

Why develop this service?

While international statistics suggest that approximately 95% of all harmful sexual behaviours are perpetrated by males, current research suggests that the scope of harmful sexual behaviour by females is larger than once thought. While traditionally the impact of sexual abuse perpetrated by females has been downplayed, the effects of these behaviours are significant for survivors.

It is estimated that females commit 10% of the sexually abusive offences against girls (0-16 years) and 10-20% of those against boys (0-16 yrs). In some cases, such abuse can involve violence, force, threats and coercion. It is very common for adult women to co-offend with a male adult partner.

What is harmful sexual behaviour?

Harmful sexual behaviour by wahine (women & girls) is sexual activity that is exploitative or lacks mutual consent. The types of acts carried out can include:

- Sexual touch that is unwanted or uncomfortable
- Penetration with objects
- Digital penetration
- Fondling genitals
- Anal intercourse
- Vaginal Intercourse
- Oral sex
- Forcing another person to watch or participate in pornography or sexual activity
- Sex with a minor
- Sex without consent
- Coerced sex
- Sex as a result of grooming
- Use of mobile phones computers or other digital technology to send unwanted sexually explicit material

Many of the factors which contribute towards females with harmful sexual behaviour are connected to female experiences generally, and the context in which they are socialized. The single most common factor amongst adolescent girls who have sexually abused is their own history of sexual victimization. Therefore, where a history of sexual victimisation has been a contributing factor, SAFE will work with both the harmful sexual behaviour and victimisation issues.

Pounamu (Sapphire) Service Includes:

- Full assessment and clinical recommendations based on individual treatment needs
- An individual treatment plan with a tailored approach that considers all relevant cultural and clinical factors.
- Recognition that females who have engaged in harmful sexual behaviours require gender responsive approaches by key clinicians who are female
- An understanding of female developmental experiences, socialisation and lifespan issues
- Social work support for whanau/family and caregivers
- Individual, whanau/family/caregiver & dyad counselling approaches
- Regular meetings and systemic reviews for those involved in the clients care
- A close working relationship with specialist services and other professionals
- The capacity to work with both the harmful sexual behaviour and the effects of sexual abuse where the client has a history of their own victimisation
- Community education

Treatment length may vary between 3-24 months dependant on individual treatment needs. SAFE does not provide residential services, but will work with residential/caregiver service providers. Service delivery varies across the Tau iwi & Tangata Whenua Services.

Referral Pathways

SAFE accepts referrals from family members, government agencies such as Child, Youth and Family (CYF), Probation services, the courts, teachers or other professionals in the community such as lawyers, doctors, and counsellors.

In relation to adolescent girls, please note that where referrals have not been made to SAFE by CYF, SAFE may refer your child to CYF, or ask you to make that referral. We may do this because serious care and protection concerns may exist concerning other children being at risk from your child. If this occurs, we will work closely with you and CYF to ensure the safest outcome is reached for all concerned.

Referral forms can be downloaded from our website. To make a referral, simply download and complete a referral form and send it to us by mail or fax. Your referral will be reviewed before we make contact with you to arrange an appointment if an assessment is deemed suitable for the young person referred.

Anyone can make a referral to SAFE and enquiries are also welcome. To make a referral please contact SAFE or check out our website: www.safenetwork.org.nz