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FULLY BOOKED

Friday, June 9, 2017

(Room 2)

11:00 - 11:55 WS #26: Recognising Problematic Sexual Behaviour in Children and Adolescents
12:05 - 13:00 WS #34: Recognising Problematic Sexual Behaviour in Children and Adolescents
(Repeated)

Recognising and Responding to Problematic Sexual Behaviour in Children and Adolescents

What's Normal? What's Not? What Do I Do?

Rotorua GP CME | June 2017

Shane Harris | Safe Network

Disclosure statement

My name is Shane Harris, and I'm speaking on the recognition of and response to problematic sexual behaviour in children and adolescents.

I work for Safe Network. I have no relevant financial relationships to disclose.

Objectives for today

- How need drives behaviour
 - How does it go wrong?
 - The problem of dysregulation and unmet need
 - Identifying problematic sexual behaviour
 - Understanding the problem
 - Offering a solution (and hope)
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- A series of abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in soft pastel colors (pinks, yellows, and light oranges) are arranged in a fan-like pattern, radiating from the bottom right corner of the slide.

Togs or undies? When does it change?

Togs



Undies

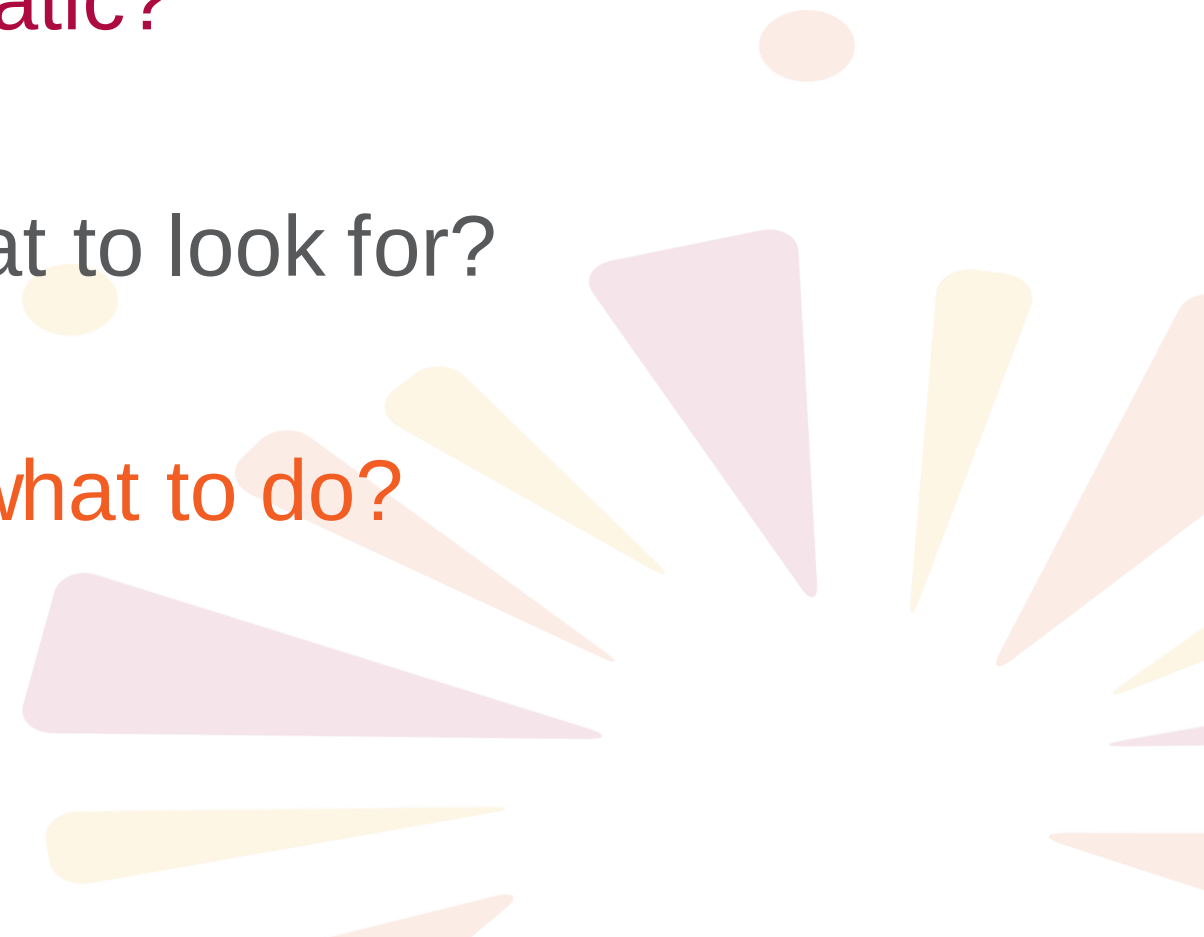


Do you know the criteria?

When does developmentally normal sex behaviour become problematic?

Do you know what to look for?

Do you know what to do?

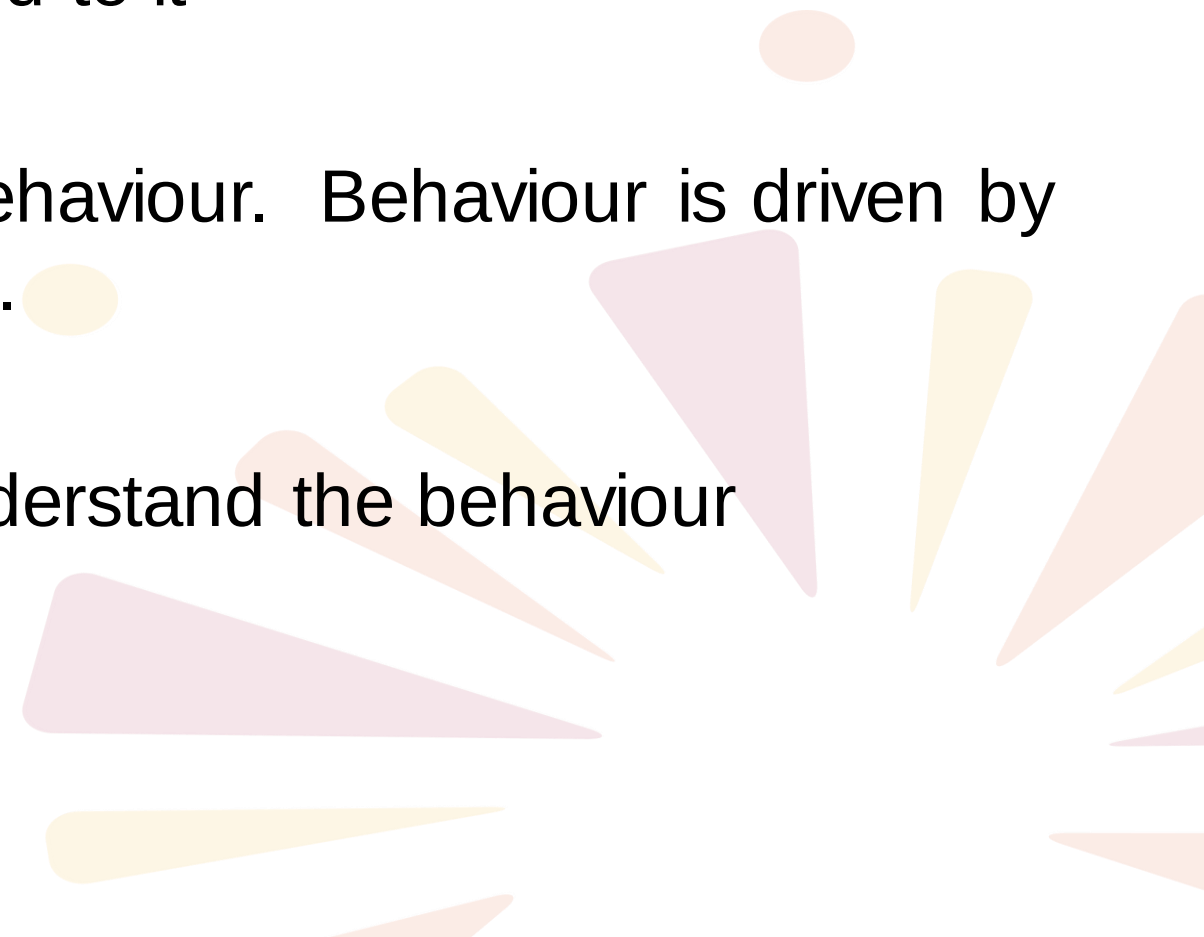
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What the....?

The way we view or think about a behaviour will determine the way we respond to it

Problematic sexual behaviour is a behaviour. Behaviour is driven by need.

Understand the need – understand the behaviour

A collection of abstract, semi-transparent geometric shapes in shades of orange, yellow, and pink, scattered across the bottom right portion of the slide.

Need driven behaviour – where does that come from?

**A brief look at the
role of attachment**



The role of attachment (based on J. Bowlby, 1969)

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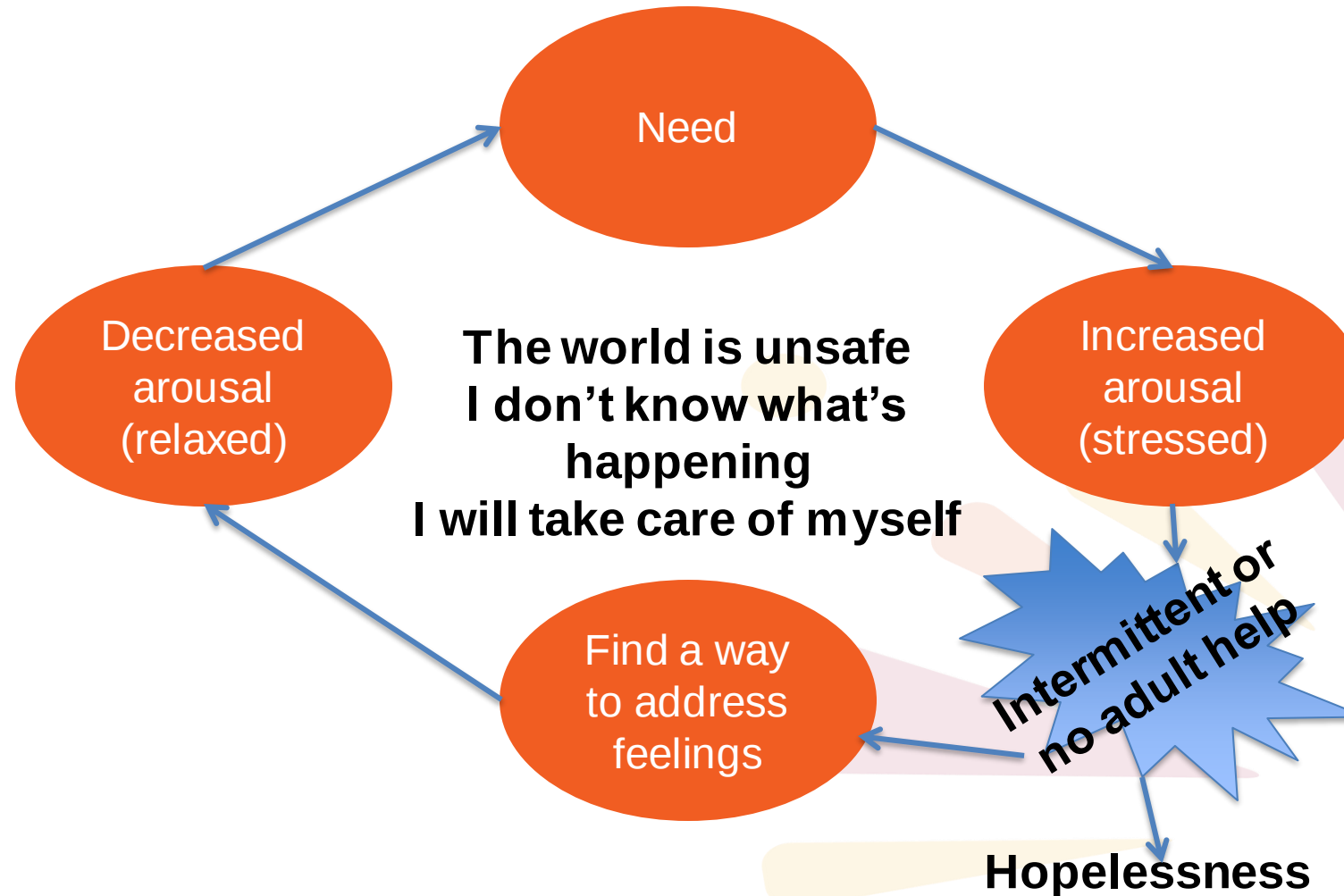
Need and mastery



Disrupted attachment and emotional dysregulation

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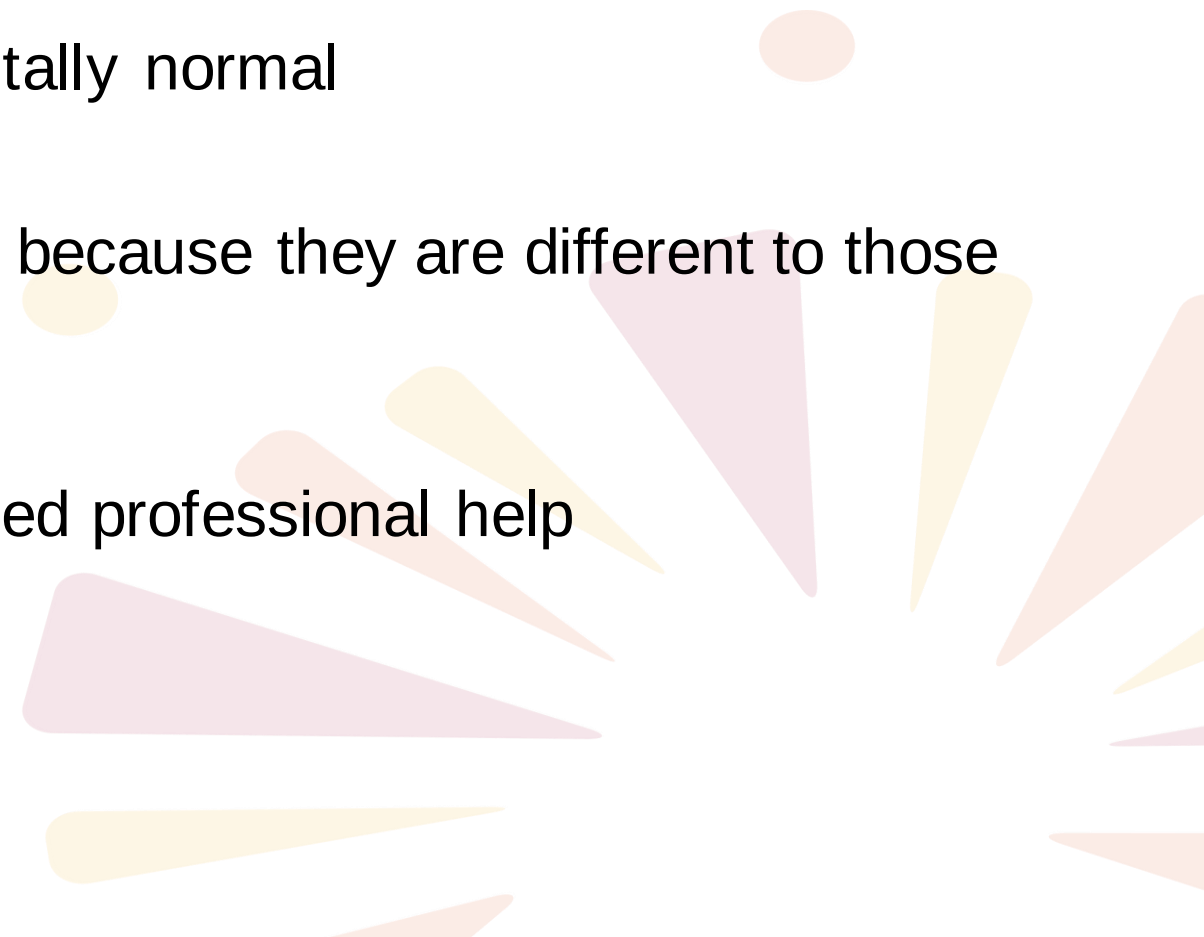
Need driven behaviour



Let's talk about sex...



Sexual development

- Children's sexual development and behaviour is a normal part of growing up.
 - Most sexual behaviours are developmentally normal
 - Some sexual behaviours cause concern because they are different to those of their peers
 - Some problematic sexual behaviours need professional help
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- A collection of abstract, colorful shapes (circles, triangles, and teardrops) in shades of pink, orange, and yellow, arranged in a fan-like pattern pointing towards the bottom right corner of the slide.

Normal vs concerning

Normal	Concerning
• Curious interest	• Insatiable interest
• Self-stimulation (pleasurable)	• Excessive or rough touching causing injury
• Interest in others / gender difference	• Unwanted touching
• Mutual genital exploration	
• Questions about sex / babies	• Insatiable interest in nudity / sex behaviour
• Skin to skin contact	• Sexual activity beyond developmental knowledge
• Gender role play	
• Using sex works	• Sex language beyond developmental age

Children's sexualised behaviour

- Ranges from normal and healthy to problematic
- Relative to child's age & developmental stage
- Most are normal and healthy
- Problematic behaviour should raise concern
- Specialist intervention

Be mindful of all factors informing your views / opinions

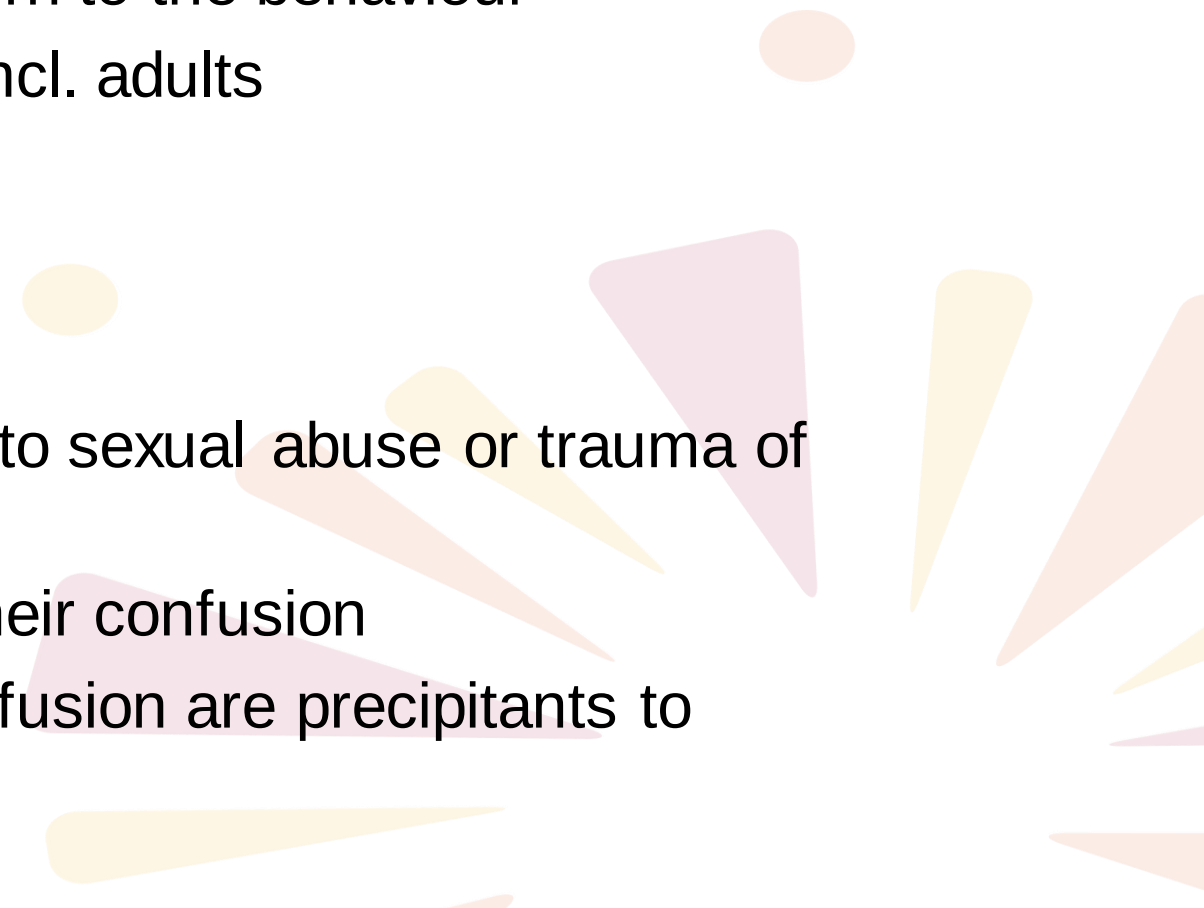
Range of children's sexual behaviour

(from Toni Cavanagh-Johnson)

- Normal and healthy
- Problematic



Sexually reactive behaviour

- Pre-pubescent
 - Quite overt
 - May be distracted, but may return to the behaviour
 - Directed at self and/or others, incl. adults
 - No coercion or force used
 - Usually non-specific focus.
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- Basis is confusion, usually due to sexual abuse or trauma of some kind
 - Child trying to make sense of their confusion
 - Increased anxiety, fear and confusion are precipitants to behaviour
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- The bottom right corner of the slide features several overlapping, semi-transparent geometric shapes. These include circles, triangles, and irregular polygons in a palette of soft colors: light orange, pale yellow, and muted pink. The shapes are arranged in a way that they appear to be floating or layered, adding a modern, artistic touch to the presentation.

Interventions

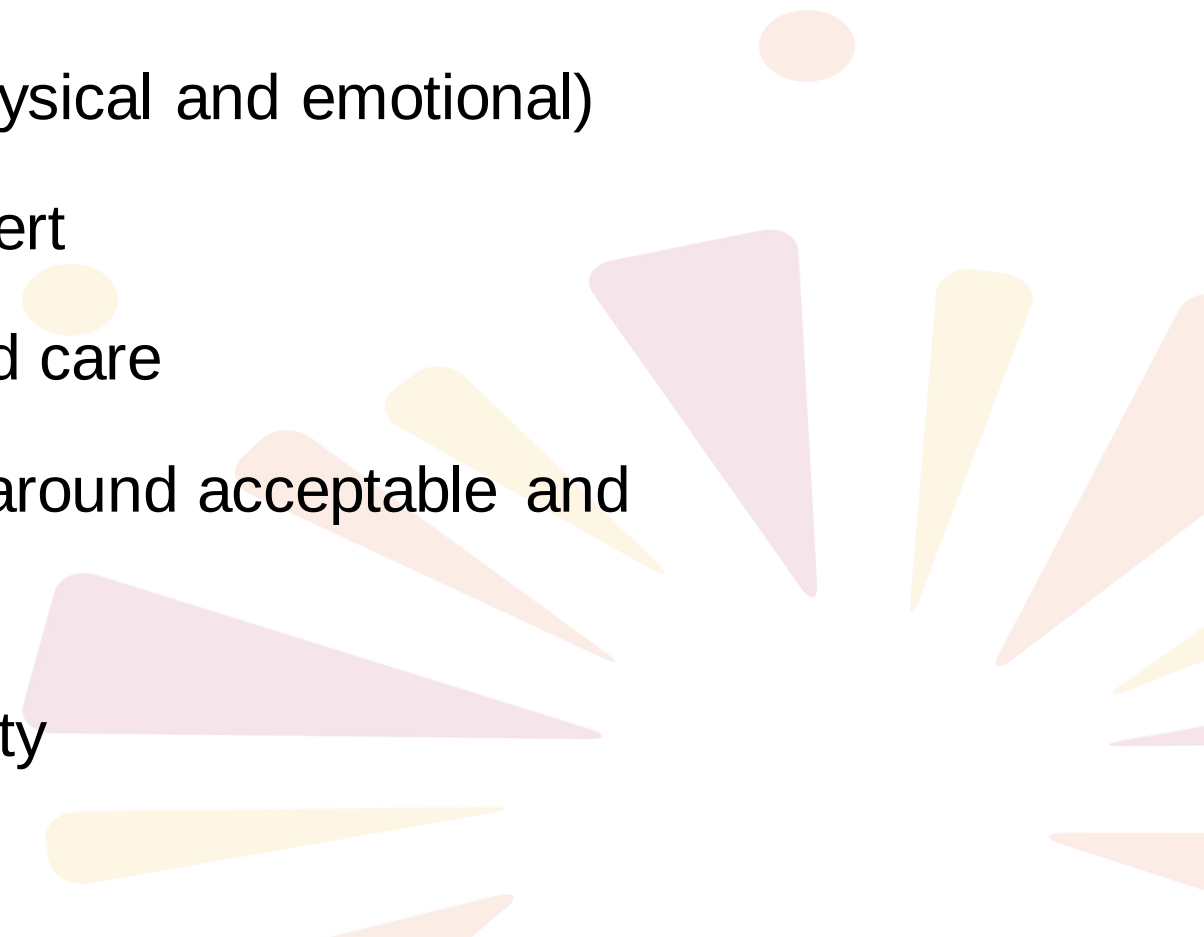
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- Professional help to address trauma
 - Parental strength and confidence
 - Safety, consistency, reassurance
 - Clear rules and expectations around behaviour
 - Practical behaviour management to minimise risk
 - Meet genuine needs (physical and emotional)
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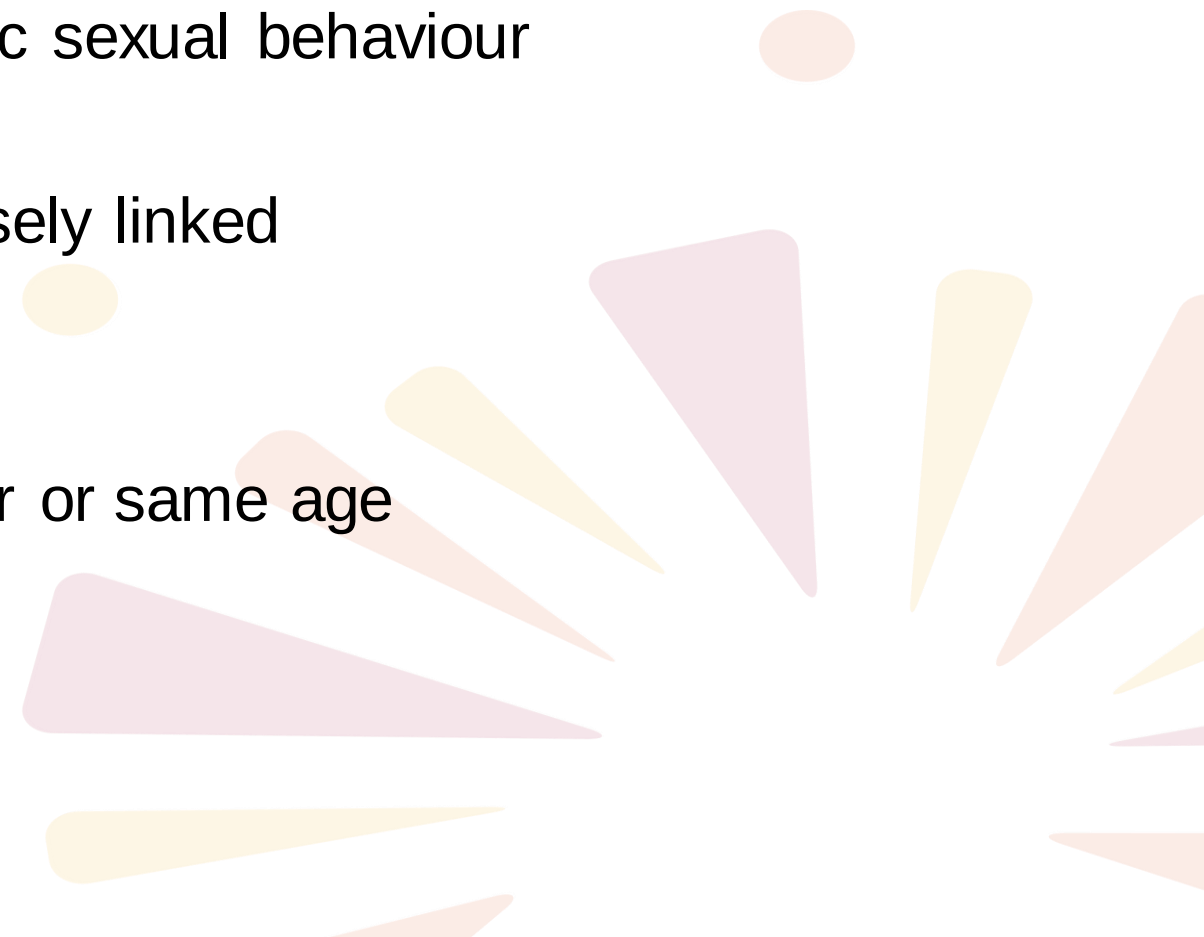
Extensive mutual sexual play

- Frequent, habitual, full spectrum of sexual behaviours
 - Relate best to other children
 - Not close or trusting of adults
 - Connection to others through neediness
 - Not coercive – mutual participation
 - Avoid detection
 - Some level of sexual arousal
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- Basis is distrust through being hurt or abandoned by adults
 - Getting safety / support need met through peers
 - Seeking comfort to address loss, fear, abandonment, loneliness

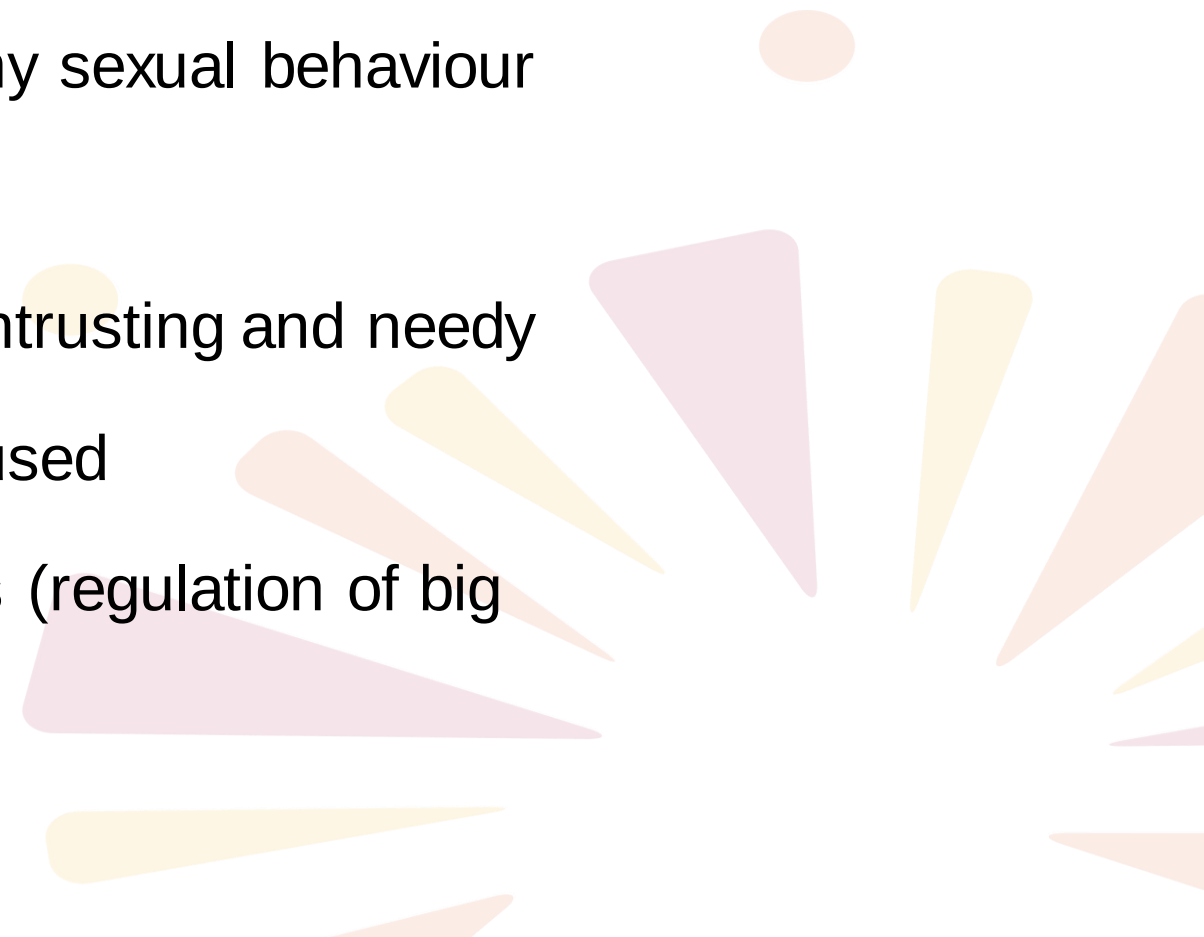
Interventions

- Professional help
 - Parent in charge and clear of role
 - Make aware of needs (e.g. physical and emotional)
 - Meet needs - may be very overt
 - Consistency, support, love and care
 - Clear rules and expectations around acceptable and unwanted behaviour
 - Practical management of safety
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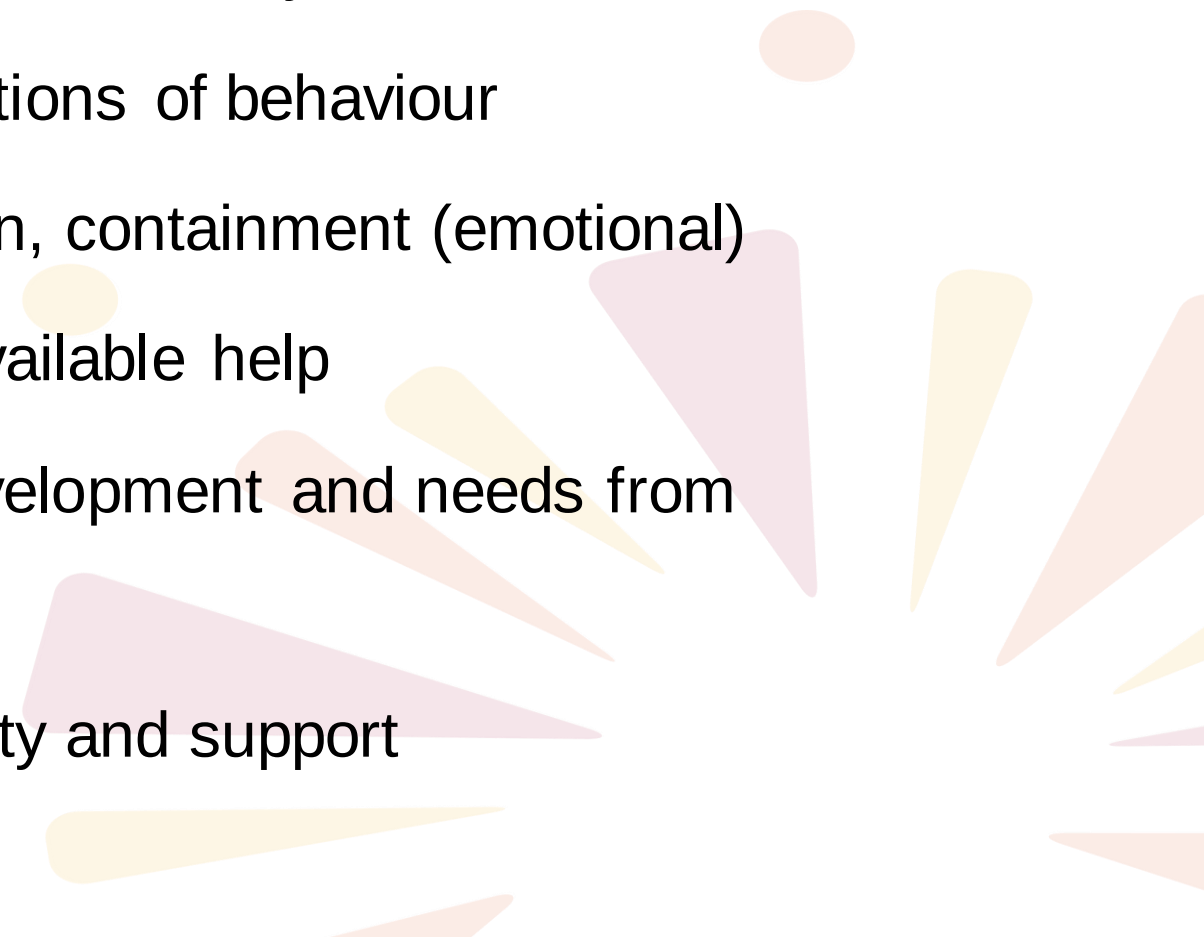
Harmful sexual behaviour

- Frequent and pervasive
 - Impulsive
 - Possible history of problematic sexual behaviour
 - Intense sexual confusion
 - Sexuality and aggression closely linked
 - Coercion to gain participation
 - Physical force not common
 - Victims may be older, younger or same age
 - Victims usually vulnerable
 - Other problems in life
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Common contributing factors

- Puberty and increase in sexual awareness and arousal
 - Social / relational awkwardness
 - Poor or no guidance on healthy sexual behaviour
 - Exposure to adult sexuality
 - Vulnerable, anxious, afraid, untrusting and needy
 - Some have been sexually abused
 - Coping and survival strategies (regulation of big emotions)
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Interventions

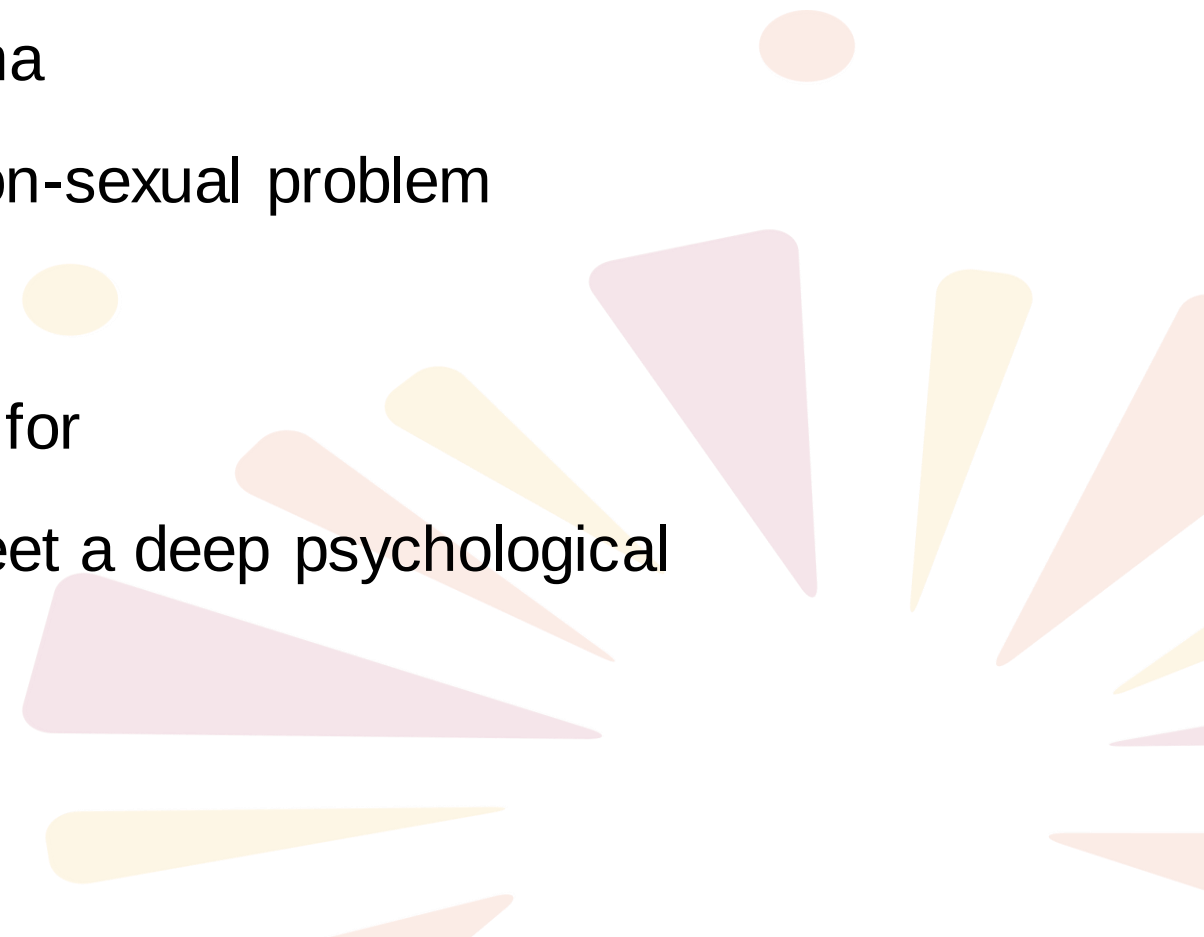
- Professional help for the young person
 - Consider need to involve MVCOT for any victims
 - Clear, overt rules and expectations of behaviour
 - Consistency, support, inclusion, containment (emotional)
 - Reassurance for parents of available help
 - Separating healthy sexual development and needs from problematic behaviour
 - Practical management of safety and support
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What makes it harmful?

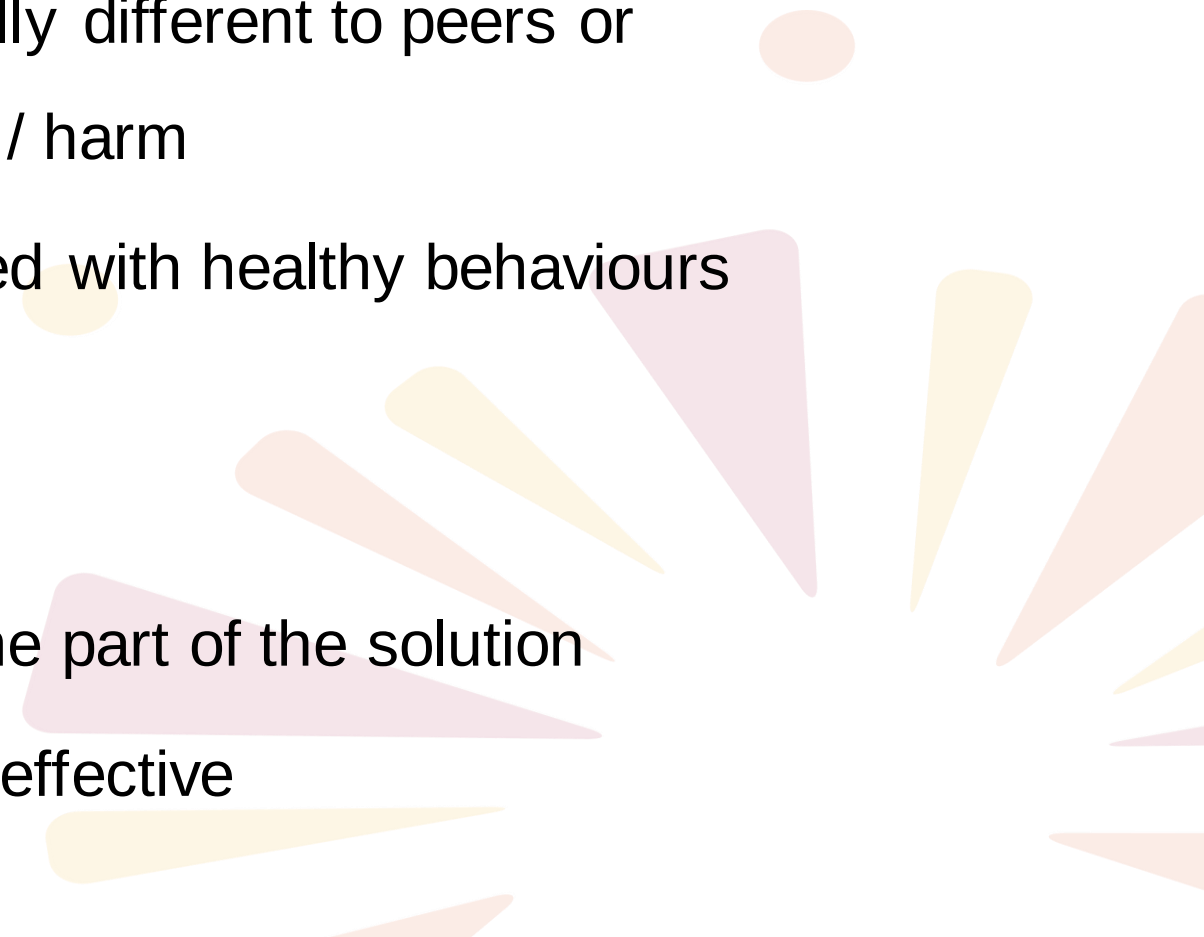
- **Coercion**
- **Inequality**
- **No consent**



What purpose does it serve?

- Communication of a misunderstood unfathomable trauma
 - A way to make sense of trauma
 - A sexualised response to a non-sexual problem
 - A way to feel powerful
 - A way to feel loved and cared for
 - A physical, tangible way to meet a deep psychological need
 - Self-gratification
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- A collection of abstract, semi-transparent geometric shapes in soft colors (pinks, yellows, and oranges) located in the bottom right corner of the slide. These shapes include circles, triangles, and irregular polygons, some of which are layered on top of each other.

Take home message

- The problematic behaviour has developed to try to address unmet needs
 - Behaviours are developmentally different to peers or cause interruption / confusion / harm
 - Can be unlearned and replaced with healthy behaviours and emotions
 - May not just go away
 - Professional intervention is one part of the solution
 - Systemic intervention is most effective
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Togs or undies?

Normal or concerning?

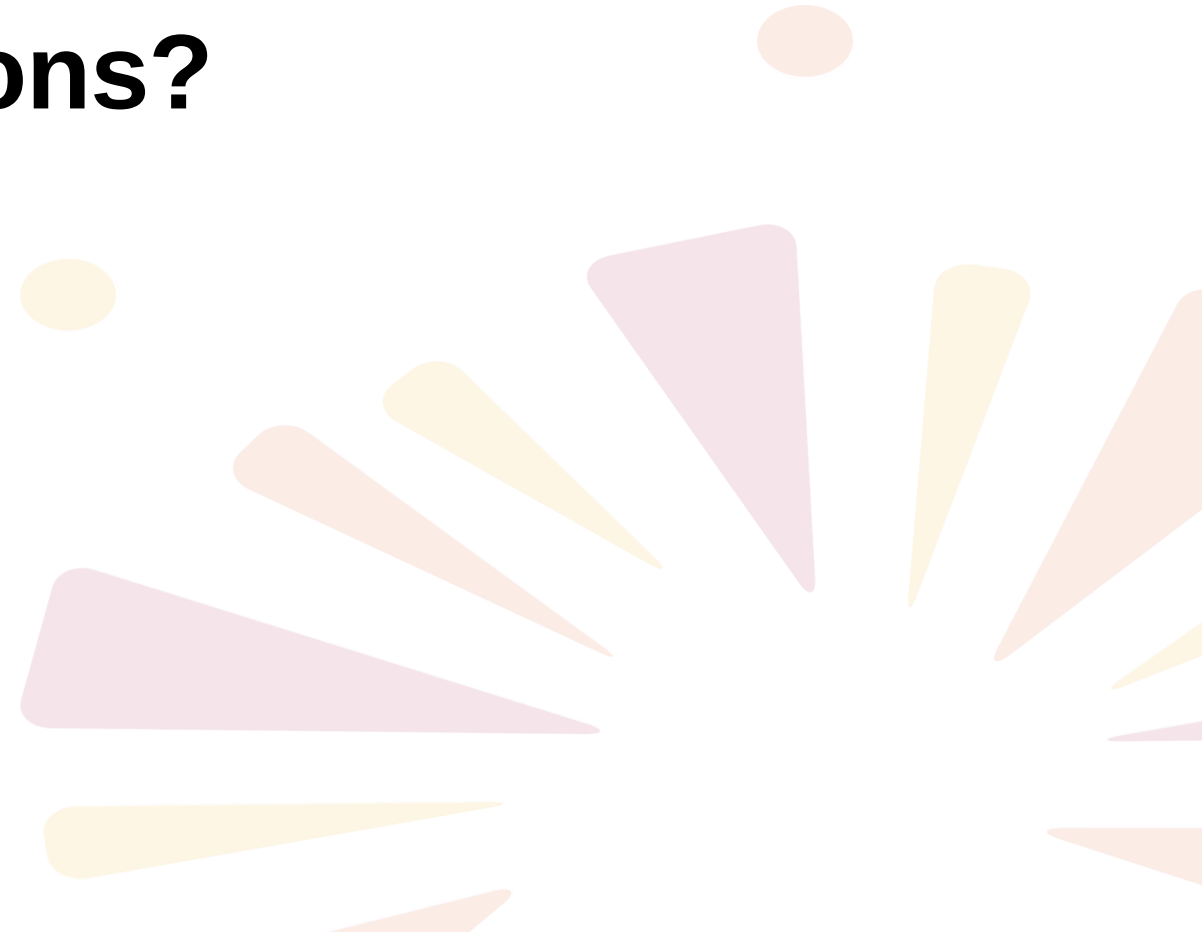
Is the line more clearly defined?

Come and talk with us at stand #9

Safe Network services

- Community-based
 - Auckland, Te Tai Tokerau, Waikato, and Bay of Plenty
 - Children (5 – 12 years)
 - Youth (13 – 17 years)
 - Adults (18 years and over)
 - Kaupapa Maori
 - Amanaki Pasifika
 - Males and Females
 - ID and other complex needs
 - Families
 - Consultation, training and education service
 - Social Work Service
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- A decorative graphic in the bottom right corner of the slide. It consists of several overlapping triangles and circles in shades of yellow, orange, and pink, arranged in a fan-like pattern pointing towards the right.

Questions?



Thank you 😊