

Providing A Safe Environment/Home for Sexually Abused Children

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**Agenda**

- 1. Understanding Normal Behavior
- 2. Unacceptable Sexual Behavior
- 3. Understanding Grooming
- 4. Safety Planning

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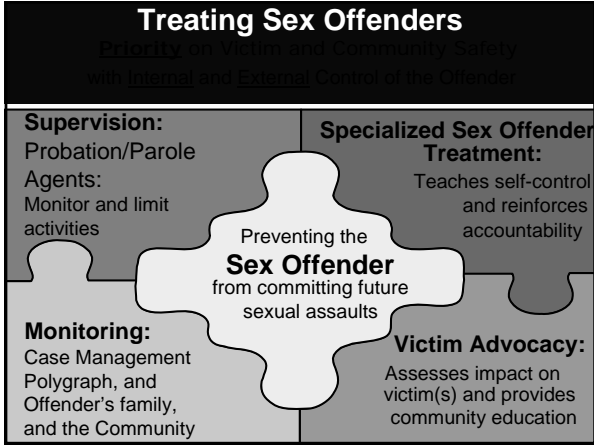
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**A Sexually Abused Child May...**

- Feel worthless
- Hate his/her body
- Think they are bad
- Damaged
- Different
- Dirty
- Feel responsible
- Uncomfortable with touch
- Blame self or others
- Withdraw from others
- Have mood swings
- Strong anger
- Unreasonable demands
- Present sexualized behaviors

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## Areas to Evaluate

1. Emotional Adjustment
2. Behavior Problems
3. Coping Skills
4. Social Adjustment
5. Family Relationships

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## Normal Child Sexual Development

- Sexual development and sexual play are natural and healthy processes in children, from toddlers through childhood and into adolescence.
- Infants and toddlers usually involve body sensations, cuddling and touch, and playing with toys. Even in the earliest of days, babies and toddlers touch and rub their own genitals, and even as infants boys experience erections.
- School age (5-7), children are interested in body parts and functions. Some sexual play may begin, and concepts of love and affection begin to develop, evolving into behaviors and questions that continue developing into later childhood (8-9 years old).

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## What's Normal & What's Not?

Pre-School (0-5 years)

### Common

- Sexual language relating to difference in body parts
- Bathroom talk
- Pregnancy talk and birth
- Genital stimulation at home & public
- Showing & looking at private body parts

### Uncommon

- Discussion of sexual acts
- Contact experiences with other children without clothing

Source: Stop it Now! [www.stopitnow.org](http://www.stopitnow.org)

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## What's Normal & What's Not? School Age (6-12 years)

### Common

- Questions about menstruation, pregnancy and sexual behavior
- "Experimenting" with same-age children including kissing, hugging, holding hands, & role-playing.
- Genital stimulation at home or other private places

### Uncommon

- Use of explicit sexual words and discussing sexual acts

Source: Stop it Now! [www.stopitnow.org](http://www.stopitnow.org)

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## What's Normal & What's Not? Adolescent Age (13-16 years)

### Common

- Questions about decision-making
- Social relationships & sexual customs
- Masturbation in private
- Experimenting between adolescents of the same age, including open mouth kissing, fondling, and body rubbing
- Sexual intercourse in approximately 1/3 of this group.

### Uncommon

- Sexual interest in much younger children.

Source: Stop it Now! [www.stopitnow.org](http://www.stopitnow.org)

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## Normal Sexual Behavior for Adolescents

### • NORMAL RANGE

- Sexually explicit conversations with peers
- Obscenities and jokes within cultural norm
- Sexual innuendo, flirting and courtship
- Interest in erotica
- Solitary masturbation
- Hugging, kissing, holding hands
- Foreplay, (petting, making out, fondling) and mutual masturbation: Moral, social or familial rules may restrict, but these behaviors are not abnormal, developmentally harmful, or illegal when private, consensual, equal, and non-coercive.
- Monogamist intercourse: Stable monogamy is defined as a single sexual partner throughout adolescence. Serial monogamy indicates long-term (several months or years) involvement with a single partner which ends and is then followed by another

Source: Missouri Division of Family Services

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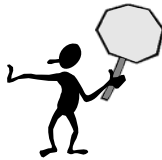
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## Yellow Flags for Sexual Behavior of Adolescents

- Although many of these are not necessarily outside the range of behavior exhibited in teen peer groups, some evaluation and response is desirable in order to support healthy and responsible attitudes and behavior.
- Sexual preoccupation/anxiety (interfering in daily functioning)
- Pornographic interest
- Sexual intercourse/promiscuity-- indiscriminate sexual contact with more than one partner during the same period of time.
- Sexually aggressive themes/obscurities
- Sexual graffiti (especially chronic and impacting individuals)
- Embarrassment of others with sexual themes
- Violation of others' body space
- Pulling skirts up/pants down
- Single occurrence of peeping, exposing with known peers
- Mooning and obscene gestures



Source: Missouri Division of Family Services

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## Red Flags for Sexual Behavior of Adolescents

- Compulsive masturbation (especially chronic or public)
- Degradation/humiliation of self or others with sexual themes
- Attempting to expose others' genitals
- Chronic preoccupation with sexually aggressive pornography
- Sexually explicit conversation with significantly young children




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**DANGER**

## Unacceptable Sexual Behavior of Adolescents

- **Illegal and/or socially unacceptable behaviors**
  - Obscene phone calls, voyeurism, frottage, exhibitionism, sexual harassment
  - Touching genitals without permission (i.e. grabbing, goosing)
  - Sexually explicit threats (verbal or written)
  - Sexual contact with significant age difference (child sexual abuse)
  - Forced sexual contact (sexual assault)
  - Forced penetration (rape)
  - Genital injury to others
  - Sexual contact with animals (bestiality)




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## SEX BETWEEN SIBLINGS

Children who have been molested often re-enact their abuse with other children. Therefore, when a child has committed sexual offenses against a sibling, it is important to assess whether the offending child has been sexually abused by an adult.

In cases of sexual activity between siblings, it is important to determine whether the behavior was normal childhood sex play or whether the older or stronger child was coercing, overpowering, intimidating, tricking, or manipulating a younger or smaller child. Normal "sex play" occurs between young children of the same developmental level and power. (For more on normal sexual play in children, visit <http://www.sowo.unc.edu/fcrp/cspn/cspn.htm>.)

Much incestuous behavior between siblings is actually sexually abusive: the older child has more strength, more authority, and more experience (Gray & Pithers; Engel, 1994)

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## Sexual Behavior Rules

1. It's **OK** to touch your private parts when you are alone in a private place.
2. It's **not OK** to other people's private parts.
3. It's **not OK** for other people to touch your private parts.
4. It's **not OK** to show your private parts to other people.

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## What is Grooming?

- Any willful action made by the offender to prepare the victim and/or the victim's support network that allows for easier sex offending.

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**Common Grooming Techniques  
Used by Sex Offenders**

- Giving the victim bribes, gifts, special privileges, drugs/alcohol
- Compliments
- Being affectionate with the victim
- Seeking victims that are needy emotionally
- Convince the victim that sex is a “game” or is “normal”

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**Common Grooming Techniques  
Used by Sex Offenders**

- Gain parents/teachers trust then move to a position of authority
- Convince the victim that they must be compliant – “Now remember your parents told you to follow whatever the babysitter says.”
- Lure the victim to a secluded place
- Win the child’s trust and respect

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**Common Grooming Techniques  
Used by Sex Offenders**

- Threats and intimidation to victim, pet, or to a significant other
- Pretend to “wrestle”
- Convince the victim that they are “learning” about sex
- Use other children to convince the victim that it is “okay” or that “everybody does it”
- Getting victim intoxicated or high

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**Common Grooming Techniques  
Used by Sex Offenders**

- Blackmail
- Child may be lured into a car when the offender states that the victim's parent is hurt and they will take them to the hospital to see them
- Offer a ride home
- "Low ball" technique

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**Common Grooming Techniques  
Used by Sex Offenders**

- Use position of authority (e.g., coach, boy scout leader, teachers assistant, Sunday school teacher, babysitter, crossing guard supervisor)
- Look for ways to be with kids without adult supervision
- Share common interests with victims

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**Common Grooming Techniques  
Used by Sex Offenders**

- Pretend to be handling children's hygiene, washing, diapering, changing, etc., or medical needs
- Offer children safety or protection
- Use pornography to set a sexual tone

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### Warning about "Grooming"

- Some of the above mentioned items may or may not be grooming behaviors by offenders or non offenders. Some of these behaviors may be pro-social behaviors.
- **Don't over analyze!!!**

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### Sex Offenders Talk About Grooming

- They report they look for the following in their victims:
  - a. Vulnerable/Needy
  - b. Not trusted by others
  - c. Poor boundaries with others
  - d. Will keep a secret
  - e. Low self-esteem
  - f. Few social supports
  - g. Behavior problems

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### Thinking Errors Justify Molesting

- You drive 65 miles per hour in a 55 mile per hour zone because:
  - Everyone else is driving at least 65
  - I'm not going as fast as the nut going 80
  - I'm not hurting anyone else
  - Driving the speed limit will impede traffic
  - Police never ticket anyone staying in their own lane
  - I've been driving 10 miles per hour over the speed limit for years and haven't got a ticket
  - If it is wrong, I'd certainly got a ticket by now.

Source: Abel and Harlow Stop Child Molestation Study and 1999 U.S. Census

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## Reduce Molesting Opportunities

- Ensure that safety precautions are in place to protect your child at school, church, clubs or other activities—especially those involving special trips and overnight outings. Have the adults in these organizations undergone background checks? Are adults ever alone with a child? If yes, when and why? How can these activities be restructured to avoid isolation?
- Stay involved in your child's activities—attend little league practices and piano recitals, volunteer to chaperone for trips or dances. Meet your child's teachers, coaches, and activity leaders. Keep track of where, and with whom, your child is if s/he is not with you.
- Be alert for adults or adolescents, particularly males, who display an unusual interest in children. While the following behaviors are not conclusive proof that a person is a child molester (nor is the lack of these behaviors proof that a person does not molest children), they are nonetheless cause for serious concern.

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## Reduce Molesting Opportunities

- Do not allow someone to have unsupervised access to children if he or she exhibits the following:
  - seems more interested in spending time with children than with his own peers
  - seems focused on children of a particular age or gender (especially if the person does not have children of that age)
  - singles out a child for special attention, gifts, or favors
  - wants to take a child on special outings without others present, or seems eager to spend alone-time with a child
  - invites children into his home unsupervised
  - allows or encourages children to do "grown up" things—or things they are not allowed to do at home

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**Sexual content is regularly marketed to younger children, pre-teens, and teens** and this affects young people's sexual activity and beliefs about sex. According to the fact sheet, *Marketing Sex to Children*, from the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood, children are bombarded with sexual content and messages:

- In 2003, 83% of the episodes of the top 20 shows among teen viewers contained some sexual content, including 20% with sexual intercourse
- 42% of the songs on the top CDs in 1999 contained sexual content -- 19% included direct descriptions of sexual intercourse
- On average, music videos contain 93 sexual situations per hour, including eleven "hard core" scenes depicting behaviors such as intercourse and oral sex

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## Internet Pornography

- In 2003, there were 1.3 million pornography websites.<sup>[1]</sup>
- More than 32 million unique individuals visited a pornography site in September of 2003.<sup>[2]</sup>
- More than 20,000 images of child pornography are posted on the Internet every week.<sup>[3]</sup>
- According to one study of almost a million "adult" websites:
  - 84% of digitized images stored on Usenet groups were pornographic.
  - 99% of Internet pornography consumers are men.<sup>[4]</sup>

[1] ProtectKids.com, N2H2 (Sept. 23, 2003).

[2] Ibid.

[3] ProtectKids.com, National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (Oct. 8, 2003).

[4] Carnegie Mellon University Study of Pornography on the Internet. *Georgetown Law Review* (1995). Cited in VA Dept. of Social Services. 49 *Virginia Child Protection Newsletter* (Fall 1996): 11.

## Internet Pornography

- Based on interviews with a nationally representative sample of 1,501 youth ages 10 to 17 who use the Internet regularly during a year timeframe:<sup>[1]</sup>
  - Approximately one in five received a sexual solicitation or approach over the Internet.
  - One in four had an unwanted exposure to pictures of naked people or people having sex.
  - One in seventeen was threatened or harassed.
  - Fewer than 10% of sexual solicitations and only 3% of unwanted exposure episodes were reported to authorities such as a law-enforcement agency.
  - About one quarter of the youth who encountered a sexual solicitation or approach told a parent. Almost 40% of those reporting an unwanted exposure to sexual material told a parent.

[1] PEW Internet Study, 2005. In - *Online Victimization: A Report on the Nation's Youth*.

## Safety Planning

- Assess victim's comfort with the offender in the home
- Assess parent's ability to supervise appropriately
- Identify internal and external risk factors

## Common Safety Plan Elements

- Offender not to supervise other children
- Offender not to be left alone with younger or vulnerable children or share a bedroom with them
- Vulnerable children bedroom's will be closer to parents
- Alarms may be placed on offender's door
- Family members will not shower or bathe together
- Family members will dress appropriately at all times

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## Common Safety Plan Elements

- Family members will knock if doors are closed
- No babysitting
- No changing diapers
- No dressing, bathing or helping younger or disadvantaged children get ready in the morning
- No sleepovers
- No pornographic materials

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## Model for Sibling Sexual Abuse Treatment Cloé Madanes' (1990)

- *General Principals*
  - Create a positive framework by emphasizing compassion, higher emotion, and spirituality
  - No secrets – Secrets allow abuse to continue
  - Emphasize blamelessness of the victim
  - Find outside protectors (for each child)
  - Emphasize offender responsibility and reparation
  - Steps can be modified depending on the situation

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## Creating A Safe Home & Community

- Clear guidelines
  - *Rules at home*
  - *Rules at school*
  - *Rules in the community*
  - *rules, rules, rules*
- Structure
- Comfort
- Security
- Understand difference between behaviors and feelings
- Privacy
- Bedrooms & Bathrooms
- Touching
- Clothing
- Saying "NO"
- Sex Education
- No Secrets
- Wrestling/Tickling
- Being alone with one person

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## House Rules - General

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

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## Physical Affection/Contact

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2. \_\_\_\_\_
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4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

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### Hugging/Kissing

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4. \_\_\_\_\_
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### Sleeping Arrangements

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2. \_\_\_\_\_
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4. \_\_\_\_\_
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### Secrets, Teasing etc.

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2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

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### Clothing and Dress Rules

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### Bathroom Rules

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4. \_\_\_\_\_
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### Children's Bedroom Rules

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2. \_\_\_\_\_
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### Parent's Bedroom Rules

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### Respite/Baby Sitter Rules

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### *If the child's behavior:*

- **Annoys you**, the goal is attention. Ignore it.
- **Angers you**, the goal is power. Rely upon rules and consequences to remove yourself from the struggle.
- **Hurts you**, the goal is revenge. State your feelings and discuss mutual concerns.
- **Makes you despair**, the goal is to display inadequacy. Find a way to encourage and empower the child.

Source: What Do You Do With A Child Like This? Tobin, L. 1998

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*Of course no one ever  
said it would be easy*

—————  
*but perhaps no one ever  
told you it could be this  
rewarding either.*

Source: What Do You Do With A Child Like This? Tobin, L. 1998

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