



WHAT CAN I DO FOR OUR FAMILY

Caring for a child who has been sexually abused can be a difficult experience for parents. This secondary trauma can affect your entire family. Here are some tips you may want to consider:

- Access general information on sexual abuse to back up your own experience.
- Contact your local sexual assault center. They have counselors that can help you with the healing process.
- Join a support group to talk to other parents.
- Spend time and surround yourself with supportive family members or friends.
- Have patience - sometimes things get worse before they get better, but given time and support, both you and your child can recover.

LaFASA

*Louisiana Foundation
Against Sexual Assault*

Sexual Assault Crisis Centers provide a 24-hour crisis hotline, information and referral, free counseling and more!

www.lafasa.org

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LaFASA

Sexual Abuse & Healing for PARENTS

WHAT IS CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Child sexual abuse is any interaction between a child and an adult (or another child) in which the child is used for the perpetrator's sexual stimulation. It is often a gradual process and not an isolated assault. It can include touching and non-touching behavior, such as showing children sexually explicit pictures, unwanted fondling, and rape. Sexual abuse can happen to both boys and girls of all ages and backgrounds.

If a child discloses abuse, remember to remain calm, listen carefully, and NEVER blame the child. Please seek help immediately either from your local sexual assault center and/or child advocacy center.

1 out of 4 girls and 1 out of 6 boys will experience some form of sexual abuse before the age of 18.

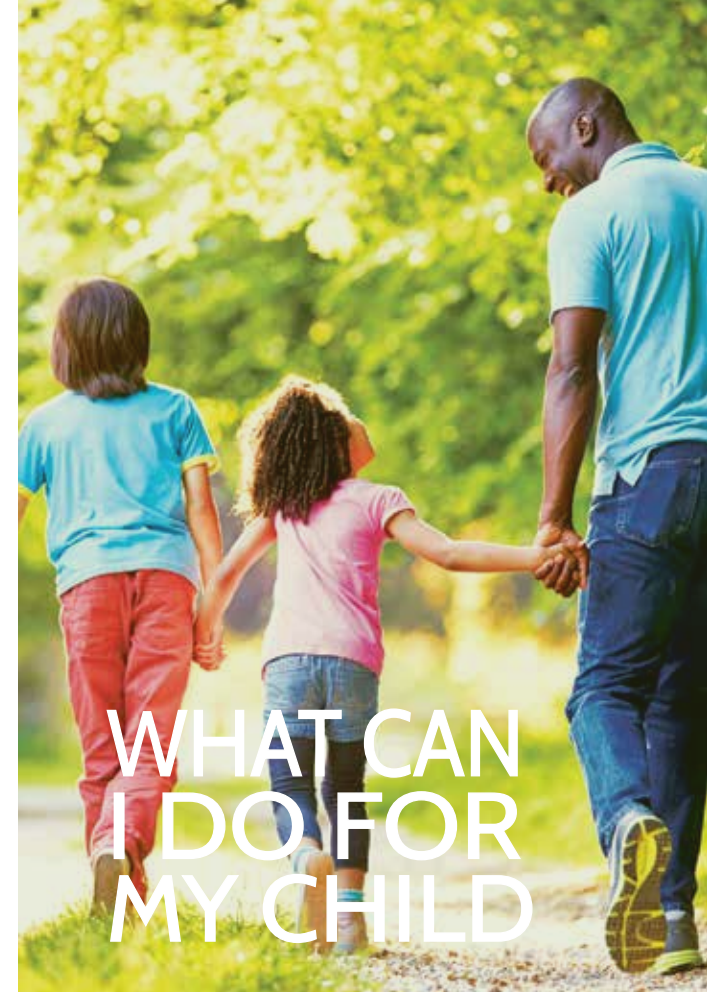
Myths About Child Sexual Abuse:

- **A stranger is most likely to abuse my child.** Children are most likely to be to be abused by someone they know and trust. Often perpetrators will “groom” victims and families to gain trust.
- **Children who experience sexual abuse will never recover.** Children can and do recover with counseling and support. That is why we recommend contacting your local child advocacy center or sexual assault center.
- **Talking about sexual abuse with a child who experienced sexual abuse will make it worse.** Professional help and support can minimize the physical and emotional side effects from the trauma.
- **Child sexual abusers are always adults.** 23% of reported cases of child sexual abuse are perpetrated by individuals under the age of 18.
- **Child sexual abuse is a rare experience.** Unfortunately it is not rare. The secretive nature of the abuse causes many of these cases go unreported.

If your child has been sexually abused, it does not mean you're a bad parent.

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. Often abusers stress secrecy or threaten children if they tell.
- members of your family blame you.
- the abuser was your partner, boy/girlfriend, or spouse.



WHAT CAN I DO FOR MY CHILD

There are many ways you can help your child and your support will help them heal:

- Contact your local child advocacy center or sexual assault center. Their trained professionals can help with reporting to law enforcement, counseling, and other needs.
- Believe your child. Praise your child for telling you and try to stay as calm as possible.
- Do not threaten the abuser. This could frighten your child and may confirm fears created by their abuser.
- Reassure your child that it is not their fault and they are blameless for the assault. Tell your child you're sorry that this happened.
- Tell your child you will seek help to stop the abuse immediately.