

# SUMMARY OF THE PROTECTIVE BEHAVIOURS PROCESS

The Protective Behaviours (PBs) process starts from the belief that we cannot be scared into feeling safe. It therefore avoids a focus on scary scenarios and rigid sets of rules for how to deal with unsafe situations (which tend to induce fear and guilt).

Instead, it starts from the positive of recognising when we feel safe and teaches the ability to recognise when we are not feeling safe, it also provides skills and tools to enable individuals to take action and get help when they need it.

Protective Behaviours recognises that life is also about taking risks and trying new things and that this is part of our development and an important life skill.

The Protective Behaviours process has been used and adapted for many settings. For example,, for conflict resolution skills, bullying prevention, domestic violence, abuse prevention and general keeping safe training. The skills and strategies are universal and suited to all people regardless of age, abilities, culture or religion.

Protective Behaviours is based on two themes which are used to teach and reinforce the basic concepts on which the process is based.

## WE ALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO FEEL SAFE

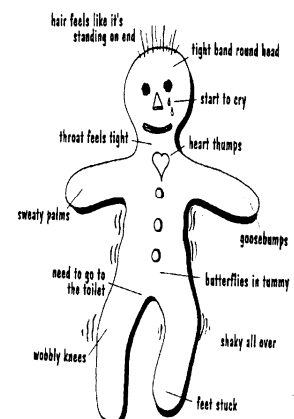
THERE IS NOTHING SO AWFUL THAT WE CAN'T TALK ABOUT IT WITH SOMEONE



## Feeling Safe and Early Warning Signs

Feeling safe is something we don't generally think about until the feeling has gone away and we start to feel uncomfortable or unsafe. The PB process helps people to identify what feeling safe is like for them and teaches the ability to recognise the difference between feeling safe, fun-scary feelings, risking on purpose and feeling unsafe.

When we stop feeling safe, our bodies prepare us for action with a rush of adrenalin and many other physical changes. These are called our bodies' **EARLY WARNING SIGNS**. They may include butterflies in



the stomach, shaky knees, heart beating faster etc Protective Behaviours teaches recognition of these body signals as an indicator that we may need to STOP THINK and TAKE ACTION.

## The Safety Continuum

Healthy lives involve an element of adventure and risk-taking. Often, when we do something fun-scary or take a calculated risk we can feel a bit unsafe and experience these same Early Warning Signs, *but there is a fundamental difference*. A fun-scary activity or calculated risk is *chosen*, and we have an element of *control* or a knowledge that there is a *time limit* (like on a roller coaster ride). Protective Behaviours therefore teaches us to ask ourselves whether we have **choice** and **control** or a **time limit** in a situation.

## Rights, Responsibilities and Choices

The first PB theme '**We all have the right to feel safe**' reinforces not just our individual right, but our responsibility to make sure other people feel safe with us. This helps us to think about the idea of responsible citizenship and encourages thoughtfulness of our own safety as well as the safety of others.

## Unwritten Rules

Sometimes the reason that we don't take notice of our Early Warning Signs is because of the messages that we get from all around us about how we think we should feel, think and behave. These might be about powerful stereotypes or assumptions which can lead us to make decisions that are not in our best interests and don't support us in feeling safe.

## Support Networks

The second Theme '**There is nothing is so awful (or too little) that we can't talk about it with someone**' introduces the idea of personal support networks of people that we could go to when not feeling safe and a process for how we might identify those people.

A support network aims for of a minimum of four people in addition to any adults at home. Strategies for checking out potential network people and building networks are explored including one-step removed questions and the use of our Early Warning Signs. The strategy of persistence is also reinforced to ensure that we get the help we need even if other people on our network are too busy or don't listen.

## Keeping Safe Strategies

Protective Behaviours uses a one step removed problem-solving model to help develop awareness of possible strategies to use in unsafe situations. For example



'How could someone keep themselves safe even if ...?' Many types of scenarios from minor predicaments to potentially dangerous and abusive situations can be explored in this way. For example, 'How could you keep yourself safe even if you had to... wash an elephants ears?'. The approach encourages problem solving skills and active thinking about developing a safety plan that will work for that person.

## Training and Resources

Training is available from Safety Net who are a registered charity based in Brighton. They run regular Protective Behaviours Training courses and can also deliver to organisations at their own venue. Safety Net also has a Library of Protective Behaviours resources that can be borrowed.

For more information contact them on 01273 696622 or e-mail [info@safety-net.org.uk](mailto:info@safety-net.org.uk).

For more information on Protective Behaviours and dates for courses visit their website [www.safety-net.org.uk](http://www.safety-net.org.uk)

For more information on Protective Behaviours UK visit [www.protectivebehaviours.co.uk](http://www.protectivebehaviours.co.uk)