



How to talk about Relationships & Sexual Health

A Step-by-Step guide for Professionals working with Young People
by Sexual Health Outreach Team Oldham Rochdale and Bury

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Introduction

This information resource is for use by anyone working with young people where an initial concern or lower-level need has been identified around relationships or sexual health.

Initially this information can be used to support a conversation prior to referral, but if it still felt the young person requires additional support or repeats the concerns after discussion a referral should be made via the normal route, you can request a referral form & return it to vcl.orbishyp@nhs.net.

If you identify young people who may all be presenting with similar concern, repeated behaviours & need for education you can also request a small, targeted group session rather than making individual referrals for all. This is to support & educate young people faster, with less waiting time for brief interventions.

You can now request a group referral form to complete for small, targeted groups of to 8 people. Consideration should be given as to whether the young people are going to benefit from group learning. Complex concerns would not be appropriate for group learning & individual referrals can still be made.

If you required any advice or support prior to or post conversation, email to above address or call the Outreach Team to speak with an Education Worker 01706 202444

We have created topic-based headings & bullet points for individual needs & to prompt a conversation with the young people. This information can also be given to young people during initial health assessments or welcome packs if they are new residents to this country. It can also be translated into the most appropriate language for them in the absence of an interpreter & as information they can keep, to refer to.

You do not need to discuss all topics with every young person. Depending on the presenting concern, choose the most appropriate topic & follow the prompts for that section. You can cover every point if needed, there is enough information for it to be read word for word until you feel more comfortable. We would encourage familiarising yourself with the information needed before your initial conversation.

Covering every prompt is not always necessary, & as a professional you can choose what is appropriate – every point does not have to be included in every conversation, but the information is there if you need it. If anything feels too daunting, then it likely needs a referral to us!

We have also provided a resource list for further reading, activities & signposting.

This resource is for guidance only; please choose the most appropriate person for the young person to talk to openly, only have conversations you feel confident & comfortable to have, make the conversation your own.

Before any full conversation around these issues, we would advise you:

- Ask the young person if they know why they have been asked to have a conversation.
- Highlight the concerns clearly, allow them time to ask to questions & explain their view if needed.

- Reassure them you are there to support, they are not in trouble & it is a safe, non-judgemental place to ask questions.
- Highlight differing confidentiality – school may automatically need to contact parents about RSE related concerns, whereas health services may not, be clear about what would & would not need to be shared by your service.
- Reassure that if they feel they need a more confidential conversation about any of the topics you can refer to School nursing team or Sexual Health Outreach Team & Nurses (SHOT) for questions/support.
- Please don't reprimand the young person for using words/slang that may not feel the most appropriate to you as an adult, they may be the only words they know. Use this conversation to offer more appropriate alternatives.
- Give information in a way that is easy for the individual to understand. Don't assume they'll know all terminology so explain where needed.
- At the end of the conversation – ask the young person relevant questions for them to demonstrate their learning from the conversation.
- Make time for any questions they may have. If you don't have the answer, just say you don't know, young people respond well to this, reassure them its ok not to have all the answers – let them know you will find out for them. Reassure them they can come back to you at another time if they reflect & have new questions or consider a referral for more in depth education.

Topics

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Puberty & Periods – Period information to be discussed with all genders.

- Puberty is normal, it happens to everyone, but it is a very different experience for each person.
- It usually starts for most around 11 or 12 years of age & continues through the teenage years & into early adulthood. There are always exceptions to this – e.g. early, prolonged & delayed puberty.
- Puberty causes physical, hormonal & emotional changes– this can be difficult & uncomfortable, but also fun & exciting.
- Ask if they know what changes occur & how this may impact them & others – consider voice changes, moods, skin – dry, oily, spots, body – breasts, bone structure, facial & pubic hair, differing shapes & sizes.
- Offer reassurance that everyone is different & fill in the blanks in their knowledge & understanding around the changes that happen.
- Inform that all bodies are different – this includes penis, breasts & vulva size – young people worry about this & compare themselves, discuss that they are still developing, they are not an adult yet.
- When it comes to bodies, people have different preferences & everyone isn't meant to look the same.
- Promote the functions of body hair & that is normal & natural – it doesn't need to be removed unless they want to want to! It is not dirty; they should not remove it because they think they should or because someone else wants them to.
- Encourage knowledge of all genital anatomy, not just the anatomy they have. Learn about internal & external functions of the differing parts.
- Masturbation can help with new sexual urges, body exploration, condom practice, understanding how things should feel & what to expect to feel during sexual contact if & when they decide to participate.
- Self-exploration can reduce the need to rush into sexual contact with another, reduce image sharing, reduce acting out their urges on each other when they may not be ready, reduce the need to please others & reduce unfulfilling experiences.
- Masturbation should be encouraged in a private, safe, appropriate way, break the stigma especially for young females -reduces sexual inequalities. Reassure that it is not shameful & nothing bad will happen.
- Discuss the clitoris, location & its function with everyone, & that self-body exploration is safe, fun & educational!
- Discuss public & private spaces especially now they are starting puberty – what is appropriate where & what isn't. Reassure that asking for privacy is ok to do, they have a right to it & this should be respected where possible.
- Periods start – give the basic facts. The body is designed to & can become pregnant at puberty if sexual intercourse occurs.

- This is usually a monthly cycle; it is the process of releasing an egg through to the body breaking down the egg if it isn't fertilised by a male sperm. The body bleeds from the vagina for 2 to 7 days to expel the unused egg to restart a new cycle. Everyone's cycle is different in frequency & how long it lasts.
- It is not dirty or shameful, it is natural, again it is different for everyone who experiences it & it can take some time for the cycle to become regular.
- Discuss differing flows – Heavy/Medium/Light & products available – include tampons, towels, menstrual cups, discs & reusable pads. Discuss regular changing & switching absorbency to match flow especially for tampons (TSS risks).
- Inform of Red Box Project or where to access free products within your service. Reassure it is discreet but there is no need to be embarrassed.
- Encourage tracking apps, need for contraception, condoms – remind that if sexually active a missed period can indicate a pregnancy & support may be needed. Direct to Sexual health Outreach Team or School Nursing Team.
- Puberty & changes require an increase in personal hygiene & intimate care but should not be too excessive. Changing clothes more regularly, a good anti-perspirant (not body spray) & general selfcare. Perfumed soaps & products shouldn't be used on the genitals as they are self-cleaning, warm water is sufficient.
- Reassure that everyone does have their own smell, this is natural & normal, it can't be washed away & doesn't need to be if regular hygiene is practiced & it isn't offensive.
- Changes in feelings, desire & sexual orientation should be highlighted- young people need to understand these feelings are normal & nothing to be ashamed of.
- There is no rush to label themselves regarding orientation, if at all – exploring feelings safely & privately is normal & they can continue to be fluid throughout life.
- Feelings, especially about others need to be thought through & considered. Just because people 'like' or 'fancy' someone doesn't mean it should be acted on. Time needs to be given to getting to know the person, communicating how they are feel & understanding if the feeling is mutual.
- Reassure them that not everyone feels the same about each other, but it also doesn't mean they don't like you as a person & vice versa.
- Encourage kindness to themselves & each other through this time, & not to draw attention to other people's changes.
- Encourage them to support each other, especially if they see someone struggling or being isolated for their puberty changes.
- Encourage work around building self-esteem & confidence, finding hobbies or interests & being comfortable in their own skin. Highlight that social media can reduce self-esteem & negatively impact feeling of worth due to comparison. Reassure that it is ok to be different.

Healthy Relationships & Unhealthy Relationships.

- Discuss different types of relationships – & differing expectations e.g. friends, parents & carers, teachers, sibling, partners
- Consensual – highlight that young people have choice, they should not be pressured to be into being in a relationship or feel they must stay in one.
- Discuss that on the whole, relationships of any kind should be positive, equal, age appropriate. If there is more negativity, jealousy bickering or trust issues it may be time to consider whether it is still right for them. Support as often as needed but don't insist this must happen.
- Discuss Positive & Negative traits – ask the young person to list them & explore the answers.
- Encourage 'romantic' relationships to be like what they would want in a friend.
- Healthy relationships go slowly, there is no rush, get to know a person – moving too fast, excessive messages, things becoming sexual too soon, excessive gifts, buying affection, being too intense & not listening to boundaries is not healthy. Intensity isn't love. Listen to what your gut tells you, don't ignore it.
- Relationships & healthy attachment should feel easy, calm & peaceful. Not enduring or chaotic. If a relationship is healthy, it shouldn't feel confusing.
- Discuss how fairytales & films about love don't always help – for example – a relationship being the only thing to want in life & someone else coming to save you! Bridget Jones was 3 films about trying to get a relationship, body shaming, the struggle, fighting for it, losing it numerous times & a happy ever after. This suggests if Love is not hard work, it's not worth it, & maybe it's not actually love if it feels easy.
- Platonic friendships are as important as romantic partnerships – you can do cool things with friends. It should be encouraged that being single is ok, spending time with friends is fun.
- Discuss that all relationships with a partner are hard & require continues work & compromise. Sometimes it requires sharing emotional load & this requires being in a good place yourself.
- It is no one else's main responsibility to make you happy, neither is it theirs to make their partner happy. A relationship should add to feelings of happiness & be positive & fun – support should be available from a partner but outside support can be necessary for self-development & growth.
- Self-esteem & confidence help foster positive relationships – choosing & accepting healthy partners, knowing when to leave a relationship, saying NO & negotiation of condom use & implementing good boundaries & relationship expectations.
- Communication is so important in healthy relationships, discussing contraception condoms, screening & results, worries, concerns & when they are ready for sex. It helps understanding of each other's feelings, desires, likes & dislikes – it makes people feel closer & more trusting.
- If you don't feel comfortable discussion sex or asking for support etc – are you ready to be having sexual relationships??

- Stress that a healthy relationship should have privacy – Password sharing & phone checking is NOT OK!
- Unhealthy relationships are often born out of low self-esteem & insecurity – it is therefore important to nurture their own confidence. Discuss ways of doing this – learning a new skill, interests & hobbies.
- Their sexual history is also no one else’s business & it is not up for discussion.
- Discuss power imbalances & the impact – for example a partner being much older means there is likely to be inequalities in the relationship, it makes it harder to speak up & ask for their needs to be met. Ask them to consider why someone would want or need a younger partner (control, insecure, power, emotional immaturity) & whether this is healthy or unhealthy?
- Partners should never decide who you can or can’t see, where you go or what you wear.
- Fixation, obsessing & over messaging, needing to know everything, trawling profiles etc, turning up at people houses should be discouraged – highlight harassment & stalking type behaviours & reporting.
- Co-dependency can increase reliance on an individual, not only does this add pressure in relationships, but it can also lead to isolation & staying in relationships that may not be healthy through fear of having no one else.
- It is important to have time together but also time apart, this is healthy & should be encouraged. You are allowed to be your own person & you don’t need to make apologies for that.
- Sexual relationships are very adult with very adult consequences – young people should explore this only when they are ready, precautions should be discussed. In healthy relationships someone shouldn’t ask or expect you to take risks with their health & potential pregnancy.
- Healthy relationships should be mutually respectful, this includes how we talk about partners when in their company & also when they are not around. Derogatory language, insults, belittling & undermining (‘Negging’) a partner is not ok – we should challenge friends who do this & hold them to account.
- Being a good friend or partner will sometimes require disagreement but in a fair way – we can’t just agree with people’s behaviour if it doesn’t align with our values & beliefs. If you see someone is uncomfortable with friends’ banter or behaviour, call them out. Gentle, respectful challenging from friends can lead to better understanding & possible behaviour change.
- Explain that being in relationships may mean that our partners were born in different countries, with different values, religions & cultural expectation. Even if they weren’t, people have different beliefs & ideals, it is important that you are happy in that relationship & that boundaries are communicated about needs & in terms of differing laws. If living in the UK, UK law applies. – highlight different laws around age & consent to sex, forced marriage etc
- LGBTQA+ - explain risks & allies, safe meeting & relationships, hate crimes, being ‘out’ with the person they are forming a relationship with – risk for Trans people if people are not aware & feel tricked.

- Acceptance of Love being Love & if it doesn't affect your life just let people go about theirs. Reiterate that any relationship can be healthy or unhealthy regardless of gender presentation or orientation etc.
- Stress that LGBTQA+ young people need to be mindful that a person they start a relationship with may have the physical anatomy they were born with. Regardless of current gender presentation or identity – they need to assess risk & precaution of a sexual relationship based on the anatomy & type of sex they are having. For example, 2 females/Lesbian couple – one person is a trans female who still hasn't had bottom surgery – if having intercourse together there is still a pregnancy risk.
- Ending relationships should be normalised, it is a choice, remind them that there doesn't have to be huge reason – it's enough to just not feel the same or not to want to be in a relationship anymore.
- Rejection hurts but is normal & should be talked about – it hurts but isn't always about them.
- Ghosting is not ok if you have been in a relationship or seeing each other for a while. No matter how hard it is someone deserves to be told the relationship is over. The only time this is acceptable is if someone is harassing them, there are threats or after being told they still haven't listened.
- Be kind & honest in ending a relationship – do it prior to starting another, give yourself time between relationships, reflect, space & don't blur the lines & contact – don't send I miss you it's not fair.
- Breaking up is hard for both people in a lot of circumstances.
- If someone cheats blame the person who was meant to be loyal to you – not the person, they cheated with. Most of the time the new person has been lied to, they may not have been aware – the person to be mad at is your partner. End the relationship & try not to react they are not worth your time & don't spend energy looking for reasons etc. Encourage them to focus on themselves during this period & finding who they are now outside of the relationship.

Consent

- **The legal definition of consent is when we agree by choice and when someone has the freedom and capacity to make that choice. We are giving permission for something to happen.**
- This can apply to lots of things but in this case, it is permission given by a person to be in a relationship, with potential touching, body exploration, kissing & sexual activity.
- Consent can be withdrawn at any time & needs to be given every time.
- In any relationship we should feel confident to say YES, NO or STOP. This should be met with respect & understanding.
- Any situation in any relationship we have should consider personal space, personal belongings, & any type of physical touch & always ask permission.
- Discuss that everyone is very different with how they respond to others – this could be due to many factors, we should always ask if we can do something first.
- Personal space is usually about an arm's length; intimate space is from the body to the elbow. Private & intimate parts of the body include genitals, the face & hair, these should not be touched without permission. Using an object to touch those places is still not appropriate.
- Consider that sometimes in crowds' personal space may be encroached but that it should never be deliberate or taken advantage of!
- It's ok to have boundaries – they will only upset those who want to overstep them.
- Consent can be given verbally & through non-verbal signs like body language – body language can be hard to read, & so encourage asking for consent verbally, so it is clear.
- Consent should be easy to decipher – it should be nothing but enthusiastic. Anything unclear or unsure should be seen as non-consent.
- The absence of someone saying No, is not them saying Yes.
- Encourage **continued** consent for young people throughout their experiences – for example, how does this feel, are you happy to carry on, do you want me to stop, do you feel comfortable. Reassure that this shouldn't feel awkward with someone & if it does then should they continue anyway? Explain the importance of continued consent & that it is less awkward than the consequences of not asking.
- Public & Private places need to be clear for young people – other people should have a right to not see things they don't want to in a public place. It is important to remember that intimacy, masturbation, naked bodies & sex is normal, however they are private things that happen between consenting people – **not everyone in public consents to seeing this & so it must happen in private.** Consider discussion of home scenarios as some young people think the whole of their house is private – it needs reiterating that there are public parts of the house. Give examples- Room sharing, main living areas where other family may be.

Consent & the Law – Sexual Activity

- Consent means that you have given permission, and that someone has given you permission to engage in any intimate activity for sex. Any sexual contact without consent is illegal regardless of the age of the people involved.
- In the UK, legally, the age of consent is 16 years. The law makes it clear that a child under 13 years is not capable of consenting to sexual activity and any allegations should be taken very seriously. The Sexual Offences Act 2003 provides specific legal protection for children aged 12 and under who cannot legally give their consent to any form of sexual activity. This would be an instant referral to services for assessment & classed as Statutory Rape.
- This leaves us with the age range of 13-15-year-olds where issues of consent will need more careful consideration. We would suggest support, conversation & exploration of these relationships to ascertain if they are safe, truly consenting & age appropriate.
- Explain that Capacity (Drugs, Alcohol, Age etc), Choice (Pressure, Understanding, Age, Tricked, Spiked) & Freedom (Physical restraint, Unable to leave, Threats, Scared) must be present to consent, describe & discuss things that may affect each one.
- Stress that when under the influence of drugs & alcohol consent cannot be given, even if agreement is made verbally at that time.
- Discuss that relationships are for two people to enjoy, if one doesn't give consent or says 'No' on occasion this is not a rejection. Discuss why people may not want to always have sex.
- Being in a relationship does not give automatic consent or entitle them to sexual activity or touch.
- If they feel being in a relationship does give automatic consent due to their needs but regardless of the other feelings, they need to consider why or how they would enjoy something if they knew they another person wouldn't be. Discuss subtle pressures such as sulking, asking numerous times regardless of being told No, guilt, silent treatment & how this could lead to coerced decisions to reduce upset & please the other at their own detriment which is not giving true consent.
- There is a maximum sentence of **life imprisonment** for rape, assault by penetration, and causing or inciting a child to engage in sexual activity.
- Discuss what defines Sexual Assault, Rape, sexually harmful behaviour & the victim impact.
- Highlight that just because you are in a relationship or having consensual sexual contact, that this doesn't mean consent is given for others to be present, for it to be filmed, or pictures to be taken. Refer to information on image sharing.

Inappropriate language & sexually harmful behaviour

- Consider that a young person using sexual slurs, shock words & tactics can be a way of drawing attention to oneself – explore this with them, could they be trying to communicate their own distress than it just being disruptive or inappropriate?
- Start by asking the young person to explain why they are doing this, rather than reacting & telling them off – often putting the question to them helps them be less defensive.
- It may be that they lack knowledge & understanding of what they are saying or have been suppressing things they wish to know.
- When it can no longer be suppressed but they don't know how to broach a conversation about it – they may display these behaviours.
- Advise that sex & relationships are normal but also private & respectful – and this includes discussion at appropriate times.
- Explain that talking to the wrong people in the wrong setting about their questions, may make people feel uncomfortable & also trigger people who may have experienced sexual abuse.
- It ok to be curious & want to find out more but needs to be discussed in a safe private place with trusted person – sex should not be used to shock or humiliate people.
- Using sexual language in a derogatory & insulting way is uncalled for – everyone should both be able to explore sex & relationships in a safe, fun way without judgement or being called names.
- Teach & talk to everyone about Misogyny, sexualised crime & that they are not entitled to just because they want to. Discuss outdated ideas about clothing, sexual history is not their business & that everyone is entitled to have safe, fun & pleasure – there is no shame in this for anyone.
- Highlight that statistically there is still a disparity between males & females. Historically girls are taught how to stay safe, rather than stressing to boys how to treat women with respect. Consider changing the past narrative during discussions.
- Discuss the serious nature of sexual assault & rape – the trauma associated with this & how using those words casually is worrying & unacceptable.
- Ask & explore why they feel sexual violence & joking about it is ok?
- Stress that talking about personal sexual experiences is disrespectful to the other person & no one's business.
- Using slang is ok within reason amongst friends, however correct terminology should be known & used in situations where required – Clinic, school, police GP, more formal situations & as long as not derogatory.
- Use this as an opportunity to educate, not increase stigma & social taboos. Inappropriacy is often born from lack of understanding around those issues & thinking it is shocking & reactionary.

Advise re; the law around hate crime & inappropriate language re: sexual orientation, gender, race, religion & that there are consequences of using harmful language or behaviours towards these groups.

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Sexting & Image sharing

- Discuss the law & consequences – not only now but for when they become an adult, anyone under 18 is classed as a child.
- **In the UK the age of consent for sexual intercourse is 16. However, it is an offence to make, distribute, possess, or show any indecent images of anyone aged under 18, even if the content was created with the consent of that young person. The law is contained in Section 1 Protection of Children Act 1978.**
- Ask directly what made them ask for images or send them or both? Explore the answer together – peer pressure, wanting a BF/GF, thinking it's just what you do?
- Encourage self-care, hobbies & interests that build confidence & reassure that this will encourage good boundaries & confidence to say NO.
- Remind young people that messaging is just that, & so if feeling pressured or uncomfortable use the report & block function, then tell an adult. Discuss how we don't have to do everything we are asked, discuss people pleasing, politeness, & its problems!
- Reassure that we always have choice & they should not be afraid to say NO or upset someone who is being inappropriate in their requests.
- It's ok not to meet someone expectations!!! Just because someone asks doesn't mean it has to happen!
- Highlight that sending images is not healthy even if it feels 'normal' in their peer groups, it is often not wanted by the receiver, it won't make them like you, it can be distressing, it won't encourage them to want to be your partner.
- Reassure them they can say no, they don't need to return the 'favour', tell someone, delete the image & block them. Never send images on to others as that is also an offence.
- Reassure that people don't have the right to see your intimate body online, once they see this, they often move on to the next - leaving the person feeling used & taken advantage of. Anyone requesting images is unlikely to have genuine interest in one person.
- Reassure that someone should like them for more than just their physical body & sexual desire especially online & where they may never have even met the person they are talking to.
- Scammers have now started posing as young people & ask for images, once sent, they use the image to blackmail the young person for money with threats of showing the images to friends & family.
- Sharing images & people seeing them who you didn't intend to can cause serious mental health problems, embarrassment, shame, regrets, anxiety. It can literally ruin lives.
- Revenge porn or Intimate image abuse – **Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015** **The person whose images were shared must show that he or she did not agree to this, and that the sender intended**

to cause those feelings of distress or embarrassment. If the case is successful, the perpetrator may go to jail for up to two years and be fined.

Discuss your understanding that it can feel normalised, due to TV, Porn, social media, Music Video's etc however their children & their bodies should not be public consumption.

- Liken to real life – when meeting someone initially or even for the first or second time would the first thing you do on meeting them, be to show your genitals & expect the same in return?? Why not? & so why do young people think this is ok online? Ask them to consider & give reasons.
- Ask them to think about how they would feel if their teachers, parents, grandparents, or siblings saw these images – how would they feel? Why wouldn't they share with them?
- Highlight it is never ok to film someone without their knowledge – sexual acts, upskirting, intoxicated etc.

Online safety

- Ask if they understand the risks associated with online use as a teenager.
- Ask what would make them disregard these risks? Explore the answers.
- Reiterate the basics, not giving out personal information, accepting people they don't know, quick adds, covering school symbols/logos, not wearing a uniform etc, not meeting people unless planned safely & inform an adult.
- Show understanding that social media & online use is normal & needed for young people – it is a brilliant thing but with such a vast reach 'worldwide' it means that there are also more opportunities to be contacted by the wrong people too.
- Encourage online time in moderation & for them to consider time outside, with friends or a hobby. This will increase self-esteem & awareness hopefully meaning they will be safer when they are online & able to confidently enforce personal boundaries.
- Encourage independent but smart thinking – to trust themselves if something doesn't feel right. Encourage blocking & reporting – reassure that they don't owe anyone anything online & not to be pressured via a message.
- Don't create, send, or ask for images of a sexual nature, it is against the law until they are 18, it is classed as child sexual abuse material – even if it is a picture of themselves.
- Images, stored, kept, or distributed even for any reason is deemed a serious criminal offence. Once images are sent there is no way of getting them back, controlling who sees them or where they end up – you remain a child forever in the picture. This can also affect life in the future – jobs, anxiety, pictures resurfacing etc.
- Images have been used for scams & to blackmail for money – inform that people pretend to be young people interested in a relationship, ask for images & then threaten to send to their friends & family for large sums of money.
- Highlight that sending images is not healthy even if it feels normal, it is often not wanted by the receiver, it won't make them like you, it can be distressing, it won't encourage them to want to be your partner. Reassure them they can say no, they don't need to return the favour, tell someone & block them.
- Reassure that people don't have the right to see your intimate body online, once they see this, they often move on to the next - leaving the person feeling used & taken advantage of. Anyone requesting images is unlikely to have genuine interest in one person.
- Reassure that someone should like them for more than just their physical body & sexual desire especially online & where they may never have even met the person they are talking to.
- Teach them to be the person they'd want someone else to be to them online, they also must be responsible & accountable for their actions towards others online too – cyberbullying, sharing information to humiliate, creating fake images & distressing content.

Remind them that they can NEVER guarantee age online or who the person is – people lie, use different pictures, voice changers & ways of talking via text & messaging. Even when they become an adult (18) it's important to understand the implications if they send a sexual image to a minor (17 or under).

- Do whatever it takes to stay safe online even if it feels extreme – block, report, tell an adult – if meeting ask for I.D, carefully planned facetime to assess who the person is prior to meeting, meet with friends, tell an adult.
- If any refusal to reassure through these requests, they should see this as a 'red flag' & potentially they may be hiding something or not be who they say they are.
- People who target young people for harm or abuse lurk everywhere online. Especially on Apps that disappear or are encrypted, What's App, Snap, Insta, Dating Apps, Online Gaming – encourage them to remain open minded & not to think it won't happen to them. Encourage trusting their feelings rather than ignoring them.
- Highlight the case of 14yr old Breck Bednar – befriended in the online gaming community & murdered (see resource list)
- If they are feeling alone or isolated due to new feelings & looking for like-minded people to feel understood - offer referrals to appropriate Young Persons services. e.g. – young people questioning their sexual orientation may look naively to adult Apps (e.g. Grindr) to explore their feeling for same sex relationships. Young people may not realise the full intended nature of the App & the danger they could be in – inform re: The Proud Trust for safe, inclusive, appropriate, supervised meetings to meet people feeling the same way & gain friendships.
- Highlight the problems with looking at Porn. Stress you understand the curiosity, but it is more useful to gain information from educational websites & signpost (BISH).
- Porn does not translate to real life, & this should not be how their relationships are conducted. Stress they should never act out what they have seen on Porn randomly & in the moment. They need to be discussed & consented to by both people.
- Porn should not be watched excessively – it can lead to dissatisfaction with normal healthy relationships. Sexual preferences are different for everyone. Just because you want to try it doesn't mean your partner will & that's ok.
- Highlight it is like fantasy film that is just made up - there no condom use, no consent, often heavily kink related, no communication, can be violent & extreme, give false & unrealistic expectations about sexual activity & how bodies should look. It also doesn't consider the emotional parts of sex needed for pleasure & good experiences.
- Highlight that people who target to groom or exploit will target both boys & girls – for sexual or criminal intent online or in person. Discuss their knowledge of CSE & CCE.

- Give the basics around befriending, grooming, targeting, isolation, gifts – extreme & frequent contacts, grand gestures, rewards & benefits, honey traps & how hard it is to see & get out of these things once involved – gangs, threats, violence, extremism etc.
- Young people may say 'I'm know, I'm not stupid'. Advise that these people are clever, it doesn't mean they are 'stupid' everyone can be fooled as they are very good at manipulation. They build them up to use them for their own gain, unfortunately not because they are special to them.

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Contraception, STI's, Pregnancy Choices & Sexual Trauma

- Highlight the basic information, contraception & screening is needed when someone becomes sexually active for them to have safe, healthy relationships with less worry around unplanned/unwanted pregnancy & infection. It shows care for themselves & their partners.
- Worry should not be present during sexual experiences; it takes away fun & enjoyment which is the whole point! – having contraception in place & using condoms increases positive & equal pleasure.
- Everyone should be encouraged to discuss contraception in relationships – highlight it is both peoples' responsibility if they don't wish to be a parent or get an STI & both should be checking & insisting it is used.
- There are lots of different contraceptive methods available, it needs to be suitable for them their lifestyle – the nurses can help with this. Reassure that methods affect each person differently & so not to decide based on scare stories.
- Long Term Contraception can be accessed at the GP, Clinics, SHOT nurses & some Pharmacies also now offer methods. Condoms are free from clinics, participating schools, colleges, services & pharmacies (see Sexual Health Hub)
- Tell ALL young people emergency contraception is available up to 5 days after unprotected sex or a split condom. Refer to SHOT nurses, school nursing team, or local Pharmacies. It is free to under 16s.
- Methods can be changed easily if it doesn't suit them.
- Bodies changes happen anyway regardless of taking contraception, normalise gaining a few pounds during puberty & that it is not always linked to contraception – it just feels that way as body changes & contraception start at the same time.
- Hormonal contraception can increase appetite; it doesn't produce fat cells. Healthy eating can help regulate this; exercise & non hormonal methods are available.
- STI's can only be passed through sexual intercourse or sexual contact.
- Discuss what STI's they know – assess whether further education is required.
- They are common & transmitted easily through unprotected sex because symptoms are not always present – STI's are not dirty they can happen to anyone who has sex without a condom. Some can be passed skin to skin.
- STI's can mostly be treated & cleared. Some are viral & can only be treated – they virus remains in the body & symptoms may return periodically.
- Some have symptoms, some don't – symptoms will need a clinic appointment, if no symptoms they can obtain a postal kit online.
- Support & conversations for missed periods, pregnancy testing & potential TOP services should be referred to School Nursing Team or SHOT.

- Sexual assault & trauma counselling is given by SARC in Manchester, they should always be offered specialist support & referral directly to SARC. SHOT do not support around these issues. Consider Police involvement if they are not already aware.
- for anyone who declines referral but wishes for information they can request a self-help websites list from SHOT. It would need to be assessed as to whether this was suitable for the YP before sending.
- Email vcl.orbishyp@nhs.net or call HCRG Young Persons service 01706 202444, for contraception & screening appointments.
- Refer to school nurse – condoms & conversations.
- Refer to SHOT if more detailed information is needed on these topics.

We hope you have found this resource useful, as an added reminder, if any concerns or disclosures are made during conversations you have with young people, please follow your own service safeguarding procedures & refer as appropriate.

Resources

- BISH – www.bishuk.com
- SEXWISE – www.sexwise.org.uk
- THE PROUD TRUST – www.theproudtrust.org.uk
- BROOK- www.brook.org.uk
- LGBT FOUNDATION – www.lgbt.foundation
- www.youngpeopleswellbeing.org
- www.unitysexualhealth.co.uk
- THE MIX- www.themix.org.uk
- RISE ABOVE – www.riseabove.org.uk
- NSPCC - www.nspcc.org.uk
- R U THINKING - www.RUthinking.co.uk
- THINKUKNOW – www.thinkyounow.co.uk
- REAL LOVE ROCKS – www.barnardosrealloverocks.org.uk
- RAPE CRISIS – www.rapecrisis.org.uk Consent & the Law
- FPA – www.fpa.org.uk -For You & Is This Love? Information Leaflets
- Therapist Aid – www.therapistaid.com
- Citizenship foundation Sexting – <https://www.youngcitizens.org/resources/smartlaw/>
- HCRG Sexual Health Hub- <https://www.theseexualhealthhub.co.uk/>
- Usborne books – What's Happening to Me? by [Alex Frith](#), What's Happening To Me? by [Susan Meredith](#), Growing up Book by [Felicity Brooks](#), Growing Up by [Alex Frith](#)
- Rochdale & Bury CCE & CSE - <https://www.itsnotokay.co.uk/>
- Brecks Last Game - <https://youtu.be/hZIYSCE-ZjY?si=XfdTZ0eNuMdf6pZ>
- Murder Games- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p03cgtx5> <http://www.breckfoundation.org/>
- <https://www.childline.org.uk/>
- <https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>
- <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>
- Misogyny Webinar – The Fawcett Society - <https://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/event-videos>
- [Women's Health Action Group - The Crimson Wave | Action Together](#)
- <https://pshe-association.org.uk/resources-landing>
- The Red Box Project - <https://redboxproject.org/>