

POWER

Path Of Wellness,
Empowerment
& Recovery

Healing from Technology-Assisted
Child Sexual Abuse (TACSA)

13-16 years



Marie Collins
Foundation

The Marie Collins Foundation is a specialist charity that works to improve the outcomes for victims and survivors of Technology-Assisted Child Sexual Abuse (TACSA). This means we want no further harm to occur to any child who has been groomed online, had intimate images shared or taken, had a fake sexual image made of them, or been sexually harmed or abused through any other use of the internet or technology. We have created this free resource to be used by practitioners who work directly with children and young people – including those impacted by TACSA – to support recovery.

It is important to note that this is not an 'online safety' resource. Such resources often focus only on prevention which can be inappropriate to use with victims and survivors as they can appear victim blaming. Online safety resources don't allow the exploration of thoughts and feelings on the journey to recovery that this resource seeks to provide.

You will have watched the short video for information on the resource preparing you for how it must be used with children and young people. It can be used with a range of suggested age groups, with this particular resource being aimed at young people aged 13-16. As a practitioner you must be mindful of not just the chronological age of a child but also their capacity to understand to ensure you utilise the age-appropriate resource.

The resource has been designed as a minimum of 8 sessions, which includes a getting to know you session followed by 3 mandatory foundation sessions, then the practitioner and young person can select from a range of targeted sessions before ending their time together with the mandatory closing session. Within each session there may be additional resources to access. However, the resource is not limited to 8 sessions, further sessions can be facilitated should the practitioner and young person choose. The resource has been created from a combination of research, the voices of those with lived experience, professional experience and the expertise of the Marie Collins Foundation.

Although as a practitioner you may not directly work alongside the young person's parent(s)/carer(s) you can direct them to support material designed specifically for them on the Marie Collins Foundation website, please visit: mariecollinsfoundation.org.uk/How-We-Can-Help/I-am-a-parent-or-carer

The professional relationship between the practitioner and the young person will be a key element in the effectiveness of this resource. Practitioners should make themselves aware of the following:

Empowering the young person: where possible every opportunity should be taken to give the young person some control. Consider: how much choice does the young person have on when the sessions take place, what notes or records are made and who will see them. For example, if the young person's sexuality is not relevant to the concerns, then is there a need to record this, and share it with others? Empowering the young person will support the development of their self-esteem, their feelings of self-worth and their confidence within the sessions.

Reassurance: It is incredibly distressing for a young person to repeatedly talk about what has happened to them and can cause more harm. Practitioners do not need to know the details of any incident to use this resource. Specialist police officers should be the only people who may have seen any images. When meeting a young person you need to be clear that you haven't seen any images and that you won't see any.

Practitioner Bias: Recent research⁽¹⁾ has highlighted how practitioners fail to recognise that online sexual abuse can be as harmful as offline sexual abuse. These views can lead to victim blaming language where the victims and survivors are seen as being responsible for their own abuse and this can come across to the young person either deliberately or via unguarded comments.

⁽¹⁾ Hamilton-Giachritsis C, Hanson E, Whittle H, Alves-Costa F, Pintos A, Metcalf T, Beech A. Technology-assisted child sexual abuse: Professionals' perceptions of risk and impact on children and young people. Child Abuse Negl. 2021 Sep;119(Pt 1).

Limitations of resource: This resource cannot be used as a replacement to therapy or counselling. It is a programme of work to support the young person on their path to recovery. If the young person is already receiving therapy, good practice would be to discuss this intervention with their therapist to ensure the process would not be overwhelming.

How to use this resource: Prior to using this resource you will have watched the video for guidance on how to use it with children and young people and will now need to familiarise yourself with the material before facilitating any sessions with a young person.

The resource is comprised of 4 stages, with clear session overviews and contact with the young person and family being made prior to the resource being used.

STAGE 1 – OPENING SESSION

This session aims to build the trust and rapport between the practitioner and the young person.

STAGE 2 – FOUNDATION SESSIONS

There are 3 mandatory sessions, which will be relevant to the young person regardless of the TACSA.

STAGE 3 – TARGETED SESSIONS

Practitioners and young people will choose at least 3 sessions from a broad range of different topics that explore supporting the young person in their recovery.

STAGE 4 – CLOSING SESSION

This provides the opportunity to reflect on the sessions and look at how far the young person has come in their recovery and the strategies they can utilise as ongoing support. It is important that the young person knows this intervention has finished.

Our Human Needs

Sometimes it is useful to have a framework to understand how and why things happen in life and how we can help ourselves to be happy, healthy and emotionally well. It can also help to remove self-blame and judgement when things haven't turned out the way we hoped.

A useful framework comes from the Human Givens⁽²⁾ approach, which identifies a set of needs that all human beings have to meet in order to be in a state of wellbeing. When we meet these needs in balance and in healthy ways we are able to build a life that works for us. However, sometimes we don't or can't find healthy ways to meet these needs and so we either don't manage to meet them or meet them in less healthy ways, which can create problems.

Our emotional needs include:

- **Security** – to feel safe in at least one area of our life.
- **Control** – a sense of autonomy or agency in what happens to us.
- **Attention** – both giving and receiving in order to feel seen by those around us.

⁽²⁾ Human Givens | www.hgi.org.uk

- **Status** – seeing that others value us for our contribution.
- **Community** – to feel connected and a sense of belonging to the wider group.
- **Emotional connection** – closer relationships to a few individuals so that we feel accepted.
- **Privacy** – time to reflect and think our own thoughts.
- **Achievement** – a sense that we are stretching ourselves and developing.
- **Meaning** – what gets us up in the morning, often met through being needed by others or by being part of something important.

Three physical needs – **nutrition, movement and sleep** – also help us to feel emotionally well.

Children have the same needs as adults and sometimes it is more difficult for them to meet their needs, mainly because they have less day-to-day **control** in their lives. They are generally expected to follow and fit in with the rules of their family and school. At school they can't choose what to wear or even when to go to the toilet. At home they may have little choice over what they eat or when they go to bed (potentially impacting how they meet their need for **nutrition and sleep**). They may have less access to **privacy**, especially if they share a bedroom.

When we recognise that all human beings, whatever their age, are looking to meet these same needs, it's apparent that we become vulnerable if this is not possible. We can see how potentially easy it could be for any of us to be groomed by someone with an ulterior motive. By making us feel seen (giving **attention**) and valued (**status**), by making us feel accepted (**emotional connection**) and by providing a sense of being needed or part of something important (**meaning**) we can be taken in by people whose intentions are harmful.

When this happens, the fallout can also mean that it's harder to meet our needs. For example, when we discover that we've been taken advantage of, it is hard to feel **secure** and we often feel out of **control**.




When we can't meet our needs, human beings become stressed – which makes our emotions stronger and harder to manage and this in turn makes it harder to think clearly. Finding ways to calm strong emotions will help us find ways to meet needs in healthy ways again.

When supporting a young person who has been the victim of TACSA, we need to be aware of their unmet needs. We can work with them to help them manage strong emotions and develop strategies to feel calmer. We can work to help them regain a sense of **control** over their lives. We can make them feel more **secure** and create an environment where they can build healthy relationships, meeting their needs for **attention, status, community** and **emotional connection** again. This will help restore their sense of **meaning**. When we understand that all human beings have the same set of needs, we remove blame and judgement when things go wrong and we can help young people work towards meeting their needs in healthy ways again and support the journey to recovery.



One way to check in with someone over how they are currently meeting their needs is a questionnaire. Please use the questionnaire provided on the next page.

If scores are consistently at the lower end for a particular question(s), then this might begin to identify appropriate support to help that young person find ways to feel calmer and meet their needs better.

How satisfied were you with the following aspect of your life in the last week ?								
1	I had a sense of control over day-to-day events							
2	I was able to relax when I felt I needed to							
3	I felt able to give attention to others							
4	I felt that life was meaningful							
5	I had interest or pleasure in doing things							
6	I felt able to remain calm enough in challenging situations							
7	I had time and space for myself							
8	I felt safe and secure							
9	I slept well							
10	I had a sense of closeness or connection with someone							
11	I felt positive and hopeful							
12	I dealt with my problems effectively							
13	I felt that I achieved something							
14	I felt valued and respected							
15	I felt able and happy to socialise with others							



The session we did today was...

I would like to share with you...



The session we did today was...

I would like to share with you...



The session we did today was...

I would like to share with you...





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