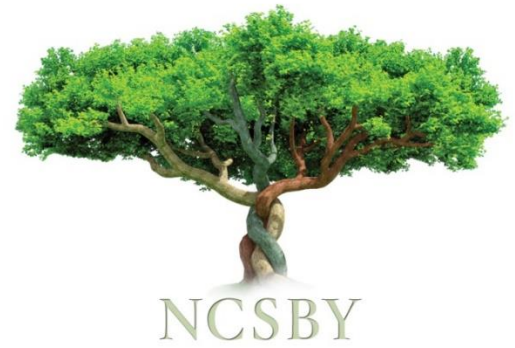


# Collaborative, Community Based, Evidence Based Services for Problematic Sexual Behavior in Children and Youth



*For more information about community based approaches to addressing problematic sexual behavior of youth contact the Center on Child Abuse and Neglect at: [OU-YPSB@ouhsc.edu](mailto:OU-YPSB@ouhsc.edu)*

## Problematic Sexual Behavior in Children and Youth

While sexual exploration and play are a natural part of childhood sexual development, some sexual behaviors indicate **more than harmless curiosity**.

In cases where these behaviors pose a risk to the safety or well-being of the child and other children in his or her world, it is imperative for families and communities to step in and mitigate through proper identification, treatment, and intervention.

## What are Problematic Sexual Behaviors?

Problematic sexual behaviors (PSB) in youth are defined as child or adolescent initiated behaviors typically involving sexual body parts that are:

- ❖ **Developmentally inappropriate**
- ❖ **Potentially harmful to self or others and/or**
- ❖ **Illegal**

**Greater than one-third of sexual offenses against child victims are committed by other youth.**

Problematic Sexual Behavior primarily occurs with other children known by the youth, with a quarter of victims being family members. Few sexual offenses of youth involve strangers

## Qualities of Effective Community Based Programs

Effective community based treatments for youth with problematic sexual behavior, the child victims, and their families have the following characteristics:

- ❖ **Community collaboration.** Juvenile justice, child welfare, treatment services systems, schools, child advocacy centers and others collaborate to identify children with problematic sexual behaviors, assess risk, and engage families in evidence-based treatment;
- ❖ **Clinical services teams trained in evidence-based treatment.**
- ❖ **Active parent and caregiver involvement.** Helping these children and youth requires active engagement of the family; and
- ❖ **Agency and public policies** that are consistent with research outcomes

When accomplished effectively, communities can better sustain the safety, health, and well-being for the children and families in the community.

*For more information see the National Center on the Sexual Behavior of Youth:  
[www.ncsby.org](http://www.ncsby.org)*

# Community Problem Requires Community Response: The Role of Community Stakeholders

As problematic sexual behavior of youth commonly occur with children within their social network, **lack of community collaboration leads to:**

- ❖ Failing to identify youth in need of services
- ❖ Families divided, both physically and emotionally
- ❖ Fragmented services
- ❖ Risk to the community members

In contrast, **community collaboration and implementation of evidence-based services** for youth with problematic sexual behaviors, children impacted, and families can lead to:

- ❖ Decreased child symptoms (problematic sexual behavior and trauma)
- ❖ Increased pro-social behaviors in children and youth
- ❖ Decreased parent / family stress
- ❖ Improved safety and well-being for child and family
- ❖ Sustainable and safe reunification of family members
- ❖ Improved placement stability for youth involved in Child Welfare system
- ❖ Decreased recidivism for youth involved in juvenile justice
- ❖ Decreased costs for placement, services and interventions



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## Community Decision Making Process

Historically, no **individual** community-system has responsibility for coordinated care for all youth with problematic sexual behavior. Implementing evidence-based treatment requires service agencies to **effectively plan, develop, and enact** a community decision-making process related to care and treatment of youth and their families.

### Individuals and professional involved in this process:

- ❖ Caregivers (Bio/Kinship/Foster/Adoptive Parents)
- ❖ Child Protective Services
- ❖ Law Enforcement
- ❖ Juvenile Justice
  - Judges
  - Prosecutors / Defense
  - Probation
- ❖ Victim Advocacy
- ❖ Behavioral and Mental Health
- ❖ School Personnel
- ❖ Medical Providers
- ❖ Other Professionals
  - Speech Therapists
  - Occupational Therapists
  - Rehab Specialists
- ❖ Faith-Based Communities / Agencies

## Community Goals and Outcomes

- ❖ Effective and consistent identification of youth and families dealing with problematic sexual behavior
- ❖ Effective and consistent referral of identified youth to evidence-based services
- ❖ Sustainable implementation of evidence-based services
- ❖ Family-centered response to all impacted by the problematic sexual behavior of youth
- ❖ Coordinated response across agencies and systems