



Seeking  
connection



# Annual Story 2019–2020



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Everyone has a right  
to fulfil their potential,  
and to be supported  
to be their best self,  
in and out of a  
relationship  
with others.





## About SECCA

### **We support the right to respectful relationships and safe sexual expression for everyone**

SECCA is a non-profit that supports people with disability to learn about relationships, sexuality, and sexual health. Nearly thirty years ago, a passionate group of health professionals, with firsthand experience of disability, saw a vacuum of understanding around sexuality and disability. This was compounded by a flawed education system that allows crucial learning about human sexuality to fall through the cracks, with dramatic flow on effects on society.

People with disability are extremely vulnerable to being both victims and perpetrators of abuse, often driven by a lack of understanding and knowledge. SECCA's team of specialist therapists, educators and advocates works to fill this void.

At the core of SECCA is an understanding of our clients' vulnerability living at the intersection of disability, mental health, and [involvement with] social services and the criminal justice system.

Through therapeutic support and education, we aim to build capacity in individuals to achieve positive relationships and sexual expression in a way that suits them. We see systemic changes in relationships and sexuality education as crucial to fulfilling human rights, and reducing the disproportionate violence, abuse and exploitation experienced by people with disability.



## Our mission

**To deliver impactful,  
current sexuality and  
relationship support  
that is relevant to  
people with a disability,  
and their carers.**



## Our vision

**To empower people with a disability to thrive in richer, safer relationships.**

## Our values

**S**

### **Self-determination**

We empower individuals to live richer lives



### **Equality**

We recognise human rights and help our clients achieve their goals

**C**

### **Collaboration**

We work with others to achieve the best outcomes for clients

**C**

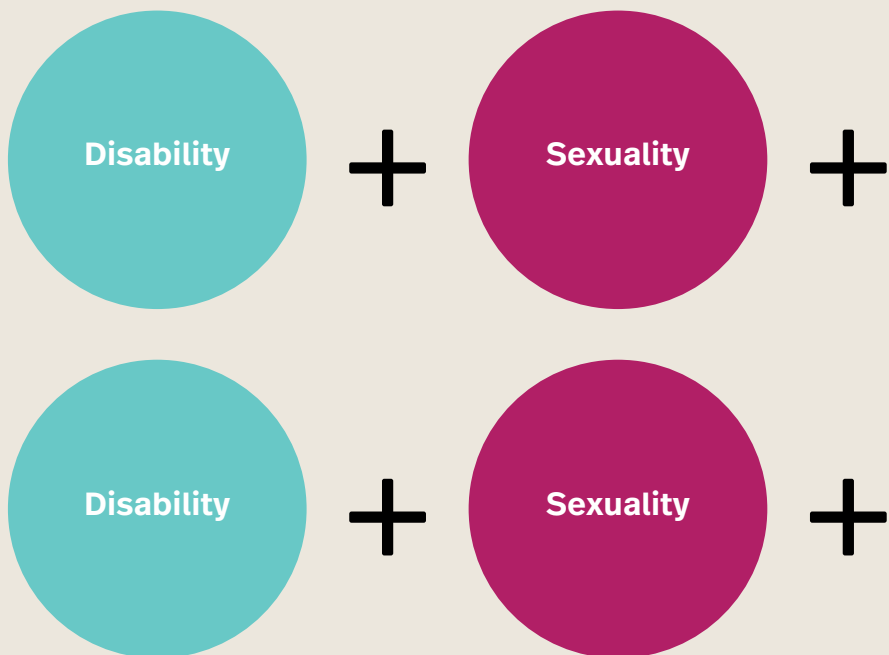
### **Creativity**

We innovate to effect change and deliver critical education

**A**

### **Accountability**

We drive quality, transparency, integrity and justice



## SECCA's prevention model vs crisis intervention

**Previously, SECCA has worked mainly in a crisis intervention capacity. We often become involved when sexuality and disability related issues have become problematic and detrimental for individuals and society. SECCA recognised that we were never going to solve the larger issues if we only worked reactively.**

A few years ago, we began to spark conversations (with our strategic partners Media on Mars and Sue Crock) about the intersectionality of SECCA's work. Over the last year, those conversations began to shape our view of how our services can reduce the incidence of abuse, and the number of people with disability ending up in correctional facilities.





RSE: Relationship and Sexuality Education

SECCA acts as a conduit, facilitating conversations at the intersection of sexuality, relationships, family and domestic violence, and mental health (among others). We aim to highlight this connectivity in a holistic way and show its impact on our society. Our focus for the next year will be on effectively joining these dots and bringing agencies together to create systemic change to address some of society's most complex issues. SECCA's position on prevention vs crisis intervention aligns with the Justice Reform Initiative.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/02/06/i-needed-help-instead-i-was-punished/abuse-and-neglect-prisoners-disabilities>

<sup>2</sup> <https://aifs.gov.au/publications/sexual-assault-and-adults-disability>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.justicereforminitiative.org.au/jailingisfailing>

## Manager's report

### **This was a year of growth for SECCA, both before and during the pandemic.**

Demand for SECCA's services has risen, as it does every year. Consultancy services and educational workshops service an unrelenting need for knowledge and resources in our unique area. Our counselling service continues to be oversubscribed, and our advocacy and lobbying efforts have increased as we seek secure funding to meet this mounting demand. We know now more than ever the acute necessity for preventative measures, through education, to help people with disability stay safe and act safe.

I'm proud of our team for being flexible, creative and resilient during Covid-19, and for their enduring commitment to best practice. With a sad farewell to co-founder and chair Suzanne Paust and her partner and Board member Jack Mansveld, we all stepped up and strode on. Their legacy is in good hands; we all feel the privilege of being a part of SECCA.

We are excited by the current volition in the sector driven by the Disability Royal Commission, the NDIS parliamentary enquiry, and the impact of the pandemic. There is a collaborative energy to see real progress made over the coming year. Despite the hardships faced by many, our optimism prevails.

So thank you to all our supporters, old and new. And here's to a vibrant future.

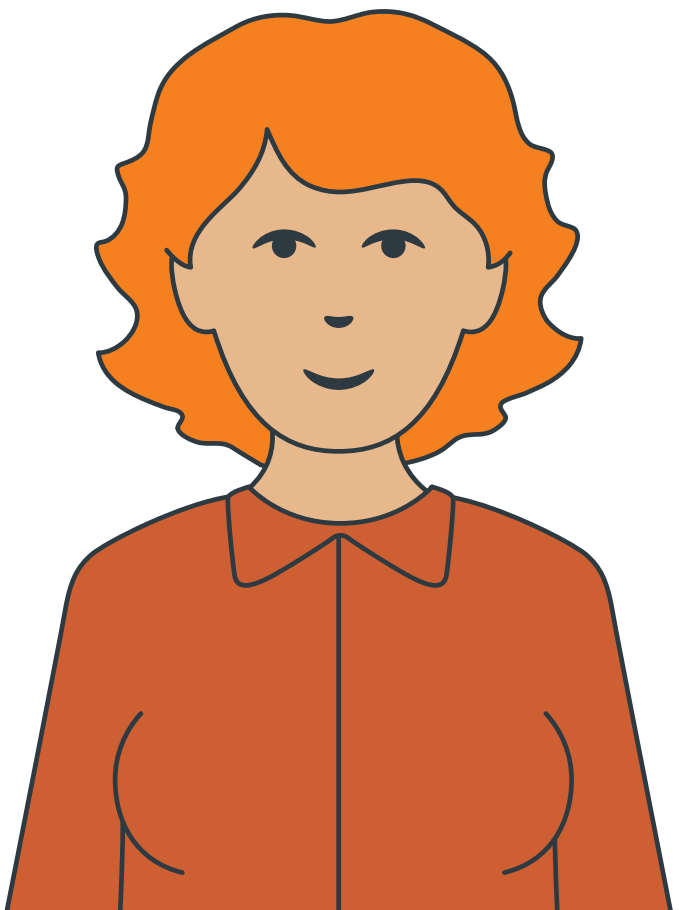
**Juana Terpou**  
*Manager and Senior Therapist*



## Strategic Partnerships

**SECCA works in a partnership model to create impact. We collaborate within the sector to deliver positive outcomes for people with disabilities, their families and carers.**

Our long-time consultant Sue Crock has journeyed with SECCA through many changes, submissions, Business Development and grant applications, and is an invaluable advisor and mentor to the team. SECCA has also worked for many years with Media on Mars, a unique creative agency with a focus on social change and connection among like-minded bodies. Media on Mars assists in telling the SECCA story and illuminating the challenges our clients face. We thank these partners for their invaluable guidance, strategic vision, and passion.



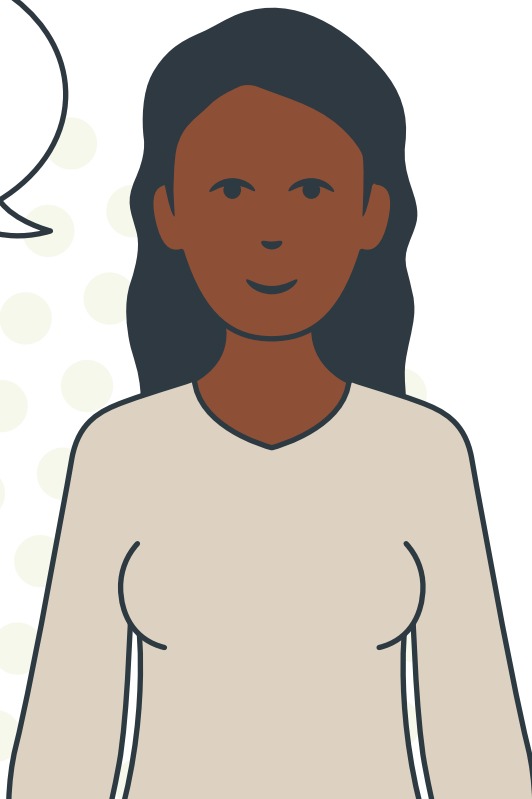
## Meet the team

### Our board

SECCA's Board of Management comprises a dedicated group of volunteers with a specific interest in supporting people with disability. They continue to contribute their invaluable time, energy and vision to SECCA.

#### Office bearers 2019/20

Chair	Suzanne Paust
Secretary	Jack Mansveld
Treasurer	Terry Rodda
Board member	Caris Jalla
Board member	Davinia Lefroy
Board member	Mahesha De Silva
Board member	Christine Manungas





## Our management and staff

SECCA is recognised as a professional organisation and leader in the field of sexuality and disability. The continued commitment and skills of the staff have helped to achieve this. All SECCA staff have been carefully selected for their demonstrated empathy, interpersonal skills and experience relating to disability and sexuality. Each of these qualities are an essential requirement for building trust and rapport with clients and enables them to deal with issues and move forward in a positive way. Staff regularly attend professional development, as well as maintain links to approved associations. This ensures their high level of industry expertise and standards.

The following represent SECCA's current staff as of 30 June 2020.

### Manager and Senior Therapist

- **Juana Terpou** BA (Fine Arts), GradDip Counselling (Human Serv), PGradDip Forensic Sexology

### Therapists

- **Helena Green** PGradDip Forensic Sexology, PGradDip Counselling, BSC Nursing
- **Romney Jones** BHSc, B.Soc.Sc, Dip Counselling
- **Michaela Southby** M.Counselling., PGradDip Forensic Sexology, BA (Hons) Communications, Cert IV Training & Assessment
- **Caryn Sullivan** BA English/Creative Arts, GradDip Counselling and M. Counselling

### Project Coordinator

- **Sandra Norman** B.App.Sc (Physics), B. Social Science.

### Project Officer

- **Jordina Quain** MPH, GradDip Sexology, GradDip Health Promotion, BA (Theatre)

### Practice Manager

- **Rebecca Hall**

### Admin Support Officer

- **Maria Barnett**

## COVID-19



**SECCA responded immediately to the COVID-19 pandemic by following the Department of Health guidance and ensured full compliance for the safety of our staff and our clients.**

SECCA:

- Developed a Pandemic Risk Management Plan with the Board of SECCA
- Communicated to all stakeholders online to provide regular updates of our activity
- Staff worked from home and provided telehealth solutions to clients
- Therapists kept in touch with clients to help mitigate risk of loneliness and detachment
- Our educators modified training for online delivery

SECCA was able to resume face-to-face services in early June 2020, with individual counselling and workshops gradually building back up as individuals felt confident to return.





## NDIS transition

**A March 2020 NDIA transition grant enabled SECCA to upgrade our systems to meet NDIS needs and streamline stakeholder communication. In the country's last transitioning state, SECCA observed NDIA advice and recommendations and kept abreast of training and reporting requirements.**

For an agency that by its nature needs to respond quickly and confidentiality, the NDIS presents challenges for SECCA.

Our concerns with the NDIS have been conveyed in our Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the NDIS, and pivot around:

1. Increased administrative burden on individuals and the agency
2. Responding to urgent or crisis care
3. Recognising therapeutic needs change and cannot always be planned for
4. Lack of confidentiality around counselling support and reporting in a manner that would be unacceptable and often illegal for the general population
5. Lack of funding for critical lifelong education for clients and industry professionals around sexuality and relationships.

We are grateful for collegial support across the industry, and to working together as a sector to make the NDIS the best it can be.



**THANK YOU AND FAREWELL**

# **Suzanne Paust and Jack Mansveld**

**The story of Suzanne and Jack's deep commitment to the rights of people with disability, and their enduring work to realise these rights, deserves a book. After nearly thirty years, Suzanne and Jack retired from their roles at SECCA in 2020.**

Suzanne and Jack's personal and professional partnership is rare, based on their shared profession as social workers and deep commitment to social justice, and to supporting the rights of people with disability. Their outstanding contribution to the disability sector has been inspired by their commitment to their own family and as carers of their son Christopher, strongly supported by their daughter Kathryn. As primary carers of a son with a lived experience of disability, their own experience has informed everything they do and furthered the importance of advocacy.

As one of the founders of SECCA, Suzanne brought her passion and expertise to her many different roles in the agency: psychotherapist, manager, educator, Chair of the Board of Management, mentor and professional supervisor. She was also active in the wider disability and sexual health fields. Jack supported Suzanne and played a significant role on SECCA's Board of Management over many years.

We recognise and honour this remarkable couple's work for people with disability, their families and carers, and their commitment to the importance of relationship and sexuality education.





Suzanne has been instrumental in shaping the Western Australian sexual health sector. I have great admiration for her commitment, professionalism and humour, and am deeply indebted to her for her friendship and collegial support.

*Matt Tilley, WA Branch President and National Director for the Society of Australian Sexologists*

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Setting up SECCA is testament to Suzanne's tenacity and determination to do the very best for those living with the challenges of a disability. She has encouraged an understanding of the need for sexuality education and the rights of people with disability. Her contribution has been exceptional, and I trust others will continue her legacy.

*Rosemary Coates, Honorary Life Member of Society of Australian Sexologists, Founded the Sexology Course at Curtin University*

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Eternal thanks to Suzanne and Jack for your compassion, leadership and vision. You gave me a place where I felt nurtured, protected and valued. You left very large shoes to fill.

*Juana Terpou, SECCA Manager*

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Suzanne and Jack had the vision and passion to establish a service that is unique, courageous and meaningful for clients. Thank you, Suzanne, for your heart and determination, and Jack for your wisdom and guidance throughout the years.

*Caris Jalla, SECCA Board Member*

.....  
Suzanne is respected and admired as  
a true leader, mentor and passionate,  
hardworking advocate by all at SECCA.

*Romney Jones, Therapist SECCA*  
.....

Suzanne and Jack have been dedicated to SECCA  
and the disability sector, wonderful people who  
have been a great support to me at SECCA.

*Maria Barnett, Admin Support Officer SECCA*  
.....

Suzanne brought amazing generosity  
of spirit to the disability sector –  
thanks for being such an inspiration.

*Michaela Southby, Therapist SECCA*  
.....

Suzanne and Jack were the captains of SECCA,  
perennial advocates who continue to shine  
SECCA's light like a beacon. Thank you on  
behalf of all the people who have benefitted  
from your incredible contributions.

*Amanda Negus, Co-Chair SECCA Board of Management*  
.....

Suzanne built such a legacy for SECCA and we  
are honoured to carry on her work and passion.

*Jordina Quain, Project Coordinator SECCA*  
.....

Suzanne you've put your heart and soul into creating  
and sustaining SECCA so successfully and I am very  
grateful for the support and mentoring that you and  
Jack gave me as Chair so many years ago.

*Louise Cefalo, Former SECCA Board Chair*  
.....

Suzanne, you are a generous mentor, model and friend.  
SECCA's success is a result of your deep commitment  
to human rights, gathering a super talented team and  
leading with your quiet calm and fierce determination.  
Deepest thanks.

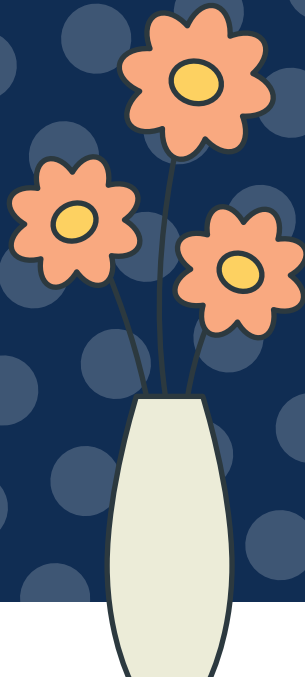
*Sue Crock*



.....  
During my time on the SECCA Board I found Suzanne to be kind, knowledgeable and dedicated. Jack's calm and considered approach also made him a pleasure to work with on the board.  
*Susan Main, Former SECCA Board Member*  
.....



Suzanne is an exceptional advocate for people with disabilities, with Jack alongside offering unwavering support. I worked with Suzanne on several committees. She has a great sense of humor, is hardworking, tenacious with a huge heart. I celebrate them for their tireless advocacy for people with disability.  
*Lorel Mayberry, Department of Sexology Curtin University*



# Our action

Sexuality, Relationships and Your Rights

Protective Behaviours Education

SECCA App Impact

Advocacy

Presentations





### **National Sexuality, Relationships and Your Rights**

SECCA collaborated with over 40 agencies across Australia to share one of our flagship resources nationally.

### **Protective Behaviours Education**

Over 300 people from over 50 different schools were trained in Protective Behaviours Education and use of the SECCA App.

### **SECCA App Impact**

89% of those trained to use the SECCA App agree or strongly agree that they feel comfortable using it and are able to use it to support teaching PBE. The App has approaching 2,500 registered users.

### **Advocacy**

SECCA's business advisory team met with key figures to detail the case for funding and education. Disability representation in the justice system remains disproportionately high.

### **Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability**

The SECCA team was activated to support clients with submissions, and preparations began for our agency submission.

### **Requests to Present**

SECCA received an unprecedented number of requests for conference/forum presentations.

## Sexuality, Relationships and Your Rights

### **One of SECCA's flagship resources, 'Sexuality, Relationships and Your Rights' (SRAYR) has achieved a national audience.**

The book about sexuality and the law was originally printed in 2019 for WA. The easy read educational book has seen high demand including hundreds of digital downloads.

Now, an Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) grant from the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) has allowed us to expand our resource nationally. SECCA has worked collaboratively with over 40 agencies associated with law, disability and sexuality, to create versions of the book that recognise the specific laws and needs of each state and territory.

**Understanding how you can change a child's life by giving them the opportunity to understand themselves and take responsibility for their own bodies.**

**High School Teacher**

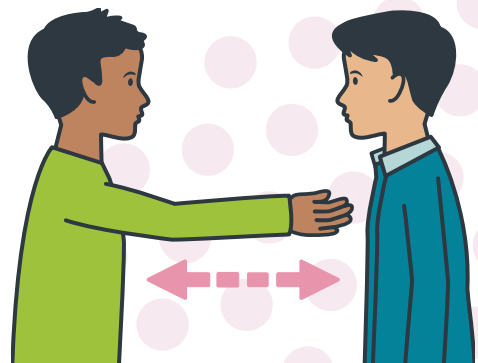
## Protective Behaviours Education

**SECCA has been able to support many teachers, education assistants and parents to deliver Protective Behaviours Education (PBE), through a series of free workshops funded by the Department of Education (a Non-Government Centre Support for Non-School Organisations grant).**

- SECCA ran 26 training sessions over 12 months. Each session reviewed PBE theory and practice, and taught participants how to use the SECCA App to teach this critical topic to people with disability. A hard copy education kit was also provided to schools which had five or more staff attend the training.
- A three-hour version of the workshop was presented to parents, with one digital version created for delivery over Covid-19 shutdown. High demand for such workshops was revealed as every session booked out immediately.
- Over the course of the grant, over 300 people from over 50 different schools were trained in PBE and use of the SECCA App.
- 94% agree or strongly agree that the training was valuable.
- 92% agree or strongly agree they want to make protective behaviours education a priority in their school or classroom.
- 89% agree or strongly agree that they feel comfortable using the SECCA App and are able to use it to support teaching PBE.
- 100% of respondents said they had recommended the workshop to someone or would recommend it in the future.

**300+**

People from over  
50 different schools



**Participation in Protective Behaviours Education and use of the SECCA App**

## SECCA App Impact

### **SECCA's ground-breaking educational resource, the SECCA App, has seen a huge uptake this year, with registered users approaching 2,500.**

The web-based SECCA App has over 2000 images and over 300 lesson plans to help deliver relationships and sexuality education (RSE). It has been designed for people with disability, being visually led, compatible with assistive technology, and easy to use on touch screen. Users are able to customise lessons with their own images to meet their unique learning needs. The App is also useful for young neurotypical people, and any demographic where talking about issues of sexuality is difficult.

Over 300 educators have been trained to use the App this year, through SECCA group training. SECCA therapists use the App in the counselling room and teach significant carers to use it to extend learning beyond the therapy room.

The response to the SECCA App has been overwhelmingly positive. It has filled a gap in the market for a flexible, user-friendly tool to teach sometimes challenging or sensitive topics. It helps make concrete topics that can be abstract in nature (like relationships), and thus may be difficult for people with cognitive conditions to learn.

The vision for the SECCA App includes modified versions to meet the needs of different audiences, including for CaLD and ATSI communities, and parents.

The SECCA App is a unique technological advancement in communicating and educating in RSE, and users have expressed great gratitude to have a tool to work with in this difficult space. SECCA's quest for funding to achieve its potential impact continues.

**It showed us a new way to explore  
and teach positive behaviours.**

**Primary School Teacher**



I love how it's individualised,  
visual and is non-intimidating  
for staff to present to students.

Head of Learning, Education Support Centre

**100%**

100% of respondents said they had recommended the [App] workshop to someone or would recommend it in the future

**89%**

Of those trained to use the SECCA App agree or strongly agree that they feel comfortable using it

**c. 2,500**

Number of users



Use of the app 2019/20



## Education Services Australia Collaboration

SECCA has been working with Education Services Australia to build capacity in teachers of students with limited literacy skills in the area of Respectful Relationships Education. SECCA created three videos and a Teacher Guide to facilitate teaching, made available on an education online hub and the SECCA website. This project also saw collaboration with an Education Support School where we filmed lessons with the students.

**I love the array of pictures,  
and students with sensory and  
communication issues find  
them really helpful.**

**Education Assistant**

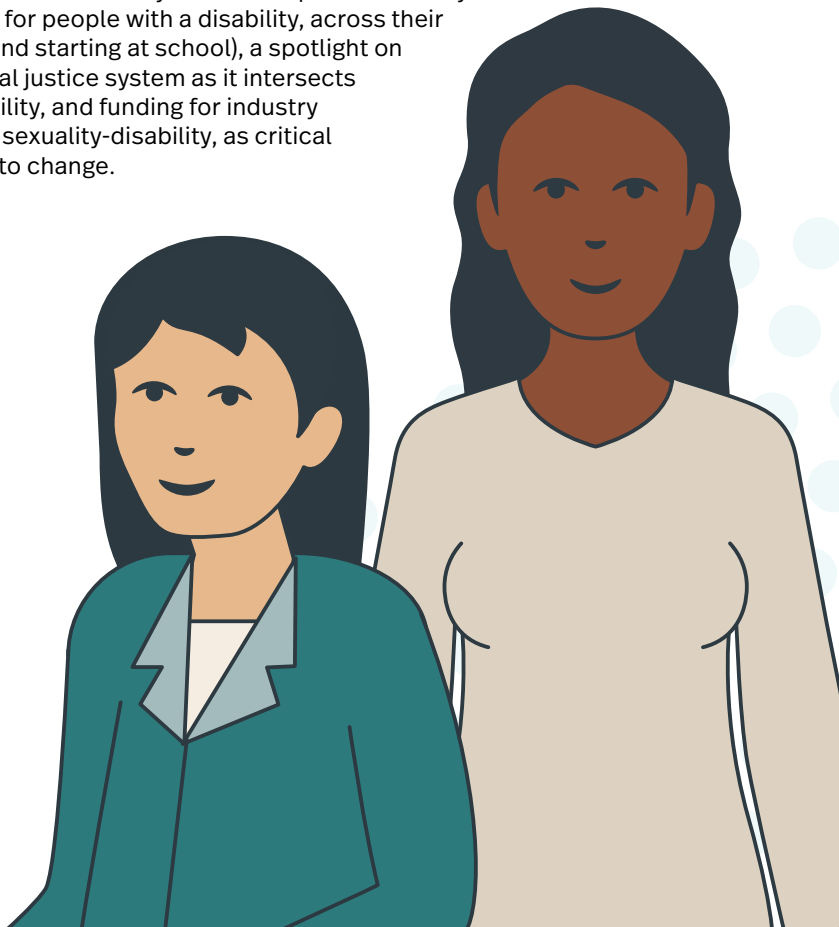
## Advocacy

### **SECCA's business advisory team met with both State and Federal MPs to detail prevailing issues for the disability community, and new challenges presented by the NDIS.**

Critical gaps in education and support services were explored, regarding protective behaviours and intersection with the criminal justice system. The case for funding and education was reinforced, as the statistics for disability representation in the justice system remains disproportionate.

### **Disability Royal Commission**

The SECCA team was briefed and activated to support clients with submissions and information. SECCA began preparations for an agency submission to detail key needs around mandatory Relationship and Sexuality Education for people with a disability, across their lifespan (and starting at school), a spotlight on the criminal justice system as it intersects with disability, and funding for industry training in sexuality-disability, as critical pathways to change.



## Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme

SECCA asserts the need to be fully accessible to individuals needing support for issues around sexuality and relationships. Their needs can be immediate, complex or systemic. The introduction of the NDIS has brought concerns relating to funding and accessibility, confidentiality and flexibility.

As WA's only specialist therapeutic and education service for sexuality-disability, it is critical our services remain attainable to those in need. SECCA addressed these concerns in its submission to the Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme. The Committee was established in July 2019 to gather information about the implementation and performance of the NDIS.

People with disability are at far greater risk (11x) of sexual abuse and assault than people without disability. They are also over-represented in the justice system for sexuality and relationship-based offences. SECCA's education, counselling and crisis intervention services address these challenges faced by people with disability, many of whom have very complex needs.





## Presentations

**This was a busy period for conference/forum presentations with an unprecedented number of requests including from:**

- the Growing and Developing Healthy Relationships Symposium
- the West Australian Association of Teacher Assistants annual conference
- the Australasian Sexual Health conference
- Therapy Focus Pebbles team
- Students at UWA and Notre Dame University
- Living Proud QLife volunteers
- Richmond Wellbeing
- South Ballajura Education Support Centre
- Down Syndrome WA parents
- Cam Can disability managers

**SECCA gives individuals  
the power to help others  
understand them better,  
in order to help them grow  
on their learning journey.**

**High School Teacher**

# Services

Education

Counselling

Consultancy





**SECCA's core services actively support our mission and vision, and the NDIS vision of choice and control for individuals who have a disability.**

We work collaboratively to propel a continual cycle of learning across the industry and community, driven by our core values of Self-determination, Equality, Collaboration, Creativity and Accountability. Our work is delivered from a foundation of evidence-based research, global best practice, three decades of experience, and specialist training.

**Great tips and discussions on how to bring up this topic and to teach it. I feel more comfortable bringing it up with clients.**

**Occupational therapist**

## Education

### Training

There is a steady demand for SECCA training wherein we share our specialist knowledge to enable others to deliver best practice education. Covid-19 has seen an increased demand for SECCA's training to be delivered online. We have successfully trained interstate agencies to deliver our workshops locally, and trained professionals and families in the use of the SECCA App and other resources to support them teaching protective behaviours.

### Workshops

SECCA's full day workshops continue to generate huge demand, evidenced by running at capacity with substantial waitlists. The full day interactive workshops educate and empower teachers and other professionals, families and support workers to support people with disability around their sexuality and relationships. They explore values and attitudes as well as providing facts, guidance and tactical approaches to respectful support.

Presenters were great and facilitated a safe and open discussion with respect. The content will certainly be helpful in teaching puberty to my students.

**Workshop attendee**

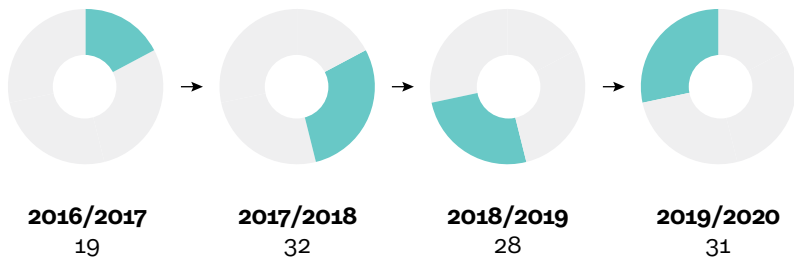


The presentation was fantastic and I feel a lot more confident starting to talk about some of these topics.

Psychologist

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Professional and community training and workshops



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Total number of people who attended training and workshops

**714**

Keep offering these workshops, it's so important for shaping the future.

Workshop attendee

Great facilitators that demonstrated integrity, openness and non-judgement towards these topics and client group.

Workshop attendee

## Issue: Pornography

# Pornography

In the internet era, online pornography is contributing to young people's sexuality education, and search engines only make it easier for them to accidentally or purposefully access pornography. Learning about sex and sexuality through the lens of pornography is problematic for any person, and for people with cognitive disabilities, the dangers are greatly compounded.

Parents and carers of young people with disability can feel unsure about addressing sexuality, and are often so busy managing the other needs of their child that sexuality and relationships education falls through the cracks.

Pornography provides no guidance about consent, safety, mutual pleasure, or sexual health. The majority of pornography models an extreme 'reality' with unbalanced power and risky behaviours, devoid of the essential elements of healthy intimate relationships. With no alternative or specific education about porn, many young people are learning from this modelling and translating it into the real world, unaware that it can be dangerous, harmful and even illegal.

In addition, some people with neurodevelopmental conditions like Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) have a propensity for hyperfocus, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, or obsessive interests, which can be problematic when the interest is pornography. The amassing and ongoing consumption of pornography is encouraged by internet algorithms working coercively to feed this obsessive behaviour. Add young people's ability to circumnavigate child-protection software and we have a situation where families and carers feel increasingly powerless, and individuals themselves are feeling disconnected and shameful.



**30% of data** transferred across the internet is pornography<sup>1</sup>

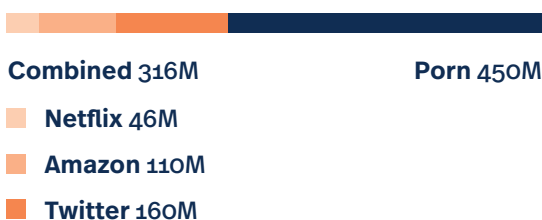
**11**

**Average age** children first access pornography is 11<sup>2</sup>

**“This is a public health crisis. Like smoking or other public health issues, this will have long-term consequences.”<sup>3</sup>**

Dr Joe Tucci, CEO  
Australian Childhood Foundation

Porn sites get more visitors globally each month than Netflix, Amazon and Twitter combined.<sup>4</sup>



**“The primary tools to address harm minimisation would be education on healthy and respectful relationships, and resilience building for children and young people.”<sup>5</sup>**

Colin Pettit, Commissioner for  
Children and Young People Western Australia

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1. [www.extremetech.com/computing/123929-just-how-big-are-porn-sites/2](http://www.extremetech.com/computing/123929-just-how-big-are-porn-sites/2)
2. [www.psychologytoday.com/au/blog/raising-kind-kids/201911/should-we-teach-kids-about-porns-harms-yes-and-heres-how](http://www.psychologytoday.com/au/blog/raising-kind-kids/201911/should-we-teach-kids-about-porns-harms-yes-and-heres-how)
3. [www.abc.net.au/news/2016-02-09/health-crisis-looming-over-accessibility-of-porn-for-children/7153016](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-02-09/health-crisis-looming-over-accessibility-of-porn-for-children/7153016)
4. [www.huffingtonpost.com.au/entry/internet-porn-stats\\_n\\_3187682](http://www.huffingtonpost.com.au/entry/internet-porn-stats_n_3187682)
5. Submission to Enquiry – Harm being done to Australian Children through access to pornography on the internet, February 2016. [www.cyp.wa.gov.au/media/2166/submission-to-senate-environment-and-into-harm-being-done-to-australian-children-through-access-to-pornography-on-the-internet.pdf](http://www.cyp.wa.gov.au/media/2166/submission-to-senate-environment-and-into-harm-being-done-to-australian-children-through-access-to-pornography-on-the-internet.pdf)

## Case study: Pornography

# Tom

**Tom is a 16-year-old boy with ASD and ADHD. Tom was referred to SECCA by his carers as he has been having issues with online addiction and antisocial behaviour related to his growing sexuality.**

It is not Tom's fault that his understanding of what is appropriate sexual behaviour is unclear. Like many boys, Tom accesses and uses pornography, which he stumbled on by accident when he was 13. Nearly half of children between the ages of 9-16 experience regular exposure to sexual images<sup>1</sup>, and the issues this raises are amplified for young people on the autism spectrum.

In particular, Tom is drawn to Hentai, or animated pornography, as it feels like an escape from reality. Young people on the spectrum are particularly vulnerable to Hentai as it blurs the line between reality and fantasy, and often portrays childlike characters they relate to engaging in sexual activities. The sex portrayed in Hentai frequently features dubious or no consent, distortedly large sexual body parts and illegal acts such as incest and bestiality.<sup>2</sup>

Like many people on the autism spectrum Tom is a highly visual learner, and unfortunately this means most of his information about sex and sexuality is coming from the pornography he watches. This is particularly dangerous for Tom, who already struggles with intimacy, discerning emotions in others and reading social cues.

When he has sex with his girlfriend, he tries to recreate what he has seen in pornography, without feeling intimate or engaged with his partner. He doesn't wear a condom because he never sees one used in the pornography he watches.

Tom's use of pornography is causing problems in his foster home, as he uses a shared computer to access and hoard graphic videos and images. Google's algorithms feed his addiction, providing a never-ending supply of increasingly extreme online pornography. His carers support his right to have a relationship, but are very concerned by some of the things he talks about, and Tom's ability to work around the computer's child-protection filters.



## Solution

Tom's referral to SECCA has drastically improved the relationships he has with his carers, girlfriend and fellow residents. He works regularly with a SECCA counsellor to address his pornography compulsion, and is learning about the elements of a healthy relationship, and the importance of safety and consent during sexual activity. He is learning that sex can be so much more than what he sees in pornography. SECCA staff are also helping educate Tom's carers around how they can support his natural sexual needs while keeping everyone safe and supported when responding to his antisocial sexual behaviour.

Without accessible relationships and sexuality education, people like Tom are at risk of hurting themselves and others. Some may have committed crimes without knowing, while others long for connection but lack the skills and knowledge to pursue intimate relationships. SECCA provides an important service for individuals and their carers who need help navigating these and other relationships and sexuality concerns.

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1. <https://aifs.gov.au/publications/effects-pornography-children-and-young-people-snapshot>
  2. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/blog/minority-report/202007/why-millennials-love-anime-and-hentai-pornography>

\* For confidentiality, real names have not been used.

## Counselling

### **SECCA provides specialist counselling and education in the area of human relationships and sexuality to people who have a disability, and also supports their families.**

Counselling is conducted on a one-on-one basis, allowing the counsellor to understand and respond to the unique needs each client. We use a range of therapeutic techniques to meet different communication and learning styles.

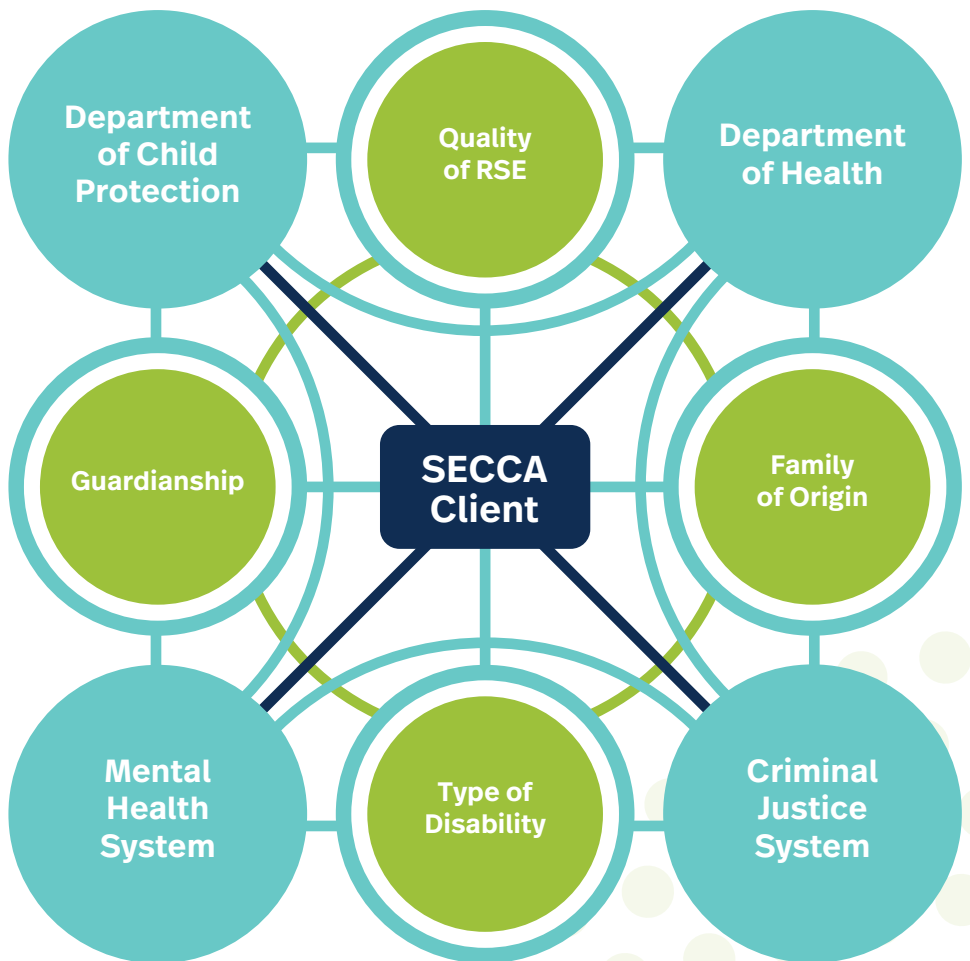
A psychosocial therapeutic approach underpins our counselling service. Psychosocial counselling helps individuals overcome social, emotional or behavioural difficulties. Specific goals for well-being are targeted through an intensive psychosocial assessment and therapeutic counselling plan.

Where appropriate, we work in a comprehensive treatment model, liaising with other supports and care givers to ensure continuity and consistency of learning outside of the counselling room.

#### **Bunbury regional counselling**

We successfully trialled a satellite clinic in Bunbury this year, making SECCA counselling accessible to people in the South West area. This will continue into the next year and informs the possibility of developing the regional model in the future.

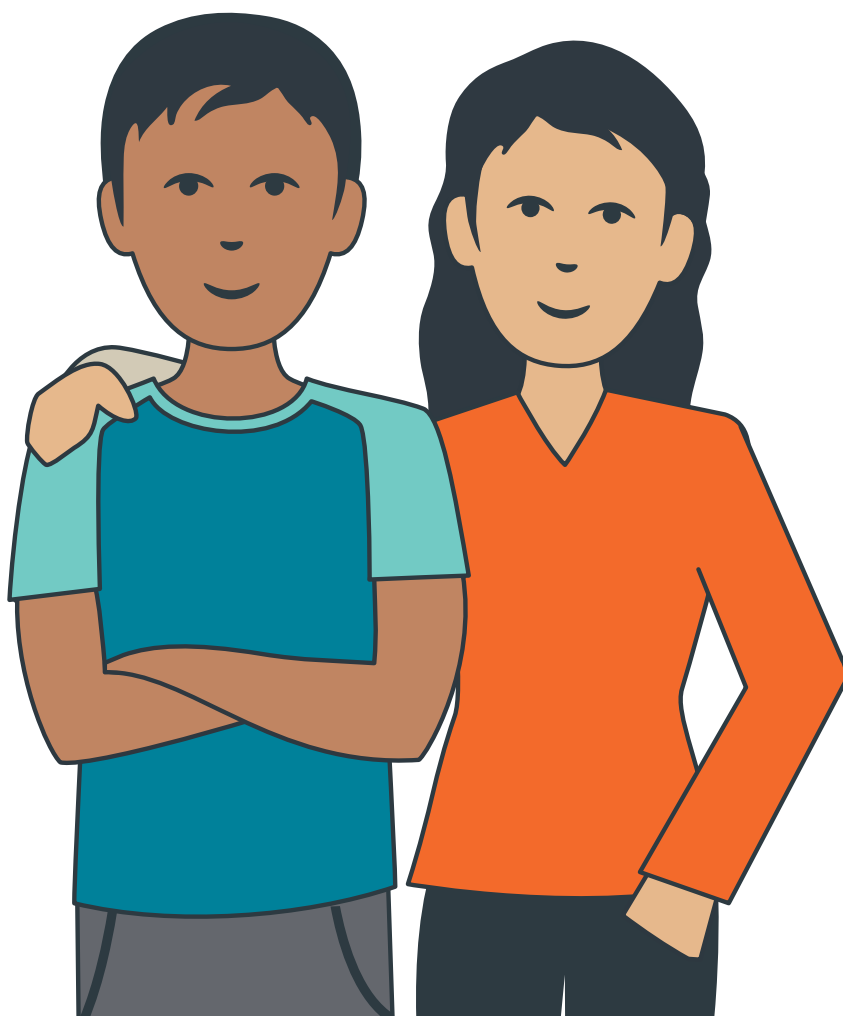
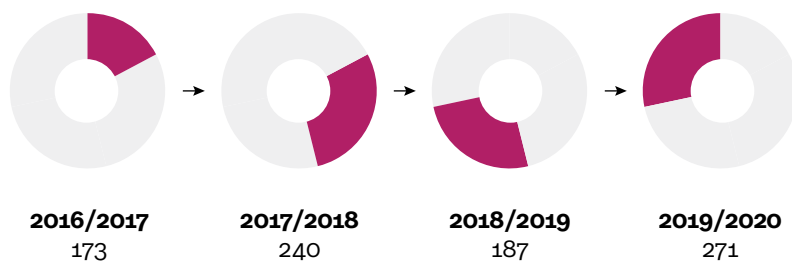
SECCA's clients sit at the centre of a complex life experience. Our counsellors work to interpret this, and aim to empower them to thrive.



RSE: Relationship and Sexuality Education



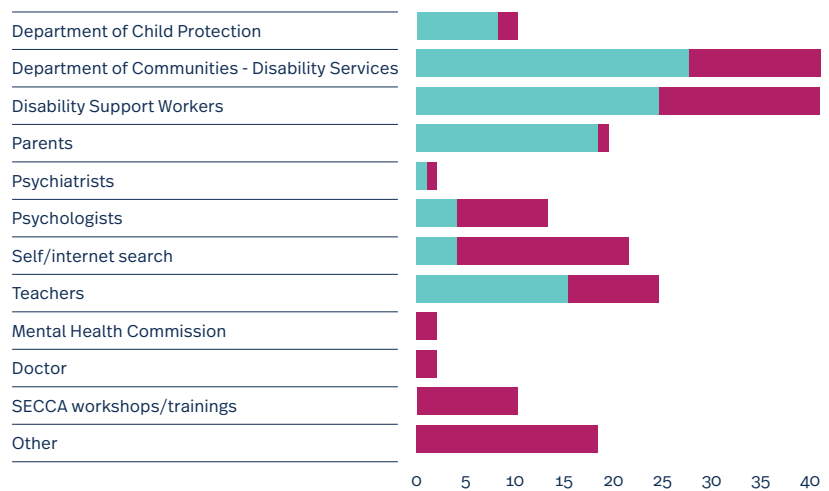
**Number of referrals**





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### Sources of referrals 2019/2020



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### Age and gender

We see people across the lifespan. This year our range was 11 years old to 76 years old.

We see people of all gender identities, with nearly twice the number of clients overall identifying as male over female when presenting. This FY we onboarded 83 people identifying as male and 45 identifying as female.

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### Types of disabilities of clients seen

SECCA supports people of all abilities, cognitive and physical, across the lifespan. We work with people with neurodevelopmental conditions, intellectual development disorders, acquired brain injury, and physical disability. Many clients also have mental health issues.

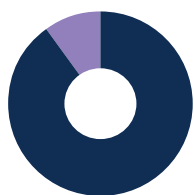
**Issue: Video games**

# Video games

Since the 1990s, a genre of ‘ultraviolent’ video games has become immensely popular among adults and young people alike. These games, many of which are bought by unknowing parents, encourage the graphic, brutal killing and mutilation of in-game characters. Most parents are concerned about protecting their children from inappropriate media, particularly violence and sexual content in movies and television and online pornography, yet video games are so universally popular that parents may not realise how dangerous exposure to inappropriate games can be.

Studies have shown that playing ultraviolent video games can lead to increased aggression, reduced empathy and reduced concern for other people’s wellbeing. Children who are exposed to violence are more likely to believe that violence is an acceptable way to solve problems. Parents who are otherwise very careful to protect their children from pornography often do not realise that many popular video games also have strong sexual content, much of which is violent and misogynistic.

For young people with neurodevelopmental conditions, online video games can provide the perfect escape from reality - an alternate world that’s hyper-stimulating, provides instant gratification through repetitive actions, and lacks the pressure of face-to-face social interaction. This world can become an obsession, and counselors, parents and carers are increasingly concerned about the disturbing ways they are seeing violent video games impacting their children.



**More than 90%**  
of young people  
play video  
games.<sup>1</sup>

**59%**

**In Australia, 59% of  
adults** playing video  
games do so with a  
child in the room.<sup>3</sup>



**90%** of popular games portray violence.<sup>2</sup>

**Boys with Autism  
Spectrum Disorder  
or Attention Deficit  
Hyperactivity Disorder  
are more likely to  
develop addictive  
video game use.**<sup>4</sup>

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1. <https://www.healthline.com/health-news/video-games-saints-or-psychopaths-082814>
  2. <https://www.healthline.com/health-news/video-games-saints-or-psychopaths-082814>
  3. [www.smh.com.au/technology/video-games/the-state-of-australian-gamers-in-2019-20190801-p52cuk.html](http://www.smh.com.au/technology/video-games/the-state-of-australian-gamers-in-2019-20190801-p52cuk.html)
  4. <https://www.webmd.com/add-adhd/childhood-adhd/news/20130729/video-game-addiction-more-likely-with-autism-adhd#1>
  5. <https://getkidsinternetsafe.com/sex-games/>
  6. <https://www.apa.org/about/policy/violent-video-games>

## Case study: video games

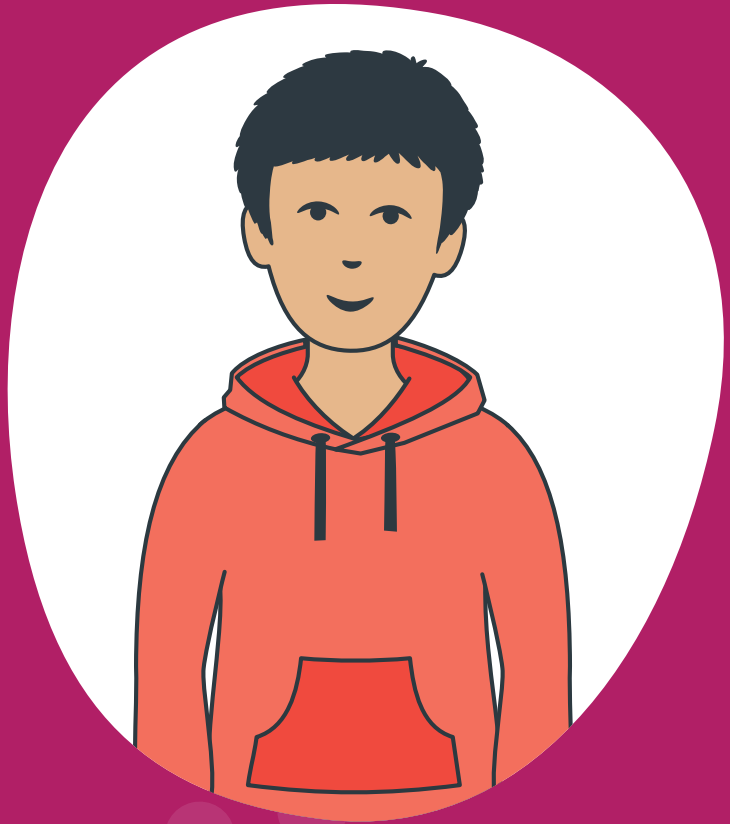
# Chen

**Chen is a 13-year-old boy with autism and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), living at home with his parents, his younger sister and his older brother. Chen was referred to SECCA after he was suspended from school for allegedly downloading videos of violent sexual scenes from a popular video game onto school computers. He vigorously denies doing it, but his parents are concerned, and understand that Chen is an easy scapegoat for the school as he has recently been displaying troubling aggressive behaviour and language, and was served a Violence Restraining Order (VRO).**

Along with 90% of young people, Chen plays video games. Like many people with autism, Chen has fantastic computer skills, and he grew up watching his father and older brother playing popular ultraviolent games like Grand Theft Auto. His interest in video games and desire to be a professional gamer led him to start playing too. These new games reward him for brutal violence, and encourage in-game antisocial behaviour like stealing cars and damaging property. To his father and brother, the difference between the 'game world' and the real world is obvious, but for Chen it isn't.

Chen's obsessive interest in these games has led him to online videos of game modifications that add the ability to rape characters as well as kill them, and he now considers this sexual violence a fun part of the game. He hears adult gamers using violent and misogynistic language to describe female characters, and has started using this language himself. At school, he has started responding to problems with threats of violence, imitating the language he hears in the game, and in the community of gamers he follows on video game streaming platforms. Recently, his sexually violent threats became so extreme that a VRO was taken out against him by one of his fellow students.

Chen is being ostracised by his peers and is considered a threat by his teachers. His behaviour is impacting the way



people treat his younger sister, and his family feel unwanted in the school community. Chen's VRO and suspension from school was the tipping point for his parents, who fear that if he continues on this path, their son will end up in prison for his aggressive behaviour.

### **Solution**

At SECCA, Chen and his family now work with a team who don't pass judgement about his school suspension or his VRO. SECCA's policy puts the client's interests first, and the team is providing Chen with expert counselling to help him learn about appropriate and inappropriate communication, and how to manage anger. SECCA is working with Chen's parents to help implement boundaries to manage his video game addiction.

SECCA works as an advocacy agency for young people who find themselves at risk of being charged for crimes that they may not understand have been committed. SECCA employs forensic sexologists who have an intimate understanding of the criminal code, and are perfectly placed to assist families in these overwhelming situations.

SECCA offers education to clients and their significant carers around online safety, the difference between online relationships and real relationships, and how to develop healthy relationships.

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\* For confidentiality, real names have not been used.

## Consultancy

**SECCA's consultancy and advisory service is widely regarded. In the absence of broad training in the area of sexuality-disability, SECCA's specialism provides a lifeline for many. Each year we support disability and mainstream professionals, teachers, support workers and families to respectfully manage situations and behaviours relating to an individual's sexuality.**

We see a year on year increase in demand for this service, which also serves as an interim support for those waitlisted for individual counselling. By providing immediate information, resources and therapeutic guidance, we empower concerned families, teachers and others who lack education or formal training in this area.

SECCA shares its specialist knowledge with industry professionals including disability service providers, mainstream psychologists, occupational and behavioural therapists, teachers and educational support staff. Our advocacy for increased education in sexuality-disability for everyone supporting people with disability is ongoing.

### **Industry engagement**

Through submissions to parliamentary and industry inquiries and Royal Commissions, government lobbying and participation in advisory groups and panels, SECCA continues to advocate for progress in education, equity and an NDIS which offers the same flexibility and confidentiality afforded to the non-disability population.

We are committed to advocating on behalf of our clients to ensure they receive high quality, flexible services by SECCA's specialist staff.

### **Research**

Over the past year SECCA has raised awareness of the importance of research, as a means of informing best practice sexuality and relationship services. By supporting research, SECCA can be at the forefront of innovation and contribute to the conversation around sexuality, relationships and disability. Our advocacy team has been in discussion with researchers at Curtin University such as SiREN and CERIPH to map areas for collaboration. SECCA will be seeking to develop research partnerships as we move forward into the new year.

## Case study:

### Consultancy and advisory services

**SECCA every week supports other health, education, disability agencies, and mainstream service providers to meet their clients' needs. We ensure comprehensive sexuality and sexual health guidance is given, directed by best practice, leading resources and learned experience.**

Many clients have complex diagnoses with complex trauma and current challenging sexualised behaviours. Rarely have they received prior support or information in managing this aspect of being.

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A young man with an intellectual disability received counselling at SECCA after displaying inappropriate behaviours within his workplace that led to a suspension of his employment. The Counsellor contacted his workplace and advocated for his return to work following a series of successful counselling and psychosexual educational sessions. This was received positively with plans for the individual to return to work under the proviso that he attend ongoing counselling at SECCA.

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SECCA met with a group of staff at Graylands Hospital to discuss ways to support the sexuality of their patients in the context of a restricted environment where relationships between the patients are discouraged.

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SECCA staff met with a community educator at Legal Aid to discuss collaborative education sessions on sexuality and the law.

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A therapist worked closely with a high school experiencing several complex student cases. She supported teaching staff through education, advice and resources, to better support their students in life skills around appropriate and safe sexuality and behaviours.

**Issue: COVID-19**

# COVID-19

**The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted and amplified the need for vulnerable people to have access to support and secure housing.**

People with intellectual disabilities often feel isolated and lonely, and may seek out company wherever they can find it. They may lack the understanding of the risks associated with this, particularly in the context of a pandemic. Homelessness or insecure housing compounds this issue, posing a risk to both the individuals' personal safety and the safety of the wider community.



**People with intellectual disability are more likely to contract or die from coronavirus.<sup>1</sup>**



COVID-19 patients 18–74 years of age, without an IDD, just under 3% died.

COVID-19 patients 18–74 years of age, with an IDD, 4.5% died.

**People with autism and an intellectual disability may struggle to understand the importance of social distancing and find the change in their routines extremely distressing.<sup>2</sup>**

**Coronavirus will disproportionately affect those who are currently homeless or at risk of homelessness, as their risk of exposure is much greater.<sup>3</sup>**

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1. [www.webmd.com/lung/news/20200608/intellectual-disability-raises-covid19-death-risk#1](http://www.webmd.com/lung/news/20200608/intellectual-disability-raises-covid19-death-risk#1)
  2. [abcnews.go.com/Health/social-distancing-people-disabilities-raising-challenges/story?id=69486075](http://abcnews.go.com/Health/social-distancing-people-disabilities-raising-challenges/story?id=69486075)
  3. [www.csi.edu.au/media/uploads/csi-covid\\_factsheet\\_homelessness\\_statement2.pdf](http://www.csi.edu.au/media/uploads/csi-covid_factsheet_homelessness_statement2.pdf)

## Case study: COVID-19

# Toby

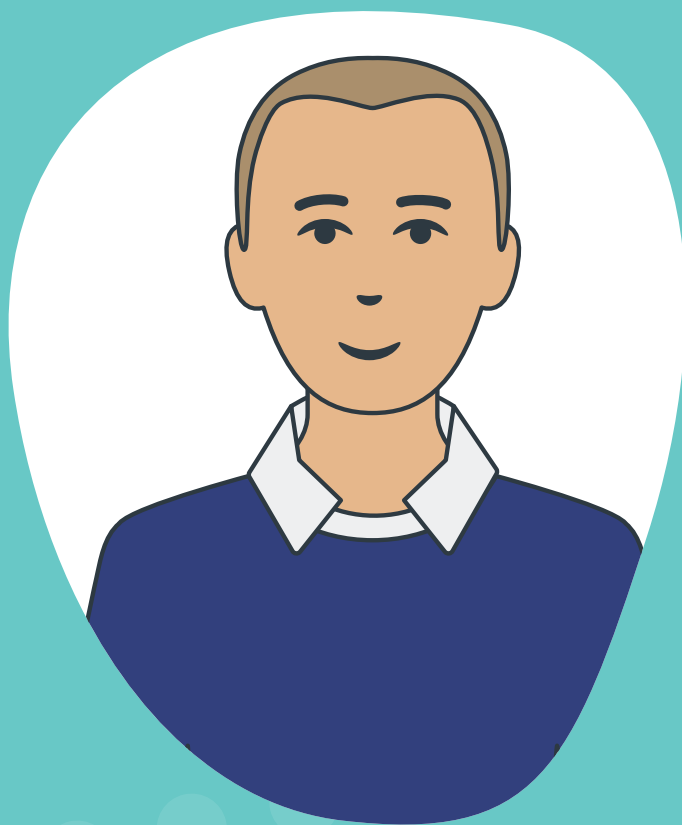
**Toby is a 18-year-old man with autism and an intellectual disability, suspected Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and epilepsy.**

His biological family has a history of domestic and sexual abuse and as a result Toby has been in and out of the child protection system since he was 5 years old.

Like many people with a traumatic history, Toby is known to the justice system - primarily for absconding and stealing a bike. At 16 he was sentenced to juvenile detention for charges relating to 'sexting' inappropriate images on social media. He was then transferred to an adult prison when he turned 18. Although Toby maintains his 'girlfriend' pressured him to take the offending images, he is now a registered sex offender.

After his release, Toby stayed with a distant relative, but this arrangement was short-lived as his relative did not want him there and made him feel unwelcome. He survived by 'couch surfing' until new regulations around COVID-19 and social distancing forced him to spend nights on the streets. Toby doesn't understand COVID-19 and the social distancing requirements that have resulted from the pandemic.

Toby's disability affects his impulse control and decision-making capability. He has no family support and as a result is vulnerable to victimisation, exploitation, negative peer pressure and being led to take part in antisocial conduct.



Toby is isolated and lonely, so he will seek out company and a place to stay wherever he can find it. He does not understand the risks associated with this, particularly in the context of a pandemic. Without stable accommodation and support, Toby is likely to stay with anyone, risking both his personal safety and the reporting conditions of his parole. His level of stress has escalated to the point he is presenting at SECCA with suicidal ideation.

People like Toby are at very high risk of abuse, infection or reoffending. The desire for connection and support makes them particularly vulnerable and the COVID-19 pandemic has compounded these issues.

### **Solution**

SECCA works with clients like Toby to understand social distancing, friendship and protective education. The SECCA App can provide invaluable support for this education as it is a visual tool that is easily understood by people with disabilities.

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\* For confidentiality, real names have not been used.



## Looking forward

### **Continuing NDIS transition**

As SECCA prepares for the Quality and Safeguarding Commission launch in WA from December 1st 2020, we will revise key systems and communication tools for a more fluid customer experience.

A transitional grant from the NDIA has enabled SECCA to revise our data management for greater compatibility with the NDIS system. We will launch a new website with increased connection to the NDIS, and an intuitive interface for users of all abilities. A new customer management and referral system will streamline client management and communication.

This improvement in our IT systems will create substantial administrative efficiencies to help manage the increased reporting requirements of the NDIS. It will enable easier and clearer pathways for clients to understand how the NDIS works in relation to accessing our services.

### **Ongoing Advocacy**

The urgency has never been greater for comprehensive relationships and sexuality education (RSE). Research is strong to support its effectiveness in enabling people to develop safe and healthy relationships, and the vulnerability in this area for people with a disability.

We need to see funding directed into RSE education for people with disability, and training for all those supporting and educating them, to enable appropriate protective behaviours.

SECCA remains committed to advocating for people with a disability to have access to basic human rights. We want to see upheld our country's commitment to the UN's Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability through provision of RSE.

### **Greater stakeholder connection**

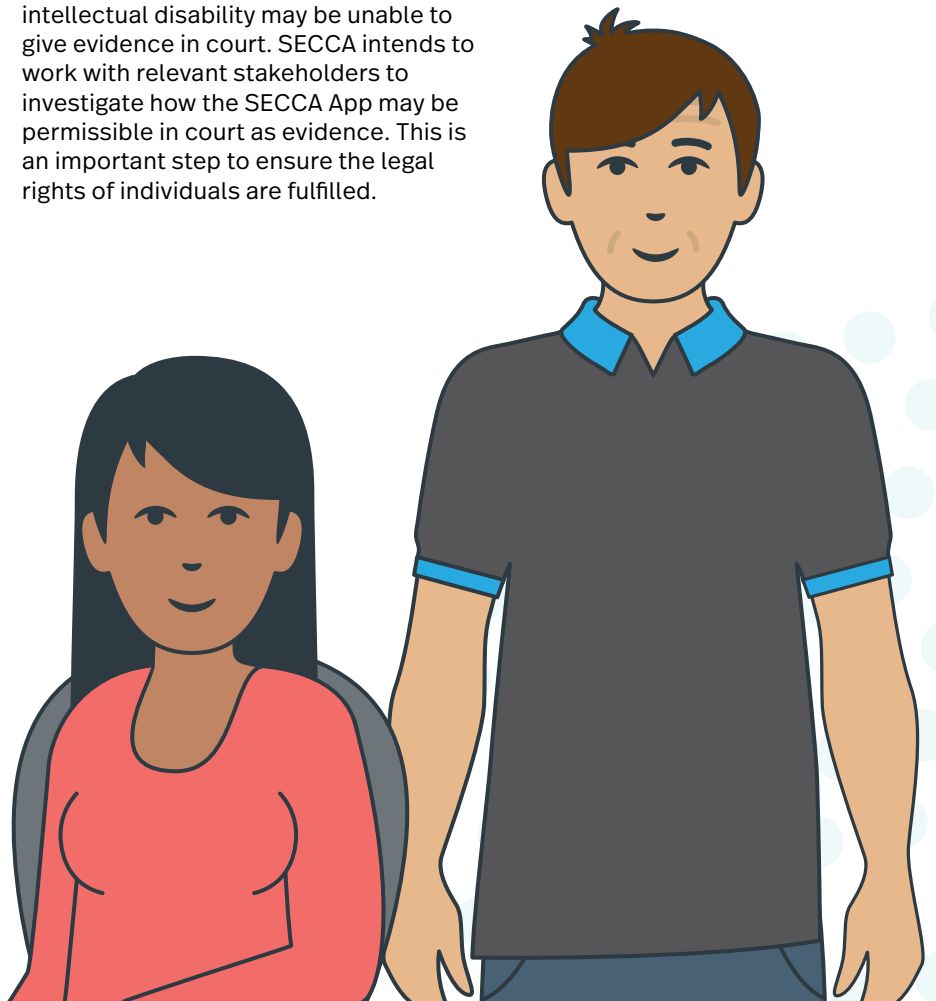
SECCA's forthcoming website will enable more sophisticated stakeholder management. Our regular newsletter will be reinstated, having been postponed during the NDIS transition. We look forward to once again sharing information on key issues and developments pertaining to SECCA, sexuality and the disability sector.

### **The SECCA App funding - support required**

A development and training and education budget is required to help the SECCA App reach its potential to transform relationship and sexuality education for learners with specific needs. The strategy is to develop further language versions to support ATSI people and those in CaLD communities, create a version tailored specifically to parents, and deliver training to users in both online and face-to-face environments.

### **Use of the SECCA App in court**

SECCA maintains its commitment to drive change in the criminal justice system that disadvantages people with a disability. The SECCA App can be developed to fill a communication need in the justice system where people who are non-verbal with an intellectual disability may be unable to give evidence in court. SECCA intends to work with relevant stakeholders to investigate how the SECCA App may be permissible in court as evidence. This is an important step to ensure the legal rights of individuals are fulfilled.



## Financials

Where our money came from

Financial Year 2019/2020



- WA Department of Health
- WA Department of Communities - Disability Services
- Project Grants
- NDIS
- Other

Full financials available from SECCA on (08) 9420 7226.

SECCA thanks the WA Department of Health and WA Department of Communities - Disability Services for their continued financial support and commitment to SECCA.





## Seeking Connection

SECCA is a non-profit organisation designed to support people with disabilities to learn about human relationships, sexuality and sexual health.

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