

MST-PSB Case Study

Tom, aged 13, was convicted of three charges of rape against his younger sister, Rose, and was subject to a referral order with a requirement to engage in MST PSB. He was living with his maternal grandparents, and had had no contact with Rose, who remained living with her mother, since the initial disclosures were made. School staff were also concerned about Tom sending sexually explicit texts to his peers, and inviting them to his house.



The professional system, including education, youth offending and social care, was highly concerned about the risks that Tom might pose. The MST PSB therapist initially developed a robust safety plan with Tom's family and school, to ensure the safety of the community. Regular professional meetings were also held, which provided a useful way to contain professional anxieties, and to review the safety plan. Rose's own therapist attended these meetings, allowing the opportunity for the views of the victim to always be kept in mind.

The MST PSB therapist engaged with Tom's mother, father and grandparents, which spanned three households. Although Tom's mother and grandmother were highly

motivated to support Tom and engage in the therapy, his father and grandfather were more reluctant, and found it hardest to contemplate what had occurred within their family.

The therapist worked alongside social care throughout, to keep father and grandfather informed of the intervention and to ensure they were aligned with the safety plan. The therapist initially supported mother in taking the lead in some conversations with Tom, known as clarification, which entailed exploring in detail episodes of sexually harmful behaviour.

Whilst these conversations were emotive and challenging for all, they allowed a better understanding of the factors which led to Tom engaging in such behaviours, and provided the beginning steps of him taking responsibility for what had happened. This was the scaffolding that eventually led to Tom writing an apology letter to his sister, and to subsequently, with the support of Rose's therapist, meeting with his sister for the first time.

A range of interventions targeted the drivers to Tom engaging in sexually harmful behaviour. The interventions included developing an understanding of the impact of pornography and how this leads to myths about sexual relationships, as well as education around consent and the law. Grandfather felt more able to join in this stage of the work, and of his own accord had some very useful conversations with Tom, for instance, around dating girls, and around appropriate masturbation. Over time it became evident that Tom held some unhelpful attitudes towards women, which in part stemmed from him witnessing domestic violence in his own parents' relationships; the therapist was able to gain alignment with Tom's father, helping him to recognise that these unhelpful attitudes continued to put Tom at risk of further offences. Father was able to reflect on the impact of his own behaviour on Tom, and to talk with Tom about how he would want Tom to treat women. At the end of the intervention, Tom remained living with his grandparents, and was having monthly contact with his sister, supervised by his parents. At a review nine months later, Tom had moved to live with his father, there had been no further concerns about sexually harmful behaviour, and Tom and Rose continued to enjoy monthly contact with each other.