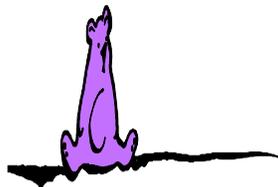


Resource Guide

for

Parents, Caregivers, and Service Providers working with Alaska Native Children

*How to help when someone you care about
has been sexually abused*



Developed for Alaska CARES, 4050 Lake Otis Parkway, Suite 205, Anchorage, Alaska 99508
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WHAT IS ALASKA C.A.R.E.S.?

Alaska C.A.R.E.S. is an acronym for Child Abuse Response and Evaluation Services and is located in Anchorage, Alaska. Alaska CARES is a Child Advocacy Center guided by National “standards of practice” and has provided services to children and their non-offending family members since 1996.

Child Advocacy Centers use a Multi-Disciplinary Team approach when responding to reports of suspected child sexual abuse. The Team members include law enforcement, child protective services, advocacy, mental health, medical, prosecution and the child advocacy center staff.

Alaska CARES offers services that focus on the special needs of a child when there is a suspicion of sexual abuse. The goal is to keep the child’s needs as the primary focus. Services include:

- A forensic interview (conducted by a law enforcement professional or an Office of Children’s Services worker with special training in forensic interviewing of children)
- A comprehensive medical examination (conducted by a pediatric nurse specialist)
- Mental health referrals (for child and family)
- Advocacy support (for child and family)
- Case coordination and brief follow-up
- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorders (FASD) screening/referrals (for the child)
- Medical referrals as needed (for the child)

Contact information:



WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE RESOURCE GUIDE?

Child sexual abuse involves secrecy, confusion and shame. This Resource Guide was designed to provide useful and practical information, ideas and tips to help with some of the difficult parts of this crime. In Alaska Native communities, nearly everyone is impacted in some way by child sexual abuse in the past or currently. This Guide provides a way to reach out, share the load and offers information to help with coping, and to support a healing process—whether as a child, a parent or caregiver, a service provider and in the community where people are impacted by child abuse.

Child sexual abuse impacts every race, culture, and religion; it happens in lower, middle and upper incomes, and in families' at all educational levels. Child sexual abuse happens to boys and girls, to children through teenagers and in every community throughout the world. Those are facts.

In rural Alaska, there are limited resources available to meet the investigation needs of child sexual abuse reports. When an Alaska Native child travels out of their village to come to an appointment at Alaska CARES, they are far away from home. The process can be threatening to the child and their family. Following the appointment, they usually return to their village. If the child was sexually abused, one of the most powerful factors that will help the child cope and begin a healing process will be a supportive family. A community that provides support to that child and family will also be a tremendous benefit and assist the child and family in the healing process.

It is good to teach children about personal safety, but it is NOT the child's job to keep safe. **It is an adult's job** to think of ways to protect children and keep them safe. **It is an adult's job** to take action when child sexual abuse is suspected or known. Most people don't automatically know "how to help when someone they care about has been sexually abused". This Resource Guide offers many different ideas and ways to help that are specific to this issue. Please share this Guide with other people you think it will help.



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March 1, 2005

Dear Readers:

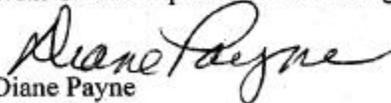
Under the Children's Justice Act Partnerships for Indian Communities, Alaska CARES has developed a much needed resource for Alaska Native people and those who work with Alaska Native families. Alaska Native children who have been victims of child sexual abuse and other serious abuses deserve and need well-informed and nurturing adults to help them heal and reach their potential as adults.

We know that generations of Alaska Native people have suffered terrible abuses and oppression. We also know that Alaska Native people continue to experience the highest rates of child abuse and assaults against adult Native women. These statistics are intolerable. In some communities, sexual abuse within families has been overlooked or excused to the point that some people view it as "normal". But I believe the overlooking or excusing these abuses is often because the "system" did not respond or intervene when Native children were being harmed, or interventions were traumatic and culturally offensive.

I have learned in my work with Alaska Native communities that sexual abuse of children is not culturally acceptable. This resource guide is designed especially for Native parents, caregivers and family members as well as for those involved with serving Native people. The basic information provided in this resource should help you work with children and their families toward healing from child sexual abuse. However, it is still important for you to learn more about this issue whenever you have an opportunity. Child sexual abuse affects children in many different ways; it also affects families and communities in different ways. You will need to learn about how to address this issue within the history of your own community.

Please remember that "asking for help is a sign of strength" and whether you are a parent or a service provider, each question you ask is important. Your commitment to helping children and families is important. If you don't get the answer you need - find someone else to ask!

With Great Respect and Warm Regards,


Diane Payne
Children's Justice Specialist

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Dear Parents, Caregivers and Community Providers:

If you have ever worried about or wondered if a child you know is being sexually abused, you know it can raise a variety of feelings and challenges about what to do. Child sexual abuse can be complicated. It can raise feelings of shame and confusion. Sometimes there is a history of child sexual abuse within the family and maybe this crime isn't acknowledged in the community. This Resource Guide was developed to help you whether a parent of a child, a caregiver, or a service provider. This Resource Guide was designed to provide information to each of you as you travel the path of helping children, families and others move forward to learn coping skills and begin a healing process. Some of the information is designed to be used right now and some maybe more useful after some time has passed following the visit at Alaska CARES.

When an Alaska Native child travels from their village to Alaska CARES, the parent or caregiver that comes with the child is given this Resource Guide. Many people find that after the appointment at Alaska CARES, they have new questions, or they may have forgotten what was talked about, or even that their memory of

what happened or what was said is blurred. All those responses are quite normal. Please revisit the information within this *Guide* as often as is helpful to you. If you were not at an Alaska CARES appointment with a child, then someone asked us to send you a copy of this Resource Guide because they believe you would want this information and you would want to help.

The Resource Guide provides a variety of information related to questions and concerns people often have about child sexual abuse—parents, caregivers and service providers within your village or Region—Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) workers, Health Clinic workers and Community Health Aides, and Behavioral Health Aides. If this issue affects you personally, being able to be supportive to a child may depend on your own ability to have worked through or be able to talk about your own abuse. Information for adult survivors is also included in the *Guide*.

Research shows that the most important factor in a child's healing process is a supportive adult. But just what does that mean? There are ways you already support children every day. This *Guide* may offer some new or different ideas to build supports for children and adults within the village.

Respectfully,

Alaska C.A.R.E.S.

Section 1.

For Parents, Caregivers and Service Providers

MAPPING YOUR COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Today's date: _____

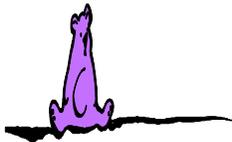
Name of Alaska CARES worker: _____

Name of Parent or Caregiver: _____

Parents/Caregivers: When an Alaska Native child travels from their village to Anchorage for an appointment at Alaska CARES, it can be a confusing time to the parent or caregiver that travels with their child. The next page was designed especially for you—to think about people who will be helpful when you return to your village. It provides a way to explore any specific questions, possible concerns or worries you may have about when you return home.

Service Providers: This page was designed to help answer questions, explore worries or concerns a parent or caregiver had during the appointment at Alaska CARES. If you are working with a family, please consider asking the parent or caregiver about the information on this page; ask how they are doing and what they might need from you or other services providers.

Please turn to the next page.



MAPPING YOUR COMMUNITY RESOURCES

1. Who will believe you when you return home?

2. Who else can you talk to that will keep the information confidential?

3. Who else will support you during this time? _____

4. Who will believe your child? _____

5. Who will care for you when you need a break? _____

6. What are you afraid of when you return home? _____

Gossip, confidentiality, your personal safety, and your child's safety? _____

7. Who will you call if you don't feel safe? _____

8. How can you prepare for these safety concerns? _____

9. What will you tell people when you return home? _____

10. Who might you see while in Anchorage? _____

11. What will you tell that person about your being in Anchorage? _____

12. When you return home, what will you say to people if they blame you or your child? _____

13. What else do you need at this time? _____

14. Is there someone you want me to call for you or that we can call together? _____

15. Other questions or concerns or problems? _____

WHAT DO I DO DURING THE INVESTIGATION?

Parent/Caregiver: It can be confusing during an investigation. What happens during an investigation? What can you do and say? What is your part? What might get in the way of a thorough investigation? The following list offers ideas to help answer the question, “What do I do during the investigation?”

Service Provider: This information offers ideas of how to be supportive to children, parents and caregivers in this situation.

- **The abuser is responsible for their actions.** If you find you are blaming the child or yourself, please know that this is a common thought people have. **IT IS NOT THE CHILD OR YOUR FAULT.**
- **As the Parent or Caregiver, your cooperation with Law Enforcement and the Office of Children’s Services (OCS) is important and valuable.** Law enforcement and OCS are responsible to investigate suspected child sexual abuse reports. They are helped by your cooperation.
- **Do you need to talk with someone before your child is interviewed?** The Alaska CARES staff will talk with you before your child is interviewed. Talk with the CARES staff about your questions or concerns. They will be a resource to you.
- **Let the trained interviewer at Alaska CARES interview your child.** The interviewer is trained on how to talk with children. As a parent/caregiver, it is helpful to tell your child:
 - “It is important to talk with some people about what happened to you and this person is okay to talk to”
 - “This persons’ job is to talk with children and help protect them. It is okay to tell them what happened”
 - “Some people need to ask a lot of questions and try to collect the facts. Lots of boys and girls have had this happen to them too. You are the only one who can tell what happened to you. It is okay to talk about with this person”.

(If these words don’t sound like you, talk with someone and find your own words to let your child know it is okay to talk with the interviewer.)

- **Don’t ask your child to tell you what happened.** It is good for your child to hear you say:
 - “I believe you”
 - “I’m sorry this happened to you”
 - “I’m glad I know”
 - “I will do my best to take care of you, now that I know”
 - “I am upset, but not with you”
- **Don’t confront the person who abused your child.** It is the job of either Law Enforcement or OCS to investigate the abuse. Talking to the abuser could damage the chances of prosecution—by letting the abuser know they are a suspect. Confronting the abuser could cause them to get an attorney before the police investigate.

- **Keep your child safe.** Your child should not be with a “*suspected or known sex offender*” or be left in situations where the abuse happened before (going to the abuser’s home, babysat by the abuser, etc). Some people find it a good time to re-think “what is safe?” (Read [Safety Tips and More Safety Tips for Children](#) & [Talking to Parents and Family Members about Sexual Abuse](#)).
- **Help the child get help.** You may want to “just forget the abuse happened”. Many children and families benefit from counseling or treatment after sexual abuse. Without treatment, children try to put meaning to the abuse in their own way; they may blame themselves for the abuse, develop an unhealthy self-image and negative identity, and behavior problems, which can last into adulthood. (Read below for a definition of treatment).
- **If the child wants to talk to you about what happened, be a listener but don’t ask for details.** If you believe the child is telling you something they didn’t tell the investigators or is talking about a different abuser, please tell the local Police, Alaska State Troopers and/or OCS. If your Tribe also handles abuse issues, you may also tell the ICWA worker.
- **Decide how and what you want to tell people.** Some people will want to help and others may blame you or your child, or say hurtful things. It is okay to tell people “I don’t want to talk about it, thank you”. It is good to tell trusted family and friends what you need; they won’t know—you can tell them you need someone to listen, someone you can cry with, someone who will drive you somewhere, someone to tell you that you can get through this.
- **Keep to your normal discipline and household routines during this time.** It is very reassuring to children when daily routines and limits are set and maintained. Children need to be children. The child may not want to talk about it anymore—this is okay.
- **Respect the child’s privacy and don’t discuss what the child disclosed with others.** This is very important--gossip hurts others and may lead to a child feeling “the abuse was their fault”, “that they are damaged”. Some people may even exclude, ignore or ban the child because they don’t believe what happened.

What does “treatment” mean? Sometimes when sexual abuse happens within a family or the abuse happened over a long period of time, outside help is necessary. What you do as a parent is helpful—you listen, reassure and provide comfort to your child. But a counselor with special training to help children who were sexually abused can be objective and help a child work through issues too painful for you to tackle together. A good counselor creates a safe atmosphere where a child can feel free to show hidden fears and anger. Treatment can vary from a once a week appointment, to an “in-patient” setting away from home. It really depends on what you want and what your child needs. Talk with the Behavioral Health Aide or the Health Clinic Provider if you have questions. **Special note:** During the different stages in a child’s development, there will be stress. Symptoms or behaviors from the abuse are likely to surface again and the child may benefit from counseling. This is very common and normal.

Parent/caregiver: If you experienced sexual abuse as a child, this maybe an extra hard time for you. If you feel unable to meet your child’s needs at this time, please ask for help from your family, friends, the Behavioral Health Aide, the Community Health Aide or ICWA Worker. Without help, it is very easy to get needs and emotions related to your own experience confused with your child’s needs and emotions.

WHO IS IN CHARGE OF THE INVESTIGATION?

Parents/Caregiver/Service Provider: This question is frequently asked and the answer can depend on the village or Region. The following information explains the process designed within Alaska when there is a report of suspected child sexual abuse. It answers the question of who is in charge of the investigation and who else may be contacted during the investigation.

Who is in CHARGE of the investigation?

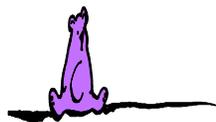
- ✓ Law Enforcement—the local Police or Alaska State Troopers
- ✓ Child Protection—State of Alaska/Office of Children’s Services (OCS).

Law Enforcement takes the lead when it is a criminal case (has a law been broken?) OCS takes the lead if it is a civil case (is a child in danger?) If it is both a criminal and civil case, the two agencies are to work together.

Who else may be contacted during the investigation?

- ◆ local/regional District Attorney’s Office
- ◆ a Child Advocacy Center, if in the community or region (see Resources Section for the Child Advocacy Centers in Alaska)
- ◆ the Regional Hospital or Health Clinic
- ◆ the Women’s Shelter
- ◆ Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Worker
- ◆ Community Health Aide

Many people feel confused or angry about the investigation process. Be sure to ask questions of the Alaska CARES staff, the law enforcement agency investigating your case, the Advocate and OCS. Keep asking until you are satisfied that your questions are answered.



TALKING WITH PARENTS AND FAMILY MEMBERS ABOUT SEXUAL ABUSE

Parents and Caregivers: Information that is factual about child sexual abuse is helpful to parents and caregivers as they teach, nurture and guide their children. The following points are offered to support you as the parent and caregiver of children who need you to help protect them and take action when they can not.

Service Provider: In your role as a Service Provider in the village, you offer educational services in your specialized field to different age family members. There are times when your help, support and knowledge about this topic will help people in the community begin to find ways to talk about sexual abuse and foster a healing process. People often have questions about this topic and need to find honest answers. The following points are often common areas of interest to people about sexual abuse.

Talking about sexual abuse, whether to raise awareness to prevent it, or share concerns that it may have happened, is not easy. It is not comfortable to discuss. But it is very important to talk—to help victims feel safe to disclose sexual abuse, to get help to heal, and to send a message to the abusers that it is not acceptable. Everyone has a role in stopping the silence and pain, and supporting the healing process.

Children have the right and a need to trust that adults in their lives will protect them from dangerous situations and people. Adults need to take responsibility to guide children. For example,

- *You would not leave a small child who had been burned to tend a wood stove. Rather you would instruct the child on respect for the stove and proper use.*
- *You would not ask children to hike over the mountain and find their own trail to the other side. Rather you walk with the child to develop a sense of direction.*

Yet parents often do not prepare their children for dangers. A child does just naturally have the “equipment” or information needed to protect her/him and know how to respond. Children cannot be given general statements like “don’t talk to strangers” or “tell me if you feel bad” and be expected to apply those to situations where they might be sexually abused. Taking it a step further, parents need to take the time and talk with their children about their bodies belonging to them and about personal safety.

Please turn to the next page for Points You Can Pass on to Parents and Caregivers.

POINTS YOU CAN PASS ON TO PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS:

- ❖ **All sex offenders are at risk of re-offending;** treatment may have helped them re-direct those urges but alcohol, drugs and some situations may contribute to relapse and another sexual assault.
- ❖ **Sex offenders who were convicted as adults must be registered in Alaska;** if the offense was committed in another state or before 1994, they may not be registered.
- ❖ **A small percentage of people accused of sex offenses have actually been convicted.** Until recent DNA technology, specialized forensic medical exams and new prosecution strategies, allegations of child sexual abuse often did not lead to such charges.
- ❖ **Children learn to trust, rely on and believe what older children and adults tell them.** When they spend a lot of time with older children and adults, they often cooperate with things they are told to do without resisting, even when it scares or hurts them and makes them feel bad.
- ❖ **Most people who sexually abuse children are people the child knows and people whom their parents approve of.**
- ❖ **Sex abusers trick, threaten or bribe their victims into keeping silent.** Children believe the abusers can really do the things they say they will do, no matter how outrageous it may sound.
- ❖ **Many children do not tell until they are older and feel more able to protect themselves.** If a child is left to fend for him/herself, make grown-up decisions, left in the care of many different individuals, and is not convinced their parent will respond to their needs (even small things like being there at bedtime or helping them with school), then a child will not likely believe that the parent will protect them or stop the abuser. This is especially true if the abuser is someone the parent likes, spends time with, or is a family member.
- ❖ **When children do tell about abuse, they don't tell the whole or all the details at once.** They "try out" the information on the adult first to see their reaction. Sometimes they don't remember all of it until a skilled interviewer is able to help them remember.

Please turn to the next page for more points

Continued

POINTS YOU CAN PASS ON TO PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS:

- ❖ **Children RARELY make up stories about sexual abuse.** A child who talks about sexual things outside his/her developmental level most likely has either been abused or been exposed to sexually explicit information or acts.

- ❖ **It is okay for a parent to refuse to allow someone to be around his/her child who has either been convicted or suspected of child sexual abuse.** Even supervised contact with known or suspected child abusers may lead the child to believe that the person is safe. Clearly tell your child when it is NOT OKAY to be with a person or ONLY OKAY if the child's parent is present.

- ❖ **If someone gets offended because you don't want your child with him or her unless you are there—be suspicious.** Individuals who want to spend more time with children than people their own age should also cause concern. Individuals that hang around schools, play areas, etc. and just watch children should always cause concern.

- ❖ **Always ask your child what they think of different people and LISTEN to their answer.** The child might tell you directly that people make them uncomfortable. Don't deny their "internal warning" or "natural ability" to recognize that sense of being uncomfortable. Don't make them do things that make them uncomfortable such as hugging, kissing, or sitting on someone's lap—if they don't want to. It may be their inner warning sign, or intuition that protects them when you aren't close by.

Used with permission. Developed by Diane Payne, Children's Justice Specialist. Tribal Law and Policy Institute, 4201 Tudor Center Drive #225, Anchorage, Alaska 99508. Phone: 907-770-1950. Email: diane@tribal-institute.org, Web Site: www.tribal-institute.org

Section 2.

Helping Children

SIGNS THAT A CHILD *MAY BE* BEING SEXUALLY ABUSED

Parents, Caregivers: This list gives some **Signs** that a child may be in a sexually abusive relationship. Children seldom tell directly with words, but they may “show us with Signs”. The nature of child sexual abuse means secrecy, confusion, manipulation, trickery, threats, and deceit. Children are primarily abused by someone known and trusted in the family. Adults must figure out ways to be watchful and be alert for **Signs** in order to protect children and intervene when sexual abuse happens.

Service Providers: This list provides **Signs** about child sexual abuse and offers information that may help in your role of providing services to parents, children and caregivers in the community. The more that people can find ways to talk about this, work together to protect children and enhance ways to intervene when children are not safe, the community will become a safer and healthier place for all it’s members.

- Sudden fear of a particular place or person
- Extreme mood swings, unexplained depressions and excessive crying
- Moodiness and withdrawal from normal family activity and affection
- and the opposite, extreme clinginess to a “safe” family members and extreme fearfulness when separated from that person
- Sudden changes in personality
- Behavior and other problems in school (grades dropping, etc)
- Running away from home
- Secretiveness
- Telling lies
- Suddenly has money (from unexplained source)
- Self-destructive behavior
- Hyperactivity
- Fear of the dark and fear of going to bed (new demands for a night light)
- Problems with sleep – can’t sleep, nightmares, bedwetting, sleepwalking, etc.
- Changes in eating habits
- Unexplained stomach upsets and aches
- Difficulty at bath time
- Changes in bathroom or toilet-training habits
- Regressive behavior such as thumb sucking or signs of dependency that were earlier outgrown
- Pain, itching, redness, soreness, unusual discharge from genital area
- Difficulty in walking (limping) or sitting
- Bruises, rashes, cuts, and other hurts that child cannot or seems unwilling to explain
- Torn, stained or bloody underwear
- Inappropriate displays of affection and sexual “acting out”
- Use of sexual terminology not normal to age level of peers
- New names for body parts
- Unusual interest in sexual matters
- Sudden acting out—aggressive or rebellious behavior – against siblings, or other family members, with friends, violent play with dolls and other toys
- Hurting animals

***Remember that these can be signs of other things and must be explored. Talk with your Health Clinic Provider, Community Health Aide or Behavioral Health Aide for more assistance.**

From Heart Healers, Inc., <http://www.angelfire.com>

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I SUSPECT A CHILD IS BEING SEXUALLY ABUSED?

Parents, Caregivers, Service Providers: Sometimes people have “worries, a concern or a funny feeling” that a child is being harmed. After reading **Signs that a child *may be being sexually abused**, you may have some different ways to think about how children may “show us” they are being harmed. If you have reason to think a child is not safe, the following list will help guide your next step. Remember, child sexual abuse is against the law, is harmful to children and children cannot stop the abuse by themselves.

- 1. If a child says they were abused, try to remain calm.**
- 2. Reassure the child that what happened was not their fault.** Tell them they did the right thing by telling and that you believe them. Tell the child that you will only talk to the adults whose job it is to help keep children safe.
- 3. Report to the professionals who are mandated to investigate.** Make a report of suspected abuse to the local Police, or Alaska State Troopers and the local or Regional OCS Office. Call a Child Advocacy Center closest to your village. They can help to sort out what needs to happen next in terms of the investigation. Services at Child Advocacy Centers include a special forensic interview, a comprehensive medical exam, advocacy services, and mental health referrals.
- 4. Know that children can learn to cope and start a healing process after sexual abuse, especially if they are believed and have the support of a caring parent and/or family members.**
- 5. Get help for yourself.** It is often painful, as a parent or caregiver, to know that your child was sexually abused. It can cause further harm to a child if the abuse is minimized or if the parent has irrational fears related to the abuse. Mental Health Counselors can help parents deal with their own feelings about the abuse so that the parent can protect and support their children.

HOW DOES SEXUAL ABUSE HARM CHILDREN?

Parents, Caregivers: This is such an important question to ask. Understanding this is important for all parents and especially for parents and caregivers in a child's life who may feel overwhelmed and want to put this experience behind them. Parents or caregivers may think the child will just forget about the abuse—children do not forget. The list on this page describes some behaviors and ways children can begin to think about themselves and the world after they have been sexually abused. Without help, a child's normal development can be interrupted, both in day-to-day life and into their future. There are examples of future behaviors, health problems, and ways of thinking an adult may have who was sexually abused. Examples of ways to help a child cope and begin to heal are provided, as well as ideas for adults.

Service Providers: In your work with children, parents and/or caregiver, you provide information, support, and other services to help them. Understanding how child sexual abuse can effect the child both today and as adults is important. Knowing what a child needs to cope and heal can help them continue in their growth and development and can foster a healthy self-image and self-esteem. The information is provided to help support your role with families in the community.

Behaviors and ways of thinking for children who were sexually abused

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Lower self-esteem
- Easily agitated or unsettled behavior
- Nightmares and frightening dreams
- Repeated play—acting out parts of the abuse
- “Acting out” sexual behaviors that are not usual or common for their age or peer group
- Cruelty to people and animals
- Running away
- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Hurting themselves, attempting suicide
- Loss or reduced trust in friendships, family
- Poor social skills
- Blame themselves for negative events
- Feeling different from their peers
- Feeling “Too much” or overly guilty and/or shame
- See themselves as helpless and life as “dangerous”

Please turn to the next page and read, What do children need?

WHAT DO CHILDREN NEED?

1. The non-offending parent who believes their child's report of sexual abuse and provides support after the sexual abuse is brought to light will help the child now and in the future. If the parent is not available, then supportive relationships with other caring and safe adults can lower mental and emotional distress and behavioral problems.
2. Seek help. Learn coping skills and begin a healing process. It is very important to the child and the family. (Please read "Does my child need counseling?")
3. Let people help and provide support. Join a Survivor's Support Group. If there isn't one in your community, ask the Behavioral Health Aide, ICWA Worker or Community Health Aide to help start a Survivor's Support Group. Is there another informal group that would be a safe, confidential place to talk about this? Ask people to help. Many people don't know how to help or what you need but will help if asked.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Here are some important facts about child sexual abuse.

- Child sexual abuse is not usually a violent act. It is more typically a gradual process of sexualizing (or grooming) the relationship between the child and abuser over time.
- It is a **violation** of the child's very nature, which is to be vulnerable, curious, trusting, and dependent. Because trickery, manipulation, deceit, coercion, secrecy, threats, play, or bribery are part of child sexual abuse, a disruption to the child's normal development can occur and increase the risk for problems in both childhood and adult life.
- Supportive adults and counseling for the child and family can help with coping and starting a healing process.
- Child sexual abuse usually occurs without a witness. Often, there isn't physical evidence, so it can be difficult to detect.
- Child sexual abuse does not impact all children in the very same way.
- Multiple episodes of sexual abuse are very common.
- Even if a child was sexually abused one time, it still was a **violation** to that child.
- Ignoring, minimizing, denying, hoping it will go away, or not talking about it does not help a child cope, begin a healing process, and continue to develop in a healthy ways.

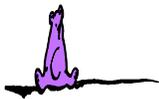
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WHAT ARE SOME FUTURE BEHAVIORS, HEALTH PROBLEMS, AND WAYS OF THINKING CHILDREN WHO WERE SEXUALLY ABUSED HAVE WHEN THEY BECOME ADULTS?

If the child (and their supportive family members) do not learn positive coping skills and begin a healing process, behaviors, health problems and ways of thinking can continue into adulthood. Some of these include:

- Anxiety in everyday life
- Depression, thoughts of suicide and suicide attempts
- Anxiety related to sexual relationships and sexuality in general
- Negative thoughts about their body and low self-esteem
- Increased behaviors such as alcohol abuse, drug abuse, harm to self
- Eating disorders such as obesity, bingeing and self-induced vomiting
- Increased risk to overall health
- Increased mental health needs
- Difficulty trusting others
- See their body as damaged
- View the world is an unsafe place
- Difficulty choosing a supportive, safe partners
- Difficulty in forming and maintaining close relationships

Help for the Parents, Caregivers, and Service Providers: If you were abused as a child and suffer from these symptoms, please ask for help from a trained professional in your village or Region who has experience working with adults who were sexually abused. Sometimes people worry that because this crime happened to them as a child, that they will also become an offender. Most people do not. Again, if this is a concern, talk with a trained professional.



From the National Center for PTSD. <http://www.ncptsd.org>
The APSAC Handbook on Child Maltreatment, Second Edition, 2002. Sage Publications. and
Child Abuse, Second Edition, David A. Wolf, 199. Sage Publications.

WHAT CHILDREN NEED TO HEAL?

Parents, Caregivers: This is an important question to find answers to. Child sexual abuse takes many forms and does not effect all children in the very same way. It may be helpful to think about it as learning both coping skills and a lifelong process of healing. Special needs may arise at various stages in their development and even into their adult lives. Helping children learn healthy coping and self-care skills is the job of the parent and caregiver. Just like saying it did not happen, ignoring it, minimizing it, and blaming the child, are harmful ways to deal with the abuse, figuring out healthy ways to cope is critical to the child's well-being. The following list offers some suggestions.

Service Providers: The following list provides some suggestions to help a child who experienced sexual abuse. If you are working with a family, perhaps this list will help you as you provide support and care to the family.

FEELINGS

Your child may have a lot of feelings including fear, anger, confusion, and sadness. Tell your child that you love her/him and are glad she/he can talk about feelings. Help your child find ways to express their feelings in a safe way (beading, talking with an Elder, going for a walk, pounding on a cushion, yelling into a pillow, drawing, writing in a journal, coloring).

Help your child figure out how to comfort him/herself when upset. Ask: "what would help you feel better?" Or suggest: "Let's sit together and read a story"; "draw a picture"; "tell me a story"; "write a story", ask "Can I have a big hug?" Pretend you are dogs and "shake off" the bad feelings (just like dogs shake water off their backs). Be creative and have fun.

Find someone you can talk to about your feelings. This is tough on you, the parent or caregiver, so take good care of yourself too.

BEHAVIORS

Children may test the limits, cling to you, or seem distant. This is normal. Some behaviors may get worse before they get better. Your reaction to those behaviors can make a big difference. Maintain a regular and structured routine with limits and boundaries. This will help your child feel safe. It lets the child know they have a parent/caregiver who will keep their world secure.

BUILD ON THE CHILD'S STRENGTHS

Help your child by recognizing that they are being good and complimenting those good behaviors. For example, I like the way you helped your sister; thank you for setting the table; I appreciate your hanging up your coat, putting your boots away, etc.

Please turn to the next page.

BALANCE

Keep balance between supporting the child verses overemphasizing that the child was a victim of abuse. There is a difference between knowing the abuse happened, that a child can survive, learn coping skills and a healing process, verses talking about the child as a victim and having that become a part of their identity.

HAVE FUN

It is okay to take breaks, laugh and have fun. Do something special together; go fishing, visit a friend. You will get through this and taking a break from the serious stuff can really help sometimes.

COPING AND HEALING

Children can learn coping skills and begin the healing process with a supportive environment. Some children benefit from counseling. If you would like the names of professionals who work with children, talk with the Behavioral Health Aides in your village or the person who travels to your village and provides counseling services.

HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

Children can learn to ignore their own feelings in uncomfortable situations, instead of recognizing them as a “warning sign”. It is important to teach all children that their personal boundaries need to be respected. It is very important to the child who has been sexually abused because most had their personal boundaries invaded repeatedly. Here are a few examples of how to teach children healthy boundaries:

- Knock and ask before going into a child or adult’s bedroom,
- If they don’t want a kiss from grandma or uncle, help them find a polite way to say no.
- Tell them: “your feelings will tell you when things don’t seem quite right” and
- “Listen to your feelings”.

Help children make decisions about their bodies. Say,

- “If someone wants to pat your bottom, you can tell them not to”,
- “You deserve privacy when you need it”,
- “Your body belongs to you”,
- “Ask before getting or giving a hug”.

Background Information for Parents, Caregivers and Service Providers:

The most important factor for helping a child after they have been sexually abused is that they are believed and supported by close, trustworthy adults. Children who were sexually abused were in some way tricked, manipulated, and deceived in ways that exploited the nature of what it means to be a child.

The child may have received gifts, been threatened, or bribed. Children can believe the abuse was their fault or that they could have stopped it. Children who have been sexually abused can have bad, or confusing, or even mixed experiences. Children need to be told and shown in many ways that they are loved, respected and special. No matter what ways were used to sexually abuse a child, it is NEVER the child’s fault. The person/abuser is the one responsible.

DOES MY CHILD NEED COUNSELING?

Parents, Caregivers: Counseling is often recommended for a child when they have been sexually abused. It can also benefit the family. Counselors who know about child sexual abuse can teach “coping” skills and begin the process of healing. This is important to a child’s self-esteem, self-image and their continued development. The family’s role is critical too. In Alaska, there are many villages that do not have a counselor living in the village. Please use the list that follows to think about your child and their needs. Talk with the Behavioral Health Aides, Community Health Aide, or your Health Clinic Provider about your questions or worries. Ask them to help you figure out if your child needs counseling or if you want family counseling.

Service providers: Please read the following list. Talk with parents or caregivers about these different questions and explore any concerns or worries. If the answers were yes, then counseling services would benefit the child and family. Please help the family with arranging the counseling services.

Some children may need specific counseling services when they were sexually abused. The following questions will guide you in thinking about your child and if they need counseling.

_____ **Does your child seem depressed?** Children may have unexplained mood swings. Does your child seem to be sad for weeks, doesn’t want to be with friends and family, wants to be alone, has lost interest in things they enjoyed in the past?

_____ **Has your child’s behavior regressed or changed?** Sometimes children go through a period of time when their behavior regresses from what is usual or normal for them. There may be a change in their eating, sleeping, playing habits, they may begin to wet the bed, talk baby talk, or cling to you. This maybe a temporary response following the disclosure of child abuse.

_____ **Does your child seem anxious?** Does your child appear to be jumpy, worried, can’t eat, can’t sleep, can’t concentrate or stares off into space.

_____ **Do you think, see, hear or feel that your child may hurt her/himself or others (people, animals)?** (Are they running away, cutting themselves, using drugs or alcohol, huffing, angry?)

_____ **Is your child “acting out” sexually with other children or adults?**

These questions are designed to help you think about how your child is doing. *You are not being asked or expected to be your child’s counselor.* You may not know the answers to the questions—BUT you are the person closest to your child. If you have questions or worries about your child’s well being, talk to the Behavioral Health Aide, the Community Health Aide, or your Health Clinic Provider. These people will help you sort out what may be part of your child’s coping and healing process or a need for additional help.

SAFETY TIPS FOR CHILDREN

Parent, Caregiver: You are the primary teacher and role model for your children. These Safety Tips provide examples and ways to teach children about safety. Look for everyday ways to reinforce these with your children.

Service Provider: In your work with Parents and Caregivers, look for ways to help build and reinforce these Safety Tips for children. It is the everyday kind of activities that make these the most meaningful to children, parents and caregivers.

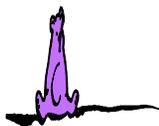
1. DON'T MAKE YOUR CHILDREN

- ✓ Hug or kiss someone if they do not want to. This teaches children they have to hug or kiss someone when they are told to. It may teach them to ignore their own feelings of what is unsafe, or confusing.
- ✓ Don't tell children they have to do "everything" the babysitter or the boyfriend or older brother, etc. says. Children hear things in a concrete way. Children may think they "have to do whatever" they are told. Sexual abuse is about power, trickery, deceit, and secrets.
- ✓ Never leave your child with a known or suspected sex offender, even if the person has been through treatment.

2. SEE A DOCTOR IF

- ✓ Your child has pain or bleeding in their private areas
- ✓ Your child has irritation or discharge from their private areas

What is child sexual abuse? Anytime a child, teenager, or adult uses a child in a sexual way, it is abuse. Sexual contact may be gentle or painful. Clothes may be on or off. Child sexual abuse includes sexual touching, kissing, play, showing of pornography or taking pictures. Sexual abuse is **never** a child's fault. Children cannot give consent to sex with an older child, a teenager, or an adult.



MORE SAFETY TIPS FOR CHILDREN

Parents. Caregivers: Sometimes parents wonder how to bring up personal safety with their child. The following Tips offer a way to introduce safety with your child and then talk about the Safety Rules. This can be used in everyday situations such as after dinner, sitting together, etc.

How to introduce safety rules to children: Most grown-ups are nice to children and care about what happens to them. But every now and then there are grown-ups who try to touch a child in a way that is **not okay**. It might be a person you know and trust, like a family member, a teacher or neighbor. These are Safety Rules for children and young people.

- **Your body belongs to you.**
- **No one has the right to touch you**, if you don't want them to. That includes teachers, grandparents, uncles, aunts, mom and dad, the babysitter, your brother or sister, religious leaders, the coach—everyone.
- **There are places on your body that are private**—like the places a swimming suit covers. Adults or bigger kids should not try to touch private parts, unless it is the doctor and your parent or guardian is in the room with you.
- **Trust your feelings.** If something feels funny, uncomfortable or confusing to you, **YOU CAN SAY NO**. It is good to say **NO** to an adult or bigger kid who tries to do something that is not okay or tells you it is “a special secret”. Sometimes children say **NO** to confusing or unwanted touch and the abuse still happens.
- **Tell someone you trust what happened**, even if the person said it was a secret or that they would hurt you or someone else if you told.
- **If someone does something to you that feels wrong or confusing**, they may tell you it is a “special secret” and make you promise not to tell. **TELL! It is OKAY to break this kind of promise.** The person who made you promise knows that they are doing something wrong.
- **Keep telling until someone listens.** Some adults do not know what to do when a young person tells them about sexual abuse. An adult may tell you not to talk about it, or to forget it. They may even tell you that you made up the story. **DON'T GIVE UP.** Find someone to tell who will help.

Used with permission. Developed by Diane Payne, Children's Justice Specialist. Tribal Law and Policy Institute, 4201 Tudor Center Drive #225, Anchorage, Alaska 99508. Phone: 907-770-1950. Email: diane@tribal-institute.org, Web Site: www.tribal-institute.org

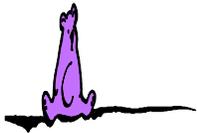
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More Safety Tips for Children

Remember, adults, teenagers, and older children should:

- ✓ NEVER ask you to keep a “secret” about touching.
- ✓ NEVER touch you anywhere that is private, the places your bathing suit covers.
- ✓ NEVER ask you to touch them anywhere private.
- ✓ NEVER reach under your clothes or try to get you to take off your clothes.
- ✓ NEVER ask you to take off their clothes.
- ✓ NEVER ask you to keep a secret about something wrong.
- ✓ NEVER try to take pictures of you without clothes.
- ✓ NEVER ask you to touch yourself or other children somewhere private.

Other ways to build personal safety: Look for other ways to teach children about personal safety. As a parent or caregiver, you are a role model for children. Think and talk together about who is trustworthy, that being hurt and hurting others is not okay—whether with mean or cruel words, unwanted touches such as hitting, pushing, kicking etc and unwanted sexual touch. Personal safety means all kinds of ways to feel and be safe, whether sexually, physically, emotionally, spiritually, etc.



MY 8 RULES FOR SAFETY

Parents, Caregivers: Teaching children MY 8 RULES for SAFETY can be an important way for them to learn about what is safe, what isn't safe, and who to tell if something happens. In your role as a parent or caregiver, these rules give a way to introduce the topic of personal safety to your children. Finding ways to talk about safety will help break the silence that feeds child sexual abuse.

Service Providers: Please consider posting these rules in your office area and/or looking for ways to talk with parents, caregivers and children to reinforce the rules. Talking about this with children helps them to learn about safety. It can also help adults in the community build and reinforce safety nets for the children.

MY 8 RULES FOR SAFETY

1. Before I go anywhere, I always check first with my parents or the person in charge. I tell them where I am going, how I will get there, who will be going with me and when I'll be back.
2. I check first for permission from my parents before getting into a car or leaving with anyone—even someone I know. I check first before changing plans or accepting money, gifts or drugs without my parent's knowledge.
3. It is safer for me to be with other people when going places or playing outside. I always use the buddy system.
4. I say NO if someone tries to touch me in ways that make me feel frightened, uncomfortable or confused. Then I GO TELL a grown-up I trust what happened.
5. I know it is not my fault if someone touches me in a way that is not okay. I don't have to keep secrets about those touches.
6. I trust my feelings and talk with grown-ups about problems that are too big for me to handle on my own. Lots of people care about me and will listen to me and believe me. I am not alone.
7. It is never too late to ask for help. I can keep asking until I get the help that I need.
8. I am a special person and I deserve to feel safe.

REMEMBER:

- ✓ **Check first**
- ✓ **Use the buddy system**
- ✓ **Say No, then Go and Tell**
- ✓ **Listen to my feelings**
- ✓ **Talk with grown-ups I trust about my problems and concerns**

From the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, 210 Wilson Blvd, #550, Arlington, VA 22201-3052.

WHAT IS HEALTHY AND NORMAL CHILD SEXUAL BEHAVIOR?

Parents, Caregivers: This question is one many parents and caregivers think about at different stages in their child development. All people, including children, are sexual beings. It is natural for children to be interested in their own and other people's bodies. A certain amount of exploration is normal. The following information will help you evaluate your child's sexual behaviors. This information is given to support you as the parent and/or caregiver. Your beliefs and cultural values are of primary importance and will also guide the way you teach your child. Many people (parents/caregivers) did not take child development classes in school that included human sexuality and yet as a parent, you are the primary teacher of your child. Please use the following information if it is helpful to you as a parent or caregiver.

Service Provider: This information is offered as a guideline in thinking about a child's sexual behaviors and what is normal and healthy development. Parents' beliefs and cultural values are primary. As a service provider, you may have opportunities to support parents and caregivers that have questions about what is normal and healthy sexual behavior for children. Please use this information if it is helpful to you in your role.

Healthy sex play involves:

- ✓ **Information Gathering:** Looking, touching, trying on different gender roles.
- ✓ **Similarity:** Children of similar age, size, and developmental level.
- ✓ **Friendship:** Children have an on going, mutually enjoyable play relationship.
- ✓ **Voluntary:** Children play together voluntarily.
- ✓ **Light-hearted and spontaneous:** Children may be embarrassed by the play, but they do not usually feel ashamed, guilty or fearful.
- ✓ **Lessons or stops:** Children's play ends when they are asked to stop.
- ✓ **Balanced:** Children's interest in sex is balanced by interest in other areas of life.

Note of Caution: If a child was sexually abused, then more guidance and supervision maybe needed than what is given in the above list. Please read the page on "Does my child need counseling?" Talk with the trained Behavioral Health Aide in your community if you need more help.

From UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN'S BEHAVIORS, WHAT IS NATURAL AND HEALTHY, by Toni Cavanagh Johnson, Ph.D. (www.TcavJohn.com).

Section 3.

Self-Care

HOW DO I KNOW IF I AM “TOO” STRESSED? WARNING SIGNS

Parents/caregivers: Stress can build-up in a person over time. Often there are behaviors or symptoms that warn us of this build-up. Stress can even make a person physically ill. This list offers a way to think about your day-to-day life and how you are doing with your emotions, your physical health, your behaviors and thoughts. Circle the things you feel daily and once a week and then read the box at the bottom of this page.

Service Providers: Sometimes the people you provide services to may feel like things in life are piling up on them and that they are having trouble finding enjoyment in life. With parents and caregivers, look at the list together and see if there are emotions, behaviors, thoughts or physical symptoms that are adding up and feel like “too much”. Help them look for ways to cope, take a break, or deal with the stress in their lives.

Emotions

anxiety
depression
grief
uncertainty
feeling overwhelmed
easily angered
feeling of sadness,
not caring
denial you have
problems
restless, feeling
unworthy
avoiding dealing with
problems
irritable, defensive,
argumentative
withdrawal within

Physical

fatigue
nausea
headaches
grinding of teeth
chills
rapid heart rate
profuse sweating
twitches
dizziness
vomiting
weakness

Behaviors

change in activity
withdrawal from others
non specific body
complaints
emotional outbursts
loss or increase in
appetite
avoiding people &
responsibilities
compulsive behaviors
such as gambling,
sex, spending money,
drug/alcohol use
sleeping problems

Thoughts

blaming others
poor attention
confusion
poor concentration
memory problems
dizziness
hyper-vigilant
nightmares
disturbed thinking
intrusive images
thoughts of suicide
thoughts of revenge

The more warning signs a person has from the above list, the more likely it is that stress is impacting their life. If you are not able to find enjoyment in your life, if you feel like things are piling up, you are not laughing, and things are “too much”, then ask for help. Sometimes people benefit from learning new or different ways to cope with stress. Talk with the Behavioral Health Aide in your community. They may help you learn different ways to cope with stress so that you can find balance in your life.

Please turn the page and read How to take care of yourself? 35 ways to “take a break”.

HOW TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF? 35 ways to “take a break”

Parents, Caregivers, Services Providers: Stress is a part of life and it can be good or bad. Without regular breaks though, stress can build and become destructive to a persons overall health and well being. There are many ways to cope with stress. Just like taking a multi-vitamin on a daily basis is important to help meet nutritional needs, doing something to help take care of yourself and cope with stress on a daily basis is important too.

1. Take a long, slow deep breath and let it out. Now take another one. Keep going.
2. Cry, if you need to.
3. Go for a walk.
4. Wash your face with cool water.
5. Take a steam.
6. Call a friend.
7. Go to church.
8. Hold your lips together and count to 10 s l o w l y.
9. Play your favorite music—sing and dance along.
10. Ask a friend for a hug. Ask your friend to remind you that things will get better.
11. Give yourself a hug.
12. Go for a boat ride
13. Go fishing.
14. Go berry picking.
15. Get a good night sleep.
16. Eat your favorite foods.
17. Laugh.
18. Have a plan, make a backup plan.
19. Visit a friend.
20. Light a candle.
21. Make a special dinner and share it with friends.
22. Talk with an Elder or Grandparent.
23. Snuggle up in your favorite blanket.
24. Go Camping
25. Help another person
26. Go Hunting
27. Do skin sewing or bead work
28. Watch a favorite movie.
29. Avoid negative people.
30. Call a CRISIS HOTLINE and ask the person to listen. (See Resource List)
31. _____
32. _____
33. _____
34. _____
35. _____

CHOOSING SOMEONE TO TELL

HELP FOR ADULTS WHO WERE SEXUALLY ABUSED AS CHILDREN

Parents, Caregivers: Sometimes adults, who were sexually abused as children, have never talked about it. Their experience was unique, yet most people carry fear, anger and shame within themselves about the abuse if they have never had help to heal. In the past, there were many real and good reasons why it wasn't safe to talk about the abuse—distrust and denial became a way of living life. But this kind of secret, buried deep inside for so long takes a toll. If this was your experience, how do you begin to break the silence? How do you begin the lifelong process of healing, coping and learning to manage your life in new ways? One way is to begin talking about your experience. It will be important for you to find people who are safe to talk to and “Choosing Someone to Tell” offers ways to think about “who” that will be.

Service Providers: If you are working with a parent or caregiver that was sexually abused as child, you can support them by being a trusted, confidential listener. If possible, start a Survivor's Support Group within the village. Many survivors have found an informal meeting time valuable to start the healing process. Read the [Supporters of Survivors](#) page for more ideas on how to help and [Guidelines for a Survivor's Support Group](#).

Talking about abuse is part of breaking the silence and telling the truth about what happened. It is important to first begin talking about the abuse with people who are likely to respond well. Begin with someone you trust the most. That person could be a Behavioral Health Aide, a respected Elder, the ICWA Worker, your spouse or partner, or a friend.

Many people find it helpful to attend a Survivor's Support Group. As you begin to talk about the abuse, you will likely experience the understanding and caring of the support group. And as you listen to other survivors, you will know you are not alone.

In time, you need to let the people closest to you know what you are going through. It will be helpful for them to know why you are so upset and why it is so hard for you to trust. Your partner needs to know why you are distant or why you may not want to be intimate.

If you are thinking of telling someone, ask yourself these questions:

- Does this person love and respect me?
- Have we been able to talk about personal things before?
- Does this person care about how I feel?
- Do I trust this person? Do I feel safe with this person?

If you answered yes to those questions, you are choosing someone who is likely to support you.

Pick a time, place, and a length of time that will work for both of you, not when either of you has to rush off to do something else. Be sure to tell your friend not to tell someone else if that is what you want.

**When you tell someone and they listen with respect and care,
Your life can begin to change dramatically.**

From [Beginning to Heal, A First Book for Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse](#), Ellen Bass and Laura Davis. 1993.

FOR SUPPORTERS OF SURVIVORS:

How to help an adult who was sexually abused as a child

Service Provider: In your job as a Service Provider, adults who were sexually abused as children may ask for your help. Most people don't automatically know how to help. The following suggestions provide ways to think about that role. It is a difficult and challenging job. Please take care of yourself too. See [Self-care Tips for Supporters of Survivors](#) on the next page.

How to help an adult who was sexually abused as a child

Being a close supporter of a survivor healing from child sexual abuse can be a tremendous challenge. Being a part of the healing process can lead to real growth and closeness. But you may also feel confused, scared, resentful, isolated, or overwhelmed. You may not know what to say, what to feel or how to act—these are all natural responses to a difficult situation.

When a survivor of child sexual abuse tells you about the abuse, they are entrusting you with a part of their life that is painful, frightening and vulnerable. The following tips can help you honor that trust and help with the healing process.

Believe the Survivor. Even if the memories are unclear or too terrible to believe, believe.

Join with the survivor in validating the pain and harm caused by sexual abuse. All abuse is harmful. Even if it was not violent, physical or repeated, all abuse has serious consequences such as an inability to trust others.

Be clear that abuse is never the child's fault. Children require attention and affection for their development. They do not ask to be sexually abused. Even if a child responds sexually, was not forced, or did not protest, *it is never a child's fault*. It is not okay for an adult to be sexual with a child.

Educate yourself about sexual abuse and the healing process. There may be people in your community familiar with this topic. It may be hard to recognize, but often we have the answers within ourselves and within our own communities. It is also important to access outside education when we don't have the answers. Some places to look include (www.sidran.org), (www.stopcsa.org) and (<http://ccan.ouhsc.edu/pmm.asp>). A good resource for individuals experiencing secondary or vicarious trauma is (www.isu.edu/~bhstamm/ts.htm).

Don't sympathize with the abuser. The survivor needs your total loyalty. Sometimes within communities, people may take sides—either the survivor or the abuser. It can get confusing because the abuser is someone's family member too. However, it will not help the survivor (or the abuser, in fact) to excuse, deny or minimize that the abusers' actions caused pain and harm. If you having this conflict, please talk with someone who can help you sort through your feelings.

Validate the survivor's feelings of anger, pain, and fear. These feelings are natural, healthy responses to abuse. The survivor needs to feel and express them, and be heard.

Express your feelings. If you have feelings of outrage, sympathy, or pain, calmly share them. Just make sure your feelings do not overshadow the survivor's feelings. The survivor needs your strength and support at this time. It is important that when you do share your feelings, you do so in a way that does not make a "villain" of the offender. Sometimes the victim has conflicted feelings about their abuser (they may be a loved family member) and when another person shares outrage and anger directed at the offender, the victim might begin to defend the abuser, deny or minimize the abuse, or even recant (take back) their statement of abuse. Instead, you can use generic words like, "I feel so angry that someone could hurt you like this", focusing on the behavior, not the person who did the behavior.

Respect the time and space it takes to heal. Healing takes time, includes ups and downs and cannot be hurried. It is a lifetime process.

Encourage the survivor to get help. You should not be the survivors' only supporter. Many survivors are traumatized by their abuse and are beginning their healing process.

Get help if the survivor is suicidal. Take all threats seriously. Don't hesitate or try to deal with it alone. Ask if the person has a plan for suicide. If so, call the police. Take the person to the hospital or clinic if they are cooperative. Ask a trained person within the village to help or call the Suicide/Crisis Hotline.

Accept that there will probably be changes in your relationship as the survivor heals.

See the person as a survivor, not a victim. Continue to see the person as strong, courageous person struggling to resolve a major trauma.

Continued

FOR SUPPORTERS OF SURVIVORS

SELF-CARE TIPS FOR THE SUPPORTER OF A SURVIVOR

- ✓ Get help for yourself.
- ✓ Find a place that you can talk about your own fears, doubts and frustrations.
- ✓ Take breaks.
- ✓ Recognize that you will be affected by the trauma stories you hear.

If you find yourself feeling extremely defensive or upset when the survivor talks about the abuse, it may be that you are reacting to experiences from your own past. This is common. One person's pain brings up hurt for another. If this is happening to you, seek help for dealing with your own unresolved pain.

GUIDELINES FOR A SURVIVOR'S SUPPORT GROUP

Service Providers: The following are offered as guidelines to consider when organizing a Survivor's Support Group. The group may decide on some additional guidelines. Whatever the group decides, the guidelines should create an environment of safety and respect for the members.

1. Form a talking or healing circle.
2. Agree that what is said in the group stays in the group.
3. Agree there will be no blaming.
4. Agree that people can talk if they wish but that no one has to talk.
5. Pick a topic or feeling to focus on for each meeting.
An example: I feel sad when _____. People fill in the blank and talk about it from their experience.

Recognize that work may need to be done around trust issues or other foundation problems before a support group can be successful.

Try to ensure that victims and offenders are not both present in the same circle. If you are unable to do this, at a very minimum, recent victims and offenders should be protected from being in the same group.

Thoughts and excerpts from Beginning to Heal, A First Book for Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse, Ellen Bass and Laura Davis, 1993; Diane Payne, Children's Justice Specialist, Tribal Law and Policy Institute; and Kimber Eversen, LCSW, with Chugachmiut and a private practice Therapist.

Section 4.

Suggested Reading

SUGGESTED READING

Parents, Caregiver and Service Providers: These books can be found in various bookstores and libraries in larger communities and in public libraries in various small communities. The books, articles and videos can be found on-line. There are websites listed that offer good information about this topic and are free to the user.

FOR PARENTS

Allies in Healing: When the Person You Love Was Sexually Abused as a Child, A Support Book by Laura Davis. 1991. HarperPerennial Library. ISBN 0060968834.

Beginning to Heal by Ellen Bass and Laura Davis. Published by Harper Perennial. 1993.

The Courage to Heal: A Guide for Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse by Ellen Bass and Laura Davis. 1994. HarperPerennial Library. ISBN 0060950668.

Helping Your Child Recover from Sexual Abuse by Caren Adams and Jennifer Fay. 1992. University of Washington Press. ISBN 0295968060

The Mother's Book, How to survive the molestation of your child. Caroline M. Byerly. Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company. 1997. ISBN 0-7872-4326-4.

7 steps to protecting our children, from Darkness to Light. 247 Meeting Street, Charleston SC, 29401. Helpline: 1-866-367-5444. Website: (www.darkness2light.org)

Understanding Children's Sexual Behaviors, What is Natural and Healthy by Toni Cavanagh Johnson, Ph D. 1101 Fremont Ave. Suite 101, South Pasadena, CA 91030. Phone: 1-626-799-4522, (www.TcavJohn.com).

Victims' No Longer: Men Recovering from Incest and Other Sexual Child Abuse by Mike Lew, Forward by Ellen Bass 1990. HarperCollins. ISBN 0060973005.

Wounded Boys Heroic Men: A Man's Guide to Recovering from Child Abuse by Daniel Jay Sonkin and Lenore E.A. Walker. 1998. Adams Media Corporations. ISBN 1580620108.

FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS

Bitter Earth: Child Sexual Abuse in Indian Country. NCJ 144998, Office for Victims of Crime Resource Center: Phone. 1-800-627-6872. OVC homepage: (www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/)

History of Victimization in Native Communities, March 2000. The Center on Child Abuse and Neglect. Document prepared by the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, grant # 97-VI-GX-0002 from the office for Victims of Crime (OVC), U.S. Department of Justice.

Outgrowing the Pain: A Book for and about Adults Abused as Children, by Eliana Gil, Launch Press, 1984.

Please turn to the next page for more reading suggestions

The Spirit Weeps, Characteristics and Dynamics of Incest and Child Sexual Abuse, by Tony Martens. With a Native Perspective by Maggie Hodgson. Published by Nechi Institute, Box 3884 Postal Station D, Edmonton, AB T5L 4K1 Canada. 1988.

Treating the Young Male Victims of Sexual Assault: Issues and Intervention Strategies by Eugene Porter, Safer Society Press, Orwell, VT. 1986.

Well Nations Magazine, the magazine that connects people. Published six times a year. 520 Kansas City St. Suite 308, Rapid City, SD 57701. Fax: 605-348-9284. (www.wellnations.com)

Young Once Indian Forever: Protecting the Children of Indian Country (Video about child sexual abuse). National Criminal Justice Reference Service. Call 1-800-638-8736 or order online at <http://www.ncjrs.org> (order # NCJ 164621).

FOR CHILDREN

A Better Safe than Sorry Book: A Family Guide for Sexual Assault Prevention by Sol and Judith Gordon. Prometheus Books. 1993. (Ages 3-9).

BJ Learns about Federal and Tribal Court (Video for children to prepare for court experience when child has to testify). National Criminal Justice Reference Service NCJRS. Call 1-800-638-8736 or order online at <http://www.ncjrs.org> (order #NCJ 139730). and Learning all about court with "BJ": An activity book for children going to Federal Court or Tribal Court. NCJRS, (order #NCJ 167252).

Cartwheels: A workbook for children who have been sexually abused by Phyllis Spinal-Robinson and Randi E. Wickham. Janice Publishers. 1992. (Ages 10-13).

Kids Helping Kids by Linda Lee Foltz. 2003. Lighthouse Point Press. ISBN 0963796690.

Sexuality Curriculum for Abused Children and Young Adolescents and Their Parents by Toni Cavanagh Johnson, Ph.D. 1998.

Your Body Belongs to You by Cornelia Spellman. Albert Whitman Publishers. 1997. (ages 4-7).

FOR TEENAGERS

Abused Boys: The Neglected Victims of Sexual Abuse by Mic Hunter. Fawcett Book Group. 1991.

How long does it hurt? A guide to recovery from incest and sexual abuse for teenagers, their friends and their families by Cynthia L. Mather and Kristina E. Debye. Jossey-Bass Inc. 1995.

In Their Own Words: A sexual abuse workbook for teenage girls by Lulie Munson and Karen Riskin. 1995.

No is Not Enough: Helping Teenagers Avoid Sexual Assault by Caren Adams and Jennifer Fay. Impact Publishers. 1984.

Section 5.

Frequently Asked Questions

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Parent, Caregiver and Service Provider: The topic of child sexual abuse brings up many questions. Some of the questions are fairly easy to answer; and many more would be better answered in a conversation because the answer depends on many things. Some questions do not have clear, direct and simple answers. The following questions were selected because they are Frequently Asked. If you have a question that is not answered here, please look in the Index of this Resource Guide and see if you can find the answer. If not, talk with a Behavioral Health Aide, the ICWA Worker, call Alaska CARES, or one of the other Resource Agencies listed within this document. Find someone you trust who will give a knowledgeable and honest answer to your question.

1. **Who do I report to when I suspect a child is being sexually abused?** This will depend on the community and what services are available. Best Practices would mean reporting to the local Police, or Alaska State Troopers and the Office of Children Services (OCS).

2. **How do I know if I should report?** In the State of Alaska, there is a Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Law that requires that when a person has **“reasonable cause to suspect that a child has suffered harm”**; *they must report the harm immediately*. In addition, under Federal law, individuals who have legal or other **responsibility for an Indian child’s welfare** through an Indian Tribe or organization, tribal corporation, or on tribal lands, including village corporations, lands held by incorporated Native groups or regional corporations and reservations ***must report any “known or suspected abuse of a child”***. Children need adults who will make a report if they suspect abuse. Abuse harms children and children cannot stop it on their own. This involves trust—that when a report of harm is made, that the agency whose job it is to intervene will do their part. However, a mandated reporter will be acting against the law if they do not make a report of known or suspected child abuse.

3. **What is the role of the VPSO and Alaska State Troopers?** VPSOs are peace officers and work in cooperation with the Alaska State Troopers. Alaska State Troopers interview children when there is a suspicion of child sexual abuse. They need special training on how to conduct a forensic interview with children and the training should be current. If the Alaska State Trooper does not have this kind of training, ask for a Trooper who does, or another worker who can assist the Trooper with this part of the investigation.

4. **Why is there an investigation when someone suspects a child has been sexually abused?** Child sexual abuse is against the law in the state of Alaska and certain professionals—law enforcement, the Office of Children’s Services (OCS)—are mandated to investigate when sexual abuse of a minor is suspected. Child sexual abuse is against the law in every state within the United States and in countries around the world. Children cannot prevent or protect themselves from abuse. Children need adults to do this job for them. A person who sexually abuses children will not stop their behavior on their own. Someone must intervene. An investigation can begin the process of stopping the abuse and helping the child return to safety.

5. What do I do if I think something happened to my child? Tell the local Police, the Alaska State Troopers or OCS. Call someone you trust in the village who can help you sort this out—the ICWA Worker, the Behavioral Health Aide. Call the Child Advocacy Center in your Region and ask them to help you figure what to do.

Special Note: Depending on your community, report suspected abuse to the ICWA Worker too or the Village Child Protection Team. This can be a way to help get early prevention services offered to the child and family.

As a parent, the most important things you can do for your child is to:

- ✓ Insure the child's safety
- ✓ Believe the child
- ✓ Support the child
- ✓ Get counseling for the child and support for yourself

6. What will happen after I report? When child sexual abuse is suspected, a criminal investigation begins. How quickly it begins depends on lots of factors such as

- Is the child in current danger?
- Is the abuser in the home?
- When was the last time the child and abuser were together?
- Is there a suspect?
- Is the child with a protective parent or guardian to insure safety?
- Does weather permit travel? Etc.

OCS takes the lead if it is a civil case (is the child's safety at risk?) and law enforcement takes the lead if it is criminal (has a law been broken?). The agencies work together if it is a civil and criminal case. A person trained to conduct forensic interviews with children should interview the child. The parent or guardian will be interviewed, and so will other people who may have information about the child and the child's safety. Suspected abusers will also be interviewed.

7. What is the next step after the investigation? Depending on who is in charge of the investigation and what is found during the investigation, the answer varies.

If it is a criminal case, law enforcement will give the information from the investigation to the District Attorney's (DA) Office. The DA makes the decision about whether to prosecute the case or not. If there is a suspect who is charged, the case may go to Grand Jury. At Grand Jury, it will be determined if the case will continue to move forward in the court system or if there is a plea agreement. If the DA doesn't prosecute, it doesn't mean they believe the abuse didn't happen—there can be different reasons why the case won't go to court, such as lack or limited evidence, the age of the victim, is there a witness/es, the child's interview, search warrant, etc.

The answer continues on the next page

Continued. 7. What is the next step after the investigation?

If it is a civil case, a report is made to OCS. If OCS opens the case, an investigation is conducted. If the abuse is confirmed, OCS will decide that the:

- a. Child stays in the custody of their parents and OCS develops a plan with the family to insure the child's safety and family needs
- b. Child is taken into State's custody, remains with the parent and OCS develops a plan with the family for safety
- c. Child is taken into State's custody and placed in foster care or with a family member. An emergency petition is filed for a Child In Need of Aid (CINA) hearing in the court system.

If the abuse is not confirmed, the case will be determined either "invalid" or "unsubstantiated" and the case is closed. The information is filed within the OCS system. OCS is to send a letter to the reporter to let them know the outcome of the investigation. Again, OCS and law enforcement can both be involved in investigating child abuse if it is both civil and criminal.

Special Note: The investigation often takes more time than we may wish it would. It doesn't happen in the way that is shown on TV.

8. **What happens when a child goes to court?** The child should be prepared before going to court. Call your Regional District Attorney's Office, they provide this service to help prepare the child for court. A visit to the courtroom before the actual court day is very helpful to the child. Sometimes communities have an advocate to help children learn about this process and provide support.

See Section 4, Suggested Reading in this guide. There are two free guides that can be ordered (a video and workbook) that help explain what happens in Federal and Tribal court, what the different people do and answers many questions that children have about the court process.

See Section 6, Resources. There is an agency, STAR, that provides advocacy services to children going to court. A toll-free number is listed.

9. **What do I do when no one believes me?** Make a report to the local police department, Alaska State Troopers, and OCS. If you already did this, how long ago did you make the report? It is hard to wait for people to conduct an investigation when you are worried a child is not safe. What makes you believe the child is being harmed? What about talking with the Behavioral Health Aide or ICWA Worker or Women's Shelter to discuss your worries? Call the Child Advocacy Center in your Region. What actions can you take to keep the child safe? What can other people in the community do to help? This is a question that does not have a clear, direct answer. Please explore your concerns with a trusted person who can help you sort this through.

10. **My child was sexually abused. What do I say when people tell me my child is sexually "acting out"?** If you are not aware of it, thank them for their concern. If you are aware of it, thank them and let them know you know about this and that you are dealing with it.

11. If my child has an exam, will I know for sure if she/he was sexually abused? Sometimes people think an exam will show “for sure” if a child was sexually abused. It most likely will not. Child sexual abuse is about tricking or deceiving a child into some kind of sexual relationship. Vaginal and/or rectal penetration is only one kind of sexual abuse that happens to children. Even when penetration occurs, a child’s body will heal and may not leave a scar or any other evidence. Most children do not tell about abuse but then most children are not asked. A child’s words, behaviors and actions are the best “signs or warnings” that they are being abused. A trained, experienced Forensic Interviewer knows how to talk with children and create an environment to help children talk about their personal safety.

12. What is a medical examination? Does my child really need one? When child sexual abuse is reported, a physical examination is often a part of the investigation process. Why? Children who have been sexually can have negative thoughts about their body and sometimes believe that other people can “see” that they were abused. If there is any evidence, documenting it through an exam can help build the case.

- Children need to know that every part of their body is important.
- Children are comforted to know their body is okay
- The exam is a comprehensive head-to-toe exam.
- An exam can begin the healing process for a child when they know they are healthy.
- Children are not forced to have an exam.
- A child’s examination IS NOT THE SAME KIND OF EXAM THAT ADULT WOMEN OR ADULT MAN GETS AS PART OF AN ANNUAL CHECK-UP.
- A specially trained pediatric medical professional conducts the exam.
- The child’s private areas are examined using a special instrument, a colposcope.
- The colposcope provides light and magnification,
- and allows the medical provider to externally (the outside of the body) examine the child.
- If the child has injuries, the medical provider will provide treatment.
- If there are injuries, the injuries will heal.

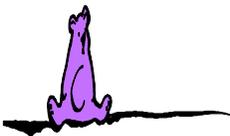
13. Why didn’t my child tell me? Children don’t tell for many reasons and if they do tell, the supportive adults in their life must recognize how brave they are to tell. Child sexual abuse is about secrecy, deceit, trickery, threats, and manipulation. Sometimes children don’t know that the abuse is wrong, or they feel confused, scared or shameful. The abuser may have told the child “it’s our special secret” or “if you tell your mom, she won’t believe you”, or “I’ll kill you” or “I’ll have to go to jail if you tell” or “if you do this, then I won’t touch your sister”. Whatever was said or not said to your child, he/she usually feels an overwhelming responsibility to take care of it by her/himself and remain silent. It is not about you as a parent; it is about the silence, fear, intimidation, and secrecy that is part of child sexual abuse.

14. I want to talk with my child about the abuse but I am afraid I'll make it worse. What do I do? Look and listen for ways that your child may show they need to talk about the abuse. Children may not use words, but you may see it in their play. Be a good listener. Validate their feelings and emotions. Let them know that bad things can happen to good people, they are not bad because this happened, and their body is not damaged, and if there are injuries, the injuries will heal. Read [How to Help Your Child Heal](#). You won't make it worse by providing ways to talk with your child, learn coping skills and begin a healing process. It does make it worse to ignore it, pretend it didn't happen, or deny it. Read [Does My Child Need Counseling?](#) Sometimes parents and children need some outside help for the healing to begin.

15. How do I know if someone is safe or not to be with my child? This is really hard because people who sexually abuse children are often in very trusted relationships within the family—the boyfriend, a babysitter, an uncle or aunt, grandfather, the coach, or a leader in the community. People may have a funny feeling about someone, maybe there are rumors about a person abusing children, or they are a suspected or known sex offender. TRUST your feelings and internal warning system. Watch out for children. Teach them about personal safety; talk with them, etc. Even if we can't be 100% sure about everyone, there may be signs or warnings that certain people are not safe with children. Read [Talking with Parents and Family Members about Sexual Abuse](#) for more tips.

16. What can I do when the offender lives in the community? If this offender sexually abused your child, help make sure they are never left alone together. Teach your child the buddy system, to walk away from the person, and not to talk with them. If the child still doesn't feel safe, have a plan where they can go that is safe. Read [MY 8 Safety Rules](#) and teach them to your child. Look for ways to set up safety nets within the community so other children are not left alone with the known offender, such as children playing in groups, a safe adult who will watch out for children playing outside, etc. Some communities have posted the picture of known sex offenders in the post office, and held meetings to increase awareness in the community about safety for their children.

17. What happens when the person accused of child sexual abuse is taken out of the village? This is a question that has a "it depends" answer. The accused person maybe arrested and taken to a jail that is out of the village and/or released to third party custodian in another community. Depending on the charges and evidence, the case may go to trial. In most cases, there is a plea bargain that happens and no trial. If there is a trial, the child will have to testify in court in the presence of the accused person. If found guilty or there is a plea bargain, the person will be sentenced to jail and/or parole. Sex offender treatment is not mandatory. Or all the charges could be dropped and nothing happen. The person could return to the community.



Section 6.

Resources

RESOURCES

In the VILLAGE

Name of Village: _____
Alaska State Troopers/Post: _____
Behavioral Health Aide: _____
Community Health Aide: _____
Health Clinic: _____
Regional Hospital: _____
ICWA Worker: _____
Shelter or Women's Services: _____
Village Public Safety Officer: _____

***Child Advocacy Centers in Alaska**

***Anchorage**

Alaska C.A.R.E.S.
4050 Lake Otis Parkway, Suite 205
Anchorage, Alaska 99508
Manager: Cory Bryant
Phone: 1-907-561-8301

***Bethel**

Yukon Kuskokwim Delta
Child Advocacy Center
Tundra Women's Coalition
P.O. Box 2029
Bethel, Alaska 99559
Program Manager: Erin Smith
Phone: 1-907-543-3144

***Dillingham**

Nitaput Child Advocacy/Family Support Center
P.O. Box 130
Dillingham, Alaska 99576
Contact: Melba Taylor
Phone: 1-907-842-1230

***Fairbanks**

Stevie's Place
P.O. Box 70220
Fairbanks, Alaska 99707
Program Manager: Pam Karalunas
Phone: 1-907-374-2850

***Juneau**

Southeast Alaska Family Evaluations (SAFE)
419 6th Street
Juneau, Alaska
Director: Michelle Monts
Phone: 1-907-463-6105

***Nome/Bering Strait**

Kawerak, Inc. Child Advocacy Center
P.O. Box 948
Nome, Alaska 99762
Program Director: Kim Galleher
Phone: 1-907-443-4376

***Wasilla**

The Children's Place
P.O. Box 871788
Wasilla, Alaska 99687
Executive Director: Jen Downey
Phone: 1-907-357-5157

Continued, in ALASKA

AWAIC (Alaska Women's Aid in Crisis) 24-hour Crisis Line and Shelter Information

In Anchorage, call 272-0100; Outside Anchorage, call collect: 1-907-272-0100

Alaska Region, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)

P.O. Box 25520, Juneau, Alaska 99802-5520

Gloria Kate Gorman, M.S.W., Social Services Director

Phone: 1-800-645-8397, Ext. 2, 2

Careline Crisis Intervention Hotline

Provides crisis intervention for individuals considering suicide, or experiencing crisis, isolation, or depression. Free, immediate and confidential help, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Throughout Alaska, call Toll-free 1-877-266-4357, in Fairbanks, call 452-4357

STAR (Standing Together Against Rape) Crisis Line

Victim advocacy services. In Anchorage, call 276-7273, outside Anchorage, call: 1-800-478-8999

Tribal Law and Policy Institute/Anchorage Office

4201 Tudor Center Drive, Suite 225, Anchorage, Alaska 99508

Diane Payne, Children's Justice Specialist

Ph: 907-770-1950, Fax: 907-770-1951. (www.tribal-institute.org), Email: diane@tribal-institute.org

NATIONAL

CHILD-HELP USA Hotline

Toll-free Number: 1-800-422-4453. Trained counselors available 24 hours a day for crisis intervention. Children and adults may be connected to counselors in 144 languages. Resources on child abuse are at: <http://www.childhelpusa.org/help.html>

KEMPE Children's Center

Information on the prevention and treatment of child abuse.

1825 Marion Street, Denver, CO 80218. Web site: Info@kempe.org or questions@kempe.org

National Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-799-7233

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

24 hours toll free telephone: 1-800-the-lost (1-800-843-5678)

Office for Victims of Crime-OVC Resource Center

Information Clearinghouse and Information Specialists. OVCRC is a well-established network of victim advocates and organizations. Brochures, Website, Products, Publications and Online Ordering Services

- Ask for assistance by calling 1-800-627-6872 or email to AskOVC@ojp.usdoj.gov
- National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS), P.O. Box 6000, Rockville, MD 20849-6000
- Hours: 8:30 am - 7 pm, Monday through Friday eastern time
- Web site: www.ncjrs.org