SB-CaRT
Sexual Behaviours
Context and Response Tool

NSW GOVERNMENT

Considerations for Aboriginal children and young people

For many Aboriginal communities, sexual development is understood as a natural part of life with each Nation having their own cultural ethics and values that guide what is considered acceptable behaviour.

Aboriginal children are not inherently more likely to display problematic and harmful sexual behaviours than children from other communities. It's Important to recognise that colonisation disrupted traditional systems of ceremony that provided fundamental knowledge about body changes.

Key Facts

Conversations around sexuality and problematic and harmful sexual behaviours can be particularly complex in Aboriginal communities, where cultural protocols view sex and the body as private and sacred. Navigating these topics requires cultural humility, sensitivity, and relationship-based approaches.

When supporting Aboriginal children and their families around sensitive topic such as problematic and harmful sexual behaviours, it is fundamental to ensure cultural safety to be prioritised alongside physical, emotional, and psychological safety.

This includes recognising the importance of cultural ways of knowing, being and doing and kin, community and country in healing.

Aboriginal children and families hold deep strengths and resilience.

Aboriginal children and young people are more likely to be exposed to the environmental and situational factors which makes displaying problematic and harmful sexual behaviours more likely, such as:

- being exposed to trauma and abuse
- being removed from their family and culture
- living in out of home care
- being involved in the justice system.

Overrepresentation of Aboriginal children and young people in these settings is not due to individual or cultural deficits. It is strongly correlated with ongoing structural inequities, racism, dispossession, and historical and contemporary government interventions.

Practice approaches

1. Building trust with families through being open and respectful, transparent and culturally safe engagement, and be open when seeking to understand their perspectives of sexual behaviour.
2. Always be mindful of your own positionality such bias, power dynamics, gender imbalance. E.g. "For instance, it may be culturally unsafe and inappropriate for a male clinician to discuss sexual development with an Aboriginal female Elder." Consider who you might need to involve in this conversation.
3. Ensuring your approach is grounded in a holistic, culturally responsive trauma- and violence-informed framework.

Further information

Together We Can is currently being piloted. Public access to the site is expected to be available in coming months.

Together We Can