

# What healthy relationships are (on and off line) and how to educate young people on them

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*"It sort of makes you stop and think, doesn't it."*

C. GROSS  
COLLECTION

# Task 1

1. How much time do you spend online (in a week)?

– (phone / ipad / computer / work / home)

2. Rate (0-10) your level of awareness about the internet (sites / technology / use etc)

# Task 2

1. Who influenced you to be the person you are?

2. How did you learn about relationships?

# Banardos report 2015

Ofcom findings on children's and parents' media use reports that, **in a week**, young people aged between

- 8 and 11 years
  - 14 hours of television
  - internet for over 10 hours,
  - play games for 9 hours
  - radio for 5 hours
- 12 to 15 year olds
  - television 15.7 hours,
  - internet 17 hours,
  - play games 11 hours
  - radio 6.8 hours.

# What happens in these hours?

- 1 in 3 report being victim of cyberbullying
- 1 in 4 children have seen something upsetting on the internet

(NSPCC, 2015)

## **Do they speak to adults about this experience?**

### **NO**

- 44% of children say they have been bullied
  - but only 55% of these report it (annual bullying survey 2015)

# Scale of the problem

- Difficult to say
- Wolak, Mitchell and Finklehor (2007): 42% of sample of 10-17 yr olds had seen pornography in previous year
  - Now assumed that nearly all will have seen it
- 48% of 18yr olds surveyed thought sexting was 'normal' (Parker 2014)

# What is the impact of use?

- Neuroscience approach and focus on addiction ideas
  - <http://yourbrainonporn.com/>
- Internet porn use driven by novelty and neuro reward – reinforcement

(This is individual impact?)

# Pornography has been linked to:

Horvarth et al (2014) - review

- unrealistic attitudes about sex;
- maladaptive attitudes about relationships;
- more sexually permissive attitudes;
- greater acceptance of casual sex;
- beliefs that women are sex objects;
- more frequent thoughts about sex;
- sexual uncertainty (e.g. the extent to which children and young people are unclear about their sexual beliefs and values);
- less progressive gender role attitudes (e.g. male dominance and female submission).
- BUT: not clear if sexting links to increased 'risky behaviours'

# We know a little about individual characteristics:

(Predominant pathways in adults – argued to be relevant for adolescents as well)

Middleton *et al* (2006)

## Intimacy Deficits

- offend when lonely/rejected/adult relationships compromised
- experience high levels of emotional loneliness,
- difficulty in establishing age appropriate relationships, internet used for pseudo-intimacy

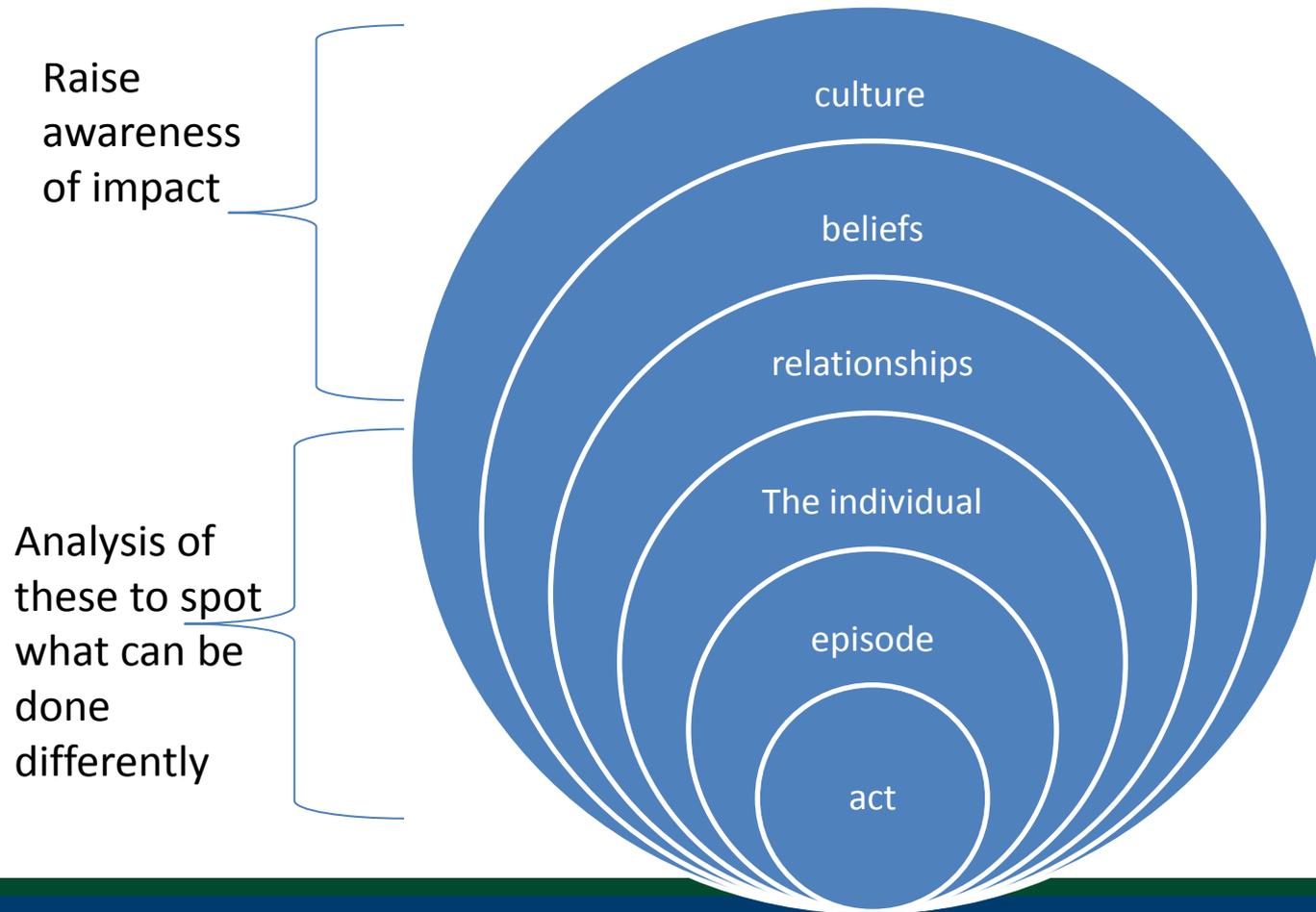
## Emotional Disregulation

- experience strong negative mood states over which lack of control, combined with sexual desire,
- become disinhibited, use sex as a soothing strategy,
- internet pornography to alleviate negative emotions, increase feelings of well-being

# Applicable to adolescents?

- Teenagers have relationships and mood problems
- How do we work out the problematic use compared to 'teenage use'
- Adolescence as time of:
  - change, poor judgement, peer pressure, brain development, stimulation seeking

# We know about wider influences?



# What is normal sexual development?

Much researched area

- Changing?
- What we know/don't know
  - Not clear on what is normal (Bancroft, 2006)
  - There is no clear 'escalation of use'
  - 'Risk behaviour' more likely as adolescent
  - Access is changing the picture of 'normal'

# Development in general

- Childhood as time of development in:
  - Moral reasoning
  - Cognitive ability (empathy/perspective taking)
  - Relationship/social skills
- Teenage brain plasticity idea
- Hormonal influences noted

# So.....what are good relationships?

- In real life? On line?
- Is there a difference?
- Individual differences and age differences exist

Culture will impact on our understanding and therefore skills in either forum (and differentiation becomes less useful/normal)

Young people are living lives seamlessly between real and online

People believe the internet is a good thing and that it brings people together / is useful etc (Turkle 2013)

# Sexual Development in Children

- As children grow, they may show signs of sexual behaviour which is a normal part of growing up
- What is normal, worrying or abusive depends on the age of the child and the situation
- Sexual development progresses through different phases and each stage has age appropriate behaviours
- However, children develop at different rates and some may have learning difficulties or developmental delays

# Healthy Sexual Behaviours are...

- Mutual
- Consensual
- Choice
- Exploratory
- No intent to cause harm
- Fun
- No power differentials

# Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool

<https://www.brook.org.uk/our-work/category/sexual-behaviours-traffic-light-tool>

## Green behaviours

- solitary masturbation
- sexually explicit conversations with peers
- obscenities and jokes within the current cultural norm
- interest in erotica/pornography
- use of internet/e-media to chat online
- having sexual or non-sexual relationships
- sexual activity including hugging, kissing, holding hands
- consenting oral and/or penetrative sex with others of the same or opposite gender who are of similar age and developmental ability
- choosing not to be sexually active

What is a green behaviour?

What can you do?

## Amber behaviours

- accessing exploitative or violent pornography
- uncharacteristic and risk-related behaviour, e.g. sudden and/or provocative changes in dress, withdrawal from friends, mixing with new or older people, having more or less money than usual, going missing
- concern about body image
- taking and sending naked or sexually provocative images of self or others
- single occurrence of peeping, exposing, mooning or obscene gestures
- giving out contact details online
- joining adult- only social networking sites and giving false personal information
- arranging a face to face meeting with an online contact alone

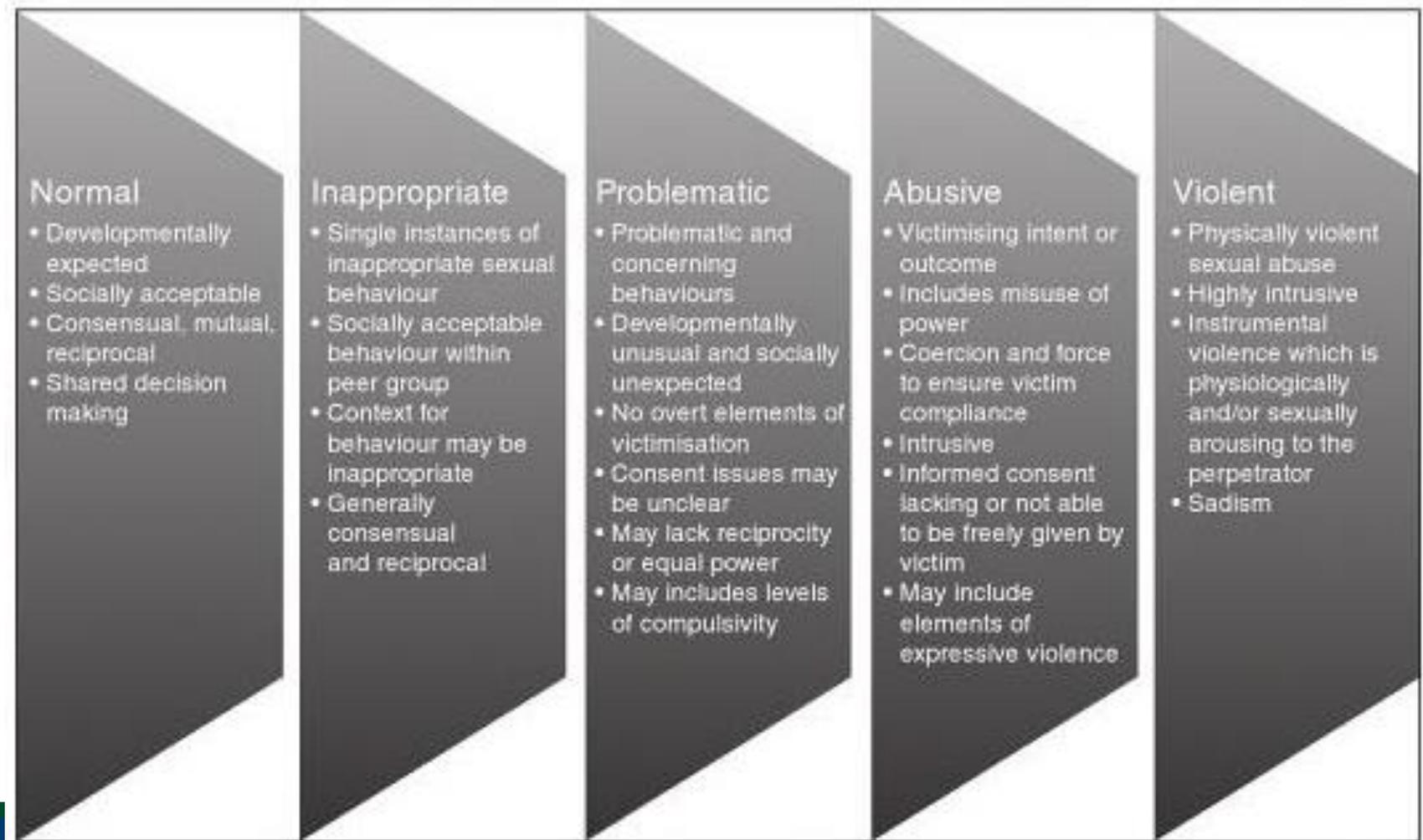
What is an amber behaviour?

What can you do?

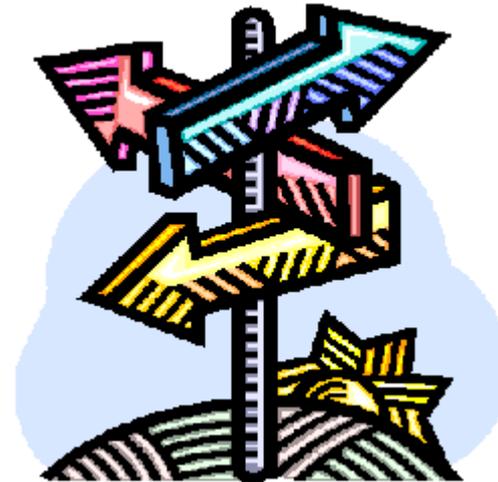
## Red behaviours

- exposing genitals or masturbating in public
- preoccupation with sex, which interferes with daily function
- sexual degradation/humiliation of self or others
- attempting/forcing others to expose genitals
- sexually aggressive/exploitative behaviour
- sexually explicit talk with younger children
- sexual harassment
- non-consensual sexual activity
- use of/acceptance of power and control in sexual relationships
- genital injury to self or others
- sexual contact with others where there is a big difference in age or ability
- sexual activity with someone in authority and in a position of trust
- sexual activity with family members
- involvement in sexual exploitation and/or trafficking
- sexual contact with animals
- receipt of gifts or money in exchange for sex

# Hackett's Continuum of Children and Young Peoples Sexual Behaviours (2010)



# What can we do?



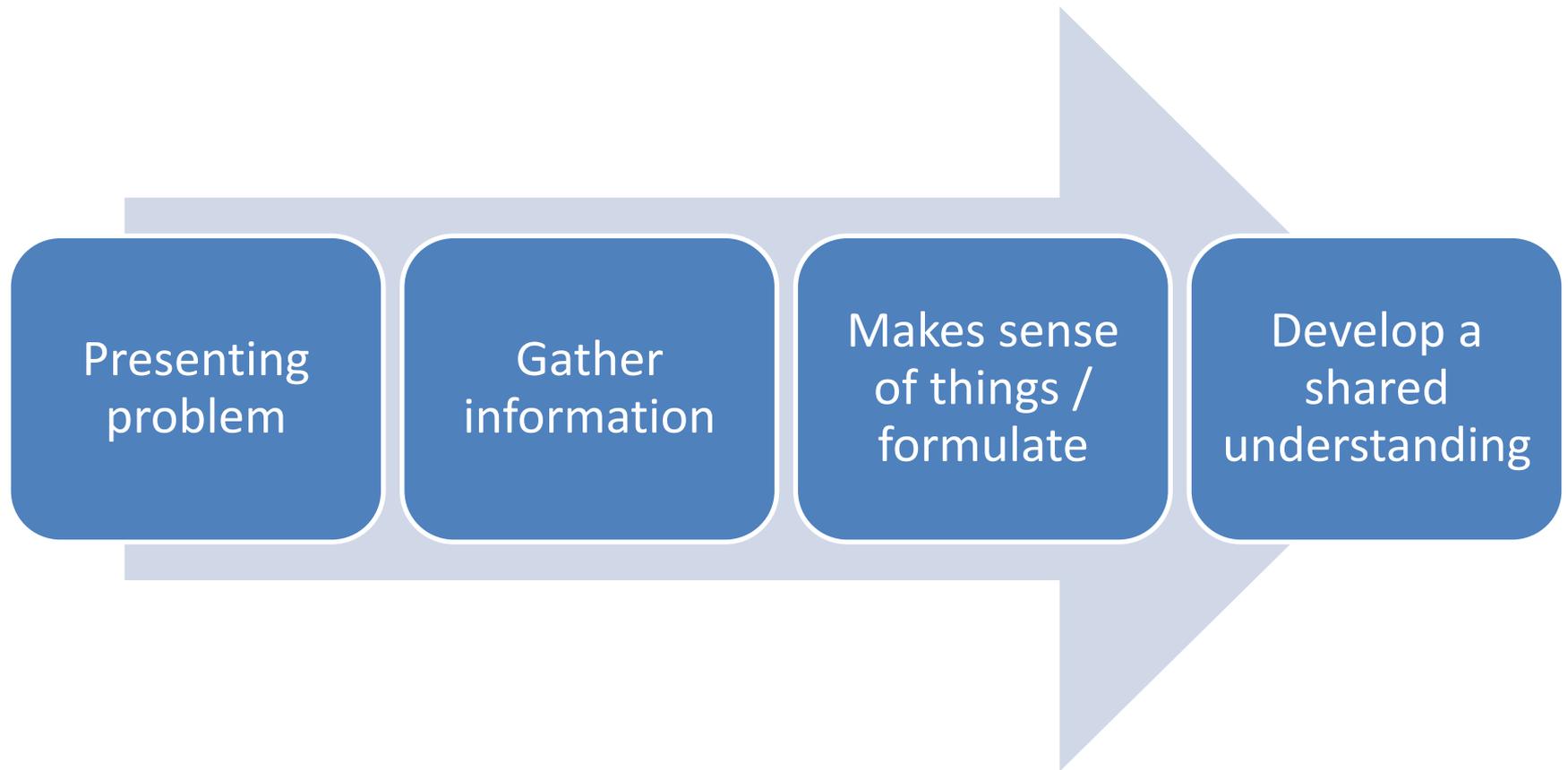
# We can....

1. Understand what has happened
2. Work out what needs to change
  - It is not necessarily 'specialist' skills that are needed
  - We need to consider what is useful for that individual

How can we understand what happened? We know:

- Its complex and no single cause
- There is variety for each young person
- There are 'no rules' about escalation
- A combination of young person's experiences and what they are trying to achieve is relevant
- Confusing social norms and values need to be held in mind

# process of understanding



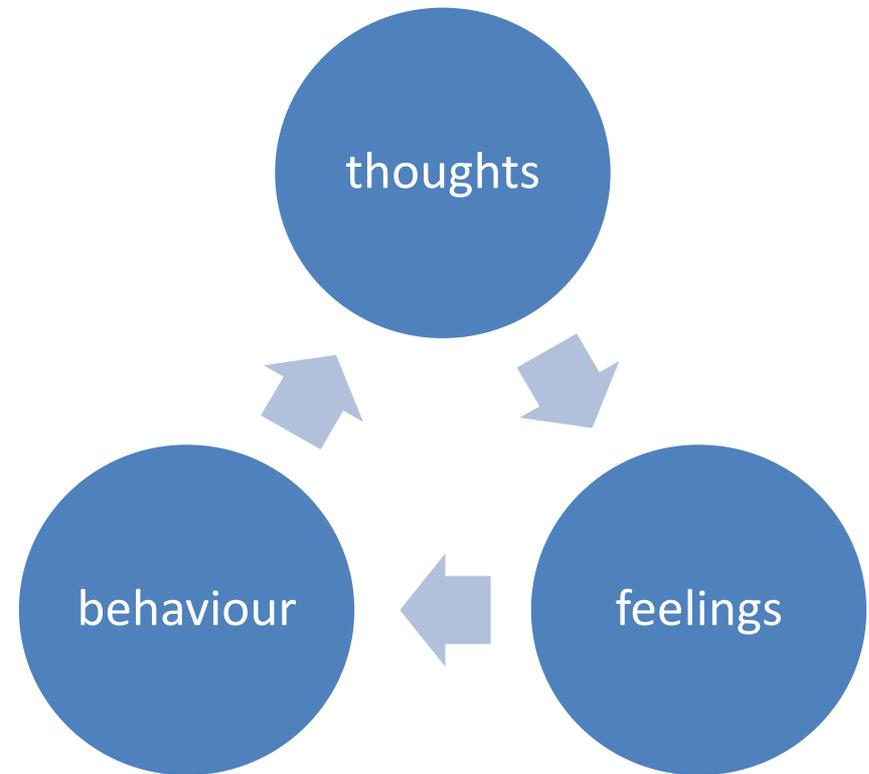
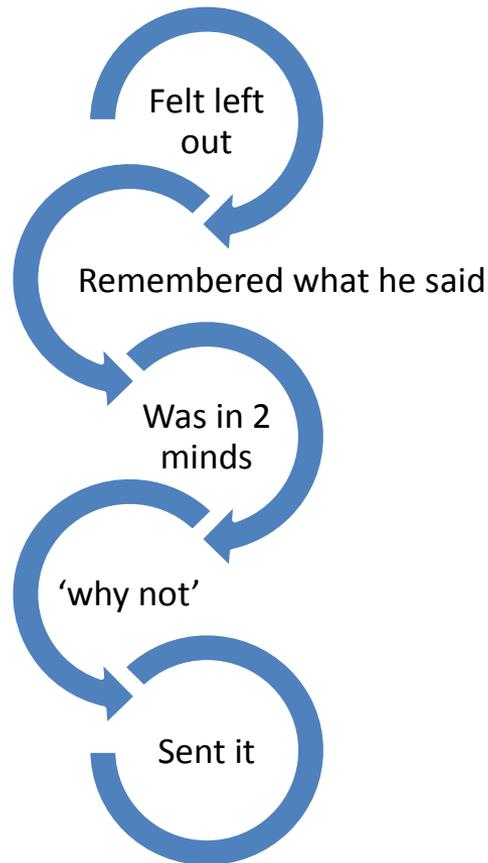
# Helping change

Some ideas of what to talk about

## 1. About the specific event

- How did this thing happen?
  - Analysis (decision chains / TFB of CBT)
  - Support moments of 'resistance'
  - Recognise mistakes (reduce guilt/shame)

# Decision chain and CBT cycle

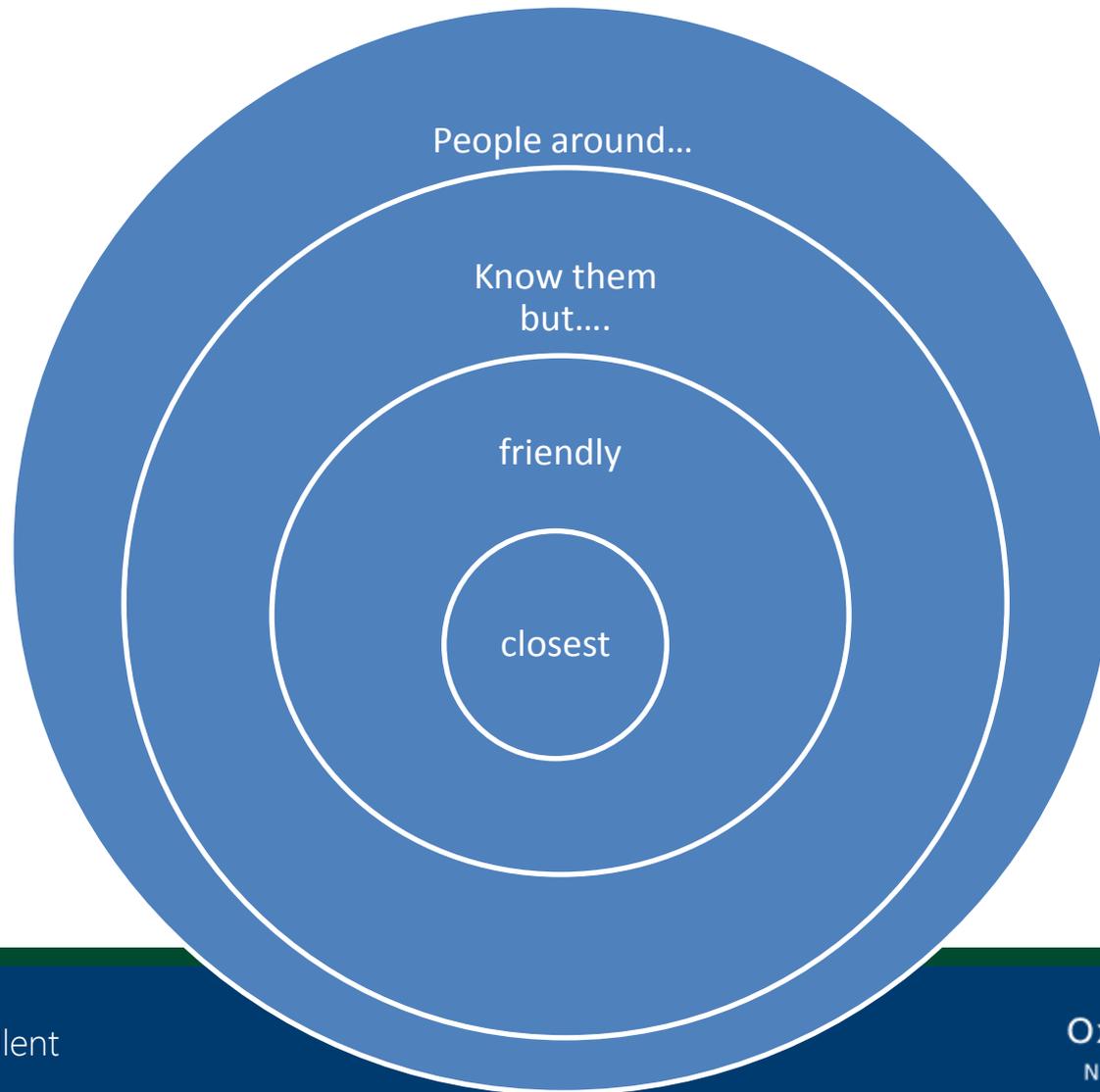


# Some ideas of what to talk about

## 2. Widen this out to relationships and sex

- Where are they at (skills) or who is around?
  - Continuum or circle
- What is a relationship?  
Where did you learn about relationships?
- What do you know about sex? How have you learnt about it? What have you seen (internet/real life)?

# Who is in your circle?



# Continuum: what is ok with you?

good	ok	Feels wrong	Unacceptable
Talking to/messaging each other		Sometimes ignored	Totally ignored
happy		Feel annoyed at them	
Doing it because I want to	Kind of feel like it	Not totally comfortable with being asked to do something	Being forced to do something
I can do what I want			Telling me what is should do



# Finally – don't forget the parents..

- Almost half of young people (48 per cent) living at home say their parents only know some of what they do online.

Ipsos MORI poll commissioned by Barnardo's

- <https://youtu.be/MkKj7cwUvzQ>

Raise awareness of impact

Analysis of these to spot what can be done differently

