

Practices for the Sacred Circle:

Additional Guidelines and Resources for Parents and Caregivers

Parents and Caregivers,

We understand that learning about the sexual behavior of your child can be overwhelming and can bring up conflicting emotions. There are many resources and treatment options available to guide you and your child on your healing journeys. Mental health professionals can be especially helpful in facilitating conversations to help you and your child share and process these feelings in a productive way. This resource is meant to help you cultivate a positive relationship with mental health professionals, and to find a provider that is a good fit for your family.

- **Identify a therapy model that fits the needs of your child and/or family.** Mental health providers will give you meeting options; they may wish to conduct individual sessions with your child, sessions with both parent and child, or group sessions. The reason for these approaches may vary and should be explained to your satisfaction before they take place.
- **Therapy provided by mental health professionals should be based on a child's age and developmental level.**
- **It is important that the mental health professional is someone you can feel comfortable with.** They may talk about several uncomfortable topics for you and your child. You are free to explain your comfort level with certain topics and provide feedback on how to best approach your child.
- **Ask questions!** Any language used by the mental health professional you do not understand should be questioned so that the professional can provide further feedback or clarification. Asking questions helps your child get the most out of therapy sessions.
- **When you are receiving services from a mental health professional, you should feel supported, respected, and heard.** Your child should not feel shame because of mental health services.
- **Be present, be patient, be positive.** The first few therapy sessions may not feel entirely comfortable. Relationships between providers, children, and families take time to build.
- **Stay actively involved.** Parent and caregiver involvement in their child's treatment has been found to significantly improve treatment outcomes.

Adapted from the National Center on the Sexual Behavior of Youth

- <https://www.ncsby.org/sites/default/files/Youth%20Board%20Flyer.pdf>
- <https://www.ncsby.org/sites/default/files/Now%20What%20What%20to%20Expect%20out%20of%20Treatment%20-%20English.pdf>

