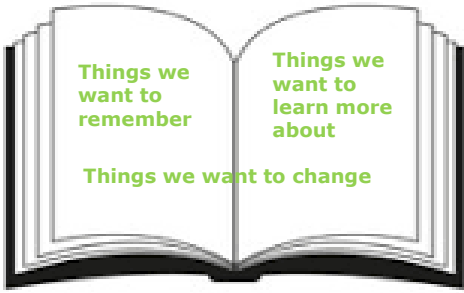




Let's Talk
Addressing Sibling Sexual Harm Within the Sibling Relationship
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Important things book



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What do the words of these children tell us?

- ☐ We need to make sure that in our attempts to “protect” victims that we don’t inadvertently contribute to additional harm
- ☐ Most children can and want to talk about and understand what happened.
- ☐ We don’t want children who are victimised or children who cause harm to carry this template into their future relationships

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BE SAFE
(managing risk)

BE WELL
(reducing risk)

BE OKAY
(minimizing impact/repair)

4



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Addressing sexual harm at an individual level

Supporting parents/ family

Working With systems/ community

Sibling relationship

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The "old" way
(the apology letter)

Writing an Apology Letter
Dear Mr. and Mrs. Smith,
I am writing to you to say I am sorry for what I did to you. I know I was wrong and I am sorry for the trouble I caused you. I hope you can forgive me.

Mr. Clements
Course 4
12/15/10

A Ring, A Thief, and A Beautiful Zombie!

One sunny day, a man named Max was sitting on his porch. He was thinking about looking for a wife. The perfect wife, he said to himself, "would be Lilee." Lilee is a girl who is pretty, and pretty. The next thing Max did was run to the store to buy Lilee a ring. He looked for the perfect one he could find and brought it home.

Max went to Lilee's front door, and rang the bell until she answered. He knelt on the ground and proposed. Lilee agreed right away, and thought to have the wedding the next day. The next day everyone was excited for the wedding. Lilee was getting ready with her hair, makeup, and dress. Max was getting ready with his suit. They finally got married happily.

Three years later, Lilee was driving to the store, but suddenly a car crashed right into her. Lilee sadly died, but she died with a smile on her face. Max was terribly crushed by his sadness, and wouldn't talk to anybody at all. He sat all day staring into this air.

Max finally decided to make Lilee a statue with the best of everything he could find. He made the statue out of gold and silver. He buried Lilee with her wedding dress and her ring. Lilee got buried in a deep dark forest, so she could rest in peace without any robbers or anything. Nobody ever forgot Lilee.

One thousand years later, a grumpy robber named Mystorio was searching for a graveyard, because he stole almost every thing in town. Mystorio was looking for a graveyard, because he stole almost every thing in town. Mystorio was looking for a graveyard, because he stole almost every thing in town.

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Individual Therapy

Parent/ family intervention

Working With systems

Sibling relationship

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Bringing children together
(Therapeutic contact)



**The first step
of reparation
and recovery**
(and for those children
who are separated, the
first step of contact)

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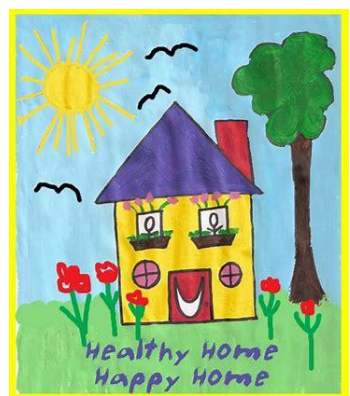
**An opportunity to explore
and answer questions
children have about sexual
abuse (addressing what
happened)**

AND



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Identify what
needs to be
different for
home to be
safe, happy
and healthy
(change and
growth)



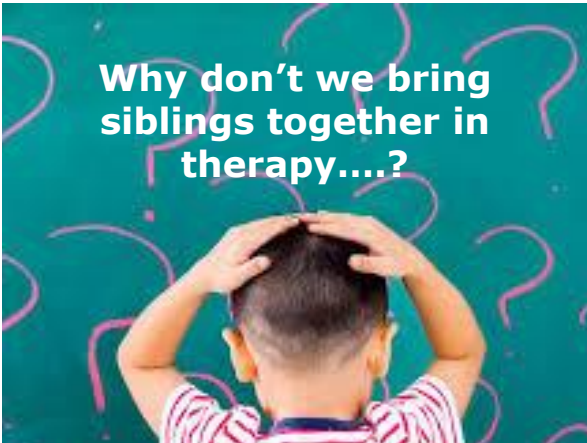
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an opportunity to
experience each
other and their
family differently

(promote accountability, responsibility, communication, empathy)

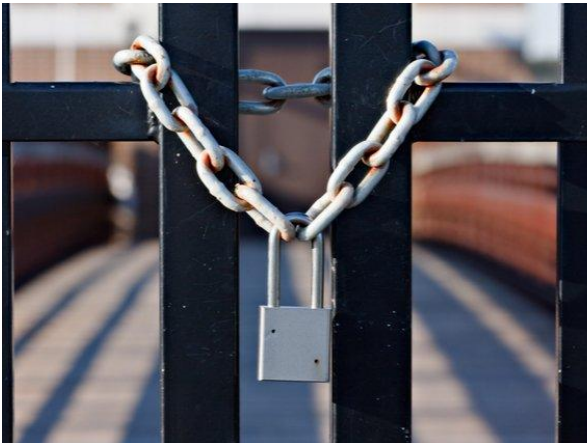
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Parents

Legal system



Victim services

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Continuum of parent responses

Supportive ambivalent rejection

17

service

Continuum of parent responses

Supportive ambivalent rejection

18



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- ☐ Early as possible following disclosure and/or separation
- ☐ Before commencement of social contact
- ☐ Continue throughout the intervention/reunification process
- ☐ Occur after assessment (and reassessment of readiness of the family)

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Considerations for the sibling who was harmed

- ☒ Can talk about the harmful sexual behaviour (or manage it being talked about)
- ☒ Reduction of acute symptoms
- ☒ Able to manage their own emotional reactions "well enough"
- ☒ Expresses a willingness for contact to occur (or acknowledgement of ambivalence/uncertainty)
- ☒ Feels safe "enough"

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Considerations for parents/caregiver

- ☒ Acknowledgement of the harmful behaviour and that it has an impact (or recognition of their ambivalence)
- ☒ Places appropriate responsibility onto the child who has harmed (or able to recognise & manage ambivalence)
- ☒ Capacity to be supportive to each child
- ☒ Able to manage their own emotional responses to the detection of the harmful behaviour

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Considerations for the sibling who has harmed

- ☒ Acknowledges the harmful sexual behaviour (but doesn't need to have described in detail)
- ☒ Acknowledges that the behaviour has had an impact (but doesn't need to understand what that impact is)
- ☒ Acknowledges a need to change/keep the behaviour stopped
- ☒ Demonstrates an ability to consider the feelings/needs of their sibling

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- ☒ They can manage their own emotional reactions to the disclosure/detection of the sexual harm (especially anger at disclosure)
- ☒ Demonstrates a willingness to accept the direction of parents/other adults
- ☒ Capacity to abide by safeguards/rules

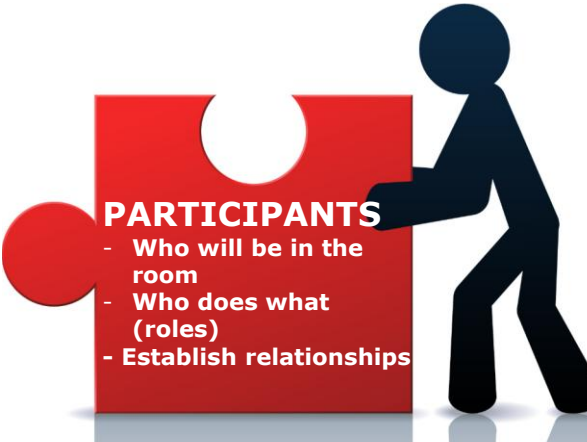
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Assess readiness...and....



What else do we need to consider before bringing children together.... ?

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Talking about safety in the room



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3 stages (goals) of joint therapy

- 1. Naming the problem (acknowledgements)
- 2. Learning about the problem (clarification)
- 3. Being healthy and safe (change & consolidation)

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Stage 1
Acknowledgements

What important things do we need to say about what has happened



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Name the problem/sexual abuse

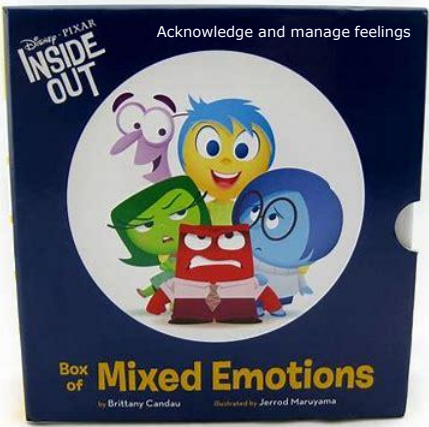


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**Create an expectation and context of communication
curiosity and learning**



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In the room
In their relationship
Within their family

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INITIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

What do we want parents to be able to say/communicate to their children?

What do we want children to communicate about their behaviour?



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"This is what I've learnt about your family so far"

(modelling acknowledgements)



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What do we want parents to be able to say/communicate to their children? (acknowledgements)

"what are the most important things you want to say to Chris and Harry....."



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INITIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS (parents)

What are the most important things you want to say to your children about what happened?

Acknowledgements can include statements about

☐ Telling/disclosing

☐ Impact

☐ Responsibility

☐ Facing up

☐ Understanding

☐ What they are going to do to address what happened

☐ Safety

☐ Future relationships

☐ And.....

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Children’s Acknowledgments

(child who has engaged in the sexual harm)

- Naming the problem

This is what I did
- Recognition of the need to change

What I did was wrong and hurtful.....

It should not have happened.....

I’m now going to work on making sure it doesn’t happen again and to become a better person.
- Steps towards change

I’m going to achieve these things by...

Remembering & talking about what happened,

Figuring out what went wrong and working out what needs to be going right

Practicing at behaving in a safe and responsible way

Teaching the important people in my life the important things I learn

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What about apology?



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How do children best communicate that they are sorry

- Words AND Action
- Acknowledging
- Understanding
- Demonstrating

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Answering the
questions children and parents
have about sexual abuse ?

and

Sharing important things that
I've learnt ?

49

"If your brother/sister/
mum/dad could ask us
anything they want to
about the sexual abuse
what do you think they
would want to know?

What might they be
curious about?"



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Clarification – Issues to explore

- ☐ Behaviour
- ☐ Secrecy
- ☐ Impact
- ☐ Responsibility
- ☐ Why ?
- ☐ Apology
- ☐ Forgiveness
- ☐ Safety
- ☐ And.....

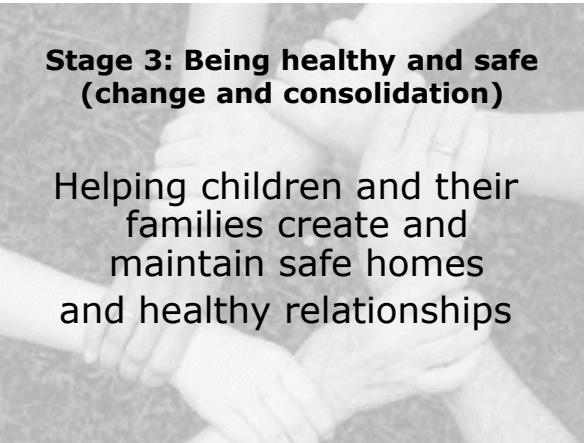
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What issues do families bring to the table

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Safe/Unsafe house

Exploring sibling and
family dynamics

Understand contributing factors to
the unsafe sexual behaviour

Identify potentially problematic /
possibly protective factors

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If I looked through the window....
what would I see ???



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What are we interested in learning about....?

- ☐ Communication styles

☐ Warmth/Affection/closeness

☐ Emotional climate

☐ Sexual climate

☐ secrecy

☐ Coping styles

☐ Roles and responsibilities

☐ Family rules
- ☐ privacy

☐ Differential treatment

☐ Gender roles

☐ Rivalry and conflict

☐ Coercion

☐ play

☐ Sibling/parent coalitions

☐ Discipline and limit setting

☐ Capacity to empathise

☐ and.....

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Talking about safety with children

Precursor to contact
(for children separated)

Necessity for children who live together

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Talking about safety with children

Safety is first and foremost the job of adults BUT.....

Kids need to know what adults are doing and eventually learn how to be safe and keep safe

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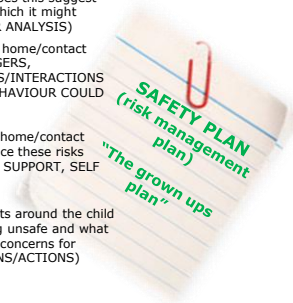
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What do we know (so far) about the harmful sexual behaviour and what does this suggest about the circumstances in which it might reoccur (SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR ANALYSIS)

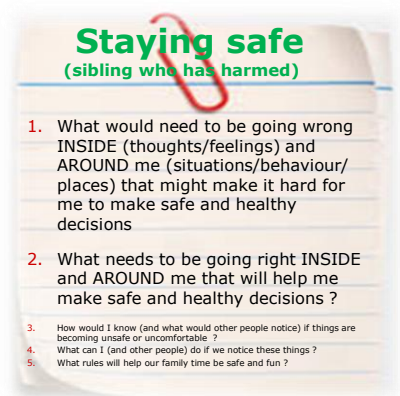
What risks are present in the home/contact setting (EXPOSURE TO TRIGGERS, VULNERABLE RELATIONSHIPS/INTERACTIONS AND SITUATIONS WHERE BEHAVIOUR COULD REOCCUR)

What can be done within the home/contact environment to manage/reduce these risks (STRUCTURE, SUPERVISION, SUPPORT, SELF MANAGEMENT)?

How might the child and adults around the child know if things were becoming unsafe and what will the adults and child do if concerns for safety arise? (WARNING SIGNS/ACTIONS)



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Safety Plan

(sibling who has engaged in the HSB)

1.

What would need to be going wrong INSIDE (thoughts/feelings) and AROUND me (situations/behaviour/places) that might make it hard for me to make safe and healthy decisions

2.

How would I know (and what would other people notice) if things are becoming unsafe or uncomfortable ?

3.

What can I (and other people) do if we notice these things ?

4.

What needs to be going right INSIDE and AROUND me that will help me make safe and healthy decisions ?

5.

What rules will help our family time be safe and fun ?

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Safety Plan

(sibling who has been victimised)

1.

What would I notice INSIDE (thoughts/feelings) and AROUND me (situations/places) that might make me feel or tell me that things are unsafe/uncomfortable ?

2.

How would I know (and what would other people notice) if things are becoming unsafe or uncomfortable ?

3.

What can I (and other people) do if we notice these things ?

4.

What needs to be going right INSIDE and AROUND me that will help me be safe and comfortable ?

5.

What rules will help our family time be safe and fun ?

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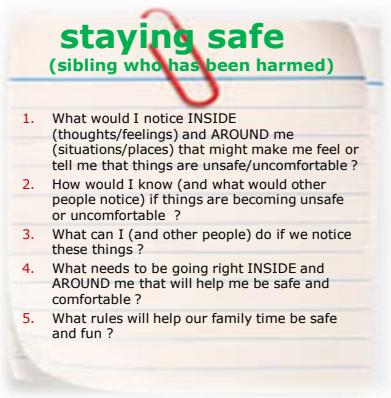
CHECK IN

- Identify who they can tell

- Assume telling might be hard (better still assume they won't)

- Have an adult assume the responsibility for checking in with the child

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