ways CSA happens online.

Online child sexual abuse is a general term used to describe illegal sexual activity involving a minor that occurs online or using technology. Technology-facilitated sexual abuse refers to sexual abuse that is initiated or facilitated through online interactions or using technology—can involve a minor, but can also be between adults. CSAM, sexting, and sextortion are all tech-facilitated.

Child sexual abuse material are images and videos of children or teens of a sexual nature posted online or shared via technology. It can be produced and shared by others, or it can be self-generated and produced/shared by children/youth themselves.

- Child sexual abuse material – formerly we called this “child pornography” but this name more accurately reflects the crime being committed
 - All sexually explicit images and videos of children – of minors. Even if kids are smiling or have taken the photo,

these are abusive.

- This could be produced by a parent or guardian, a neighbor or community member or online enticement.
- Far-reaching implications – the abuse the child is experiencing in the moment of the “filming”...and then the long term impact of having the abuse documented and potentially shared repeatedly
- In many forms, on many platforms. In 2020, social media (facebook, tik tok, snapchat and others) reported over 125 million social media content and account removals for child sexual abuse concerns – including sexual exploitation. This was only a partial report but is just example of how prolific this can be. Not just dark web videos of tortuous abuse. But images of nudity and overall sexualized positions, dress, situations are posted all over.

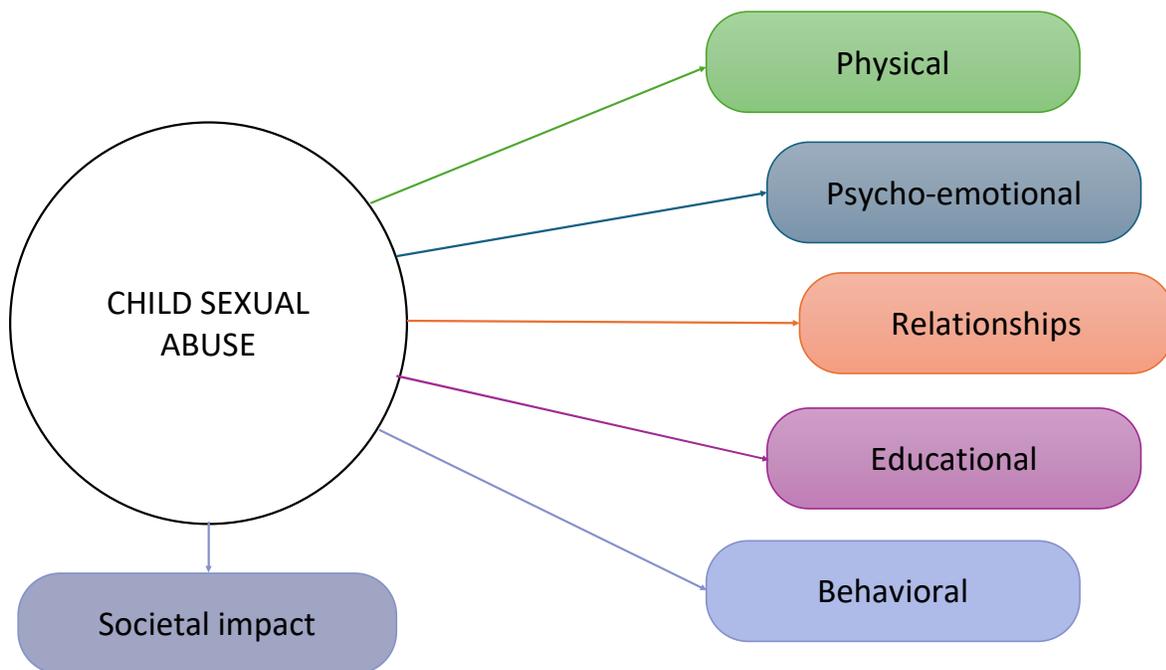
Sextortion is when someone coerces a child for money or for sexual images, materials, or activities – often through threats.

- Online enticement of children for sexual acts is a serious offense. It includes use of the internet to entice, invite, or persuade a child to meet for sexual acts, or to help arrange such a meeting.
- Engaging a child, or soliciting a child, for the purposes of sexual exploitation in a crime. It is against the law to try to get children to have sex over the internet, as well as to engage in any sexualized behaviors.
- Trafficking: In reality: Family members are likely to be the first person who traffics the child, bringing them into the world of commercial sexual exploitation. Recent studies have found that over 40% of people trafficked in sex trafficking cases were involved familial trafficking. – this number is most likely much higher for the number of children who are trafficked initially by a family member. Can be tech-facilitated; craigslist ads, texting, messaging over social media, dark web.

Exploitation refers to sexually abusing a child for gain. This may be to get money for the content, to gain access to a crime group with resources, or in order to secure housing, material items, drugs, etc.

Please know that at the time of writing this was the most recent terminology. However, both tech and terms do change quickly.

Impact of Child Sexual Abuse



Suggested script:

The impact of sexual abuse is different for everyone but often there are quite negative impacts a survivor experiences that go beyond childhood, into their adult years.

Many factors influence how a child is impacted and how they might be impacted into adulthood, such as who abused them, the nature and frequency of the abuse, the response by others once the abuse is known,.

Ways being sexually abused can impact a person includes:

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Physical impacts such as health problems, like chronic pain, and respiratory and reproductive concerns.

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Psycho-emotional impacts such as mental health problems, including depression, aggression and suicidality.

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Relationship impacts as well, such as abusive relationships with friends, significant others and a lack of trust with loved ones.

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Educational impacts such as failing school and difficulties holding onto a job later.

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And behavioral impacts such as using drugs/alcohol, increased teen pregnancy and making other risky choices.

Sexual abuse has a wide impact. And it's not just the person who was abused who is affected. It impacts families and communities too. Those who care for and love someone who has been sexually abused can often have their own emotional responses.

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And it impacts our entire society economically as well. In the US, over \$200,000 is spent for each victim of sexual abuse on costs associated with medical and psychological care, as well as education, legal and criminal justice costs to name just a few.

Prevention Continuum



Suggested script:

Trainer's note: *Acknowledge that the previous section on statistics and terminology may have been difficult. Take time to check in.*

Now that we've covered some statistics and terms, let's look at a framework that can help you recognize concerning behaviors and situations and provide information about what to do when there is a concern, a risk of children being harmed.

So, as you think about any sexual behavior, this continuum can help you better understand if a behavior is a warning sign of potentially harmful behavior.

In the green zone, we see behaviors that are healthy and developmentally appropriate. Situations that are safe.

In the yellow zone, we see behaviors that are concerning or inappropriate and potentially unsafe situations.

And in the red zone, we see harmful, abusive, or illegal behaviors.

It is important to note that these are not siloed behaviors – sometimes a behavior or situation may seem just on the edge of green, heading into yellow or you start off thinking a behavior is in the yellow zone, but then more investigation pushes it in the red zone.

At every stage, we can be involved and active – including in the green continuum when there are no concerns with behaviors at all.

Prevention Continuum

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

Suggested script:

The continuum and how it categorizes various levels of behaviors becomes a tool to help you determine which steps you may need to take.

Sometimes we don't always feel clear on what steps to take, we may have concerns but aren't sure whether they warrant a response. This continuum can help get you started. In figuring out the steps you want – and maybe need to take.

It may be helpful to think about the prevention continuum as a traffic light...

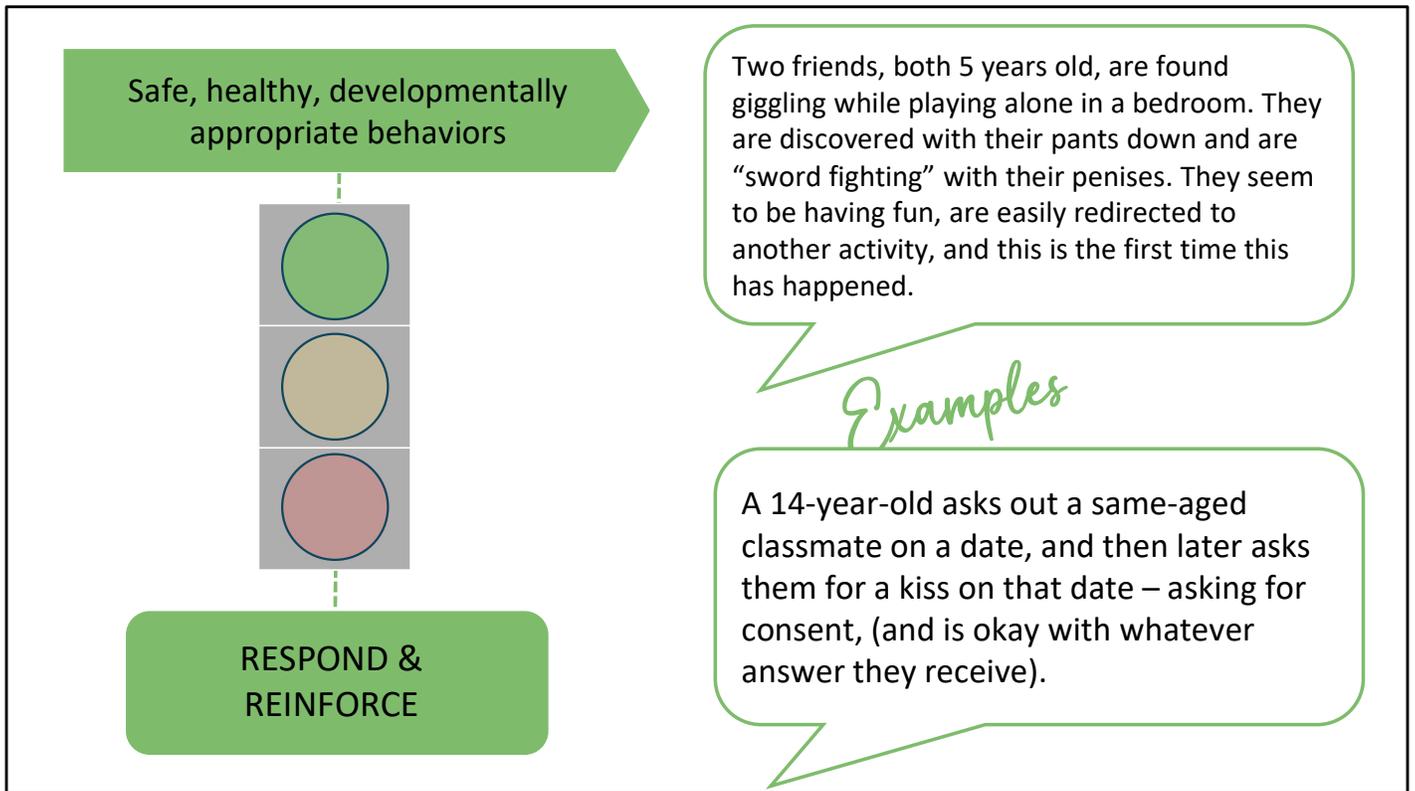
Where green means go – you respond and reinforce safe, healthy, developmentally appropriate behaviors.

Yellow means proceed with caution – you want to protect the children involved and respond to any concerning behaviors

Red means stop – you want to stop harmful, abusive, and possibly illegal behaviors with system response and safety planning

And we can look at both adults' behaviors with children and at behaviors between youth using this continuum

Let's look at some examples, these applicable to both children and adult's behaviors but for now, we are going to look at behaviors between children and youth to help us better understand these prevention levels.



Suggested script:

We are going to talk more in depth about children’s behaviors later but first again – first just a couple of examples of behaviors that we would identify as green prevention level behaviors and situations.

Two friends, who are 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.

This is an example of normal exploratory and playful behavior, which is why these are considered green prevention level behaviors.

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Even though this is developmentally healthy, in this situation, you would want to use this as a teaching moment to talk about the rules regarding private parts and keeping our clothes on when we are playing with others. This would look like a

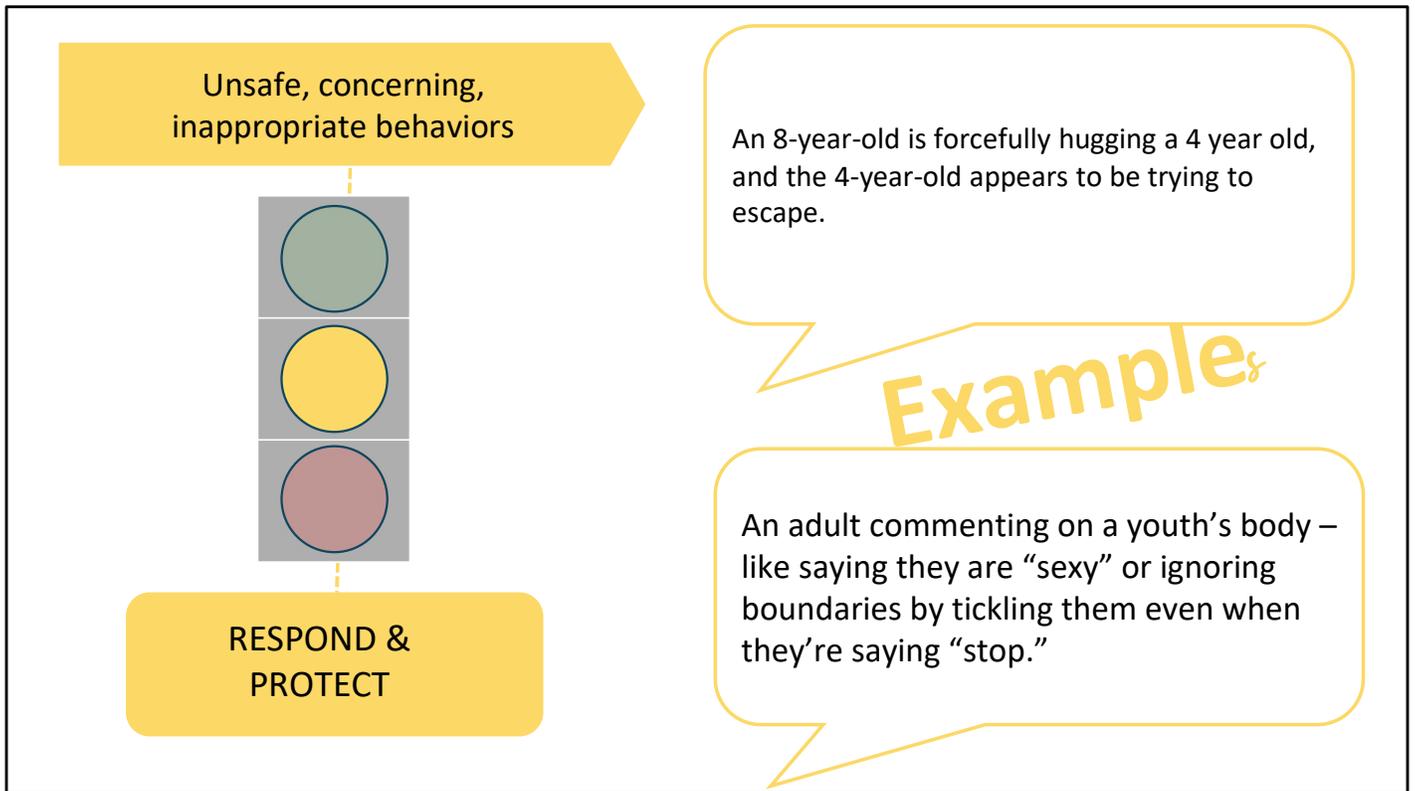
quick reinforcement of safety rules, “We always play with our clothes on” and moving the kids along to a new activity. You may also increase supervision when it comes to the bathroom, or even make either clear the next time they use the toilet that the bathroom has a one-person-in-it-at-a-time rule.

Depending on your relationship to these kids you could also offer an age-appropriate resource so they can learn more about bodies, too.

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Another example would be a 14 year old who asks out a same-aged classmate on a date, and then later asks them for a kiss on that date – they’re asking for consent and are okay with whatever answer they receive.

This is an example of healthy behaviors, demonstrating an understanding of boundaries.



Suggested script:

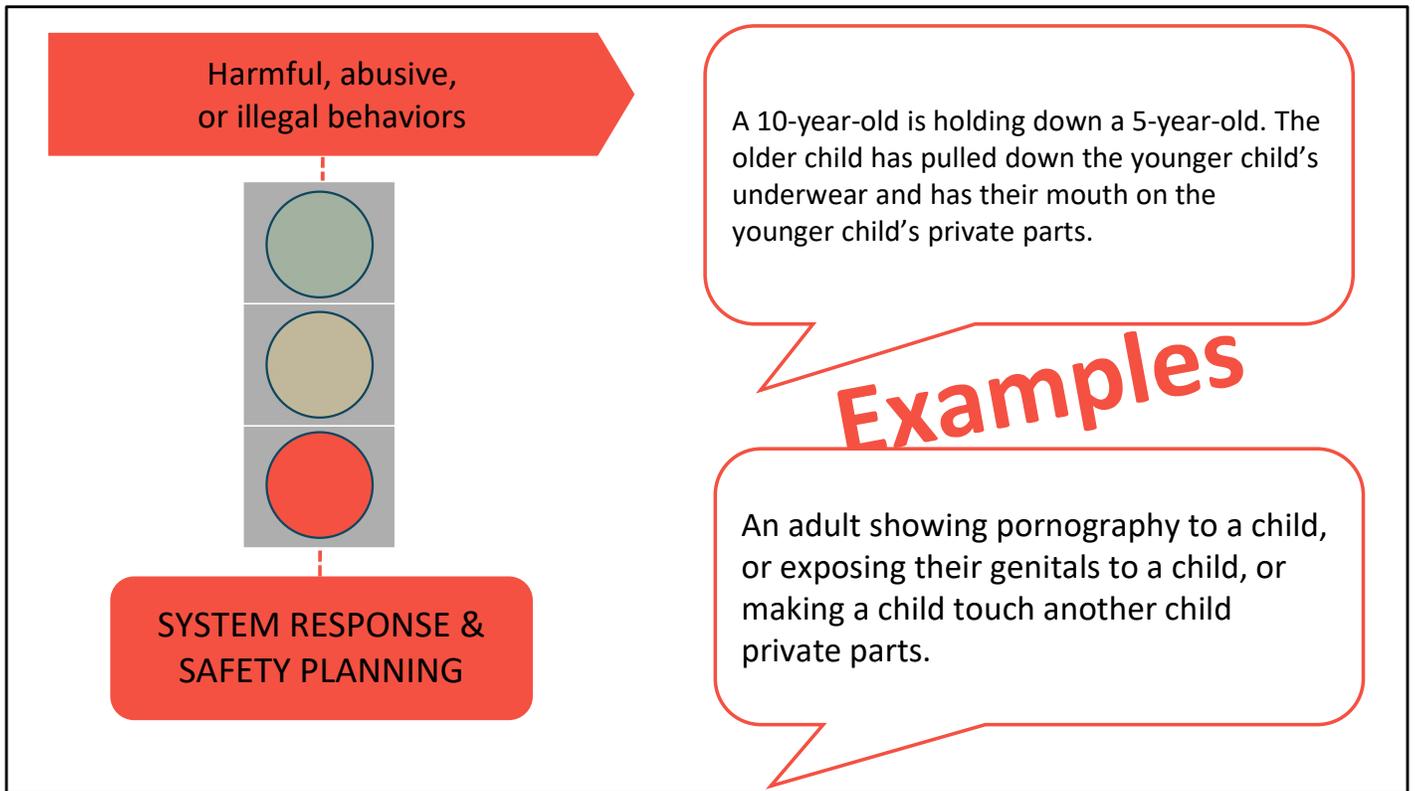
Turning now to the yellow prevention level, consider an 8 year-old and 4-year-old. The 8 year old is forcefully hugging the younger child, and the 4 year old appears to be trying to escape.

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Another example would be an adult commenting on a youth's body – like saying they are “sexy” or ignoring boundaries by tickling them even when they're saying “stop.”

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In these situations, it's an adult's responsibility to respond and protect the child by speaking up when boundaries are crossed, rules are broken or we see any warning sign that a child may be in an unsafe situation.



Suggested script:

And now on to the red prevention level - One example of red behavior would be discovering a 10-year-old holding down a 5-year-old. The older child has pulled down the younger child's underwear and has their mouth on the younger child's private parts.

Another example would include a teenager who is sending sexual pictures of themselves to other students, even when asked repeatedly to stop.

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Red behavior from an adult might be showing pornography to a child, then exposing their genitals to a child, or making a child touch another child's private parts.

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Again, our response when discovering that abuse or harm has happened is to

intervene with safety planning and involve systems, such as child protective services or law enforcement to make sure we do everything we can to ensure the child's safety and support.

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.

Suggested script:

Safety Planning happens all along the prevention continuum and involves establishing guidelines and rules to protect children. Safety Planning is a key step of prevention.

Safety rules are not just for the home, but wherever the child is – at a relative's house, in the community – anywhere.

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It is important that everyone around your child and your child knows the safety rules.

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You also need to establish the expectation that everyone is accountable to follow them because it reduces the risk of sexual abuse.

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Developing a safety plan with safety rules is part of proactive prevention.

Planning for Safety



Safe, healthy,
developmentally
appropriate behaviors

Unsafe, concerning,
inappropriate
behaviors

Harmful,
abusive, or
illegal behaviors

Suggested script:

Safety planning is a “green prevention level” activity - meaning that we are thinking about family rules for safety *before* there is an incident. Safety plans ideally are not in response to a warning sign or vulnerable situation – though they absolutely can respond to specific environmental and behavioral concerns. They also shouldn’t be used as a punishment, but instead as a shared set of agreements which help keep everyone on the same page. When done early, the rules become comfortable and familiar for all family members, and are more likely to become more automatic.





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Sample Family Safety Planning Rules

Note: This agreement is designed to keep everyone safe in a family or any living situation with children, and these rules can look different depending on what norms look like in any specific household, culture, and/or country. It is recommended that safety plans be reviewed regularly, perhaps annually and as children mature, some rules may need to be updated to fit them and their developmental needs.

Sample Introduction language: These are our rules for living together safely, for respecting the rights of others, and for ensuring the personal safety of everyone. Our signatures on the bottom acknowledge that we have discussed these rules, that we understand them, that we will follow them and help each other follow them. If a rule is broken – at our home or somewhere else – we will tell a trusted adult.

1. There is to be no sexual contact, behaviors or touching between children and youth in this family or between adults and children.
2. Children and youth do not show their private parts to others (child, youth or adult), unless there is a medical reason and a trusted adult is present.
3. Children and youth do not ask others to show their private parts to anyone, or ask others to touch their own or someone else's private parts.
4. No one should ask a child or youth to touch their private parts or show a child or youth their private parts.
5. It is okay to touch your genitals in private: alone and behind a closed door at your own home.
6. All physical touching requires consent and respect of the other person's boundaries; if a child is young or non-verbal, children, youth and adults will look for other cues that the other person is uncomfortable or does not want to be touched. There should not be touch that will confuse, scare, or be (sexually) over-stimulating (like back rubs, foot tickling, wrestling, "horse play," etc.).
7. Children and youth will inform parents about new friends they make online through digital media.
8. Children do not access sexually explicit content on the Internet, on any mobile device, or anywhere else, and will not bring into the home any inappropriate sexually explicit content found in materials including books, pictures, magazines or videogames. If a child or youth sees something inappropriate, they should click "back" and tell a parent or trusted adult.
9. Everyone's body is their own. If anyone is touched in a sexual way or made to feel uncomfortable, they should and can say "no," and should tell a trusted adult (a caseworker, counselor, school teacher, coach, etc.). A child will never be in trouble if they did not say "no" to an inappropriate touch.
10. When adults talk with a child or youth in their bedroom, the door must always remain open.

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11. If the door is closed, there should only be one person in the bathroom or bedroom at a time unless help is needed with health and/or hygiene.
12. In this family, we do not "objectify" others or ourselves – we do not treat people as sexual objects but as whole and special, and worthy of our respect and everyone's own self-respect.
13. We do not use offensive or threatening sexual behaviors or language. Secrets are not allowed in this family, only surprises.
14. All family members and visitors to this home are responsible for following these rules.

Examples of additional safety rules in professional care situations, such as foster care:

1. No one should be in a bedroom other than their own unless another adult has given permission and the door is left open.
2. Undressing should only occur when someone is alone in their bedroom or bathroom with the door closed.
3. When outside of one's own bedroom, always wear appropriate clothing, such as a robe or t-shirt over underclothes.
4. Everyone sleeps in their own bed at all times.
5. Children and youth do not sleep in the same bedroom with adults. Sleeping arrangements while traveling will be discussed prior to any trip.

All signatures below indicate everyone understands and agrees to these rules.

Signed on _____ (date) by:

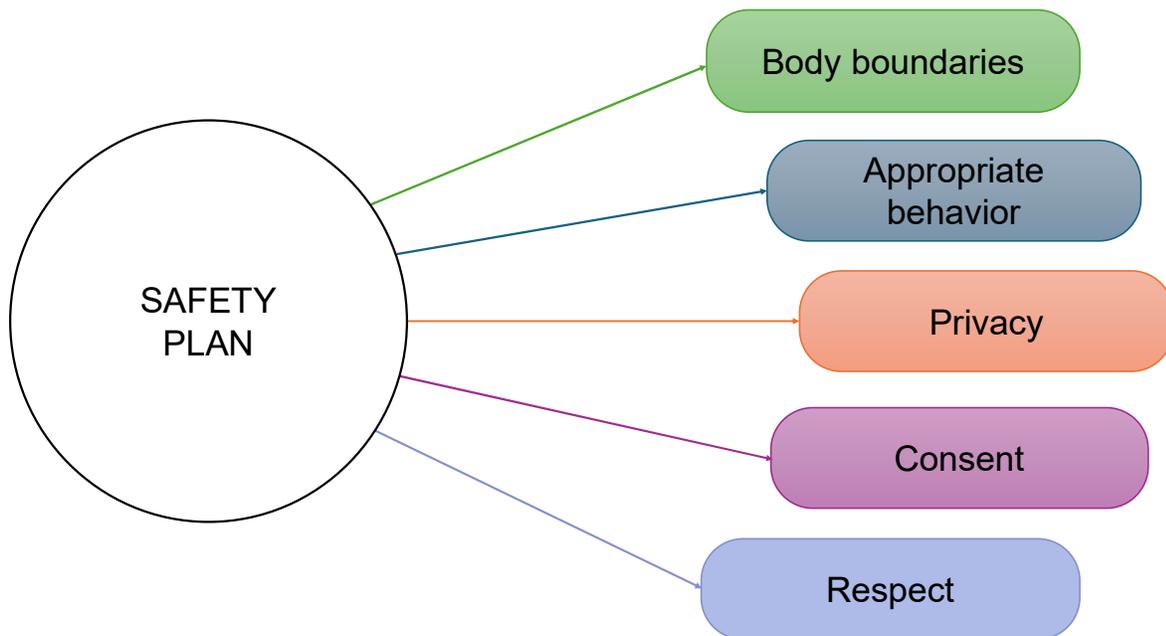
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FAMILY SAFETY PLAN

Suggested script:

In your **handouts** you can find the resources called **Create a Family Safety Plan and Everyday Actions to Keep Kids Safe.**

Important Parts of a Safety Plan



Suggested script:

Just like you may have rules to address safety and well-being concerns – like kids’ bedtimes or what the curfew is for your teen—safety planning rules guide behaviors so that everyone is safe.

- Safety plans are rules that a family creates about body boundaries, respect, consent, privacy, personal autonomy and appropriate touching
 - These are rules that all children and adults follow in the home. This includes visitors to the home. These rules move with family members, so these rules also apply to kids when they visit other people’s houses, and to all family members when they go somewhere together.
 - Safety planning is not seen as punishment, or even a consequence (although sometimes, safety plans may be adapted – and in response to a specific incident).

Safety planning should involve rules that focus on 5 areas:

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- Body boundaries – this means respecting everyone’s own body, and their right to be touched or not to be touched in the way that feels safe and comfortable to them. Certainly, children may need to have their body touched, like for a medical exam, but the objective here is to make sure that children know they do not have to be subjected to just any type of touch. This rule also emphasizes that they need to respect other people’s personal boundaries as well.

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- Appropriate behaviors – these are behaviors that are healthy & age-appropriate. This includes safe behaviors between children, and safe behaviors between adults and children. Safe behaviors support safe environments.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

- Privacy – everyone has a right to privacy. Having personal privacy creates a safer environment for everyone.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

- Consent is extremely important as well. Talking about and modeling consent in your family will help everyone understand the importance of asking for permission (and getting it!) before touching another person. This also means honoring someone else’s no.

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- And finally, respect is critical – recognizing that everyone is worthy of respect and deserves to be safe and grow up in a harm-free environment.

It’s important to note that a safety plan is flexible and updated as children age or maybe when there is a change in the family or in their situation, like a grandparent moving in or a new baby.

Safety planning is done with your family’s values and culture in mind, and it’s not a one and

done process. You should look for opportunities to talk about the rules in everyday situations. As kids age and mature, safety planning may start to look different, too.

Trainer's note:

Additional language for this slide:

- Safety plans are used to help prevent sex abuse and harmful sexual behaviors between youth by defining what makes up a safe environment and helps kids know what a healthy family environment is
- A safety plan helps kids know when there are things happening that shouldn't be happening. If we tell them what safe rules are, and someone breaks those rules, then they have a baseline and can let someone know that rules are being broken. And safety planning helps others know the limits, expectations, and rules.

Safety Planning

Having a safety plan can help you communicate about unsafe behaviors.

It helps you communicate your boundaries and expectations clearly.

Suggested script:

Having safety plan provides a mechanism to communicate with others – both children and other caregiving adults – about the rules, and about behaviors that are not safe.

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The rules can help us identify behaviors on the continuum that might be inappropriate, concerning, harmful, or abusive – and it supports us to clarify safe boundaries and expectations around safe relationships and behaviors.

Safety Planning

**We are responsible for communicating
and enforcing the safety rules.**

Suggested script:

When we do see concerning behaviors, such as an adult crossing boundaries, for example insisting a child give them a hug when the child doesn't want to, the safety plan allows us to speak up without accusing anyone of being a risk - because we can point to the safety rules we have established.

And if we communicate the safety plan with children, it helps with those conversations as well. For example, if we see a youth making another child uncomfortable by using sexual language, we can use the safety rules to help children learn more appropriate behaviors that helps everyone feel safe.

By communicating with other adults about your family's safety plan, you are further protecting children by letting others know what your boundaries and expectations are – and it communicates that you are a parent who monitors your child's interactions and plans for their safety – this alone may deter someone who may be a risk to a child.

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)

Suggested script:

Activity

Trainer's Note: This activity will first be some solo reflection time, and then you will put people in breakout groups to share their thoughts with their small groups. You can then have the big group discuss broader reactions/reflections (see next slide for language). This can be brief, and also OK to have people 'opt-in'—no need to call on one person from each group if that doesn't feel appropriate. Remind participants about small/breakout group guidelines: confidentiality, listening, sharing the floor, speaking from your own experiences, and thanking each other! Allow approximately 5 mins or so to do solo review and jot down some notes. Then, put them into groups.

Activity Instructions:

We're going to do an activity now. Get your **handout: Sample Family Safety Planning Rules**. Look at this handout on your own, and then reflect on the question, "Which rules are you aware of in your program? This includes spoken rules, ones which are written down, ones which are 'just understood'. Similarly, have you seen these rules relayed to children, practiced, written down? Make

some notes, because after you reflect we're going to put you in breakout rooms. We'd like you to share your answers with each other and talk this over.

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

Stop It Now!

Family Rules for Safe Boundaries, Respect, and Privacy (Example)

This agreement is designed to keep everyone safe in this family. These are our rules for living together safely, for respecting the rights of others, and for ensuring the personal safety of everyone. Our signatures on the bottom acknowledge that we have discussed these rules, that we understand them, that we will follow them and help each other follow them.

- No child or adult should be in a bedroom other than their own unless another adult has given permission, the door is left open, and there is a purpose to the visit that is safe and comfortable (such as help with packing out clothes or folding a bedtime story).
- When adults talk with a child or teen in their bedroom, the door must always remain open.
- Undressing should only occur when someone is alone in his/her bedroom or bathroom with the door closed.
- When outside of one's own bedroom, always wear a robe or t-shirt over underclothes. Do not walk around with just underclothes or shorts without a shirt.
- If the door is closed, there should only be one person in the bathroom at a time, unless help is needed with health and/or hygiene.
- Everyone sleeps on his/her own bed at all times.
- Children do not sleep in same bedroom with adults. Sleeping arrangements while traveling will be discussed prior to any trip.
- There is to be no sexual contact or sexual touching between children in this family or between adults and children.
- We do not show our private parts to others (child or adult), unless there is a medical reason.
- We do not ask others to show their private parts to anyone.
- We do not ask others to touch our own or someone else's private parts, (and no one should ask us to touch someone else's private parts).
- It is okay to touch yours/our privately, alone and behind a closed door.
- All physical touching between family members requires consent, and should not be scary, confusing or sexually stimulating.
- Children will not have access to or bring into the home any inappropriate sexually explicit content found in materials including books, pictures, magazines, or videogames. If you see something inappropriate, ask "Back, log off, or tell a parent."
- Children do not access sexually explicit content on the internet, on a mobile device, or anywhere else.
- Everyone's body is his/her own. If anyone is touched in a sexual way or made to feel uncomfortable, he/she should and can say "no," and will tell a trusted adult (a caregiver, counselor, school teacher, coach, etc.)
- In this family, we do not "objectify" others or ourselves - we do not treat people as sexual objects but as whole and special, and worthy of our respect and everyone's own self-respect.
- We refrain from using offensive and obscene sexual language, and do not purposefully seek to make other people uncomfortable or feel scared with offensive or threatening sexual behaviors.
- All family members and visitors to this home are responsible for following these rules.
- If someone does not follow the rules, he/she will be told so, and held responsible for his/her actions.
- All signatures below indicate everyone understands and agrees to these rules.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
 _____ Date: _____
 _____ Date: _____

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Suggested script:

- **Ask:** Anyone want to share any realizations, what you already do, any other thoughts?

Trainer's note: *Debrief after bringing them back from the breakout rooms. Let the groups share for as long as is appropriate for your group. Consider calling in any themes which are consistent across groups, something which ties into info already covered, or even something that will be discussed later on.*

Trainer's note: *trainer may want to expand conversation by highlighting some of the rules on this list, and including any of the debriefing conversation as relevant*
Below are some rule examples to deepen the conversation:

There are rules about private body parts, which are very important.

No one should ask a child or youth to touch their private parts or show a child or youth their private parts.

Youth should not ask others to show their private parts or ask others to touch their own or another person's private parts.

There are also rules about respecting others' personal space and privacy when using the bathroom, changing and showering.

Some families choose to have rules about locking doors, or knocking and waiting for an answer before entering a room.

Another potential rule would be giving children permission to say no to unwanted touch - even friendly touch from a relative such as a hug.



Safety planning is also important for organizations...

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

Suggested script:

You've learned about safety planning for families, but it's important to also note that organizations and places that serve children and teens, like schools, afterschool programs, and youth sports should also have safety plans.

It should include things like:

- policies and procedures and a code of conduct

These should address things like environmental safety, policies for adult and child interactions, children or youth being alone with other children, and how to report concerns a child is at risk or being harmed.

An organizational safety plan should also include things like:

- Required screening and training for employees and volunteers
- And information in their employee and parent manuals regarding child safety

While this training and this information is not intended to help an organization create a safety plan, as a professional it's important you ask and know what your

organization is doing to protect children (and to protect caregivers, like yourself!). And in your **handouts**, a tip sheet called **Questions Parents Should Ask About School Policies** to help you prepare for conversations on safety in schools and other youth serving programs



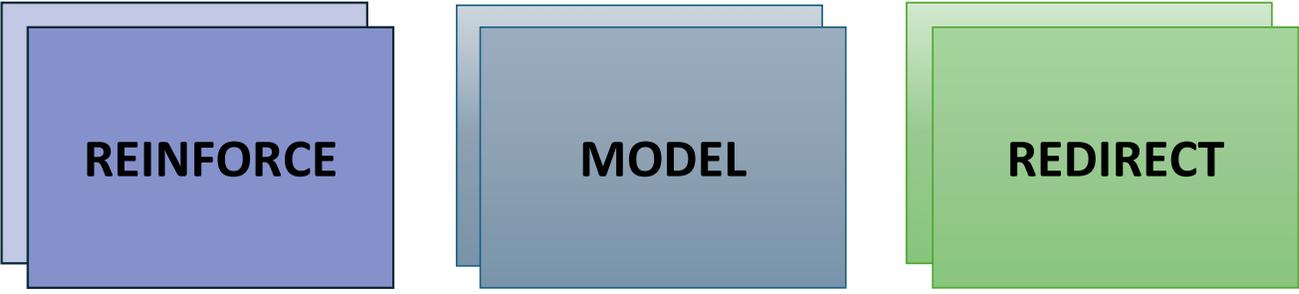
It is critical for kids to see adults modeling appropriate behaviors and setting and enforcing boundaries.

Suggested script:

In addition to having a plan, having rules of safety - another key point of safety planning is helping children learn healthy boundaries.

One of the most protective things adults can do is model healthy boundaries Kids don't only need to have clear rules about safety, they also need to see the adults in their life modeling healthy behavior.

Teaching Healthy Boundaries



REINFORCE

MODEL

REDIRECT

Suggested script:

Teaching healthy boundaries involves:

- Reinforcing appropriate boundaries. This means acknowledging and praising safe boundaries when you see children and teens behaving in safe, respectful ways. Let them know that they are behaving in a way that is safe and healthy and shows care for others.

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- Modeling healthy boundaries and demonstrating behaving in safe and responsible ways is also important.
- Kids constantly observe adults, so we have to behave in a way that aligns with our safety rules and demonstrates consent and respect.
- When kids see you as a safe adult and see that you “practice what you preach” and speak up when boundaries are crossed or safety rules are

broken, they feel safer. It also helps them know when someone else is not practicing safe behaviors.

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- And when you see unsafe, inappropriate or abusive behaviors, you should redirect what you're seeing.
- Ignoring or being indirect is not as helpful as being able to clearly model, reinforce, or redirect as needed.
- For example, when a child or youth makes an unsafe choice, talk to them about the rule that's been broken or the behavior you're concerned about, and then give them alternative ways to behave.
- If they're older, you can ask them to brainstorm with you how they could have handled the situation differently.

Let's practice identifying each of these responses.

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.

Optional for trainers, either as discussion or with polls

Suggested script:

Activity:

Note to trainer: The next three slides are polling activities. If your group is more open to free discussion then you can choose to simply read the answers off of the script and have people raise their hands. Then, use the responses below each answer to guide the way you talk about the three different answers. It is also OK to use your own words, these are meant to help you find the thread and guide people towards thinking in the preventative mindset, while also making sure they understand which is the most appropriate answer.

Now we're going to do an activity which tests our knowledge about reinforcing, modeling, and redirecting in the moment.

Here's our first scenario:

- You are at the park with your 6-year-old daughter, and she sees a friend from school. She runs up to her friend but stops and asks if she can give her

a hug.

- Which of the following would be a supportive way to reinforce your daughter's healthy, safe behavior?

Note to trainer: bring up a poll where people can choose between the three responses

Poll 1:

- Option 1: I think you know Susie well enough to give her a hug without asking.
 - **For discussion:** sometimes friends seem close enough, but to teach healthy boundaries and consent, we should always encourage children to ask permission before touching someone – and should be asked permission before someone touches them.
- Option 2: Great job respecting Susie's boundaries and asking for her consent.
 - **For discussion:** While this is reinforcing, it might be too advanced for a 6-year-old

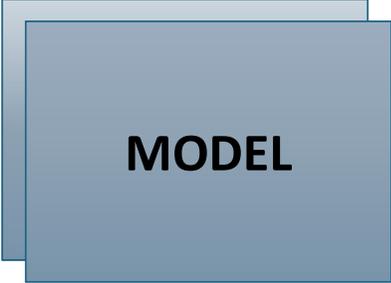
Option 3:

- I like how you asked Susie before you hugged her.
 - **For discussion:** Yes, this is the most appropriate way to respond. It reinforces the behavior, and it uses age-appropriate language for a 6-year-old.



Ask: Are there other responses that you think might also work?

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.

Optional for trainers, either as discussion or with polls

Suggested script:

Our next situation is: you just found out that your 13 y.o. was chosen for the school play! You rush into the house to congratulate them and you hear that they're taking a shower.

- Which of the following would be the best way to model appropriate, healthy, and safe behavior?
- *Note to trainer:* bring up the corresponding poll where people can choose between the three responses

Poll 2:

- Option 1: 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.
 - **For discussion:** Yes, this is a great way to let your child

know that you respect their boundaries, even when you have something important that you want to tell them.

- Option 2: You knock on the door, and then you open the door, yelling as you go in, “it’s just me”.
 - **For discussion:** This one feels pretty realistic, right? I think a lot of us have been there, either as the child in the shower or the parent/family member who knocks then goes right in. This isn’t to make anyone feel badly about past behaviors! Instead, it’s meaningful to note that this isn’t the greatest way to model safe and healthy privacy boundaries. While you knocked first and announced yourself, you always want to wait for a response before opening the door. Just because there was a knock doesn’t mean your child wanted you to walk in on them in the shower.

- Option 3: You burst into the bathroom, knowing that your child will be as excited as you are to get the news.
 - **For discussion:** Even when you have good news to deliver, modeling respect for your child’s privacy tells them that you do respect them and their privacy. And again, maybe some of us have been there! But we’re thinking about our actions broadly, and about the implications of our behaviors as it relates to modeling safe boundaries.

➤ **Ask:** Are there other responses that you think might also work?

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.

Optional for trainers, either as discussion or with polls

Suggested script:

Now for our last scenario:

- You have family visiting and your 15-year-old nephew is tickling your 10-year-old son, Kenny. After a few minutes, your son looks upset and says, "Stop tickling me". The 15 year old doesn't stop.
- Which of the following would be a supportive way to model appropriate, healthy, and safe behavior through redirection?
- *Note to trainer:* bring up a poll where people can choose between the three responses
 - Poll 3:
 - Option 1: Geez, can't you see he's over it? And he asked you to stop so you better stop—or else.
 - **For discussion:** While this is asking your nephew to stop

tickling your son, it's not redirecting him. It's actually subtly threatening him. And, there may be a better way to support your son and ensure he is safe and comfortable.

- Option 2: Kenny seems to be over the tickling. Come help me set up the sprinkler so we can do the slip and slide.
 - **For discussion:** This is the best option out of these three to model redirection. It is suggesting that the tickling stop, and offers the boys another activity which is safe and does not involve physical contact with each other.

 - Option 3: Kenny, come on, he's just playing, don't be so dramatic.
 - **For discussion:** This invalidates your son's feelings, because it's belittling. It is not a supportive or safe response.
- **Ask:** Are there other responses that you think might also work?

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?

Optional for trainers

Suggested script:

Activity:

As we now turn to talking more specifically about sexual development, let's start with an activity. I'm going to split you all up into groups or pairs. Talk with your group members 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? And, talk with your group members about how you learned about sex, and how you wish you had learn about sex. You also don't have to talk about any of this if it feels too much or uncomfortable. I want to invite everyone, though, to think about how they can share to their comfort level. No need to share explicit, personal details! Instead, it's ok to share general reflections, for example, 'I remember when my parents were watching this movie at home, it was the first kissing scene I saw. That got me really curious.' That sort of thing. And again, honor your boundaries and how you're feeling. You know your situation best.

- **Debrief:** Would anyone like to share some general reflections around what they learned from the group? Were there any patterns that came up? Anyone have really similar stories of learning about sex, or very dissimilar ones? (*allow for a few responses*)

Talking together about this may have helped you realize how you would or wouldn't want the same or similar experiences for the children you care for, so let's talk more about how important healthy sexual development information is for children!



Use for transition between workshop 1A and workshop 2B

A woman with dark hair in a ponytail, wearing a light pink top, is smiling and playing with colorful blocks with a young girl. The girl is wearing a yellow dress and is focused on stacking the blocks. The background is a bright, indoor setting, possibly a classroom or playroom.

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

Suggested script:

Looking now at healthy sexual development and the role this plays in child sexual abuse prevention -

- **Ask:** How can learning about healthy sexual development help us prevent harmful behaviors or sexual abuse?

Allow for answers/discussion then review below

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When we know what behaviors are healthy and developmentally appropriate, it is easier to identify behaviors that may be unsafe, problematic, or abusive. It can help you identify concerns that a child or youth has been harmed, or is at risk of being harmed, or is at risk for harming another child.

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Understanding healthy sexual development also helps us set healthy and safe

boundaries with kids. This helps us protect kids now, and helps us to create kids become safe adults too.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

Finally, understanding healthy sexual development helps us to provide safe and **accurate** education to kids that is developmentally appropriate. And it can also help inform adults what protective actions they can take.

Think of understanding healthy sexual development, setting safe boundaries, and offering accurate info as prevention tasks for adults.

Safe and trusted adults who are responsible for child's safety and education should be the primary sex educators in children's lives. This is important because kids are naturally curious about their bodies, relationships, and even sex. If we don't provide them with accurate information, they will learn about it elsewhere. It is critical that children and youth know who their safe adults are so that they can get honest information from them about important topics.

This is often difficult for adults to talk about anything having to do with sex with kids, but of course vital in safety for kids.



Suggested script:

So, let's learn a bit about expected and developmentally appropriate healthy sexual behaviors of children and youth by age groups – and this will include behaviors that are about being in relationships, both with peers and potential romantic partners.

It may be difficult to think about sexual development in young children, but just like physical, emotional and cognitive development, children of all ages go through stages of sexual development as well.

It's also important to note that every child's development is different. So, the behaviors we describe for each age group may not fit every child exactly. And your family, culture and experiences may also inform what seems typical for children in your life.

But knowing what the generally expected behaviors are does give us a framework to better understand typical sexual development.

Children's sexual behaviors are very different from adult's sexual behaviors. Children are sexual but not in the same way as adults where arousal and pleasure are the goals.

And sexual problem behaviors are very different as well.

Many of the behaviors of children have to do with discovering gender differences and studying sex roles.

It is important for adults to view these behaviors from the child's viewpoint and not their own personal experiences

Children's sexual behaviors – and we will be looking at these behaviors, and how to discern what is concerning – may be happening for a variety of reasons.

More information is available through some of these resources: **Handout: Healthy Sexuality Book and Website Resource** and the **Article: Promoting Healthy Sexual Development and Sexuality**.

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.)



Suggested script:

Let's start with infants and toddlers.

Children in this age group could be called "CURIOUS and OPEN" because they're interested in anything and everything.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

This curiosity leads them to naturally explore their own body and as they get older, potentially others' bodies - including the genitals. They might be curious about mom's breasts or brother's penis, but they are NOT likely to explore bodies with someone they don't have a relationship with.

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Children may experience genital stimulation. Those with penises may experience erections and those with vaginas may experience vaginal lubrication.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

Self-soothing through self-stimulation is also common.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

They're also open at this age to talking about their body, and often enjoy nudity – not yet feeling shy or shameful about their body.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

They may begin to identify by gender and when they become more verbal, they are able to use appropriate words to name ALL of their body parts, including their genitals if they've been given accurate information.

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



Suggested script:

Next let's look at 3 – 5 year olds who are even more curious and may experiment with role play.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

As children get a bit older, self-soothing continues and they may make the connection that touching their genitals feels good and they may rub or stimulate themselves.

The words “genital stimulation” or “self soothing” are more appropriate descriptions of what we may commonly think of as “masturbation”. This is because for children this age, this behavior is not about sexual pleasure and instead it is about generally feeling good.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

At these ages, children may be curious about others' naked bodies and because

they don't yet understand privacy and boundaries, they may even try to see others naked.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

They are often still comfortable being naked themselves. But at this age, they may begin to become more aware of their own bodies and how they appear to others. You might see this in their dress or in how they relate to others. You might also see a transition as they learn more about privacy, for example, they may start asking for privacy in the bathroom or while changing.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

Children this age are also likely to begin asking questions about bodies, for example they may point out differences in other's bodies or ask what genitals are for, about sex, or even ask where babies come from.

We'll talk soon about other protective activities parents and caregivers can engage in, but let's note that the curiosity at this age provides great opportunities for adults to educate children by having age-appropriate conversations - about their bodies, about safe behaviors and even about healthy relationships. And of course we have opportunities to model safe relationships and behaviors for them.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

Also, around this age, kids begin to experiment with their ideas of gender roles by role-playing games like house or doctor. They may refer to someone as their "boyfriend" or "girlfriend," or pretend to be dating or married, or even raising kids. They are practicing out the relationships they see modeled in front of them.

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



Suggested script:

Children ages 6 -8 are typically trying to figure out boundaries, both their own and others.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

At this age, children are becoming more aware of what's okay and not okay around sex and sexuality. They still have limited understanding of adult sexual behavior.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

They may still continue curiosity-driven sexual play and will still touch themselves but, if healthy boundaries and privacy are reinforced, they are clearer that it's something that is done privately and that there are rules about safe playing.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

They often begin to prefer same gender friends.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

And, likely they are being more influenced by their peers' dress, speech, and style.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

They may share affectionate behavior with their peers. Hugs, hand holding, etc.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

They also are beginning to test limits by engaging in name-calling and teasing, and even using sexual words even when they don't always fully understand what the words mean.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

They are developing a stronger sense of themselves, what it means to be a person of their gender, and they have a stronger body image and awareness of how they are different from their peers.

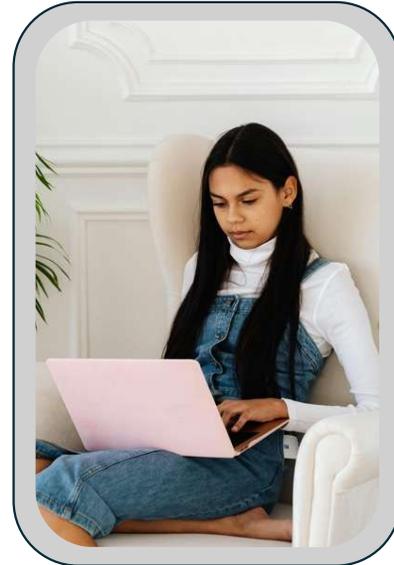
>ADVANCE SLIDE

And they are also beginning to understand the taboos around sexuality and may not ask as many questions or be as comfortable asking questions. This is why it is so important to have ongoing conversations about sexuality, relationships, boundaries, and consent with children - throughout their development.

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



Suggested script:

Moving on to 9 to 12 year-olds, we recognize this time period covers only three years and yet, there can be enormous differences in youth during these ages. And again, this can vary greatly from child to child.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

During this period, some children may enter puberty. They may feel older or be in a hurry to be older. They want more privileges, wanting to be treated like they are more mature – and at the same time, they may be more reluctant to talk about what they are doing, thinking, and feeling.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

And now many children will become more modest and seek more privacy.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

They may start to have romantic crushes (think of a pre-teen with posters all over

their bedroom walls). They wonder about marriage, partnerships, having kids – and for many, having sex.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

It is not out-of-the-ordinary to continue to have primarily same-gender friends - but not always.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

And they begin to be concerned about whether they are “normal.” Cultural and familial influences and beliefs may feel less important to them, as they are trying to both fit in and are just beginning to think about what they believe.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

Kids this age may feel shy asking parents or caregivers questions about their bodies or sexually-related topics.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

And they often seek out information from technology - the internet or other media.

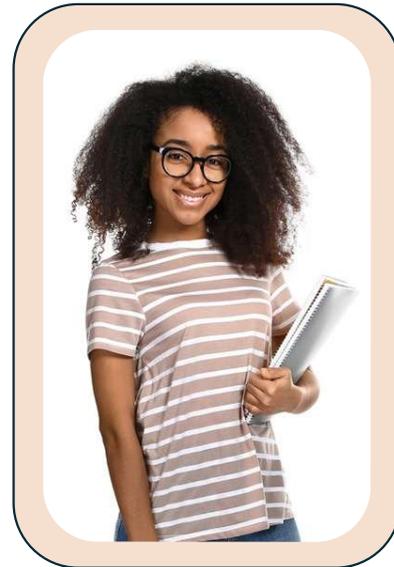
>ADVANCE SLIDE

And finally - some pre-teens may become sexually active by age 11 or 12 years. Kids this age are way too young and not emotionally or cognitively ready to be making these complex decisions, but it does happen.

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



Suggested script:

Finally, let's talk about adolescents. There's a lot going on developmentally at this age, and this stage covers a wide range of sexual behavior. This is a wide age group, and just like the pre-teens, two 15 year olds can look and act and experience things entirely different. So these are some general developmental experiences, and we wouldn't want to say that these are the same at the same time for every teen.

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So to start, teens often feel insecure and uncertain, and are easily vulnerable to hurt feelings. They may mask this, but overall, their self-esteem can be shaky as they worry about fitting in. Loneliness is frequently experienced.

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There is a lot of pressure to become mature quickly. In general – they are often making decisions about sexual behavior and relationships, including health issues

related to sexual activity such as AIDS, STDs, and pregnancy.

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They also may feel peer pressure to do things, to act in certain ways - or they may feel like they can do new things since they are older.

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Choices (and consequences) often shift from considering their parents and their family rules, to their friends and what they might think. And they may question family values or cultural beliefs. This is “normal” and helps them process how they grew up in their family with how to live in the world.

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Youth these ages may begin to explore sexual behavior and relationships. Yes, perhaps they were doing that younger, but it is almost expected now.

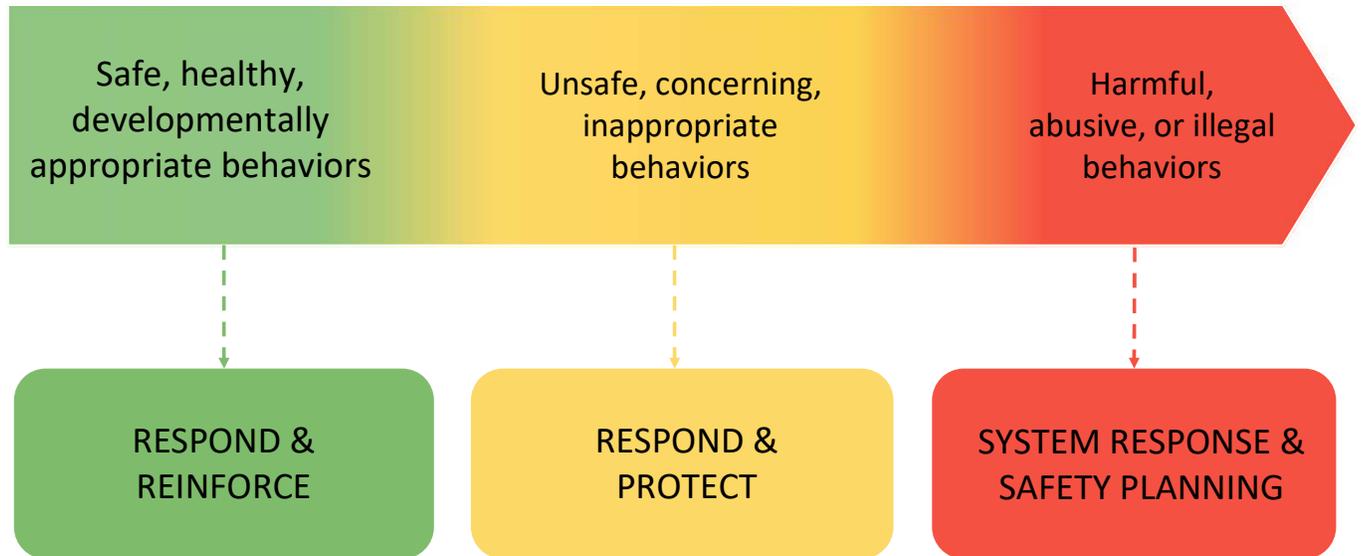
>ADVANCE SLIDE

They may think they know about sex, but often lack information about intimacy and healthy relationships. They may also be hesitant to ask practical questions about sexuality, communication and dating.

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They need to know they will make mistakes, experience challenges and confusion, and that this is normal and okay.

Prevention Continuum



Suggested script:

Now that we've looked at sexual development tasks across the ages, let's think about what we can do to protect children – before there are any warning signs. Remember, this is the green – primary prevention level.



Suggested script:

In the green prevention continuum is healthy sexual play between younger children, primarily 12 and under.

While it may seem that kids shouldn't participate in any exploratory behaviors and play that involve any sexual features, indeed this is a way for children to learn and gather information about their world.

It may be unsettling to realize that children are engaged in sexual play. However, when we understand this is a normal developmental task - a part of childhood, and not sexual in the way we typically think of sex - we are better prepared to address these types of behaviors.

But recognizing that sexual play between children can be healthy and developmentally expected doesn't mean that we are just ignoring it, we need to learn more about what is healthy and identify when to respond and/or redirect.

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

Suggested script:

So let's learn more first about what healthy sexual play between children looks like.

Generally, healthy sexual development is an information gathering process where children use looking and touching to explore gender roles and behaviors with children who are similar in age, status, and size.

Healthy, normal sexual play is most often characterized by:

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Behaviors between kids who are close in age, or children who have an ongoing friendship or relationship – who are peers

>ADVANCE SLIDE

It appears playful, for example, playing house or doctor, and all children involved

are having fun, are smiling and laughing. No one is being forced to play, and the play is out in the open.

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And limited in type and frequency (for example, it is **not** something they do more than other types of play like building things, drawing or playing with dolls).

For more information, check out your **Handout: Age Appropriate Sexual Behavior**



Suggested script:

How you react when you see a child engaging in age-appropriate, exploratory sexual play is important.

Just because these behaviors are a natural part of growing up, you should not ignore this behavior as stated earlier, instead we respond by setting boundaries, providing accurate information and modeling safe, healthy behaviors.

And also pay attention to what is being done right and reinforce healthy appropriate behaviors by acknowledging and praising them.

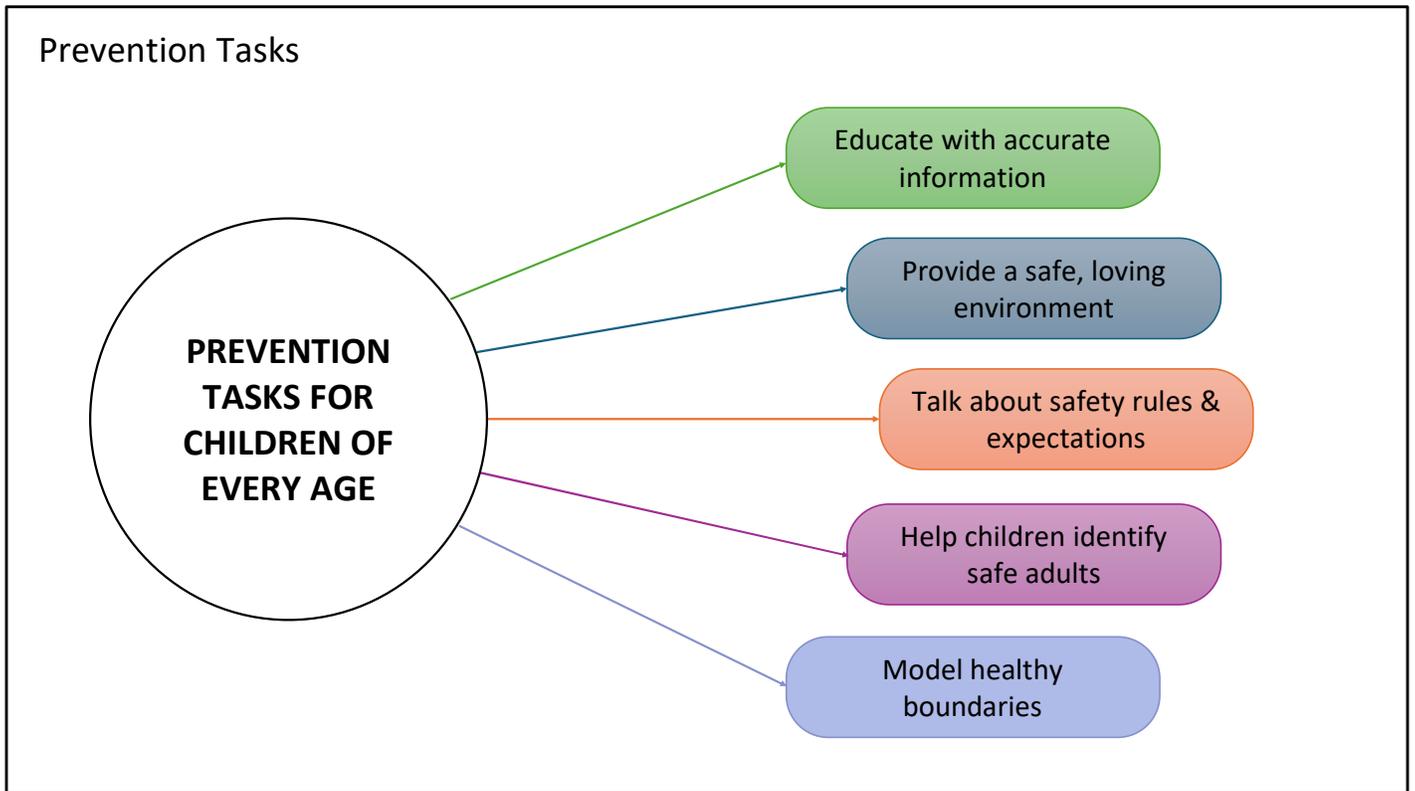
You respond as you would in any other teaching and caring moments, such as praising a child for using manners or not interrupting.

So in the green prevention continuum level, :

- We communicate about the safety rules and let children (and all adults involved in the children's lives) know what the rules are. And we consistently reinforce the rules, as well as review them. We don't

wait for a problem...we take advantage of regular opportunities to illustrate these through our safety plan.

- We help children develop healthy sexual behaviors through education and our ongoing support
- And we are vigilant with our ongoing monitoring



Suggested script:

Now, let's move from talking about developmental tasks to talking about prevention tasks. Prevention tasks are behaviors, interactions, education and safety planning choices that caregiving adults make in order to keep children and their environments as safe as possible. The prevention tasks vary based on the age of the child. We're going to start with a broad overview of prevention task concepts that are across the developmental stages – from infancy through the teen years. Then, we'll talk about prevention tasks adults can take based on a child's age and stage.

Children and teens need us to:

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Provide them with accurate information about their body and the changes that they may be experiencing.

Kids are always yearning for information – and it's important that adults provide

them with healthy and age-appropriate information, or with safe ways to get information.

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Provide a safe and loving environment for children, one where they feel respected and seen. This includes helping kids feel good about themselves, helping them feel good about their bodies and building up their self-esteem.

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As presented earlier, we prioritize and practice safety through talking about the family safety plan, talking openly and frequently about the rules in the family. It's important for children and youth to know that even if other families act differently, or if they see different behaviors or rules on a video, they know your family's values and expectations around things like privacy, exposure to sexual content or images, and consent.

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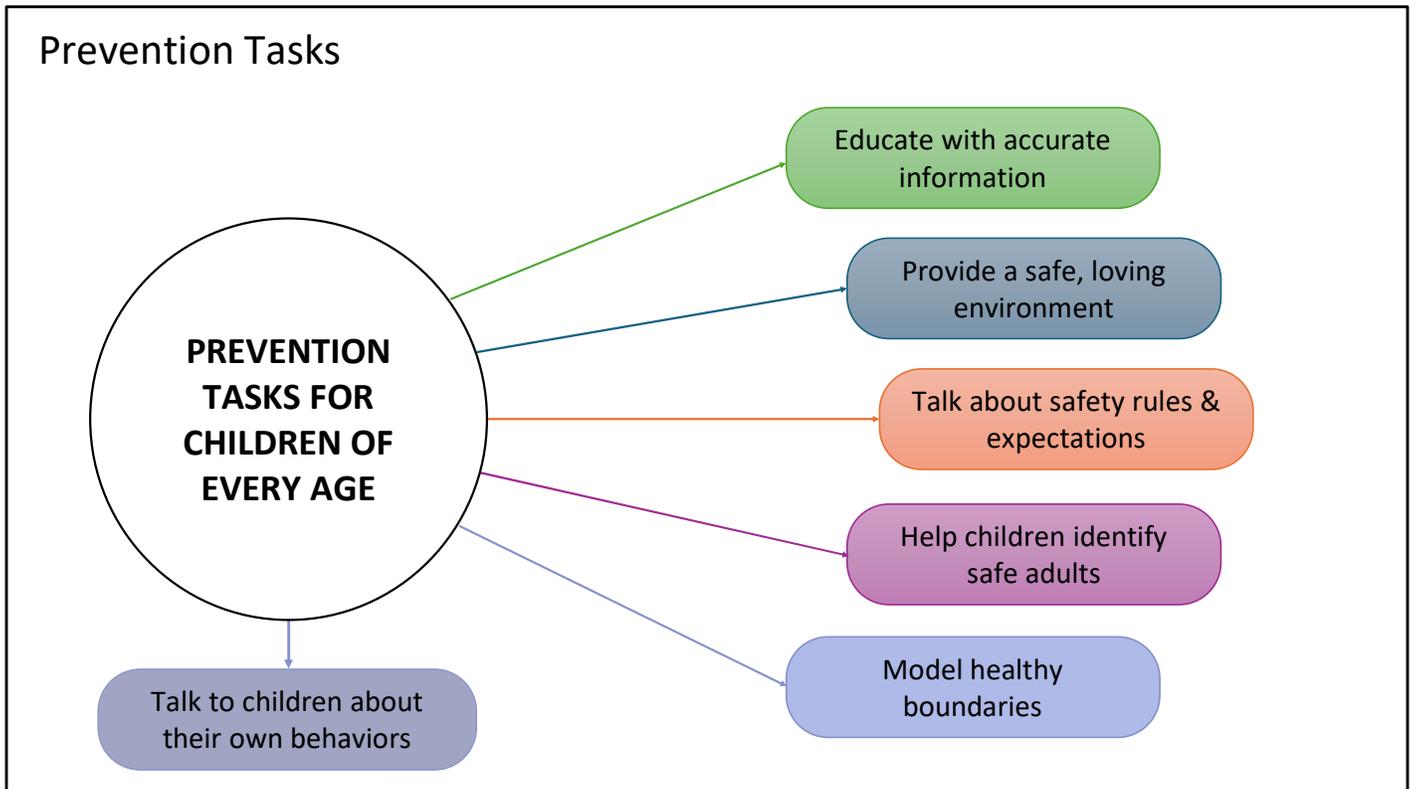
Help children identify a few safe adults in their lives so they always have someone safe to talk to.

You can do this by asking, "If you were scared, confused or worried who would you talk to?" And we make a point in saying, "If the person you would normally talk to is the person hurting you or was breaking a safety rule, who else could you talk to?"

Ensure your child or teen has several safe adults they can talk to if needed.

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And as we've addressed, we need to model healthy boundaries – including physical, emotional, and sexual boundaries. We need children to see that we behave in the way we are asking them to. We emphasize modeling often because it is key that we demonstrate for children and youth, the same safe behaviors and relationships we hope they will have.



Suggested script:

Finally, it's important to note that research shows the greatest risk for children behaving inappropriate with other children sexually is between 12-14 years old.

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So, it's very important that we talk with children not only about others' behaviors, but about their own behaviors toward others including things like bullying and crossing personal boundaries. And we must start these conversations when they are young and continue them as children mature.

We have heard from many parents who reach out about their child's inappropriate sexual behaviors that while they often have talked with their child and told them no one should touch their private body parts, they regret that they never specifically told their child they should not touch another person's private parts - or any part of another person's body without permission.

Basically, and as a bit of a repeat – learn all that you can, practice and model safe

and respectful behaviors, help children find help and we'll talk more about the importance of consent and healthy touch in a minute. And throughout all of this, of course, we want kids to know that they do have a sense that they deserve to be safe, that it's right for them to be free of sexual harm – so we validate, empower and respect them.

Teaching Consent to Children

Respect
children's
physical
boundaries

Teach
children
bodily
autonomy



Reinforce
healthy
boundaries
and consent

Teach kids
to respect
others'
boundaries

Suggested script:

Let's talk about consent now – teaching kids about consent is a prevention task – and happens across ages and developmental stages.

When most people hear the word consent, they think of it in terms of consenting to sex.

However, consent is much broader and applies in other ways as well. Teaching children to ask for permission is something most parents have done beginning when their children are young. Often we start off by talking about permission – by teaching children that they cannot touch things that do not belong to them without asking for permission.

And then we apply this to our bodies - we can teach children that their body belongs to them and no one should touch it without their permission - without their consent

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One way to do this is to recognize – and respect a child’s physical boundaries. This starts even during the non-verbal stage, when they are infants. We can describe to children what we are doing that involves their bodies.

For example, you can get in the habit of telling a baby that you are going to touch them to wash them, even before they can understand what you’re saying.

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And as children age, you start asking them before you put hands on their body. Yes, parents are just going to naturally hug their kid or reach out to fix their hair, but practicing modeling this behavior can help children recognize their own boundaries. We want them to develop a sense of bodily autonomy – the feeling that their body is theirs, and theirs to control.

Also, asking kids for permission to give them a hug is an important way of modeling consent and teaching them bodily autonomy, meaning - their body is theirs and *they* get to decide what they’re comfortable with and others need to respect them.

We should never force a child to be affectionate with anyone. We should let them determine how and to whom they want to show affection. This is called bodily autonomy. We can teach them to be polite but if we teach them that they have to be affectionate with someone that they don’t feel comfortable with, we are giving them a message that could make them more vulnerable - that it doesn’t matter how they feel about touch, they just have to do it - which *is* a dangerous message.

Any professional adult, such as a nurse or coach, should not put hands on a youth without first telling them what they are doing, and allowing the child to refuse or to at least raise any concerns. While there may be medical reasons to proceed, again we can be respectful and be as informative with the child as possible about why we need to touch them.

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We reinforce a child’s boundaries and their own feelings about being touched with other adults in their lives. If a child says no to a hug or to tickling, the adult needs to respect that. And we step in if we see a child ignoring another child’s boundaries.

You can model and reinforce this by simply saying to the adult or child, “Lindsay asked you to stop, so please stop” or “It looks like Lindsay is tired of rough-housing. Please stop.”

Again, of course there may be a reason that a child needs to be touched, such as for a medical reason – but we can still do everything we can to respect their boundaries.

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And remember, it is also critical that we teach kids to respect other's boundaries. For example, you can say to a child, “Quinn looks uncomfortable when you hug them. Is there another way you can show them you’re happy to see them?” This helps teach them important social skills and about consent.



Suggested script:

>ADVANCE SLIDE

States have laws about consent because they recognize that children and young teens can be easy to trick, are easily persuaded, and are raised to obey older youth or adults as authority figures. Legally and morally, it is always the adult's responsibility to set boundaries with children and to stop an unsafe activity, regardless of permission given by a child or even a child's request to play a sexual game. Children cannot and are not responsible to determine what is inappropriate or abusive.

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However, when you are talking about older teens, consent laws can be confusing.

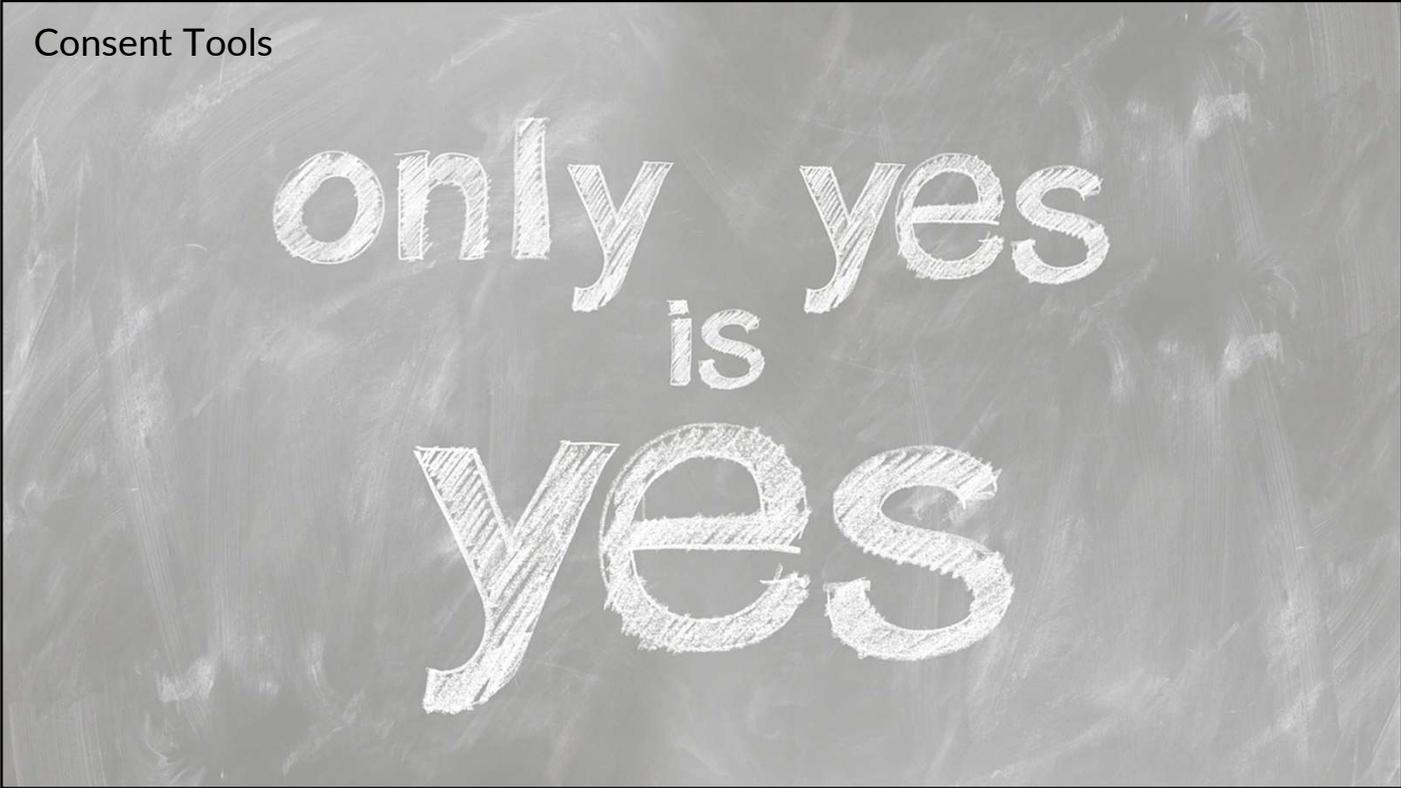
The age of consent varies by state, but in most states, it is between 16 – 18 years old. There are also some states that allow even younger children to consent to older teens under 18.

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If you work with teens it may be important to know your state laws around age of consent and for you to educate teens about those laws.

If you'd like more information on reporting, please check out our resource guide on **Reporting**, located on the resource guides section of Stop It Now!'s website.

Consent Tools



only yes
is
yes

Suggested Script:

Here's a resource that may be helpful to share with younger children.

Show online video: Consent for Kids -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h3nhM9UUjc>

Trainer's Note: *May need to open in another link to share. Allow for comments after*

- Alternate video to share for older youth: Tea Consent (clean) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fGoWLWS4-kU> or Tea Consent - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQbei5JGiT8>

Handout: Video Aids for Teaching Consent



Suggested script:

Now I want to ask you all some questions...

- **Ask:** Who in this workshop has ever felt like they needed a hug? *(allow for hands to raise or use a poll feature)*
- **Ask:** Who has felt like they needed a hug – but didn't get it? *(allow for hands to raise or use a poll feature)*
- **Ask:** If you needed a hug and didn't get it, what did that feel like? *(allow for responses)*
- **Ask:** And who has felt like they needed a hug – and got it? What did that feel like? *(allow for responses)*

Reflect on responses (suggestion): So we can see that not getting hugged when you need a hug feels pretty awful – and that getting that hug can feel pretty good. So getting touched is important – getting healthy touch that we want and consent

to is actually critical to our well-being – and safety.

So, what is healthy touch?

Touch is essential for infants and toddlers, but it's also important throughout a child's life. Even adults need touch. Touch is essential for all humans.

To feel visible, loved, and worthwhile, humans need to receive healthy touch.

Healthy touch is nurturing. It is wanted and appropriate, and it is safe.

Research has also shown that children who receive little or no touch are more vulnerable to inappropriate touching or sexual abuse than kids who are touched often and appropriately.

In other words, healthy touch is a prevention tool.



Suggested script:

If we don't provide children with healthy, nurturing, and safe touch, they won't know that it is important, and they won't know what safe, healthy touch is.

This actually puts them at risk for abuse because they can't tell healthy from unhealthy and a potentially harmful or abusive touch, and they may crave touch that makes them vulnerable to harm.

People who sexually abuse children can often recognize a child that craves physical touch. And they can also recognize a child who is educated about healthy touch and is able to recognize inappropriate or unsafe touch - and this acts as a barrier from potential harm because the knowledge deters someone who might otherwise behave abusively.

Also, if a child is ever abused, the lack of knowledge about safe and healthy touch may cause them confusion and they may not know when to ask a safe adult for help - they won't know the touch wasn't a safe touch.

It's also worth noting that people who have lacked healthy physical touch throughout their lives may be more prone to struggling with their own relationships.

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So for all of these reasons, think of healthy touch as a protective layer for kids.

Special Considerations for Children with Disabilities

3x more likely to experience abuse

Understand a child's unique needs



Suggested script:

Guidelines for healthy touch may change depending on a child's needs. Sometimes there are special considerations, such as children with disabilities.

Kids with disabilities are three times (3x) more likely to be sexually abused than kids without a disability*. Youth with disabilities are incredibly vulnerable. This is partially due to mistaken thinking that people with disabilities are not sexual, so they don't need healthy sexuality education. We know this isn't true, but outdated beliefs like this unfortunately persist.

So we need to think about how to model this for kids with different abilities a way that they can integrate. A big part of your work as a parent or caregiver is to learn an individual kid's sensory preferences, physical space boundaries, and particular needs for physical touch, especially if they've come to us having a history of abuse, as so many have.

We need to consider how to model healthy touch for kids with different abilities in a way that they can integrate. A big part of your work as a parent or caregiver is to learn an individual kid's sensory preferences, physical space boundaries, and

particular needs for physical touch.

- **(Optional) Ask:** Can someone share an example of a kid they've cared for that had specific physical or sensory boundaries, what it was like before you knew them, and what it was like for you and them after you finally "got it" – when you realized that there were desired safe ways of touch for this child?

[Sometimes this generates reflections, but it may not. No need to land on this too long, listen to the group; each group will be different]

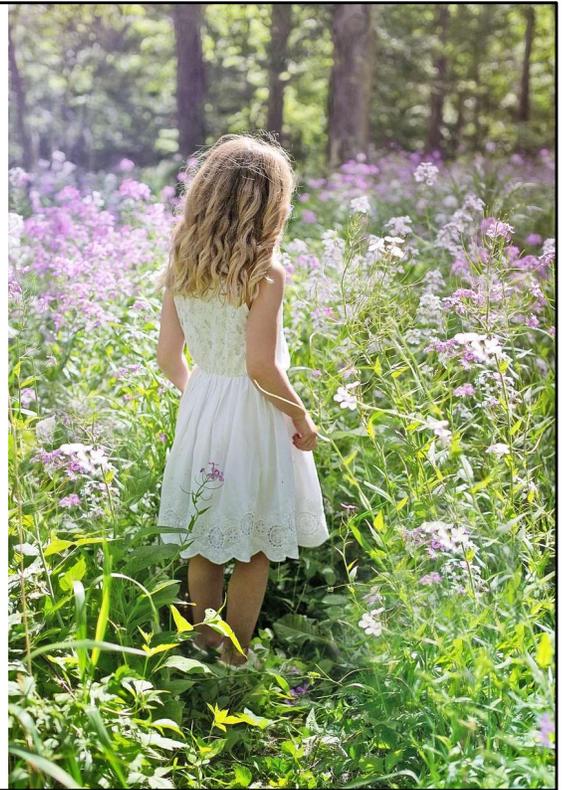
Survivors and Kids in Foster Care

Touch can be confusing!

Learn what the child is comfortable with

Review safety plan/program rules

Modify and talk with other adults as needed



Optional for workshops

Suggested script:

(The following section is provided for use when teaching foster parents and other professional caregivers as deemed appropriate)

Professionals who work with children – teachers, counselors, coaches, medical professionals, foster parents – need to think about the impact of touch in their relationship. Yes, we often may think that a good hug is needed for a student, a young athlete, a child in daycare or at a doctor’s appointment, but we all have a responsibility – as parents and professionals – to be aware of the circumstances around a child and how they might perceive a hug.

But touch is confusing for kids in foster care, or kids who have had some type of trauma in their lives - and for the parents and involved professionals that care for them.

What information does help us determine what healthy touch is for (each individual) child? How do we know what kids can handle? First - learn as much as

you can about child – Is there known abuse? Have allegations been made involving the child? And, talk with the child (if possible)

- Ask them what they're comfortable with
- Acknowledge the discomfort at first when new people touch.
- Review your family's safety plan, specifically the rules about safe touch. Be explicit and clear that adults and other kids will not engage with them sexually, and what to do if someone does. Have a dialogue about how and when they like to be touched, and how they communicate that they don't want to be touched. Remember to let kids push us away when they've had enough.

All of these above strategies over time teach a child a certain kind of healthy interpersonal dynamic around touch, body space, and consent.

Being a professional supervising and caring for children can sometimes raise questions about when it is ok to touch a child, how to show affection and support, and similar concerns.

➤ **Ask** - How many people have had concerns about hugging a child in their care, under their watch? What about physical touch with these kids can be worrisome? (allow for answers) Discuss

Look for possible reasons:

- Afraid of allegation – perhaps already kid's history of making allegations, or history of sexual abuse, or had personal experience with someone making allegation or even in personal life.
- Afraid of triggering child – scaring them...
- Afraid of how child will interpret – how to use safety plan to support – describe healthy behaviors/engagement
- Doesn't feel comfortable or safe – listen to this gut instinct, how to turn this into compassionate education opportunity for child

Some agencies also do a good job of providing staff and professional caretakers very clear guidelines around healthy touch. Good policies and procedures can help you better define safe touch in your program.

Prevention Tasks

Infants through Preschool



Teach the correct names for private body parts.

Suggested script:

Now let's look at prevention tasks for children at different stages of development, beginning with infants through preschool age.

As soon as young children begin to become verbal, they can benefit from learning the anatomically correct name for all of their body parts. The adults in their lives can teach them what to call their body parts, including their private body parts or genitals -the words nipples, breasts, penis, scrotum, vulva, vagina, butt cheeks, anus.

Some adults may be uncomfortable with this task. These may not be words they are used to using...and especially around children. However, if we are able to become more comfortable having these conversations, kids will also be comfortable to talk to someone when they have concerns that involve their body. So, we can start this task with very young children.

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.



Suggested script:

And - how can a child know to tell someone that they are being touched on their penis or vulva, if they don't know that they have one? And in the same way that we tell little children to point to their nose, to point to their toes, etc., we can teach them to tell us where their private body parts are.

If a child doesn't know the names of their body parts it can be harder for them to disclose if they are being touched inappropriately or abusively. Imagine if a young girl is taught to call her vagina a cookie or pocketbook (and yes, that happens frequently). And then if that child tries to tell an adult that someone is touching their pocketbook, that adult may not understand that the child is telling them they are being hurt. Even when adults use these "nicknames" for body parts, they can forget themselves what these nicknames reference – because no one wants to think about a child being sexually abused so our brains don't automatically get what the child is telling us.

Trainer's note: Stories to illustrate importance of using anatomically correct language – use or come up with own:

- Story 1: This story was heard on the Stop It Now! Helpline about a little girl who was taught that her vagina is a pocket book. She kept insisting that her grandpa was going into her pocket book but no one made the connection until later. And we really advocate that adults get comfortable using commonly understood names for ALL body parts, even those between the shoulders and the knees. This is a key part of safety planning. It's important to help children feel comfortable about their body, including what their body parts are called. They're open at this age in talking about their body, and often enjoy nudity – not yet feeling a shyness or even shame about their body.
- Story 2: a woman sitting in this training, hearing this about the importance of anatomically correct language, went home that night and as she got her 4 y.o. son ready for the bath, she decided to remind him to wash his penis. They used a “cutesy” name for his penis, so when she told him to do this – he said, “but mama, I don't have a penis”. So – imagine if anyone ever had to ask him if someone had touched his penis. Or that if we tell him no one is allowed to touch his penis, but we don't use that name – it can get confusing.

Providing honest, accurate information is a good protective tool.



Suggested script:

People who sexually abuse children also often use a child's lack of knowledge as a way to trick them. So honest and accurate information is a good protective tool.

We know that every family has their own way of communicating and their values and culture that help guide their behaviors. If using this anatomically correct language is not acceptable in your family, then consider making sure that everyone who is responsible for the care of the child knows the language that the child will use to describe their body parts so that the child can communicate about their body if they need to.

Prevention Tasks

Infants through Preschool

Safe or unsafe touches (or okay or not okay, or healthy or unhealthy).

Teach the difference between secrets and surprises.

Allow child to explore own body; don't shame for being curious

Respond to questions honestly and simply

Healthy physical contact

Provide warm, safe and loving environment



Suggested script:

Let's look at some other protective tasks for this age group:

>ADVANCE SLIDE

First experts recommending using the terms safe or unsafe touches (or okay or not okay, or healthy or unhealthy). In the past, this was more often referred to as “good and bad touch”, but we don't use that anymore.

➤ **Ask:** So why do you think this is? Why has this language been changed?

Wait for some answers, discuss and include: Sometimes sexual touch feels good, even if it is abusive touch. That may be difficult to comprehend out touch that is sexual abuse can feel good but our body doesn't always react to the environment or feelings, even if there is fear or sadness, or even pain attached – sometimes it just responds to a sexual stimulation – much like a tickle. So the use of good and bad touch can be confusing – maybe the sexual response feels ok.

Also it can be confusing for children who have people they love in their life who are touching them in a harmful or abusive way. How could a touch from a person they love be anything but good. Only bad people give bad touches....but in fact, of course, this isn't true so we can help kids by using language that isn't as confusing - kids can find it easier to understand when we talk about safe or healthy touches vs one that are not safe or ok.

And the language of safe/unsafe can fold into your family or organization's safety rules—no one touches areas underneath clothes, that's an unsafe touch.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

We also want to teach children about secrets vs. surprises. Adults should not ask children to keep secrets - even seemingly innocent ones. It can confuse them, and sometimes people who are testing out how vulnerable a child might be, will ask children to keep a secret to find out if they will keep quiet about something potentially harmful. So as adults, we watch how we speak to kids about secrets.

You can teach children that secrets often mean that someone is doing something they're not supposed to, like maybe breaking a safety rule. But a surprise is something special that is going to happen that someone will eventually find out about – like a surprise party or present.

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And finally, just a few other tips:

- Allow child to explore own body; don't shame for being curious
- Respond to questions about sexuality honestly but simply
- Healthy physical contact – as we talked about when we talked about healthy touch
- Provide warm, safe and loving environment – what all children need. When children live in an environment that is warm and loving, they are safer.

Prevention Tasks

School-age through Pre-teen

Provide education and information

Model open communication, healthy boundaries, and healthy relationships

Focus on values

Address their own behaviors!



Suggested script:

Moving from these tasks with younger kids, we're now focusing on school-age to pre-teen youth. This group is the 6-12 year olds. These kids need adult guidance and support as much as ever. They are trying to grow up, and in some cases are faced with more adult-like decisions and situations than we ever want to believe. And at the same time, they are trying to separate from the family as they focus more and more on their peers. That makes it even more important to talk them, pay attention to them and model family values and safety.

And all the tasks from the earlier age group are still relevant here.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

As always, adults should continue to provide accurate and age/developmental stage appropriate education and information to them.

Some children will ask questions, others may not. Provide info even if child doesn't ask for it, at this age – they have many questions but may just not know how to

ask. You can look for opportunities (like TV or social media) to begin conversations. And if they do ask a question, you can always start by asking a child what they already know about a topic. This might help you learn what is motivating their question, which may be very different than what you thought.

Remember, youth at this age are trying to grow up, and will likely be pulling away from their family and focusing more on their peers. And they sometimes face more adult-like decisions and situations.

It's important that adults model open and honest conversations, healthy boundaries, and safe relationships for kids this age. Kids at this age are very observant...and they learn by watching us.

What we demonstrate in how we talk about things, how we practice our own boundaries and what our own relationships look like influences how children behave, so it's important that children observe safe and healthy behaviors and relationships in the adults close to them. It's that modeling thing again. Kids are watching us – hard to tell them to do as we say, and not as we do – so we're thoughtful about what we're giving them to observe. If they are watching relationships that include a lot of deceit and lying, but we tell them that lying is bad – then we can't be sure that we are passing on values that will help them.

Keeping a focus on the family's values, and encouraging the child's development of their own values is part of how we communicate – and why. This helps children make safe decisions as they better understand why something is or isn't their family's values. Talking about values also means keeping in communication with them. Continue to provide education, and stay involved in their lives.

And we need to address their own behaviors - like bullying, and all disrespectful behaviors, including ones that are specifically sexual or gender based, for example, while it may be normal to use "dirty" words or tease the opposite sex, we still want to intervene, use these educational opportunities to help children learn respectful behavior

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.



Suggested script:

And now moving on to the teen years, this can be a complicated time and it's vital that adults stay engaged with youth.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

As they mature, teens want to try new things and often think they are invincible and in charge of their own lives.

So this is the time to help them think about their own safety and develop mature decision-making skills. This means helping them learn to make safe and informed decisions, and thinking through the consequences of those decisions.

It's important to show them you value their thoughts and feelings but stress you want them to learn to be safe.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

This is also an important time to help them learn how 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.



Suggested script:

>ADVANCE SLIDE

Having open and honest conversations about healthy vs. harmful relationships is important. Teaching them about red flags in relationships and how to seek help from safe adults is critical for this age.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

Although some parents find it difficult, having open conversations about sex and other uncomfortable topics is also essential. Letting them know they can ask you questions and giving them accurate and reliable information so they don't google their questions, can help them stay safe.

Being that steady and reliable person is important at this age. Even if they come to you less – the information you're giving them is still being taken in... even if it seems like they're not listening, they often are.

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?



Suggested script:

Teens get a lot of messages about what not to do, they may take in unsafe messages from media about dating and consent, they may turn to porn to find out about how sex works... but where do they learn about relationships that are healthy? How do they know what red flags to look out for in their friendships and partnerships? What should they do if something feels weird to them? Being in love feels great, but what happens when someone you care about is texting at all hours of the night, they won't let you see your friends, or they're starting to be controlling? And, who here doesn't remember that new relationship energy, and the tendency to cast aside friendships to spend all your time with this one person you want to be with?

You can ask them how they would know if a situation or person feels safe and comfortable - and what signs would they pay attention to that the person or situation wasn't safe. You can talk with them about what kind of relationships they want to be in too.

Review:

Good questions to engage adolescents:

- What are your limits? What do your boundaries look like?
- How will you know when your boundaries are crossed? What are some “red flags”?
- What kind of relationship do you want?
- How will you know that a relationship is safe and healthy? What are some “green flags”?
- Ask: What other questions might be good to engage teens?

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.



Suggested script:

It's also critical to be informed about the technology kids are using. Spend time with children on the technology they're using and ask questions. Teach them what is appropriate or not when they are online.

You also want to include conversations about social media and tech use, and you can help them find safe role models to look up to in the media they're consuming.

And Include in your conversations, your expectation that they not bully or harass others online. You may have to give them some examples so they know what's okay, and what's not.

Some youth may explore relationships, sex or their sexual identity online and search for things they are curious about, like sex, bodies, and relationships. As a result, some children and teens may find and view pornography: legal sexual content meant for adults. And, some youth may also be exposed to child sexual abuse material online.

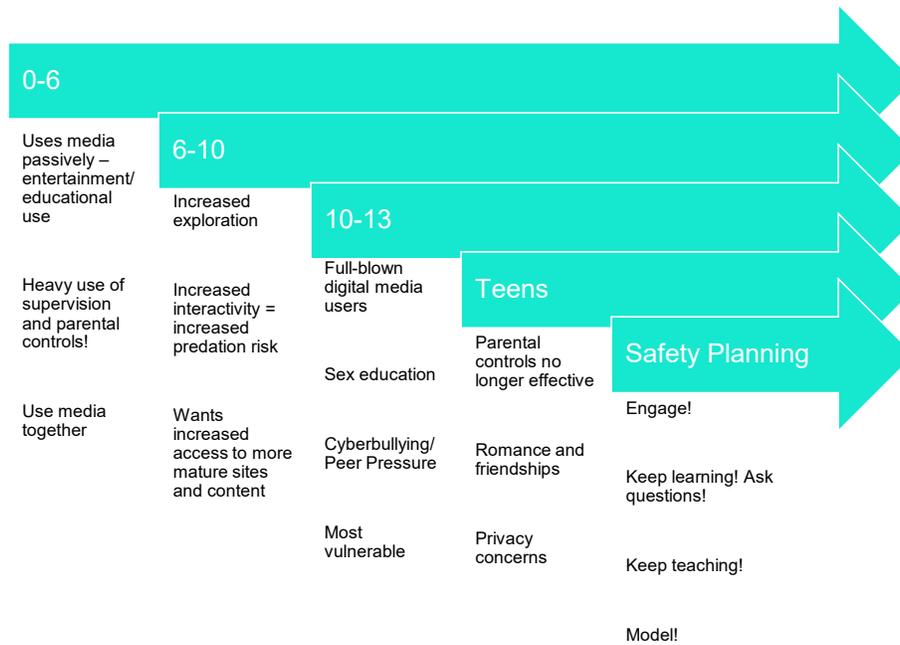
One thing that you should know is that youth are seeing their relationships online

as very real...these are their friends and not 'strangers'. So, messages we've tried to give kids about how they don't know who they are talking to can sometimes be less effective, because actually research is showing us that the kids report that when someone engages in harmful behaviors with them using technology, this is often someone that child says they know, even if it's an online-only friendship – kids typically don't consider online friends "strangers".

Technology use should be included in safety plans. And, we want to let kids know that their technology use will be monitored.

As always, we want youth to know that they can come to a safe adult – to you or someone they trust if they feel concerned about anything inappropriate or unsafe they see online or experience in any way in their technology use – even if they've done something that may have broken a rule or that they are worried might be "bad." And let them know that caring adults can help them figure it out together.

Technology Use Through A Developmental Lens



Suggested Script

When we think about technology risks for our children, we can also think about the development of kids in regard to their use of technology and all digital devices – and then this helps us with safety planning.

Let's take a brief, birds eye look at kid's use of technology through that developmental lens.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

Starting with the ages 0-6: Kids generally use media passively, watching - engaged and entertained, but not usually *engaging* with others. At this age, heavy use of supervision and parental controls is appropriate, and can be straightforward. As with many things, adults can hold tight boundaries and use media together with children as it is easy for any youth to easily click into places for older audiences, even on child-friendly apps or websites.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

Now looking at around the ages of 7-10 (and this could be earlier, whenever kids start exploring and using media interactively), we see that kids are beginning to use messaging, are downloading, apps and programs – increasing their risk. Online bullying can be common – and the pressures to conform, based on the many images kids are viewing, becomes more difficult. Privacy also starts to become important— with kids entering personal information online. This is the time to talk and teach about passwords, privacy, people posing as others online, etc.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

Moving now to ages 10-13: Kids are now becoming full-blown technology users: messaging and texting is common – both between familiar peers, and strangers online, such as through game platforms; viewing adult pornography is not uncommon. And actually the internet, including social media, becomes a child's classroom on sex education, especially if it doesn't exist or is incomplete elsewhere in a child's life.

Parental controls begin to lose effect, Kids are highly influenced by what they are seeing. The shift from child to teen is underway and for some – puberty has begun. And the digital world is becoming the place where youth go for answers and connection. And we'll also note that cyberbullying is picking up speed during these ages.

This is the most vulnerable age range for online grooming. Generally, maybe a little more around ages 12 to13, these kids are becoming internet wizards, full of ideas and curiosity, but almost completely lack social savvy to steer away from or navigate complex adult social situations, especially involving sex. They will take more risks with their online behaviors (and this will continue throughout their teen years)..

>ADVANCE SLIDE

And now to our teens: As social media and messaging becomes romantic, online bullying becomes sexual harassment. Parental controls are now often ineffective.

So more than ever, we continue talking with teens about their experiences – their live online and on their devices. We take their concerns and relationships seriously,

asking questions to help them reflect on their experiences. We help them develop good digital citizenship and their critical thinking skills, all the while standing by to support them as needed – even if they find themselves in trouble.

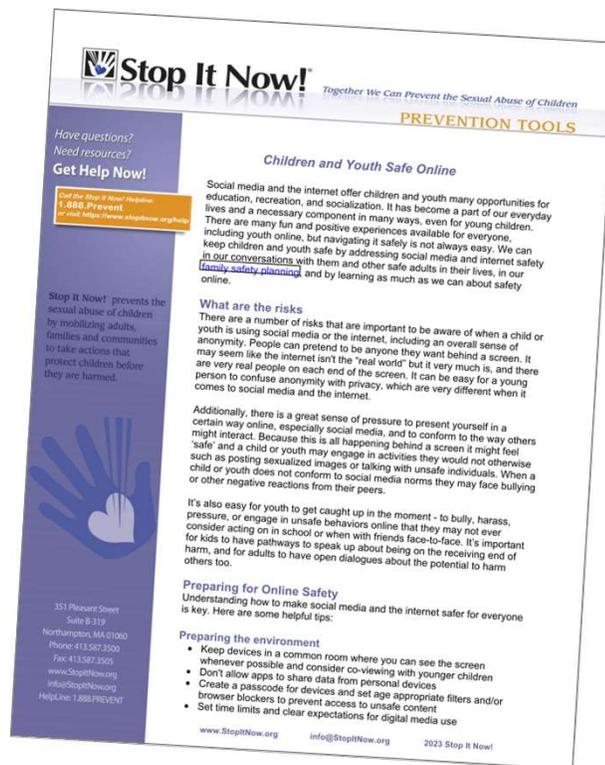
>ADVANCE SLIDE

So our safety planning for kids involving technology is basically the same concepts as what we do for live in-person protections. And this is a moving train – parents and concerned adults need to continue to engage and learn about technology advances and how they might impact kids.

And of course, as we've talked about, modeling is so important – so our own behaviors around technology can model safe and healthy use of devices all around.

➤ **Questions?** Open for discussion.

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



Suggested script:

You can help the youth in your life make a plan for what to do if someone online asks them to break family safety rules or do something they don't want to. Let them know that talking to you or another trusted adult is always the right thing to do, even if it feels scary to talk about sharing a nude photo online or feeling blackmailed because of something they did. We want them to know that even if they make a mistake, you always want them to be safe and you will support and help them, no matter what.

For more information, check out your **Handouts**:

- **Resource List: Staying Safe Online**
- **Internet Safety Guidelines and Tips** – *stop to review if time allows* (these are "safety planning rules" for the digital world)
- **Online Safety Contracts**
- **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.

Suggested script:

So, we've established that talking to children about sex, their bodies and relationships is necessary to help them stay safe and grow up healthy.

But how do we do that? Talking to kids about their bodies, sex, and sexuality isn't easy. And answering their questions about these topics may be even harder.

When kids ask questions, our responses will impact their views regarding sexuality.

Our verbal responses, as well as our body language and facial expressions are important. We want them to hear and see that we are open to their questions, even if it does make us uncomfortable. You can say to your child, "I'm glad you're asking about this. I also want you to know there's nothing shameful about it - and I'm glad you're asking this question! I want you to have accurate information so I want to be as open as I can to talk with you."

>ADVANCE SLIDE

What we need to remember is that we need to be “askable adults.”

You want to respond to questions with a developmentally appropriate answer. You should answer in a matter-of-fact way and provide accurate information that is relevant for their age and the question they are asking. Remember, a child asking where babies come from is not looking for a course in biology - and in fact, they may just want to know where someone goes to have a baby. So don't lecture, check in, stop and ask, “Does this make sense? Am I answering your question?” and “Do you have any other questions?”

And, if you are caught off guard and you don't know what to say in the moment – tell them you want to answer them but need some help explaining and that you will talk with them later. And then make sure you do talk with them later. It is also ok to let them know that you were sure of the answer and you wanted to look up some information to make sure you were giving them accurate information.

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?



Suggested script:

So, how would you answer a youth's questions about sex or their bodies?

- **Ask/Reflection:** What questions have you been asked that have taken you by surprise? What questions worry you or make you concerned that you'll be caught off guard and won't know how to answer? *[Trainer note: Just take a few responses as an intro into activity below. You can also prompt participants to carry these questions into the following activity.]*

Activity: Split into small groups or pairs. activity where we practice what we might say as a response to some of those difficult and/or embarrassing questions.

Activity Instructions:

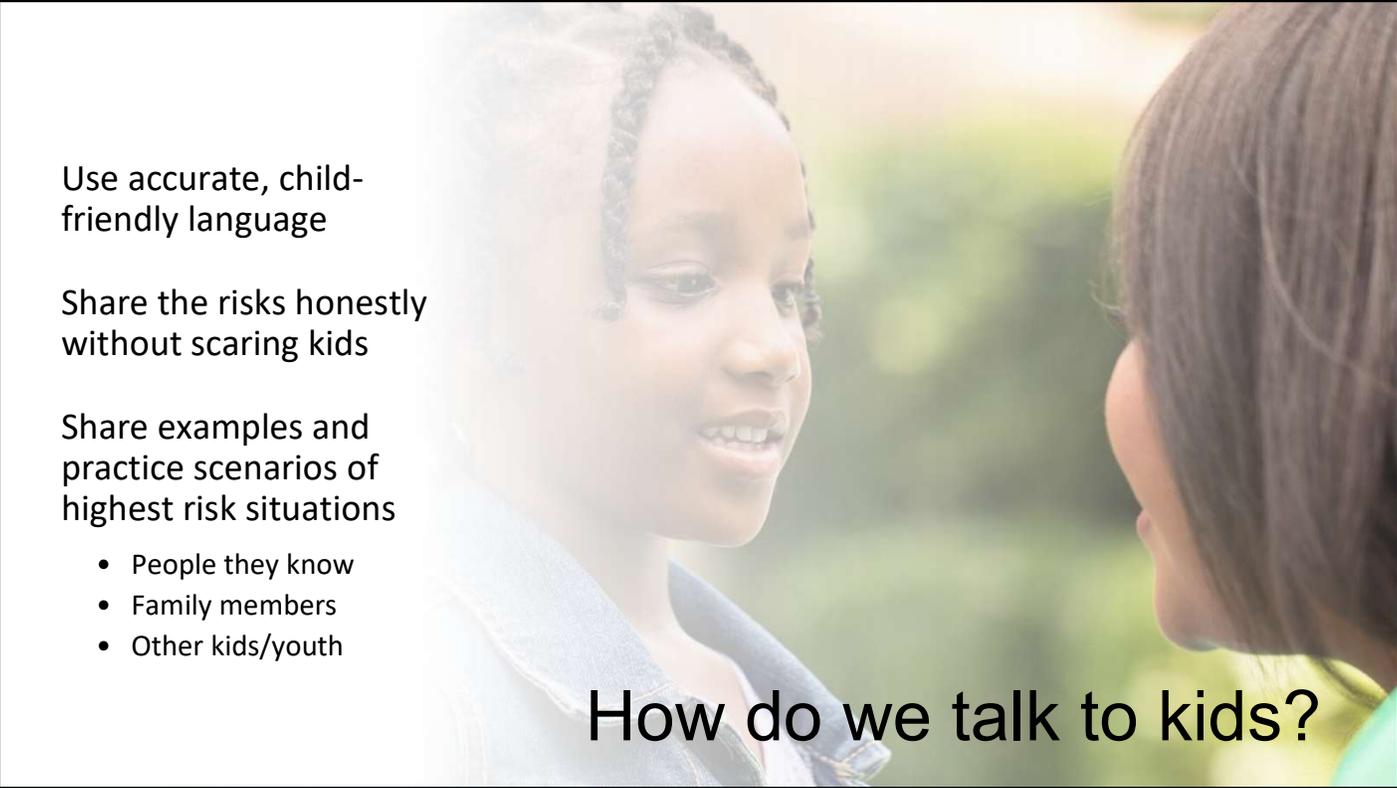
Inform participants that this is an activity where we practice what we might say as a response to some of those difficult and/or embarrassing questions.

Imagine that you are reading a story to a 4-year-old, something with no sexual content whatsoever, yet this child randomly asks you one of the questions on this slide. How would you respond? In your groups/pairs, I'd like you to both discuss

what you think you would answer to any of these questions, and maybe even try role-playing it a bit.

Trainer's note: after 6 minutes, pull the groups back.

- **Debrief** can be very brief: How did that go for everyone? We're not going to ask for reports out from each group/air, but if anyone has a burning insight that they wanted to share, or perhaps a funny story – please do share.



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

How do we talk to kids?

Suggested script:

Let's look at a few tips about how to have conversations with youth about sexual safety and risks

>ADVANCE SLIDE

First, remember to share information using child-friendly, but accurate language.

Let the child's natural curiosity lead and respond to their questions in language that is age-appropriate.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

It's also important to talk about sexual abuse in a way that covers the reality of risk to them, but does not scare them.

Remembering these facts about sexual abuse helps us know what to share.

- 90% of the time children are abused by someone they know,

- More than ½ the time it is a family member,
- And up to 77% of the time the person who sexually abused is another child or youth

>ADVANCE SLIDE

So knowing this, Make sure that you talk about, and use examples that show:

- Abuse can be by someone they know, even a family member that they love and trust
- And it can also happen by another child or youth

Share examples and practice scenarios with children, asking them what they would do in certain situations. You might want to say for example, “What if mom or dad break a safety rule”, what do you think you would do?

The important thing is that kids understand it can happen by anyone and the safety rules you establish can help them recognize when they see a red flag or when someone breaks a rule.

To learn more about having these conversations, you can find resources on Now!’s website like the tip sheet, Talking to children and teens and other resources on Children’s Sexuality Development and Behaviors.

For more information, check out your **handouts** called: **Talking with Children and Teens Communication Tips and**

Examples and

Sexuality Concepts in Concrete

Terms to help supplement your conversations.

Prevention Continuum

Safe, healthy,
appropriate
behaviors

Unsafe, concerning,
inappropriate
behaviors

Harmful,
abusive, or illegal
behaviors

Behaviors that cross
boundaries, violate
safety rules or
policies/procedures

Suggested script:

>ADVANCE SLIDE

Moving on now to the yellow stage of the prevention continuum, focusing on children, and on the relationships and environments that can be concerning, and on behaviors that could mean they're being sexually abused.

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

Suggested script:

Let's start first by looking at the conditions in a child's environment which make them vulnerable to sexual abuse or to harm.

Generally, harmful behaviors are more likely to happen when a child's environment involves a lot of chaos or lacks boundaries. When children and youth live in environments where adults expose them to sexual situations, to violence, or to other illegal activities, they are more vulnerable.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

Specific environmental risk factors include:

Settings where secrecy is frequently permitted or encouraged

Lack of boundaries and privacy

Significant stress in family/community (death, current divorce, or job loss)

Children being viewed or talked about in adult sexual ways

Exposure or easy access to pornography or other adult content

Unacknowledged child sexual abuse in family history

Alcohol abuse or illegal drug use in adults close to the child, including family friends or friend's parents

Repeated exposure to other forms of violence, including situations where sexual behavior is demanded in exchange for money, drugs, privileges or protection

Also keep in mind that these risk factors might be present anywhere in a child's life, not just in their home. Adults must watch and take note of children's experiences at school, while visiting with friends, or in other places they visit.

Risk Factors



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

Suggested script:

Sometimes the relationships in a child or youth's life can increase their vulnerability to sexual abuse or harm.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

These include:

A weak or absent ongoing connection to a trusted, safe adult; When children feel like they have no one to depend on they are more at risk.

When a child or teen feels emotionally isolated or neglected.

And as talked about, when a child or teen isn't provided accurate information about age-appropriate healthy sexuality, boundaries, and privacy

Developmental challenge or disability in the child or other family members

When a child is expected to parent or fill the emotional or intimate needs of adults

And when the child is a victim of physical or emotional abuse or neglect

All of these risk factors are indicators of potential vulnerability. They don't automatically mean a child is being abused or will be abused. But, paying attention to children where you see these risk factors and ensuring you are creating a safe environment can reduce their risk of abuse.

➤ **Ask:** Any questions, anything anyone wants to add?



60% of children do not disclose

Suggested script:

Now that we've talked about environments and relationships that may increase a child's risk of harm, let's look now how we might discover that a child or youth is being abused.

Children do sometimes disclose sexual abuse..

>ADVANCE SLIDE

and, much more of the time, children don't disclose - 60% of children do not disclose their sexual abuse



Suggested script:

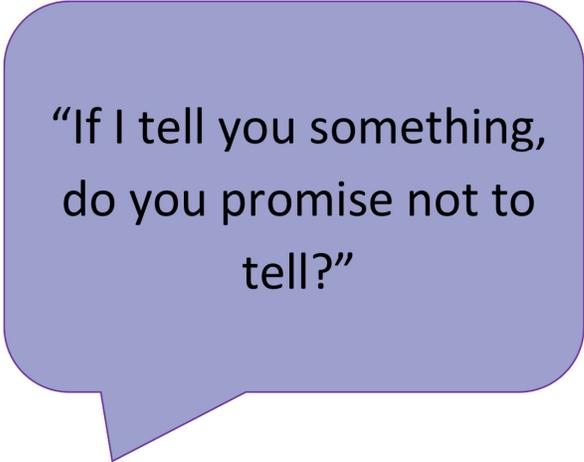
We talked about earlier why children don't disclose, but there may be other things they say or do that indicate they may be in a risky or harmful situation.

They may try to tell through their behavior, affect, and indirect statements.

And if they do disclose, it may happen bit by bit, over a period of time, as opposed to all at once.

Disclosure

Hint



“If I tell you something,
do you promise not to
tell?”

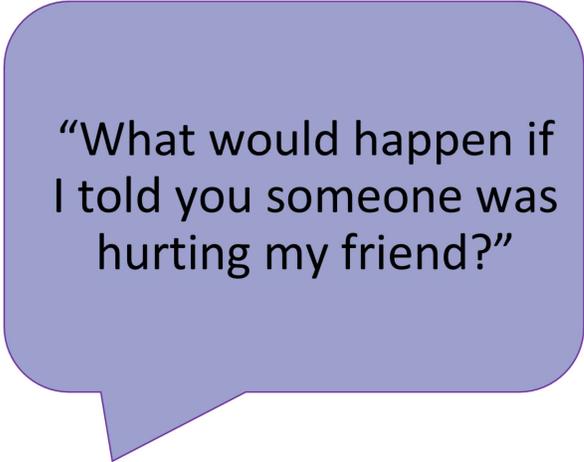
Suggested script:

When children do try to speak up, it's rare that they will directly state they are being abused.

For example, they may hint that something is wrong like saying, I don't like going over to my friend's house when their older brother is there.

Disclosure

Question



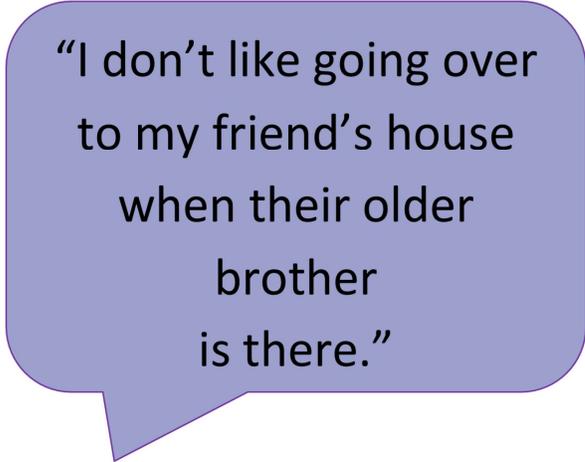
“What would happen if I told you someone was hurting my friend?”

Suggested script:

Or they may question you to find out what you might do, for example by asking, “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.”

Suggested script:

Another way a child may communicate they are in an unsafe position is by beginning to tell you something, but put conditions on their disclosure, like asking you not to tell anyone.

Be careful and don’t tell the child you won’t tell anyone. Be open and honest about your need to protect them, which may involve telling a few select other people (like a therapist, doctor and/or a co-parent, if applicable).



Suggested script:

We'll discuss how to respond to disclosures later, but before we talk about how to respond, let's look next at warning signs of possible abuse.

Because children and teens don't often disclose, it's important that adults know warning signs of sexual abuse. When you can recognize indicators that a youth is struggling, then you're better able to respond appropriately.

And this is also why learning as much as you can about healthy and developmentally on track sexual development helps you recognize those warning signs.

As we talk about these warning signs, please note that the presence of one or more of these signs does not automatically mean that a youth has experienced any sexual harm. Generally we are looking for repetitive behaviors that do not respond to redirection, or groupings of behaviors.

Warning Signs of Abuse

Stop It Now! Together We Can Prevent the Sexual Abuse of Children
PREVENTION TOOLS

Have questions?
Need resources?
Get Help Now!

1-888-786-8689
www.stopitnow.org

Stop It Now! prevents the sexual abuse of children by motivating adults, families and communities to take actions that protect children before they are harmed.

Warning Signs in Children and Adolescents of Possible Child Sexual Abuse

Any one sign doesn't mean that a child was sexually abused, but the presence of several suggests that you begin asking questions and consider seeking help. Keep in mind that some of these signs can emerge at other times of stress such as:

- During a divorce
- Death of a family member or pet
- Problems at school or with friends
- Other anxiety-inducing or traumatic events

Behavior you may see in a child or adolescent

- Has nightmares or other sleep problems without an explanation
- Seems distracted or distant at odd times
- Has a sudden change in eating habits
 - Refuses to eat
 - Losses or drastically increases appetite
 - Has trouble swallowing
- Sudden mood swings, rage, fear, insecurity or withdrawal
- Leaves "clues" that seem likely to provoke a discussion about sexual issues
- Mimics, draws, plays or dreams of sexual or frightening images
- Develops new or unusual fear of certain people or places
- Refuses to talk about a secret shared with an adult or older child
- Talks about a new older friend
- Suddenly has money, toys or other gifts without reason
- Thinks of self or body as repulsive, dirty or bad
- Exhibits adult-like sexual behaviors, language and knowledge

Signs more typical of younger children

- An older child behaving like a younger child (such as bed-wetting or thumb sucking)
- Has new words for private body parts
- Resists removing clothes when appropriate times (bath, bed, toileting, diapering)
- Talks other children to behave sexually or play sexual games
- Mimics adult-like sexual behaviors with toys or stuffed animal
- Wetting and soiling accidents unrelated to toilet training

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Handout:
**Warning Signs in Children
of Possible Sexual Abuse**

Suggested script:

There is a **handout called: Warning Signs in Children of Possible Sexual Abuse** in your resources if you'd like to have that available for this discussion.

Warning Signs of Abuse



Often, young children will show their feelings through their behavior, especially if they can't talk about what's wrong.

Suggested script:

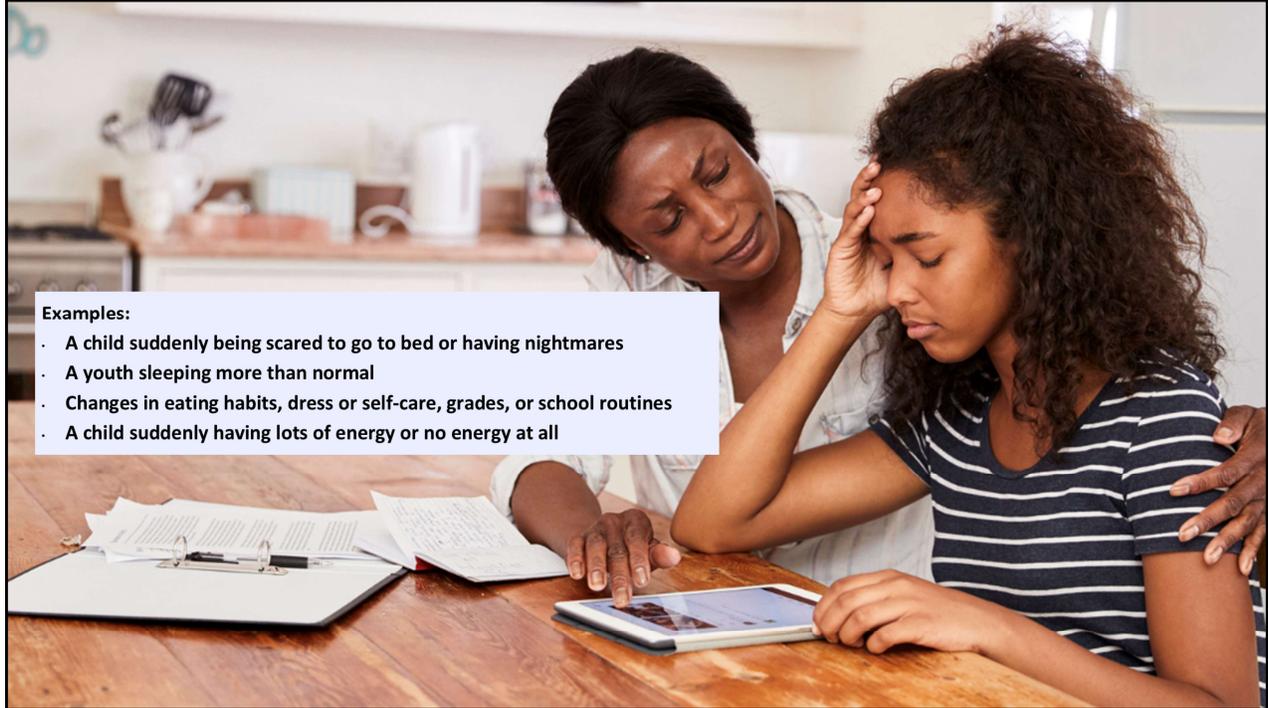
Sexual abuse is often hard to identify because there are rarely physical or visible signs.

So, we have to depend on our observations of a child's or teen's behaviors.

Often, young children will show their feelings through their behavior, especially if they can't talk about what's wrong.

For example, a child might suddenly revert to younger behaviors like thumb sucking or bedwetting because they're anxious about their parents' divorce, or they might be overly clingy and touch other kids inappropriately because they're worried about a sick parent.

Let's identify some behaviors that we can observe and that could be warning signs.



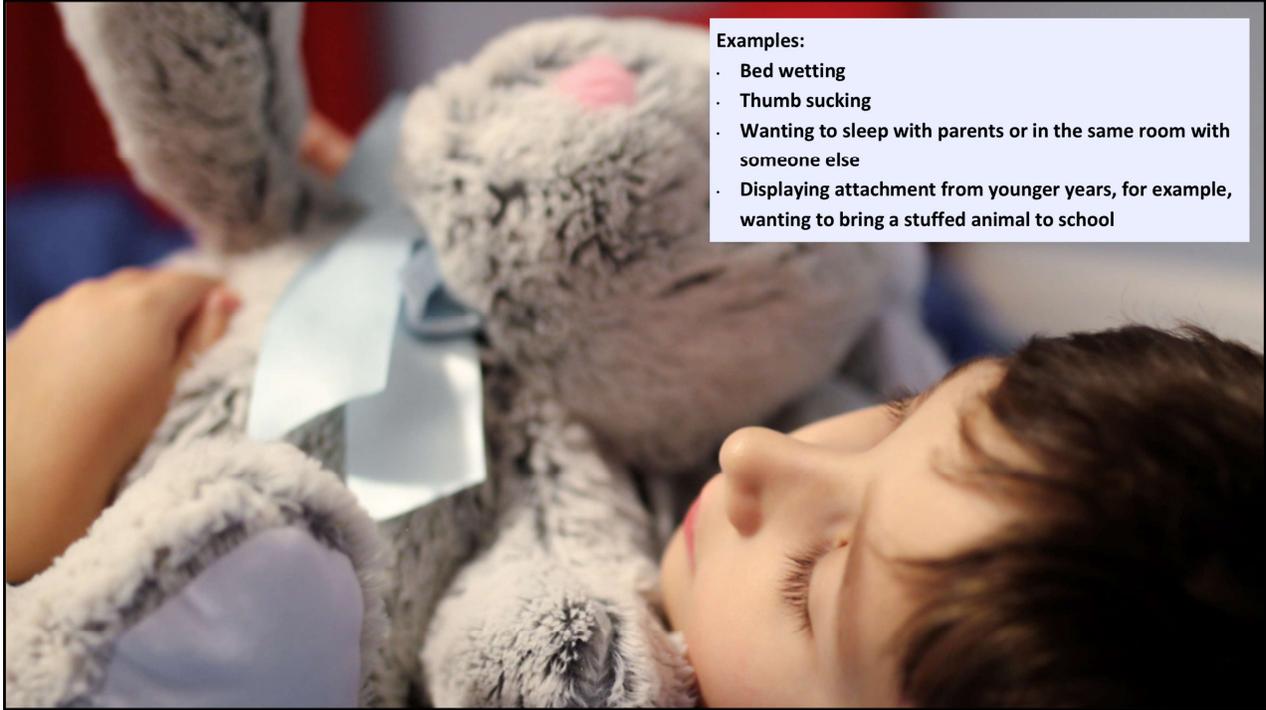
Suggested script:

First – pay attention to changes in kid’s typical behaviors, activities and even habits and routines...anything new suddenly?

When we see a change in a child or youth’s normal behaviors or activities, we should pay attention and be inquisitive about what’s going on for them.

Some examples are:

- Fears at bedtime, including nightmares
- Differences in routines such as sleeping, eating, self-care and appearance
 - This can include sleeping more or less, not bathing or taking a shower more than once a day, or suddenly dressing differently or not changing clothes
- Changes in grades or school routines
- Increased or decreased energy



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

Suggested script:

Regressive behaviors are another change that may be a warning sign.

So we pay attention when children's behaviors revert back to behaviors they have previously outgrown.

Some examples of these are:

- 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
- Acts younger than their age, i.e. wanting parents to bathe them, pick them up or pay attention to them when they're doing tasks they could previously do without supervision or help



Examples:

- A once happy child may become more fearful, anxious, or depressed
- They may begin showing big emotions or outbursts over small issues
- A youth or teen who usually enjoys new experiences may suddenly not want to leave the house

Suggested script:

Also pay attention to unexplained fears and mood swings or showing emotions or behaviors that don't seem normal for that child or youth.

These behaviors may look like a:

- A once happy child may become more fearful, anxious, or depressed
- Or a child who becomes easily upset, displaying big emotions or outbursts over minor issues
- It can include anxiety and fear around leaving the house or going to new places or when a child is scared of a particular person
- And also pay attention to frequent emotional changes such as going from happy and cheerful, to sullen and shut down without cause



Some breaking of rules is common as kids grow up, but thrill-seeking, breaking the law, using drugs or alcohol, or hanging out with older people may be a warning sign.

Suggested script:

Another change in behavior that may be a warning sign is kids or youth engaging in risky behaviors.

So while although some rule-breaking is common as kids grow up, reckless and dangerous behaviors, such as driving fast, drug and alcohol use, criminal activity, selecting peers who are older and/or involved in risky behaviors can be a warning sign, and is a time to intervene with youth.



It's natural for youth to want privacy or have secrets with their best friend.

However, if a child is keeping secrets or hiding things from parents, that may be a warning sign.

Suggested script:

Children or teens keeping secrets is another concerning warning sign.

It's natural for youth to want privacy or have secrets with their best friend.

However, if a child or teen is regularly secretive, keeping whole areas of their life secretive (for example, their digital life) or hiding things from parents, that may be a warning sign.



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

Suggested script:

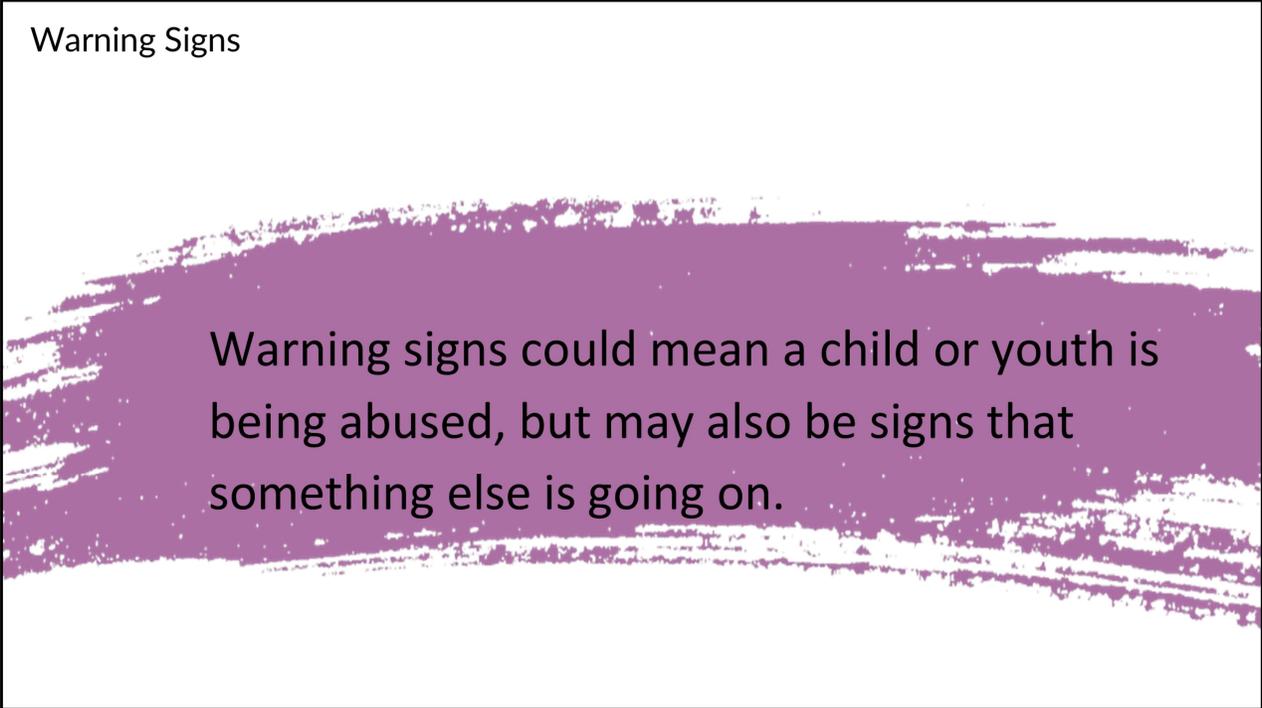
The last warning sign we'll review is sexualized behaviors in kids.

Although a child engaging in sexual behavior does not automatically mean they are being abused, there are some warning signs to watch for.

Examples are a child or youth who:

- Brings up sex constantly or at inappropriate times, to inappropriate people, or in inappropriate settings
- Has more knowledge of sex than is appropriate for their age
- Is viewing sexual material online or sharing such material with others
- 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.

Suggested script:

It is important to remember that these warning signs could mean a child or youth is being abused, but they 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.

Suggested script:

Regardless, if you see these types of warning signs or indicators, you should 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

Suggested script:

If you have observed warning signs or suspect that a child or teen has been sexually abused, you want to respond and protect.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

You want to check in with the child or teen. You can ask them if they are feeling safe or if there is anything they want to talk about.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

Let them know you are there for them and they can always come to you with anything--- even things that may be hard to talk about where they are concerned that they have done something wrong, like break a safety rule themselves. Assure them that you are there to support them no matter what.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

If you are seeing warning signs and are concerned, it might be helpful to determine if other adults have concerns. You can talk to other adults responsible for the child's safety and ask them if they have any concerns or if they have seen any warning signs in the child's behavior that might indicate the child isn't safe.

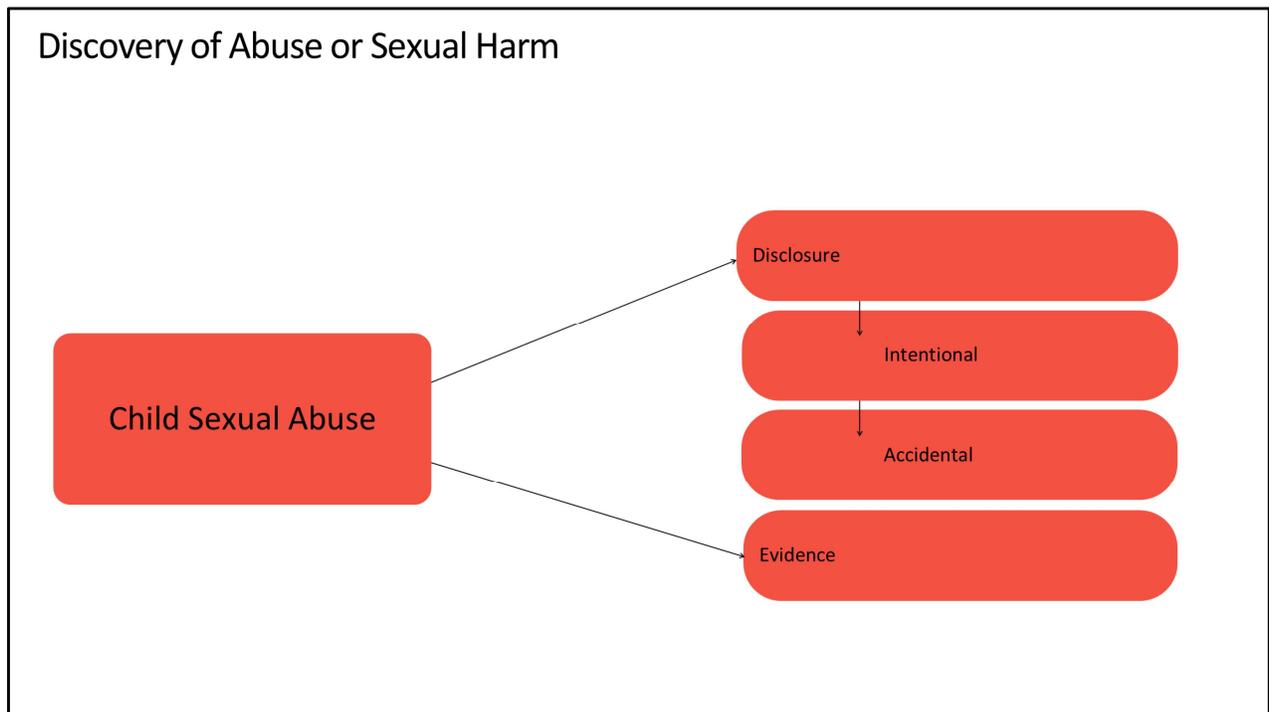
>ADVANCE SLIDE

You also want to review and strengthen your safety plan. Are rules regarding privacy, safe boundaries and consent being practiced? What can you do to build up the protective factors in the environment? Are there new rules that needed to be added, or old ones that need to be adapted?

>ADVANCE SLIDE

If you believe a child has been harmed, you want to make a report to your local child protection agency. Remember you don't need proof that abuse has occurred to make a report. The professionals can better determine if abuse has occurred. Making a report can get the child the help and support they need.

You can also reach out to the Stop It now helpline with any questions and we can support you in next steps.



Suggested script:

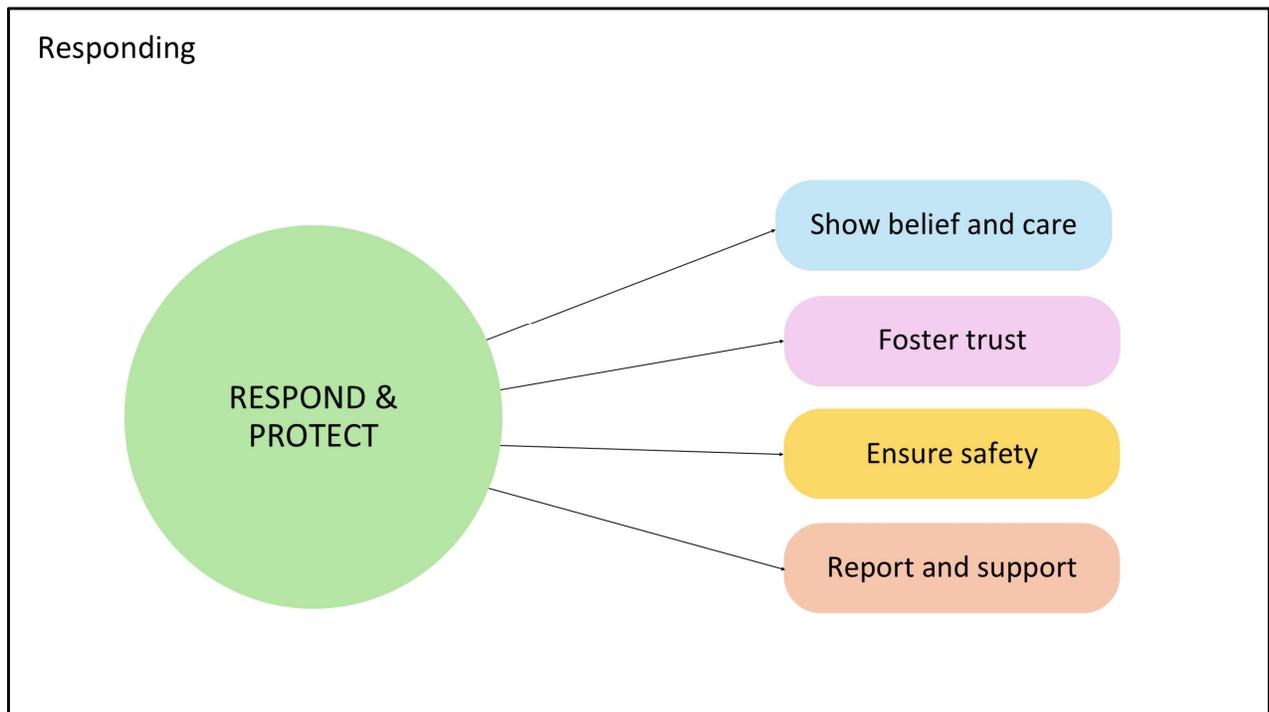
There are a few ways we learn that a child is being sexually abused

We've talked about why children might not disclose abuse directly, but sometimes they may try to indicate that they are not comfortable in a situation or with specific people. Remember our example from the section on why children don't disclose where a child will say that they don't want to go to a friend's house if their big brother is around. They might be asking for help to stay safe.

Children sometimes try to tell at the most "inopportune times." too like when you have the flu, are trying to get dinner on the table, in the car running late to get to the airport.

Some disclosures are on purpose. The child seeks you out to tell you about being hurt. But others may be accidents, "when I'm at my mom's house, her boyfriend jumped in the shower with me to help me wash the parts of my body that my bathing suit covers."

And then there are the cases when the evidence – an STD in a young child or a teen’s pregnancy for example, brings the abuse to light. Abuse can also be discovered by literally walking in on a child’s abuse – especially when we’re talking about youth to youth sexual harm.



Suggested script:

Responding to disclosures

And if a child discloses abuse to you, please know that healing and recovery is possible. The way we respond can help begin these processes; your response is critical.

So if a child discloses abuse to you:

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You want the child to know they are believed and cared for. Reassure them they did the right thing by talking about what is happening and asking for help and let them know you are there to help them.

You can start with statements like,

- "You did the right thing by sharing this"
- "I believe you"

- “You did nothing wrong”

>ADVANCE SLIDE

You want them to feel safe and to trust that you can help them. You can demonstrate this by remaining calm and not showing negative reactions or emotions. What children need is going to be different than what you as an adult need. Adults may need to be angry, think about getting revenge, and seeking legal consequences. Children just need to know that you care and can help them.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

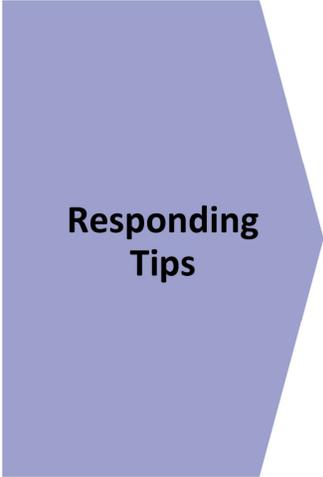
Ensuring that the youth is safe may mean removing them from a vulnerable situation or asking others to leave.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

And you will need to involve professionals by reporting the abuse which we'll cover momentarily.

You should inform the child about what to expect next and reassure them that you will support them.

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.

Suggested script:

Some tips to help you support the child or teen includes:

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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.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

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 seems to need a break or to not want to talk more.

>ADVANCE SLIDE

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

>ADVANCE SLIDE

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

>ADVANCE SLIDE

Take responsibility to follow up and report the abuse — ensure action is taken. You might be the only one with the courage to report.

If a child does tell you about a concern regarding their safety, or if you suspect they have been harmed, you should respond with immediate safety planning. This means ensuring the child is safe by reaching out to a professional – including making a report of suspected child sex 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.

Suggested script:

Many professionals who work with children and youth are mandated reporters and are required by law to report suspicions of abuse to child protective services. In some states, every adult is a mandated reporter.

However, you do not have to be a professional to report abuse. And you don't have to have proof that a child is being harmed. You can contact CPS whenever you have a concern that a child is not safe.

The Child Welfare Information Gateway has a good resource where you can learn more about your local systems, and find the appropriate reporting numbers for your state.

Trainer's note:

Share link with participants: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/resources/states-territories-tribes/>



Suggested script:

Let's talk about when to report. Always report if any of the following are true:

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An adult or a child who shows numerous and consistent warning signs of abuse or being at risk to abuse.

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

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

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We would also want to report if anyone – an adult or child – states they have sexually harmed a child.

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And we report any child sexual abuse materials online or someone who is viewing these materials.

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ANYTIME YOU HAVE CONCERNS! Remember you do not have to have proof.

In some states, as a non-professional, you may also be able to report anonymously.



Suggested script:

If you are not comfortable reaching out for system-based support and services, we strongly encourage you to take steps to ensure the child is safe and not exposed to at-risk situations and that the person who has abused does not have access to other children or youth.

Reporting often is a scary thought for many people and some people may have a negative perception of child protection agencies.

We acknowledge these systems are not perfect. But they are the best way to get the child and family help and resources such as counseling.

Trainer's note: *(add if relevant to your audience)*

If you work with parents, part of helping them can be to talk with them about the reporting process, helping them prepare for that step, and sharing what community

resources are available to them.

If you find yourself in this situation, please reach out to the Stop It Now! helpline. They can help prepare you to involve protective systems and support you in safety planning if you need it.

Additionally, if you find yourself dealing with the sexual abuse of your child or a child you know and care for, you may need other types of support.

This could include reaching out to a medical provider or to a counselor experienced in working with children who have been sexually abused and their families.

Children who have been abused may show the impact of abuse in various ways, and seeking appropriate support for them is essential to support their healing.

And those who are supporting a youth who has been sexually abused also need their own support. It is important that adults get to express their feelings privately, and other family members and friends may also benefit by having a confidential resource to talk about how this youth's experience of abuse is affecting them.

Wrap Up



Suggested script:

We have come to the end of Workshop 1 and want to thank you all so much for your engagement and the work you do to keep children and families safe.

➤ **Handout post-survey**

Trainer's note:

Suggested final check out questions if time allows

- *What do you need now?*
- *What do you plan on doing now?*
- *How can we support you?*
- *Remind participants of Workshop 2 if relevant/scheduled*
- *Remind participants to take the survey and provide the link*

We acknowledge that the conversations and information shared may have been difficult at times. That is understandable, and as always, we encourage you to seek out support in however that makes sense for you – but please do practice self-care; pay attention to how this course has impacted you. You do not need to know

everything! In fact, we are stronger when we ask for support, support each other and work together...we know we all want the same thing – to keep children safe from harm.

And as always, reach out...we're here for you.