

HOW CAN I HELP?

Warning Signs:

- » Late age or sudden onset bed wetting
- » Sudden aversions to places or people
- » Developmentally inappropriate knowledge of sexual behavior
- » Sudden withdrawal from others
- » Aggressive outbursts
- » Changes in eating habits
- » Sudden lack of interest in school, friends, and previously enjoyed activities

Resources:

The Blue Bench

Nonprofit addressing sexual assault through “comprehensive issue advocacy prevention, and care.”



Parenting Safe Children

Organization committed to keeping children safe from sexual assault through parent education.



RAINN

rainn.com

“The Nation’s largest anti-sexual violence organization.”



The United States is experiencing a silent epidemic of childhood sexual abuse. As of 2022, the Centers for Disease Control confirmed 60,000 reports of sexual abuse against children, and this number is largely considered to be underreported.¹

In order to begin addressing the magnitude of this statistic, our communities need to become aware and active in the primary prevention of childhood sexual abuse. This means not just engaging with the justice system after abuse has occurred, but taking conscious steps to prevent abuse from ever occurring in the first place.

There are many ways to start working toward prevention in our daily lives: speaking to other adults about sexual abuse candidly, creating prevention plans within families and

communities, and avoiding the bystander effect (See Something, Say Something) are just a few.

Teaching children the appropriate words for “penis” and “vagina” so that they can communicate easily about inappropriate behavior, encouraging bodily autonomy (allow saying “no” to touch), and establishing the difference between an “unsafe secret” and “safe surprise” are ways we can help our children protect themselves and identify dangerous behavior early.



¹ U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, “Child Maltreatment 2022”, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Children’s Bureau, 2024, <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/data-research/child-maltreatment>

Quick Definitions:

Consent

Enthusiastic and willing “yes” to engage in sexual activity. Children cannot ever give consent to any form of sexual engagement.

Sexual Abuse

Legally defined as forcing another to engage in sex by threats, violence, or coercion; or against individuals who cannot legally give consent. This includes children under 18, the incapacitated (by drugs or other disability), and individuals in unequal power dynamics (e.g. a warden and a prisoner).

Bystander Effect

A psychological effect where people become less likely to intervene or offer help when there are others present, assuming others will do it instead.

Autonomy

The ability of an individual to have control of their own actions and body; and self-agency in their own lives.

I BELIEVE
YOU.
IT'S NOT
YOUR
FAULT.
HOW CAN
I HELP?

IT'S TIME
TO TALK:



Community action against
childhood sexual abuse