

keeping children safe from sexual abuse



Child sexual
abuse is
a crime

don't forget
"Every child is special"

THE FACTS

- ♣ *Many children experience some form of sexual abuse.*
- ♣ *In the majority of cases, the offender is someone known to the child.*
- ♣ *Child sexual abuse occurs in all kinds of families.*
- ♣ *Boys and girls of all ages may be sexually abused.*

Why is prevention important?

Parents can not always be available to protect their children 24 hours a day. Also, children are often misinformed about when and where sexual abuse might occur and who might abuse them. It is important that children have accurate information and are taught skills to keep themselves safe.

What are personal safety programs?

Children are taught rules about traffic, fire, water and safety, from an early age. Personal safety programs are designed to help children learn the rules for keeping themselves safe.

The most widely used program in kindergartens and schools is the Protective Behaviours Program. Ask about this

program at your child's school or kindergarten.

What do children need to know?

To help children protect themselves from sexual abuse, they need to know and understand the principles of personal safety. Most people find it difficult to talk to children – especially young children about how to protect themselves from child sexual abuse. Some ideas:

- *include the topic in a discussion about general safety – water, roads and fire.*
- *when talking to children about personal safety, use the correct names of the parts of the body. This teaches children to be comfortable with their body.*

7 basic personal safety principles

1. ***Teach children about touch.*** Most sexual abuse involves inappropriate touching or fondling of the child by the adult. Children need to know how to identify when and how people can touch them, and when and how they can touch others.
2. ***Teach children to trust their feelings.*** Children have a keen natural sense when something is amiss. They must learn to

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trust all their feelings, whether good, bad or confusing.

3. **Teach children when to say no to adults.** Children are taught to be polite and obey adults. However, they must also have permission to say no to an adult if they need to protect themselves from an unpleasant situation.
4. **Teach children that they own their bodies.** Children quickly learn the meaning of 'mine' as it applies to toys, bikes, etc. The right to make the same claim about their bodies and to decide when they want to be touched and by whom, should be established early.
5. **Teach children to leave an uncomfortable situation.** Children need to feel safe and they should be taught to remove themselves as quickly as possible from any person who makes them feel uncomfortable or threatened.
6. **Teach children about inappropriate secrets.** Much sexual abuse depends on the child being persuaded, threatened or coerced into not telling about the abuse. Children need to learn that secrets which frighten or hurt them should not be kept.
7. **Teach children about support persons.** Children should be helped to identify a number of people to whom they can turn to if they are touched in inappropriate ways. They should be taught to expect

that adults will act to protect them and to keep on telling until they find someone who does.

WHAT IF MY CHILD HAS BEEN ABUSED?

- believe your child and respond calmly
- assure the child it is not his or her fault
- say, "I'm glad you told me"
- comfort and reassure the child
- notify the appropriate authorities so that your child can receive help as needed

WHAT IS CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE?

Definition of Child Abuse

NAPCAN defines Child Abuse as anything which individuals, institutions or processes do, or fail to do, which directly or indirectly harms children or damages their prospects of a safe and healthy development into adulthood.

Child sexual abuse is a crime. It happens when an adult or someone bigger, or older than a child, involves a child in sexual activity by using his or her power over a child, or taking advantage of a child's trust.

Often tricks, bribes or threats and sometimes physical force are used to make a child participate in the activity.

Child sexual abuse includes a wide range of activity including exhibitionism, fondling, oral sex and intercourse.

KIDS HELP LINE 1800-55-1800

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION SERVICE
1800-68-8009