

Factsheet 6: Communicating hope for the future



Most children and young people who display PHSB do not go on to repeat these behaviours and, with the appropriate support, are able to make a full recovery.¹ Weaving this hope for the future into conversations with carers can help them believe that change is possible for the child or young person.

Emphasising that carers play an important role in realising this hopeful future can support them to feel empowered and that they have the capacity to support positive change in the child or young person. Highlighting the important role of carers can also help them to remain proactive and consistent in implementing strategies and accessing supports that increase safety for those in their care. Carers who are hopeful for a better future for the child or young person are also more likely to be able to communicate this sense of hope to the child or young person themselves, helping them feel positive about their future.

Conversation tip	Examples in practice
Make it clear to carers that you hold hope for the future, and that research indicates that most children who engage in PHSB make a full recovery with the appropriate support. ²	<i>I know it can be scary to think about how the future might look for your family and Bailey after something like this happens. I want to reassure you that, with the right level of support, most children/young people who engage in harmful sexual behaviour won't repeat this behaviour.</i>
Emphasise the importance of a carer's role by illustrating how they can make a difference in the child with PHSB's recovery. ³	<i>I know Bailey is working with [therapist(s)], and that there are a lot of practitioners involved at the moment. I want to make sure you know how important your role is. Children displaying harmful sexual behaviour who have carers that put boundaries and strategies in place to help keep everyone safe—and who believe in their potential for change—are often able to make a full recovery.</i>
Support carers to talk to the child with PHSB about hope for the future.	<i>It's so important that Alex knows that we believe she can make good choices and that we're hopeful about her future. Let's think about some ways you can talk to her about hope...</i>

1 Mitchell, et al. (2020)
 2 NSW Government, Family and Community Services. (2016)
 3 NSW Government, Family and Community Services. (2016)