

What is child sexual abuse?

Child sexual abuse is a crime. It can range from showing children sexually explicit pictures to unwanted touching and sexual intercourse. Sexual abuse can happen to both boys and girls of all ages and backgrounds. In the vast majority of cases, the abuser will be someone that the child knows and trusts.

If your child has been sexually abused, you may be feeling...



Shock
Guilt
Anger
Fear
Betrayed
Confused
Shame

How could this happen...?
Why didn't I know...?
How could he / she do this...?
Will my child be all right...?
But I trusted him / her...!
Why didn't he / she tell me...?
It only happened because I'm a bad parent...?

*For both you and your child, these feelings are very normal reactions.
If your child has been sexually abused, it does not mean you are a bad parent
or that your child is a bad child.*

Your child may be feeling...



Guilt
Fear
Isolated
Cut off from family
Responsible
Anger

He / she only did it because I'm bad.
He / she said bad things would happen if I told.
I'm the only one.
It's my fault the family has broken up.
I made everybody cry.
It's not fair.

You are not responsible for the abuse, even if...

*You knew and trusted the abuser.
You were unhappy and preoccupied at the time.
Your child didn't tell you.
The abuser was your partner.
Members of your family blame you.*

- Believe them.
- Try to stay as calm as possible.
- Praise them for telling you.
- Tell them you are sorry it happened.
- Reassure them that it was not their fault.
- Try to understand if they couldn't tell you.
- Tell them you will seek help to stop the abuse.

What can I do for my child?



Caring for a sexually abused child can be a difficult and isolating experience. For both yourself and your child, you may want to...

- *Access general information on sexual abuse to back up your own experience.*
- *Phone one of the listed support agencies. If your child has a counselor, speak with them.*



- *Join a support group to talk to other parents.*
- *Spend time with supportive family members or friends.*
- *Have confidence - sometimes things get worse before they get better but given time and support, both you and your child can recover.*



**LOUISIANA
FOUNDATION
AGAINST SEXUAL
ASSAULT**

1250 S.W. Railroad Ave, Suite 170
Hammond, La 70403
Phone (985) 345-5995
Fax (985)345-5592
Toll Free Information Line:
(888) 995-7273
www.lafasa.org

Sexual Assault Crisis Centers
provide:

- A 24-hour crisis hotline
- Information and referral
- Free counseling
- And more...

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Information by Karen Gillie for the Support Network for Parents and Caregivers of Sexually Abused Children.



*Sexual Abuse
and Healing;
A guide for parents*

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