

Village Counseling Center

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www.villagecounselingcenter.net

Children with Sexual Behavior Problems

Children with Sexual Behavior Problems (SBP)



Children with SBP VS. SEXUAL OFFENDERS



Children with problematic sexual behavior are significantly different from adolescent/adult sex offenders.

Most children do not continue to have sexual behavioral problems.

- Treatment outcomes – Most show lower sexual behavior problems after short-term outpatient treatment (12-32 weeks).
- Recidivism rates for children 6-12 years old – 15% two years after treatment.

Inappropriate Sexual Behavior

Children who engage in sexual behaviors that:

- are not ordinary for their age.
- hurtful to themselves and/or others.
- elicit adult concern.
- result from trauma, anxiety or abuse.

Inappropriate Sexual Behaviors

- Curiosity becomes an obsessive preoccupation.
- Re-enact adult sexual activity.
- Coerce others into sexual behaviors.
- Injure themselves via sexual acts.
- Discuss sexual acts.
- Put mouth on sexual parts.

Inappropriate Sexual Behaviors

- Kiss adults they don't know well.
- Draw sexual parts.
- Touch adults' or animals' sexual parts.
- Overly friendly with adults they don't know well.
- Masturbate with objects.

Adolescents

- Account for 20% of rapes and 30-50% of child molestation cases.
- Mostly males.
- Highest risk – high levels of deviant sexual arousal - juveniles who exclusively target younger, male children (especially when penetration is involved).

Most common Inappropriate Sexual Behaviors – Adolescents

- Oral sex with younger children
- Fondling genitals of younger children
- Digital-Vaginal penetration
- Incest behaviors
- Peer related, “Social” offenses
- Anal penetration (less common)
- Penile-Vaginal penetration (not common)
- Sexual acts involving force (not common)

SEXUAL ACTING OUT

CRITICAL INFORMATION:

Every act of inappropriate sexual behavior increases the probability of future sexual behavior.

Why some children act out sexually?

1. History of Sexual Abuse
2. "Sexualized"

History of Sexual Abuse

Studies of very young children with sexual behavior problems suggest that 49% to 80% have been sexually victimized.



Sexually reactive children act out in sexual ways to:

- Attempt to deal with difficult emotions (sadness, anxiety, fear, shame, abandonment).
- Decrease tension.
- Satisfy impulsive sexual needs.
- Cope with intrusive, trauma related memories.

“Sexualized”

- Child who has been sexualized prematurely in life.
- Example: Exposure to pornography and witnessing adult sexual behavior in the home.



'Sexualization' Issues

- Cultural Issues.
- Parents/Home Environment.
- Sibling Interactions.
- The Real World: What They See, Hear and Read.



Warning Signs & “Red Flags”

- History of sexual or physical abuse, abandonment or rejection.
- Behavior problems at home and school.
- No outside interests and few friends.
- Lack problem-solving skills
- Poor impulse control.



Warning Signs & “Red Flags”

- Sexual behavior - beyond developmental level
- Thoughts and actions – consumed by sexuality.
- Sexual behaviors - increase over time and are not isolated incidents.
- Coercion - usually a factor. They seek out children who are easy to fool, bribe or force.
- Anxious - sexual issues.

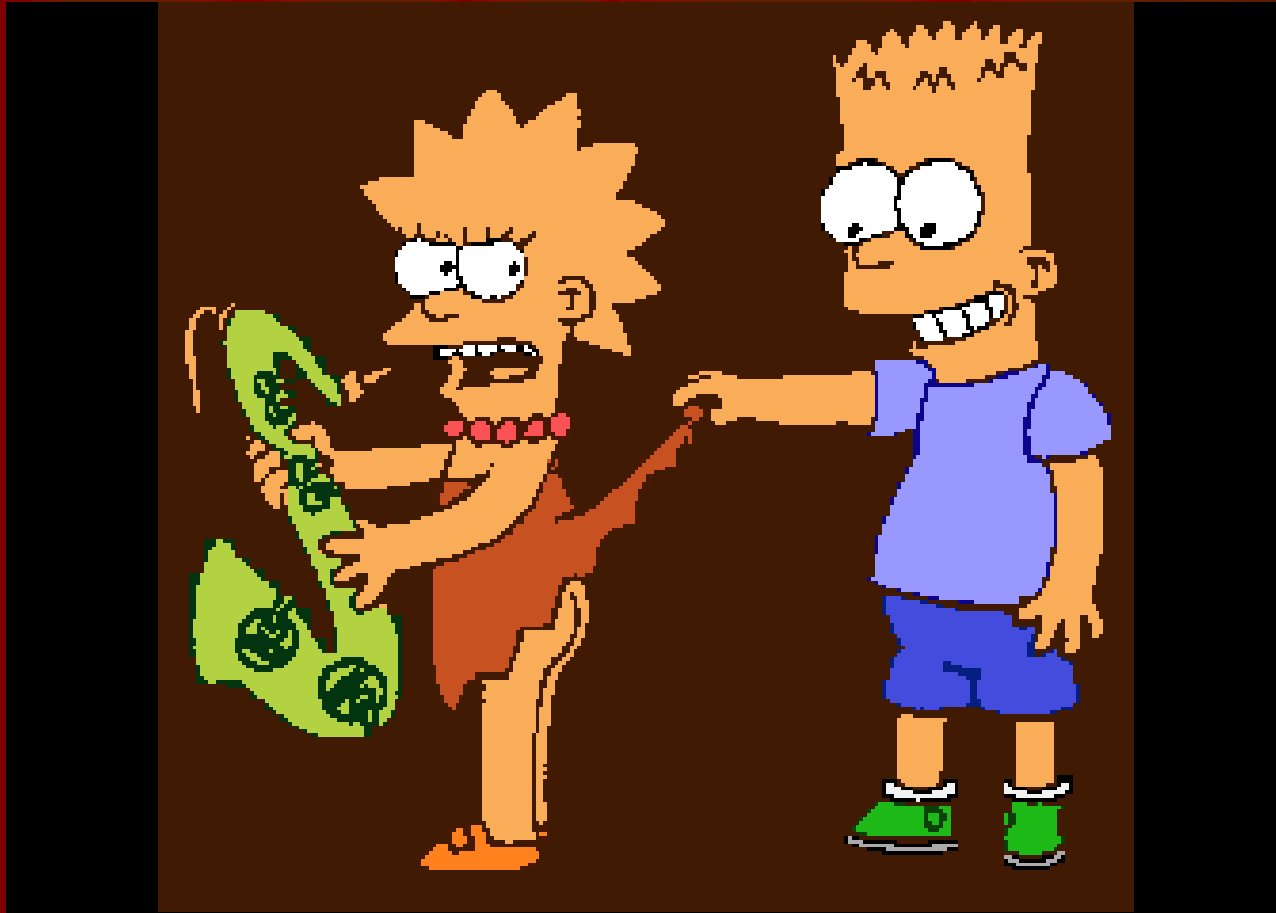


Warning Signs & “Red Flags”

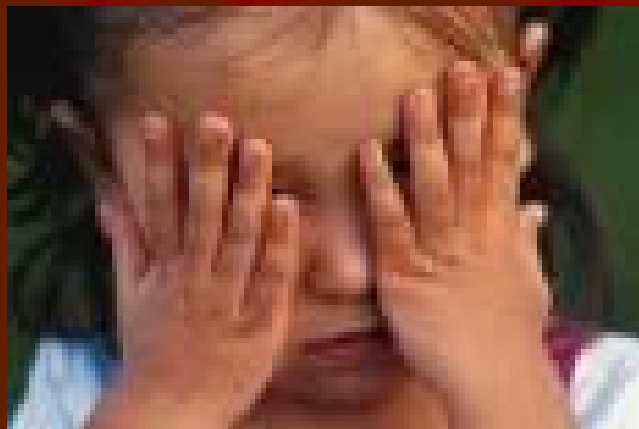
- Act out sexually when they feel ‘jumpy, funny, mad or bad’.
- Most report feeling worse after the behavior, not better (all girls in this group and some 60-70% of the boys).
- Most have witnessed extreme physical violence between their caretakers.



Responses & Interventions



IMPORTANT NOTE



Much of the shame and psychological damage that occurs -- not only with child victims of sexual abuse, but also with sexually reactive children -- stems from the reactionary behaviors of adults.

APPROPRIATE RESPONSES

- Inappropriate or problematic sexual behavior in children is not a clear indicator that a child has been sexually abused.
- Some inappropriate sexual behavior in children should be dealt with in the way you would deal with all inappropriate behavior.

APPROPRIATE RESPONSES

REMAIN CALM

Do not overreact
as most sexual
behaviors in
children are
within the
typical or
expected range.



APPROPRIATE RESPONSES

- Matter of fact way – “this has happened, and it is not acceptable behavior in school.”
- Provide an open environment in which they can ask question and learn about sexuality.

APPROPRIATE RESPONSES

- Keep clear, dated and factual records of your observations of the child and his/her behavior.
- Talk with others about the behavior.
- Abuse and/or law enforcement report?

MODIFYING INAPPROPRIATE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

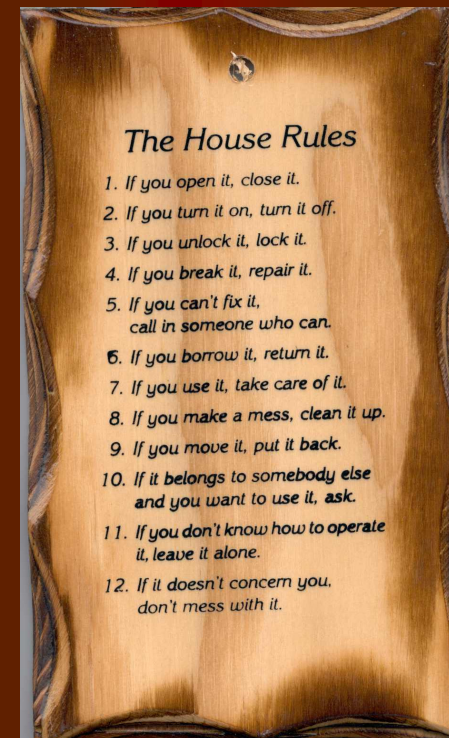
- Most children will stop the behavior if they are told the rules, mildly restricted, well supervised, and praised for appropriate behavior.
- Use the correct words for body parts
- Provide clear boundaries.
- Provide positive consequences for appropriate behavior and a structured approach to inappropriate behavior.



SPECIFIC HOUSE RULES

Create Environments that Reduce Anxiety and Promote Safety

1. Develop, write & role play SAFETY PLANS
2. Establish specific 'House Rules' regarding touching



SAFETY PLANS

How they work!

MODIFYING INAPPROPRIATE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

SIGHT & SOUND SUPERVISION



SPECIFIC HOUSE RULES

Create Environments that Reduce Anxiety and Promote Safety

SUPERVISION! SUPERVISION!

- ***Providing intensive supervision is a must!***
- Do not leave children alone with younger or more vulnerable children.
- Require a higher level of supervision compared to most children.
- The First Meeting!!!!



SPECIFIC HOUSE RULES

Create Environments that Reduce Anxiety and Promote Safety

PERSONAL TOUCH

- Ask permission to touch.
- Immediately address any touch that feels uncomfortable or that is hurtful.
- Slowly teach children about good, nurturing touch such as less intrusive touches such as side hugs, pats on the back, tag.

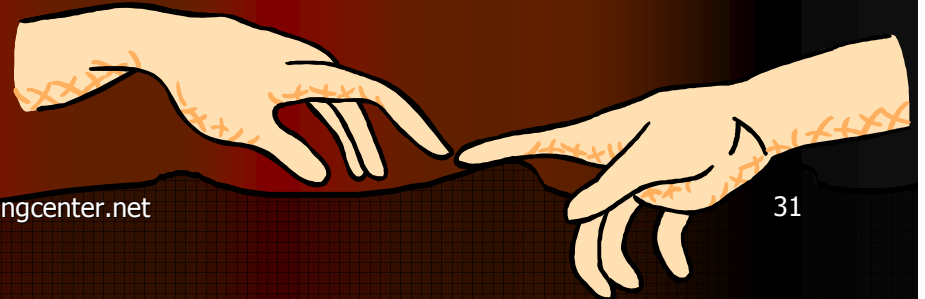


SPECIFIC HOUSE RULES

Create Environments that Reduce Anxiety and Promote Safety

PERSONAL TOUCH (Cont.)

- Set limits for children that need or pursue constant touch or contact.
- Allow children to say “no” to touch and don’t be hurt or persuade them into touches they are clearly uncomfortable with.
- Give appropriate physical contact but also teach children to respect boundaries and personal space.



SPECIFIC HOUSE RULES

Create Environments that Reduce Anxiety and Promote Safety

SEXUAL TALK

- Monitor sexual talk between children.
- Talk openly about sexual matters in a developmentally appropriate and respectful way.
- Eliminate exposure to sexually stimulating materials.
- Talk to children and teach them what is appropriate.



SPECIFIC HOUSE RULES

Create Environments that Reduce Anxiety and Promote Safety



PRIVACY

- Teach the importance of boundaries and the right to privacy.
- Allow private spots, drawer and/or diaries/journals.
- Search drawers or read diaries with permission and in youth's presence.

SPECIFIC HOUSE RULES

**Create Environments that Reduce Anxiety
and Promote Safety**



AT HOME

- Sleep in own beds. Own room is ideal.
- Care when tucking children in at night (Male vs. female, closeness).
- Leave lights and doors open for children who are fearful.

SPECIFIC HOUSE RULES

**Create Environments that Reduce Anxiety
and Promote Safety**

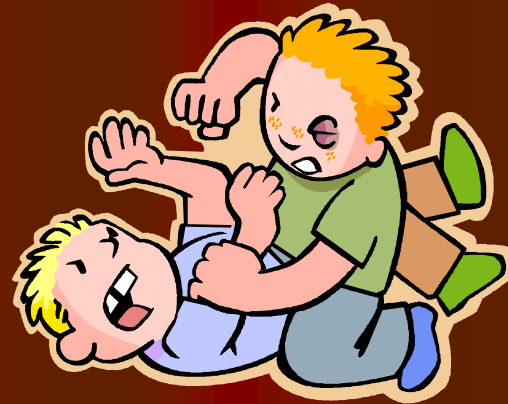


AT HOME

- Require proper clothing at all times & for all family members.
- Knock on bathroom & bedroom doors and wait for permission to enter (unless an emergency).

SPECIFIC HOUSE RULES

**Create Environments that Reduce Anxiety
and Promote Safety**



HORSEPLAY

- Reduce or eliminate horseplay such as tickling (coercive) or wrestling (starting point for intimate behaviors, causes anxiety, guise to sexually touch other children).

SPECIFIC HOUSE RULES

Create Environments that Reduce Anxiety and Promote Safety



PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT

- Do not use physical punishment.
- Do not use punishment that is cruel or humiliating.

INTERVENING

When a Child is Acting Out Sexually or Inappropriately

3. Teach the child and all family members about 'House Rules'
4. Intervene and confront child's sexually acting behavior

INTERVENING

When a Child is Acting Out Sexually or Inappropriately

EDUCATION

- Teach about Good Touch, Bad Touch and Secret Touching.
- Help him/her focus on the difference between good touching, bad touching and secret touching.
- Provide prevention education.
- Provide regular sexuality education.

INTERVENING

When a Child is Acting Out Sexually or Inappropriately

THERAPY & COUNSELING

- Can be very helpful to any child who has suffered abuse or neglect.
- Effective treatment should address the child within the context of family relationships and should involve the children's caregivers (e.g., foster family).
- DOESN'T WORK IF YOU ARE NOT INVOLVED AND MAY LEAD TO MORE PROBLEMS IN YOUR HOME.

INTERVENING

When a Child is Acting Out Sexually or Inappropriately

THERAPY & COUNSELING

- Especially helpful for children who have an established pattern of sexually acting out or sexual aggressiveness.
- Should focus on boundaries.
- Does not “fix” a child. Is not a cure all.

Support for Foster Parents?

- Foster Parent Liaison
- Family Care Counselors (FCC's)
- PSF Supervisors & Administration
- PSF Quality Operation Managers
- Therapist
- Guardian ad Litem (GAL's)
- Child Welfare Attorneys
- THE JUDGE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Thank You

