

Call Example 1

CALLER: **TONY**
HELPLINE OPERATOR: **RICK**
SOURCE OF HELPLINE NUMBER: **BBC ACTION LINE**

Call Details:

Tony, a middle aged man, contacted the Helpline with concerns about his feelings towards his friend's teenage daughter, Sarah. During the past few years, Tony had developed a close friendship with Sarah's mother who had been through a difficult divorce. He described his relationship with Sarah's mother as platonic; neither were interested in a sexual relationship.

He thought Sarah saw him as a father figure, but he had begun to develop sexual feelings towards her. He was appalled by his thoughts and had never acted on them.

Tony recently started seeing a therapist but had not spoken about his feelings for Sarah because he feared repercussions. He used the sessions to help manage his feelings of depression which he believed related partly to his current situation.

Tony did not have any children of his own and did not come into contact with any during his working hours as an office manager. He wanted help to manage his inappropriate thoughts.

Discussion and Advice:

- ▶ We said that Tony had taken proactive steps by contacting the Helpline and by referring himself to a therapist. We encouraged him to continue seeing the therapist to discuss his mental health and general sexual concerns, and that he be as honest as possible with the Helpline about his attraction to Sarah.
- ▶ We discussed the importance of Tony never being alone with Sarah or putting himself in situations that were risky. Was it possible to meet her mother by herself, or outside of the home; or to consider ending the relationship altogether?
- ▶ We discussed the importance of Tony not reinforcing his inappropriate thoughts with masturbation. We explored a number of techniques that Tony might try to manage his fantasies such as removing himself from the risky environment and distracting himself with tasks which were mentally absorbing. We discussed the negative consequences for Sarah should he act on his thoughts and suggested Tony reflect on these.
- ▶ Tony was close to his sister, so we suggested he consider telling her about the situation.



Actions agreed with Tony:

- ▶ To implement immediate child protection measures by never allowing himself to be alone with Sarah.
- ▶ To focus on managing his fantasies using the techniques discussed.
- ▶ To continue to use the Helpline.
- ▶ To consider disclosing to his sister and to pass the Helpline number on to her if he does this.
- ▶ To continue accessing help from the therapist.

Outcome

Tony called the Helpline five times over a four month period. He began to spend less time with Sarah's mother and saw Sarah less often. In order to occupy his mind he started an adult education class through which he met some new friends. He found this helped to increase his self-esteem and in the management of his fantasies. He continued to use his therapist for support. He also disclosed to his sister. Although initially shocked, she was able to offer support.