

COURAGEOUS CHATS FOR OUR CHILDREN

Our children are important, and it's up to all of us to keep them safe from sexual abuse.

That means being courageous and talking about things we have not talked about before, for our children.

HOW!?

Ethnic communities face unique challenges. We don't always have our wider family to help us to bring up our children here. Some things are harder for us, but together, we know we are resilient in so many ways. This means we know our communities can learn how to protect our children from sexual abuse. **Let us come together to learn and keep our children safe and happy.**

COURAGEOUS CHATS

Child sexual abuse is taboo and hides in the shadows. People who harm children take advantage of this secrecy. You can help keep your children safe by making sure they know they can talk to you about anything and that you will take them seriously. Having warm, open relationships with our children is the first step. The next step is having open conversations in our families and communities about our personal boundaries, safe touch, and communication. Let's make it easy for our children to tell us how they feel, and how they are, without worrying about how we will react.



It's vital that children feel comfortable talking to us about anything. Children who have warm relationships with many safe adults are less vulnerable to abuse.

UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUE

Sexual abuse affects people of every cultural, religious, and ethnic background. It is hidden, so we don't always see how big a problem it is.

WHAT IS CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE?

- Involving a child or young person in sexual activities.
- Touching a child or young person in a sexual way.
- Using a child or young person for sexual gratification, including watching them undress, or showing them pornography, or having sex in front of them.

We sometimes imagine that people who harm children are easy to recognize. Or that they are strangers to us.

But that's not true.

Children are usually harmed by someone they know; someone their parents know.

People who harm children are likely to manipulate children, and their parents, to gain access to children.

They deliberately build trust with parents but interfere in the relationship between parents and child. They tell the child no one will believe them if they tell anyone what is happening.

This is all to make it easier to sexually abuse. It makes it more likely a child will not tell anyone about what is happening, at the time or afterwards. It makes it more likely if a child tries to tell anyone, they will not be believed.



TO KEEP OUR CHILDREN SAFE

Know how they normally behave so you will notice any change in their behaviour. Know who your child spends time with and pay attention to who is in your child's life and who takes care of them.

What should I look out for?

If you notice any of these things, check them out with your child:

- A change in sleeping, eating, toileting or washing.
- Becoming withdrawn.
- Problems trusting others, avoiding certain people and places.
- Acting younger than their age, becoming clingy and tearful.
- Displaying sexualized behaviour or language which is age inappropriate.
- Becoming angry, hostile, aggressive to others or self-harming.
- Learning or concentration difficulties.
- Telling you about someone or something that worries them.

TALKING ABOUT OUR BODIES

Teach your children the proper names of their body parts.

It's good to teach names in our own languages, and also in English, so our children can tell us if someone tries to touch them.



OK & NOT OK TOUCH

Talk to your child about okay touches and inappropriate touches.

Okay or 'good' touches are ones that make us feel safe, warm, and loved.

Inappropriate or 'bad' touches are ones that make us feel unhappy, scared, confused or yucky.

Boundaries are just rules we make to feel safe.

For example, it's good for children to know that some parts of their bodies are private. We can also teach our children that they are allowed to say 'no' to being touched, by anyone, even us.

If they do not want to kiss a relative goodbye, let them shake hands instead.

Children need to understand that they have ownership of their own body and have some control over how and when they are touched.

SUPPORT/RESOURCES

If you want to talk with someone, we are here to help.

- Diversity Counselling New Zealand -

dcnz.net/

- Safe to Talk - 24-hour helpline -

safetotalk.nz

- Netsafe – online safety advice and resources -

netsafe.org.nz/