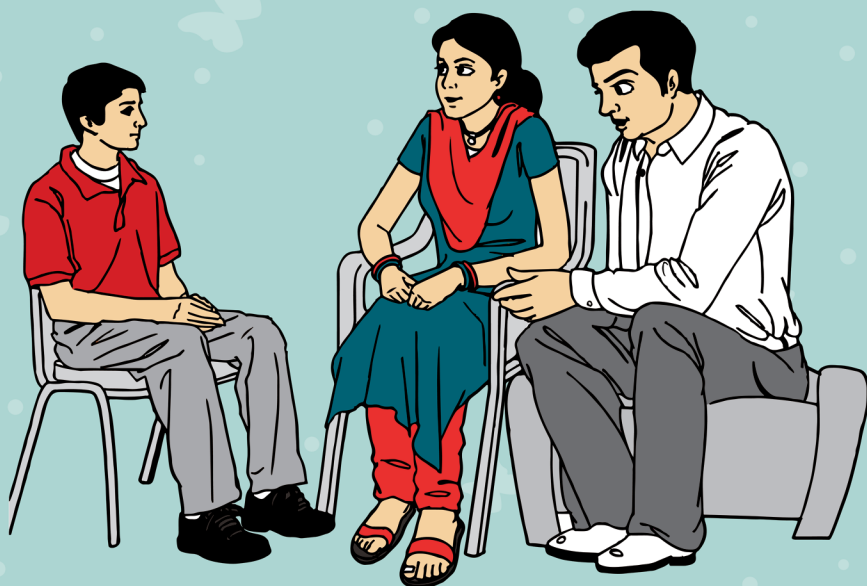


Preventing and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse

A HANDBOOK FOR CAREGIVERS



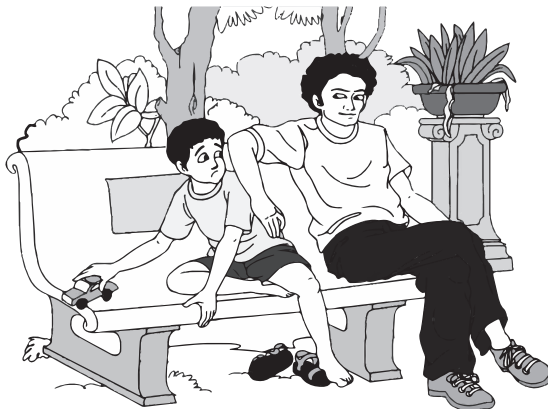
Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) is any act, using a child, for the sexual gratification of the more powerful person. Child Sexual Abuse is a violation of a child's body as well as of the trust, implicit in a care giving relationship. This violation can have a significant impact on how the child, as a victim and later on as an adult survivor, perceives and experiences the world. The effects of Child Sexual Abuse can be damaging but need not be permanent.

It is our responsibility, as parents, teachers and caregivers to safeguard our children and to teach them skills to stay safe from sexual abuse. Since parents, teachers and caregivers are the best people to teach children about personal safety, this booklet is designed to facilitate an understanding of the issue and propose simple tips for participating in children's safety.

This information booklet also aims to equip caregivers to initiate conversations about personal safety, setting boundaries and responding to children effectively in order to create an environment of comfort and assurance for children to seek help.

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) includes Contact and Non-Contact Sexual Abuse:

Contact Sexual Abuse



- Penetrative Sex: Peno-vaginal intercourse, Anal sex, Oral sex.
- Touching the child's Private Body Parts, making the child touch the powerful person's Private Body Parts.

- Fondling of the child's body with an intention of sexual gratification of the powerful person.

Non-Contact Sexual Abuse



- Exposing child to pornographic content.
- Making the child watch others indulging in sexual activity or showing Private Body Parts of others.
- Talking about sex and sexual activity with a child. Passing comments of sexual nature.
- Looking at a child's Private Body Parts while the child is undressing or bathing for sexual gratification.

Statistics show that one in every two children is sexually abused!

53.22%

Children reported having faced one or more forms of sexual abuse.

50.00%

Abusers are persons known to the child or in a position of trust and responsibility (family member, close relative, friend or neighbour).

52.94%

Boys reported experiencing some form of Child Sexual Abuse. Boys and girls are equally vulnerable.

- 20.90% reported facing severe forms of sexual abuse and 50.76% other forms of sexual abuse.
- 5.69% reported being sexually assaulted.
- Most children did not report the matter to anyone.
- Greater incidence of sexual abuse was reported by children between the age group of 10 to 15 years.

Source: Study of Child Abuse: India, 2007, Ministry of Women and Child Development

According to WHO (World Health Organization, cited in Study of Child Abuse: India 2007 Ministry of Women and Child Development), India has the world's largest number of sexually abused children, with a child below 16 years raped every 155th minute, a child below 10 every 13th hour and one in every 10 children is sexually abused at any point in time.

According to National Crime Record Bureau Statistics in 2015,

- A total of 94,172 cases of crimes against children were reported.
- A total of 19,767 children were sexually assaulted which accounts for 36.2% of all cases of crime against children.
- 54.5% of total reported incest rape cases were of children.
- The maximum cases of crime against children were reported in Maharashtra.

Being sexually abused, impacts the life-world of children at the physiological, psychological, social levels and on sexual behavior patterns. Children can immediately experience conflicting emotions post Child Sexual Abuse, such as:

- Shame, guilt, sadness and anger
- Fear, shock and confusion

The impact of Child Sexual Abuse can continue to affect children even as they become adults if they are not supported and healed.

Long term impact of CSA can include:

- Psychosomatic illness
- Possible exploitative relationships in the future
- Social withdrawal
- Inappropriate or over sexualized behavior
- Inability to trust
- Domestic violence
- Confused sexual identity
- Promiscuity

Sexual abuse can happen to children of any socioeconomic group, sex, religion or culture. Most children quietly suffer and don't talk about Sexual Abuse. But we need to TALK about it, so that WE can PREVENT IT and HEAL its ill effects.

These are some steps that YOU can take as primary caregivers to reduce the risk of Child Sexual Abuse:

1. Get Involved in Your Child's Life as there is No Substitute for Your Attention and Supervision:



- Be aware of your children's environment when you are not with them (home, school, activity classes and playground).
- Know your children's schedule. Ask them to keep you updated if there is a change in plans.
- Know your children's friends and, if possible, their parents as well. Also, meet their teachers or caretakers.
- Ask your children about what happened during the day and things that they liked or disliked. Ask them about people they interacted with.
- Be aware of the kind of programs or shows they watch on television or on the internet in your presence as well as absence.
- Take part in your children's games and discuss the kind of games they play. Encourage them to play on the playground or in a public place instead of a playing in a friend's home.
- Encourage open communication. Your children will know they can talk to you about any situation. Be open to answering their questions and comments and use it as an opportunity to educate them. Don't get angry with them for asking such questions or ask them to keep quiet or go away. Answer their questions in an age appropriate manner. If you don't know the answer, it is ok to tell them that you don't and will find it out. Remember to inform them about it after you have found out the answer. Don't avoid answering their questions because children can sense your discomfort. For example, in movies, cartoons or serials if an inappropriate situation arises, speak to your children about it and do not avoid it.

- Learn about technology to keep your children safe from harm and enable them to use it positively and responsibly. Help them develop guidelines for safe internet usage and follow those.

2. Respect Children's Feelings, Listen and Talk to Them:



- Show unconditional love towards children and tell them that your love for them is independent of their academic performance or achievements. Do not label children as bad or nasty as this affects their self-esteem negatively. Always refer to the behavior as incorrect and not the person.
- If there is a change in the child's behavior or performance do not correct them with force immediately, try to speak to them and find out what is bothering them.
- Listen to the child's concerns, understand the feeling and try to reflect that feeling back to your child. For example, "You feel really angry when your uncle squeezes your cheek tightly." This will make them feel that you understand them well and also teach them to label their feelings and express them.
- Share your feelings, pleasant and unpleasant experiences or challenges and how you tackled the difficulties faced by you, if any. Children will learn to express and handle difficult situations when you share with them.
- Respect children's liking and disliking to touch and hugs. Stop tickling them, squeezing their cheeks or hugging them if they don't like it. Don't force children to hug or kiss anyone. Support them, by helping them find another way to show respect to family members. It will help children set their boundaries. When adults at home respect a child's boundaries; they learn to say 'stop' or 'no' to a touch that makes them feel uncomfortable.

3. Teach your Children about Personal Safety as you are their Best Teacher:



- Read books on personal safety with your children and encourage them to ask questions.
- Set boundaries about places they may go, people they may see, and things they may do. However, while setting boundaries speak to your child in a calm and reassuring way as fear is not an effective teaching tool, but confidence is. Give them a rationale for these boundaries, instead of just dictating restrictions on what they should / should not do.
- Teach children their full name, home phone number and how to use the telephone. Post your contact information where your children will see it: office phone number, mobile no. etc. List names and contact details of other adults whom they can contact in case you are not available.
- Teach children about touches and how to identify the way they feel. Just like, we teach our children safety rules about crossing the road, we can also teach them about Safe and Unsafe Touches.



Safe Touch

Safe touches are those which are healthy for children. Touches that make children feel happy and comfortable can be safe touches. Touches like holding hands, hugging when they want it, patting on the shoulder can be safe touches. These touches are important and everyone needs them.



Unsafe Touch

Unsafe touches are those that are not healthy for children. Touches that make children feel uncomfortable, sad, angry, scared, shy or confused are mostly unsafe touches. Unsafe touches include hitting, kicking, pulling hair, forcefully hugging and kissing, tickling in a way that it is hurting them.

- Use daily life events as an opportunity to talk to children about personal safety.

For example:

- » While bathing young children name their private body parts along with other body parts and talk about the importance of keeping them clean and healthy.
- » When children express curiosity about their body parts or ask question about sexuality; answer them in age appropriate manner.
- » When children have questions about private body parts of the opposite sex; answer them in age appropriate manner.

Teach children Personal Safety Rules/Guidelines

RULE NO.

1

It is NEVER all right for someone to TOUCH, LOOK or TALK about your private body parts except to keep them clean and healthy. It is never alright for someone else to ask you to TOUCH, LOOK or TALK about their private body parts.

RULE NO.

2

If someone tries to break this rule, say “NO” and GET AWAY.

RULE NO.

3

TELL a TRUSTED ADULT and KEEP TELLING until you get the help you need.

- Use “what if” questions and concrete examples relating to their life to practice safety rules. This will make children think about situations they may encounter and give them confidence to take decision and act assertively.

» What if

- your friend wants to play doctor-doctor game and touch your private body parts?
- someone asked you to jump off a wall?
- an uncle or an older boy wanted to play a secret touching game with you?
- Tell your children to trust their instincts and let them know that it is ok to say ‘NO’ assertively if they do not like a touch/look or any other behavior.
- Tell children to seek help from a trusted adult if they’re scared, confused, feel unsafe or have an emergency.

PROVIDE INFORMATION ON PERSONAL SAFETY IN AN AGE APPROPRIATE MANNER.

It is important to respond to children’s queries. Understanding why a child is asking a particular question will help parents to respond age appropriately.

Aware Parents and Caretakers Can Help a Child Who Has Been Sexually Abused.

Sometimes, despite our best efforts, our children become victims of sexual abuse. We need to help our children overcome the abuse. To help them we can do the following:

STEP 1: Recognizing that the child has been sexually abused

STEP 2: Helping the child talk about this experience

STEP 3: Seeking professional support to help the child heal

Step 1: Recognizing that the child has been sexually abused

Recognizing an abusive situation is a skill for parents and caretakers. Most children don't report abuse. But parents and caretakers can identify sexual abuse based on children's behavioral changes. No 'one' behavior alone determines that a child has been sexually abused. These are just some of the indicators which can help us to be alert.

- Sudden drop in academic performance
- Repeated urinary infections
- Unexplained pain or swelling in genital area
- Excessive increase or decrease in food intake or sudden weight loss or weight gain
- Sudden disproportionate fear of a place/person/color, etc.
- Seems sad, consistently talks very little
- Social withdrawal, hostility or aggression
- Suicide attempts
- Passive or overly pleasing behavior
- Hints, indirect comments about the abuse
- Use of abusive sexual language
- Sexualized behavior - that includes excessive sexual play, inappropriate sexual comments or gestures sexual activity at an early age

IMPORTANT: These behavioral changes and physical concerns **MAY** be indicative of sexual abuse, but are **NOT** necessarily a result of sexual abuse.

Step 2: Helping the child talk about abuse



In order to help the child talk about the experience it is important to first understand why they don't talk about sexual abuse and what enables them to talk about it and seek help.

WHY CHILDREN DON'T TALK?

Abusers use a lot of techniques to maintain control so that children do not share about the abuse. These could either be in the form of threats, coercion or certain belief systems. Some of these can be:

- "Mummy & daddy won't believe you".
- "I don't even know how to say what happened, I just feel weird".
- "I don't think uncle meant to be bad to me..."
- "It didn't hurt...I was just uncomfortable".
- "She's mommy's good friend".
- "They said it was just a game".
- "Daddy will leave us and go..!"
- "It was my fault!"
- "...I liked it".
- "My teacher might fail me if I tell Mummy".
- "I am scared, Uncle told me not to tell anyone, it's a secret."
- "It is our special secret".

WHAT MAKES CHILDREN TALK, EVENTUALLY?



- Awareness and understanding of the abuse.
- Discussion with an understanding parent or an adult with whom they are comfortable.
- Inability to bear the abuse anymore.
- Physical illnesses following sexual abuse.
- Secure adult relationships that provide confidence.
- Revelation during counselling session.
- Desire to prevent abuse of other children.

REMEMBER THAT THE CHILD IS NOT AT FAULT.

Create an understanding and open environment to help the child talk about the abuse. When children finally do talk about abuse, it's very important to respond effectively.

Some guidelines to handle disclosure effectively are:

Do's

- Keep calm.
- Believe the child.
- Listen to the child.
- Answer the child's questions honestly.
- Respect the child's privacy by not telling other people.
- Don't promise to keep it a secret; instead explain why you have to report it and to whom.
- Give positive messages: "It is not your fault", "I am with you" or "I am proud of you for telling".
- Get professional help from counselors, doctors after taking the child into confidence.

Dont's

- Blame the child.
- Panic or overreact.
- Pressurize the child to talk.
- Question too much or aggressively.
- Make the child repeat the story.
- Confront the offender in child's presence.
- Ask the child to forget or adjust.

REMEMBER DISCLOSURE IS DIFFICULT FOR CHILDREN.

It may be days, months, years (or even never), for a victim or survivor to be able to talk about sexual abuse. Be patient and supportive.

Step 3: Seeking professional support to help the child heal

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) is NOT the child's fault – but the child can show impact of it. Professional counselling facilitates child's healing by helping the child:

- Realize that abuse is NOT his/her fault.
- Reduce the shame and guilt.
- Feel accepted, safe and secure.
- Rebuild their self-esteem and confidence.
- Minimize focus on the traumatic past, heal and move on.
- Come to terms with the consequences about the abuser when reported and action taken.

The family also needs counselling to cope with the situation and help the child heal. Arpan provides support through professional counselling to any person who has experienced Child Sexual Abuse.

You can reach our counselors on **support@arpan.org.in** or call on **98190.86444**

Arpan is a registered award winning NGO based in Mumbai working on the issue of Child Sexual Abuse with a team of dedicated and skilled professionals since the year 2006. Arpan addresses the issue of Child Sexual Abuse by providing direct prevention and intervention services to children, adolescents and adults. Arpan through all its programmes over 1,93,000 has reached out to children and adults directly. Arpan trains professionals to replicate similar services. Arpan has indirectly reached out to 8,94,000 children and adults. We also build resources relevant to various stakeholders, and advocate with systems for better child protection measures.

Our Vision: World free of Child Sexual Abuse

Our Mission: To empower individuals, families, communities and society with prevention and intervention skills to reduce the occurrence of Child Sexual Abuse and heal its psychological, social, sexual and physical consequences.

Our Activities include:

EMPOWERING:

- Parents, teachers, Non-Governmental Organization professionals, caretakers and student professionals with prevention and intervention skills to help prevent CSA through awareness and training
- Children and adolescents with personal safety skills to protect themselves from CSA through teaching in classroom setups in schools
- Mental health professionals with therapeutic skills to deal with CSA cases effectively through regular trainings and workshops
- Child, adult survivors and rescued minors to heal from trauma caused by CSA through counseling

ADVOCATING WITH:

- Policy Makers for specific laws on CSA to prevent and reduce the occurrence of CSA.
- School and Educational systems to incorporate personal safety modules into their curriculum to empower children and adolescents.

You too can help, by:

TALKING ABOUT THE ISSUE

- Talk to your friends and family about CSA. Learn more about CSA on www.arpan.org.in.
- If you have experienced CSA or know of someone who has, reach out to us on support@arpan.org.in or 98190.86444.

VOLUNTEERING

- We need individuals with varied skills and resources to help our work grow.
- Tell people about Arpan and the work we do.
- Help us get access to networks like schools, clubs, residential societies, NGOs, any platform to talk about CSA and create awareness.
- Help us continue the good work by raising funds.

DONATING

- Sponsor Teaching @ Rs. 1900 X ____ no. of children personal safety skills

WAYS TO DONATE:

- You could send a cheque in the name of 'Arpan' to our office.
- For bank transfer details contact us on finance@arpan.org.in.
- For online donation visit <http://arpan.org.in/donate/>

You will be sent a receipt and 80G tax exemption certificate.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT US ON

Email: info@arpan.org.in

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Online Courses: www.arpanelearn.com

Tel: +91.98190.51444

Address: Arpan House, Delta Chemicals Pvt Ltd., J-1, Cama Industrial Estate, Off Valbhat Road, Goregaon (E), Mumbai - 400 063, India.

A Short Recap: Understanding, Prevention and Coping with Child Sexual Abuse

Child Sexual Abuse is any act using a child for the sexual gratification of the more powerful person.

- Sexual abuse can affect children negatively, yet most children don't report it.
- Aware parents, caretakers and children can help prevent Child Sexual Abuse.
- Teach children about Safe and Unsafe Touch.
- Teach children Personal Safety Rules/Guidelines.
- Child Sexual Abuse is NOT the child's fault.
- Aware parents and caretakers can help a sexually abused child better by:
 - » Step 1: Recognizing that the child has been sexually abused
 - » Step 2: Helping the child talk about this experience
 - » Step 3: Seeking professional support to help the child heal

Quick Tips for keeping Children Safe

- **TALK** to your child frequently. Make time for them. Do things you both enjoy.
- Talk goes both ways so **LISTEN** to your child, know what is happening in their life.
- **SUPPORT, ENCOURAGE** and **PRAISE** your child's thoughts, ideas and achievements. Avoid discouraging statements and labels.
- Learn to use **NON-PHYSICAL OPTIONS FOR DISCIPLINE**. If you are angry about your child's behavior address the issue after calming down.
- Let them know they have the **RIGHT TO SAY 'NO'** to anyone including known adults when they feel uncomfortable and unsafe.
- **ENCOURAGE THEM TO TELL** if they feel unsafe. Let them know they can tell or ask for help from you and other adults.
- Build an **OPEN AND TRUSTING RELATIONSHIP** with your child.
- **LET THEM KNOW YOU LOVE THEM!**

For more information on Child Sexual Abuse visit www.arpan.org.in

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