

What is Child Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is an abuse of power. It involves sexual activity forced on a child by either an adult or an older, more powerful child. Because the victims are powerless to stop the abuse and are confused about what is happening they may suffer deep emotional damage even if there is no physical damage.

Did You Know

- Evidence shows that 70% of sexual abuse victims are girls and 30% are boys; many experts believe that the number of male victims is actually higher as boys are less likely to tell than girls.
- Any child can be abused. Young children and children with disabilities are more vulnerable.
- Studies show that in over 90% of cases a child is abused by a family member or someone they know. Very few children are abused by strangers.
- Abuse occurs in all communities. Abuse is just as common in rural communities as it is in cities.



- Abusers may develop a relationship with your child to gain access, They use many tactics to ensure a child's silence such as threats, bribery and physical force. They may tell the child that participating in sexual activities is a way to repay favours.
- The majority of abusers are males, some abusers have themselves been victimized as children.
- Studies have found that some abusers victimized more than 70 children before anyone listened and/or recognized the signs and symptoms of abuse.
- Child Sexual Abuse is very frequently unreported.

Where you can go for help

Rural Abuse Helpline and Outreach
1-877-33-TALK NOW
1-877-338-2556

Huron Perth Children's Aid Society
Huron County
519-524-7356 or 1-800-265-5198
Perth County
519-271-5290 or 1-800-668-5094

Huron Perth Centre for Children and Youth
Huron
519-482-3931
Perth
519-273-3373

Huron County Health Unit
519-482-3416 or 1-877-837-6143

Perth District Health Unit
519-271-7600 or 1-877-271-7348

Rural Response for Healthy Children
519-482-8777 or 1-800-479-0716

Victim Services of Huron County
519-524-4108

Victim Services of Perth County
519-271-9998 or 1-866-387-7773

Optimism Place
519-271-5550 or 1-800-265-8598

Women's Shelter, Second Stage Housing & Counselling Services of Huron
519-524-6245 or 1-800-265-5506

Personal Safety For Children



Let's Talk

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Huron-Perth
Children's Aid Society

What are the signs and symptoms of Abuse

- Physical symptoms such as difficulty in walking or sitting, pain in urination frequent psychosomatic illnesses
- Excessive bathing
- Excessive masturbation
- More sexual knowledge than is appropriate for the child's age
- Changes in mood and behavior
- Sleep problems or nightmares
- Feelings of low self worth, talk of being damaged
- Self mutilation or cutting
- Running away
- Exceptional secrecy



What are the long term consequences of sexual abuse?

- Post traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety disorders such as panic attacks, social phobias
- Victims often lose interest in school and other activities
- Difficulties in trusting others, relationship problems, fears of intimacy
- Unhealthy behaviors such as substance abuse and risky sexual behavior
- Chronic health problems including obesity
- Struggles with sexual identity issues
- Running away from home and in some cases turning to prostitution
- Suicide

Reporting Child Sexual Abuse

A person who suspects that a child is being sexually abused or is at risk of such abuse is required by law to report such concerns immediately to the Children's Aid Society.

All reports of child sexual abuse are assessed by the Children's Aid Society. In cases where an investigation is required the society works together with the police to ensure that the child is safe and that the family is supported.

In all cases, the person reporting is protected from any kind of legal action, provided the report is not falsely made.



How can you Help If a child discloses abuse

This is a very emotionally difficult time for the child. The following messages are very important for the child to hear:

- "It is good that you told me"
- "I believe you"
- "It is not your fault"
- "I will do my best to help you"

As a member of your community you can help prevent child abuse by:

- Supporting public education and child abuse prevention programs in schools and the community
- Teaching children how to recognize, say "no" to abusive behaviour and tell a trusted adult
- Reporting suspicions of abuse to local authorities