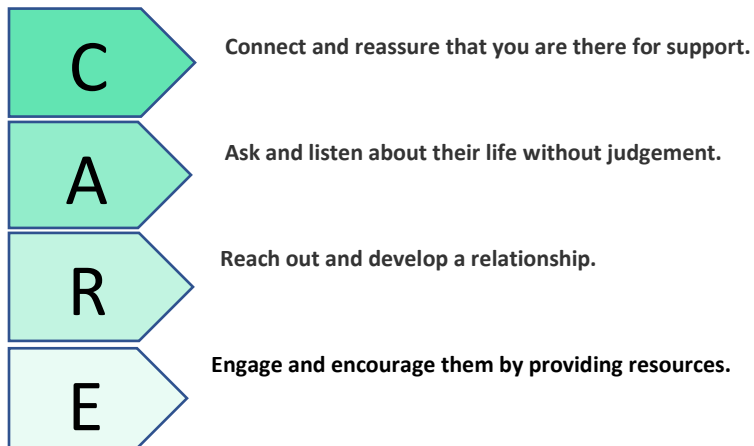


*For our students who are being sexually abused:*



## What is sexual abuse?

Sexual Abuse involves forcing, tricking, bribing, threatening or pressuring a child/teen into any sexual activity. Sexual abuse includes:

- Being touched or kissed in a way that felt uncomfortable or intrusive.
- Being touched in the private parts body areas.
- Being forced to pose naked, or partially naked for a picture or video.
- Being forced to look at pornography. (pictures, books, videos, movies)
- Being forced to watch other people in sexual acts.
- Being forced to touch someone else's body.
- Being called sexually-degrading names, or having someone make rude comments about your body parts (either in person, by phone, on the internet, by a note).
- Being forced by one person to touch another person.
- Forced sexual intercourse of any type.

## Who are the abusers?

Most abusers are **NOT** strangers- they are known to their victim

An abuser can be anyone, a parent, step-parent, your parent's partner, aunt, uncle, grandparent, brother, sister, cousin, babysitter, coach, instructor, neighbor, person from church.

The abuser is always responsible for the abuse, because they are in a position of trust and authority over you.

## How children/teens are affected by sexual abuse:

Here are some ways a child/teen can be affected by abuse:

- Anxiety
- Sadness/Depression
- Suicidal thoughts/suicide attempts
- Cutting, biting, burning, hitting or other self-harming behaviors
- Sleep problems/ Nightmares

- Eating problems (over- eating, anorexia, bulimia)
- Headaches/stomach aches/pain in parts of your body.
- Feeling alone/different from everyone else
- Problems concentrating at school.
- Withdrawing from family, friends or activities
- Problems trusting people
- Feeling very angry/lashing out at people
- Feeling bad about yourself
- Doing drugs or drinking alcohol to numb your feelings
- Not taking care of your body, your appearance
- Bathing/showering many times a day
- Running away to try to get away from the abuser, or running away because you think no one cares about you
- Thinking you are bad, or you somehow caused the abuse (you DID NOT)
- Confusion because you may still care about the abuser.
- Confusion because your body may have responded to the abuse, or you may have enjoyed some part of the contact with the perpetrator

Remember, if you are feeling all or any of these feelings, you are NORMAL. These are normal reactions to being abused.

## **Why someone might not want to tell on an abuser:**

- If the abuser is a family member, you might be afraid of what will happen to your family.
- Often children/teens are confused and don't immediately know it is abuse.
- Abusers will use tricks like giving you gifts, money, special privileges to get you to do what they want. Then you might believe that you took part in the abuse, but you weren't. You were tricked.
- Abusers often threaten to harm/kill you, a family member or your pet if you tell. They might say, "Your mother will just die if she finds out." (That isn't true.) The abuser might tell you that you will go to jail, or be taken away if you tell. (That isn't true, either.)
- The abuser may tell you that no one will believe you anyway, because you are crazy or you are a liar. (That isn't true, either.) The abuser is trying to make you feel that you have no options to do anything, but you can.

Often children/teens don't think anyone can protect them, but there are a whole lot of people out there who will help you.

## **What can you do if you have been abused, or are being abused?**

You can do something. Tell someone you trust (a parent, relative, teacher, school counselor, principal, doctor, nurse, coach, instructor, neighbor, police) It is scary to tell. You don't know always know will happen after you tell, but the most important thing to remember is that you have taken the first step in making sure you are safe. Even if you are no longer being abused, talking about it to someone you trust will help you sort out all the feelings you have kept bottled up inside. You can call:

## **For more info**

**National Center for Missing and Exploited Children-** <http://www.missingkids.com/Cybertipline>

**Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network -** <http://www.rainn.org/get-help/national-sexual-assault-online-hotline>

**The Center for Prevention of Abuse –** <http://www.centerforpreventionofabuse.org/>

## **Helplines**

**National Sexual Assault Hotline - 800-656-HOPE (4673)**

**Child Help National Child Abuse Hotline- (800) 4-A-CHILD**

**Darkness to Light - 866-367-5444**

**National Center for Missing & Exploited Children - (800) 843-5678**

**National Center for Victims of Crime - (800) 394-2255**

**Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network - (800) 656-4673**