

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

With specialist clinical intervention 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 Youth Service

Safe Youth Service offers a specialist clinical assessment and treatment service for males and females aged 13-17 years who display concerning and harmful sexual behaviour.

Sexual development is one of many areas of change for adolescents. Adolescents engage in and display a range of sexual behaviour that is healthy and normal for their age. But when it is harmful, action should be taken to address the behaviour and prevent further harm.

It is easier to stop concerning and harmful sexual behaviour in children and adolescents with specialist help that directly addresses their age-appropriate and developmental needs.

The referral pathway

How to get help

If you are concerned about the sexual behaviour of your teenage son or daughter, or another teenager, you can arrange for a referral to Safe services.

Adolescent sexual behaviour is concerning or harmful if:

- It is targeted at younger children or anyone more vulnerable
- It is secretive
- It is aggressive, forceful, manipulative or threatening
- It is not consensual
- The sexual behaviour continues despite repeated requests to stop
- The young person appears driven to engage in sexual behaviour regardless of whether or not they will be punished or reprimanded
- Others complain about the teenager's sexual behaviour or are adversely affected
- The sexual behaviour progresses in frequency, intensity or intrusiveness over time
- The sexual behaviour is directed at adults who feel uncomfortable about it
- The sexual behaviour is targeted at animals
- The sexual behaviour includes using electronic technology to make, access or distribute images and videos of concerning and harmful sexual behaviour of themselves or others
- 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.

Referral to Safe services

Individuals are referred to Safe by CYF (Child, Youth & Family), family members, friends or other professionals within the community such as your GP, or via self-referral.

It is important to note that if CYF does not know about the referral to Safe, we may need to ensure CYF becomes involved, if necessary, to check that all of the children or young people involved in the harmful sexual behaviour 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 an individual 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 young person, their history and the concerning or harmful sexual behaviour that has brought them to Safe. Their strengths and resources will be assessed, as well as their problems.

Family members and/or caregivers will be part of the assessment process. The wide-ranging effects of the concerning or harmful 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:

- Up to four interviews with the young person and their significant family members and/or caregiver
- Collecting information and reports from other agencies or professionals who are involved, e.g. CYF, Police, counsellors, school

- Written questionnaires and psychological tests completed by the young person and their parent or caregiver.

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

If the youth is accepted into treatment, 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 Youth Service generally offers up to 12-18 months of individually tailored intervention that includes all or some of the following:

- Weekly group
- Weekly one-to-one appointments as required
- Family session each month
- Three-day intensive therapy camp away from Safe for each group once per year
- Three-monthly case review for each client that involves parents and other interested parties, such as the school, CYF, etc.

Will parents need to pay for their teenager 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?

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

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