

Sexual abuse awareness



"And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea." —Matt. 18:5-6

Although sexual abuse can take many forms, a consistent thread connects each type of abuse: *Sexual abuse occurs whenever one person dominates and exploits another by means of sexual activity or suggestion.* Sexual feelings and behavior are used to degrade, humiliate, control, hurt, or otherwise misuse another person. Coercion or betrayal often play into sexual abuse.

The abuse can take a direct, painful, and obvious course, such as in stranger rape. Or abuse can be indirect, perhaps even subtle, such as when a victim is gently fondled by an offender who professes love.

Touch plays a part in many episodes of sexual abuse. But abuse can occur, (and cause sexual harm), even when no touching is involved. A person who has been forced to pose for pornographic pictures, or sexually harassed by telephone, has suffered sexual abuse, even through his or her body may never have been touched by the offender.

Expanding the definition of sexual abuse has many survivors identify their experiences more accurately for themselves and better convey the damage of their experience to others. To help you understand the meaning of sexual abuse, and to identify whether you have been sexually abused, consider these four questions. A *yes* response to any of them can distinguish an experience as sexual abuse.

1. Were you unable to give your full consent to the sexual activity?

If you were harassed, intimidated, manipulated, or forced into the sexual activity, you were not able to give full consent. If you were under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or medication, you were not able to give full consent. If you were asleep, unconscious, or otherwise not mentally alert, you were not able to give full consent. As a result of age, size, and power differences, children are not informed or mature enough to give full consent to *adult types* of sexual activity.

2. Did the sexual activity involve the betrayal of a trusted relationship?

If persons who were supposed to be taking care of you or who were in an authority role used their position to force or encourage you to engage in sexual activity, you were sexually exploited and thus sexually abused. This can occur in situations in which a parent, relative, teacher, religious leader, or therapist compounds the trusted caretaking relationship with sexual involvement. An employer who uses his status to gain sexual favors is abusing his power. **(It makes no difference if you initiated the sexual interaction. Care takers betray trust and responsibilities when they respond.)**

3. Was the sexual activity characterized by violence or control over your person?

Any sexual situation in which you were restrained or bound against your will, physically forced, or harmed constitutes sexual abuse. Humans need to

be in control of what is happening to them physically. When this is denied by someone else in a sexual situation, it constitutes abuse.

4. Did you feel abused?

Finally, for purposes of sexual healing, what matters most is whether *you* feel you were sexually abused. Your feelings are genuine. They can't be erased. You need to trust your own feelings about an experience. If it felt funny or exploitive to you, regardless of how others perceive it, it has had an impact on you. That is what counts.

Children Learn What They Live

*If children live with criticism,
They learn to condemn.
If children live with hostility,
They learn to fight.
If children live with ridicule,
They learn to be shy.
If children live with shame,
They learn to feel guilty.
If children live with tolerance,
They learn to be patient.
If children live with encouragement,
They learn confidence.
If children live with praise,
They learn to appreciate.
If children live with fairness,
They learn justice.
If children live with security,
They learn to have faith.
If children live with approval,
They learn to like themselves.
If children live with acceptance and
friendship,
They learn to find love in the world.*

—Dorothy Law Noble

Common types of sexual abuse

Persistence

We cannot go back and make a new start, but we can start now to make a new ending.

The clinical definition of sexual abuse continues to expand as our society recognizes a broader range of activities perpetrated by sexual offenders. A single episode or sexual abuse may fall into several categories.

Child Sexual Abuse: sexual abuse of children by adults or by older children or peers who dominate and control through sexual activity. Older boys who make girls undress and then fondle them, for example. It can be committed by strangers but most often is perpetrated by adults or older children in trusted caretaking roles.

Incest: the most common form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse of children by other family members, including mother or father, stepparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents.

Molestation: sexual abuse involving sexual stimulation to body and genital areas, including penetration. It can happen at any age, by a perpetrator of any age.

Stranger Rape: violence, anger, and power expressed sexually in an attack on a victim. It may involve penetration of body openings (oral, anal, and vaginal) but does not have to.

Date or Acquaintance Rape: sexual abuse, not necessarily violent, perpetrated by someone known to the victim, often a peer in a trusted social relationship.

Marital Rape: sexual abuse perpetrated by one spouse on the other, or by a sexual partner in any long-term committed relationship.

Sexual Assault: physical attack to victim's sexual body parts, often involving force or violence. This term can cover a wide range of activities and often describes the rape of boys and men.

Exhibitionism or Exposure: displaying the naked body or parts of the naked body in an effort to shock, intimidate, or sexually arouse a victim.

Voyeurism: invasion of a victim's privacy either secretly or openly with the intent of gaining sexual gratification.

Obscene Phone Calls: invasion of a victim's privacy with sexually suggestive messages over the telephone in an effort to shock, intimidate, or sexually arouse a victim.

Sadistic Sexual Abuse: sexual abuse in which the offender incites or tries to incite reactions of dread, horror, or pain in the victim as a means of increasing the offender's sexual arousal during the abuse. May involve use of physical restraint, quasi-religious rituals (form of ritual abuse or occult crime), multiple simultaneous perpetrators, use of animals, insertion of foreign objects, mutilation, or torture.

Sexual Exploitation: objectification and use of victims, by means of sexual activity or photographic imagery, to gain money or sexual gratification.

Sexual Harassment: use of gender, status, and power differences to intimidate or control a victim, or to require sexual involvement. May be expressed as flirting and sexual suggestiveness.

Gender Attack: exposure to actions that demean the sexual gender of a victim, often with sexual overtones, such as cross dressing a child or verbally denigrating a victim's gender.

Gay Bashing: verbal or physical attacks directed against a victim's perceived homosexual orientation.

Sexual Violence: acts of violence involving or harming sexual parts of the victim's body.

Note on definitions

Legal definitions of sexual abuse are much narrower and can't be relied on in determining if an experience was sexual abuse.

Unfortunately, in many parts of our country, no laws protect victims from certain types of sexual abuse, such as spousal rape, sexual harassment, gender attack, gay bashing, and abuse perpetrated in indirect and subtle forms.

The offender

Myth or reality

Myth: Sexual assaults occur as the result of a sudden uncontrollable urge.

Reality: Sexual assaults are rarely spur of the moment. They are usually thought out and in some cases, carefully planned by the offender.

Myth: Sexual assault is crime caused mostly by sexual issues or problems.

Reality: Sex is a part of sexual assault but the reasons have more to do with other issues in the offender's life. For example, offenders who sexually assault children may commit this crime partly because they feel powerful and in control, feel badly about themselves and their life, were abused and neglected as a child, or feel more comfortable with children. Offenders who sexually assault peer age victims or adults may also have some of these feelings, but their sexual assaults may have more to do with wanting to have physical power over others, their own fears, or not dealing with their age in an appropriate way.

Myth: Most teenagers who are accused of sexual offenses are simply curious and trying to learn about sex.

Reality: Teenagers commit sex crimes in similar ways as adults which has little to do with learning about sex.

Myth: Most victims are sexually assaulted by someone of a different race.

Reality : Almost all sexual assaults (90%) involve persons of the same race or culture.

Myth: Most sex offenders serve prison sentences following their first offense and usually stop after being caught.

Reality: Not all offenders serve prison sentences following their first offense. Some offenders receive probation, some receive prison sentences, and some have to live in the same type of supervised facility. What happens to an offender in court depends to some degree upon how serious his problem is. Also, an offender must be legally responsible for his offenses, no matter how serious the crime is. Most sex offenders have a history of sexually abusive behaviors before they were caught. Sexual assault is a crime that happens over and over again. Without specialized treatment, sexual assault will most likely happen again. The offender will cause more harm to victims and may eventually be rearrested.

Myth: Sexual offenders are usually "dirty old men", homosexuals, unattractive men who can't find a woman, and/or single.

Reality: Most adult sexual offenders are heterosexual men who appear to have "normal" relationships with adults, including sexual relationships which involve consent or agreement with another adult. Most teenage sex offenders are also attracted to girls their age and consider themselves to be heterosexual.

Myth: Sexual offenders begin to commit sex crimes or show signs of this behavior during their adulthood.

Reality: Most sexual offenders show some sign of the sexual aggression problem between the ages of 12 and 15 years old.

Myth: Sexual offenders are basically too aggressive to have been sexually victimized themselves as children or adults.

Darwins' Mistake

*Three monkeys sat in a coconut tree,
discussing things as they are said to
be.*

Said one to the others,

"Now listen you two.

*There's a certain rumor that must
not be true,*

*that man descended from our noble
race,*

that very idea is just a Disgrace!

No monkey ever deserted his wife,

Starved her babies or ruined her life.

*And you've never known a mother
monk'*

*to leave her babies with others to
bunk,*

*and pass them on from one to
another.*

*'till they scarcely know who is their
mother.*

*Another thing you'll never see,
a monkey building a fence around a
coconut tree,*

*allowing all coconuts go to waste,
forbidding all other monk's to taste.*

*Another thing a monkey won't do,
go out at night and get on a stew,*

*and use a club, or gun, or knife
to take some other monkey's life.*

*Yes, man descended, the ornery
cuss, but brother.*

he did not descend from us."

Reality: Reports show the between 30% to 70% of adult and adolescent sex offenders report having been sexually abused as children, adolescents, and sometimes even as adults.

Myth: Sexually aggressive males are usually seriously mentally ill, emotionally disturbed, or mentally restarted.

Reality: Most sex offender are average intelligence who are usually not mentally ill, where a person is not in touch with reality or is not capable of understanding his own actions at all. Mentally restarted people commit sex crimes, but not necessarily more or less often than non-retarded persons.

Myth: Women often fantasize about being raped and eventually want men to force them into sexual situations.

Reality: Women do not want to be hurt, abused, or assaulted nor do they necessarily fantasize about being raped although many women often have fears about being raped.

Myth: A sexual offender is easy to spot in a crowd of people.

Reality: Most sexual offenders look "normal" and can be of any race, social class, sex, or physical appearance.

Myth: A person who does nothing to resist such as scream or fight is not really being assaulted.

Reality: There are many ways an offender can get another person to do something they do not want to do. These include the use of force, threats, "head games", and intimidation for offenders who assault adults. These also include manipulation, bribery, and trickery for offenders who assault children.

Myth: Infants, young boys, and men are never sexually assaulted.

Reality: Victims range in age from newborn children to the elderly, or of all races and economic backgrounds, including both male and females. Males and females are probably victimized about the same.

Myth: Many victims are sexually assaulted because of the way they act or dress.

Reality: Research illustrates that offenders search for victims who seem like easy targets or who are probably not going to report them rather that because of the style of clothes or their behavior.

Myth: If a young person consents to having sex with an adult, then it cannot really be considered a sexual assault.

Reality: Children are not intellectually, socially, and emotionally developed enough to make decisions regarding sexual activity. A child victim may cooperate with the offender, but this does not mean they consent. They often cooperate due to fear, confusion, looking up to the offender, and other reasons. Offenders use their cooperation to wrongly convince themselves their assaults are not crimes.

Myth: Child molesters are not a danger to society since many time they do not "hurt" their victims.

Reality: The short and long-term effects of sexual abuse can be serious and devastating and can have traumatic effects on the cognitive, social, and emotional development of children. Just because an offender uses no physical force does not mean the child is not harmed by the manipulation, betrayal, and other psychological damage done by the offender.

A prayer

Lord, make me a channel of thy peace
That where there is hatred I may bring love,
That where there is wrong I may bring the spirit
of forgiveness,
That where there is discord I may bring
harmony,
That where there is error I may bring truth,
That where there is doubt I may bring faith,
That where there is despair I may bring hope,
That where there are shadows I may bring thy
light,
That where there is sadness I may bring joy.

Lord, grant that I may seek rather
To comfort—than to be comforted;
To understand—than to be understood;
To love—than to be loved;
For it is by giving that one receives;
It is by self-forgetting that one finds;
It is by forgiving that one is forgiven;
It is by dying that one awakens to eternal life.

—St. Francis of Assisi

Child sexual abuse oriented offenders tend to:

- ☐ be shy, overly "sensitive", unassertive, moralistic and inadequate
- ☐ feel awkward, insecure, and resentful
- ☐ have difficulties with relationships, both social and sometimes sexual
- ☐ often do things without thinking about the consequences
- ☐ show a strong need for approval and recognition from others
- ☐ may be emotionally and socially immature
- ☐ can be very "self-serving", doing things mostly for themselves
- ☐ feel it is acceptable to only get close to children
- ☐ often have poor social skills and become isolated from their peers
- ☐ can be extremely distrustful of others
- ☐ are usually unable to appropriately show their feelings
- ☐ often feel a strong sense of hopelessness
- ☐ view the control of their life as being outside themselves
- ☐ sometimes view themselves as the victim to avoid responsibility for their behavior
- ☐ have a low opinion of themselves
- ☐ have learned some of these characteristics through modeling adults in their life at an early age
- ☐ find younger children attractive because of their innocence and vulnerability
- ☐ can be sexually aroused by younger children
- ☐ find relationships with children emotionally and socially safer than relationships with peers
- ☐ view children's attention and affection as unconditional and therefore desirable
- ☐ talk themselves out of how serious the abuse by repeating offenses and rationalizations
- ☐ sometimes make their attraction and feelings stronger toward children through child pornography and even child oriented advertisements or television
- ☐ repeat their offenses often with respect to their primary victim of choice
- ☐ sometimes use alcohol to make it easier to commit offenses
- ☐ use denial, minimization, rationalization, and manipulation as ways to avoid detection, guilt feelings, and conflicts
- ☐ inaccurately view child sexual abuse as less destructive to the victim because it usually involves manipulation rather than overt violence
- ☐ demonstrate direct and indirect abuses of power both in offending and in other situations
- ☐ view the reluctance of the legal system to prosecute sexual abuse cases as a message that the abuse may not be all that serious
- ☐ sometimes encourage their family to treat children in a manner that suits the needs of the adults
- ☐ are always capable of re-offending under certain conditions of stress or having unmet emotional needs
- ☐ present a higher risk of re-offending if they have exclusively targeted male victims, have a history of prior sex offenses, and who are younger at the time of their first offense than most sex offenders

Essence of survival

Every morning in Africa, a Gazelle wakes up. It knows it must run faster than the fastest lion or it will be killed...Every morning a Lion wakes up. It knows it must outrun the slowest Gazelle or it will starve to death. it doesn't matter whether you are a Lion or a Gazelle... When the sun comes up, you'd better be running.

Anyway

*People are unreasonable, illogical,
and self-centered,*

Love them anyway

*If you do good, people will accuse
you of*

selfish, ulterior motives,

Do good anyway

If you are successful,

*you win false friends and true
enemies,*

Succeed anyway

*The good you do will be forgotten
tomorrow,*

Do good anyway

*Honesty and frankness make you
vulnerable,*

Be honest and frank anyway

*What you spent years building may
be*

destroyed overnight,

Build anyway

People really need help

but may attack you if you help them,

Help people anyway

Give the world the best you have

and you'll get kicked in the teeth,

**Give the world the best you've got
anyway.**

Statistics

- According to a recent FBI study, 30-46% of all children in the U.S. will be sexually assaulted before they are 18 years old.
- One-half of all reported rape victims are younger than 18 and half that number are younger than age 12.
- In 50% of the cases reported, children are molested in their homes or in the home of the offender. The second most frequent place is in the car or outdoor spaces.
- Two-thirds of sexual abuse crimes against children occur between noon and 8 PM, before dark sets in.
- The "shared secret" and the "special friend" approach are most commonly employed in child sexual abuse offenses.
- In the majority of cases the sex offender is not a stranger but rather well known to the victim and his/her family.
- Some estimates of sexual molestation of children in the U.S. range as high as 500,000 to 5 million incidents per year according to the National Organization for Victim Assistance.
- Most reported offenders are men (97% heterosexual males) although an unknown percentage can be attributed to female perpetrators.
- Offenders are not old: of those offenders who were convicted, most were arrested for the first time prior to age 30 and many are adolescents.
- A child has a statistically greater chance of being approached by a sex offender than he has of being hit by a car.
- One-third of all sexual assaults appear to involve the use of alcohol by the offender.
- The average age of a child sexual abuser at the time of their first offense is 15 years of age.
- The average age of a peer age sexual assault oriented offender at the time of their first offense is 18 years old.
- The average age of involvement in treatment for a child sexual abuser is 33 years old.
- The average age of involvement in treatment for a peer age sexual assault oriented offender is 40 years old.
- The average age of first conviction of a sex offender ranges in their 20's.
- Peer age sexual assault oriented offenders are generally arrested more than child oriented sexual abusers.
- Peer age sexual assault oriented offenders tend to have more prior convictions.

The victim

Myth or reality?

Myth: Women often fantasize about rape and eventually want men to force them into sexual situations.

Reality: No one wants nor deserves to be the victim of a violent, traumatic, or humiliating assault.

Myth: A person who does nothing to resist is not really being raped.

Reality: Fear of death, threat of violence, aggression, coercion, bribery, and intimidation are all means of making victims go along even though they do not all include direct violence.

Myth: Infants, young boys and men are never sexually assaulted.

Reality: Victims of sexual abuse range from newborn to the elderly, including both males and females of all ages, all levels of society, and life styles. Victims can be from any background, race, or life-style. People from religious and moral backgrounds as well as prostitutes and sex offenders can be assaulted.

Myth: Most sexual assaults involve women and young females who wear no bras, short skirts, tight pants, and a lot of makeup.

Reality: How an offender picks a victim has nothing to do with the way the victim dresses, acts, or anything about their personality. The reason a person becomes a victim is because the offender feels they are an easy target in some way. Sexual assault is the responsibility of the offender and not the victim.

Myth: Sexual assault does not happen very often.

Reality: Studies show that about one out of every four girls and one out of every eight boys will be sexually assaulted prior to reaching age 18. In addition, most assaults (ranging from 50-80%) do not get reported to the police or other authorities.

Myth: Children make up stories or just lie to get back at someone or to get attention.

Reality: Children rarely lie about sexual assault. In fact, depending on the child's age, they usually report a smaller part of the abuse in the beginning. Once they feel safer and can cope with the confusion and embarrassment they are more able to tell the whole story.

Myth: The emotional and psychological effects on the victim are small when compared to the physical threats and pain suffered.

Reality: Sexual abuse does just as much damage to the victim's social and emotional development as it does to their personal safety.

Myth: If a person was really abused then he/she would report it right away.

Reality: Many victims of sexual abuse are too frightened or embarrassed to tell someone. In many instances of abuse of young children, they are confused about what is happening to them. They may have been tricked or manipulated by the offender into thinking it is their fault or that they will get in trouble if they tell. Some abuse of children continues for so long that the victim simply feels too helpless to tell anyone. Female victims are reported in the statistics more often. This is probably because many males do not want to report being sexually abused. Male children fear being wrongly labelled

Words that help kids

*I love you.
That's great!
Good Job.
What did you like best about today?
You're very special.
I like your smile.
Let's talk about you.
I want to help you...
We're so proud of you.
I can see why you're angry.
Let's talk about it.
Believe in yourself as I believe in you.
Thanks for your help.
You're such a good worker.
You do that so well!
Don't give up.
You're so nice to be around today.
Just do the best you can.
You're going to be just fine.
How do you think we can fix this?
Give it your best...
You are what matters.
We can do it together.
You made me happy; I hope you
made YOU happy.*

Common emotional reactions

- fear
- shame
- powerlessness
- anxiety
- anger
- inappropriate sexual feelings
- depression
- disbelief
- self-blame
- denial
- embarrassment
- mixed feelings
- confusion

Note: Not all victims may experience all of these reactions.

Common behavior reactions

- sleep problems/nightmares
- appetite problems
- fears
- school problems
- running away
- isolation
- suicide thinking/attempts
- problems with job responsibility
- temper problems
- acting-out/breaking the law
- problems making friends
- aggressive behavior
- being too adult-like (for children)
- drug and/or alcohol abuse
- sexual aggression
- inappropriate sexual behavior
- breaking home rules
- bed wetting

Note: Not all victims may experience all of these reactions.

homosexual or gay, and males are often brought up to “face things”, even if it winds up and being the wrong decision for them. Our society feels more comfortable seeing females as victims than males.

Myth: Children are better off if they do not talk about being sexually abused because it will only make them more upset and confused.

Reality: Talking about sexual abuse will help the child understand what has happened, learn that the offender is responsible, giving them back control of their life, help them cope with their fears, and give them enough information to avoid being sexually abused again.

Myth: Victims always hate the person who sexually abuses them.

Reality: How a victim feels about the offender depends on how well they knew the offender before the assault(s) began. For example, children who are abused usually know their assailant. They almost always have mixed feelings between disliking the sexual abuse but having some positive feelings about the offender. Rape victims who know their assailant are confused between the likable things about the offender and the fear, anger, and impact caused by the assault.

Myth: Mothers and fathers always know if the other parent is being sexually abusive towards someone in the family.

Reality: The offender who sexually abuses others in the family uses a lot of secrecy to stop others from knowing about the abuse. Some times the other adult members of the family, like the spouse of the offender, have had their own troubles and have learned how to get their needs met outside the family. They are in many cases distant and don't know what their children are going through in their daily lives. For these reasons, it is not unusual for the spouse of an offender to not know the abuse is going on. They simply don't see some of the emotional and behavioral signs that the children are showing. On the other hand, some spouses do know about the abuse. Those individuals should be reported to the authorities for not protecting the children. They too need to get specialized treatment.

Victim high risk factors

- Preadolescent appear more at risk than other age groups.
- Children with few friends are more likely to be abused. Their isolation usually allows child-oriented sex offenders to use a relationship and attention to get the child to trust them.
- Children who have parents who are physically or emotionally uninvolved in their lives run a higher risk of being abused.
- Children are at higher risk who have seen violence between family members, or live in families where there are many problems that do not seem to be resolved. These are the children who may look for their own emotional needs to be met outside their family. They are at higher risk of being abused because this is the situation a child-oriented offender looks for in finding an isolated child who will not report, or not report right away. Also, the amount of time the family has to spend on managing problems may stop them from knowing about the many needs and problems their children have.

The above statements do not guarantee that a person in those situations will be abused. They are only observations about victims who have reported sexual abuse.

Short-term effects

Short-term effects, initial effects, are the behaviors, emotions, feelings, opinions, or other experiences of the victim which happen immediately and/or soon after the assault(s). Short term effects by definition occur within the first two years following the abuse. (See side-bars for details.) Longer-lasting abusive experiences, more frequent abuse, abuse by fathers and stepfathers versus others, abuse males versus females, abuse adults versus teenagers, families not believing or supporting the victim, where the victim was placed outside the home, and the use of physical force appear to have a more serious impact on the victim.

Effects of sexual abuse on latency-age children

Sexual abuse can influence the acquisition of latency skills in a number of significant ways. In incest families, the sexual over stimulation can produce a chronic pattern of inappropriate sexualized behaviors, leading to prostitution or perpetration by the victims. Second, the nonoffending parent often has difficulty setting limits or rules (especially after disclosure of the abuse), which can result in confusion for the child whose sense of boundaries has been disrupted, eliciting severe testing of limits.

In cases of extra familial as well as intrafamilial molestation, the child show maintains silence is often preoccupied with intrusive thoughts and fears, leaving little energy for concentration in school. The victim may also experience sleep disturbances, and the resulting fatigue interferes with learning. Inability to work productively in school can lead to feelings of helplessness and inadequacy rather than competence and achievement. In addition, depression and psychosomatic symptoms, along with self destructive and suicidal gestures, are common sequelae for molested children. Later on, substance abuse frequently occurs in adolescents and adults attempting to dull their emotional pain.

There are also several ways in which the experience of sexual abuse interferes with the development of mutually satisfying relationships with peers. Because the children have been betrayed and exploited by trusted adults, they create a barrier that interferes with their ability to establish trusting relationships. In addition, these children are often discouraged from forming relationships outside the family unit, and there is little opportunity to practice appropriate social skills. Furthermore, these children invariably experience severe guilt and shame, which reinforces their isolation and impedes their capacity for friendships. These victims are often pseudomature, and as they assume more adult role responsibilities, the gap widens even further between their peers and themselves.

Many victims of sexual abuse have not experienced adequate boundaries and therefore do not respect the rights of others. The need to defend against the intense feelings of vulnerability may translate into aggressive or sexual exploitation for others as a defense against helplessness and in an effort to achieve a sense of control. For male victims, this attempt at mastery may be even more pervasive when the debilitating effects of stigmatization and overwhelming feelings of shame lead to profound need to reassert

Common physical signs of sexual abuse

- cuts
- rashes
- abrasions
- infections
- bruises
- general medical complications
- poor personal hygiene

Note: These physical signs are specifically for children who have been sexually assaulted. Adults who are sexually assaulted may have these also depending upon how physically violent the offender was. Children who are assaulted do not in most cases have any physical signs. This does not mean they were not sexually assaulted, but instead means that most offenders who molest children use tricks or talk them into the abuse.

Common psychological impact/effects are:

- confusion about sexuality
- interruption in normal sexual, social, and emotional development
- fear of having normal sex
- fear of being homosexual (for male victims)
- distrust of others
- fear of getting emotionally close to others
- blaming one's self
- relying too much on others, losing one's independence
- shame
- feeling like "damaged goods"
- poor self-worth
- anger (usually hidden from others)
- feeling different from others
- strong need to control
- helplessness

Not 4 Sale

*The devil came to my house, knocked on my door
I said, oh my, I know that I have heard that voice before
He said "You've quite a talent, the makings of a star"
"And with a little help from me, you really can go far"
"I'll tell you what I've told the rest, the rules remain the same"
"Don't glorify, support or ever mention Jesus' name"
"Now you can do something that's positive, but just don't misbehave"
"Like use your notoriety and get somebody saved"
"And don't you be so vocal about the Truth you know"
"The Bible's bad for business, leave your faith at home"
"I'll give you wealth and fame, far as the eye can see"
"Live the way you want, but your career belongs to me"
Then he smiled a crooked smile and winked an evil eye
And said "Well, whatcha think my man?" and this was my reply
I have been bought with a price when Jesus hung on a tree
My life is not my own, I'll never follow your lead
You build up all the pleasure of sin in people's eyes
But never tell the consequences of the compromise
You used to have my number, but this time you will fail
So get thee behind me Satan,
I'm not for SALE!*

masculinity. Diminished self-esteem may lead to either distancing of defensive provocative behavior to alienate others further.

Eventually, the normal physiological changes that occur during the late latency and early adolescence produce increased doubt and confusion in these children, who worry that they may have been damaged by the molestation. Girls may believe that menstruation is really a direct result of having been torn or cut during penetration, and they are often preoccupied with worries about whether they are still considered to be "virgins." Severe sexual anxiety and guilt can interfere with later sexual development.

Boys and their parents, on the other hand, are often consumed with anxiety that the homosexual nature of their sexual experience has somehow resulted from their inherent weakness. There is often much confusion about sexual identity, with strong fears that the boys are now or will become homosexual. In addition, parents may believe that their sons will become perpetrators and may communicate that anxiety to their sons. Therefore, the entire process of puberty is often anticipated with significant uncertainty and dread.

Finally, the duration, extent, and frequency of the molestation, the nature of the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim, and the use of force and the treats to prevent disclosure are all relevant factors that mediate the impact of the abuse on these children (Browne & Frinkelhor, 1986). For further discussion of the effects of sexual molestation: Sgroi (1982), Gelinas (1983), and Rogers and Terry (1984). Additional information on the special issues of latency-age children can be found in Bornstein (1951), Harter (1977, 1983), Lewis (1971), Powell (1979), Sarnoff (1976, 1987), and Solnit, Call, and Feinstein (1979).

Jesus Sets Boundaries to Protect Children

by Earl R. Henslin, Psy. D., in *The Way Out Of The Wilderness*

No matter how old we are or how old we become, we are always precious children in God's eyes. God loves us dearly and cares for us deeply. He made that love real to us through the life of His Son, Jesus, who came to earth to live, die, and live again so that we might be healed and truly feel His presence in our lives. I think it is very important for us to realize the depth of God's love for children—the depth of His love for the wounded inner child that lives in each of us.

While Jesus was alive on earth, He clearly communicated God's unconditional love for children.

"And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea." (Matt. 18:5-6)

"People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.'" (Mark 10:13-14)

Jesus had strong words for those who did not value or care for children. He became angry when the disciples sent the children away, as if children

were less important than adults. He expressed intense anger at anyone who would cause a child to sin or hinder a child's pursuit of God's kingdom. Jesus didn't stop with strong words. He also set boundaries to ensure that the children were protected and that responsibilities were clearly defined and appropriately maintained. He made it clear that it is absolutely wrong to do anything that would hinder or distort a child's image of God! the message was clear; the line was drawn.

Based on these statements, how do you think Jesus would respond to someone who spiritually, emotionally, physically, or sexually abused a child? Don't you think Jesus will understand our hurt if we have been abused? I believe He does. I believe He understands the pain and anger of an injured child, both when that injury occurs and when the adult works through those feelings in recovery.

Resources

The following list contains books, articles, and tapes that may be of help to you. These resources present information on sexual abuse, sexuality, and other relevant topics. Because sexual healing is a relatively new topic, few references address it directly or in much detail. You will need to pick and choose relevant material from what you read. Inclusion on this list does not indicate a recommendation or endorsement.

Sexual Abuse Recovery

- Bass, Ellen, and Davis, Laura. *The Courage to Heal: A Guide for Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse*. New York: Harper & Row, 1988. Section on intimacy and sexuality.
- Bear, Euan, and Dimock, Peter. *Adults Molested as Children: A Survivor's Manual for Women and Men*. Orwell, VT.: Safer Society Press, 1988. An excellent seventy-page booklet, especially helpful for survivors and partners just starting out in recovery. Safer Society Press, Shoreham Depot Road, RR1, Box 24-b, Orwell, VT 05760.
- Butler, Sandra. *Conspiracy of Silence: The trauma of incest*. San Francisco: Volcano Press, 1985.
- Caruso, Beverly. *The Impact of Incest*. City Center, Minn.: Hazelden Foundation, 1987. General information about incest and a short section on sexuality concerns.
- Davis, Laura. *Allies in Healing: When the Person You Love Was Sexually Abused as a Child*. New York: Harper Collins, 1991.
- Engel, Beverly. *The Right to Innocence: Healing the Trauma of Childhood Sexual Abuse*. Los Angeles: Tarcher Publishers, 1989.
- Estrada, Hank. *Recovery for Male Victims of Child Abuse: An Interview with Hank Estrada, Incest Survivor*. Santa Fe: Red Rabbit Press, 1990.
- Evert, Dathy, and Bijkerk, Inie. *When You're Ready: A Woman's Healing from Childhood Physical and Sexual Abuse by Her Mother*. Walnut Creek, Cal.: Launch Press, 1988.
- Forward, Susan, and Buck Craig. *Betrayal of Innocence: Incest and Its Devastation*. New York: Penguin, 1988.
- Hagans, Kathryn, and Case Joyce. *When Your Child Has Been Molested: A Parent's Guide to Healing and Recovery*. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1988.
- Hunter, Mic. *Abused Boys: The Neglected Victims of Sexual Abuse*. Lexington Mass.: Lexington Books, 1990.
- Ledray, Linda. *Recovering from Rape*. New York: Henry Holt, 1986.

- Lew, Mike. *Victims No Longer: Men Recovering from Incest and Other Sexual Child Abuse*. New York: HarperCollins, 1990.
- Maltz, Wendy, and Holman, Beverly. *Incest and Sexuality: A Guide to Understanding and Healing*. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1987.
- Parrot, Andrea. *Coping with Date Rape and Acquaintance Rape*. New York: Rosen Publishing Group, 1988.
- Poston, Carol, and Lison, Karen. *Reclaiming Our Lives: Hope for Adult Survivors of Incest*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1989.
- Spear, Joan. *How Can I Help Her? A Handbook for Partners of Women Sexually Abused as Children*. City Center, Minn.: Hazelden Foundation, 1991.
- Thomas, T. *Men Surviving Incest: A Male Survivor Shares on the Process of Recovery*. Walnut creek, Cal.: launch Press, 1989.
- Warsaw, Robin. *I Never Called it Rape: The Ms. Report on Recognizing, Fighting and Surviving Date and Acquaintance Rape*. New York: Harper & Row, 1988.
- White, Louise. *The Obsidian Mirror: An Adult Healing from Incest*. Seattle: Seal Press, 1988.

Sexual Compulsion and Addiction

- Carnes, Patrick. *Out of the Shadows: Understanding Sexual Addiction*. Minneapolis: CompCare Publications, 1985.
- Carnes, Patrick. *Contrary to Love: Helping the Sexual Addict*. Minneapolis: CompCare Publications, 1988.
- Carnes, Patrick. *A Gentle Path through the Twelve Steps: a Guidebook for All People in the Process of Recovery*. Minneapolis: CompCare Publications, 1989.
- Carnes, Patrick. *Don't Call It Love: Recovering From Sexual Addiction*. New York: Bantam, 1991.
- Earle, Ralph, and Crow, Gregory. *Lonely All the Time: Recognizing, Understanding, and Overcoming Sexual Addiction, for Addicts and Co-dependents*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989.
- Kasl, Charlotte. *Women, Sex, and Addiction: A Search for Love and Power*. New York: Harper & Row, 1990.
- Mura, David. *A Male Grief: Notes on Pornography and Addiction*. Minneapolis: Mikweed Editions, 1987.
- Schneider, Jennifer. *Back from Betrayal: Surviving His Affairs*. New York: Harper & Row, 1988.

Organizations and Programs

Many of the organizations listed here provide referral services for obtaining professional therapy. In

considering a therapist, support group, or residential treatment program, you may want to consult physicians, mental health referral agencies, and sexual assault centers for more information about these services in your area. Interview therapists and learn details about program philosophy and operations before making your choice. Once again use your own judgment when contacting any of these organizations and programs. Many organizations suggest that with written inquiries you enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope. Inclusion on this list does not indicate a recommendation or endorsement.

- Adults Molested as Children United (AMACU)**, P.O. Box 952, San Jose, CA 95108, (408) 280-5055. Provides information and adult survivor groups.
- Alternative to Fear**, 1605, 17th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98122. Acquaintance rape education for adults and teens: self-defense information.
- American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors and Therapists (AASECT)**, 435 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 1717, Chicago, IL 60611-4067, (312) 644-0828. A national certifying organization that, upon your request, provides you with a list of counselors, psychologists, clinical social workers, and physicians who are certified sex therapists in your region.
- Believe the Children**, P.O. Box 630, Hollywood, CA 90028. Provides training consultation, and resources for child victims and adult survivors. For referrals and information call their National Child Abuse Hotline (800) 422-4453.
- Chimera**, 59 E. Van Buren Avenue, #714, Chicago, IL 60605, (312) 939-5341. Self-defense programs taught by women and for women; available in an number of states.
- Cult Awareness Network (CAN)**, 2421 W. Pratt Boulevard, Suite 1173, Chicago, IL 60645, (312) 267-7777.
- Healing Hearts**, c/o Bay Area Women Against Rape (BAWAR), 1515 Webster Street, Oakland, CA 94612, (415) 465-3890. A national organization for ritually abused survivors and their therapists.
- Incest Resource, Inc.**, 46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge, MA 02139, (617) 345-8807. Publishes low-cost materials on incest related topics, including the newsletter "For Crying Out Loud," and offers a referral service.
- Incest Survivor Information Exchange**, Box 3399, New Haven CT 06515. Produces a Newsletter for adults survivors.
- Incest Survivors Resource Network, International, Inc.** P.O. Box 911, Hicksville, NY 11802, (516) 9353031. Provides educational resources through participation in national and international conferences and committees.

- King County Rape Relief**, 1025 S. 3rd St., Suite C, Renton, WA 98055, (206) 226-7273, (206) 226-5062 (office). Provides publications, book catalog, programs and counseling for sexual assault prevention and treatment.
- Looking Up**, P.O. Box K, Augusta, Me 04332, (207) 626-3402.
- MALE (Men Assisting, Leading, and Educating)**, P.O. Box 380181, Denver, CO 80238-1181.
- Men Stopping Rape, Inc.**, P.O. Box 316, 306 N. Brooks Street, Madison, WI 53715-1090, (608)257-4444, Joseph Weinberg, Director.
- National AIDS Hotline** (800) 342-AIDS, (800)342-2437.
- National Association of Adult Children of Dysfunctional Families (NAACDF)**, 842 Forest Circle, Fond du Lac, WI 54935. (414) 921-6991.
- National Domestic Violence Hotline**, (800) 333-SAFE.
- National Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NCASA)**, 123 S. Seventh Avenue, Suite 500, Springfield, IL 62701, (217) 753-4117.
- National Council on Sex Addiction**, (303) 494-5550.
- Parents Anonymous**, (800) 421-0353.
- Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA)**, (612) 339-0217.
- Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous (SLAA)**, Augustin Fellowship, P.O. Box 119, New Town Branch, Boston, MA 02258.
- Survivors Healing Center**, (408) 459-8308.
- Survivors of Incest Anonymous (SIA)**, (301) 282-3400.
- VD National Hotline**, (800) 227-8922, (800) 982-5883.

Conclusion

If your child is the victim of a serious crime, seek outside help immediately.

For information or referrals, call the *National Organization for Victim Assistance (800-TRY-NOVA)* or the *National Victim Center (800-FYI-CALL)*. A variety of individual and community crime-prevention strategies is offered by the *National Crime Prevention Council, Dept. RD, 1700 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006*. The National Child Safety Council also produces safety information written specifically for children that is distributed through local law-enforcement agencies.

Even if your child is the victim of a seemingly insignificant crime, take him or her seriously. Listen carefully. Above all, don't blame your youngster for what happened. No one deserves to be victimized—especially a child.



Glen Milam, Director
22150 Ponds ville Road
Smithsburg MD 21783
301-824-6400
glenmilam@erols.com