

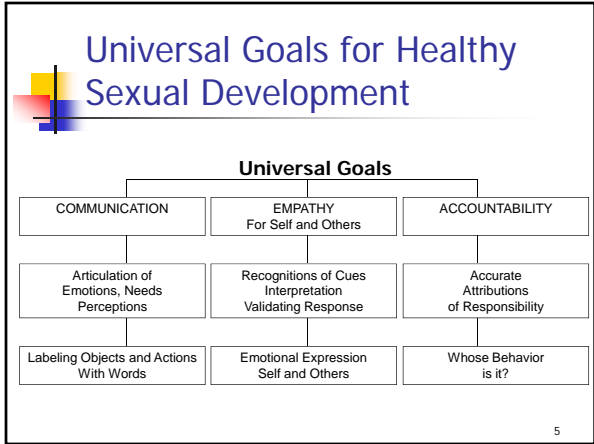
Understanding Childhood Sexual Behavior

Denali Family Services
2010

- ## Overview
- Universal goals for healthy sexual development
 - Myths and facts
 - The range of human sexual behavior
 - When sexual behavior is a problem
 - Responding to sexual behavior
 - Safety planning
 - Talking to parents

- ## Objectives
- Participants will...
- Understand the range of sexual behavior in children
 - Understand how to respond to sexual behavior in children
 - Understand how to create and implement safety plans
 - Understand how to talk with parents about their child's behavior

- ## Universal Goals for Healthy Sexual Development
1. Communication
 2. Empathy
 3. Accountability



- ## Myths and Facts
- ### Myths
- Children are not sexually curious
 - Physical exploration is unhealthy
 - Masturbation has harmful effects
 - Children do not need to know about sex until they are older

Myths and Facts

Facts

- Sexual curiosity is normal
- Physical exploration is normal
- Masturbation is normal

Therefore...

- Sexual education is important

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Range of Sexual Behavior: 0 to 2

5-6 Months	9-11 Months	12 Months	18 Months	22-24 Months
Differentiates between male and female	Pairs female voice with female face; male voice with male face	Boys focus more on male behavior; girls more on female behavior	Awareness of gender specific anatomy	Can correctly identify males and females; exploration of own genitals

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Range of Sexual Behavior: 2 to 6

- Curiosity about other's bodies
- Asking questions about gender and anatomy
- Exploring physical sensation
- Playing dress-up, both male and female roles
- Including physical intimacy in fantasy play with toys and dolls

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Range of Sexual Behavior: 6 to 12

- Stronger gender identification
- Increased physical exploration
- Increased curiosity about other's bodies
- Asking sexual questions
- Telling sexual jokes amongst peers
- Mutual touching

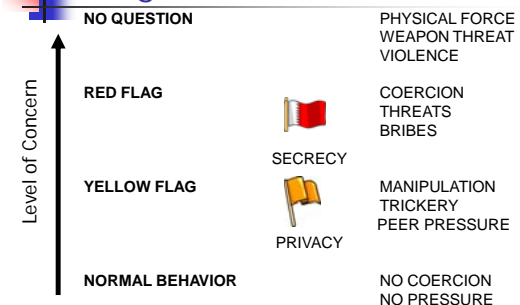
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Range of Sexual Behavior: 12 to 18

- Establishing gender identity
- Establishing gender roles
- Establishing sexual orientation
- Exploration → Masturbation
- Dating
- Physical intimacy

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Range of Sexual Behavior



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Range of Sexual Behavior

YELLOW FLAG:




- Preoccupation with sexual themes
- Single occurrence of peeping, exposing, or obscenities
- Sexual teasing
- Sexual graffiti or artwork

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Range of Sexual Behavior

RED FLAG:



- Sexual communication with significant age difference
- Attempted touching or exposure of others' genitals
- Sexually "grooming" peers
- Inducing fear/threatening force

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Range of Sexual Behavior

No Question:

- Forced Penetration
- Forced touching
- Genital injury

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When is Sexual Behavior a Problem?

1. When it is a problem for the child
2. When it is a problem for others
3. When it is abusive

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When is Sexual Behavior a Problem?

Sexual behavior may be a problem for the child who is doing it if

- It is causing harm or poses the risk of harm to his or her body
- It is interfering with the rest of their development
- It interferes with social or family relationships
- It violates rules
- It is self-abusive
- The child believes the behavior is a problem

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When is Sexual Behavior a Problem?

Sexual behavior may be a problem for others if

- It causes others to feel uncomfortable
- It occurs in the wrong place and time
- It is in conflict with the beliefs, values, or sensibilities of family or peers

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When is Sexual Behavior a Problem?

Sexual behavior is abusive when there exists

1. Lack of Consent
2. Lack of Equality
3. Coercion

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When is Sexual Behavior a Problem?

Sexual behavior is not a problem if you can answer 'no' to the following questions:

- Is the behavior violating a rule or law?
- Is the behavior putting the child at risk for physical harm, disease, or exploitation?
- Is the behavior interfering with the child's development, learning, social or family relationships?

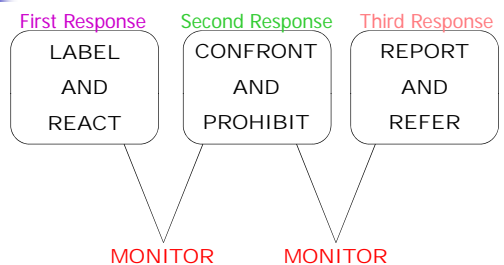
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When is Sexual Behavior a Problem?

- Is the behavior causing the child to feel confused, embarrassed, or bad about him/herself?
- Is the behavior causing others to feel uncomfortable?
- Is the behavior abusive because it involves a lack of consent, a lack of equality, or some type of coercion?

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Responding to Sexual Behavior



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Responding to Sexual Behavior

First Response: Label and React
Label Behavior

"Darren, I see you're [behavior]."

React on a Personal Level

"When you [behavior], it makes [person/people] [emotion]"

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Responding to Sexual Behavior

Monitoring:

- Observation: Anger, Coercion, Isolation
- Exploration: Feelings, Thinking Errors
- Education: Social Skills, Laws and Rules

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Responding to Sexual Behavior

Second Response: Confront and Prohibit
Confront Behavior

"Darren, I said that when you [behavior]
[person/people] [emotion]."

Prohibit

"Stop doing it."

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Responding to Sexual Behavior

Monitoring:

- Redirecting: (if ongoing)
- Behavior Management: Suggest Positive Replacement Behavior to Meet Need
- Limit Setting: "Stop or..."

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Responding to Sexual Behavior

Third Response: Report and Refer

Report

Report as needed or required (e.g. to guardians or supervisors), if you have not already done so.

Refer

Refer to specialist or authority as needed or required

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Responding to Sexual Behavior

When we become aware of behavior which is dangerous or abusive, we need to make a rule quickly, but our goals remain the same:

1. Communication
2. Empathy
3. Accountability

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Safety Planning

When working with sexually reactive youth, all activities should include a

Safety Plan


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Safety Planning

Safety plans are...

- Essential to Managing Risk
 - Identify hazards
 - Explore resources
- Used to make decisions about activities
 - Encourage coordination
 - Document planning

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Safety Planning

Safety plans answer four questions about any activity:

1. What are the risks?
2. What can reduce the risk?
3. What resources are available?
4. What's the emergency action plan?


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Safety Planning

1. **What are the risks?**
 - What are the potential triggers?
 - What situations might cause stress?
 - What factors have to be controlled?
 - Group time
 - Bathroom trips
 - Recess


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Safety Planning

2. **What can reduce risk?**
 - Sight and sound supervision
 - Notifying others
 - Extra staffing
 - Alternative activities
 - Flexible scheduling
 - On-call support


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Safety Planning

3. **What resources are available?**
 - Does the youth have the skills?
 - Can others help?
 - Can triggers be removed?
 - Can activities be modified?
 - Is there a back-up plan?


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Safety Planning

4. **What's the emergency action plan?**
 - If the client does *a* then we will *b*
 - E.g. if the client *becomes disruptive*, then we will *remove him from the group*
 - or
 - offer him an alternative activity*
 - or
 - remind him of his incentives and consequences*

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Safety Planning

Answering these questions will help to create a **Final Plan** that outlines...

- If the safety plan is reasonable
- If the client can participate, and why
- If there is an alternative

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Activity

Working in groups, develop a safety plan for the following situation...


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Activity

A 5 year old boy with a history of sexual reactivity (fondling, peeping, exposure), is joining your classroom. He has a short attention span and boredom often leads to sexual acting-out behavior, usually toward other boys. This behavior usually begins with lewd jokes or comments.

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Activity

Write a safety plan that answers these four questions about the activity:

1. What are the risks?
2. What can reduce the risk?
3. What resources are available?
4. What's the emergency action plan?

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Activity

What's the final plan?

- Can he safely interact with the group?
 - Yes, if...
 - No, because...
- If 'no', is there an alternative?

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Talking to Parents

- When talking to parents, the following steps may help:
 1. State what you've observed
 2. Wait for a response
 3. Roll with resistance
 4. Collaborate to find a solution

Always Remember the Universal Goals

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Talking to Parents

1. State what you observed
 - Be specific
 - Be concise
 - Be objective

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Talking to Parents

- Example
 - "Today at recess Tim told a female student that she had 'nice boobs'."
 - Rather than*
 - Tim is a really great kid and I know he has a lot of energy and I'm sorry to bring this up, but today he said some things that might have made one of the other students feel uncomfortable, and I'm sure I'm probably making too much of this but....

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Talking to Parents

- 2. Wait for a response
 - Maintain focus
 - Use non-verbals to elicit a reply
 - Allow silence
 - Don't respond until they've said something

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Talking to Parents

- 3. Roll with resistance
 - Use reflective statements
 - Redirect back to the behavior
 - Establish follow-up, if necessary

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Talking to Parents

- Example 1
 - Staff: "Today at recess Tim told a female student that she had 'nice boobs'."
 - Parent: "Well...what was she doing when he said that?"
 - Staff: "Good question, but her behavior is a different issue. Right now let's talk about Tim."

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Talking to Parents

- Example 2
 - Staff: "Today at recess Tim told a female student that she had 'nice boobs'."
 - Parent: "Thanks for the heads-up; I'll talk to him when we get home."
 - Staff: "Okay great, then let's follow-up tomorrow to process your discussion."

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Talking to Parents

- 4. Collaborate to find a solution by agreeing on...
 - The current behavior
 - The expected behavior
 - Behavioral interventions
 - A time to follow-up

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Talking to Parents

- Remember the Universal Goals:
 - Communication: Be willing to talk with the parents openly and honestly about their child's behavior.
 - Empathy: Imagine and remember how it might feel to talk about your child's sexual acting out.
 - Accountability: Clarify the expectations and who is responsible for helping the child meet them.

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Talking to Parents

- Role Play Activity
 - Working with a partner, role play the scenario provided.

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Summary

Realities:

- Children are sexually curious from a young age
- Children need to know about the dangers and realities of sex

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Summary

Range of Behaviors:



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Summary

Responses:

- **First:** Label and React
- **Second:** Confront and Prohibit
- **Third:** Report and Refer

*Note :One might need to confront and prohibit immediately to maintain safety

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Summary

Safety Plans answer the following questions about an activity:

1. What are the risks
2. What can reduce the risks?
3. What resources are available?
4. What's the emergency action plan?

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Summary

- When talking to parents, the following steps may help:
 1. State what you've observed
 2. Wait for a response
 3. Roll with resistance
 4. Collaborate to find a solution

Always Remember the Universal Goals

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References

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