



ACT
Government

RISK MANAGEMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

Day ONE

26 July 2022



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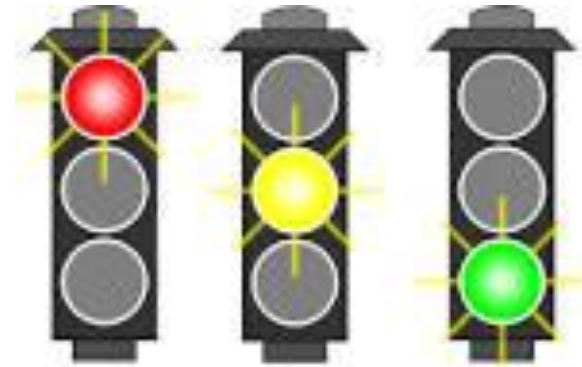
**Canberra Health
Services**

Young children with harmful sexual behaviours: how we can recognise and respond safely when children are displaying these behaviours in preschools, long day care and outside of school hours care services

Cassandra Tinning

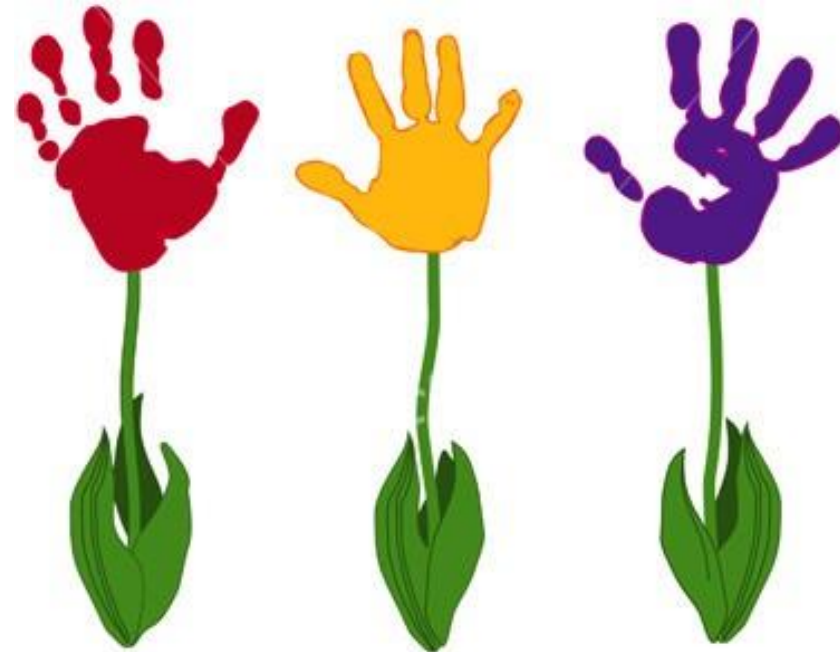
Allied Health Manager

Women Youth and Children's
Community Health Programs



Overview for the session

- Why is this relevant now?
- What are Harmful Sexual Behaviours? (HSB): Using the Traffic Lights tool for everyone's benefit
- Some ideas for response to sexual behaviours



Terminology

Today I will be discussing children's sexual behaviour that spans from developmentally appropriate expressions of sexual behaviour through to 'harmful sexual behaviour'

Harmful sexual behaviour

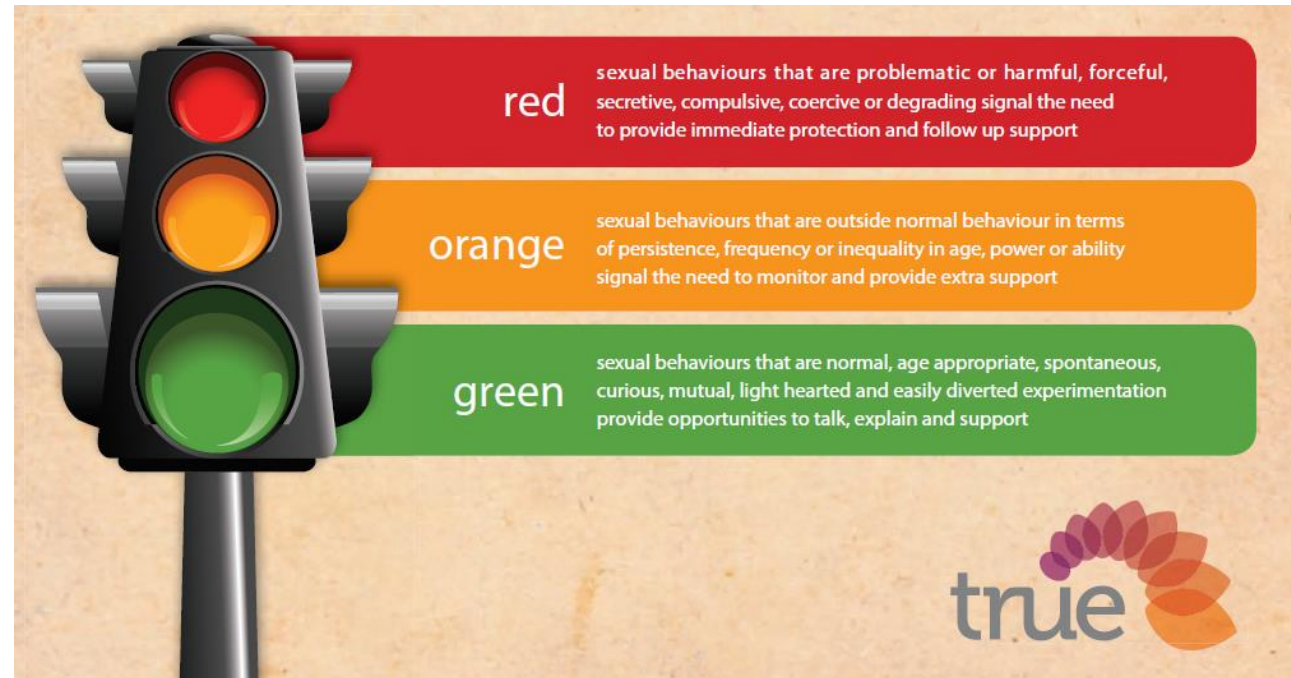
- The term 'harmful sexual behaviours' covers a broad spectrum of behaviours. They can range from those that are developmentally inappropriate and harm only the child exhibiting the behaviours, such as compulsive masturbation or inappropriate nudity, to criminal behaviours such as sexual assault.

[Children with harmful sexual behaviours | Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse \(childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au\)](https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au)

Traffic Lights Tool

[Traffic Lights® for professionals | True](#)

www.true.org.au



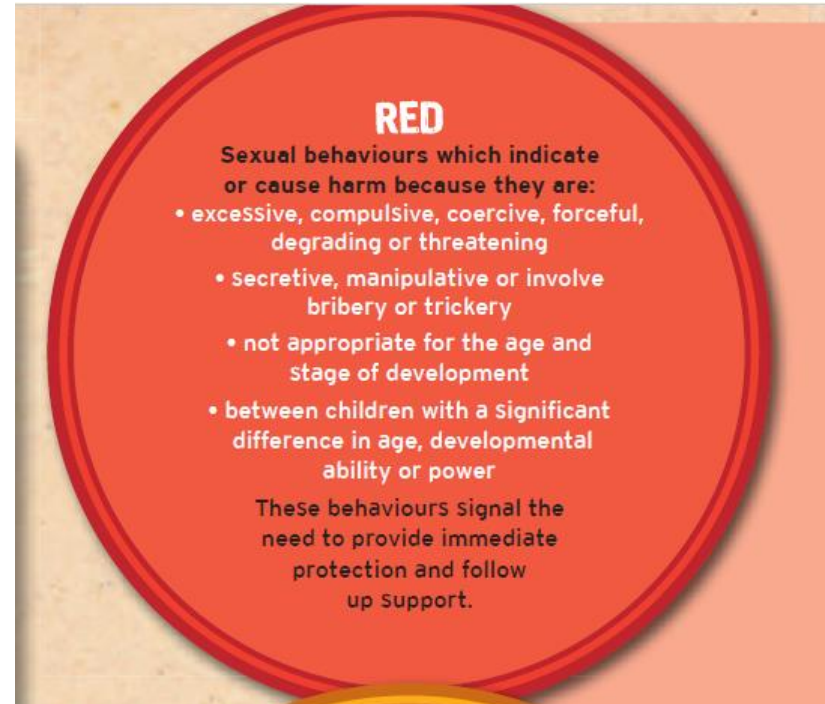
Green Light Behaviour



Orange Light Behaviour



Red Light Behaviour

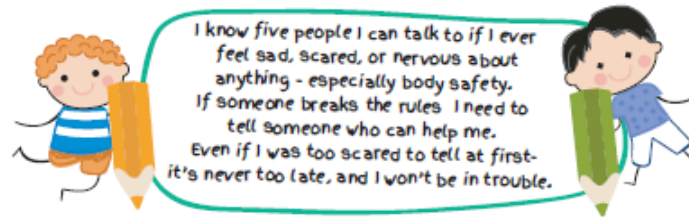
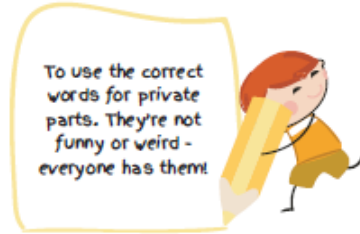
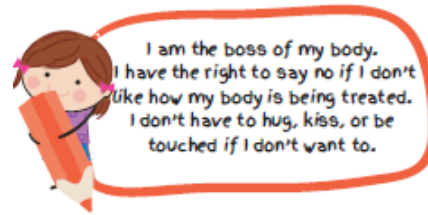


Practical responses to children engaged in harmful sexual behaviours

- Remain calm. (If you can, grab some more grown ups to help)
- Externalise the behaviour.
- Clearly and calmly ask the child/ren to stop the behaviour.
- Separate the children and provide them with activities to help the behaviour to stop.
- Then engage children separately “I just want to understand what was happening in the cubby house..”
- Notice any unusual emotions in either of the children.
- Either child may become distressed and require nurture.
- You might also require some nurture, so reach out to your colleagues/ supervisor. Together you can follow your service guidelines, but most importantly:
 - keep a record of the behaviour
 - Keep close communication with all the parents



Protective behaviours program / Child Protection Curriculum / Body Safety Rules



For More, Visit: TheMamaBearEffect.org

What can parents/caregivers expect from the staff of your service working with their child?

Sample expectation setting: When responding to developmentally appropriate sexual behaviour staff will:

- Calmly direct the children away from the activity
- Reinforce the messages of the child protection curriculum – as appropriate for their age group
- Tell the parents/caregivers of the children involved about what occurred so that parents/caregivers can reinforce the messages delivered by our staff
- Inform wider groups of parents/caregivers if a number of children observed the behaviour or staff are aware children are discussing the behaviour. This is to help reinforce consistent messages
- Monitor the children's behaviour and take further actions if behaviours continue.

Helpful contact numbers



- Child and Youth Protection Services (ACT): Ph 1300 556 728
- Child Protection Helpline (NSW)- 13 2111
- Child at Risk Health Unit : Ph 5124 2712
- 1800 Respect (Open 24 hours to support people impacted by sexual assault, domestic or family violence and abuse)
- Lifeline: Ph 13 11 14

Thank you



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