

# PROTECTIVE BEHAVIOURS

## Teaching Guide





# ABOUT THE PROTECTIVE BEHAVIOURS PROGRAM

## History of the Protective Behaviours program

The Protective Behaviours program was developed in the mid-1970s by Peg Flandreau West, a school pastoral care worker in Wisconsin, USA. In her work with children, Peg became aware that the stranger danger concept was not enough to protect children from harm that is caused by people known to and trusted by the child. Peg developed and refined the Protective Behaviours program to empower and protect children.

The Protective Behaviours program came to Australia in the 1980s when Peg introduced the 'Basic Essentials' manual. The program was initially delivered by the Victoria Police Service and it has since expanded across Australia and is supported by government and non-government agencies in health, education, disability, and child protection sectors.

WA Child Safety Services honours Peg's legacy as we continue to deliver Protective Behaviours training throughout the community.

## About the WACSS Protective Behaviours program

Protective Behaviours is a personal safety program designed to empower children, young people, and adults with strategies to promote safety and resilience.

The Protective Behaviours program teaches and promotes concepts of emotional intelligence, empowerment, assertiveness, problem-solving, and an understanding of safety. In teaching these concepts and strategies, Protective Behaviours aims to prevent abuse, increase safety, and reduce violence.

Protective Behaviours' messages can be delivered in a clear, simple, and non-confronting way by using fun and engaging activities developed in accordance with children's ages and developmental stages at home, in educational settings, and throughout the wider community.

The WACSS Protective Behaviours program is represented in the lessons below:

**LESSON 1:** Theme 1: 'We all have the right to be safe and feel safe at all times', and Feelings

**LESSON 2:** Warning Signs

**LESSON 3:** Safety Check

**LESSON 4:** Theme 2: 'We can talk with someone about anything, no matter what it is', and Networks

**LESSON 5:** Safe and Unsafe Secrets

**LESSON 6:** Persistence

**LESSON 7:** Body Safety

**LESSON 8:** Public and Private

**LESSON 9:** Personal Space and Consent

**LESSON 10:** The Right to Say No

**LESSON 11:** Theme Reinforcement and Assessment (optional lesson)



## WHY DO WE NEED TO TEACH PROTECTIVE BEHAVIOURS?

All Western Australian government and non-government schools are mandated to provide abuse prevention curriculum to students across all year levels.



**OF CHILDREN ABUSED,  
WERE ABUSED BY  
SOMEONE THEY KNOW  
AND TRUST**

(Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006)



**OF CHILD  
SEXUAL ABUSE IS  
COMMITTED BY  
CHILDREN AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE**

(Quadara, 2014)



**1 IN 3 GIRLS AND 1 IN 7 BOYS  
WILL EXPERIENCE SOME FORM OF SEXUAL  
ABUSE BEFORE THEY TURN 18**

(Quadara, 2014)

### CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE OFFENDERS ARE



**FAMILY**



**KNOWN TO THE CHILD/FAMILY**



**STRANGERS**

(US Department of Justice, 2017)

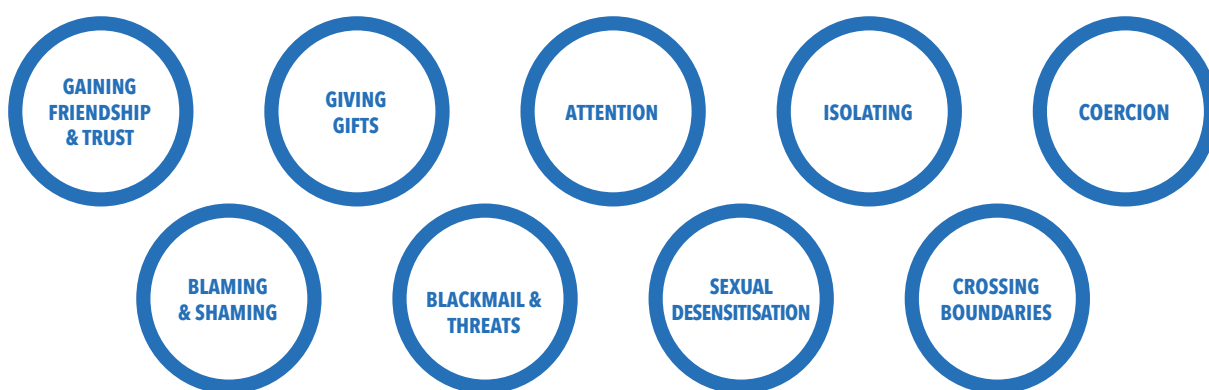
# GROOMING BEHAVIOURS

Child sexual abuse thrives in secrecy. Child sex offenders may groom children, families, and communities in order to sexually abuse children. "Grooming is a conscious, deliberate, and carefully orchestrated approach used by the offender. The goal of grooming is to permit a sexual encounter and keep it a secret"<sup>1</sup>. Grooming can happen in 'real' life or in the online world.

Grooming behaviours can be difficult to identify because the abuser can appear like a 'good' person – friendly, helpful, and supportive.

## What can grooming look like?

The following behaviours may be exhibited by child sex offenders seeking to abuse a child.



**GAINING FRIENDSHIP AND TRUST** – helping with homework, showing favouritism.

**GIVING GIFTS** – lollies, toys, alcohol. Gifts can be used as bribes for the child to engage in inappropriate behaviour.

**ATTENTION** – special outings, flattery, treating the child as older than his/her age. This serves to help the child feel special and believe that the relationship is 'special'.

**ISOLATING** – the abuser deliberately finds reasons to be alone with the child.

**COERCION** – the abuser may coerce the child into inappropriate behaviour, for example, "I love you and this is what people who love each other do".

**BLAMING AND SHAMING** – the abuser may place responsibility on the victim and use shaming language.

**BLACKMAIL AND THREATS** – the abuser may use blackmail to ensure the victim keeps the abuse a secret. This may be through threatening to share inappropriate images of the victim or threatening violence on the child or his/her family.

**SEXUAL DESENSITISATION** – the abuser may talk about sexual activity or show pornography to the child to normalise the inappropriate behaviour.

**CROSSING BOUNDARIES** – the abuser may seemingly 'accidentally' behave inappropriately, such as walking into the bathroom, getting undressed in front of the child, or brushing past the child and touching his/her private parts.

**It is important to note that offenders may use none, some, or all of these behaviours and may not apply them in this order.**

<sup>1</sup> Knoll. (2010). Teacher sexual misconduct: grooming patterns and female offenders, *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, vol. 19, pp. 371–386.



## BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

### How to use this resource

This resource enables educators to teach the comprehensive Protective Behaviours program across 11 lessons. The lessons are divided into the following year groups:

PRE-PRIMARY

YEARS 1 - 2

YEARS 3 - 4

YEARS 5 - 6

Each topic is explored in an age appropriate way and built upon as the student progresses through year levels.

Depending on the developmental level and previous exposure to Protective Behaviours, the class may be more suited to activities in the previous year group. Extension activities are also provided to reinforce the learning concepts.

Educators can choose to use the lesson plans to teach explicitly or use them as a guide to incorporate their own games, resources, and ideas. Protective Behaviours is a program that is best taught by including the framework and language into everyday situations and practice.

These Lesson Plans are mapped to:

- > Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority National Quality Standard;
- > Western Australian Curriculum; and
- > Australian Curriculum.

A summary of the curriculum mapping can be found at the beginning of each year group section. Detailed mapping is documented within each lesson.

### ICON LEGEND



WACSS  
POSTER



TEACHING  
RESOURCE



ACTIVITY  
SHEET



CERTIFICATE



VIDEO



BOOK



CONVERSATION  
STARTER



TIP

# IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

## Parent involvement

It is recommended that parents and caregivers are informed and educated about the Protective Behaviours program. We encourage schools to host a WA Child Safety Services Parent Workshop where parents/caregivers can attend and ask questions about the program or abuse prevention more broadly. When parents are educated and informed about the Protective Behaviours program they can continue their children's learning and reinforce the concepts in the home.

Visit the **WACSS website** for a sample parent letter.

## Process congruent with content

When delivering the Protective Behaviours program, it is essential that the teaching process is congruent with the content. This means ensuring the teaching of the program is in line with the foundations of the program (safety). For example, ensure students understand they have the right to feel safe during the sessions by clearly stating they have the choice to pass on an activity.

Remember the safety 'recipe': **SAFETY = CHOICE + CONTROL + TIME LIMIT**

It is important to create an environment where students feel safe and comfortable discussing their feelings and thoughts without fear of ridicule or judgement. Before commencing teaching of Protective Behaviours curriculum, remind students of the classroom rules. If you do not have classroom rules, this is a good opportunity to develop these as a class. Here is an example of what to consider:

- > Respect others' opinions and feelings.
- > One person speaking at a time.
- > Practise active listening.
- > Everyone has a right to 'pass'.
- > Everyone's contribution is valued and acknowledged.
- > Use the strategies of one-step removed problem-solving and protective interruption.

It is important to revisit the group rules and confidentiality at the beginning of each lesson.

## Social norms

Children may be socialised in ways that reinforce unhealthy norms. Examples might include 'children should be seen and not heard', 'boys don't cry', 'if boys hit you it means they like you', 'children should do as they are told', and 'respect your elders'. These unwritten rules can impact on our children's physical and emotional safety.

The Protective Behaviours program encourages educators to explore the source and content of social norms, challenging those that could impact on personal safety.



## One-step removed problem solving

Problem solving games are a helpful way for children to practise their skills of keeping themselves safe. One-step removed problem solving is a strategy for teaching children how to respond in unsafe situations without them being or feeling unsafe. It can be easier to pretend someone else has the problem - like a puppet or a character in a story. This is less frightening than thinking that these things will really happen to them. We can use books, puppets, videos, and the question, "How could someone keep safe even if...?" to help children identify solutions to problems or situations.

Students may also use this strategy to find out information about something that concerns them or to check out an adult's reaction before fully disclosing. For example, a student may speak to an educator about a 'friend' with a particular problem before they decide to share that it is him or her with the problem to resolve.

## Review of online resources

Videos can be valuable resources to aid in learning; however, it is essential that you watch the resource first to determine the suitability and teaching points for your class. Careful consideration must be given to the emotional impact that some videos may have. It is essential to allow adequate time for deconstruction, reflection, and questions about the resource to ensure learning objectives are met and the end of the lesson is appropriately closed.

We recommend accessing our recommended videos using a YouTube account to avoid issues with age restrictions. All videos are available on the WA Child Safety Services website.

## Closing the session

Topics discussed in Protective Behaviours may relate to students' personal experiences or evoke strong feelings. It is important to monitor the impact of the content on students. When planning your Protective Behaviours lessons it is essential to give consideration to how you will 'wrap-up' and close the session.

Consider closing the lesson with a positive activity, story, or reflection to help resolve feelings that may have arisen. Ensure you allow time for sensitive discussion and reinforce steps students can take if they are feeling unsafe or need to talk some more about anything; i.e. talk with a trusted adult (e.g. teacher, chaplain, or contact the Kids Helpline).

## Teachable moments

Look for teachable moments in everyday classroom life to reinforce Protective Behaviours concepts. Consistent reinforcement of the concepts is valuable for students to incorporate the learning into their lives. Some examples include:

- > Displaying the Themes poster in your classroom.
- > Referring to Warnings Signs and the Safety Check when situations arise (public speaking, assemblies, concerts, or excursions).
- > Reinforcement of personal space in the playground and classroom.



## Protective interruption

Protective interruption is a strategy used by the educator to stop a student from making a disclosure in a situation that may increase their vulnerability or cause distress to other students. This strategy is to be used in a group setting if a student (or adult) starts to disclose abuse or an unsafe experience that has happened to them or someone they know. The aim is to pause the disclosure until the student is in a safe and confidential environment. This strategy also protects others from hearing a potentially distressing experience.

In these situations, it is important to let the student know that you will follow up as soon as possible. Some examples might be:

"Jake, I see you have something really important to tell me. Let's wait until recess so you have my full attention."

"Maddie, let's go and sit over there so I can hear you properly".

Once you are in a confidential area with the child, listen in a supportive manner and provide reassurance that telling you was the right thing to do (further guidance about how to respond to a disclosure of maltreatment is below).

Protective interruption is used in a group setting; however, if a student (or adult) starts to disclose abuse and you are the only person present, the student can be supported to continue.

It is then important to follow the reporting protocols of your school and the law (e.g. mandatory reporting).

## Responding to a disclosure of maltreatment

The way an adult responds to a child who discloses maltreatment can have a great impact on his/her capacity to recover and seek help.

It is important to follow your school's procedures if an individual discloses child maltreatment.

In the absence of known procedures, WA Child Safety Services recommends responding in the following way:

- > Ensure the child is in a private location.
- > Be supportive and listen.
- > Always believe the child.
- > Reassure the child that telling you was the right thing to do.
- > Maintain a calm appearance.
- > Be truthful – don't promise to keep it a secret.
- > Let the child use his/her own words.
- > Reiterate that it is not the child's fault.
- > Do not push for information or ask for details of the abuse.
- > Let the child know what will happen next.
- > Do not confront the alleged perpetrator.
- > Write down what you heard as soon as possible.
- > Report to the Department of Communities.



# EMPOWERING OUR CHILDREN



# PROTECTIVE BEHAVIOURS

Background information for lessons



# LESSON 1 – THEME 1 AND FEELINGS

## THEME 1: 'WE ALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE SAFE AND FEEL SAFE AT ALL TIMES'

There are 2 themes that underpin the Protective Behaviours program. Theme 1 is, 'We all have the right to be safe and feel safe at all times.' There are 5 main teaching points in this first theme.

**TEACHING POINT 1: We all** means everybody. You, me, adults, children, friends, family, strangers, people all over the world - there are no exceptions.

**TEACHING POINT 2:** What is a **right**? Educate children about what a 'right' is, and what rights they have. Children are born with rights. Rights are not earned and cannot be taken away. Children's rights are documented in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Human rights are based on dignity, equality, and mutual respect – regardless of nationality, religion, or beliefs. Human rights are about being treated fairly, treating others fairly, and having the ability to make choices about our own lives.<sup>2</sup>

These basic human rights are:

- > **Universal:** they belong to all of us – everybody in the world
- > **Inalienable:** they cannot be taken away from us
- > **Indivisible and interdependent:** governments should not be able to pick and choose which are respected.

Explore with children how rights link with responsibilities. For example, if I have the right to feel safe at all times, that means I have the responsibility to make sure my behaviour does not cause another person to feel unsafe. We can also explore the difference between rights and wants.

**TEACHING POINT 3:** What does it mean to **be safe**? We all have the right to be safe from harm. There are situations where children may feel emotionally safe but not be physically safe (e.g. in the context of abuse, where the abuser is a loved one or someone the child trusts).

**TEACHING POINT 4:** What does it mean to **feel safe**? People often do not think about what 'feeling safe' feels like until that feeling goes away. Help children to identify what 'feeling safe' means for them. Safety is a personal, individual experience. What makes one person feel safe may not make someone else feel safe (e.g. holding a snake).

**TEACHING POINT 5:** What does **at all times** mean? 24 hours a day, 7 days a week – day and night. No matter where we are; at home, school, in public, a friend's house. There are no exceptions. We have the right to feel safe at all times, even if we have done the wrong thing.

### NOT EVERYONE WILL RESPECT OUR RIGHT TO BE SAFE AND FEEL SAFE.

The Protective Behaviours program assists children with identifying when their right to safety is not being respected, how to problem solve, and how to access help.

<sup>2</sup> Amnesty International. (2019). What are human rights? Retrieved from <https://www.amnesty.org.au/how-it-works/what-are-human-rights>



## FEELINGS

Feelings underpin the Protective Behaviours program. It is important for all children to be encouraged to develop emotional literacy; to be able to recognise, understand, and appropriately express their feelings from a young age. Emotional literacy helps children communicate with others, negotiate situations, and develop clear thought patterns.

Children's responses to the different emotions they experience can impact their choices and actions. Children being aware and 'in charge' of their feelings are important elements of developing empathy, self-confidence, and responsibility.

Teaching and modelling a range of emotions and strategies to manage them builds children's self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills, contributing to their sense of wellbeing.

Help children to develop their feelings vocabulary and include safe and unsafe feelings. Avoid telling a child not to feel scared, or that they are silly to feel scared. Instead provide understanding, reassurance, and encouragement to find solutions to different situations.



WACSS FEELING CARDS



- > Tell me about a time you felt....
- > What was it that made you feel that way?
- > Who are people you can talk with about your feelings?



## LESSON 2 – WARNING SIGNS

Warning Signs are the involuntary responses that we feel in our bodies when we feel unsafe, or when we are in an exciting or challenging situation. Just like our bodies give us signals to let us know we are hungry, cold, or thirsty, our bodies give us signals to tell us we may be in an unsafe situation. We may also have a 'gut feeling' about a person or situation that could be a sign for us to be cautious.

Some of these Warning Signs may result in the 'alarm' reaction described by Dr Bruce Perry. "In the initial stages of threat, an alarm reaction is initiated. The alarm reaction is characterised by a large increase in activity of the sympathetic nervous system, resulting in increased heart rate, blood pressure, respiration, a release of stored sugar, an increase in muscle tone, a sense of hyper-vigilance, and tuning out of all non-critical information. All of these actions prepare the body for defence - to fight with or run away from the perceived or sensed threat". Dissociation (or freezing) is an alternative psychological response to overwhelming threat.<sup>3</sup>

Children can learn to identify their Warning Signs so they can seek help if they may be unsafe. Examples of Warning Signs include pounding heart, butterflies in the tummy, jelly legs, sweaty palms, and an uneasy feeling.

Adults can help children learn how to respond if they feel a Warning Sign by asking themselves these questions:



- > Why do I feel my Warning Signs?
- > Am I feeling unsafe or worried?
- > If I am feeling unsafe or worried, what can I do to feel safe again?



It is important to note that children who have experienced trauma may not be able to identify their Warning Signs due to them being in a state of 'hyper-arousal' – a persistent state of alarm.

### EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Our bodies' Warning Signs may be a sign of alarm. When we are in a state of alarm, it can be difficult to think clearly about what to do next. When children are able to regulate their emotional responses, they become less vulnerable to the ongoing impact of stress. Also, they are more likely to have the emotional resources to maintain healthy friendships, and their capacity to focus and learn.

Teaching children emotional regulation techniques and strategies (such as slow, deep breathing, or visualisation) to help their bodies and minds to calm down is important.

Teach children to stop, use their regulation strategy (e.g. deep breathing), and think about what is happening around them.

Encourage children to tell a trusted adult on their network if they feel their Warning Signs and are feeling unsafe. Remind children to keep on telling trusted adults (or contact the Kids Helpline) until they feel safe again.

<sup>3</sup> Perry, B., Pollard, R.A., Blakley, T.L., Baker, W.L., Vigilante, D. (1995). Childhood Trauma, the Neurobiology of Adaptation & Use-dependent Development of the Brain: How States become Traits. *Infant Mental Health Journal*. Vol 16, Issue 4, pp 271–291.



# LESSON 3 – SAFETY CHECK

Feeling safe is an emotional and physical state; therefore, it may be different for each of us. We can help children learn that having different feelings to other people is okay, and we need to listen to what our own bodies tell us about how we are feeling. Every child has the right to make their own decisions about what feels safe and unsafe. As adults we can respect how children feel while ensuring they are safe. Children can also be taught how to respect how others feel.

The WACSS Protective Behaviours program teaches children to do a Safety Check to assess how they are feeling and if they need to seek help. The Safety Check introduces children to assessing risk and making informed choices about what action they can take.

In everyday life there are situations and choices we make that involve assessing risk and making informed choices, for example, climbing a tree, going for a drive with a friend, or going to a party. Some of the things we may consider when making a decision are:

- > Do I have a choice and control, and do I know the time limit?
- > What are the risks involved?
- > Do I feel safe enough to participate?
- > If I am going to participate, to what extent?
- > Is there a better way of doing it that may increase the safety of the situation?
- > Is there an adult nearby to help if I need it?

The key idea is to think about the potential risks and make an informed decision. As adults we have learned and developed this skill – we assess risk regularly.

It is important to provide children with opportunities to learn these skills. Adventurous, free, undirected play is an ideal way for children to develop and practise their risk assessment skills. Children who have developed risk assessment skills are more likely to have the capacity to assess risk and make an informed choice when their trusted adults are not with them.

It is natural to want to protect children from harm, so it can be easy to step in before giving our children an opportunity to assess the risk and problem solve themselves. It is important to find a balance by allowing children (in a safe environment) the space to practise assessing risk.



## SAFE

Feeling safe (physically and emotionally) will mean different things to different people. Other emotions associated with feeling safe may be calm, secure, loved, and happy. When we are feeling safe we have some choice, control, and we know there is a time limit to what we are doing.

## FUN AND SCARY

We may feel excited and feel some Warning Signs, but there is a choice to do the activity, some control over how it is done, and we know the duration of the activity.



**RISKING FOR A REASON**

Some activities may not be fun, but there is a reason to do it (e.g. dentist visit, school assembly). We may feel our Warning Signs, have limited choice about doing it and less control about how it is done, but we know how long it will take.

**UNSAFE**

Feeling unsafe involves feeling that our physical or emotional safety is threatened. There is little or no free choice about what is happening, little or no control, and we do not know how long it will go for. People often feel their Warning Signs if they feel unsafe.

**In the context of abuse there is little or no choice or control, and no certainty about how long it will last.**

Using scenarios and problem solving strategies can help children to develop confidence in responding to a range of situations.

It is important to teach children that a game that may start out fun can change so they begin to feel unsafe. Children can be taught that even if they initially agreed to play a game or do an activity, they can change their mind and stop if they feel unsafe.

We can reinforce the importance of help-seeking behaviours in these instances – a child can always talk with a person on his/her network, another trusted adult, or contact the Kids Helpline.

**For example:****ASSESS:**

I am at the Royal Show in line for a scary ride. I feel my Warning Signs, I am feeling unsure about whether to go on the ride.

- > **Do I have the choice to go on the ride?** Yes I can choose not to, but I really want to. However, once the ride starts I have no choice, I can't get off until it finishes.
- > **Do I have control?** Yes I have some control. I can choose to ride with a friend or family member and I could close my eyes if I get scared.
- > **Is there a time limit?** Yes, I know the ride lasts for 3 minutes.

**RESPOND:**

I am Risking for a Reason. I feel my Warning Signs, I have some choice, I have some control, and I know the time limit. I can do some deep breathing to calm my nerves and remind myself why I am doing this - because I want to go on the ride, to feel the adrenaline rush, and to have fun with my friends.





# SAFETY CHECK

Assess

Safe

Fun & Scary

Risking for  
a Reason

Unsafe

If I am feeling worried, scared, or unsafe

I can ...

Respond



Stop & look away



Yell "No!"



Move away



Scream for help



Get help from a trusted adult

OR CONTACT:



kids**helpline**  
Anytime Any Reason



# LESSON 4 – THEME 2 AND NETWORKS

## THEME 2: 'WE CAN TALK WITH SOMEONE ABOUT ANYTHING, NO MATTER WHAT IT IS'

We can explore this theme in detail with children through these main points:

**TEACHING POINT 1: talk with.** Encourage children to communicate their thoughts and emotions. Foster an environment where communication and sharing feelings is welcome.

**TEACHING POINT 2: someone.** Encourage children to identify trusted adults in their lives who they feel safe talking with. Trusted adults who are available, will listen, believe them, and help them if needed. Explore the difference between someone, anyone, and everyone.

**TEACHING POINT 3: anything,** no matter what it is – good, happy, weird, wrong, or even if it is something small. As the adults in the child's life we need to be willing to have open, honest conversations with children about any topic.

## NETWORKS

A network is a group of 5 adults chosen by the child who they believe will provide them with support, assistance, and if necessary, protection. These people are called network helpers. Networks may be referred to as a Helping Hand Network.

Networks help to raise children's awareness of the importance of seeking support in potentially threatening or abusive situations, and to enable children to learn that it is okay to ask for help.

By assisting students to create a network we can discuss the qualities we need in trusted adults, as well as how we can identify and contact those people. It is important that we do not tell children who to put on their network as it needs to be their choice.

Network helpers need to:

- > Be an adult
- > Be available
- > Listen
- > Believe, and
- > Provide help if needed.



**FREE Network Activity Sheet**  
available for download via  
[www.wachildsafety.com.au](http://www.wachildsafety.com.au)



We encourage a variety of people from a child's life to be on their network. Ensure children know about the Kids Helpline. Visit the Kids Helpline website for further information and resources. 000 can be placed on the child's network 'up their sleeve' just in case.

Children may want to include a pet, God, or a deceased relative on their network. Children can put these in the palm of the hand as they can be good to talk with and practise telling, but it is important to remind children of the importance of telling a trusted adult.

#### TEACH CHILDREN:



- > Their network helpers' phone numbers/email addresses.
- > How to contact them.
- > How to call 000 and the Kids Helpline.
- > Ways they can introduce a conversation to a network helper.

#### NETWORK REVIEW

For several reasons, over time a network helper may no longer be appropriate to be on the child's network. Encourage regular review of network helpers. Reviewing the network is also a good opportunity to check in with children to see if they have needed to talk with a network helper and if the helper did their job – listened, believed the child, and helped (took action).



The end of the school term or school year is a valuable time to review children's networks to ensure they have trusted adults they can talk with over the school holidays.



# LESSON 5 – SAFE AND UNSAFE SECRETS

Secrets can play a vital part in child sexual abuse. Perpetrators are less likely to abuse a child who is unwilling to keep an unsafe secret, as it poses too big a risk for the perpetrator.

Develop an expectation that secrets can always be shared with someone we trust. With young children it is encouraged that we have surprises, rather than secrets. Educate and discuss with children the difference between a safe and unsafe secret.



## SAFE SECRETS OR SURPRISES

- > You only need to keep the secret for a short time (the secret is told eventually).
- > Everyone is feeling happy and excited.
- > No one is getting hurt on the inside or the outside of their body.
- > You can tell someone on your network if you want to.
- > There is choice and control about telling the secret.



## UNSAFE SECRETS

- > Someone is feeling worried or unsafe (they might feel their Warning Signs).
- > Someone is getting hurt on the inside or outside of their body.
- > The secret must be kept for a long time or forever.
- > Someone has broken the Body Safety Rules.
- > Someone said if you tell, something bad will happen.
- > There is no choice and control about telling the secret.

# LESSON 6 – PERSISTENCE

Persistence is a life skill that can be applied to all aspects of a child's life. Persistence from children can be viewed in a negative light in our society (e.g. nagging) – we can change that perspective and ensure that we give children the opportunity to practise being persistent without adverse consequences.

Key findings from 'No one noticed, no one heard: A study of disclosures of childhood abuse'<sup>4</sup> showed that "many disclosures were either not recognised or understood, or they were dismissed, played down or ignored; this meant that no action was taken to protect or support the young person."

We can help children understand that sometimes we may not get help or assistance the first time we ask for it.



**1 IN 3 AUSTRALIANS  
WOULD NOT BELIEVE CHILDREN  
IF THEY DISCLOSED THEY WERE  
BEING ABUSED**

(Bravehearts, 2015) Child Sexual Assault: Facts and Statistics

Teaching persistence helps children learn that if they are feeling unsafe, or feel their Warning Signs, they need to keep on telling people on their network until they feel safe and get the help they need. Remind children that there are numbers 'up their sleeve' they can call (Kids Helpline and Emergency 000).

<sup>4</sup> Allnock, D. and Miller, P. (2013) No one noticed, no one heard: a study of disclosures of childhood abuse. London: NSPCC



# LESSON 7 – BODY SAFETY

It is important to encourage the use of correct terminology for all body parts. Private parts of the body include penis, testicles, scrotum, bottom, anus, nipples, breasts, vagina, and vulva. We include the mouth as a private part due to child sexual abuse sometimes involving oral sex acts.

Teaching children anatomically correct terms can help promote positive body image, self-confidence, and open communication. It may also discourage perpetrators, and, in the event of abuse, help children and adults navigate the disclosure and forensic interview process.<sup>5</sup>

It is important to teach children to identify private parts of the body as those parts covered by bathers and underwear (also the mouth).

Private parts are private because no one is allowed to see, touch, or take a photo of them without a good reason (e.g. check up at the doctor). It is important for children to value their bodies, to learn how to take care of them, to recognise that they are the 'bosses' of their own bodies, and to respect other people's bodies.

## BODY SAFETY RULES

NO ONE SHOULD



**SEE**



**TOUCH**



**TAKE A PHOTO OR VIDEO OF**

THE PRIVATE PARTS OF YOUR BODY

**IF...**

YOUR  
**PRIVATE PARTS**  
ARE **HURTING**

YOU HAVE A  
**QUESTION**  
ABOUT YOUR  
**PRIVATE PARTS**

SOMEONE HAS  
**TOUCHED, OR**  
**ASKED TO TOUCH**  
YOUR  
**PRIVATE PARTS**

SOMEONE HAS  
**ASKED YOU, OR**  
**MADE YOU TOUCH**  
THEIR  
**PRIVATE PARTS**

**TELL A TRUSTED ADULT ON  
YOUR NETWORK OR CONTACT**

kidshelpline  
Anytime Any Reason  
1800 55 1800 | CALL | EMAIL | WEBCHAT



Approximately 30 to 60% of child sexual abuse is committed by children and young people.<sup>6</sup> It is also reported that child-on-child abuse is on the rise. When teaching Body Safety Rules it is important to teach children that these rules apply to everyone - whether it is another child, teenager, adult, friend, family member, or stranger.

A child must never be made to feel that it is his/her fault if the Body Safety Rules have been broken.

<sup>5</sup> Palumbo (2013). Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2013/04/the-case-for-teaching-kids-vagina-penis-and-vulva/274969/>

<sup>6</sup> Quadara, A. & Miller, R. (2014). *Sexual abuse and exploitation prevention: Effective responses*. Child Family Community Australia webinar presented on 28 April 2014.



# LESSON 8 – PUBLIC AND PRIVATE

Teaching children about the difference between public and private reinforces to children that there are some things that can be shared and some things that we do on our own. It is also helpful for teaching children about boundaries and consent. In the Protective Behaviours program we teach children parts of the body, clothes, places, behaviours, photos, videos, and information for application in the 'real' world and the online environment.

## PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PHOTOS/VIDEOS

The internet and portable devices have transformed the way pornography is accessed. It is no longer a matter of if children will see pornography, but when. Research indicates that children's first exposure to pornography is now in primary school, and the age of exposure is becoming lower.



**Anecdotally the average age of first exposure is 8 years old**



**Nearly one in ten 13 year olds is worried they are addicted to pornography**



**Pornography contributes to distorted ideas about sexuality and relationships**

Experts across the globe agree that exposure to pornography is a public health crisis. It is believed that pornography exposure is contributing to the 30 to 60% of child sexual abuse being committed by children and young people.<sup>7</sup> Experts believe this significant increase can be attributed to the easy access of online pornography, which gives children and young people distorted and unhealthy ideas about sexuality and relationships.

The public and private topic provides you with an ideal introduction and the language to explain pornography to primary school aged children. We suggest using the language 'private photos' and 'private videos'.

Avoid using the words 'rude' and 'bad' when describing private parts of the body or pornography. If a child sees, is sent, or is shown pornography we do not want them to think they are rude or bad, as this may discourage them from telling a trusted adult what they have seen.

Children may use the internet to find out more about their own bodies or to search a word they have heard (e.g. sex). What they will find may not be what they are expecting and may be highly graphic, confronting, and sometimes upsetting.

<sup>7</sup> Quadara, A. & Miller, R. (2014). *Sexual abuse and exploitation prevention: Effective responses*. Child Family Community Australia webinar presented on 28 April 2014.





It can be helpful to give children a range of 'in the moment' strategies if they do see private photos or videos.

- > Turn the device off.
- > Turn the device over or close the laptop.
- > Close or cover your eyes.
- > Look or move away.
- > Importantly, do not show friends or siblings.
- > Talk with a trusted adult about what you have seen.



### PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INFORMATION

From a young age, children can be taught about how their personal and private information is available on the internet, who has access to this information, and how this information may reflect on them.<sup>8</sup>

It's also valuable to help children understand that any information they provide online (including via text) can be shared more broadly than they might think. Even if their profile is set to private, they cannot control what their friends will do with the information that they post. Encourage students to think carefully before sharing images or messages online or on their mobile phone.

The online world is a public place. We can encourage children to think about what content (images, videos, text) they post about themselves and others.

<sup>8</sup> Office of the eSafety Commissioner. (2017). Digital reputation. Retrieved from [www.esafety.gov.au/education-resources/iparent/staying-safe/digital-reputation](http://www.esafety.gov.au/education-resources/iparent/staying-safe/digital-reputation).





# LESSON 9 – PERSONAL SPACE & CONSENT

Teaching children about personal space helps them develop an understanding of social distance and the different forms of touch. Children have the right to set their own personal space boundaries. We encourage adults not to pressure children to give anyone a hug, kiss, or any form of physical contact if they do not want to unless there is good reason (i.e. dentist visit). Children can be taught to be in charge of their own personal space and to respect others' personal space.

## I AM THE BOSS OF MY BODY!



As adults we can reinforce personal space and consent concepts by asking permission and explaining why we need to enter their personal space. For example, "Can I get a high five before you leave?" If the child says "no", a simple "okay" without any signs of disappointment is an appropriate response.

We can teach children that they have the right to be assertive and say "no" if someone violates their personal space boundaries. The child does not have to keep this a secret and is encouraged to tell a trusted adult about it.

Introducing and teaching consent to children at an early age helps children understand the message that "I am the boss of my body" and others are the bosses of their bodies. This concept provides a sound basis for building healthy and respectful relationships with others.



# LESSON 10 – THE RIGHT TO SAY NO

Research tells us that one of the things child sex offenders seek in a victim is a child who appears vulnerable and likely to show minimal resistance. Teaching children assertiveness skills and building their confidence can play an important part in enhancing their safety. We can teach children that they have permission to say “no” to adults or children if they are feeling unsafe.

Children can be taught about how to use their whole body (body and voice) to communicate. For example, the look on their face, moving away, putting their hand out, volume of voice, tone of voice, and the words they use all help communicate with others.

Children can also learn about their ‘Right to Say No’.

Teach children the different ways we can say “no” and help them identify situations where they can use each type of “no”.

There are 3 types of “no” that can be helpful to teach children:

- > Polite No – “No, thank you. I don’t want you to pick me up.”
- > Assertive No - “No. Stop. I don’t like it.”
- > Emergency NO! – **“NO! STOP! HELP ME!”**

We can help children to practise using these types of “no” and how they can use their bodies to reinforce what they are saying.

It is important that we teach children that their right to say “no” applies to other children and adults if they are feeling unsafe.



In a Personal Emergency it is okay to be like the police, ambulance, or fire brigade and break the rules (e.g. go through red traffic lights). If a child has a Personal Emergency (e.g. someone tries to touch their private parts) they can break the rules, yell an Emergency No, and do whatever they need to do to get away.

(OPTIONAL)

## LESSON 11 – THEME REINFORCEMENT & ASSESSMENT

It is important to ensure that the underlying principles and themes of the Protective Behaviours program are understood and able to be put into practice. The Protective Behaviours program is not designed as a one-off topic or program. The themes and topics can be consistently revisited, discussed, and reinforced in everyday life.

Theme reinforcement involves a variety of methods to maintain awareness of the principles and encourage their use. You can use songs, posters, and your everyday interactions to help reinforce these messages.

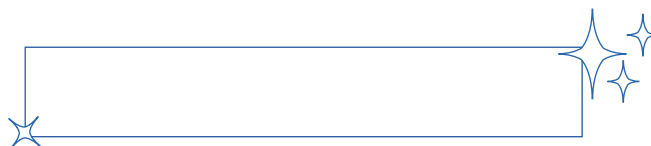


Visit the WACSS website, social media pages, and YouTube channel for some great ideas.



WA Child Safety Services  
Creating Safer Communities

### Certificate of Participation



For participating in the WA Child Safety Services  
Protective Behaviours Program for Year \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## HELPFUL RESOURCES AND WEBSITES



[www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au)



**Commissioner for Children and Young People**  
Western Australia

[www.cyp.wa.gov.au](http://www.cyp.wa.gov.au)



**Government of Western Australia**  
Department of **Communities**  
**Child Protection and Family Support**

[www.dcp.wa.gov.au](http://www.dcp.wa.gov.au)



**eSafety Commissioner**

[www.esafety.gov.au](http://www.esafety.gov.au)



(formerly Porn Harms Kids)

[www.echildhood.org](http://www.echildhood.org)



**Royal Commission**  
into Institutional Responses  
to Child Sexual Abuse

[www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au](http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au)

