

Child Sexual Assault and Human Trafficking

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Myths...

- ▶ Normal-appearing, well educated, middle-class people don't molest children
- ▶ People are too quick to believe an abuser is guilty, even if there is no supporting evidence
- ▶ Child molesters molest indiscriminately
- ▶ Children who are being abused would immediately tell their parents
- ▶ Children who are being abused will show physical evidence of abuse
- ▶ Hundreds of innocent men and women have been falsely accused and sent to prison for molesting children
- ▶ If asked about abuse, children tend to exaggerate and are prone to making false accusations
- ▶ By using repeated interviews, therapists or police can easily implant false memories and cause false accusations among children of any age

www.theleadershipcouncil.org

Statistics

- ▶ 1 in 10 children are sexually abused
- ▶ Over 90% know their abuser
- ▶ 1 in 5 girls
- ▶ 1 in 20 boys
- ▶ Self report studies show that 20% of adult females and 5-10% of adult males recall a childhood sexual assault or sexual abuse incident
- ▶ During a one-year period in the U.S. 16% of youth ages 12-17 have been sexually victimized
- ▶ Children are most vulnerable to child sexual assault between the ages of 7 and 13

<http://www.unh.edu/ccrc/>

<http://www.d2l.org>

What you can do...

- ▶ Be aware of your surroundings
- ▶ Recognize the signs of grooming
- ▶ Talk about it
- ▶ Recognize the signs of CSA
- ▶ React responsibly

Surroundings...

- ▶ 80% or more of child sexual abuse incidents happen in isolated one on one situations
- ▶ When visiting your CASA child...home visits, school, aftercare programs, ask what the policy is for transitions and places that children would be vulnerable (ex: bathrooms)
- ▶ Questions to ask...
 - ▶ How many adults are with the children at any given time?
 - ▶ What is the child to adult ratio in the classroom?
 - ▶ What is your policy on disclosure of abuse?

Grooming

- ▶ Definition:

A process by which an offender gradually draws a victim into a sexual relationship and maintains that relationship in secrecy. At the same time, the offender may also fill roles within the victim's family that make the offender a trusted and valued member (i.e. priest, coach, teacher, tutor...)

Grooming behaviors...

- ▶ Paying special interest to a particular child
- ▶ Breaking boundaries or rules
- ▶ Being overly physical with children
- ▶ Encouraging secrecy

Be wary of someone who seems too good to be true...

Talk about it...

- ▶ Why kids don't tell
 - ▶ The abuser sometimes threatens the child or a family member
 - ▶ The abuser may shame the child, say the child let it happen, or tell the child his or her parents will be angry
 - ▶ The abuser may try to confuse the child about what is right and wrong
 - ▶ Some children who did not disclose abuse the first time are afraid or ashamed to tell when it happens again
 - ▶ Children are afraid of hurting their parents and family
 - ▶ Some children are too young to understand
 - ▶ Many abusers tell children the abuse is "okay" or "a game"

Children who disclose...

- ▶ Children who disclose sexual abuse often tell a trusted adult other than a parent
- ▶ Children may ask questions about bodies, interactions, or sex, rather than talk directly about something they've experienced
- ▶ Children may tell parts of what happened, or pretend it happened to someone else, to check your reaction
- ▶ Children will often shut down if you respond emotionally or negatively

Make sure children understand that no matter what happened, they can share with you without fear of being blamed

Signs of abuse...

- ▶ Physical signs 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 potential signs
- ▶ Other physical problems such as anxiety, chronic stomach pain, or headaches
- ▶ Emotional and behavioral signals are MORE COMMON. Some of these are "too perfect" behavior, withdrawal, fear, depression, unexplained anger and rebellion
- ▶ Nightmares, bedwetting, falling grades, cruelty to animals, bullying, being bullied, fire setting, runaway, and self-harm of any kind may be signs
- ▶ Sexual behavior and language that are not age-appropriate can be red flags
- ▶ Use of alcohol or drugs at an early age

How should I react??

First and foremost: understand that very few reported incidents of child sexual abuse are false

- ▶ Offer support: Most children bear sexual abuse alone and in secret. Remember that they often feel ashamed, guilty or frightened and powerless
- ▶ Don't overreact: When you react to a child's disclosure with anger or disbelief, the child is likely to
 1. Feel more ashamed
 2. Shut down
 3. Change or retract the story, even when abuse is actually happening
 4. Change the story to match your questions

Samples Responses

"I believe you"

"What happened is not your fault"

"I'm the adult, and it's my job to protect you"

"This takes a lot of courage, I'm very proud of you for telling me"

Don't fill in the gaps, or rush to "get to the bottom of it"

Don't ask leading questions

Report

Lancaster County Law Enforcement

402-441-6000 or 911

Abuse/Neglect Hotline

1-800-652-1999

Information that is helpful when making a report of abuse...

1. Child's name and where the child lives
2. What the child said to you
3. What signs you've seen in the child
4. What behaviors you've observed in the alleged offender
5. What access the alleged offender has to the child
6. Where you are, where the child is, and where the offender is, if known

Human Trafficking

The U.S. Government defines human trafficking as: sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such acts has not attained 18 years of age. The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

What do we know?

- ▶ Scope of the problem
 - ▶ 2.8 million children run away each year in the United States
 - ▶ 3 out of 4 runaways will be approached by a pimp or a sexual predator within the first 72 hours after running away
 - ▶ Males, females, adults and youth are sexually exploited

Nebraska Data

- ▶ UNL study completed in 2014
 - ▶ At least 47 Nebraska school age girls per year were victims
 - ▶ More likely estimated at least 100 per year

Warning Signs of Sex Trafficking

- ▶ Unusual tattoos-such as dollar signs, bar codes, or pimp name
- ▶ Large amounts of cash
- ▶ Several cell phones
- ▶ No ID or someone is holding their ID
- ▶ Unkempt and malnourished
- ▶ May have lots of hotel keys, condoms, etc.
- ▶ Accompanied by/relationship with a significantly older adult

Risk Factors

- ▶ Poverty
- ▶ Youth in out of home care and/or in state custody
- ▶ Runaway youth
- ▶ Youth with a history of sexual abuse
- ▶ Homelessness
- ▶ Language and cultural barriers
- ▶ Immigrants
- ▶ Developmental disabilities
- ▶ Members of the LGBTQ community
- ▶ Substance use
- ▶ Mental Health Issues

Efforts to Combat Sex Trafficking in Nebraska

- ▶ Nebraska Attorney General formalized the Nebraska Human Trafficking Task Force (NHTTF)
 - ▶ Multidisciplinary team of professionals who are currently working to build infrastructure state-wide to combat this issue
 - ▶ October 2015: AG's office and Salvation Army awarded \$1.5 M grant to combat trafficking across the state
 - ▶ Attorney General's office released the Nebraska Human Trafficking Statewide Plan

What CASA Volunteers Can Do...

- ▶ Speak openly about the risk of out-of-home youth to be trafficked
- ▶ Recognize the basic signs of trafficking
- ▶ Respond appropriately to the crime and to the survivor

How to Report...

If you suspect human trafficking call
911

OR

National Human Trafficking Hotline
888-3737-888

References

- ▶ The Leadership Council
 - ▶ www.leadershipcouncil.org

- ▶ Darkness to Light
 - ▶ www.D2L.org

- ▶ Crimes Against Children Research Center
 - ▶ www.unh.edu

- ▶ Women's Fund of Omaha
 - ▶ www.omahawomensfund.org

Contact Information

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Questions????????????