

**Treatment Manual**  
**for**  
**Cognitive-Behavioral Group Treatment**  
**for**  
**Parents/Caregivers of**  
**Children with Sexual Behavior Problems**

**Barbara L. Bonner, PhD**  
**Center on Child Abuse and Neglect**  
**University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center**  
**Department of Pediatrics**

**C. Eugene Walker, PhD**  
**Pediatric Psychology**  
**Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences**  
**University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center**

**Lucy Berliner, MSW**  
**Sexual Assault Center**  
**University of Washington**

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**Cognitive-Behavioral Group Treatment for Parents/Caregivers  
of  
Children with Sexual Behavior Problems**

**Barbara L. Bonner, PhD, C. Eugene Walker, PhD, and Lucy Berliner, MSW**

**Preface**

The cognitive-behavioral parents' group is designed to be an educational group, not a therapeutic group, for the parents. The focus is to teach the parents about their children's sexual behavior and to assist them in reducing their child's inappropriate sexual behavior. This manual is designed to be used with the cognitive-behavioral treatment program for children with sexual behavior problems.

## Session One: Parents

### Group Objectives

- 1) To establish group rules.
- 2) To discuss and sign the Group Contract.
- 3) To define the purpose of the parents' group and give an overview of its content.
- 4) To outline the format for the parents' group.

### Materials

- Name tags
- Program Description (See Appendix)
- Group Contract (See Appendix)
- Pens

### Introducing Group Members

- Provide the parents with **name tags** as they enter the group room.
- After everyone arrives, have the parents tell their names and some information about themselves, such as their work, number of children in the home, and name and age of child in group.
- Have each parent tell something special or fun about their child.

### Establishing Group Rules

- Explain that a few rules are needed to make the group a place where they can feel comfortable to talk openly.

#### **1. Confidentiality.**

- Explain:
  - The things talked about in this group are confidential and are therefore not to be repeated to others outside of the group.
  - Telling others about their own comments or experiences in the group would be all right, while repeating the comments or experiences of others would not be.
  - The therapists will also keep information discussed in the group confidential unless they have a duty to reveal that information due to potential harm to the group member or others, such as suspected abuse.
  - This should have been explained to them previously, but ask if they have any questions regarding confidentiality.
- Outline what their children were told regarding confidentiality:
  - The children don't have to tell anyone what they said in the group if they don't want to.
  - Specific things they say will not be told to anyone unless it is necessary to prevent harm.
  - Their parents will only be told the topics being discussed in the group and how their children are doing in general.
  - The children will be encouraged to talk to their parents about things they have learned in the group if they want to, but it is strongly recommended that the parents not question their children about the group.

- However, it is fine for parents to talk to the children in a general way about what they learned in the parents' group to provide an opportunity for discussion.
- Allow an opportunity for the parents to express their feelings and opinions about these aspects of confidentiality.

## **2. Respect.**

- Remind the parents of the importance of taking turns when talking.
  - Everyone will have an opportunity to talk at some time.
  - It is best to avoid speaking for other group members--allow everyone the opportunity to speak for him/herself.

## **3. Discuss questions or concerns in this group, not elsewhere.**

- For example, if questions arise related to the group, do not ask the child care workers (staff who watch the children while the parents are in their group meeting).
- Although they do provide child care, they are not directly involved in the group process and are not trained to answer questions relating to the group.

## **4. Other Rules**

Ask the parents what other rules they believe would be important to have in the group, but try to keep the rules to a minimum.

### **Group Contract**

- Explain that you would like to provide them with additional information about the group.
- Hand out copies of the **Program Description** and **Group Contract**.
- Have the parents read the description of the program and ask any questions they may have.
- Read the outline of the expectations and requirements for the group aloud with the parents.
- Ask the parents to sign the form.
- Let the parents know that if they arrive late, their child may not be permitted to attend the group if their late entrance would disrupt an ongoing activity.

### **Description of Parent Group Purpose**

- Explain that the main purpose of the parents' group is to educate the parents about children's sexual behavior and to assist them in managing the children's inappropriate sexual behavior. Explain that everyone in the group is there for the same reason:
- Each of them has a child that has engaged in sexually inappropriate behavior.
  - Ask the parents to give a specific example of something their child has done which was sexually inappropriate.
  - Discuss the content for the children's group and mention some of the activities that will be used during the course of the group.
  - Allow an opportunity for questions about the content.

### **Outline of Format for the Parent Group Sessions**

- Explain:
- At the beginning of each session, they will have an opportunity to bring up things that have happened in the past week which they want to discuss in group.

- After some time has been spent discussing current concerns, the group will go on to discuss that session's topic.
- Material introduced in the children's group will be covered at about the same time in this group, although as a rule it will be discussed in the parents' group before the children's group.

**Final Notes**

- Emphasize the importance of attending each session.
- If they are unable to attend, the parents should call ahead and let the therapists know.
- They may leave a message with the secretary if the therapists are not available.
- If they have questions that are not sufficiently addressed in or outside the group, then they may call the therapists or supervisors.
- Remind the parents to take the children to the restroom immediately prior to bringing them to group.

## Session Two: Parents

### Group Objectives

- 1) Introduce the Sexual Behavior Rules.
- 2) Explore parents' expectations of what they hope to gain from the group.
- 3) Discuss how the parents deal with their children's emotions.

### Materials

- "Sexual Behavior Rules" handout (See Appendix)
- Projective Storytelling Cards (See Materials List in Appendix for ordering information)
- Bathing Suit Picture (See Appendix)
- Group Contracts for any new parents

### Introducing New Group Members

- If there are any new group members, have everybody state their names and briefly tell something themselves and their children in the group.

### Review

- Group rules from Session 1.

### Questions

Ask if the parents have any questions about last week's session or if anything came up in the past week that they want to discuss.

### Sexual Behavior Rules

- Explain that one of the first things to which the children will be introduced are the Sexual Behavior Rules.
- These four rules will play a key role throughout the remainder of the group and will be discussed many times.
- Show the parents the **Bathing Suit Picture** and explain that Private Parts are defined for the children as the parts of the body that are covered by the bathing suits.
- Give the parents the "**Sexual Behavior Rules**" handout on which the following four rules are written:

1. It's OK to touch your own private parts when you are alone.
2. It's not OK to touch other people's private parts.
3. It's not OK for other people to touch your private parts.
4. It's not OK to show your private parts to other people.

Explain:

- Certain aspects of the rules are discussed thoroughly with the children to make certain they understand.
- For example:
  - It is emphasized that not touching other people's private parts includes many things that can't be done, such as kicking, pinching, or hurting in any way.

-This rule also means not touching other people's private parts with any part of their own body or with anything else.

-The only time that other people should ever be able to touch the child's private parts is if that person has a very good reason, such as a physician or nurse during a medical examination or if a parent is helping them bathe or putting medicine on their private parts.

-Although they may have different rules when they get older, these are the rules they have right now.

-Show the parents several **Projective Storytelling Cards (87-A7; 87-A12; 87-A17; 87-A19; 87-A20; 87-A21; 87-A22; 87-A25; 88-A8)** that are used for the children to practice the rules.

-Allow the parents an opportunity to express their thoughts about the Sexual Behavior Rules.

-Ask if there are any inappropriate sexual behaviors in which their children engage that they believe will not be addressed by these rules.

If there are any new group members, speak to them briefly afterwards to let them know what the group rules are and review and sign the parent contract.

### **Exploring Parent Expectations**

-Ask the parents to talk about the things they hope to gain from the group.

-Also have the parents discuss their feelings about being in the group and what they expect it to be like.

### **Feelings**

-Let the parents know that one of the topics in the children's group for next week is discussing different feelings.

-Ask:

-How do your children deal with their feelings?

-What are some ways your children can express feelings that are okay with you?

-What feelings do you think the children are experiencing when they act out in sexually inappropriate ways?

-As the parents are discussing their children's feelings, bring out the importance of accepting their children's feelings (which is not the same as accepting the way they express them) and the importance of helping their children label and talk about their feelings.

## Session Three: Parents

### Objectives

- 1) Discuss the importance of supervising the child closely.
- 2) Discuss the rules in the parents' homes.

### Materials

- “Sexual Behavior Rules at Home” questionnaire (See Appendix)
- “Recommendations for Children with Sexual Behavior Problems” handout (See Appendix)

### Review

- Sexual Behavior Rules

### Questions

Ask if the parents have any questions about previous sessions or if anything came up in the past week that they want to discuss.

### What Are the Rules in Your Home

Explain:

In talking about the Sexual Behavior Rules, it was mentioned that different families will have different views about behavior, especially sexual behavior. In addition to the specific sexual behavior rules we will talk about in the group, every family has more informal rules regarding sexuality, privacy, things that are OK and not OK to talk about, and so forth. It's important for parents to be aware of those informal rules and to be aware of what children know about those rules.

- Distribute copies of the "**Sexual Behavior Rules at Home**" questionnaire. Give the parents time to read it and have them respond. Remind them that it is OK to not have the same answers as other people. Let them know this is not a test that will be graded, it is only a means of stimulating discussion.
- Find out what comments the parents have about the exercise.
- Discuss the parents' answers to the questions.

Ask:

- How do you think your children would respond and would it be the same as what the parents have said?
- How do children know what the rules are and are there any rules the children might be confused about?

### Supervision/Family Environment

- Hand out the "**Recommendations for Children with Sexual Behavior Problems**" handout.
- Discuss each of the eight guidelines.
- Allow an opportunity for the parents to ask questions and give their reactions to the guidelines.
- Remind the parents to (1) supervise the child closely to prevent any inappropriate sexual behavior and (2) praise the child for appropriate behavior.

## Session Four: Parents

### Objectives

- 1) Explain the Turtle Technique.
- 2) Discuss warning signs in children's sexual behavior.

### Materials

- Turtle Technique handout (See Appendix)
- "When Children's Sexual Behavior Problems Raise Concern" handout (See Appendix)

### Review

- Recommendations for Children with Sexual Behavior Problems from Session 3.

### Questions

Ask if the parents have any questions about previous sessions or if anything came up in the past week that they want to discuss.

### Turtle Technique

Introduce the parents to the Turtle Technique by mentioning the following:

- The Turtle Technique is a series of steps that will be taught to the children and practiced repeatedly.
- It is a technique to help children think before they act.
- Using this technique can help the children keep the Sexual Behavior Rules (and other rules they might be tempted to break).
- It is important for the parents to know the steps so they can help their children use the technique.

### Steps in the Turtle Technique:

- Distribute copies of the **Turtle Technique handout** and explain the steps.
- If a child thinks about a behavior that they should not do, such as breaking a sexual behavior rule, they should go through the following steps:

- 1) Think or say out loud: **Stop, wait!**

- What is important here is for the children to delay immediate action.

- 2) **Go in your shell like a turtle.**

- At this point, the children are to relax so they can think more clearly. The image of the turtle going into its shell is used to try to encourage the children to go inside themselves and relax rather than acting impulsively.

- 3) **Think.**

- At this point the children are taught to ask themselves some questions:

“Is doing this OK?”

“What will happen if I do this?”

“What could I do instead?”

-Explain that this is also a good time for the child to think about the consequences of different actions that the child might take.

-A choice is then made regarding an appropriate behavior for the child to do.

4) **Do something.**

-Here the children are taught to act on the appropriate choice that they made.

-Discuss the steps with the parents.

-Do they think they could help the child with the techniques if asked?

-Distribute copies of the **“When Children’s Sexual Behaviors Raise Concern”** handout and discuss the warning signals.

-Discuss normal or expected sexual behavior in children.

-Emphasize that sexual behavior is a part of development just like any other aspect of development.

-Point out that a wide range of normal sexual behaviors exist.

-Deciding what is and is not normal depends on factors such as the age of the child and the circumstances.

## Session Five: Parents

### Objectives

1) Discuss developmentally expected sexual behavior in children.

### Materials

-Developmentally Expected Behavior handout (See Appendix)

### Review

-Turtle Technique

-“When Children’s Sexual Behaviors Raise Concern”

### Questions

Ask if the parents have any questions about previous sessions or if anything came up in the past week that they want to discuss.

### Developmentally Expected Behavior

-Distribute copies of the **Developmentally Expected Behavior handout**, allow the parents to fill it out, and then discuss their responses to each item.

## Session Six: Parents

### Objectives

1) Teach and discuss issues in behavioral management and discipline of children.

### Materials

-Flipchart

### Review

-Turtle Technique

### Questions

Ask if the parents have any questions about previous sessions or if anything came up in the past week that they want to discuss.

### How the Parents Discipline Their Children

- Tell the parents that in the next few weeks, some general aspects of discipline and dealing with misbehavior in children will be discussed and then the information will be applied specifically to dealing with sexual misbehavior.
- Ask each parent to discuss the techniques they use for disciplining their children.

### Behavior Management Technique

Explain that:

- In this session the parents may already know some of the information that will be covered, but it is important to talk about each of these things so that everyone has received the same information.
- In the next session, specifically dealing with sexual misbehavior will be discussed.

**Setting Rules:** Things to think about that can be helpful in setting rules for the children. These can be written on a flipchart as they are discussed with the parents.

#### **-Be concrete and specific.**

-A rule like “be respectful” is too vague. Try to specify the behavior you want or don’t want.

#### **-Keep the rule simple.**

- The more simple the rule is, the more likely the child is to remember it.
- Have the parents give examples of rules that would fit these first two criteria.

#### **-Have a few rules.**

-It is best to avoid overloading the child with too many rules to remember at once.

#### **-Be consistent.**

-If you know you will not consistently enforce a rule, it is best not to set it as a rule.

#### **-Be sure to tell the child the consequences for breaking the rule before it is broken.**

-Consequences need to be appropriate for the behavior and the situation.

#### **-Have degrees of seriousness in the rules.**

- Don't treat everything the child does with the same weight.
- If everything is a major rule and gets a serious punishment, consequences lose their effectiveness.

**-Have appropriate expectations.**

- Be sure that the expectations you have for your child are appropriate to his or her developmental level.

**-Rules should be stated in a positive form if possible.**

- Children are most likely to hear only the action verb that the parent uses. For example, if a parent says, "Don't run in the house!", the child is likely to focus mostly on the word "run" instead of the whole phrase. It would be better to say, "Walk in the house!" Here the child would focus on the word "walk".

**Choices and consequences:**

There are two types of consequences: natural and logical. Natural consequences are those that happen naturally as a result of a behavior; logical consequences are those that are imposed by someone else.

For example: If the child left a bicycle in the driveway, a natural consequence would be that it might get run over; a logical consequence would be that the parent says the child can't ride the bike for a week.

- Threats are not consequences; be sure to use consequences you will really follow through with.

**Choices**

- Giving the child choices when possible helps develop responsibility for behavior and can sometimes help avoid power struggles.
- Giving your child choices is an excellent way of avoiding threatening your children.
- When your child is given choices, he or she is given the opportunity to choose the appropriate behavior.

Use this example of using choices and consequences:

“(Name), you are (undesirable behavior). You have two choices. You can either (choice #1) or (choice #2). However, if you continue to (undesirable behavior) you will (consequence). It's your choice.”

Example: Jason, you are running in the house. You have two choices. You can either walk or you can go sit on your bed. If you continue to run, you will have to sit on your bed. It's your choice.

- Have the parents come up with situations in which they might use choices and consequences and practice stating them.

**Praise:**

Rules of praising:

- Focus your attention on the child.**
- Make eye contact.**
- Look pleasant.**

**-Describe the behavior you are praising.**

- Be specific. (Say, “You did a great job of being quiet while I was on the phone,” rather than saying, “You are such a good boy.”)
- Parents may also praise their children for general characteristics that they like (ex.: “I like you, you're a fun person to be with.”)
- It also can help to let your children hear you praising yourself. This helps them understand that it is OK to say good things about yourself.

**Ignoring:**

Ignoring works best on new behaviors that have just started. Ignoring is usually not successful to stop behaviors that the child has done for a long time, such as a child who has had tantrums for a long period of time.

- Use this technique only if the behavior will not cause harm to people or property.
- Use it for irritating behaviors such as whining.
- Be sure you can tolerate the behavior and ignore it 100% of the time if you decide to ignore it. Once you pay attention to the ignored behavior, all your ignoring has gone to waste, and you actually have taught the child to be more persistent in the behavior in the future.
- Ignore the behavior completely, but when it stops, praise the child for something specific. (Example, “I like it when you talk in your regular voice.”)
- Realize that the behavior is likely to get worse before it gets better. Children will usually increase the undesired behavior when you start to ignore it in an effort to try to get your attention. This is likely to continue to escalate until the child realizes that their efforts aren't succeeding.
- Remind the parents: When you pay attention to a behavior, that behavior will increase.

**Time out:**

**-Purpose**

- Children need to understand what it is and why it is being used.
- Use it for serious violations of established rules.

**-Location**

- There needs to be a time out place, somewhere that is boring but not scary.
- Using a chair that is located such that the child is unable to touch anything in any direction can be helpful.
- Sending a child to his or her room may not always work as well as one might think. For many children, the room may be a fun escape instead of a negative consequence.

**-Warning**

- When misbehavior begins, tell the child they have two choices. They can either do the correct behavior or they can go to time out.

**-Duration**

- Tell them how long it will last (a rule of thumb is no more than one minute for each year in the child's age).

- Time out does not start till the child is quiet.
- Ignore pleading and promises to do better.
- Many parents find it helpful to use an egg timer; this makes the time out more concrete and reduces the child's asking when they can get up.
- After time out is over, praise the child and redirect him/her to more appropriate activities.

**-Awareness**

- Be sure that your children know about and understand, in advance, what "time out" is, how it works, and when it will be used.
- This technique is more useful for pre-school and young school-age children than for older children.

## Session Seven: Parents

### Objectives

1) Teach parents techniques to manage inappropriate sexual behavior in children.

### Materials

-Scenarios listed below.

### Review

-Behavior Management Techniques from Session 6.

### Questions

Ask if the parents have any questions from previous sessions or if anything came up in the past week that they want to discuss.

### Handling Sexual Misbehavior

-Read the following scenarios and have the parents discuss ways of handling these situations.

**1. A parent discovers his/her young child in the closet with a cousin of the same age and their clothes are off. This is the first instance of such behavior.**

Suggestions of what to do:

- a. Calmly instruct the children to get dressed.
- b. Have a brief but specific conversation about proper sexual behavior.
- c. Temporarily separate the two children and then allow supervised play.
- d. Rewards can be provided for appropriate behavior.
- e. Tell the other parent so they can help also with supervising play.

Ask the parents:

- Would you handle the situation differently if it had been the third instance of that behavior?
- What if the children had been different ages?
- What if the child explained that he or she was just curious?

**2. A child engages in sexually explicit talk and his or her brother and sisters giggle.**

Suggestions of what to do:

- a. Find out if the child understands what he or she is talking about.
- b. Remind the child that the behavior is not acceptable.
- c. Clarify for the child what is and is not appropriate to talk about in different settings.
- d. Have the child leave the room for a period of time.
- e. If the child is using slang for body parts, teach the correct terms.

**3. A child masturbates in the living room while the family is watching television.**

Suggestions of what to do:

- a. Remind the child that is something that should be done in private.
- b. Distract the child by giving him or her something else to do.

**4. The parent discovers the child performing oral sex on another child.**

Suggestions of what to do:

- a. Firmly remind the child of the Sexual Behavior Rules.
- b. Put the child in time out.
- c. Restrict playing with friends for a period of time.
- d. Supervise play with other children and provide small rewards for appropriate play.
- e. Consult with a counselor, especially before allowing unsupervised play even for a brief period of time.

-If this is the first instance of this behavior, it would be important to find out more information, such as where the child got the idea for doing this.

-For any of the above situations, parents may also remind children about using the Turtle Technique to help themselves stop and to do something else instead.

**5. Another parent calls and says that your child has been talking about sex.**

Suggestions of what to do:

- a. Sit down with your child and ask if there are questions she or he would like to ask about sex (or where babies come from).
- b. Explain to your child that it is not appropriate to talk with other children about sex. You would prefer if she or he would come to you with thoughts and questions.
- c. Explain that one of the reasons you would prefer him or her talking to you is that other children may not have the right information about sex and might say something that is not correct.

**NOTE:** For any of the above situations, parents may also remind children about using the Turtle Technique to help themselves stop, think, and to do something else instead.

**Additional Examples/Group Discussion**

-Ask the parents to come up with additional examples of inappropriate sexual behavior and discuss ways of dealing with that behavior.

## Session Eight: Parents

### Objectives

- 1) To explain aspects of sex education taught in the children's group.
- 2) To facilitate group discussion regarding sexual abuse prevention.
- 3) To discuss topics suggested by the parents that have not been covered.

### Materials

- Where Did I Come From? (See Materials List in Appendix for ordering information)
- Male and Female Diagrams (See Appendix)
- Private Zone (See Materials List in Appendix for ordering information)

### Review

Handling Sexual Misbehavior from Session 7.

### Questions

Ask if the parents have any questions from previous sessions or if anything came up in the past week that they want to discuss.

### Sex Education

- Explain to the parents that an important part of the treatment process for their children is to provide them with basic information regarding sexuality.
- Discuss with the parents what kind of information their children already have about sex and from whom they got that information.

Components of the sex education section of the children's group:

- Therapists will review the book, Where Did I Come From, and show the parents the Male and Female Diagrams that will be used with the children.
- Therapists explain to the parents that a brief amount of information regarding puberty will be discussed (for example, that the children's bodies will be changing as they grow up).
- Therapists will include some discussion about when it is appropriate and not appropriate to talk about sex.
- Discuss any questions the parents have about the sex education portion of the children's group.

### Abuse Prevention

Show the parents the book Private Zone and go over the prevention guidelines that will be given to the children.

#### Prevention Guidelines

- Even adults need a good reason to touch your private parts.
  - For example, it is OK for a doctor or nurse to touch your private parts when your parents take you for a medical examination. Here, we ask the children how they can tell that a person is really a doctor or nurse.
- It's OK to say you'll do it yourself (taking a bath, using medicine).

- We teach the children that if somebody touches their private parts or tries to touch them, they should:
    - Say no.
    - Yell!
    - Leave the situation.
    - Tell someone; never keep it a secret.
    - Keep telling people until someone believes them.
  - We also ask the children: If somebody else touches them, who is breaking a sexual behavior rule? Here we emphasize that if someone else touches them, that person is breaking a sexual behavior rule.
- Discuss with the parents appropriate responses by adults to children's disclosures of sexual abuse.
- Some examples:
- Believe the child.
  - Stay calm.
  - Reassure the child.
  - For example: "I'm glad you told; you didn't do anything wrong. I will help you."
  - Report the offense to the authorities and get help for your child.
  - Let the child talk about it if he or she wants to, but don't force the child to discuss it.
  - If a friend or family member was the abuser and they may go to jail, emphasize that the other person did something wrong and that is one way of getting help for them.

### **Parent Topics**

- Find out what the group members would like to discuss in the group that has not been covered or was not covered sufficiently up to this point.
- If time permits, facilitate a group discussion on pertinent topics that the parents raise.

## Session Nine: Parents

### **Objectives**

- 1) Suggest ways parents to talk to their children about sexuality.
- 2) Discuss topics suggested by the parents.

### **Materials**

- Pens
- “Guidelines for Discussing Sexuality and Sexual Behavior with Children” handout (See Appendix)

### **Review**

Abuse prevention

### **Questions**

Ask if the parents have any questions about previous sessions or if anything came up in the past week that they want to discuss.

### **Talking With Children About Sex**

Give the parents the handout on **Guidelines for Discussing Sexuality and Sexual Behavior with Children** and discuss the guidelines provided.

### **Group Discussion**

- Ask what the group members would like to discuss in the group that has not been covered or was not covered sufficiently up to this point.
- If time permits, facilitate a group discussion on pertinent topics that the parents raise.

## Session Ten: Parents

### **Objectives**

1) Discuss topics suggested by the parents.

### **Materials**

-None

### **Review**

Guidelines for Discussing Sexuality and Sexual Behavior with Children

### **Questions**

Ask if the parents have any questions about previous sessions or if anything came up in the past week that they want to discuss.

### **Group Discussion**

- Facilitate a group discussion on pertinent topics that the parents raise.

## **Session Eleven: Parents**

### **Objectives**

- 1) Inform the parents of the status of their children's progress in the group.
- 2) Answer any questions the parents may have about their child.

### **Questions**

Ask if the parents have any questions about previous sessions or if anything came up in the past week that they want to discuss.

The parents meet individually with the group therapists during this session. The therapists provide the parents with feedback about their child's progress and recommendations for additional treatment if needed.

## Session Twelve: Parents

### Objectives

- 1) Post-testing to assess child's progress.
- 2) Have parents evaluate program.

### Materials

- Instruments for post-testing (Optional; See Appendix)
- Evaluation Questionnaire (Optional; See Appendix)

This session can be used for additional review and discussion with the parents or as an evaluation session. If it is used for evaluation, the parents will complete any tests and questionnaires selected for the evaluation process on the outcome of the treatment program. In addition, the parents can be asked to complete the **Evaluation Questionnaire** on the usefulness of the program. The parents should be thanked for their participation in the program and reminded to call for additional services if problems arise in the future.

## **APPENDIX**

## **Parents: Session One**

### **Program Description**

The Children's Sexual Behavior Problems Program is a specially designed treatment program for children who exhibit problems in sexual behavior and their parents/caregivers. The two major components of the cognitive-behavioral program are described below.

#### **Children's Therapy Group**

The children's therapy group meets once a week with each session lasting one hour. Through participation in a weekly therapy group, children will learn accurate names for body parts and basic information about sexuality, the sexual behavior rules, self-control procedures, and prevention of future abuse. Group members will participate in a variety of activities during the course of treatment, including listening to selected stories read by the therapists, role playing, and group discussion.

#### **Parents' Therapy Group**

Involvement of the parent/caregiver is a required and essential feature of the treatment program for children. Parents are required to attend a weekly session that lasts one hour. Parents will be asked to sign a form which clarifies the parental responsibilities.

Sessions will consist of group discussions which will coincide with the topic(s) of the children's group and also involve topics of special concern to parents of these children. Topics to be discussed in the parents' group session include: the nature of their child's inappropriate sexual behavior, feelings about their child, improving the parent-child relationship, feelings about being a parent, and helping the children to control their behavior, etc.

**Session One: Parents**

**CENTER ON CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT  
DEPARTMENT OF PEDIATRICS  
UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER**

**Children’s Sexual Behavior Problems Program**

Parent/Caregiver Responsibilities

As a group member, I agree to:

1. Attend each weekly session and be on time.
2. Assure that my child attends all sessions on time.
3. Give 24 hours notice, whenever possible, if I am unable to attend a session. (This can be done by calling \_\_\_\_\_.)
4. Abide by the group’s confidentiality rules.
5. Participate in group discussion designed to help my child better control his/her sexual behavior.
6. Arrange child care for my other children who do not participate in the current children’s group. (Child care is provided during the parents’ group sessions for participating children only unless specific arrangements are made with the therapists.)
7. Participate in the evaluation of the program and my own experiences in it, including periodic brief follow-up assessments for two years.
8. Notify the Project Coordinator if I move or change my telephone number during the next two years so that I may be contacted for the follow-up assessments of my child’s progress/behavior.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Caregiver

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Caregiver

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

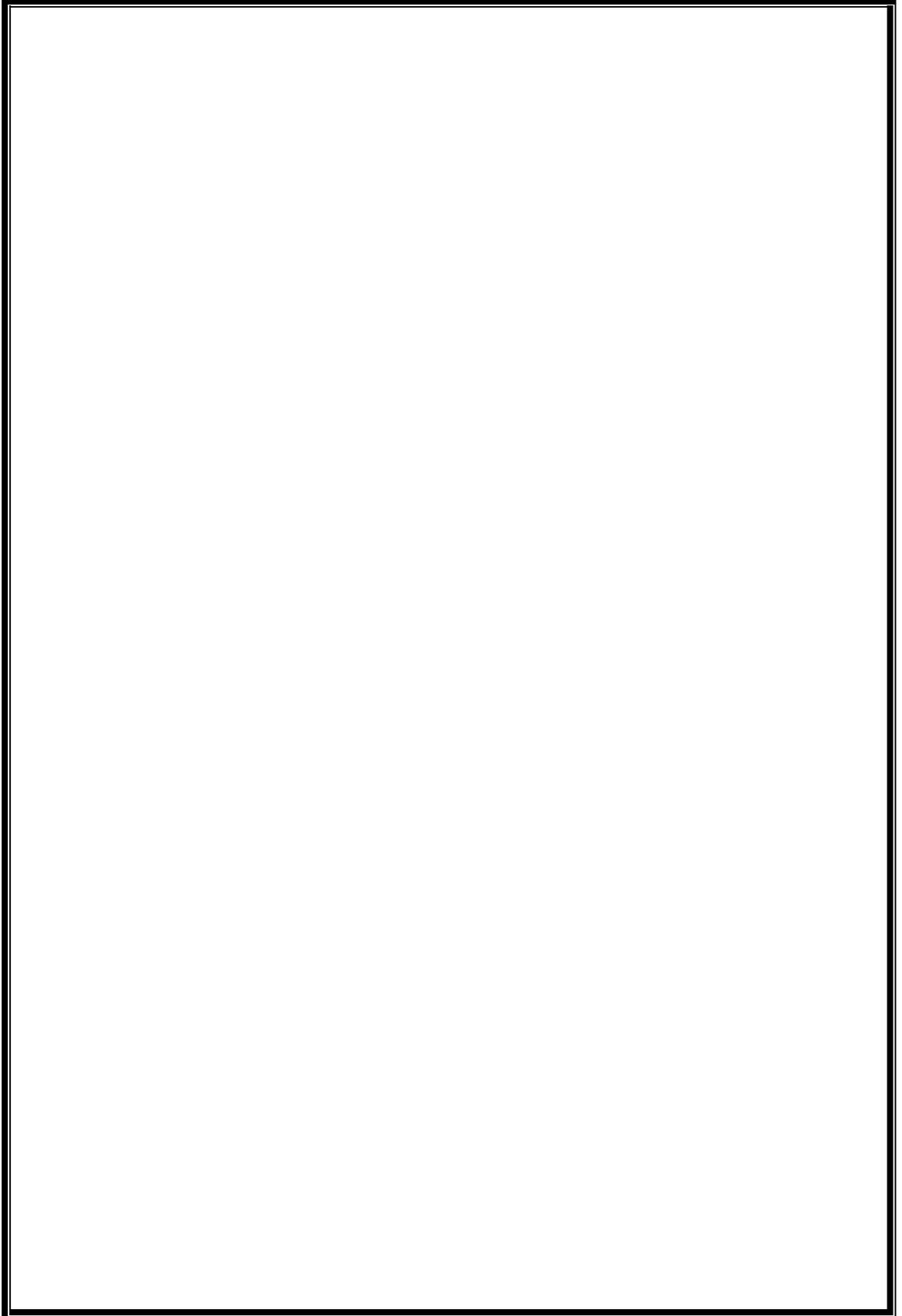
## **Session Two: Parents**

### **SEXUAL BEHAVIOR RULES**

1. It's OK to touch your private parts when you are alone.
2. It's not OK to touch other people's private parts.
3. It's not OK for other people to touch your private parts.
4. It's not OK to show your private parts to other people.

**Session Two: Parents**

BATHING SUIT PICTURE



## MATERIALS LIST: Parents

1. Projective Storytelling Cards  
  
Northwest Psychological Publishers, Inc.  
P.O. Box 49458  
Redding, CA 96049-4958  
(916) 223-4735
  
2. Turtle puppets for teaching the Turtle Technique  
  
Folkmanis puppets  
1219 Park Avenue  
Emeryville, CA 94608  
(510) 658-7677  
(510) 654-7756 FAX
  
3. Where Did I Come From? By P. Mayle, 1973.  
Lyle Stuart Inc.  
120 Enterprise Ave.  
Secaucus, NJ 07094  
  
(Available in most bookstores)
  
4. Private Zone By Frances S. Dayee, 1984.  
Warner Books, Inc.  
666 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10103

### Session Three: Parents

#### SEXUAL BEHAVIOR RULES AT HOME

Note: These questions are asked about behavior in children ages 6-12.

Is it okay for:	Okay	Not Okay
1. Parents to be nude in front of children?		
2. Children to touch their private parts when they are alone?		
3. Children to “play doctor” with their friends the same age?		
4. A child to sleep with his/her parent(s)?		
5. Children to be nude in front of each other?		
6. Children to ask for privacy in the bathroom?		
7. Brothers and sisters to touch each other’s private parts?		
8. Children to bathe together?		
9. Children to sleep together?		
10. Children to watch movies/TV/videos with sexual behavior?		
11. A child to go into the parents’ bedroom without knocking?		
12. Children to watch while adults are having sex?		
13. Children to have the door closed when they are in a room alone?		
14. Children to kiss another child or adult?		
15. Children to go into the bathroom when an adult is in the bathtub or shower?		

Adapted from Johnson, T. C. (1989). Human sexuality: Curriculum for parents and children in troubled families. Los Angeles, CA: Children’s Institute International.

### Session Three: Parents

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH SEXUAL BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS

(Ages 6-12)

1. Close supervision is important when the child is playing with other children. Check on them frequently to make sure you know where they are and what they are doing. Do not allow them to play in a room with the door closed.
2. It is preferable that the child not bathe or sleep in the same bed with other children. Also, if possible, the child should sleep in a room alone.
3. The child should not be given any opportunities for assuming a role of authority over younger or more vulnerable children.
4. Sexually explicit materials should not be available in the home.
5. The adults should enforce privacy in their bedroom and in the bathrooms. There should be established rules about entering the adults' (i.e., knock before entering). bedroom. If engaging in sexual activity, the adults should take steps to ensure that children cannot come in or observe.
6. The adults should use appropriate modesty in the child's presence. There should be no nudity, partial nudity, or explicit displays of sexual behavior by either parent or other adults in front of the child. It is, however, appropriate for adults to show normal affection to each other and the children.
7. The child should not be permitted to sleep or bathe with the parent.
8. The adults should communicate clear rules and expectations about privacy and appropriate sexual behavior to the child. It is important that all members of the family know and observe these rules.

Bonner, B.L., Walker, C.E., & Berliner, L. (1994). Children with sexual behavior problems. Research project funded by National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, HHS.

## Session Four: Parents

### TURTLE TECHNIQUE

1. **Stop. Wait.**
2. **Go in your shell like a turtle.**
3. **Think.**
4. **Do something.**

### Turtle Technique Story

There once was a turtle named Jamie who lived in a pond with her family and a bunch of other turtles. She liked to swim and play with her friends. She also liked to play with her friends. She especially liked to play with her two best friends, Susie and Carol. In this pond, everyone had a special bookbag where they kept their own belongings, things that only belonged to them. One day, Jamie saw that Carol was away from her special place and that Carol had a beautiful pencil sticking out of her bookbag. She wanted to see it up close and she really wanted to have a pencil just like that one. She started to go over to the bag and she was going to take the pencil. Just before she got there, she felt she better **Stop** and **Wait** a second. She then went **inside her shell**, where she knew it would be safe to relax. She then spent a few moments **thinking**:

- Is what I'm thinking of doing OK?
  - She decided that it was not OK because it would be breaking a rule that she should not steal other people's things.
- What will happen if I do this?
  - She thought about how it might make Carol feel bad if she didn't have her pencil anymore and that she might get herself in trouble if she did this.
- What could she do instead?
  - She thought that maybe she could go and play jump-rope with Susie, or maybe go swimming in her favorite part of the pool.
- **So . . . Jamie decided that what she was going to do instead was to go and find Susie to play jump-rope, and she went off to play.**

This story works best when using a puppet that has a head that can be pulled into its shell. They can practice the following steps:

1. **Stop-Wait**

- Have the child imagine a stop sign.
- This is the signal to stop what they are doing and ask themselves what they're feeling.
  - "Let us imagine a turtle (use puppet) is in a situation similar to one when she wants to take something that is not hers."
- How does she think the turtle might be feeling?

2. **Go in your shell like a turtle.**

- Ask the child what turtles do when something bothers them.
- Explain:
  - "They go inside their shells where it is safe. Doing that makes it easier to relax and think."
- Have the child pretend he/she is a turtle and practice going into his/her shell.
  - Demonstrate this with the puppet.
- Explain that while he/she is in the shell, he/she may relax some more by going limp like a bowl of spaghetti or a rag doll.
  - Have the children practice this, taking deep breaths to help them relax.

3. **Think**

- Tell the child:
  - "Ask yourself, is what I'm thinking about doing OK?"
  - "What will happen if I do this?"
  - "What could I do instead?"
- Explain that now that the turtle is relaxed, this is a good time to think about these things.
- Use the questions in relation to the situation that was described earlier for the **puppet turtle**.
- Ask the child to name some things the turtle could do instead, maybe some things to make the turtle feel better if they mentioned unpleasant feelings in the first step.
- Make sure that a few suggestions that might have negative consequences are given so there is an opportunity to talk about how some things might seem like a good idea at first but make us feel bad later or get us into trouble.
- Have the child pick something that the turtle can do instead of breaking a behavior rule.

4. **Do something:**

- Explain that now the turtle has picked something to do, he/she needs to go ahead and do it.

## **Session Four: Parents**

### **WHEN CHILDREN'S SEXUAL BEHAVIORS RAISE CONCERN: SIGNALS FOR PARENTS AND COUNSELORS**

1. The child focuses on sexuality to a greater extent than on other aspects of his or her environment, and/or has more sexual knowledge than similar-aged children with similar backgrounds who live in the same area. A child's sexual interests should be in balance with his or her curiosity about, and exploration of, other aspects of his or her life.
2. The child has an ongoing compulsive interest in sexual, or sexually-related activities, and/or is more interested in engaging in sexual behaviors than in playing with friends, going to school, and doing other developmentally appropriate activities.
3. The child engages in sexual behaviors with those who are much older or younger. Most school-aged children engage in sexual behaviors with children within a year or so of their age. In general, the wider the age range between children engaging in sexual behaviors, the greater the concern.
4. The child continues to ask unfamiliar children, or children who are uninterested, to engage in sexual activities. Healthy and natural sexual play usually occurs between friends and playmates.
5. The child, or a group of children, bribes or emotionally and/or physically forces another child of any age into sexual behaviors.
6. The child exhibits confusion or distorted ideas about the rights of others in regard to sexual behaviors. The child may contend: "She wanted it" or "I can touch him if I want to".
7. The child tries to manipulate children or adults into touching his or her genitals or causes physical harm to his or her own or other's genitals.
8. Other children repeatedly complain about the child's sexual behaviors—especially when the child has already been spoken to by an adult.
9. The child continues to behave in sexual ways in front of adults who say "no", or the child does not seem to comprehend admonitions to curtail sexual behaviors in public places.
10. The child appears anxious, tense, angry, or fearful when sexual topics arise in his or her everyday life.
11. The child manifests a number of disturbing toileting behaviors; s/he plays with or smears feces, urinates outside of bathroom, uses excessive amounts of toilet paper, stuffs toilet bowls to overflow, sniffs or steals underwear.
12. The child's drawings depict genitals as the predominant feature.
13. The child manually stimulates or has oral or genital contact with animals.

14. The child has painful and/or continuous erections or vaginal discharge.

Johnson, T.C. (1991, August/September). Understanding the sexual behaviors of young children. SIECUS Report, 8.

(Note: This is reprinted with permission from the Sex Information and Education Council of the US-SIECUS.)

## Session Five: Parents

### DEVELOPMENTALLY EXPECTED BEHAVIOR

Check **EVERY AGE** when you think the following behaviors normally occur:

	2- year- olds	4- year- olds	8- year- olds	12- year- olds	16- year- olds	Adults	Never
1. Wanting to “go steady” with a girlfriend/boyfriend.							
2. Asking questions about sex.							
3. Kissing someone in a sexual way.							
4. Watching sexually explicit TV, movies, or videos.							
5. Looking at sexually explicitly magazines or books.							
6. Undressing together in order to see each others’ private parts.							
7. Masturbating							
8. Fondling another’s genital or anal areas.							
9. Fondling another’s breast area.							
10. Touching other body parts of another person (i.e., shoulder, arm, leg) in a sexual way.							
11. Penetration of another’s vaginal or anal area with a finger.							
12. Having sexual intercourse.							
13. Pretending to have intercourse with another person.							
14. Trying to observe other people’s private parts.							
15. Participating in oral sex.							

## Session Eight: Parents

### Female Diagram

1. Breast
2. Vagina
3. Uterus

### Male Diagram

1. Penis
2. Testicles
3. Scrotum

## Session Nine: Parents

### GUIDELINES FOR DISCUSSING SEXUALITY AND SEXUAL BEHAVIOR WITH CHILDREN

1. If you are going to talk with your child about sexuality, make certain that you have correct information. If you do not know the answer to a question, be honest with your child. You could look for the answer together in a book from the library.
2. Pay attention to your child's questions and answer the questions at the level he/she can comprehend. If your child is asking about how animals make babies, just talk about that. If they want to understand the entire reproductive cycle, get them books or diagrams and help them understand that process.
3. Remember how your parents discussed or did not discuss sexuality with you and decide whether you want to change how you talk to your child. If your child has not asked and is not asking questions about sexuality, make sure you are not somehow discouraging communication in this area.
4. If some children are not ready to discuss sexual behavior, let them know you will talk with them when they are ready. Let your child know that you will try again another time, and then remember to bring it up again later.
5. Find a time to bring up the topic of sexuality. For example, if you see a program on television or a movie with your child where a sexual issue is raised, state your agreement or disagreement with the way in which it is portrayed. Have age appropriate books on sexuality available for your children and read these books together.
6. It is recommended that parents use the generally accepted terms for body parts (breasts, penis, vagina, etc.), particularly with children ages 6 to 12.
7. When you discuss sexuality with your child, remember that your own sexual values will be conveyed to your child. If there is a difference between your attitudes about sexual behavior, how you act sexually, and what you want your child's sexual behavior and attitudes to be, this could cause your child to be confused.
8. A way to encourage communication about sexuality with children is to ask what the dirty jokes are that are going around their school. You may find that they are not much different than the jokes told when you were growing up. Another technique you might use is to ask about sexual slang words being used. This will give you an opportunity to clarify the accurate meaning of the words used and the jokes being told if your child is confused by them.
9. When your child uses a dirty word, you may want to ask what the word means. You may need to tell the child the actual meaning of the word. It is up to you if a child is allowed to use dirty words or slang. However, if parents use these words, it is very possible that children will imitate them.
10. It is important for children to know that changes will occur to their bodies during puberty before these changes begin to occur.

11. It is also important for children/adolescents to know about sexual intercourse, reproduction, and contraception before they become sexually active.
12. Children are more likely to engage in responsible sexual behavior if they have positive models, correct knowledge, and clear values. Children learn most of their values and attitudes by watching adults and peers.

Note: If parents or caretakers are having problems in their intimate relationships, these issues should not be discussed with the child nor should the child be used as a confidante. Children cannot help parents with adult sexual problems. This does not mean that if a child is aware of relationship difficulties the parent is having with a mate, that the child's questions should not be answered. However, the questions should be discussed only to the extent that they are helpful to answer the child's questions.

Adapted from Johnson, T.C. (1989). Human sexuality: Curriculum for parents and children in troubled families. Los Angeles, CA: Children's Institute International.

## **Session Twelve: Parents**

### **Instruments That Were Utilized for Post-testing in the Research Project**

1. Child Sexual Behavior Inventory (Friedrich)
2. Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach)



