



Sexual Abuse of girls

Girls and boys can both be targeted for sexual abuse, but research tells us that this is far more often experienced by girls. Almost 2 out of 3 girls have some sexually intrusive experience during childhood (source: Child and Woman Abuse Studies Unit prevalence study).

There is nothing which ever makes this the fault of the child who is abused.

Often the perpetrator is an adult, usually someone known and usually a male. He may be a friend of the family, a neighbour, a teacher, a family member or none of these. Sometimes there is more than one abuser and some abusers are female. In other cases the abuse might be from another child or young person.

There is no truth in the idea that children often make up stories of sexual abuse. The biggest problem for many girls who suffer abuse is finding someone to talk to, who will take them seriously.

Trafford Rape Crisis will listen and will support you while you make sense of what happened.

Abuse is never justified. No child ever 'deserves' to be abused, whoever or whatever they are; whether they are white, from a minority ethnic group, clever, musical, naughty, good, messy, tidy, quiet, rebellious. No abuse is ever the fault of the girl who suffers it.

Girls who are sexually abused do not grow up to be abusers. The idea that abusers are taught to abuse simply does not make sense. Most of the children who are sexually abused are girls. Most of the abusers are men.

Those men are not 'sick' or 'ill', they choose to sexually abuse children to make themselves feel powerful. If abusers couldn't help themselves then they would not be able to hide the abuse. Yet most sexual abuse is kept very secret.

For supporters

If you are supporting someone who experienced abuse in childhood then please let them tell you what they want to, when they are ready. You can't rush this, it may be new to you but it is something they may have lived with for a long time. Just telling you it happened might be all she needs. There is no need for any survivor to feel they have to 'tell it all'. All that matters is taking the time to tell what they need to tell.

For the most part, what you need to do is to listen, **and believe.**

You can also read, to learn more about how they might be feeling. Our website lists a number of useful books. There are also some other resources, on the back of this leaflet.

It is normal: to cry, or not to cry; to sleep a lot or not at all. It is also normal to talk about it and to keep quiet. Most of all, it is really common to think that the rape or abuse was your fault. Abusers often say this. Abusers lie.

Further Resources

Child & Woman Abuse Studies Unit:
www.cwasu.org

A group of feminist researchers working to find out more about child abuse. Their website includes information about the sexual abuse of girls.

Truth About Rape: www.truthaboutrape.co.uk

Feminist campaigning group, which you can also join on Facebook.

Rape Crisis: www.rapecrisis.org.uk

National organisation of rape crisis groups.

Trafford Rape Crisis

Our website is **www.traffordrapecrisis.com** and includes further reading lists.



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