Keep and Speak Secrets Lesson

Background information about Keep and Speak Secrets

An important component of child personal safety is helping children distinguish between harmless secrets they can keep and hurtful secrets they need to tell to a trusted adult. Many dangerous situations for children involve some element of secrecy. Sexual offenders often use ploys to manipulate children into keeping abuse a secret.

Keep and Speak Secrets, a strategy in the Kids in the Know safety program, was created to address the issue of sexual abuse. The intent of teaching this strategy is to disrupt dangerous situations children may encounter and to increase their reporting of sexual abuse. It is important to help children distinguish between harmless secrets they can keep and hurtful secrets which they should tell to a trusted adult.

I. Together with your child read each scenario and have your child decide whether they think it is a keep or speak secret. Discuss how they determined their answer.

1. My teacher asked me and two other students to stay in for recess to help decorate for a surprise party for the class that afternoon. My teacher asked us not to tell the other students. __________________________

2. I was walking home from school when an older boy walked up behind me and hit me. He told me not to tell anyone or he would hurt me again. __________________________

3. My aunt was making a special anniversary dinner for my parents and told me not to say anything to them. __________________________

4. I was play wrestling with my friend’s older brother on Friday. He touched me in a way that made me feel uncomfortable. He scared me. __________________________

5. I was playing with my best friend and saw bruises on her arms and legs. She told me her father gets mad sometimes and hurts her. She made me promise not to tell anyone. __________________________

6. My brother is scared to go to the dentist. My Dad made me promise not to tell him about the loud noises some of the machines make. __________________________

7. One of my neighbours asked me if he could take pictures of me. He said he would give me candy, if I didn’t tell anyone. __________________________
8. My bus driver said he’d take me to the candy store one day after he drops all the other kids off. He said we can only go as long as I don’t tell my parents.

9. My soccer coach told me that I am the best player on the team. He said I could become a professional soccer player, if I had extra practices with him. He told me not to tell anyone because the other players on the team would be jealous.

10. My dad is planning a surprise birthday party for my mom. He told me not to tell her.

II. Reinforce the lesson on Keep and Speak secrets by reading the book Teatree’s Keep and Speak Secrets (available at McNally Robinson and online at www.kidsintheknow.ca).

Follow-up questions:

1. What are the two types of secrets Teatree learns about?

2. Find secrets in the book that should be told to a trusted adult and secrets that are safe to keep.

3. What do you think Teatree’s secret might be? What could it be, if it is a keep secret? What if it is a speak secret?

4. If Teatree’s secret is a speak secret who could she tell?

5. Who are trusted adults in your life?