

# Responding to problematic and harmful sexual behaviours

FOR CARERS



Kids in out-of-home care (OOHC) are at greater risk of developing problematic and harmful sexual behaviours (PHSB), due to their experiences of trauma. Most will not develop these behaviours, but those that do need an immediate and caring response.

## **Problematic and harmful sexual behaviour**

Problematic and harmful sexual behaviour (PHSB) is behaviour displayed by kids under 18 years of age. This behaviour:

- is outside what is culturally accepted as developmentally typical
- may be compulsive, obsessive, coercive, aggressive, secretive or violent
- might involve a substantial difference in the age or developmental ability of those involved
- can be harmful to those displaying the behaviour or others

## **Your response matters**

If you become aware that your kids are displaying PHSB, or have concerns about behaviours you've seen, it is important you take action. The earlier that behaviours are addressed, the better the outcomes can be.

Follow these steps to respond safely and effectively:

- report your concerns – talk to your caseworker or, if you don't currently have one, call the Child Protection Helpline on 132 111
- work with the experts – discuss what you've seen and develop appropriate responses with caseworkers, psychologists and other key supports
- implement plans and strategies – be prepared to introduce support strategies and supervision at home and in the community
- support therapeutic intervention – attending therapy with kids, and helping them to practice skills, can make a big difference
- keep up communication – discuss what is and isn't working, and acknowledge your own support needs

**You've Got This!**

LINKS Training and Support