



Child Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse occurs when a child is exploited sexually by another person. It may take many forms: exposure of the genitals, obscene phone calls, obscene internet solicitation, voyeurism, use of pornography, fondling, and oral, vaginal, or anal intercourse.

Children are most commonly sexually abused by someone they know and trust. When these acts occur within a family, the sexual abuse is called incest. There may be a single occurrence, but most likely the abuse will continue over a period of time, often for years. The abuse generally begins with acts such as fondling. The child is coerced and manipulated into remaining silent. Victims are terrified of revealing the abuse due to confusion, guilt, and fear of being blamed, punished, or not believed.

The vast majority of child perpetrators are teenage or adult males. Most are heterosexual men, many with children and a wife or girlfriend. Perpetrators come from all socio-economic levels, religions, and ethnic backgrounds.

Victims/survivors of child sexual assault do not cause the abuse and are never to blame. The offender, not the victim, is responsible. If you know or suspect a child is being or has been sexually abused, you can call your local rape crisis program, child protective service agency, or the 24-hour National Child Abuse Hotline for assistance and referral: 1-800-422-4453.

HERE ARE THE FACTS:

- 67% of all victims of sexual assault reported to law enforcement were juveniles under the age of 18. More than half (34%) of these victims were under the age of 12. (Sexual Assault of Young Children as Reported to Law Enforcement: Victim, Incident, and Offender Characteristics. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000).
- Females comprised 82% of all juvenile victims. 73% of female victims were under the age of 12. 69% of female victims were under the age of 6. (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000).
- Most (77%) of the juvenile sexual assaults reported to law enforcement occurred in the residence of the victim, the offender, or the residence of another individual. Only 16% of sexual assaults to youth under the age of 12 occurred in a place other than a residence. (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000)
- 23% of all sexual offenders were under the age of 18. 40% of these offenders victimized children under the age of 6. (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000).
- In 1999 47% of child sex offenders were related to the victim, 49% were acquaintances, and 4% were strangers. (Juvenile Offenders and Victims 1999 National Report. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1999).
- 54% of convicted child sex offenders reported having at least two victims. (Managing Adult Sex Offenders in the Community- A Containment Approach. English, K., Pullen, S., and Jones, L. U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice. January, 1997.)
- In 1998, juveniles accounted for 77.9% of sexual assault victims in the state of Wisconsin. Nearly 71% of all victims were under the age of 15. The majority (83%) of these victims were female. (Crime and Arrests in Wisconsin-1998, Federal Bureau of Investigation Uniform Crime Reporting Program. Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance, 1998).

This information sheet was compiled in 2000 by the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (WCASA). WCASA is a membership organization of sexual assault centers, other organizations, and individuals throughout Wisconsin working to end sexual violence. For information sheets on other topics or to become a member, contact WCASA 600 Williamson St., Suite N-2, Madison, WI 53703, (608)257-1516, www.wcasa.org. For more information about sexual assault or to receive support with a sexual assault experience, contact your local sexual assault program. This sheet may be reproduced in its original format only.

- One out of five 10-17 year olds who were online received an unwanted sexual solicitation. Approximately 2/3 of these were made to females by males. Adults made up 24% of the solicitors. (Online Victimization: A Report on the Nations Youth, Finkelhor, D., Mitchell, K., and Wolak, J. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Crimes Against Children Research Center, 2000).
- Researchers estimate that between 96-100% of accused child sexual abusers are heterosexual. (Are Children at Risk for Sex Abuse by Homosexuals? Jenny, C., Roesler, T., and Poyer, K. Pediatrics Vol.94 No.1, 1994.)
- The majority of rapes of men and boys are perpetrated by heterosexual males (Male on Male Rape: The Hidden Toll of Stigma and Shame. Scarce, Michael. Insight Books. New York, New York. 1997.)
- 61% of state prisoners serving a sentence for committing a violent crime claim they had been physically or sexually abused as a child. (Prior Abuse Reported by Inmates and Probationers. U.S Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1999.)
- 134,300 convicted child molesters are living in neighborhoods across America. (Sex Offenses and Offenders: An Analysis of Data on Rape and Sexual Assault. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1997.
- One out of thirteen convicted sex offenders (7.7%) are arrested for a new sexual assault within three years of their release from jail. (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1997.)

INDICATORS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE:

Physical Signs May Include:

- Bruises
- Cuts
- Irritation, pain, or injury to the genital area
- Vaginal or penile discharge
- Difficulty with Urination
- Pregnancy
- Venereal disease in a young child
- Nightmares

Behavioral Signs May Include:

- One child may be treated in a significantly different way from the other children in the family
- Arriving early at school and leaving late.
- Nervous, aggressive, hostile or disruptive behavior toward adults.
- Running away.
- Abuse of alcohol or drugs
- Sexual self-consciousness, provocativeness, vulnerability to sexual approaches.

Comments May Include:

- He fooled around with me.
- My mother's boyfriend does things to me when she's not there.
- I don't like to be alone with my father.
- I'm afraid to go home tonight.
- Will you help me go live with my aunt?

Source: National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse