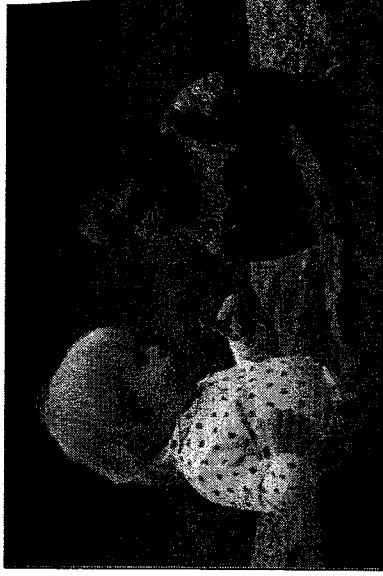


It shouldn't hurt to be a child



SIGNS OF NEGLECT

- Poor hygiene, odor
- Inappropriately dressed for weather
- Needs medical or dental care
- Left alone, unsupervised for long periods
- Failure to thrive, malnutrition
- Constant hunger, begs or steals food
- Extreme willingness to please
- Frequent absence from school
- Arrives early and stays late at school or play areas or other people's homes

SIGNS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

- Pain, swelling or itching in genital area
- Bruises, bleeding, discharge in genital area
- Difficulty walking or sitting, frequent urination, pain
- Stained or bloody underclothing
- Venereal disease
- Refusal to take part in gym or other exercises
- Poor peer relationships
- Unusual interest in sex for age
- Drastic change in school achievement
- Runaway or delinquent
- Regressive or childlike behavior

Services available to help the family and the child include counseling, in-home services, mental health and alcohol or drug abuse services, assistance or training in home and financial management, parent education and self-help groups. In severe situations, it may be necessary to temporarily place a child in out-of-home care.

A person who is mandated to report suspected child abuse or neglect will be informed by the county what action, if any, was taken to protect the health, safety and welfare of the child who is the subject of the report.

SIGNS OF CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT

Following are the major signs of physical and sexual abuse, emotional damage and neglect. One of these, or even several in combination, may not indicate that abuse has occurred. They may indicate accidents or that medical conditions, emotional illness or other problems exist. If a number of these signs occur together or if they reoccur frequently, child abuse and neglect may be suspected.

SIGNS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE

- Bruises, welts on face, neck, chest, back
- Injuries in the shape of object (belt, cord)
- Unexplained burns on palms, soles of feet, back
- Fractures that do not fit the story of how an injury occurred
- Delay in seeking medical help
- Extremes in behavior: very aggressive or withdrawn and shy
- Afraid to go home
- Frightened of parents
- Fearful of other adults

SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL DAMAGE

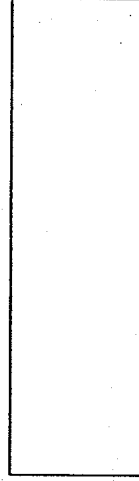
- Low self-esteem
- Self-denigration
- Severe depression
- Aggression
- Withdrawal
- Severe anxiety

... but sometimes it does

Ask Yourself How You Can Help

REPORT CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services
Division of Children and Family Services
Bureau of Programs and Policies



County Department of Human/Social Services
or the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare

YOU CAN HELP!
REPORT CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Immediately contact your county department of social or human services, sheriff, or the local police.

Wisconsin's Child Protective Services (CPS) System

The purposes of the CPS System are:

- To promote the well being of the child in his or her home setting, whenever possible, or in another safe and stable placement;
- To assure that appropriate protective services are provided to abused and neglected children and their families and to protect children from further harm;
- To provide support, counseling and other services to children who have been abused or neglected and their families;
- To protect the health, safety and welfare of children by providing education on the reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect.

Chapter 48 of Wisconsin's Statutes defines abuse as:

Physical Abuse

Physical injury inflicted on a child by other than accidental means. Physical injury includes, but is not limited to, lacerations, fractured bones, burns, internal injuries, severe or frequent bruising or great bodily harm.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual intercourse or sexual touching of a child, sexual exploitation, forced viewing of sexual activity, or permitting, allowing or encouraging a child to engage in prostitution.

Emotional Damage

Harm to a child's psychological or intellectual functioning which is exhibited by severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal or aggression.

Emotional damage may be demonstrated by substantial and observable changes in behavior, emotional response or learning which are incompatible with the child's age or stage of development.

Neglect

When a parent...or caretaker...fails, refuses or is unable, for reasons other than poverty, to provide the necessary care, food, clothing, medical or dental care which seriously endanger the physical health of the child.

PERSONS REQUIRED TO REPORT ABUSE & NEGLECT: (Mandated Reporters)

- physicians
- coroners
- medical examiners
- nurses
- dentists
- chiropractors
- acupuncturists
- optometrists
- all medical & mental health professionals
- day care providers
- alcohol and other drug abuse counselors
- marriage & family therapists
- mediators under s. 767.11, Stats.
- treatment staff employed by or working under contract with a county department
- professional counselors
- physical therapists and physical therapist assistants
- occupational therapists
- dietitians
- speech therapists
- audiologists
- emergency medical technicians
- social or public assistance workers
- paramedics
- school administrators, teachers, counselors
- police and law enforcement officers
- CASAs (Court Appointed Special Advocates)
- child care workers in any day care center, group home or residential care center

Mandated reporters are required to report suspected abuse and neglect of any child they see while in the course of their professional duties. They must also report those situations in which they have reason to believe that a child has been threatened with abuse or neglect and that abuse or neglect is likely to occur.

Any other person may report if there is reason to believe that a child has been abused or neglected or has been threatened with abuse or neglect.

Penalty

Persons required to report and who intentionally fail to report suspected child abuse or neglect may be fined up to \$1,000 or imprisoned for up to 6 months or both.

Persons who report in good faith are immune from civil or criminal liability.

REPORTING IS NOT "MEDDLING"

Deciding to get involved in a situation of suspected abuse or neglect can be difficult. It is, however, a decision that may be crucial to a child not only today, but also in the future. Parents who have abused or neglected their children may need services and support to provide safe care for their children.

HOW TO REPORT

Contact your county social/human services department, sheriff, or local police department immediately - by telephone or in person.

WHAT TO REPORT

Explain, as well as you can, what happened or is happening to the child. Describe the nature of the abuse or neglect. Be as specific as possible.

Be prepared to give the name, address, and telephone number of the child and also the name of the parent or caretaker. Even if you do not know all of this information, report what you do know.

Tell all you know about the situation.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN?

A social worker from the county department of social/human services, an agency under contract with the county department or the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare will work with the parents and assess the situation to determine if any support or assistance is needed to protect the child and help the family.

STAYING SAFE

INTRODUCTION

In 1997, the State of Wisconsin enacted the Sex Offender Registration and Community Notification Law. This law was created to monitor and track people convicted of sex crimes and to provide access to this information for police, victims and the general public. It is believed that holding sexual offenders accountable for their whereabouts and activities, and making their presence known in community settings, will help decrease acts of sexual violence in our communities.

Although this law is an important step toward ending sexual violence in our communities, it only applies to people convicted of these crimes. It is equally important to raise public awareness in identifying and preventing sexual violence that has not been reported to the authorities. It is also crucial to be informed and educated about ways in which we, as individual citizens, can help protect ourselves and our loved ones from sexual assault.

Staying Safe was created to help people learn ways to reduce and stop the damage caused by sexual violence. Some of the information is about responding to sexual violence that has already occurred. Other information is about stopping sexual violence BEFORE it starts. Staying Safe provides basic suggestions and steps that can be used to keep ourselves and our loved ones as safe as possible from sexual violence.

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WHAT IS SEXUAL ASSAULT?

Sexual assault is any sexual contact between people that is unwanted, not consented to, or forced. Sexual assault includes a wide range of behaviors in which a victim is tricked, threatened, or manipulated into doing something sexual.

Sexual assault generally refers to adults. It can include marital/partner rape, date rape, and rape by a stranger. It can also include other kinds of unwanted sexual behavior like touching of private areas, or being forced to touch someone else's private areas.

Sexual abuse is sexual assault. Sexual abuse is a term generally used to describe sexual activity between an adult and a child. Sexual abuse often occurs over a period of time. It can include sexual touching, sexual intercourse, and other kinds of unwanted sexual behavior.

Myth Sexual assault always involves violence, threats, or use of a weapon.

Fact Sexual assault does not have to include threats, violence or weapons. **IF THE SEXUAL CONTACT IS UNWANTED, THEN THE SEXUAL CONTACT IS SEXUAL ASSAULT!**

Myth Sexual activities with a child that are gentle (rather than violent or forceful) will not cause lasting harm to the child.

Fact Many sex offenders develop a relationship with a child in order to trick or manipulate the child into participating in sexual activity. This is called GROOMING. Even if there is no force, children are harmed because someone they knew and trusted hurt and betrayed them.

WHERE DOES SEXUAL ASSAULT HAPPEN?

Sexual assault happens every day. It happens in the streets, in private residences, in public areas, and in places of business.

WHO GETS SEXUALLY ASSAULTED?

Sexual assault can happen to anyone. It happens to females and males, rich and poor, young and old, educated and non-educated, and people of all ethnic and racial backgrounds. Sexual assault shatters the comfortable feeling people have that nothing like this could ever happen to them or to someone they love.

Myth People often cry rape to get attention or to get back at someone.

Fact False accusations of sexual assault happen in about 2% of all cases. This is similar to the number of false reports of other violent crimes. It is far more common for a victim of sexual assault to not report the crime to anyone.

WHO COMMITS SEXUAL ASSAULT?

Just like victims, sex offenders come from all ethnic and racial groups, all ages, and all social classes. Most sex offenders are male, but some females also sexually assault others.

The majority of sex offenders know their victims before they assault them. In fact, more than one-fourth of those who sexually assaulted a child were a member of that child's household.

Myth Sex offenders only assault their victims because they don't have a good sexual relationship with a consenting adult.

Fact There are many reasons people commit sexual assaults. The main reason is often the power and control the offender feels during the assault. Research indicates that most people who sexually abused or assaulted children were also in a consenting sexual relationship with an adult.

WHAT ARE SOME SIGNS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT AND ABUSE?

Recognizing sexual assault is not always easy, especially if the victim is a child. A child's reaction can differ depending on his or her age, personality, and the nature of the offense. Sometimes child victims do not appear upset by crimes that seem very serious to adults. Inside however, they might be frightened, angry, or confused.

Child victims are sometimes afraid to tell anyone about what has happened, especially if the offender is a close friend or family member. They might be afraid that people will be angry at them, that it is their fault that the abuse happened, or that no one will believe them. They might also be afraid that the offender will do something bad to them or their family if they tell.

Adult victims of sexual assault can also experience fear, shame, and guilt about being sexually assaulted. Therefore, they may delay reporting the incident, or they may not report it at all.

Myth If someone says that they were sexually assaulted and then takes back the statement, they were lying about being assaulted in the first place.

Fact Fear, shame and guilt can cause victims to change their story about being sexually assaulted.

Many times, an offender will tell their victims...

That something bad will happen if the victim tells

That the offender will hurt or kill the victim or the victim's family

That no one will believe the victim

That parents and friends won't like the victim any more

That reporting the abuse will break up the family and the victim will have to live someplace else

That the family won't have enough money to live on if the offender goes to jail

Some victims think they abuse/assault was their fault, and they feel ashamed, guilty, or embarrassed about it. These are just some of the reasons victims might take back what they first said about being sexually assaulted.

Myth Most sexual assaults are committed by strangers.

Fact Statistics show that approximately 90% of all acts of sexual violence are committed by people known to the victim.

Victims of sexual abuse can display a variety of physical, emotional, and behavioral signs.

It is important to keep in mind that some of the following signs can be the result of problems that are not related to sexual abuse. Also, some victims do not display any outward signs that they have been sexually abused.

Physical signs of sexual abuse in children may include...

Unexplained injury, pain, or irritation in the genital area

Stained or bloody underclothing

Pregnancy

Sexually transmitted disease

Behavioral signs of sexual abuse in children may include...

Unexplained or sudden fear of a particular person

Unexplained or sudden fear of certain places

Return to "babyish habits, like thumb sucking, bedwetting, ect.

Unexplained or sudden self-consciousness about genitals, including becoming upset by bathing and diapering

Sudden knowledge and/or display of sexual words/behaviors that are not appropriate to their age group including acting out sexual behavior with toys, animals, or people
Any other sudden or unexplained change in a child's behavior

WHAT IF I THINK A CHILD HAS BEEN SEXUALLY ABUSED?

There is no "right" way to respond to a child who has been or might have been sexually abused. However, the following can help the victim start healing right away.

Listen to the child. How adults respond to a child victim is very important to the child's recovery from the trauma of sexual abuse. It can be hard to listen to or understand a child's report of the abuse. Their complaints, explanations, and descriptions may be unclear, confusing, or seem to make no sense. It can also be difficult for an adult to hear about the abuse because it may remind them of their own history of being sexually abused, or the offender might be a close friend or family member. The important thing is to make sure that children are able to tell their story to someone who can help protect them from further abuse, and help them start to feel safe again. Some things that you can say to help a child tell you what has happened are:

"Tell me more. I'm listening."

"You did the right thing telling me about this."

"Take your time, I will listen for as long as you need me to."

Believe the child. When a child tells you he or she has been sexually abused, your first reaction may be disbelief. Children sometimes tell lies, but it is very rare for a child to make up and report sexual activity with an adult. The child's description might sound confused and/or have some "holes" or gaps in it. This is common and does not mean that the child is lying.

It is also common for a victim to delay reporting the sexual abuse, especially if the offender has made threats that something bad would happen if he or she told. The abuse might have happened days, weeks, months, or even years prior to the victim telling you. Again, this is not a sign of lying. This is a common reaction to the child's fear and confusion.

It is very important to take a child's story seriously, even if the offender is someone you thought you could trust. Some things you can say to reassure a child that you believe him or her and are taking the story seriously are:

"I believe you."

"I'm glad you told me what happened to you."

Keep your reaction calm and reassuring. When a child tells you what has happened to him or her, you might feel angry, shocked, disgusted, or panicked. It is important that you appear calm, reassuring, and caring. This will help the child feel comfortable telling you about the abuse. It will also give the child the message that nothing is so terrible that he or she can't tell someone about it.

If you appear very angry or upset when the child is telling you about the abuse, he or she might think that you are feeling that way toward them, instead of the offender. A child might also decide to live with an abusive situation rather than risk upsetting you.

Make sure that if you do react strongly, the child knows that your negative feelings are about the offender, not about him or her. Some things you can say are:

"I know this is hard to talk about. I'm glad you're telling me."

"You look very scared. I'm proud of you for being brave and telling me what has happened to you."

"I'm happy you're telling me about this, so that I can help keep you safe."

Let the child know the abuse is not his or her fault, and the child hasn't done anything wrong. It is Never the child's fault when sexual activity happens with an adult. No matter what the offender says, if sexual activity occurred, the adult is fully responsible. Sometimes, if an offender bribed, tricked, or convinced a child to do something sexual, the child may

believe it's his or her fault that the abuse happened. Even if no physical force was used, or the child "agreed" to the sexual behavior, the child needs to know that it was wrong for the adult to behave this way, and that the child is not bad, responsible, or at fault because of how the abuse happened.

It is understandable that an adult would be very angry and upset if a child was sexually abused. However, it is very important that the child knows that you are angry and upset with the offender, not with him or her. Some things that you can say to the child to help him or her understand this are:

"I'm angry with _____ for doing this to you."

"I'm not angry with you, I'm upset about what happened to you."

"It's not your fault that this happened."

"He was wrong for doing that to you."

"It makes me mad that someone would hurt you."

Report abuse to the police. Keeping a child safe must be your first priority. Not reporting the abuse of a child to the police may lead to continued abuse of the child as well as others. It is important to report the sexual abuse no matter how long ago it happened. Many sex offenses can be prosecuted years later.

Sometimes, people are worried that involving the police could create a situation that will cause more trauma to the child. It is important to know that you can be in control of the situation to make sure that the child's needs are met. Many police departments have specially trained officers that investigate child sexual abuse. They know how to interview children so they feel less frightened, shy, or uncomfortable.

Some ways you can help a child through the process are:

Ask the police and/or the child protection worker to videotape the child's statement, so that it can be used by others. This will prevent the child from having to tell and retell his or her story to many different people.

Request that you be put in touch with the Victim/Witness Coordinator in the District Attorney's Office. A Victim/Witness Coordinator is specially trained to help others understand the legal process and will be able to offer support and referrals to counselors and others who can help. They can also make sure that you are aware of court dates and other important information.

Myth Sexual abuse by a stranger is more harmful than sexual abuse by a known and trusted adult.

Fact It is often more traumatic to be abused by someone the victim knows because the victim trusts the offender, and sexual assault is a huge violation of that trust.

When the offender is a close friend, family member, or a member of the household, as is the case with many sexual assaults, some people might feel reluctant to contact the police. They may feel "torn" between loyalty to the child and loyalty to the offender, especially if the offender is their spouse. They might also be afraid of the disruption that could be created in the family or household if the police are brought into the situation. However, a child in this situation is the most vulnerable to further abuse and trauma. Children depend on non-offending adults to make sure they are safe, secure, and protected. Protecting the vulnerable child is more of a priority than "keeping peace" in the family. The child will not have any "peace" unless you take steps to provide it.

WHAT CAN I DO IF THE VICTIM IS AN ADULT?

Child and adult victims have similar needs. They need to be believed. They need to know that they are not responsible for being sexually assaulted. They need to have support for what they have gone through, and they need to be allowed to express themselves freely. When friends and family ask, "What can I do to help?" Some common responses are, "Just listen," "Spend time with me," "Believe me," "Don't crowd me - give me some breathing room," and, "Help me start getting some control back over my life." Acknowledging victims' feelings, respecting their need for privacy and their need for time to heal, and "being there" emotionally for them can be

