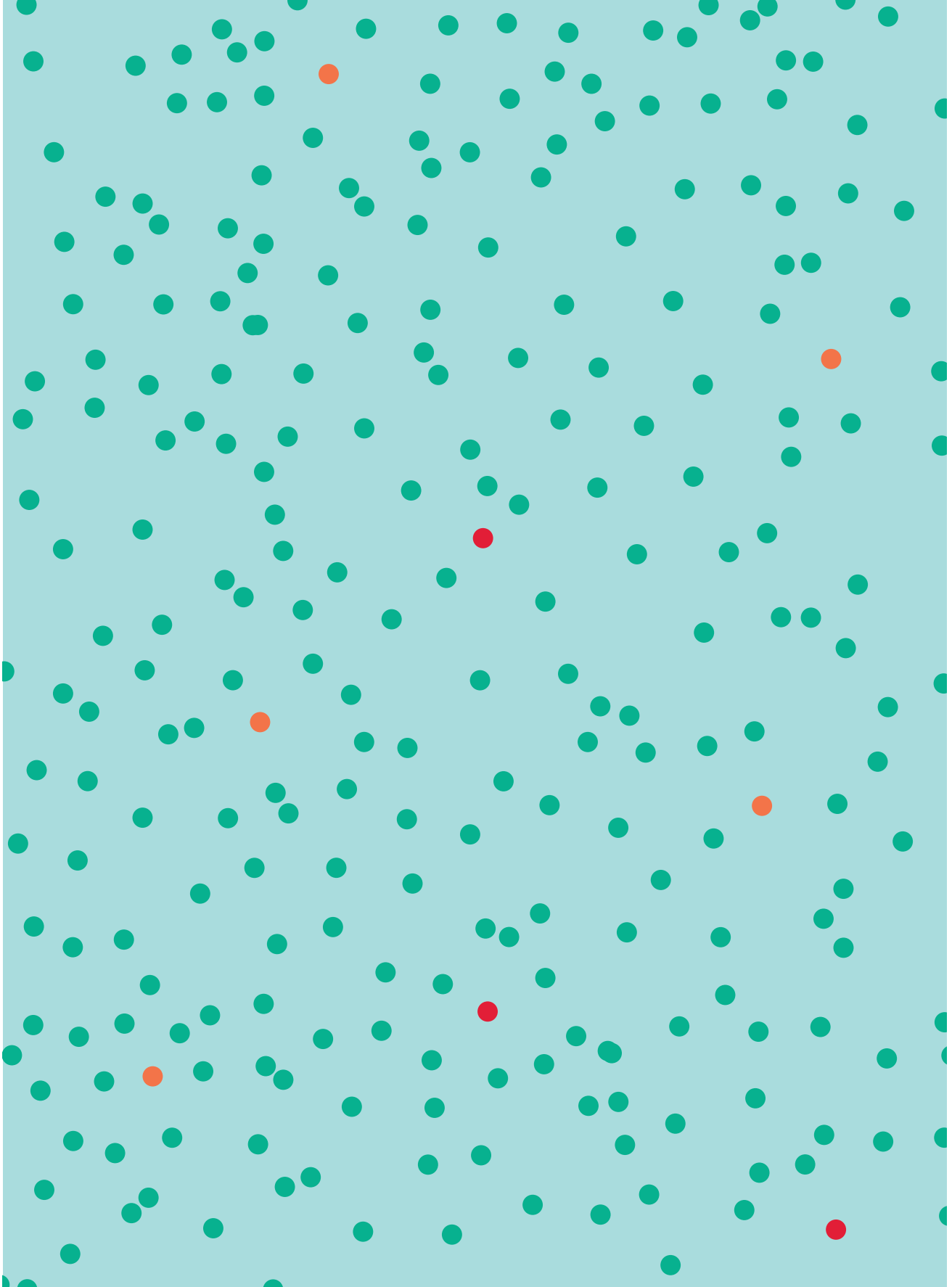




Sexual behaviours in children & young people

A guide to identify, understand and respond to sexual behaviours



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For more information

For more information about using this resource, professional development, professional consultancy, or licensing Traffic Lights® visit www.true.org.au or refer to the Where to get help section of this guide.

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Sexual behaviours in children and young people

Knowing how to identify, understand and respond to sexual behaviours in children and young people helps adults to support healthy sexual development and protect children and young people from harm or abuse.

Sexuality is a fundamental part of being human and develops throughout life. It is natural for children and young people to express their sexuality through their behaviour. Typical and developmentally appropriate sexual behaviour may be expressed in a variety of ways through play and relationships and relates to the age and/or stage of development of the child or young person.

Sexual behaviours are not just about sex. They may include any talk, touch, questions, conversations and interests which relate to sexuality and relationships. Relationships can occur online and offline.

When children or young people display sexual behaviours that increase their vulnerability, or cause harm to others, adults have a responsibility to take action to provide support and protection.

Some children and young people may be at increased risk of exposure to, or of developing, problematic or harmful sexual behaviours. This includes those who have experienced abuse or neglect, been exposed to domestic and family violence, had disruptions to their development or socialisation, or who live with disability. Adults who care for these children and young people have a duty of care to provide relevant information and support.

About Traffic Lights®

Traffic Lights® provides guidance that is age and developmentally appropriate, positive and protective. Traffic Lights® is a developmental tool and not a legal framework. Traffic Lights® can be used by a wide range of professionals including schools, early childhood education and care centres, health professionals, social workers, psychologists and may also be used by families.

Traffic Lights® uses the categories of green, orange and red light to help adults identify, understand and respond to children and young people's sexual behaviours.



It's important to remember that most sexual behaviours are typical and developmentally appropriate and will be in the green light category.

The behaviour is always red if any person involved does not consent or discloses sexual abuse; if sexual touch involves an animal; if it is life threatening; or if a person of any age is viewing, making or sharing abusive or sexualised material involving a child (known as 'sexual imagery of a person under the age of 18').

STEP 1



Identify:

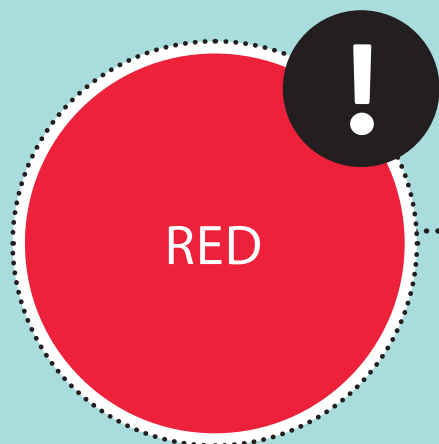
What is the behaviour?

Sexual development is influenced by many factors.

The environment in which children grow, develop and interact has a significant influence on their knowledge, attitudes and behaviours. When using Traffic Lights® to establish whether children or young people's sexual behaviour is typical and developmentally appropriate, problematic or harmful, it is necessary to consider the current social, cultural and family context.

Use Traffic Lights® to identify the characteristics of the behaviour and the way it occurs and then follow steps 2 and 3 to understand and respond. All green, orange and red light behaviours require some level of information, support and protective response.

The charts on pages 6-9 list specific examples of green, orange and red light behaviours at various ages.



RED

Sexual behaviours which **indicate** or **cause harm** because they are:

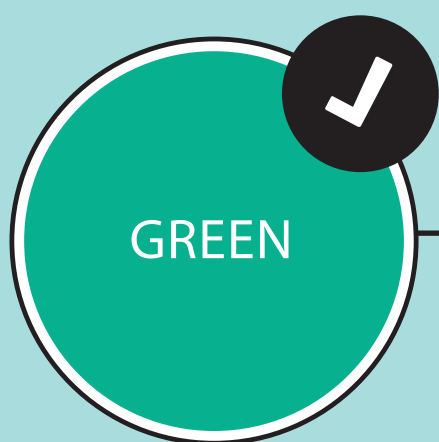
- Excessive, compulsive, coercive, forceful, degrading or threatening
- Secretive, manipulative or involve bribery or trickery
- Not appropriate for the age and/or stage of development
- Between children with a significant difference in age, developmental ability or power
- Abusive or aggressive



ORANGE

Sexual behaviours which **cause concern** because of:

- Persistence, intensity, frequency or duration of behaviours
- The type of activity or knowledge for the age and/or stage of development
- Inequality in age, size, power or developmental ability
- Risk to the health and safety of the child or others
- Unusual changes in a child's behaviour



GREEN

Sexual behaviours which **are typical and developmentally appropriate** are:

- Spontaneous, curious, light hearted, easily diverted, enjoyable, mutual and consensual
- Appropriate to the child's age and/or stage of development
- Activities or play among equals in terms of age, size and ability levels
- About understanding and gathering information, balanced with curiosity about other parts of life

STEP 1

Identify: Examples by age

The following charts list specific examples of green, orange and red light behaviours at various ages. Take into account the age and ability level of the child or young person and others involved as well as the location, frequency and nature of the behaviour.

All behaviour must be considered in context.

0-4 years

- Comfortable being nude
- Body touching and holding own genitals
- Unselfconscious masturbation
- Interest in body parts and functions
- Wanting to touch familiar children's genitals during play, toilet or bath times
- Participation in games involving looking at and/or touching the bodies of familiar children e.g. "show me yours and I'll show you mine"
- Asking about or wanting to touch the breasts, bottoms or genitals of familiar adults e.g. when in the bath or shower
- Supervised online communication with family or known peers

- Masturbation in preference to other activities
- Preoccupation with sexual behaviours
- Explicit sexual talk, art or play
- Persistently watching or following others into private spaces e.g. toilets, bathrooms to look at them or touch them
- Pulling other children's pants down or skirts up against their will
- Touching the genitals/private parts of other children in preference to other activities
- Attempting to touch or touching adults on the breasts, bottom, or genitals in ways that are persistent and/or invasive
- Touching the genitals/private parts of animals after redirection
- Recurrent urinary tract infections
- Communicating online with known people which may include giving out personally identifying details

- Compulsive masturbation which may be self-injurious, of a persistent nature or duration
- Persistent explicit sexual themes in talk, art or play
- Disclosure of sexual abuse
- Simulation of sexual touch or sexual activity
- Persistently touching the genitals/private parts of others
- Forcing other children to engage in sexual activity
- Sexual behaviour between young children involving penetration with objects, masturbation of others, oral sex
- Indication of a sexually transmitted infection
- Communicating online with known and unknown people which may include giving out personally identifying details and / or sexual images or videos

5-7 years

- Increased sense of privacy about bodies
- Body touching and holding own genitals
- Masturbation with increasing awareness of privacy
- Curiosity about other children's genitals involving looking at and/or touching the bodies of familiar children e.g. "show me yours and I'll show you mine"
- Curiosity about sexuality e.g., questions about babies, gender, relationships, sexual activity
- Telling stories or asking questions, using swear words, 'toilet' words or names for private parts
- Kissing or holding hands with known peers
- Mimicking or acting out observed behaviours such as pinching a bottom
- Supervised online communication with family or known peers

- Persistent rubbing / touching own genitals after redirection
- Masturbation in preference to other activities in public; with others and/or causing self-injury
- Explicit talk, art or play of sexual nature
- Playing / attempting to play "show me yours and I'll show you mine" games with significantly older or younger children
- Persistent attempts to touch the genitals of other children
- Persistent interest in touching or viewing other people's private body parts / private activities
- Persistent questions about sexuality despite being answered
- Persistent nudity and/or exposing private parts in public places
- Touching genitals/private parts of animals after redirection
- Recurrent urinary tract infections
- Communicating online with known people which may include giving out personally identifying details

- Rubbing / touching own genitals to the exclusion of usual activities
- Masturbation that is compulsive, self-injurious, self-harming, or seeking an audience
- Rubbing own genitals on other people
- Disclosure of sexual abuse
- Simulation of sexual touch or sexual activity
- Forcing other children to play sexual games
- Sexual knowledge beyond expected for age or stage of development
- Indication of a sexually transmitted infection
- Excessive talk about sex and sexual activity
- Communicating online with known and unknown people which may include giving out personally identifying details and / or sexual images or videos

Continue over page for more examples

8-12 years

- Growing need for privacy
- Masturbation, with increasing awareness of privacy
- Curiosity about other children's genitals involving looking at and/or touching the bodies of familiar children e.g. "show me yours and I'll show you mine" games with peers
- Showing curiosity about private parts but having a respect for the privacy of others
- Hugging, kissing, flirting, touching with known peers
- Interest and/or participation in a relationship with a peer of any gender
- Curiosity and seeking information about sexuality
- Use of sexual language
- Exhibitionism amongst same age peers within the context of play e.g. occasional flashing or mooning
- Communicating online with family and known peers

- Masturbation in preference to other activities, in public and/or causing self-injury
- Persistent explicit talk, art or play which is sexual or sexually intimidating
- Intentional viewing of other people's private body parts / private activities
- Marked changes to behaviour e.g. mimicking older or adult flirting behaviours, seeking relationships with older children or adults in preference to peers
- Simulation of sexual activities e.g. oral sex, sexual intercourse with clothes on
- Mutual /self-masturbation with known and unknown peers
- Hugging, kissing, flirting, touching with unknown peers
- Accessing age restricted materials e.g. movies, games, internet with sexually explicit content
- Persistent expression of fear of sexually transmitted infection or pregnancy
- Recurrent urinary tract infections
- Communicating online with known people which may include giving out personally identifying details

- Compulsive masturbation e.g. self-harming, seeking an audience
- Persistent bullying involving sexual aggression e.g. pulling/lifting/removing other children's clothing, sexually threatening notes, sending sexually explicit material, drawings, text messages
- Degrading or humiliating self or others using sexual themes
- Disclosure of sexual abuse
- Accessing the rooms of sleeping children to touch or engage in sexual activity
- Touching another person's genitals without permission
- Sexual activity or penetration with animals, dolls/stuffed toys
- Participating in or simulating intercourse and/or oral sex with known or unknown peers with clothes off
- Sexual activity in exchange for material items or privileges
- Indication of sexually transmitted infection or pregnancy
- Communicating online with unknown people which may include giving out personally identifying details
- Communicating online with known and unknown people to send or publish sexual images, videos or audio of self or another person

13-15 years

- Need for privacy
- Masturbation in private
- Accessing information about sex and sexuality
- Viewing age and developmentally appropriate materials for sexual arousal e.g. music videos, magazines, movies
- Sexually explicit mutual conversations and/or use of humour and obscenities with peers
- Interest and/or participation in a relationship with a peer of any gender
- Mutually consenting sexual activity for pleasure, in private, with a known peer of similar age/developmental ability
- Communicating online with peers
- Arranging a meeting with a known peer, who they communicate with online, with the knowledge of a known adult

- Sexual preoccupation which interferes with daily functioning
- Sexual activity with a person of more than two years age difference, developmental ability and/or peer grouping
- Viewing age and developmentally inappropriate materials for sexual arousal e.g. music videos, magazines, movies
- Indication of sexually transmitted infection or pregnancy
- Viewing of others while they are engaged in sexual activity or nudity
- Explicit communications, art or actions which are obscene or sexually intimidating
- Exposure of private parts in a public place with peers e.g. flashing
- Recurrent urinary tract infections
- Communicating online with unknown people which may include giving out personally identifying details
- Communicating online to send or publish sexual images, videos or audio of self or another person with or without their consent
- Arranging a meeting with an online acquaintance accompanied by a peer or known adult

- Compulsive masturbation e.g. self-harming, in public, seeking an audience
- Engaging vulnerable others in a process to gain sexual gratification by using grooming techniques, e.g. gifts, lies, flattery
- Force or coercion of others into sexual activity
- Disclosure of sexual abuse/sexual assault
- Sexual activity or penetration with animals, dolls / stuffed toys
- Unsafe sexual activity, including unprotected sex, sexual activity while intoxicated, multiple partners and/or frequent change of partner
- Sexual activity in exchange for material items or privileges
- Sexual contact with others of significant age and/or developmental ability
- Creating, possessing, accessing or sending child exploitation materials e.g. photos of children naked or in sexual activities
- Harassing or coercing others to take or send sexual images videos or audio
- Deliberately sending and/or publishing sexual images videos or audio of another person without their consent
- Arranging a meeting with an online acquaintance unaccompanied by a peer or known adult

16-18 years

- Need for privacy
- Masturbation in private
- Accessing information about sexuality
- Viewing materials for sexual arousal e.g. music videos, magazines, movies
- Sexually explicit mutual conversations and/or use of humour and obscenities with peers
- Interest and/or participation in a relationship with a person of any gender
- Mutually consenting sexual activity for pleasure, in private, with a partner of similar developmental ability
- Communicating online with peers
- Arranging a meeting with an online acquaintance accompanied by a known peer or adult

- Sexual preoccupation which interferes with daily function
- Viewing of others while they are engaged in sexual activity or nudity
- Explicit communications, art or actions which are obscene or sexually intimidating
- Sexual activity in exchange for material items or privileges
- Exposure of private parts in a public place with peers e.g. flashing
- Unsafe sexual behaviour, including unprotected sex, sexual activity while intoxicated, multiple partners and/or frequent change of partner
- Indication of sexually transmitted infection or unplanned pregnancy
- Arranging a meeting with an online acquaintance with the knowledge of a known peer or adult

- Compulsive masturbation e.g. self-harming, in public, seeking an audience
- Preoccupation with sexually aggressive and/or illegal pornography
- Disclosure of sexual abuse/sexual assault
- Sexual contact and activities with animals
- Forcing or manipulating others into sexual activity
- Engaging others in a process to gain sexual gratification by using grooming techniques e.g. gifts, manipulation, lies
- Creating, possessing, accessing or sending child exploitation materials
- Harassing or coercing others to take or send sexual images videos or audio
- Deliberately sending or publishing sexual images videos or audio of another person without their consent
- Arranging a meeting with an online acquaintance without the knowledge of a known peer or adult

STEP 2



Understand:

What is the behaviour communicating?

All behaviour communicates.

Children and young people show their needs and wants through their behaviours. Understanding the reasons for a child or young person's sexual behaviour is important so adults can support healthy sexual development and provide appropriate information and support.

When sexual behaviours are typical and developmentally appropriate they are usually part of natural curiosity and making sense of the world.

However, when sexual behaviours are identified as problematic or harmful, it is essential to think about why the child or young person may be exhibiting the behaviour. The child or young person may not have the language, experience or ability to seek help.



For all **green**, **orange** and **red** light behaviours ask:

What is the behaviour communicating?

Try to understand the reasons for a child or young person's sexual behaviour.

Reviewing the behaviour and the context in which it is happening will assist adults in understanding what is going on for the child or young person and indicate what support is needed.

You should consider the following questions to help you to understand the behaviour.

Q1. What are the issues or concerns regarding the child or young person and their behaviour?

Q2. What might the behaviour indicate? Examples include:

- Curiosity
- It feels good
- Learning about privacy
- Learning about touch and social rules
- Exploring sexual identity and gender roles
- Interest in relationships
- Experiencing feelings of sexual attraction
- Developing independence
- Lack of age and developmentally appropriate sexuality information
- Lack of role models for learning about healthy sexuality, relationships and sexual activities
- Possible grooming, child sexual exploitation
- Difficulty regulating emotions and/or behaviour
- current or historic sexual abuse
- Boredom or loneliness
- Lack of social skills
- Medical needs
- Confusion about sexuality, relationships or sexual activities
- Lack of rules and consequences
- Lack of information about the risks of the behaviour
- Exposure to explicit sexual activity including online content
- Lack of adult supervision or support
- Experience of physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect
- Lack of consistency across environments
- Anxiety about adult or family relationships

Understanding the child or young person and the factors that may be contributing to the behaviour guides the planning of effective responses.

Expressing sexuality through sexual behaviour is natural, healthy and a basic aspect of being human. Sexual behaviour which makes children or young people vulnerable or causes harm to another requires adult intervention to provide support and protection.

All children and young people have the right to be safe.

STEP 3



Respond

What response will meet the child or young person's needs?

All behaviour has a function. When adults understand why the behaviour may be happening, they can respond by helping to meet the needs of the child or young person in effective ways.

Behaviour usually reflects a range of needs and all sexual behaviours require a response.

The type of response will depend on what is motivating the behaviour, what the behaviour might be communicating and the severity of the behaviour.

When children or young people's sexual behaviour is problematic or harmful a range of strategies may be needed to respond effectively. People close to the child or young person may also need support and guidance e.g. family, carers, teachers and support workers.

Green light behaviours provide opportunities to:



Talk, explain and provide support.

Orange light behaviours signal the need to:



Monitor and provide targeted support.

Red light behaviours signal the need to:



Provide immediate protection, and follow up support.

Relationships and sexuality education encourages open and clear communication and builds age and developmentally appropriate knowledge and skills that lay the foundation for healthy and safe choices about relationships, sexual health and wellbeing.

Strategies for meeting the need could include:

- Giving accurate facts and information about sexuality
- Teaching social and emotional skills
- Talking about relationships and personal boundaries
- Supporting healthy friendships and relationships
- Letting them know it is good to talk and ask questions
- Talking about options and finding out where to get more information
- Making home and other environments private and safe
- Creating and modelling rules about privacy and safety
- Reinforcing rules with praise or consequences
- Having consistency between homes, family, school, community
- Increasing supervision during times of risk
- Monitoring behaviour and reviewing support strategies
- Restricting access to previous victims or vulnerable others and explaining why
- Limiting time spent with people who bully or who also show problematic or harmful sexual behaviours
- Removing from situations where there is actual or suspected risk of harm, exploitation, abuse or neglect
- Seeking medical attention to check for any infections or injuries
- Providing information and support to family, carers and staff
- Accessing family counselling or therapy
- diversion techniques (e.g sport, drama, singing)
- Referring to other services

Topics for education could include:

- Public and private body parts, places and behaviours
- The use of anatomically correct language
- Personal safety
- Types of touch and rules about touch
- Puberty
- Managing periods
- Healthy and unhealthy relationships
- Online and offline relationships
- Using the internet and social media safely, legally and respectfully
- Sexual abuse
- Child sexual exploitation
- Consent
- Self-esteem and feelings
- Cultural identity, gender and sexuality
- Sexual functioning
- Reproductive health
- Decision making
- Help seeking
- Safer sex
- Contraceptive choices
- Sexual health checks

All to be delivered LGBT+ inclusively

Taking action



Most sexual behaviours are typical and developmentally appropriate and will be in the green light category. These behaviours present opportunities to communicate with children and young people about healthy sexuality.



Orange or red light behaviours are less common. They indicate the need to pay attention, monitor, supervise, provide sexuality and personal safety education and may also require counselling, protection from harm or a legal response.



All green, orange and red light behaviours require some form of action and support.

Report harm or abuse – If you are aware of, or reasonably suspect, a child has been or is being sexually abused, or is at risk of sexual abuse or is at risk of sexually abusing others, you should contact child protection services or the police.

It is important to be aware of mandatory reporting requirements in your state or territory. You should also be aware of your organisation's child protection policies and procedures.

Sexual behaviour and the law

- There are many different laws relating to aspects of sexuality and sexual behaviour.
- Sexual activity must be voluntary, consensual, and mutually agreed by those involved.
- The age of consent is 16 in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. This law applies to all genders and sexualities
- A person must be able to consent to sexual activity - age, intellectual and psychological ability to understand and give full permission are taken into account. Consent cannot be given if intoxicated by drugs or alcohol.
- Incest or sexual activity between close family members is against the law. Close family members could include de facto, step, foster and biological relatives.
- Taking, sharing, selling, storing or posting sexual images, videos or audio of a person under the age of 18 is against the law.
- Children from 10 years of age can be criminally charged for sexually abusing others. Their ability to understand their actions is taken into account when determining whether charges should be laid.

Where to get help

Talking about concerns can help prevent harm or abuse.

NSPCC Helpline

If you're worried about a child
0808 800 5000
help@nspcc.org.uk
www.nspcc.org.uk

Action for Children

www.actionforchildren.org.uk/how-to-help/
worried-about-a-child

ThinkUknow website:

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Contact Police Services Call 999 if the child is at immediate risk, or call the police on 101 if you think a crime has been committed.

UK Safer Internet Centre:

0344 381 4772
helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
www.saferinternet.org.uk

Childline:

For under 18s
0800 1111

Forward:

For information and support on FGM
www.forwarduk.org.uk/violence-against-
women-and-girls/female-genital-mutilation/

Further support for organisations on Traffic Lights®

Professional development

Brook offers training on Traffic Lights® for professionals working with children and young people. Our training provides professionals with a framework for identifying whether behaviour is part of healthy development or if it is a cause for concern. We also provide guidance on when to safeguard and/or signpost to internal or external support.

Brook's training equips professionals to make consistent and informed decisions that neither pathologises nor criminalises young people. Participants will be trained to have robust and meaningful conversations around behaviour that causes concern and will be equipped to embed the tool within their practice.

Participants will be able to:

- Categorise behaviours and the law relating to these
- Explain healthy sexual development
- Integrate their newly created action plan into their organisation's toolkit

Licensing

Brook offers licensing of Traffic Lights® material and Trademark. Licensing options include:

- Non- commercial licence
- Commercial licence
- Train the trainer

For more information about these support options please contact

training@brook.org.uk

What do you think?



Green, orange or red?

Use Traffic Lights® to identify these scenarios

1. Harry, aged 8, masturbates daily at school. When masturbating he will often expose his penis to the rest of the class.
2. Teekai, aged 13, spends a lot of time alone in his bedroom with the door shut. When his mum knocks on the door he tells her to go away. Lately he is putting his sheets and pyjamas into the washing basket to be washed every morning.
3. Gayle, aged 12, often tries to sit on the lap of her dad's friends. When she does, she will talk about their bodies and say that it is OK for them to kiss her. Sometimes she likes to dance for them and says she is being a pop star.
4. Alex, aged 15, spends lots of time chatting to friends online. Recently, Alex made a new friend, 'Magic69' online. The more they chat, the more Alex feels attracted to 'Magic69' and thinks about making a time to meet them in person. Alex talks to a friend about it.
5. Marley and Ashmita, both aged 4, are playing in the cubby house and have both taken their underpants off. They are looking at and touching each other's genitals.
6. Harper, aged 7, tells her teacher that she has seen Lucas, aged 13, touching her best friend Cindi's vulva.
7. Tilly, aged 16, is overheard telling her close friends about having intercourse and oral sex with her partner who is 17 years old at the same school. She tells them that she enjoys it.

Suggested answers: 1=red; 2=green; 3=orange; 4=orange; 5=orange; 6=green; 7=red

Glossary

Child sexual abuse

Child sexual abuse (CSA) occurs when an adult, older, stronger and/or significantly more intellectually developed child or adolescent uses his or her power or authority to involve a child in a sexual activity. Such behaviours can be physical, verbal or emotional and can include:

- Kissing or holding a child in a sexual manner
- Exposing a sexual body part to a child
- Having sexual relations with a child
- Talking in a sexually explicit way that is not age or developmentally appropriate
- Making obscene phone calls or remarks to a child
- Sending obscene mobile text messages or emails to a child
- Fondling a child in a sexual manner
- Persistently intruding on a child's privacy
- Penetrating the child's vagina or anus by either the penis, finger or any other object
- Oral sex
- Showing pornographic films, magazines or photographs to a child
- Having a child pose or perform in a sexual manner
- Forcing a child to watch a sexual act
- Rape
- Incest
- Coercion of a child into sex for monetary gain

Any sexual behaviour initiated by an adult towards a child is CSA. In cases where the activity is initiated by one child on another child, CSA has taken place when the children differ significantly in terms of age (typically defined as 2 years or more), developmental ability or size. Children who are already experiencing adversity and are vulnerable are most at risk of CSA. Indicators of CSA can be physical, behavioural and emotional. It is important to be aware of abuse indicators and have a sound understanding of the differences between green, orange and red light behaviours.

Consent

Is a voluntary agreement to engage in a particular activity. Consent should be explicitly expressed through mutually understandable communication or words. Consent can be withdrawn at any point. A person cannot give consent if they are:

- asleep or unconscious
- threatened or forced
- intoxicated by alcohol or drugs

Developmentally appropriate

Development encompasses a range of interrelated areas including physical growth and physical skills, social interaction and emotional regulation, cognition, and communication skills. The majority of children and young people reach specific developmental milestones around the same age and this represents typical or expected development. When we refer to developmentally appropriate behaviour, this means it is in line with what we would expect for the age and/or stage of development.

Grooming

Grooming is a process whereby a perpetrator uses manipulation or tactics to draw a child into a sexual relationship by gaining access to the child and building trust, compliance, control and maintaining secrecy. Grooming is often gradual and calculated, with the perpetrator preparing the child, significant adults, and the child's environment for the abuse. Grooming can take place in person, online or both.

Distinguishing between grooming behaviours and non-sexually motivated behaviours can be difficult, as the same behaviour can have different underlying motivations. Therefore, it is vital to be able to identify indicators through a child's behaviour. This means having a sound understanding of the differences between green, orange and red light behaviours.

Harmful / problematic sexual behaviours

When talking about children and young people's sexual behaviours that are outside of those that are typical and developmentally appropriate, it is important to note that a range of different terms are used across different disciplines and professions. Some of these include problematic, inappropriate or concerning sexual behaviours, sexually reactive behaviours, sexually abusive behaviours and harmful sexual behaviours.

For the purpose of this training, harmful sexual behaviour is defined in line with the NSPCC, as:

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

Harmful sexual behaviours is an umbrella term that covers a spectrum of sexual behaviours that are not typical or developmentally appropriate, may cause harm to the child or others or may be abusive towards another child, young person or adult. These behaviours may take place in person or online.

Problematic sexual behaviours refers to behaviours exhibited by younger children. These behaviours do not typically involve intent to harm others, but nonetheless, may cause harm or distress, to either the child exhibiting the behaviour or another.

Mandatory reporting

Refers to the legislative requirement on certain professions to make a report to government authorities if there is suspicion that a child has experienced, is currently experiencing or is at unacceptable risk of experiencing child abuse or neglect. Statutory guidance is issued by law; you must follow it unless there's a good reason not to. More can be found here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2

Healthcare professionals must report to the police any cases of female genital mutilation (FGM) in girls under 18 that they come across in their work. Further details can be found here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/fgm-mandatory-reporting-in-healthcare

Online devices:

Refers to any device that can be used to connect to the internet. These include:

- Computers
- Mobile phones
- Personal devices such as laptop computers or tablets
- Gaming devices

Oral sex

Placing ones mouth on another person's genitals.

Significant age difference

This typically refers to a difference of more than two years. However, age difference should never be considered in isolation; it is vital to consider the context in every situation. This means also considering the developmental ability of those involved and any potentially power differentials. For example, if two young people are the same age but one has an intellectual disability, or if two young people are the same age but one holds a greater position of power, then the parties do not have the same ability to freely offer consent.

Times of risk

Times of risk are times when a child or young person has increased vulnerability. This could include periods of transition in a child's life such as changing year levels in school, changing between carers or homes, or transitioning from preadolescence to adolescence or to adulthood. Typically, these are times when a child's confidence and sense of security are changing. This can include their attachment with trusted adults and can lead to vulnerability that could be taken advantage of.

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