

Capture opportunities to screen teens for unhealthy sexual relationships

Unhealthy sexual relationships are characterized by a lack of equality with regard to respect, choice, and power between partners. Unhealthy relationships include consensual or non-consensual sexual relationships between teens and authority figures, and/or older sexual partners.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommend that all teens be screened for the risk of unhealthy sexual relationships at every visit.

Remind teen patients that

- everyone has the right to feel good about themselves;
- feelings of unhappiness, pressure or anxiety may be signs that their relationship is not healthy;
- they have a right to set limits for themselves.

Assure that clinic staff working with teens are

- knowledgeable about these issues and about resources in your community that provide for counseling, guidance and protection when needed;
- familiar with Alaska's statutes on sexual abuse of minors and mandatory reporting. Some information about Alaska statutes is printed on the back of this document.

Screening teens for risk of unhealthy relationships may include an introductory statement such as:
It is important to me that you are healthy and an important part of your health is the relationships you have with others.

Some or all of the following questions may be used to screen teens about their relationships:

Do you have someone special in your life?

Does this special relationship include sexual experiences?

Are you comfortable with those sexual experiences?

Have your sexual experiences ever included sexual intercourse?

Has your partner ever made you feel pressured or uncomfortable about sexual matters?

These questions may be incorporated into your clinic's existing patient intake or history forms.

The primary source for information shared in this document is ACOG. For more details please visit the ACOG website @ www.acog.org/

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Department of Health & Social Services, State of Alaska
www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/wcfh/familyplan.htm

Some Information About Alaska Statutory Definitions of Child Sexual Abuse

Alaska Statutes define Child Sexual Abuse in two sections. Chapter 47, which includes the Child Protection Statutes, does not define Sexual Abuse. Readers are directed to the Criminal Statutes twice:

- Subsection (16) (A) defers to 11.16.100 for definitions of prostitution;
- Subsection (16) (B) defers to 11.41.455 for definitions of exploitation (which addresses offenses associated with production of pornographic material).

Thus, the definitions of Child Sexual Abuse can only be found in Criminal Statutes, in the following sections:

Sec. 11.41.434. Sexual abuse of a minor in the first degree

Sec. 11.41.436. Sexual abuse of a minor in the second degree

Sec. 11.41.438. Sexual abuse of a minor in the third degree

Sec. 11.41.440. Sexual abuse of a minor in the fourth degree

Sec. 11.41.410. Definitions (defines terms as they apply anywhere in Section 11).

The first degree statutes are cited here. The language for second and third degree statutes are similar, with the exception that each degree is slightly less severe. Additionally, second degree cites sexual exploitation (11.41.455 - production of pornographic material).

An offender commits the crime of sexual abuse of a minor in the first degree if:

- (1) being 16 years of age or older, the offender engages in sexual penetration with a person who is under 13 years of age or aids, induces, causes, or encourages a person who is under 13 years of age to engage in sexual penetration with another person;
- (2) being 18 years of age or older, the offender engages in sexual penetration with a person who is under 18 years of age, and the offender is the victim's natural parent, stepparent, adopted parent, or legal guardian; or
- (3) being 18 years of age or older, the offender engages in sexual penetration with a person who is under 16 years of age, and
 - (A) the victim at the time of the offense is residing in the same household as the offender and the offender has authority over the victim; or
 - (B) the offender occupies a position of authority in relation to the victim.

The terms used in the above section are defined in 11.41.410.

- (5) "position of authority" means an employer, youth leader, scout leader, coach, teacher, counselor, school administrator, religious leader, doctor, nurse, psychologist, guardian ad litem, babysitter, or a substantially similar position, and a police officer or probation officer other than when the officer is exercising custodial control over a minor
- (6) "sexual act" means sexual penetration or sexual contact
- (8) "without consent" means that a person
 - (A) with or without resisting, is coerced by the use of force against a person or property, or by the express or implied threat of death, imminent physical injury, or kidnapping to be inflicted on anyone

Information in this document may not be relied upon as legal authority and is for informational purposes only. State Statutes are subject to change. Information in this document is accurate as of 12/1/06. Those mandated by law to report child sexual abuse are responsible for knowing and acting on current laws. Additional information about legislation may be found at: <http://w3.legis.state.ak.us/infodocs/infodocs.htm?/infodocs.htm>

