



SEXUAL GROOMING STAGES & RED FLAGS

VICTIM SELECTION

Perpetrators may seek out children who are:

- Compliant and trusting of adults
- Unconfident and lacking in self-esteem
- Lonely and isolated
- Have an intellectual impairment or personal care needs
- Troubled
- Not close to primary caregivers or the family unit
- Lacking in adult supervision

GAINING ACCESS AND ISOLATION

Perpetrators may:

- Be involved in youth-serving organisations
- Manipulate family to gain access to the child
- Engage in activities alone with children and exclude adults
- Encourage and engage in overnight stays and/or outings with the child perhaps under the guise of helping families out
- Separate the child from peers and family

TRUST DEVELOPMENT

Perpetrators may:

- Be charming/nice/likeable
- Have 'insider' status/good reputation/ be a 'pillar of the community'
- Be affectionate and loving
- Give the child special attention
- Show favouritism/have a 'special relationship' with the child
- Give compliments
- Spend time with child/ communicate often
- Engage in childlike activities (e.g., stories, games, sports, music)
- Give rewards/privileges (e.g., gifts, toys, treats, money, trips)
- Provide drugs and/or alcohol to the child

DESENSITISATION TO SEXUAL CONTENT AND PHYSICAL CONTACT

Perpetrators may:

- Ask questions about the child's sexual knowledge/ experiences/relationships
- Talk about sexual things they themselves have done
- Use inappropriate sexual language/tell dirty jokes
- Teach the child sexual 'education'
- 'Accidentally' touch the child/use distraction while touching
- Watch the child undressing
- Expose their naked body to the child
- Show the child pornography
- Use 'innocent'/non-sexual contact
- Desensitise the child to touch/increase sexual touching

POST-ABUSE MAINTENANCE

Perpetrators may:

- Tell the child not to tell anyone what happened
- Encourage secrets
- Say things such as, "I love you/you're special"
- Use rewards/bribes/threats of punishment or harm
- Persuade the child it was acceptable/normal behaviour
- Make the child feel responsible
- Use threats of abandonment/rejection/family breaking up