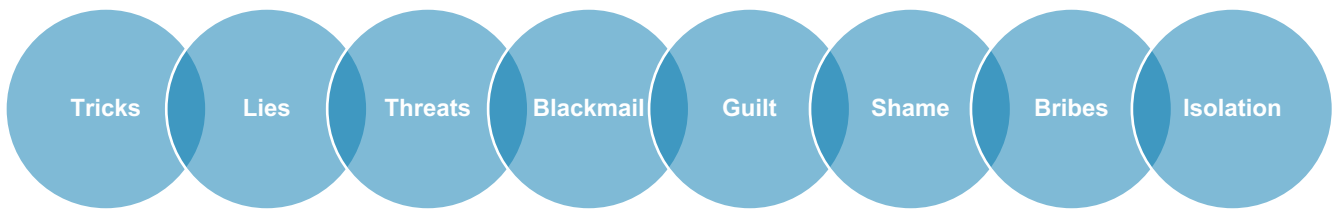


Supporting & Inspiring Family Conversations

Safe Secrets and Unsafe Secrets

When children are harmed or in unsafe situations online and offline, they are often asked, told or threatened to keep a secret. Develop an expectation that secrets can always be shared with trusted adults. Discuss the difference between Safe Secrets – secrets that are okay to keep and Unsafe Secret – secrets that are not okay to keep.

Encourage children to **persist** in asking for help if they're feeling unsafe, not getting the help or support they need or keeping an unsafe secret. Often times, child sex offenders groom children and use strategies to get the child to keep a secret. These behaviours may include:-



SAFE SECRET

- Usually linked with feelings of happiness or excitement.
- Usually kept for a short period of time
- You can tell the secret if you want to.
- No one is getting hurt or feeling hurt.

If you've not already done so, consider attending an eSafeKids Protective Behaviours workshop to learn more.

Consider reading the eSafeKids blog about online grooming and the importance of talking with trusted adults about unsafe secrets.



UNSAFE SECRET

- May be linked with feelings of fear, sadness, confusion, embarrassment, guilt, shame
- May be feeling unsafe
- May be getting 'warning signs'
- May be asked to keep the secret for a long time, forever or never allowed to tell
- May be told that if they tell the secret something bad will happen to them or someone else.
- May be linked with threats, lies, bribes, guilt or blackmail.
- Someone may be getting hurt or feeling hurt.