

# Keeping our children safe from sexual abuse

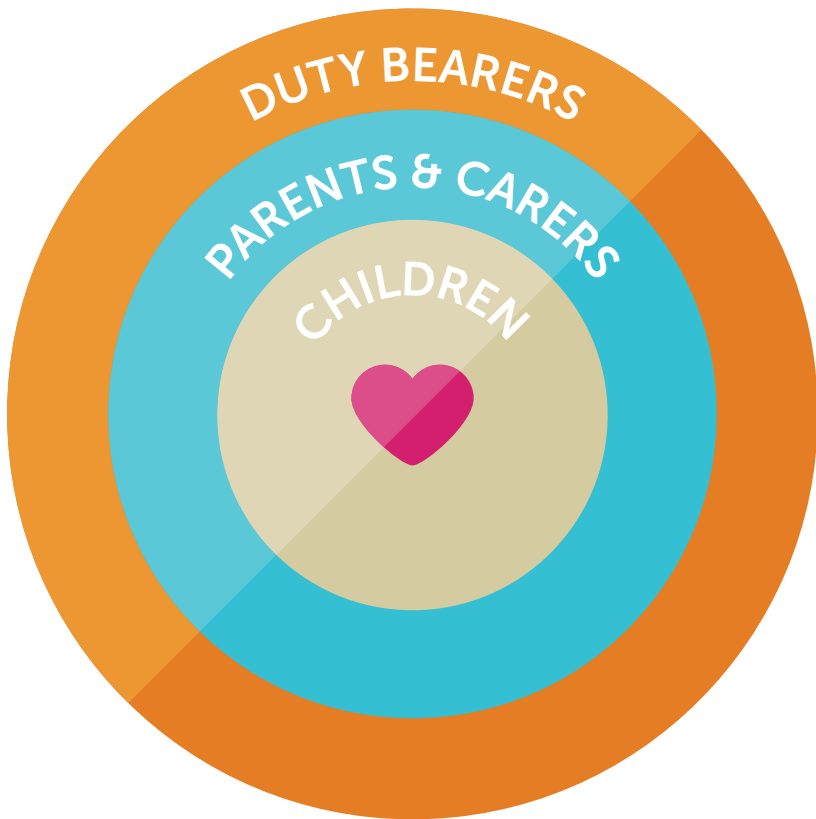
Parents and Carers





# Protecting children is everyone's responsibility

A 'child' is anyone under 18 years of age. Children need special protection. Parents and carers are the primary and most important protectors of children.



**The role of parents and carers is the most important to keep children safe from abuse.**



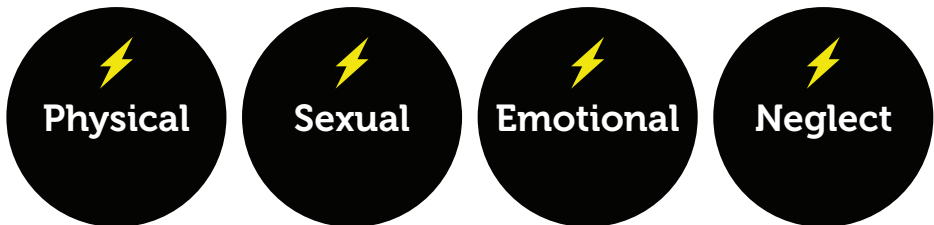
# What is child abuse?

Child abuse is any action (or non-action) that is not accidental and hurts a child or puts a child in danger.

Millions of children around the world suffer abuse every day. Child abuse occurs in every country of the world.

## Types of child abuse

There are four main forms of child abuse. Often, more than one type of abuse occurs at the same time.



## Impact of child abuse

Abuse has serious effects on children and can result in long-term physical and psychological problems.

The consequences of abuse extend beyond the immediate victims and affect families, communities and broader society.

Children should never be blamed for their abuse or the impacts that extend to families and communities.

# What is child abuse?



Verbally abusing a child



Teasing a child unnecessarily



Touching a child where he/she doesn't want to be touched



Ignoring a child



Exposing a child to pornographic acts or literature



Forcing a child to touch you



Breaking down the self confidence of a child



Hitting or hurting a child – often to relieve your own frustration



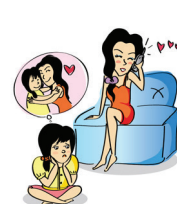
Manipulating a child



Not taking care of a child, for example: unclean, unclothed, unfed



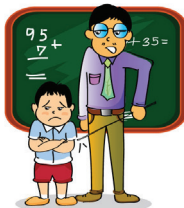
Using a child as a servant



Neglecting emotional needs of a child



Making your own child a 'servant' depriving of time for education / leisure



Hitting and ridiculing a child at school



Neglecting a child's medical needs



Neglecting a child's educational needs



Leaving a child without supervision



# What is child sexual abuse?

- Child sexual abuse occurs when someone involves a child in a sexual activity by using their power over them or taking advantage of their trust.
- Child sexual abuse includes all forms of unwanted sexual behaviour. This can involve touching or no contact at all.
- Child sexual abuse includes:
  - making abusive images/photographs/videos of children.
  - forcing children to watch or take part in sexual acts.
  - forcing/coercing children to have sex or engage in sexual acts with other children or adults.



# Did you know?

## **Child sexual abuse is a global problem**

Child sexual abuse occurs in all countries of the world. Even our community is not immune from child sexual abuse. The majority of abusers in any given community will be local.

## **Victims of sexual abuse can be girls and boys**

Both girls and boys can be victims of sexual abuse. Third gender children or children who are exploring their sexuality can be at increased risk. Children with disabilities (all types of disabilities) can also be at increased risk. Sexual abuse can happen to any child from any background.

## **An abuser is often someone known to the child**

Child sex abusers are often a member of the family, the community or someone in a position of trust.

## **Abusers can befriend victims and their families**

Abusers often build friendships with the victim and their family as a way to 'hide' their abuse.

## **Child sexual abuse can occur in the context of tourism**

A small minority of foreigners use travel as an opportunity to sexually abuse children. Travelling child sex offenders are tourists, travellers or foreign residents who commit child sexual abuse in the country or countries in which they are living or visiting.

## **Children often do not tell an adult about abuse**

For many reasons, children often stay silent about abuse. Look for signs, rather than waiting for children to report.

## **All children have the right to protection**

All children around the world have the right to protection from all forms of abuse. As adults, it is our responsibility to protect children from harm. Children should never be blamed for their abuse.



# How can I keep my children safe?

## 1 Be well-informed

- Child sex abusers take opportunities from people's lack of knowledge about how they offend in order to abuse children.
- Be informed and talk openly about child sexual abuse.

## 2 Speak with our children

- Sometimes children do not share something important with their parents because they are afraid they will be punished or blamed. Child sex abusers use this fear to their advantage.
- Build an open and trusting relationship with your child. Let them know they can share anything with you.
- Speak to your children about sex and sexual matters in a way that is suitable for their age.
- Teach your child protective strategies from a young age including:
  - Correct names for parts of their body.
  - Recognising and responding to their feelings and body signals to know when they need protection.
  - If children feel worried or scared, they can say NO and GO away from the situation and TELL a safe adult about what happened.

## 3 Be aware of what is happening

- Be aware that this could happen in our community.
- Pay attention to changes in your children's behavior.
- Observe the behaviour of other adults who spend time with your children.

## 4 Know who to contact for help

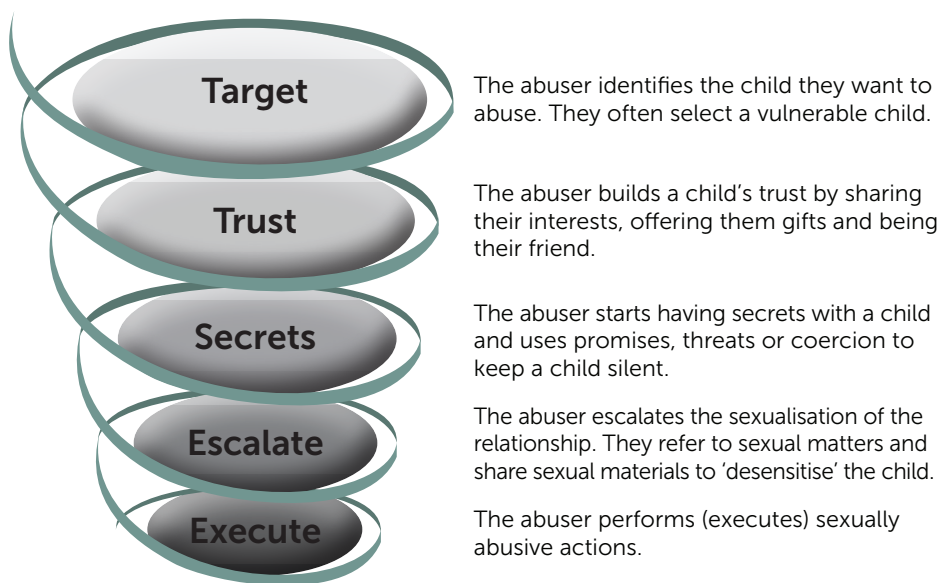
- Seek help immediately if you suspect a child is at risk or has suffered abuse.



# How do child sex abusers operate?

Abusers use many ways to access and abuse children.

People often think that child sexual abuse occurs as a random attack by a stranger. Actually, it is common that an abuser and/or an intermediary will spend time building a relationship with the child (and sometimes their family). This process is known as “grooming” and can involve a number of steps:



Not all abusers use grooming techniques. Other ways include sudden attack, procurement, deceit and manipulation, and coercion.

Often abusers do not act alone. They may be aided or supported by another person such as assistants, procurers, agents, intermediaries, and facilitators.





# What should I look out for?

## Your child's behaviour

There are signs that a child may be experiencing abuse. While these symptoms do not necessarily mean your child is being abused, they present a good reason to speak with your child about their situation or to seek help.

- Mood swings, becoming withdrawn, depression, sudden anger or aggression.
- Running away from home or going missing for long periods.
- A change in their school performance or missing school without reason.
- Unexplained money, gifts, mobile phones.
- Substance abuse (including drugs and alcohol).
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for their age.
- Physical symptoms including sleep problems, bed-wetting, sexually transmitted infections.

## The behaviour of adults around you

Be alert if you notice adults behaving in an unusual way with your children. This includes if adults:

- Give your children excessive attention.
- Give gifts of toys or money.
- Spend time alone with your child.
- Want to take your child on outings, excursions and holidays.

**If a child tells you they have been abused, reassure them that you are listening to them and that you believe what they are telling you.**



# Where can I get help?

Do you need more information? Or, do you know a situation where a child may be at risk of abuse or has experienced abuse?



Call the national child protection hotline

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Contact the local authorities

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Contact a reputable child protection agency

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w: [childsafetourism.org](https://www.childsafetourism.org) and [wvi.org/asiapacific/childsafetourism](https://www.wvi.org/asiapacific/childsafetourism)  
f: [facebook.com/ChildSafeTourism](https://www.facebook.com/ChildSafeTourism) t: [twitter.com/childsafetravel](https://www.twitter.com/childsafetravel)



## Child Safe Tourism

Take action against abuse