



Pathways to Change

Responding Effectively to PSB/SAB in Children and Young People

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Problem Sexual Behaviour (PSB)

PSB is behaviour:

- of a sexual nature that is outside what is accepted as “normal” for a child’s age and level of development;
- occurs to the detriment of their engagement in activities of normal functioning;
- may include behaviours such as excessive self-stimulation or preoccupation with pornography that isolates them from normal social and/or learning opportunities;
- PSB does not include the sexual abuse of others (CEASE 2012, p6).



Sexually Abusive Behaviour (SAB)

SAB is a sub-set of PSB which includes

- the absence of consent;
- the use of force or threat of force and coercion;
- it may include a disparity of age, level of development, or size” (CEASE 2012, p6).

N.B. Young people aged 10 years and older may be subject to legal consequences for such behaviour.



Australian Crime Commission Report

The ACC Report (2010) states that children displaying problem PSB or SAB are likely to have experienced/be experiencing a combination of:

- childhood trauma,
- compromised educational outcomes,
- adverse socio-economic conditions,
- homelessness,
- intellectual impairment or developmental delays,
- social isolation, and
- exposure to drug or alcohol misuse.



ACC Report cont'd

The report discusses the need to develop a consistent response across a range of settings including therapeutic interventions, child protection services, schools, and community education.

Failure to provide early intervention increases the likelihood that the child may follow a pathway into adult sex offending and family violence.

Effective early intervention can reduce that risk and thereby reduce the risk that other children or adults may become the victims of sexual abuse or other forms of interpersonal violence.



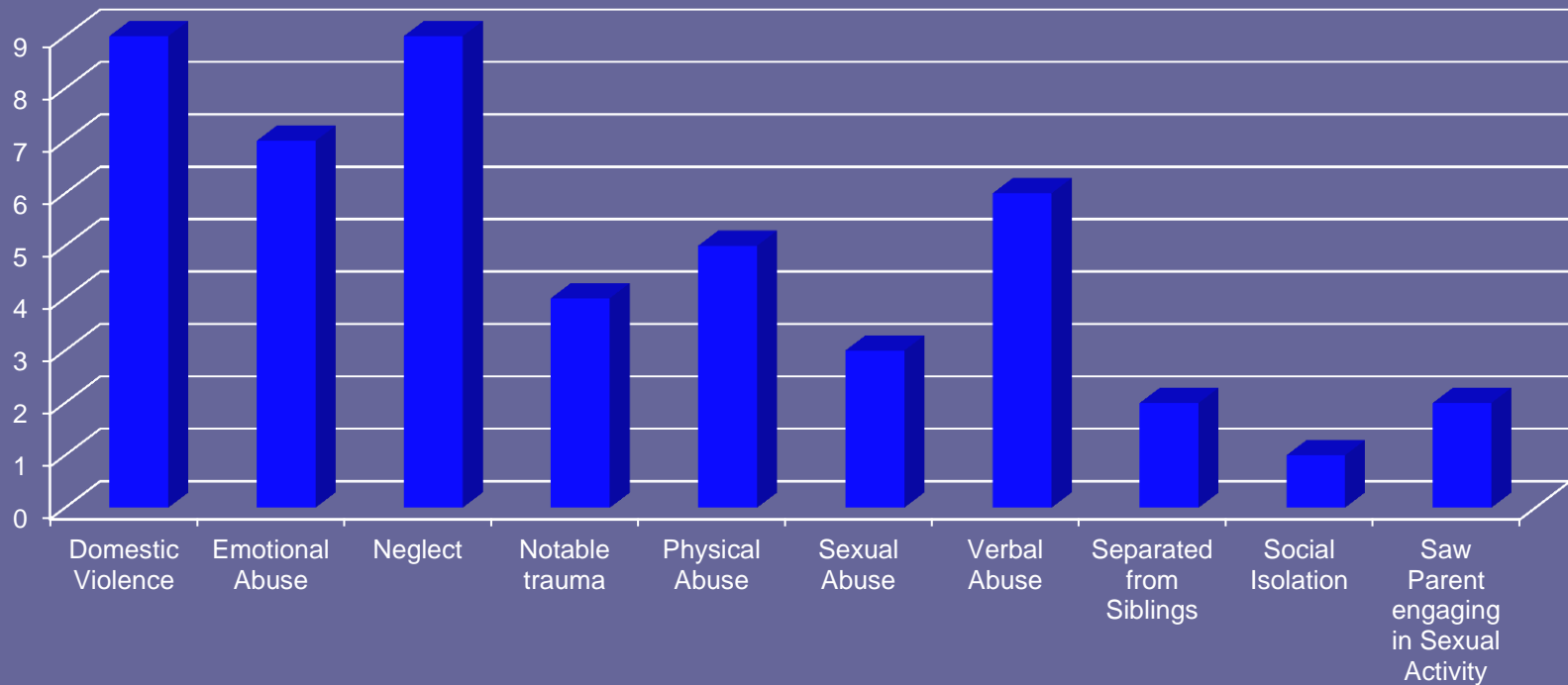
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- Funded under the Child Aware program
- File audit undertaken - between April 2011 and April 2012 SASS identified 88 clients between the ages of 3 and 16 who displayed PSB and/or SAB as their presenting issue.
- Child protection referrals made up 39% of this group



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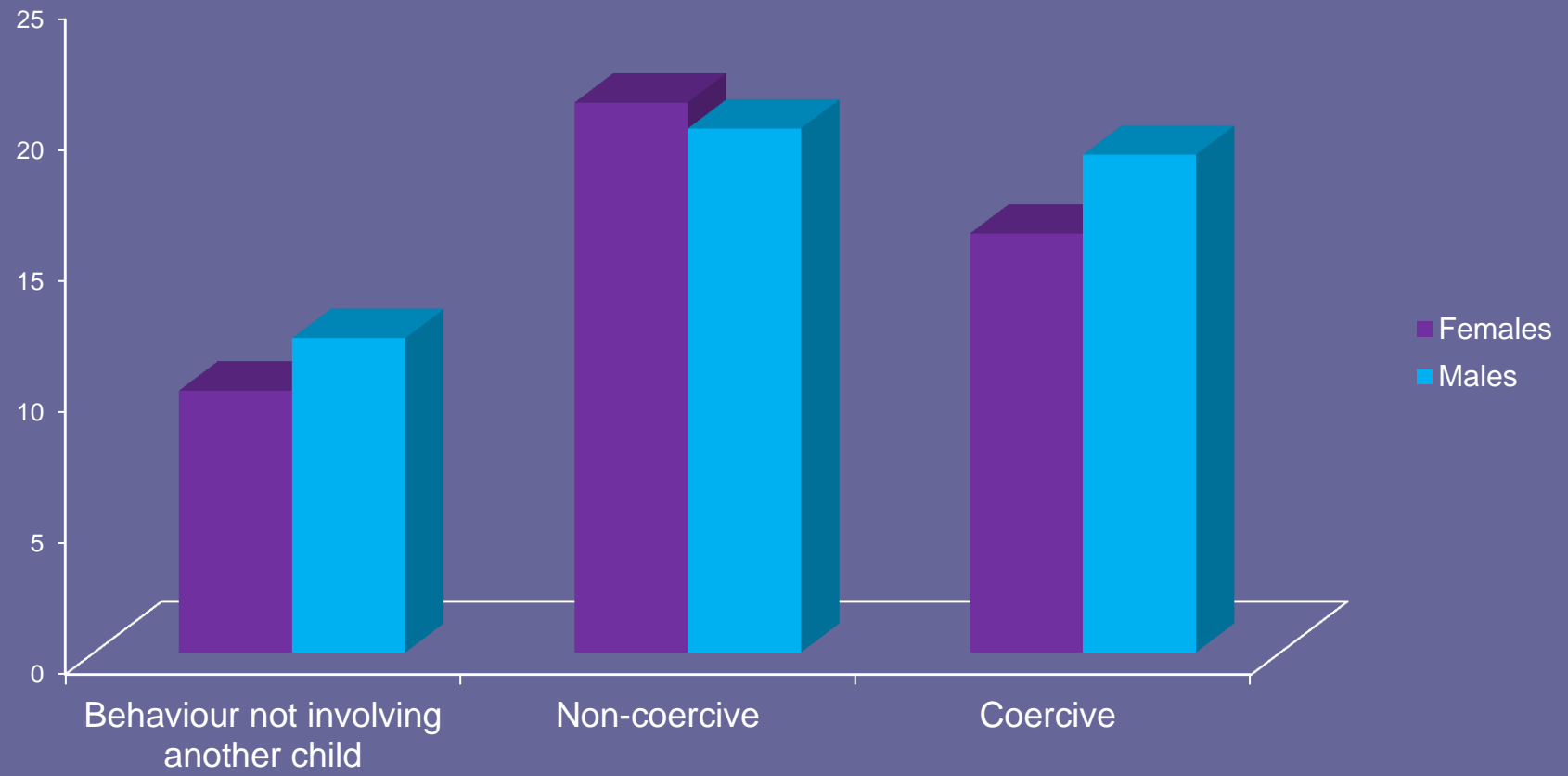
Child Protection referrals indicated the following concerns regarding family circumstances and environmental impacts on the child





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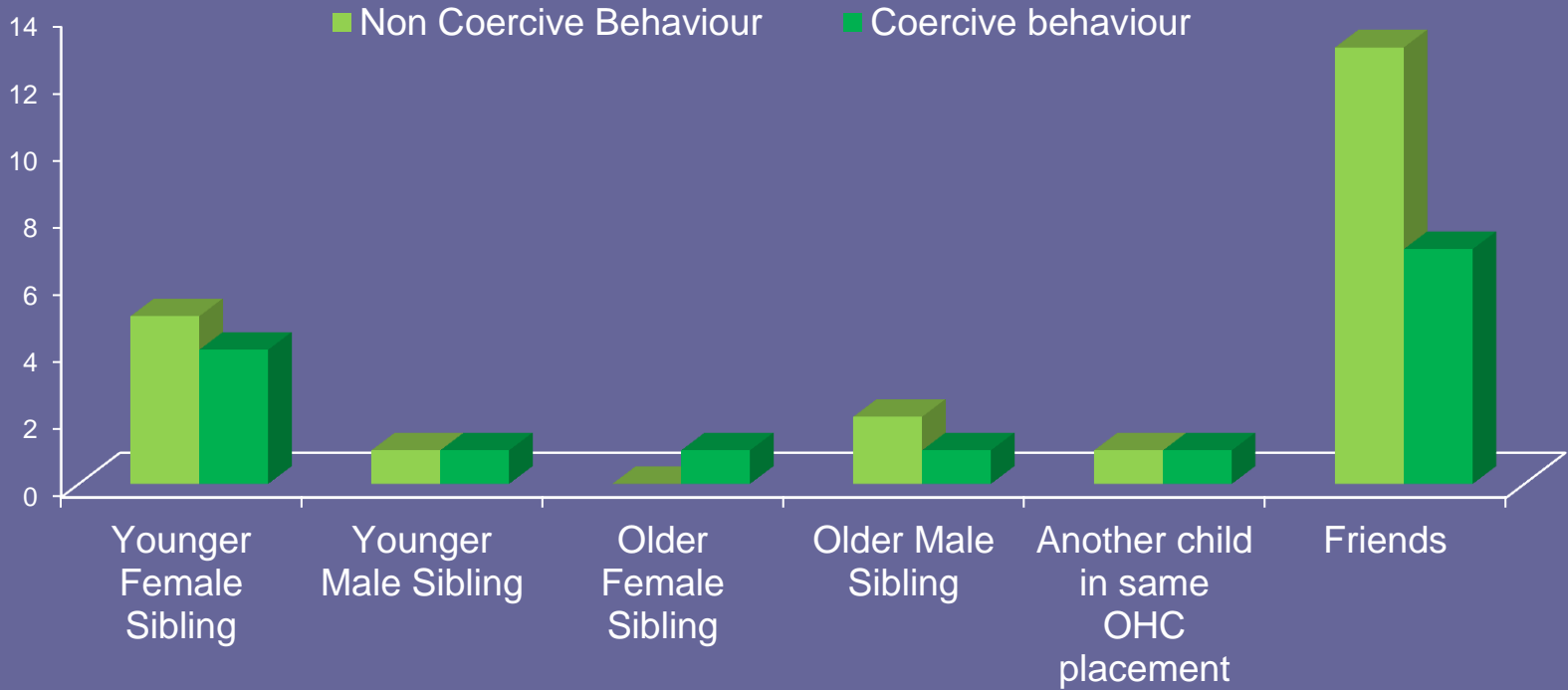
Females and Male in Relation to Behaviour Types





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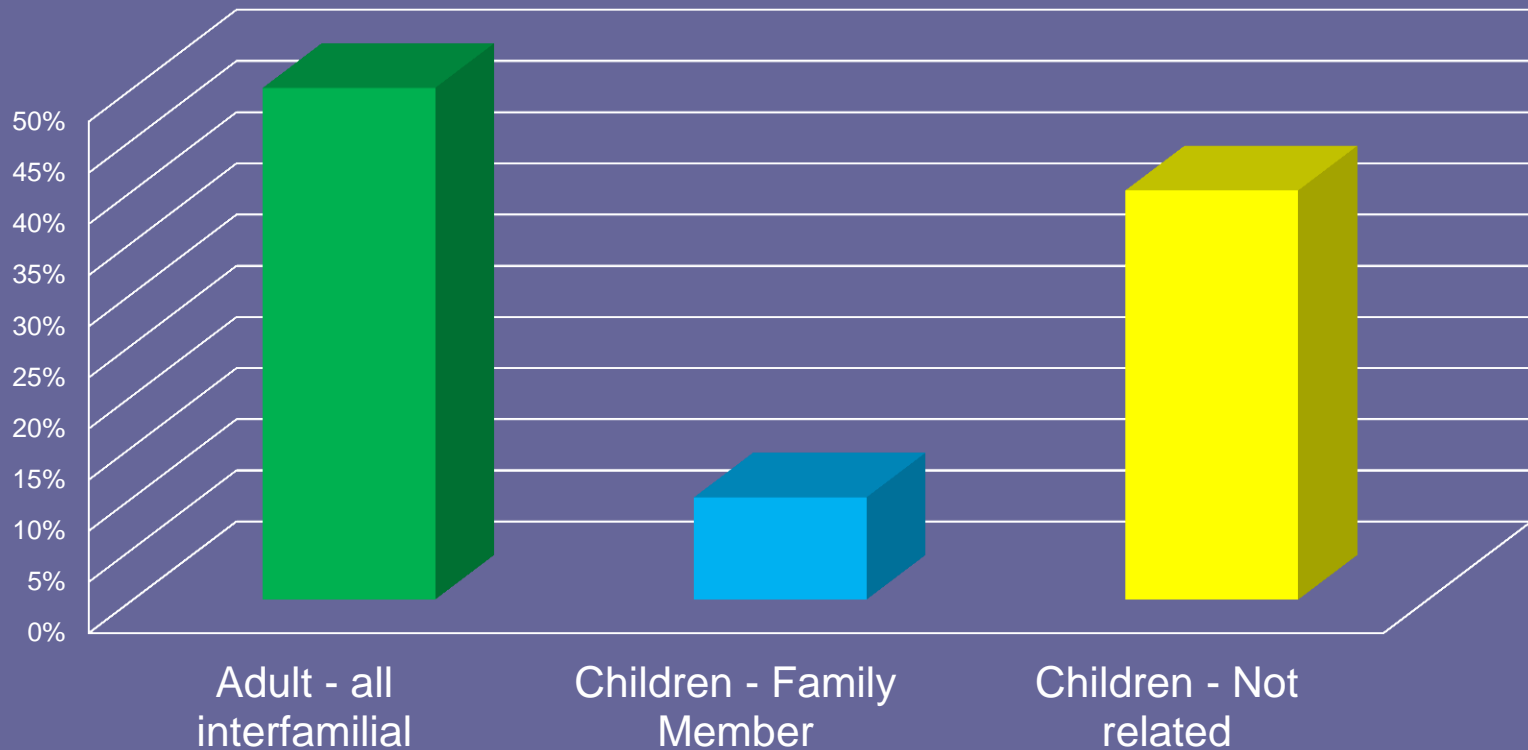
Child's Relationship to Others affected by their PSB/SAB Behaviour





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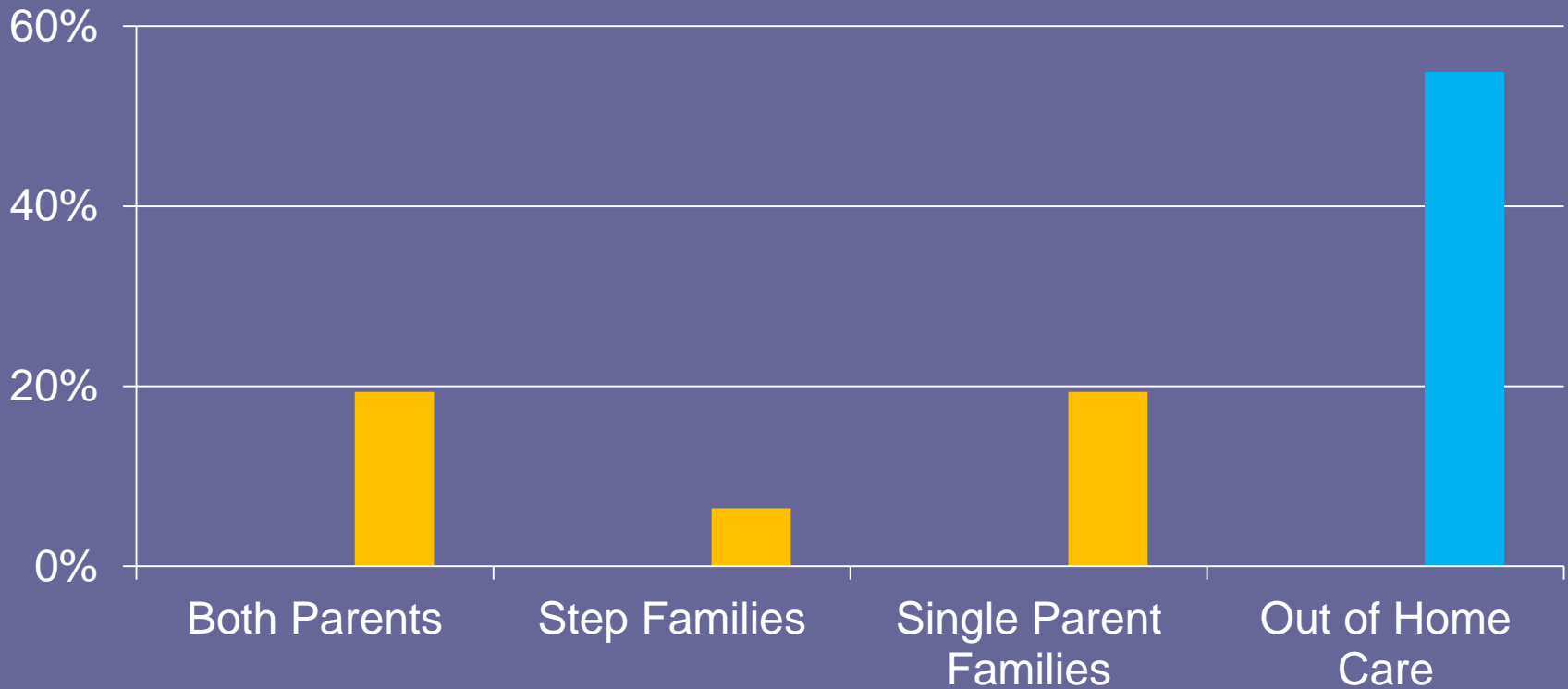
Relationship between children who had experienced sexual abuse and the perpetrator





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Living arrangements at time of service contact





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- File Audit report
- Practitioner network established - shared training
- Standards of Practice for Intervention and Treatment Programs
- Specialist Practice Handbook
- Model inter-agency protocols
- Policy and Legislation Issues Paper
- Evaluation report



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- Fact Sheets

1. Definitions for PSB and SAB

Information for Parents and Carers

2. Children, trauma and PSB
3. Information about young people who have engaged in PSB
4. Supervision and safety planning

Support for Professionals

5. Exploring responsibility for unsafe behaviours
6. Initial disclosure and acknowledgement
7. Safety planning
8. Safety Plan Template
9. Strategies and Interventions



Service Responses - What Works

Collaboration between services to provide a continuum of interventions that are based upon an individual assessment and focus broadly on the young person's social, emotional, and sexual development and their family context.

- Voluntary services
- Diversionary strategies embracing therapeutic jurisprudence
- Criminal justice responses



Diversionary options

A significant proportion of young people who exhibit SAB will not be prosecuted under the criminal justice system for sexual offences because of:

- The low rates of reporting of sexual assault;
- The evidentiary requirements of justice processes which make prosecution and conviction unlikely;
- The existence of a cohort of young people who offend but who will not be found legally responsible due to the presumption of *doli incapax*.



Diversiory options

The Therapeutic Treatment Order (TTO) provisions under the Victorian *Children Youth and Families Act 2005* enable early intervention for young people who exhibit SAB to help prevent the potential for ongoing and more serious offences.

The TTO provision allows for 12 months of compulsory therapeutic counselling. Orders are only issued in instances where children and their families do not voluntarily access treatment.



Diversionary options

The TTO system has captured young people who previously may have slipped through a gap;

- Those whose behaviours are reported to the police but not pursued via the courts;
- Those who come to the attention of a statutory Child Protection agency due to their behaviours;
- Those who are defendants within criminal justice proceedings and where prima facie evidence provides grounds for the application of a TTO.



Criminal Justice Response

A comprehensive service response to SAB requires the development of a tertiary intervention programs under youth justice orders for children (ten years and over) and young people who have been found guilty of a sexual offence.

These programs should incorporate risk, need and responsivity principles.



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Questions?

