



# Understanding Problematic and Harmful Sexual Behaviour



# Session Content Advice



This session will focus on Sexual Abuse, displayed by children and young people.

We know that for many people this subject can be upsetting and distressing and furthermore that you may have been personally impacted by CSA.

Our intention is for this session to be helpful and informative, but above all we want you to feel safe.

# Impact - signposting



Live Well First Response – NHS 111 (mental health option)

SARC – 03003034626

Stop It Now – 0800 1000 900

PDAS – 01752 252033

First Light – 03458 12 12 12

NSPCC – 0808 800 5000

# Overview of Session



- Understanding children's sexual development as part of a continuum (Hackett)
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour and Problematic Sexual Behaviour
- A note on language definitions and prevalence
- What you can do - Practice resources



# The Hackett Continuum

## Responding to children who display sexualised behaviour

It's important to be able to distinguish developmentally typical sexual behaviours from those that may be problematic or harmful, and make sure children get appropriate support. Always consider the child's holistic needs and safeguarding concerns alongside any sexualised behaviour and follow due procedures accordingly. This guide is a tool to support objective decision making about a child or young person's sexual behaviour and does not replace professional judgement or policy and legislation. Visit [nspcc.org.uk/hsb](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/hsb) for more information.

### Need advice?

Contact our helpline for advice and support:

- Call **0800 800 5000**
- Email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)
- Visit [nspcc.org.uk/helpline](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/helpline)

### Childline

For children who need further support our free, confidential helpline is available 24/7:

- Call **0800 1111**
- Visit [childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk)

Developmentally typical		Problematic		Harmful	
Hackett Continuum					
Normal	Inappropriate	Problematic	Abusive	Violent	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developmentally expected and socially acceptable behaviour</li> <li>• Consensual, mutual and reciprocal</li> <li>• Decision making is shared</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single instances of developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour</li> <li>• Behaviour that may be socially acceptable within a peer group but not in wider society</li> <li>• May involve an inappropriate context for behaviour that would otherwise be considered normal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developmentally unusual and socially unexpected behaviour</li> <li>• May be compulsive</li> <li>• Consent may be unclear and the behaviour may not be reciprocal</li> <li>• May involve an imbalance of power</li> <li>• Doesn't have an overt element of victimisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intrusive behaviour</li> <li>• May involve a misuse of power</li> <li>• May have an element of victimisation</li> <li>• May use coercion and force</li> <li>• May include elements of expressive violence</li> <li>• Informed consent has not been given (or the victim was not able to consent freely)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physically violent sexual abuse</li> <li>• Highly intrusive</li> <li>• May involve instrumental violence which is physiologically and/or sexually arousing to the perpetrator</li> <li>• May involve sadism</li> </ul>	
<p><b>How to respond</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although green behaviours are not concerning, they still require a response</li> <li>• Listen to what children and young people have to say and respond calmly and non-judgementally</li> <li>• Talk to parents about developmentally typical sexualised behaviours</li> <li>• Explain how parents can positively reinforce messages about appropriate sexual behaviour and act to keep their children safe from abuse</li> <li>• Signpost helpful resources like our 'Talk PANTS' activity pack: <a href="https://www.nspcc.org.uk/pants">nspcc.org.uk/pants</a></li> <li>• Make sure young people know how to behave responsibly and safely</li> </ul>	<p><b>How to respond</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amber behaviours should not be ignored</li> <li>• Listen to what children and young people have to say and respond calmly and non-judgementally</li> <li>• Consider the child's developmental age as well as their chronological age, alongside wider holistic needs and safeguarding concerns about the problematic sexualised behaviour</li> <li>• Follow your organisation's child protection procedures and make a report to the person responsible for child protection</li> <li>• Your policy or procedure should guide you towards a nominated child protection lead who can be notified and will provide support</li> <li>• Consider whether the child or young person needs therapeutic support and make referrals as appropriate</li> </ul>		<p><b>How to respond</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Red behaviours indicate a need for immediate intervention and action</li> <li>• If a child is in immediate danger, call the police on 999</li> <li>• Follow your organisation's child protection procedures and make a report to the person responsible for child protection</li> <li>• Your policy or procedure should guide you towards a nominated child protection lead who should be notified and will provide support</li> <li>• Typically referrals to children's social care and the police would be required. Referrals to therapeutic services should only be made once statutory services have been informed and followed due procedures</li> </ul>		

- Consider stage of development and chronological age of all children involved
- Consider what you already know about the children involved
- Responses of children
- Power imbalances
- Is the behaviour excessive or compulsive?
- Where is the behaviour taking place?

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“I’d like to discuss a child I’m working with who is running around half naked.”

“Which half?”

# Definition – Harmful Sexual Behaviour



Sexual behaviours expressed by children and young people under the age of 18, that are developmentally inappropriate, may be harmful towards self or others, or be abusive towards another child, young person or adult

Derived from Hackett (2014)

Peer on Peer – a form of Harmful sexual behaviour that occurs between children of a similar age or stage of development

Child on child – a form of harmful sexual behaviour that occurs between children of any age or stage of development

Sexually reactive behaviour – a trauma response seen in pre-pubescent children where they react to situations in a sexual manner.

Harmful sibling sexual behaviour – a form of harmful sexual behaviour that occurs between siblings (research suggests this is the most common form of intra-familial sexual abuse)

Hackett's overview of research and crime statistics suggests that anywhere from one fifth to three-quarters of sexual abuse is by other children and young people (Hackett, 2014). The NSPCC uses the figure of “around a third” as a mid-way point between the lower end and the higher end of the estimates

# Language

Juvenile sex offender

Adolescent sex offender

Young abuser

Perpetrator

Abusive



Young people who have  
sexually harmed

Young person who has sexually  
harmed

# What should I do if I have concerns a child has displayed or experienced PSB or HSB?



Report – follow your organisations safeguarding procedures and report the concerns. Consider specifically reporting to Children’s social care and the police if a sexual assault has taken place. Remember to use Hackett

Record – detailed recording of what you have seen or heard including context (what where when) and detail about what happened including the child’s language – avoid vague language e.g. sexualised behaviour/sexual touching.

Respond – depending on your role you may have to respond to both the child who has harmed and the child who has been harmed. Remember listen calmly and allow the child to speak. Do not promise confidentiality and be clear about what actions you will take.

# Resources PSCP website



PLYMOUTH  
SAFEGUARDING  
CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE ▾

PARENTS & CARERS ▾

PROFESSIONALS ▾

THE PARTNERSHIP ▾

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT ▾

Identifying & Responding  
to Child Sexual Abuse

Communicating and Listening  
To Children

Practice Tools &  
Support



Supporting  
Healthy



Identifying / Preventing  
Problematic & Harmful



Removing Nude Images of Young  
People On The Internet & Getting

# CSA centre FREE Resources



Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse

## Signs and indicators

A template for identifying and recording concerns of child sexual abuse



November 2021

Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse

## Communicating with children

A guide for those working with children who have or may have been sexually abused



February 2022

Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse

## Supporting parents and carers

A guide for those working with families affected by child sexual abuse



March 2022

research in practice Practice Tool



## Intra-familial child sexual abuse: Risk factors, indicators and protective factors

Darlington [www.rp.org.uk](http://www.rp.org.uk)

Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse

## Managing risk and trauma after online sexual offending

A whole-family safeguarding guide



May 2023

Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse

## Sibling sexual abuse: A knowledge and practice overview

January 2021

Peter Yates and Stuart Allardyce



csacentre.org.uk

Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse

## Communicating with children

A guide for education professionals when there are concerns about sexual abuse or behaviour



November 2022

Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse

## Safety planning in education

A guide for professionals supporting children following incidents of harmful sexual behaviour



September 2022

# SHORE website

Our Shore website is a safe space for teenagers worried about sexual behaviour.



Up to half of child sexual abuse is carried out by under-18s.

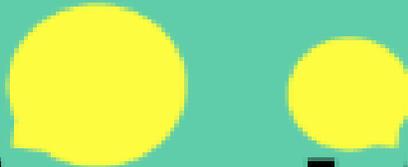
To tackle that, we give teenagers a safe and anonymous place to get help and support.

It's for anyone who:

- has questions about healthy sexual relationships
- wants to change their own behaviour
- is looking for reliable information to help them respond to someone else's behaviour

[Visit our Shore website](#)



**Talk**  **Relationships**



## Coping with suicidal feelings

Get help coping with suicidal thoughts and feelings.



## Blast Block

Match the colours as quickly as you can.



## Self-harm coping techniques

We can help you find other ways to cope with wanting to self-harm.



## Boost Your Mood

Need some inspiration? Try our fun game to get ideas to boost your mood and feel better.



## Sex and consent



## Taking control of your online safety



## Grand Prix Hero

Play our fun racing game.



## Calm zone

If you're feeling overwhelmed



HIDE PAGE

SAVE PAGE



## Sharing nude imagery: What happened next? Session plan



### Session overview

In this session, you and the child or young person will go through scenarios relating to the sharing of nude imagery. You will explore with them the legal, emotional, digital footprint consequences and impacts of sharing nude imagery.



### Suitability

This session is suitable for children and young people aged 11 or above.

However, specific suitability will depend on the questions you choose to ask. Be sure to consider whether the questions you use are appropriate for the child or young person you're working with.



### Resources

For this session you'll need the 'Sharing nudes: What happened next?' handout and 'The law and sharing nude imagery' factsheet, both can be found at the end of this document.

You'll also need flip chart paper, and access YouTube to show the video detailed in the extension task.



### Core objectives

- To support the young person's understanding of what sharing nude imagery is and the associated risks.
- To appropriately challenge any concerning or unhealthy views the young person may have regarding consent.

AIM3 and AIM Under 12's assessments can be used for young people who have displayed Harmful Sexual Behaviour

These specific assessments are used to understand a child's harmful sexual behaviour and consider the child, their family and environment – areas of strength, and areas where support may be required.

There are a limited number of professionals across the city who are AIM trained (NSPCC, Local Authority)

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**TOGETHER**  
**☀️ F♥R ☀️**  
**CHILDHOOD**



## Putting families at the heart of communities

NSPCC 2023. National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Registered charity England and Wales 216401. Scotland SC037717. Jersey 384. Photography by Tom Hull. The child pictured is a volunteer. JXXXXXXX