



CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE STATISTICS Signs of Child Sexual Abuse and What to Do

FACT:

Signs that a child is being sexually abused are often present, but they are often indistinguishable from other signs of childhood stress, distress or trauma.

Direct physical signs of sexual abuse are not common. However, when physical signs are present, they may include bruising, bleeding, redness and bumps, or scabs around the mouth, genitals or anus. Urinary tract infections, sexually transmitted diseases and abnormal vaginal or penile discharge are also warning signs.^{33,34}

Child sexual abuse victims often exhibit indirect physical signs, such as anxiety,^{33, 34} chronic stomach pain and headaches.^{35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41}

Emotional and behavioral signals are common among sexually abused children. Some of these are “too perfect” behavior, withdrawal, fear, depression, unexplained anger and rebellion.^{33, 34, 35, 42, 43, 44, 45}

FACT:

Use of alcohol or drugs at an early age can be a sign of trauma such as child sexual abuse.^{22, 23, 33, 34, 47, 48}

NOTE: Child sexual abuse victims may exhibit a wide range of immediate reactions, both in magnitude and form. Resilient children may not suffer serious consequences, whereas other children with the same experience may be highly traumatized. Some victims do not display emotional problems of any other immediate symptom in response to the abuse.

One of the most telling signs that sexual abuse is occurring is sexual behavior and language that is not age-appropriate.^{33, 34, 46}

FACT:

Child sexual abuse reports should be made to the state’s child protective service agency, the police, or both. For more information on what you can do if you suspect abuse call the Darkness to Light National Child Abuse Helpline.

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE REPORTS

SHOULD BE MADE TO THE STATES CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES AGENCY, THE POLICE **OR BOTH**

DARKNESS TO LIGHT

Some common consequences of trauma include nightmares, bedwetting, falling grades, cruelty to animals, bullying, being bullied, fire setting, runaway, and self-harm of any kind.^{33, 34}

NATIONAL CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE HELPLINE

Darkness to Light
1-866-FOR-LIGHT

Darkness to Light provides a toll-free number for individuals living in the United States who need local information and resources about sexual abuse. Any individual, child or adult who needs resources about sexual abuse can call the Helpline.

All calls are confidential and will be answered by a trained information and referral service representative. Helpline availability varies according to state and call center.

For more help related to child sexual abuse please visit:

http://www.d2l.org/site/c.4dICIJOkGcISE/b.6069265/k.29C/Get_Help_Related_to_Child_Sexual_Abuse.htm

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