



INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) is any form of sexual violation against children. Child Sexual Abuse exists in many forms including touching and non-touching activities. CSA affects the victim, the family and the society. In order to deal with the effects of abuse it is advisable to take care of yourself and your family by seeking help. With the Cece Yara Foundation, know that there is a system in place to help you through the process.

FINDING OUT ABOUT ABUSE

CSA is a devastating experience as it changes a child's perception of life and the society. Because of the trauma inflicted, a child who has been abused may take weeks, months, or even years to fully reveal what happened to them.

Reasons children do not disclose may include:

- Threats of bodily harm (to the child and/or the child's family)
- Fear of being separated from their families
- Fear of not being believed
- Fear of being blamed, shame, or guilt
- Developmental level/Cognitive abilities
- Lack of awareness regarding sexual abuse and boundaries
- Some still nurse positive feelings towards their perpetrator
- Fear of disclosure disrupting families especially if the head of the family/financial pillar is the perpetrator.

FACT: In studies of adults who were sexually abused as children, 2 out of 3 said they never told anyone about the abuse during childhood

SHOULD I QUESTION MY CHILD ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED?

No. Often when children are questioned multiple times they become scared or overwhelmed and they may recant their disclosure. Refrain from questioning your child as this may affect the investigation. Rather seek professional help.

BEHAVIOURS SOMETIMES DISPLAYED BY ABUSED CHILDREN

Children react differently depending on age, extent of the abuse, support from others, and their relationships with the offender. Some children do not show any signs, but that does not mean the abuse has not happened.

Children who have been abused may display a range of emotional and behavioral reactions, which are characteristic of exposure to trauma. These reactions include:

- Unreasonable fear of physical examination.
- A noticeable fear of person/s or certain places.
- Unusual response if asked if he/she has been touched
- Drawings that show sexual activities.
- Abrupt changes in behaviour such as bedwetting, losing control of the bowels, resort to smoking and drinking.
- Trying to get other children to perform sexual acts.
- Getting clingy.
- Abdominal and pelvic pains.
- Fear of being separated from caregiver /clingy
- Fears and Phobias
- Anger and mood changes
- Withdrawn behaviours

- Nightmares and/or difficulty sleeping
- Agitation, hyperactivity, irritability
- Anxiety, Depression, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Bed wetting, soiling themselves
- Developmentally inappropriate sexual knowledge, behavior, and/or language
- Delinquent and/or risky behaviours: self-harming behaviors
- Worried about safety

CAREGIVER REFERENCE- HOW YOU CAN HELP YOUR CHILD

The single most important factor affecting the child's recovery is the level of support from their parents or caregivers.

It is important to:

- Keep calm. Do not display emotions that may frighten the child. Be supportive. Believe your child.
- Thank the child for making the disclosure. Reassure your child that he/she is loved, accepted and important.
- Earn the trust of your child that you and other people will do everything to keep them safe.
- Keep them away from the person suspected of the abuse. Establish a safety programme.
- Tell the child he or she is not to be blamed. Never blame your child
- Maintain the usual routines of everyday life.
- Set gentle, but firm, limits for "acting out" behavior
- Give as a matter of fact answers to their questions
- Accede to any safety request of the child even if it seems unreasonable.
- Get help.

HOW DO I TALK TO MY CHILD?

Children sometimes get adaptive and feel guilty that the abuse is their fault. Reassure your child by telling him/her they did the right thing by being brave to make the disclosure. Also let them

know that the perpetrator was wrong and needs to be apprehended before he harms others. Say things like:

- You are not alone in this. I believe you
- It's not your fault, the perpetrator was wrong.
- You are not in any trouble
- I'm glad you told me. I will keep you safe
- I'm sorry this happened to you
- I will do everything I can to keep you safe
- I don't know why he/she did this. He/she has a problem and needs help

WHO SHOULD I TELL?

Seek Professional help. It's better to first of all consult a Pediatrician or Child Psychologist who is experienced in CSA cases. It is important to protect your child's privacy when considering who to share the information about your child's experience with. Any reaction or discussion should be done far away from the child so that the child will not feel guilty by threats of violence and punishment. It is important to consider what role that individual plays in the process. You can decide who to tell. Let your child know who you may be discussing it with and let your child have some choice about who is told.

Please call our dedicated Child Help Line for free on:



You can call us at any time. Our helplines are managed by trained staff who all have experience of listening and talking to children and young people, and will provide you with information, referrals, and emergency intervention if needed.