

Is my child being sexually abused?

Things to watch out for when adults are with children

Have you ever seen someone playing with a child and felt uncomfortable with it?

Did you think that you might be over-reacting?

Did you think that he/she didn't really mean it?

Do not ignore the behaviour; learn how to ask more questions about what you have seen.

The statistics are alarming and conservative! Estimates say that 1 in 5 girls and 1 in 10 boys have been sexually abused before age 18.

Who are the abusers?

They are men and women, teenagers and adults of all ages. 90% of the victims of child sexual abuse know their abusers. They are the fathers, mothers, siblings, close relatives, friends or other caretakers of children.

They are rarely the monsters lurking around the corners of our playgrounds, or driving by in their car with the offer of candy!

Use this checklist

- Do you know an adult or older child who
- refuses to let a child set any of his or her own limits?
 - insists on hugging, touching, kissing, tickling, wrestling with or holding a child even when the child does not want the affection?
 - is overly interested in the sexuality of a particular child or teen (e.g. talks repeatedly about the child's developing body or interferes with normal teen dating)?
 - manages to get time alone or insists on time alone with a child with no interruptions?
 - spends most of his/her spare time with children and has little interest in spending time with someone their own age?
 - regularly offers to baby-sit many different children for free or take children on overnight outings alone?
 - buys children expensive gifts or gives them money for no apparent reason?
 - frequently walks in on children/teens in the bathroom?
 - allows children or teens to consistently get away with inappropriate behaviours?

If you have answered "yes" to some of these questions, talk to that person. If you are uncomfortable but do not see these signs, be sure to trust your instincts and ask questions.

For information and advice on how to talk to someone, call the CAS.

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