



*"Listening to young voices...
Working to keep families safe"*

Hamilton House Child & Family Safety Center

UNDERSTANDING CHILD ABUSE

MYTHS AND FACTS:

Myth: Children are usually molested by strangers.

Fact: 92%-95% of children are molested by someone they know.

Myth: Only girls are the victims of sexual abuse or incest.

Fact: One in 4 girls and 1 in 7 boys will be sexually molested in their lifetime.

Myth: All abusers are male.

Fact: The majority of cases involve males; the number of reported female abusers is increasing.

Myth: Children fantasize about sex with adults.

Fact: Children fantasize about those things that are in their experiences.

Myth: Children never lie.

Fact: Children lie to stay out of trouble, not to get into trouble. More Commonly they will lie to deny abuse.

Myth: Children usually tell. "My child would tell me".

Only 1 in ten children disclose abuse; 75% disclose accidentally.

Myth: There are usually physical findings of the abuse.

Fact: In the majority of cases, especially those involving very young children, there will be NO FINDINGS.

ADDITIONAL FACTS:

The average victim of child abuse is between 8 and 11 years old.

Fifty percent (50%) of child abuse victims are molested in their own homes or in the offender's home.

Perpetrators of sexual abuse are compulsive and repetitive in their offending behavior. The average pedophile will have an average of 244 victims in his lifetime. Seventy percent of pedophiles begin their sexual abusive behaviors before the age of 13.

Studies suggest that the chances of getting caught for child molestation are approximately 3%. Less than 1% are arrested, convicted and imprisoned.

Studies recently found that 80% of incestuous fathers in a sex offender treatment program were sexually abused as children, but did not report the abuse. 40% of incest offender who molest girls within the family molest girls outside the family as well. Of those incest offenders who molest boys within the family, 61% molest females outside the family and 68% molest boys outside the family.

INDICATORS OF ABUSE:

CHILD REPORTS SEXUAL ABUSE !!

Sexual Acting Out

Inappropriate interest or knowledge of sexual acts

Pain during urination

Difficulty walking or sitting

Tells you that she has secrets that she cannot tell

May harm him/herself

Regression to earlier behaviors (bed wetting; thumb sucking)

Bowel Problems

Excessive Masturbation

Victimization of Others

Bruising on inner thighs

OLDER CHILDREN:

Depression

Promiscuity

Substance Abuse

Running Away from Home

Early Pregnancy

Suicidal Gestures

Pseudo-mature Behaviors

Suddenly refuses to change for gym or participate in physical activities

WHEN A CHILD DISCLOSES ABUSE

Be aware of how children disclose

Think about your response before you are in a real situation

Reassure the child that they did the right thing by telling you

Let the child know he/she was brave to share the information with you

Don't share the information with others

Don't try to talk the child out of what he/she is saying

Reassure the child that you will help them find someone who helps children when this happens (and then do it). Don't make promises that you can't keep

Call the Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-482-5964