

## Framework of childhood sexual behaviour and inappropriate sexual behaviours

### This is designed as a guide only

This brochure presents a continuum of childhood sexual behaviours observed in people with an intellectual disability.

Three classifications of sexual behaviour have been identified; behaviours typical of healthy development, behaviours which may cause concern and behaviours which require immediate professional intervention. Each behaviour should be observed in context before considering an appropriate response. Bear in mind, some behaviours may not be sexually motivated but are engaged in for a number of other reasons i.e. boredom, sensory stimulation, emotional upset.

There are no set of definite guidelines that determine appropriate and inappropriate sexual behaviour among individuals. However, the general parameters of age and developmental groupings, by which sexual behaviours are determined to be appropriate or inappropriate, are commonly recognised.

The need for respectful relationships is considered during development. Aggressive and humiliating behaviours are unacceptable and require immediate intervention.

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# Childhood Sexual Behaviour

## Age 16-18+ years

A guide for young people with a disability



## Sexual behaviour typical of healthy development

### Behaviour characteristics

- Curious and information gathering rather than sexual.
- Light hearted and easily distracted.
- Occurs between equals in terms of age, size and cognitive ability.

### Typical behaviours may include:

Viewing pornographic material.

Engaging in sexual behaviour among the peer group.

Having a one-on-one relationship (with or without sexual activity).

Using sexual language and obscenities among peers.

Masturbating in private.

Consensual sexual intercourse with a partner of similar age and cognitive ability.

### Adult response

The reaction of adults is critical and provides an opportunity to give positive feedback and age appropriate information in a calm manner.

Connecting with many acquaintances and randoms (strangers) through social media.

Exchanging personal details with online acquaintances and randoms.

## Sexual behaviour causing concern

### Behaviour characteristics

- Frequent.
- Excessive in duration.
- Unequal in terms of age, size and cognitive ability.
- Showing signs of preoccupation e.g. unable to carry out usual activities due to behaviour.

### Adult response

These behaviours are signs of concern. There is a need to observe and gather information to determine the antecedents and implement an appropriate response i.e. redirection, education and counselling.

### Behaviours are persistent and include:

Interest in sexual themes i.e. pornography.

Use of online chatrooms, engaging with randoms (strangers), where social isolation is becoming evident.

Engaging in unhealthy relationships.

Use of offensive sexual language outside the peer group.

Engaging in unsafe sexual behaviour, including unsafe sex.

Engaging in sexual activity with strangers.

Arranging face-to-face meetings with randoms (strangers) without notifying others.

Fear, confusion or anxiety about sexual identity.

## Sexual behaviour requiring professional intervention

### Behaviour characteristics

- Compulsive.
- Predatory.
- Excessive.
- Coercive.
- Threatening.
- Degrading.
- Illegal.
- Occurs between those with a significant cognitive or age difference.
- Increased preoccupation with the behaviour which precedes **all** other usual activities.

### Adult response

Immediate intervention and referral is required to appropriate services.

### Behaviours are predatory and include:

Masturbating in public.

Downloading/recording sexual images or themes of people under 18 years.

Forcing exposure or touching others' genitals.

Intentionally injuring self or others' during sexual activity.

Degrading/humiliating others using sexual themes.

Talking sexually or sexual contact with children.

Engaging in sexual contact with animals.

Making sexually explicit threats – written or verbal.

Stalking, peeping and/or exposing.

Non-consensual rubbing against others – sexually motivated (frottage).

Giving false gender, age or sexuality details online.

Viewing aggressive pornography.