**Child Sexual Abuse: Advanced Training**

How to recognize and respond to cases of child sexual abuse.

**defining the crime**

Child sexual abuse is when one or more individuals uses a child in a sexual way. The perpetrator could be an adult, older child, or peer.

**Touching offenses**: These can be anything from fondling to any method of intercourse.

**Non-touching offenses**: This could be, masturbating in front of a child, watching pornography with a child, showing a child pornographic pictures, undressing sexually in front of a child, posing / photographing a child in a sexual manner, or a number of other offenses.

**REALIZE THAT EACH PERSONS REACTION TO SEXUAL ASSAULT WILL BE DIFFERENT.**

Some factors that influence the effects of the abuse:

- The person's age and stage of development.
- The person's relationship with the offender.
- The extent of the abuse.
- The duration of the abuse.
- The level of support the person feels from his family.
- How significant people (family, community, school) respond to person the at the time of disclosure.
- How well the person was doing before the abuse began.
- The level of fear the person experienced at the time of abuse.
- How responsible the person feels for the abuse.

**WASAC provides services to sexual assault victims & survivors, their families, and significant others.**

- 24 hour crisis line – 316-263-3002
- Toll free 1-877-WASAC4U (1-877-927-2248)
- Hospital advocacy, SANE/SART
- Support groups Wichita (adult women, teen girls, Parents & Caretakers)
- Therapeutic Services
- Court advocacy, OARS, PFA & PFS
- Hispanic outreach - Español 316-263-2044
- Information & Referral
- Volunteer & Practicum Opportunities

All services are free and confidential.

**WASAC**
Wichita Area Sexual Assault Center

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...All human beings have the right to be free from violence, the right to be heard, and the right to reclaim those rights if they are violated...

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Female Sexual Victimization
• 1 in 4 girls will be victimized before the age of 18.
• 1 in 3 in her lifetime.
• Only 10-15% will report.

Male Sexual Victimization
• 1 in 6 males before the age of 18.
• 1 in 10-15 after the age of 18.
• Only 2-5% will report

Imagine - 1 in 3 of our daughters, girlfriends, sisters, mothers, friends...
1 in 6 of our sons, boyfriends, brothers, fathers, friends...


WASAC Persons Served 2009
DIRECT SERVICES AT HOSPITAL AS SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE TEAM

Female = 333 Male = 23
43% under 18, 20% under 12

Each year the Wichita-Sedgwick County Exploited and Missing Child Unit receives between 440 and 515 reports of child sexual abuse.

"and those are just the ones who tell"
mother of 4 year old girl

Only 1 in 7 sexually abused children will tell someone.

Truth or Myth? Strangers present the most danger to children.

85-90% of sexually abused children are abused by someone they know, love, and trust.

This myth only helps to further the silence of sexual abuse. If a child is abused by a loved one, it may be more difficult for them to recognize the abuse. It’s really confusing if they learn that only strangers can hurt them.

"In nearly every case, Children are sexually abused by people closest to them, parents, stepparents, relatives, neighbors..."
The Wichita Eagle, Saturday Aug 8, 2010

Truth or Myth? Child sexual abuse usually occurs in lower socio-economic families.
Deconstructing the myth
Child sexual abuse happens among every socio-economic level, every race, ethnic group, every town (urban or rural), and every religion.

"An Eagle analysis of 128 cases over the past 18 months shows the crimes span the county, affecting every neighborhood and every socioeconomic group"

The Wichita Eagle, Sunday Aug 8. 2010

"Think of how many more cases that are happening but just don’t have enough evidence to charge..."

Deputy District Attorney Marc Bennett

Map showing Wichita area child sex crimes 2009

Truth or Myth?
Physical injuries are the most common indicator of sexually abused.

If a child is abused by a non-touching offence, the emotional damage will be less severe.

Deconstructing the myth
Fact: Often there is little or no physical injury or physical evidence.

Less than 5% of all victims need medical intervention
Less than 10% of children victimized need medical intervention
Less than 35% of adult and children examined have any sort of physical injury

Perps depend on a "normal medical exam"

A lack of physical injury does not mean "nothing happened".
A lack of sufficient evidence to file charges does not mean "nothing happened".

For females & males, an unresolved sexual assault in their history is a risk factor for...

- Destructive ways of coping (cutting, etc.)
- Self -Isolation - Withdrawal
- Guilt, Shame, Low Self -Esteem / Feelings of Powerlessness
- Dissociation
- Sudden phobias
- Difficulty in Forming Trusting Relationships
- Sexual Identity Confusion
- Difficulty Developing - Maintaining - Expressing Healthy Boundary Skills

- Depression (3x) if an IP = (11x)
- Suicidal thoughts (4x)
- PTSD symptoms (6x)
- Alcohol/Drug Abuse (13x & 26x)

Truth or Myth? Children who have been sexually abused will often tell a parent or loved one.
**BARRIERS TO DISCLOSING**

- *Self-blame; Social stigma: Taboo, Shame.*
- *Body’s reaction to sexual violence may be confusing.*
- *Fear of blame (because of drugs or alcohol, rule infractions, relationship with the offender, past sexual history).*
- *Fear loss of freedom.*
- *Fear of peer and family reactions - lack of support.*
- *Fear of escalating violence—further victimization, threats.*
- *Fear of not being believed - Do they believe it themselves?*
- *Fear of peer and family reactions—lack of support.*
- *Fear of not being believed - Do they believe it themselves?*
- *Pressure from family and friends to not report.*
- *Lack of control over process.*
- *Need to be seen as able to “take care of myself”*.
- *Lack of information, or knowledge about resources, or lack of $$$*

In rural settings these will be magnified

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**15% of abused children even disclose**

*Most children never tell anyone about their abuse*

- ...they may blame themselves, fear getting the abuser in trouble, don’t recognize what’s happening as abuse, fear the threats of the abuser, think no one will believe them, they don’t know who to trust.

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**Offenders are taking advantage of a child’s lack of knowledge**

“This is what all families do.”

Young children:
- *May believe adults are always right.*
- *May focus on other wrongs that they understand (lying, broken rules).*

“Offenders may be making bribes”

“I’ll take you to Worlds of Fun if you are a good girl/boy and do this with me.”

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**Why don’t children tell?**

- Offenders are making threats

“*If you don’t let me do this to you, I’m going to do it to your sister.*”

“*He told me I would get in trouble—that he would say I wanted to do it and you would believe him.*”

“She was my mother. Who could I tell?”

“I did not want to get him in trouble. He said he would have to go to jail.”

“He told me Mom already knew.”

“He said he would kill himself if I told.”

“I was afraid nobody would believe me. Everybody in our church really liked her. She always did nice things for us.”

“I was scared he might hurt me if I told.”

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**Truth or Myth? Children commonly lie about sexual abuse — for attention - or to get back at a parent.**

- **Fact:** The child may recant the abuse.
- **60% of childhood victims recant, even those with STI’s.**
- They may fear further contact with the perpetrator. Their life may have become extremely tumultuous as a result of disclosure; therefore, they feel that if they recant, things will go back to normal.
- The number of false reports of child sexual abuse is extremely low. Only between 2-5% of reports are false reports.

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**Truth or Myth? Children who have been sexually abused are ‘ruined’. They are unable to have healthy relationships.**
Deconstructing the myth

With the proper support from family and friends, kids healing from child sexual abuse can go on to lead healthy, happy lives. They must be allowed to heal at their own pace and in their own way.

Truth or Myth?

Child sexual abuse is about sex, lust, and the desires of the abuser.

Child sexual abuse is not about having sex.

It is about Power & Control

If I hit you with a rolling pin, could we call it baking?

Dynamics of sexual coercion

The Grooming Process: Steps offenders take

- Seek out an approachable child
- Children that crave attention
- Children who trust all adults
- Establish a relationship with the child
  - Building trust
  - Becoming their buddy
- Break down the child's resistance to sensations of sexual activity
  - Offenders will find ways to touch the child a lot. As a result, the child is often unaware or confused when the touch becomes sexual.
- Find ways to isolate the child
  - Excuses to be alone with the child
- Secrets
  - Offenders will try to make the child feel responsible so he/she won't tell.

Looking for signs

Some physical indicators of sexual abuse in a history

- Blood in the genital area or underwear
- Discharge (vaginal/penile) painful urination, penile swelling
- Chafing/bruising/bite marks to inner thighs, genitals, anus or back
- Tears to any genital/anal skin
- Difficulty walking or standing
- Irritation of genital area (pain, itching, rash)
- STIs / HIV
- Pregnancy
- Changes in eating habits/ change in weight
- Destructive coping habits
  - Drug and/or alcohol abuse
  - Self physical abuse
- Destructive coping mechanisms
- Somatic Complaints/targeted pain
**Some Behavioral Indicators Of Sexual Abuse in a History**

- Inappropriate sexual behaviors for age – Premature sexualization
- Indiscriminate sexual behavior
- Running away
- Regression
- Sudden fears
- Agitation/aggression/anger/anxiety
- Over compliance
- Socially withdrawn/isolation
- Excessive nightmares, changes in sleep pattern
- Sudden changes in behavior or moods
- Truancy/drop in academic performance

**Some Emotional Indicators**

- Mood swings
- Depression
- Discouraged
- Suicidal thinking/ attempts
- Difficulty concentrating
- Lack of trust
- Helplessness
- Self-blame
- Shame
- Confusion
- Sadness
- Low self esteem/self hatred

**Supporting the victim of child sexual abuse**

When disclosing children may:

- Hint in an indirect way
- Blame or project the issue onto a friend
- Journal or draw about the abuse
- Tell you they want to tell you a “big” secret

When a child discloses:

- Listen carefully to what the child is saying. Do not interrupt.
- Believe them!
- Reassure them that it is not their fault
- that they didn’t do anything to cause the abuse
- that they are not alone
- that telling someone was the right thing to do
- that you are glad they told you

Supporting them through the healing process

Meet children where they are…

**Communicating & educating**

Young children need to know:

- The correct names for their body parts, what they are for and when to use them. (Tells them about Ps and Vs…)
- No, Go, Tell
  - No one should touch the parts of our bodies covered by swimsuits unless to keep us clean and healthy.
  - Safe Touch / Not Safe Touch
  - Confusing Touch (Messed Up Touch)
- If someone breaks the touching rules, they have a right to say “no”, get away, and tell an adult.
- The difference between a bribe and a gift. They have a right to set their own personal boundaries.
Communicating & educating

Saying “No”: Children need help practicing to say “no”.

Sex education: Provide information about development and provide a safe environment to talk about sex – Be the “Sexpert”.

No “Secrets”: No secret games are allowed.

Honor requests for personal space.

Adults are not always right.

Communicating & educating

Privacy: Teach to knock and model that behavior.

Bedrooms and Bathrooms: By the first grade, children should use bedrooms and bathrooms at separate times.

Clothing: Be conscious of what is worn outside of the bedroom.

Tell them the truth.

Provide the moral compass without shaming. Know that they will see other messages and teach how to deal with them.

Model the behavior you speak.

Communicating & educating

All services are free and confidential

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