

Tips For Parents Regarding Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse

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Abstract- Child sexual abuse is a universal problem with grave lifelong outcomes. It is a lowest prevalence which includes a huge number of victims. It also have various adverse effects on the psychological, physical, behavioral and interpersonal well-being of the victim. Many studies revealed that child sexual abuse is a major issue which affects more than one out of five females and one in ten males globally. Children belonging to low socio economic status, absence of one or both biological parents, marital conflicts and parental substance abuse increase the vulnerability of sexual abuse. Hence it is necessary to create an awareness among the parents in order to protect the child from sexual abuse.

Keywords- Child sexual abuse, parental role, Child molestation

I. INTRODUCTION

The first step in protecting the children from sexual abuse is educating parents about the nature of the problem. Sexual abuse is a difficult subject for most people to discuss, and especially difficult for parents to discuss with their children. A person sexually abuses a child when he or she exposes the child to sexual acts or behavior; and the child may experience a variety of short and long term reactions as a consequence of that abuse. Many children who experience sexual violence shows physical, emotional, sexual, or verbal signs of abuse. These effects can lead to long-term stress and hardship for the child well into adulthood, and often cause concern for parents and other caretakers.

Facts that the parents should know about child sexual abuse:

- **Most offenders are known to the child;** they may be family members, relatives, friends, teachers, coaches, babysitters, and others in positions of authority.
- **Children most susceptible to sexual abuse have obedient,** compliant and respectful personalities. They may be children from unhappy or broken

homes, as these youngsters may be eager for attention and affection.

- Children who are victims of sexual abuse can display many or few behavioral symptoms. They may withdraw from family or friends, display poor school performance, experience depression, anxiety, or exhibit aggressive and self-destructive behavior, or they may not display any outward abnormal behavior.
- Child sexual abuse often involves more than a single incident, and can go on for months or years.
- Sexual abuse includes any kind of sexual act or behavior with a child, and includes activities involving genital contact as well as non-contact events- such as showing pornographic images to children, taking pornographic photographs of a child, etc.

Tips for parents to minimize the child's risk of molestation:

The parents need practical advice. Parents bear the primary responsibility for the safety and well-being of their children. The parents can help to protect their children from sexual abuse by using following tips:

- Take an active role in their children's lives. Learn about their activities and people with whom they are involved. Stay alert for possible problems.
- Teach children early and often that there are no secrets between children and their parents, and that they should feel comfortable talking with their parent about anything -- good or bad, fun or sad, easy or difficult.
- Watch for "grooming" behaviors in adults who spend time with the child. Warning signs may include frequently finding ways to be alone with the child, ignoring the child's need for privacy (e.g., in the bathroom), or giving gifts or money for no particular occasion.

- Ensure that organizations, groups, and teams that the children are involved with minimal one-on-one time between children and adults. Ask how staff and volunteers are screened and supervised.
- Make sure whether children know that, they can talk to you about anything that bothers or confuses them.
- Teach children the accurate names of private body parts and the difference between touches that are “okay” and “not okay.” For younger children, teach more concrete rules such as “talk with me if anyone – family, friend or anyone else – touches their private parts.” Also teach kids that it is unacceptable to use manipulation or control to touch someone else’s body.
- Empower children to make decisions about their bodies by allowing them age-appropriate privacy and encouraging them to say “no” when they do not want to touch or be touched by others, even in nonsexual ways. Demonstrate boundaries by showing in their own life how to say “no.” Teach the children that their “no” will be respected, whether it’s in playing, tickling, hugging or kissing. For instance, if the child does not want to give Grandma a kiss, let the child shake hands instead. And make sure, too, that Grandma understands why a child’s ability to say ‘no’ is important for the safety of the child.
- Set and respect family boundaries. All members of the family should have rights to privacy in dressing, bathing, sleeping and other personal activities. If anyone does not respect these rights, an adult should clearly enforce the family rules.
- Teach children to take care of their own bodies (e.g., bathing or using the bathroom) so they do not have to rely on adults or older children for help.
- Educate children about the difference between good secrets (such as birthday surprises) and bad secrets (those that make the child feel unsafe or uncomfortable). Both the adults and children in their life need to know how secrets may make kids unsafe. Surprises are joyful and generate excitement in anticipation of being revealed after a short period of time. Secrets exclude others, often because the information will create upset or anger. When keeping secrets with just one person becomes routine, children are more vulnerable to abuse.
- Monitor children’s use of technology, including cell phones, social networking sites, and messaging. Review contact lists regularly and ask about any people you don’t recognize.
- Trust their instincts! If they feel uneasy about leaving their child with someone, don’t do it. If they are concerned about possible sexual abuse, ask questions.
- If their child tells there that he or she has been abused, stay calm, listen carefully, and never blame the child.
- Make unannounced visits to the child’s nursery, babysitter, daycare center, or school. When choosing a nursery, daycare center, or school, make sure that there are no areas where children play or work that are “off limits” to parents. Taking these actions raises awareness among caregivers, and reinforces the responsibility they have for the safety of the children in their charge.
- Find out if the child’s school or church religious education programs include a sex abuse prevention curriculum. If not, volunteer to be on a committee to establish such a program. Work with teachers to review available programs and make recommendations to school administrators. Talk with other parents about supporting the addition of child sexual abuse prevention material to existing child safety programs.
- **Do NOT** allow a child to go alone on “vacation” with *any* adult other than the child’s parent.
- **Do NOT** allow a child to spend the night alone with *any* adult other than the child’s parent or another **safe** adult.
- **Except in the case of a serious emergency, Do NOT** allow a child to travel alone—even for a very short distance—with *any* adult other than the child’s parent or another **safe** adult. You should also prohibit children from accepting expensive gifts from an adult, particularly if one child is singled out for special attention.

II. RECOMMENDED CONVERSATIONS WITH CHILDREN

Learn to recognize and take advantage of teachable moments with children. Be willing to openly discuss sensitive issues. The **American Academy of Pediatrics** recommends the following age-appropriate conversations with children:

- From ages **18 months to 3 years**—begin teaching children the proper names for all body parts.
- **Ages 3 to 5 years**—teach children about private body parts and how to say “no” to anyone who touches them in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable. Give them direct answers to questions about sex.

- **Ages 5 to 8 years**—talk about good touches and bad touches, and safety away from home.
- **Ages 8 to 12 years**—focus on personal safety issues.
- **Ages 13 to 18 years**—discuss issues such as rape, date rape, HIV, other sexually transmitted diseases, and unintended pregnancy. There are also professionals in the community who can provide assistance with forming age-appropriate responses to children's questions and concerns. Remember, regardless of the child's age: **Take advantage of teachable moments.**
- As children age, create an environment at home in which sexual topics can be discussed comfortably. Use news items and publicized reports of child sexual abuse to start discussions of safety, and reiterate that children should always tell a parent about anyone who is taking advantage of them sexually.

III. TIPS FOR PARENTS TO CARE THE AFFECTED CHILD

- If your child discloses any history of sexual abuse, listen carefully, and take his or her disclosure seriously. Too often, children are not believed, particularly if they implicate a family member as the perpetrator. Contact your pediatrician, the local child protection service agency, or the police. If you don't intervene, the abuse might continue, and the child may come to believe that home is not safe and that you are not available to help.
- Support your child and let him or her know that he or she is not responsible for the abuse.
- Bring your child to a physician for a medical examination, to ensure that the child's physical health has not been affected by the abuse.
- Most children and their families will also need professional counseling to help them through this ordeal, and your pediatrician can refer you to community resources for psychological help.
- If you have concerns that your child may be a victim of sexual abuse, you should talk with your pediatrician. Your physician can discuss your concerns, examine your child, and make necessary referrals and reports.

IV. CONCLUSION

Understanding the sexual abuse and its prevention builds the parental confidence to keep their kids safe. The most effective prevention involves taking action before any

abuse occurs. Prevention can start in at home today itself. **“Save future citizen without psychological distress”.**

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