

# Early Intervention clinical services

**Safe Network** operates the largest community-based specialist clinical assessment and intervention service in Aotearoa New Zealand for those with concerning and harmful sexual behaviour towards children.

## Who we are

We specialise in working with children who have problematic or concerning sexual behaviours, assisting them to learn to express themselves in healthier ways. Our clinicians also work with adults and adolescents to address their harmful sexual behaviour.

With specialist clinical treatment services based in Auckland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, and Northland, our team of thirty clinical staff includes clinical psychologists, psychotherapists, counsellors, family therapists and social workers. We offer more than 20 years' experience in working with individuals and their families to address concerning and harmful sexual behaviour.

## Safe Early Intervention Service

Safe Early Intervention Service offers a specialist clinical assessment and treatment service for boys and girls aged 5-12 years who have problematic or concerning sexual behaviour.

Many children engage in and display a range of sexualised behaviour that is healthy and normal for their age. But it is harmful if it causes others to be concerned because it is unusual for their age or makes others feel uncomfortable, confused or hurt.

## The referral pathway

### How to get help

If you are concerned about your child's sexual behaviour you can arrange for a referral to Safe services.

### Referral to Safe services

A child can be referred to Safe by CYF (Child, Youth & Family), family members or other professionals within the community, such as your GP.

It is important to note that if CYF does not know

### You may be concerned about the sexual behaviour of your child or another person's child if:

- It is different from that of other children of the same age
- The sexual behaviour continues despite repeated requests to stop
- The child appears driven to engage in sexual behaviour regardless of whether or not they will be punished or reprimanded
- Other children complain about the child's sexual behaviour or are adversely affected
- The child uses sexual behaviour to hurt, frighten or upset other children
- The sexual behaviour is engaged in by children of different ages or developmental levels
- One child uses force, threats, bribery or coercion to get the other child to participate in sexual behaviour
- One child forces another child to keep the sexual behaviour a secret
- The sexual behaviour progresses in frequency, intensity or intrusiveness over time
- The child's sexual behaviour is directed at adults who feel uncomfortable about it
- The child manually stimulates or has oral or genital contact with animal/s
- Verbal and/or physical expressions of anger precede, follow or accompany the sexual behaviour.

Information sourced from *Understanding Children's Sexual Behaviours* by Toni Cavanagh Johnson, PhD, and *Ending Offending Together* by Caroline Witten-Hannah, Frances Miller, John McCarthy.

about the referral to Safe, we may need to ensure CYF becomes involved, if necessary, to check that the child and those around them are safe. Once this has happened, we are committed to working with you, the person/s involved and CYF to ensure that the safest outcome is reached for all concerned.

You can get help by contacting CYF, the Police or Safe.

### What is the process?

#### Assessment

Before a child is accepted into Safe Network's service, it is important to assess whether Safe is the right place to provide the help that he or she needs. A comprehensive clinical assessment is undertaken in which we find out about the child, their history and the concerning sexual behaviour that brought them to Safe. Their strengths and resources will be assessed, as well as their problems.

Family members will be part of the assessment process. The wide-ranging effects of the concerning sexual behaviour, the safety of others and the needs of the family are all important factors for consideration.

*Assessment is likely to involve the following:*

- An initial interview with parents or caregivers and relevant family members
- One to two interviews with your child (determined by the child's age and needs)
- Collecting information and reports from other agencies or professionals who are involved e.g. CYF, the Police or counsellors
- Written questionnaires and psychological tests completed by your child or by their parent or caregiver.

Once the interviews and tests are completed, a detailed report is prepared, including recommendations about your child's suitability for Safe's services and a proposed intervention plan. A copy of this report, including recommendations about the next steps, will be sent to the referring agency or person.

If the child is accepted into Safe's services, they will be allocated to a clinician to undertake the treatment intervention. A schedule of regular appointment times and other session times will also be made available.

The Early Intervention Service offers a six-month contract that includes weekly one-hour appointments when the child sees their individual clinician. As part of this service the family also has appointments. These child and family appointments may run parallel to each other or include the child and family together.

#### Will parents need to pay for their children to attend Safe?

Generally the costs of services at Safe are covered by our funded contracts with CYF. If there are no available funded positions then a service fee contract is offered.

#### How do I contact Safe Network?

To make a referral or enquiry, contact Safe Network on phone (09) 377 9898 ext 700. Or download a referral form from our website, [www.safenetwork.org.nz](http://www.safenetwork.org.nz), complete it and forward it to us.

---

Hope • Trust • Confidence •