

CHAPTER 4

OTHER SEXUAL PRACTICES & SEXUAL TOPICS

It's impossible for one handbook to cover every sexual topic that might arise. Today's children are hearing about more kinds of sexual issues, at earlier ages, than we ever thought possible. Sexual topics which were never mentioned publicly, and sexual images that used to be taboo, are now featured on the covers of magazines, discussed in schoolyards and at backyard barbecues, and pictured in news reports, daytime TV, prime time TV, movies, videos, DVDs and on the internet.

The good news is that it really is possible to give simple and non-sensational explanations for any sexual practice or topic. This chapter covers some of the ones that come up frequently. You will decide what you want to say, and when. But do be aware of the many sexual topics children may hear about.

My view is that by the time children are about 10-12, they should know:

- the different kinds of sexual intercourse (vaginal, anal, oral); and
- that people may take part in many kinds of sexual activity. What actual details you get into about various sexual practices depends on what is relevant. What is relevant depends on the circumstances—on what is being asked about, or on what the child is being exposed to.

Some of the topics in this chapter may come up at quite early ages, due to our media, and due to what the child hears from other children, or overhears in adult conversation. Often, the child may have a casual interest, and a brief explanation is enough. Sometimes, they'll want to know more. Remember, it is not harmful for

children to know about specific sexual practices. If any of the information is 'too advanced', they simply will not understand it, and will tend to lose interest. If they ask, certainly, give them an explanation. Keep it simple.

If they do not ask, but you know that they are seeing or hearing about the subject, it might be well to find a way to bring up the topic and give a brief explanation.

Don't try to cover everything. Stick with what is relevant at the time; and start with the most simple explanation. You can add more detail if it is needed.

The explanations in this chapter assume that the child already knows:

- names of the sex organs of both sexes;
- which organs belong to which sex; and
- how penis/vagina intercourse happens.

Pornography and pedophilia are covered in Chapter 11. This chapter offers simple words for describing petting and kissing; masturbation; prostitution; sex toys; sexual fantasies; adult sexual games, bondage and discipline (B&D), and sadomasochism (SM); and miscellaneous topics not covered elsewhere.

There is more to sexual activity than intercourse

By the teens, young people need to know that intercourse is not the only kind of sexual practice. In addition to, or in place of intercourse, people enjoy quite a variety of activities including stroking, kissing, nibbling, biting, licking, sucking, massaging, tickling, striking any part of the body you can imagine, or several body parts at once.

Some people like to listen to music with sex; some like wine; and some like the lights off. Some people like to use vibrators or other kinds of sex aids, or sex toys, as they are often called. Some people like to act out games or fantasies, including dressing up in various kinds of gear. Some like a bit of pain, some like feathers, and some prefer whipped cream.

The list is endless. Many people find many of these practices at least as enjoyable as intercourse, and some find them more enjoyable.

What to discuss with your child will be a matter for your judgement. The examples here are to start you thinking about what you might say on various topics.

Sexual pleasure

Just a word here about pleasure. Pleasure is why most people continue to engage in sexual activity. It feels good.

Pleasure is perhaps the least discussed aspect of sexuality. But if we want to help our children achieve safe and satisfying sex lives, we also want them to experience the pleasure that good sex with the right partner can bring.