

Sexual Abuse – Family Education and Treatment (SAFE-T) Canada



Type of intervention



Group Work



Individual Work



Family Work

Target groups, levels of prevention and sub-groups:



Tertiary Prevention

Children (6-11 Years), Young People (12-17 Years), Young Adults (18-20 Years) | Male & Female | Group Work, Individual Work, Family Work | English



Tertiary Prevention

Young Children (0-5 Years), Children (6-11 Years), Young People (12-17 Years) | Male & Female | Group Work, Individual Work, Family Work | English



Tertiary Prevention

Young People (12-17 Years), Young Adults (18-20 Years), Adults (21 Years +) | Male & Female | Group Work, Individual Work, Family Work | English

Target population

Adolescents aged 12 -19 years who have offended sexually within or outside of the family and their families.

Delivery organisation

SAFE-T is a program of Thistletown Regional Centre, which is directly operated by the Government of Ontario, Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

Mode and context of delivery

SAFE-T is a community-based clinic that provides specialised assessment and treatment services to children and families who have experienced intra-familial sexual abuse, children exhibiting concerning sexualised behaviour, and youth who have offended sexually. Services at SAFE-T are offered at no cost.

The assessment and treatment services at SAFE-T focus on strengths and challenges so that individuals and families can make changes necessary for healthy futures. Training, supervision and consultation to other professionals is offered by the SAFE-T program with the aim of helping to increase public awareness and understanding of child sexual abuse, children with concerning sexualised behaviour, and youth who have offended sexually. In addition, SAFE-T is committed to conducting research in all three client areas.

Level/Nature of staff expertise required

Qualified social workers and psychologists who have completed training in the model.

Intensity/extent of engagement with target group(s)

Recommended intensity:

Dependent on treatment needs, although individual sessions typically run approximately 1-hour. In addition to individual therapy, the clinicians work with dyads, families, and groups (typically run weekly, for 2 hours).

Recommended duration:

Again, this is dependent on individual client needs. The average length of treatment is 18 months. The dyads, families, and groups typically run for 12-18 weeks.

Description of intervention

The essential components of the Sexual Abuse: Family Education and Treatment Program (SAFE-T) are individual treatment combined with regular dyad, family, and group therapy with up to 8 adolescents.

Researchers at the SAFE-T Program have developed a specialized risk-assessment tool: The ERASOR (Estimate of Risk of Adolescent Sexual Offense Recidivism). Treatment is guided by the recommendations obtained from completing a compressive assessment, which includes psychological and clinical evaluations. Information obtained during the assessment includes, but is not limited to the following topics:

- family history & functioning
- developmental history
- physical health
- intellectual, academic and cognitive functioning and expression
- spiritual/cultural issues
- self-perception
- nonsexual delinquency
- potential traumatic experiences & impact
- sexual development & sexual behaviors
- sexual identity and sexual interest
- non-offensive sexual relationships

- knowledge of consent issues & sexual attitudes
- sexual offending
- victim impact awareness
- knowledge of risk for sexual re-offending & prevention awareness
- parental perception of strengths
- common treatment topics Include (not necessarily for all adolescents):
 - developing sexual-offense-prevention plans
 - enhancing parent-child communication/relationships
 - healing from childhood trauma
 - enhancing social relationships/intimacy
 - enhancing pro-social sexual attitudes
 - Increasing accountability for sexual offences
 - Enhancing health sexual interests
 - Developing a support network
 - Enhancing affective expression/regulation
 - Enhancing awareness of victim impact
 - Enhancing self-esteem
- The philosophy behind Safe-T is that:
 - Every individual has a right to live free from the fear of being abuse
 - Each individual and family is unique and has the ability to make positive changes
 - All members of families affected by sexual abuse, including the child who was sexually abused, the youth who has offended sexually and the other family members who may experience stress and/or trauma

When contact has occurred, the person who offended is solely responsible for the decision(s) to engage in sexual activity.

The welfare of an individual who has sexually abused is the most important factor in planning ways to support, help and protect that person.

Each individual and family, given the opportunity and support, has the ability for healthy growth and development. The best support for children and families is achieved through coordinated services with other service providers.

Given the strong reluctance of some individuals to take responsibility for their actions and given the need to ensure the welfare of children, we support the appropriate use of Family and Criminal Court as a means of ensuring the safety of children and the participation of individuals and families in the counselling process.

Inclusivity and diversity are principles that are respected and practiced within the SAFE-T program.

Evaluation

This programme is rated as having promising research evidence by the California Evidence Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (see www.cebc4cw.org). This rating is based on evidence from at least one study with controls. The information in this summary is based on that published by the California Evidence Clearinghouse for Child Welfare.

References

Worling, J. R. (1998). Adolescent sexual offender treatment at the SAFE-T Program. In W. L. Marshall, Y. M. Fernandez, S. M. Hudson, & T. Ward (Eds.), *Sourcebook of treatment programs for sexual offenders* (pp. 353-365). New York: Plenum Press.

Worling, J. R. (2004). Essentials of a good intervention programme for sexually abusive juveniles. Part two: Offence related treatment tasks. In G. O'Reilly, W. L. Marshall, A. Carr, & R. C. Beckett (Eds.), *The handbook of clinical intervention with young people who sexually abuse* (pp. 275-296). Hove, East Sussex, England: Taylor & Francis.

Worling, J. R., Josefowitz, N., & Maltar, M. (in press). Addressing shame with adolescents who have offended sexually using cognitive-behavioral therapy. In M. C. Calder (Ed.), *Contemporary practice with young people who sexually abuse: evidence-based developments*. Lyme Regis, Dorset, UK: Russell House Publishing.

Contact details

Address: SAFE-T Program, 1 Eva Road, Suite 216, Etobicoke, ON M9C 4Z5

Name: Tina Fridmann

Email: tfridmann@safe-tprogram.ca

Phone: 001 (416) 744-9000

Fax: 001 (416) 326-6581