

Facing the Future UK



Type of intervention



Book/Guide

Target group/s, level/s of prevention and sub-group/s:

Communities
/ Families

Tertiary prevention

Adults (21 Years +) | Male & Female | Book/Guide | English

Target population

Parents and carers of young people who have sexually abused.

Mode and context of delivery

Facing the Future is a guide for parents and carers of young people who have sexually abused another child or young person. The book can be used in a number of ways, for example parents can read through from start to finish, or go straight to the section which is of particular concern to them. The seven chapters in the book follow a pattern which takes the parent from understanding some of the basic issues, to finding out about the abuse, helping the child and family and considering the future. The book contains “summary points” which have key messages from each section and “questions to ask yourself”, which are an attempt to encourage parents to think about the relevance of the information to their own situation.

Level/Nature of staff expertise required

No professional training or expertise is required. However, the book can be used with the support of a professional if one is involved with the family. The author advises that parents think carefully about gaining some support with the difficult issues that may be raised in facing up to and attempting to deal with, abusive behaviour and from reading the book itself.

Intensity/extent of engagement with target group(s)

The book is divided into 7 chapters and there are a range of written exercises that can be completed, linked to the material in each chapter. Parents and carers make their own decisions about the order and pace at which they work through the material.

Description of intervention

The shape of the book reflects a number of stages that the parent may need to work through, in order to be able to 'face the future,' following their child's harmful sexual behaviour. The 7 chapters comprise of:

- Chapter 1 – Learn the basics about sexual abuse - includes understanding what constitutes sexually harmful and abusive behaviour in young people and how this differs from normal, age-appropriate sexual experimentation. It also includes a glossary of the various terms parents and carers are likely to encounter and it helps them to consider what they know about their child's sexual behaviour and when there might be cause for concern.
- Chapter 2 – Deal with the crisis of finding out and learn how to respond – parents typically feel their lives have been turned upside down when they learn that their child has engaged in inappropriate or abusive sexual behaviour. They need to be able to deal with the immediate crisis situation, which involves a careful consideration about how to react to the alleged abuse and how to respond to their child, as well as how to deal with and issues of blame and responsibility and of denial.
- Chapter 3 – Learn about the issues involved in the young people's sexually abusive behaviour and why it occurs – it is vital that parents and carers have sound information about children and young people's harmful sexual behaviour, to enable them to make sense of why this has happened in their own family. Such knowledge helps challenge myths around this issue and forms the foundation on which the family can rebuild their life.
- Chapter 4 – Make sure you are in a position to help: meet your own needs as a parent – discovering that your child has sexually abused can leave parents with acute and ongoing feelings and emotions that can be very hard to deal with. Parents and carers need to feel stable enough to make sure they are doing all they can to help the child and to protect other children. This may involve reviewing parenting style and developing new parenting skills.
- Chapter 5 – Protect others and make family changes – this chapter contains perhaps the most important aspect of what parents can do. In reality they need to be doing this all through the process. It means ensuring that others in the family who may be vulnerable are protected, knowing what to do to monitor or watch for worrying incidents and how and when the child can be trusted again. Creating safe environments for the family, the victims and the child who has abused is the backbone of facing the future.
- Chapter 6 – Support the child who has abused – understanding the professional and legal system and the responsibilities of parents, how to work with professionals, what to expect from them and what to do as a parent to help the child face up to their abusive behaviour and to encourage the development of healthy sexual identity.
- Chapter 7 – Face the future – the final step concerns facing the future and finding hope. This is about learning to move on once professional involvement is finished, understanding the aftermath of the abusive behaviour and how to cope and respond in the years ahead. The chapter also examines the dynamics of family reunification following abuse.

Reviews

'This is such a niche product written for the parent of children who have sexually abused others. It is also a good source of information for any parent with adolescents irrespective of whether they abuse or not as it provides insight. It's filled with common sense approaches to managing the child and coping with their offending. It's easily understood and practical advice that is part of a process rather than an in surmountable effort to change. Well recommended by an excellent author.'

Review on Amazon 2011

'One of the few texts addressing the parents and their issues. It is very readable without "jargon". Recommended it to my co-workers.'

Review on Amazon 2014

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