

## WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

- ▶ Teach children the proper names for sexual body parts. Many children are not able to tell about the abuse because they don't know the words to use.
- ▶ Teach children the difference between safe and unsafe touches. Talk about appropriate physical affection.
- ▶ Tell children that it's okay to say "no" to touches or behaviors that make them uncomfortable.
- ▶ Remind children that safety rules apply to all adults, not just strangers.
- ▶ Teach children not to keep secrets about touching, no matter what the person says. Encourage children to tell you immediately if someone touches them or behaves in a way that is not OK.

## WAYS TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD IF ABUSE HAS OCCURRED

- ▶ Stay calm – don't panic or overreact.
- ▶ Believe your child.
- ▶ Assure your child that he/she is not to blame for what has happened.
- ▶ Let your child know you are glad he/she told you.
- ▶ Protect your child immediately from the suspected offender.
- ▶ Report the abuse at once to the Department of Health and Human Resources (Child Protective Services 1-800-352-6513), the police or your local rape crisis center.
- ▶ Get a medical exam even if your child appears to be unhurt.
- ▶ Help your child work with a professional who will handle the case.

**CALL  
US.**

## **SOMEONE IS WAITING TO LISTEN AND TO HELP.**

**FOR  
MORE  
INFORMATION  
CONTACT THE  
CENTER  
IN YOUR  
AREA.**

**CONTACT Huntington  
Rape Crisis Counseling**  
Huntington  
304-399-1111

**Family Refuge Center**  
Lewisburg  
304-645-6334

**Family Service REACH Program**  
Charleston  
304-340-3676

**Hope, Inc.**  
Fairmont  
304-367-1100

**Rape and Domestic Violence  
Information Center**  
Morgantown  
304-292-5100

**Sexual Assault Help Center**  
Wheeling  
304-234-8519

**Shenandoah Women's Center**  
Martinsburg  
304-263-8292

**Women's Aid In Crisis**  
Elkins  
1-800-339-1185

**Women's Resource Center**  
Beckley  
304-255-2559

Or

**THE NATIONAL SEXUAL  
ASSAULT HOTLINE**  
1-800-656-HOPE



**West Virginia Foundation for  
Rape Information and Services, Inc.**

112 Braddock Street, Fairmont, WV 26554  
304-366-9500 FAX 304-366-9501 [www.fris.org](http://www.fris.org)

# CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Definition

Safety  
Rules

If Your Child  
Is A Victim



**West Virginia Foundation for Rape Information and Services, Inc.**

This project was supported by award #99-VA-017.  
Awarded by the Office of Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs.

# What Is Child Sexual Abuse?

## COMMON EMOTIONAL RESPONSES TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

**FEAR** of the abuser.  
of getting into trouble or getting a loved one into trouble.  
no one will believe them.

**GUILT** for not being able to stop the abuse.  
for believing they “consented” to the abuse.  
for “telling”—if they told.  
for keeping the secret—if they did not tell.

**SHAME** about being abused.  
about their bodies’ reactions.

**CONFUSION** because of their changing emotions.  
because they may still love the abuser.

**ANGER** at the abuser.  
at other adults who failed to protect them.  
at themselves.

**SADNESS** at being betrayed by someone they trusted.

**ISOLATION** because they have trouble talking about the abuse.  
because they feel alone.

Child sexual abuse is any sexual act with a child by a parent, an adult or someone who is older and/or more powerful. It involves forcing, tricking, bribing, threatening or pressuring a child into sexual activity.

In 85% of reported cases, the abuser is a relative, close family friend or an adult the child knows and trusts.

The abuse can be physical, verbal or emotional and includes:

- Sexual touching and fondling of a child’s sexual body parts.
- Forcing a child to touch another person’s sexual body parts.
- Exposing a child to adult sexual activity or pornographic material.
- Having a child undress, pose or perform in a sexual manner.
- Taking pornographic pictures of a child.
- “Peeping” into bathrooms or bedrooms to watch the child.
- Exposing oneself to a child.
- Attempted or actual oral, anal, or vaginal penetration.

West Virginia is very specific concerning child sexual abuse. The law considers such factors as the victim’s age, the relationship of the offender to the victim, and the degree of force and violence involved. West Virginia Sexual Assault Laws can be viewed at [www.fris.org](http://www.fris.org).

## SIGNS OF POSSIBLE CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

- ▶ Physical complaints
- ▶ Sleep disturbances; nightmares
- ▶ Excessive clinging or crying
- ▶ Bedwetting
- ▶ Fear or dislike of particular adults or places
- ▶ School problems
- ▶ Withdrawal from family, friends or usual activities
- ▶ Change in eating habits
- ▶ Frequent touching of private parts
- ▶ Sexual behavior inappropriate to the age of the child
- ▶ Depression
- ▶ Anxiety
- ▶ Drug or alcohol problems
- ▶ Hostility or aggression
- ▶ Running away
- ▶ Sexually transmitted diseases
- ▶ Physical symptoms involving the genital, anal or mouth area
- ▶ Any dramatic change in behavior or development of new behaviors.

**Sexual abuse  
is never the child’s fault.**