

ARE YOU A PROFESSIONAL WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE?

SOME OF THEM ARE STRUGGLING WITH SEXUAL THOUGHTS TOWARD YOUNG CHILDREN. THEY NEED YOU AS A "TRUSTED ADULT"!

Understanding the Issue

Young people typically begin to develop sexual interests in others in and around the pubescent phases, and some might experience sexual urges or interests even earlier. Having a sexual interest in peers when growing up is entirely normal and nothing to be worried about in general. Sometimes young person has sexual thoughts or feelings about children, and it might confuse you as a professional. Remember, that you don't have to be an expert to encounter a young person in a respectful manner and provide support in their process of reflecting on their sexuality.

Role of Professionals

As a professional working with young people, you are often the first point of contact for young people struggling with these thoughts and feelings. Immediate and appropriate action is of utmost importance, as is consultation with other professionals for a comprehensive treatment plan. In situations where you as a professional become concerned about the young person's thoughts and feelings escalating to the level of behavior, you have a professional responsibility to address the issue and report about the situation in accordance with the laws and guidelines of your country.

Reporting and Professional Consultation

Recognizing the indicators of sexual thoughts about children among young people requires a basic understanding of the issue. Collaboration with trained colleagues, especially those experienced in treating individuals with sexual thoughts to children, is essential for providing the best care and support as your primary response mechanism. However, if you suspect sexual exploitation or abuse, it's your duty to report it to competent authorities.

ACTING IN THE BEST INTEREST OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Most individuals never act on their sexual thoughts. As a trusted adult, you can offer various forms of support:

- 1. Emotional Support:** Create a non-judgmental, confidential, and safe space for young people to express their concerns.
- 2. Guidance and Advice:** Offer guidance on seeking professional mental health help and understanding legal obligations.
- 3. Safety and Protection:** Prioritize the safety of potential victims, and make it clear that any potential harm to children is unacceptable.
- 4. Moral and Ethical Development:** Discuss the importance of ethical behavior and the consequences of inappropriate actions.
- 5. Role Modeling:** Demonstrate responsible behavior by seeking professional help when you face challenging issues.
- 6. Communication:** Maintain open dialogue while emphasizing the need for professional intervention.
- 7. Conflict Resolution:** Mitigate any potential risks related to the young person's thoughts, and address them by focusing on legal and appropriate solutions.
- 8. Crisis Management:** Be prepared to assist in crises or emergencies.
- 9. Advocacy:** Advocate for the young person's well-being while ensuring child protection measures to prevent harm to potential victims.
- 10. Building Self-Esteem:** Encourage young person's personal growth and healthy self-esteem while addressing their issues through professional help.

GENERAL PREVENTION

Education is key to preventing sexual exploitation and abuse.
Teach young people about:

Preventing Harm

Importance of respecting boundaries and consent.

Legal Consequences

Severe repercussions of sexual actions involving children.

Emotional Well-being

Building healthy relationships based on mutual respect.

Empowerment

Making informed decisions about their bodies and relationships.

Victimization prevention

Educating young people about sexual behavior toward children to prevent them from being victims or inadvertently causing harm.

As a trusted adult, your role is pivotal in addressing this sensitive issue. Maintaining a balance between trust and confidentiality while taking necessary actions is crucial. Open dialogue, honest answers, and provision of resources are key to equipping young people with the knowledge to make ethical decisions and prevent harm. Ensuring a safe environment where they feel comfortable to share reflects a comprehensive and responsible approach to safeguarding the well-being of the young persons you engage with.



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