

Youth Service

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.

Who we are

Safe Network is New Zealand's largest community-based specialist service for those with problematic and harmful sexual behaviour. Our specialist clinicians work with adults and youths to address their harmful sexual behaviour towards children or others, as well as with children who have concerning sexual behaviours, assisting them to learn to express themselves in healthier ways.

Our services are based in Auckland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, and Te Tai Tokerau/Northland. Our clinical staff includes psychologists, psychotherapists, counsellors and social workers.

Safe Network Youth Service

Safe Network provides specialist clinical assessment and treatment services for male and female youth (aged 13-17 years) who display problematic and harmful sexual behaviour, including using electronic technology to make, access or distribute images and videos of a problematic and harmful sexual nature of themselves or others.

Sexual development is one of many areas of change for youths. Youths 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 with specialist help that is age-appropriate and directly addresses their developmental needs. (Refer to the side panel for a range of problematic and harmful sexual behaviour that may need specialist intervention.)

Referring to Safe Network

If you are concerned about the sexual behaviour of a youth, you can get help by contacting Safe Network and arranging a referral to our services.

Youth 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 youth'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
- 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.

Youth may self-refer to Safe Network or be referred by family members, friends or other professionals within the community. Referrals can also come via Oranga Tamariki or the Police.

Where appropriate, Oranga Tamariki may need to be made aware of the referral to ensure that the

client and any other children or young people are safe. Safe Network is committed to working with the client, their family/whanau and Oranga Tamariki to ensure that the safest outcome is reached for all concerned.

What is the process?

Assessment

Before we accept a youth client into our intervention service, we assess whether Safe Network is the right place to provide the help that they need. A comprehensive clinical assessment is undertaken in which we find out about the young person, their history and the problematic or harmful sexual behaviour that has brought them to Safe Network. Their strengths and resources will be assessed, as well as their problems and challenges. Family members and/or caregivers will be part of the assessment process. The wide-ranging effects of the problematic 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 client and their significant family members or support person
- A review of information and reports from other agencies or professionals who may be involved, e.g. Oranga Tamariki, Police, counsellors
- Psychological evaluations performed by the Safe Network clinical staff. Clients may also be asked to complete additional psychological tests and questionnaires.

Once completed, a detailed assessment report is prepared, with recommendations about the client's suitability for Safe Network's youth service and

the proposed intervention required. A copy of this report, including recommendations about the next steps, may be sent to the referring agency or person where it is suitable to do so. All recommendations will be discussed and explained clearly with the client and their support people.

Intervention

If the youth is accepted into our Youth Service, they will be allocated to a clinician to undertake the 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 meetings
- Weekly individual appointments with a clinician, as required
- Monthly family sessions
- An annual three-day intensive therapy camp held off-site for each group
- Three-monthly case reviews for each client, involving parents and other interested parties, such as the school, Oranga Tamariki, etc.

Will parents need to pay for their teenager to attend Safe Network?

Generally the full costs of services at Safe Network are covered by our Government-funded contracts. Where there are limited or no funded positions available, then a part-charge or fee-for-service contract may be offered.

How do I contact Safe?

To enquire or to make a referral, contact Safe Network by phone or download a referral form from our website, complete it and forward it to us.



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