



# PSB-CBT

## What is PSB-CBT?

Problematic Sexual Behavior-Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (PSB-CBT) is a family-oriented, cognitive behavioral, psychoeducational, and supportive treatment designed to reduce or eliminate incidents of problematic sexual behavior. This program involves the caregiver in the youth's treatment. It requires weekly attendance by the youth and caregiver, active participation, monitoring, and support of the youth's application of skills between sessions, along with an ongoing assessment of the youth's progress in treatment.



Hearing that your youth has engaged in sexual behaviors can be extremely stressful for everyone involved. It's important to know that there is help.

## What is Problematic Sexual Behavior?

Problematic sexual behavior (PSB) is more than kids playing doctor or showing curiosity about private parts. PSB includes sexual behaviors that are beyond typical sexual development or illegal. A clear indication of a problem is when the behaviors are aggressive, intrusive, or coercive, and there is harm to the youth and others. The term is also used when youth display sexual behaviors that do not respond to parental intervention, or are frequent, intrusive, or occur among youth of disparate ages or abilities. There is hope through treatment.

### Sexual behavior is a continuum

Typical		Problematic
Exploratory	↔	Planned
Agreed Upon	↔	Coerced
Near Same Age	↔	Disparate Ages
Periodic	↔	Preoccupying

Source: Understanding Children and Youth with Problematic Sexual Behaviors — "What Can We Do" National Children's Alliance

**When evidence-based treatment models are followed with fidelity and protective factors are enhanced, PSBs decrease and recidivism rates decline.**

Carpentier et al. 2006

## Structure of Treatment

The first step is a clinical evaluation to examine sexual behavior, overall emotional and behavioral functioning, and family needs. PSB-CBT is typically provided in a group format, once a week, with youth and caregivers meeting in separate groups at the same time. Occasionally, youth and caregivers meet together to learn and practice new skills. The treatment is provided as an open group, with most youth able to complete treatment successfully in six to 12 months depending on the age of the youth and progress in treatment. Groups are based on age and developmental level.

### Youth will learn:

- Rules about sexual behavior and boundaries
- Coping skills and impulse control skills
- Social skills, healthy relationships and empathy
- Sex education and abuse prevention
- How to improve family communication

### Caregivers must also attend sessions weekly. They learn:

- To distinguish normal from problematic sexual behaviors in youth
- Appropriate responses and supervision for youth's sexual behaviors
- Ways to prevent problematic sexual behavior
- Effective responses to other behavioral problems
- How to improve family communication

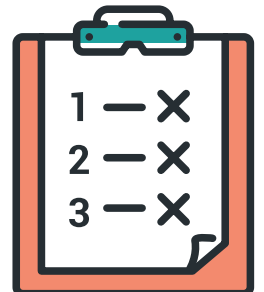
## Causes of Problematic Sexual Behavior

There isn't one type of youth who develops problematic sexual behavior. While some youth have suffered sexual abuse, many have not. In fact, most youth victims of sexual abuse don't exhibit these behaviors. Problematic sexual behavior usually occurs when youth are feeling curious, anxious, angry, reacting to trauma, trying to imitate others, or calm themselves down. Youth who have problem sexual behaviors often have poor impulse control, social skills, and decision-making abilities.

Research suggests that many factors can contribute to developing problematic sexual behavior, including:

- Youth vulnerabilities
- Exposure to sexual material, sexual abuse, or lack of sexual boundaries in the home
- Exposure to violence or physical abuse
- Factors that hinder caregiver guidance and supervision

*Adapted from Friedrich et al. 2003*



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