AIM-modellen for utredning av barn under 12 år med problematisk eller skadelig seksuell atferd

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Carol Carson

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Foreword

I am delighted to write this foreword to the new AIM Under 12 Assessment Model, authored by Carol Carson.

Harmful sexual behaviour is a key developmental threat which can so often compromise the achievement of developmental goals and the subsequent life chances of children and young people who display such behaviours. Not only this, but it is now well established that responses to such behaviours must take into account the developmental status and needs of children and young people.

Regrettably, policy and practice relating to younger children displaying harmful sexual behaviours have not always been developmentally sensitive. It has long been said that early responses to adolescents with sexually abusive behaviours suffered from a ‘trickle-down effect’ from the adult sex offender field, whereby assessment models and intervention approaches derived from research into adults were borrowed and erroneously applied to adolescents without recognition of the key physical, cognitive, social and sexual differences between adults and young people.

Fast forward nearly two decades and we stand, perhaps, at a similar juncture with regard to knowledge and practices relating to younger, pre-pubescent children presenting with problematic sexual behaviours. In other words, there is a real danger than we misapply thinking derived from research and practice on adolescents to work with younger children without recognising the significant developmental differences between them. Recent research I have been involved in supports this assertion. Out of 511 cases of children and young people referred to the police for ‘sexual crime’ over a 12-month period in one police constabulary in England, 27% related to children aged 12 or under. In 14% of cases, the children concerned were under the age of 10, but were recorded as perpetrators of sexual crime despite being under the age of criminal responsibility. In assessment practice too, there has been a significant risk that tools developed on the basis of research findings for adolescents are used to assess younger children, not because they are valid or have been designed for this group, but simply because these tools are simply what are available to practitioners. The danger here is that assessment results are unanchored from the developmental and social contexts in which the behaviours are expressed.

This means that the production of this new guidance and assessment model for use with younger children marks a significant step forward in giving practitioners the tools they need to take a more developmentally sensitive approach to this group of children. It is carefully constructed, clearly written and displays a much-needed sensitivity towards the difficult issues associated with responses to younger children and their families. Consistent with the AIM3 model for adolescents, this new model is a hugely welcome and significant step forward for the field.

Professor Simon Hackett
Acknowledgements

There are a number of people I would like to thank as without them this book would never have been completed.

Firstly, to my colleagues, the AIM Associates, who continually enrich my understanding of this field of work, through their knowledge and experience, and occasionally their challenges to my own thinking! Their support and encouragement were much needed at times, particularly as the deadline crept closer.

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To Nathalie Forbenay-Hannant from Leeds; Noreen McBride and her team at Aim to Change, SESWT and Lisa Shaw and Emma Neary from Bridgelea Pupil Referral Unit, Manchester, who all took time to try out the new Model and feedback to me. Their practice reflections were invaluable for the development of this book.

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Carol Carson

About The AIM Project

The AIM Project (Assessment, Intervention and Moving On)

The remit of the AIM Project is to support professionals to respond consistently and effectively to children/adolescents who display problematic/harmful sexual behaviour and who may be harmful to themselves and others. The AIM Project has developed models and guidance, such as this AIM Under 12s Model, to provide agencies with a common understanding of the issues and a consistent and common framework for reporting, assessing and planning interventions for the risks that are posed.

About The Author

Carol Carson

Carol Carson has been a qualified child and family social worker for 35 years and is now an independent social work consultant and trainer and specialises in practice related to children and adolescents with problematic/harmful sexual behaviours. For over 20 years she has been involved in assessment, direct work, training and consultancy for a range of agencies. She is an AIM Core Associate and has written guidance for education professionals, residential and foster carers and developed this AIM Under 12s Model for children with problematic/harmful sexual behaviours.
Forord – norsk versjon

V27/Betanien sykehus i Bergen (Norge) er hovedansvarlig for denne oversettelsen. Vi vil først og fremst takke AIM-prosjektet i UK ved manager og forfatter Carol Carson for vårt internasjonale non-profit samarbeide og derav muligheten for norsk oversettelse av AIM Assessment Models for Children under 12 years old with Problematic or Harmful Sexual behaviours, 3rd Edition. Videre forkortet «AIM under 12».


Fyllingsdalenv/Bergen, februar 2022

Monica Jensen
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