

## Developing a Safety Plan

The development of a safety plan requires input from caregivers, family members, and the child/adolescent with sexual behaviour problems. All parties should think carefully and candidly about times and situations when the child/adolescent is most likely to have problems. *It is important to be as specific as possible.* A safety plan should include all environments that the child/adolescent comes in contact with (i.e. home, school, community). When appropriate, ensure that the safety plan is well communicated to all those working with the child/adolescent (i.e. support staff, school, babysitters, etc.).

A safety plan can be created in two formats. For younger children or youth with developmental delay, a plan outlining concerns, behavioural expectations, and adult intervention is beneficial. For older youth/adolescents a safety plan can be created as a contract, placing more responsibility on the youth.

Please refer to the item titled 'Safety Plan Template' (for younger children/developmentally delayed).

### A. Reasons for the Safety Plan

The first step in the development of a safety plan is to clearly define the risks, problems or issues.

*Example: Jane touches herself inappropriately while watching television in the family room. This occurs daily.*

*Example: Jordan uses inappropriate language when playing with other children on the playground equipment.*

### B. Rules and Expectations

i. Be clear about whom or what you need to protect, such as:

- The child
- Other children
- Property
- Pets
- People in the community

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*Example: Jane's behaviour is inappropriate to other children and family members in the home. Family members will be upset with Jane and want her to leave the family room.*

*Example: Children and adults are offended by Jordan's language. Jordan will be unwelcome on the playground equipment and will not be allowed to play there with the neighbourhood children.*

ii. Pinpoint when the behaviour occurs and where it is likely to occur, for example:

- When bedroom doors are shut and others are in the same room
- When left unsupervised
- When told no or limits are set
- While doing mindless activities
- When returning to home
- When visitors come to the house
- At night

iii. Determine who is involved in the plan.

- Determine which adult is doing what action
- Remember to share the plan with all caregivers, including short term babysitters.

iv. What reinforcements are in place for positive choices? What consequences are in place for negative choices?

v. Consider options for the safety plan. For example:

- Appropriate activities - See "**Activity Levels of Risk**" handout.
- Door alarms
- Doors are to stay open while playing with friends or siblings
- An adult needs to be on the same floor (of the house) when with siblings or friends
- No pets in the bedrooms or bathrooms
- Never alone with pets
- No room mates
- No overnight stays with friends
- Closed doors when using the bathroom

*Example: Mom or Dad will give Jane a stress ball to squeeze while watching television. Respond to Jane calmly by saying "Jane you are touching yourself in a way that is upsetting to the rest of us. Please keep your hands busy by squeezing this stress ball."*

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*Example: Dad will go with Jordan to the playground to supervise him while he plays on the playground equipment. Dad will tell Jordan - before he begins to play on the playground equipment - that if he uses language that is upsetting to others (swear words, crude language) he will have to leave the playground. If there is any inappropriate language Dad and Jordan will leave the playground*

### **C. Support Plan**

i. Determine when the plan will be reviewed.

- When will you reassess the plan?
- What change are you looking for within your child/adolescent or the behaviour?
- How will change influence future safety plans/privileges?

ii. What if the plan fails?

- If preventative measures don't work, have a list of support people to call to help problem solve until you find a solution that works.
- If the child/adolescent's behaviour is a crime against another person or property you/parents may have to call the police.

iii. Re-evaluate the plan with all involved to ensure that the plan works for the family, home and community.

- What worked well?
- What didn't work well?
- When did the plan fail?
- Was anything overlooked?
- What can you do better next time?

### **D. Available Supports**

Determine who is an available support, what their role is, and when to contact them.

*Example: Mary, Jane's social worker can be of help for problem solving.*