

West Virginia Department of Education

Sexual Abuse Prevention School Personnel Training

Module 2 - Discussion Guide

(Minimum Expectation – 20 minutes)

Statistics show that 1 in 10 children are sexually abused before their 18th birthday. What are risk factors that can lead to abuse?

- Lack of body safety education
 - » Children who lack the necessary info about body safety education are at a higher risk of abuse because they cannot discern between unhealthy and healthy behaviors. Also, children who feel insecure about approaching their parents about the topic of body safety tend to believe what their friends tell them or what they find on the internet.
- Unsupervised one on one time with older children/teens or adults
 - » Children who are left unsupervised with teens and adults have a higher risk of abuse. The biggest risk is in single-parent or two working parent households where the parents must leave a child alone with coaches, instructors, teachers, babysitters, or family friends.
- Special needs
 - » Overall, children with disabilities are more likely to be victims of sexual abuse. For children with intellectual and mental health disabilities, the likelihood increases even more. These children may be viewed as easier targets for perpetrators because they often struggle with communication.
 - » Children with special needs should be taught about body safety and healthy relationships. If they have trouble with communication, teach specific signs they can use when they feel threatened or in trouble. Teach this important information on a level in which they can understand.
- Isolation
 - » Children who are insecure or struggle with self-esteem are more vulnerable to being abused. One of the classic patterns perpetrators use is to give attention to children. They love to gain their trust and make them feel special. Children who are lonely or vulnerable may long for or crave this level of attention.

Child sexual abuse is not always easy to spot. What are some signs that a child is being abused?

- Redness or bruising
- Rashes or swelling
- Urinary tract infections
- Anxiety
- Stomach pain
- Headaches
- Emotional or behavioral signals – depression/withdrawing, unexplained anger/rebellion
- There may be no signs at all



Why should we no longer only teach children the adage, “Stranger Danger” to protect them from abuse?

- 30% of children are abused by family members.
- As many as 60% are abused by people the family trusts.
- About 35% of victims are 11 years old or younger.
- Nearly 40% are abused by older or larger children.
- Research shows that the risk to children doesn’t come from strangers, but from friends and family.
- **False sexual abuse reports made by children are rare.**

If you suspect a child is being abused what does law require you to do?

- WV state law is clear that any person who is a member of the school staff, a school volunteer, a medical/dental/mental health professional, a religious leader, a camp director/camp counselor, or a coach in WV is a mandated reporter. Rather than notifying school administration, the individual must report directly to CPS and to the State Police and local law-enforcement, when the reporter believes that the child suffered serious physical or sexual abuse or assault. WV state law requires that if you have a reasonable cause to suspect abuse is occurring, you must make a report to authorities.

Refer to Module 2 Handout.

What are the specific guidelines laid out in your school’s policy about reporting suspected abuse to your school administration, CPS, and law enforcement?

- School administrator should share local school policy and procedure at this time.

From the interview with Casey Springston, Staff at DHHR Centralized Intake, we learned about information that will be needed when making an abuse report to CPS. What information will be needed?

- Child’s name, address, and age
- Parents’/caretakers’ name and address
- Nature of abuse
- Other Helpful information includes
 - » Perpetrator’s name
 - » Details of abuse
- **If the child does not give a lot of information, do not continue to question him or her because it could interfere later with the investigation.**

What are some of the things you learned as we followed the path of reported suspected abuse through the system?

References

<https://defendinnocence.org/>
<https://www.d2l.org/>

