

# Handout 1

## Reasons for you to take preventative action

### *SEXUAL ABUSE IS DEVASTATING.*

#### Physical damage:

- Eating disorders
- Drug dependency, substance abuse
- Self-harm (cutting, other self-inflicted injuries)
- Extreme risk-taking behaviour
- Sexual difficulties or disinterest
- Homosexuality
- Loss of virginity
- Pregnancy
- Sexually transmitted disease(s), infection
- Prostitution
- Suicide

#### Emotional damage

- Confusion
- Fear
- Anxiety / panic attacks
- Hyper-vigilance (can't relax)
- Depression
- Nightmares
- Sleeplessness
- Isolation / loneliness / withdrawal
- Self blame: load of guilt and shame
- Feeling dirty / different / defective
- Anger
- Loss of childhood, innocence, confidence, self-respect, self-esteem, trust in men, trust in women, trust in family, general trust in people
- Suicidal thoughts, attempts
- Helplessness
- Powerlessness
- Emotionless
- Relationship difficulties, often leading to strained marriage, divorce, or other broken relationships

- + 70-80% of sexual abuse survivors report excessive drug and alcohol use
- + One study showed that among male survivors, 50% have suicidal thoughts and more than 20% attempt suicide
- + Young girls who are sexually abused are more likely to develop eating disorders as adolescents
- + More than 60% of teen pregnancies are first preceded by experiences of molestation, rape or attempted rape
- + Approximately 40% of sex offenders report sexual abuse as children
- + Prostitution
- + Approximately 70% of sexual offenders have between 1 and 9 victims; 20-25% have 10 to 40 victims
- + Serial offenders may have as many as 400 victims in their lifetimes

Spiritual Damage:

- Distorted image of God
- Struggles to trust God
- Distorted image of self

Practical Damage:

- Activities restricted
- Financial loss
- Difficulties at school
- Career affected, even to the point of job loss and inability to have steady work
- Further abusive relationships
- Psychiatric admissions

## Handout 2

### Tricks sexual predators commonly use

1. Special attention. #1. Children naturally seek love, attention, and affection. They are often trusting of someone who is kind to them. Predators use this vulnerability to seduce them.
2. "Accidental" touching. They purposely test the waters to see what reaction your child will give and how far they can go.
3. Assistance lure. "Will you please show me where ... is?" Drill into your kids, *Safe adults don't ask kids for help.*
4. Authority trick. Used by church leaders, school leaders, Scouts, any adult who is in charge.
5. Desensitize trick. Might casually leave pornography or graphic pictures lying around; might gradually introduce talk with sexual undertones/ connotations that leads to explicit
6. Drug and alcohol trick. Lower the child's alertness.
7. Emergency trick. "Your mom is sick and she asked me to pick you up"
8. Fame trick. "Everyone will think you are cool"
9. Friendship trick. "You can't be my friend if you don't...."
10. Games trick. "This is our special little game"
11. Hero trick / Special privileges trick.
12. "I know you" trick. For a young child, if an adult comes up and says his name, he might be fooled into thinking the adult is not a stranger. Don't put an obvious name label on your child's backpack, clothes etc., and be careful how you use his/her name in public places.
13. Internet trick. Again, children's/teens' safety awareness level is lowered if they've been chatting with a stranger online for a period of time, thinking they aren't strangers anymore. People are not always who they pretend to be online, and they can even send convincing pictures.
14. Job trick. Teens can be lured into a trap by someone who pretends to be interested in hiring them for a job, especially in their own homes.
15. Legitimacy trick. Adult convinces the child that the sexual activity / game is legitimate.
16. Outing trick. Adult gets parents to consent to child going on an outing in order to gain access.
17. Pet trick. "Will you help me find my puppy?" They may have photos and a leash to prove legitimacy.
18. Teaching trick. Sexual predators choose jobs that gain them access to kids one-on-one, such as tutoring, teaching music lessons, gymnastics, martial arts, etc etc. Offers to take child out fishing, skiing, you name it.
19. Threat trick. Predators gets compliance and silence by threatening to harm or kill child, his parents or someone/thing special to child.
20. Costume trick.

~adapted from <http://www.peasinthepods.com/tricks.shtml>

## Handout 3

### Reasons children don't tell

1. Fear
  - a) Of the abuser – Often the abuser threatens to harm the child or the child's family if the secret comes out.
  - b) Of not being believed – Often the child reasons that adults are older and wiser and always right, so why would parents (teachers, other adults) believe the child is telling the truth and the adult is lying? They may also fear that their parents will believe they're imagining things or making up the story. Abusers often tell the child that the child's parents will believe his story and not the child's.
  - c) Of being punished for causing the abuse, especially in homes where parents are strict and keep order with physical or rigorous punishments.
2. Blaming themselves. *Since grown-ups are "always right" the child reasons, I must have done something wrong to cause this.* The child views the abuse as punishment for being a bad person. Children may think they were abused because there is something wrong with them, that they are bad or dirty. Though many children are manipulated, bribed, or tricked into sexual abuse, victims still blame themselves. Some abusers convince the victims that they enjoyed the abuse or they wouldn't have let it continue. So victims are ashamed to tell. Though this is faulty reasoning, in 100% of the cases we have dealt with, the victim feels that he/she is the one at fault for the abuse. The guilt and the belief that the reason he/she was abused is because he/she is a horrible person is a common but terrible consequence of sexual abuse of the child. "Victims report shame as the most damaging symptom of sexual abuse" (Jeannette Vought: Christian Recovery Center, Minneapolis, MN.)
3. Poor self-esteem or powerlessness. When a trusted friend or loved one uses the child's little body for selfish purposes, the child often feels unworthy of safety and protection. Learned helplessness. Sexual abuse strips away what little power and dignity a child has.
4. Denial. Pretending it never happened is a defence mechanism children use to try to make sense of the world and maintain their sanity. Easier / safer to deny reality or minimize especially if the abuser is a parent.
5. Trying to keep the family together. If the abuser is a family member, silence is the price children choose to pay in order to maintain some stability and security in their chaotic world. It seems their only option.

6. Confusion. Many question whether they really were abused. They can't accept the notion that someone they trust and / or love could abuse them. Especially when kids haven't been educated about sex and good/bad touch, they may not be sure that what is or has happened is wrong. Abusers often disguise abuse in seemingly acceptable behaviors—tickling, bathing, diapering, hugging, kissing.

## Handout #4

# Responding to a disclosure of sexual abuse

“DISCLOSURE of sexual abuse means a child has chosen you as a person he or she trusts enough to tell. It is the moment when children learn whether others can be trusted to stand up for them.” ~Darkness to Light, [www.d2l.org](http://www.d2l.org)

- Stay calm. Don't over-react.
  - When your child breaks an arm, you must stay calm and take appropriate action. Reacting to sexual abuse is the same. When you react with shock, anger or disbelief, the child will likely:
    - Feel even more ashamed and guilty.
    - Think that he/she is the cause for the emotion that you display, whether it is horror or anger
    - Shut down
    - Change or retract the story, when, in fact, abuse is actually occurring
  - Try not to show anger toward the offender who may be someone the child loves. You can add to the child's burden by showing how upset you are.
  - It will help the child to know you are now in control of a situation that may be very scary.
- Believe him or her. Children don't make up, imagine or lie about sexual abuse. Take him/her seriously and follow up on his/her instincts.
- Reassure the child. Children often feel responsible for or guilty about the incident; emphasize it is not the child's fault. Tell him/her you are glad he or she told you.
- Encourage the child to talk.
  - Give the child your attention.
  - Follow through on what the child has said. Often they will only drop a hint to gauge your reaction. Ask for clarification if something the

child has said raises question marks in your mind: “What do you mean by...?”

- Ask open-ended questions such as “What happened then?” Do not ask leading questions about details such as “Did he...” that put words in the child’s mouth.
- Many older children understand the implications or at least fear the consequences of telling about a sexual abuse incident. Often before they tell a trusted adult, they will ask for your blanket promise of confidentiality, e.g. “Will you promise not to tell anyone what we talk about?” Be prepared to respond carefully with a statement like: “Usually I can keep confidences, but sometimes secrets aren’t safe. I hope you can still tell me what is on your mind and trust me to do what I think is going to help you most.”
- Avoid making promises that you cannot keep; it’s better to give a truthful and realistic answer than let the child down later.
- Take action to make sure the child is safe from the offender and reassure child of this if appropriate
- Seek medical attention if necessary
- Keep the structure of the home
- Seek professional help
- If this is not your child, you must inform the parent(s) unless the parent is the offender; all 50 states have laws regarding reporting requirements for professionals working with children. [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov).

Michele Elliott: Preventing Child Sexual Assault, page 35-36

## Handout #5

### Traits Abusers Look For in Children/Teens

Sad to say, there are also children who are easier targets for sexual abuse than others. What makes a child vulnerable to be selected?

- Poor self-esteem or lack of confidence
  - shy, isolated, withdrawn
  - little or no self-confidence
  - rarely speak up for themselves, raise their hand in school to answer a question, or volunteer to lead a group, game or program; mostly sit back and wait to be called on or chosen: likely a safe choice
- Not enough love at home: legitimate needs for love, nurture, attention and acceptance are consistently unmet
  - Parents are too busy to listen on a regular basis; kids feel parents are unavailable
  - Parents don't show their love with physical affection
  - Parents don't communicate their care, or worse, emotionally or physically abuse children: angry, harsh discipline, rejection
  - Once offender identifies their need for someone who cares for them, seduction is simple
  - Child is willing to do anything at any price in order to feel love, acceptance and approval
- Child / family isolated, loners
  - Child happy for a "true friend"
  - nowhere to go, nothing to do: lots of opportunity and time for sexual encounters
  - if parents neglectful or too busy to notice child is not around, or parent relieved for someone else to take care of their kid "I'm so busy and it's so nice that Mr. So-and-so next door doesn't mind taking Jack fishing with him"
- Sexual naïveté
  - sexually naïve are easy targets: they have little or no idea of what is happening to them. Abuser calls it a game or our little secret. How can child tell parents/adults if he/she doesn't even have vocabulary or doesn't know exactly what is wrong?
  - Rationalization "I was only teaching him/her sex education" has been used countless times by incestuous parents, teachers, scoutmasters, Big Brothers and other predators. Sickening, but author has 34 years' experience working with offenders: *hundreds* rationalize/excuse their molesting children with this reason.
- Fear of adults and authority figures
  - Especially if perpetrator is in a position of authority.
  - Taught to obey authority unquestioningly. Child has no voice (No talking back to authority). Adult is always right, therefore sexual abuse can't be wrong (though it feels wrong). Children not taught to listen to their instincts, nor how to act on them. Will simply submit to abuse.



- Not only will not argue or fight adult, but also believes that other adults will believe and side with the abuser.
- Feels helpless about anything adults do
- A history of abuse of any kind
  - all individuals regardless of type of abuse and age vulnerable to seduction by sexual predator. Needy, damaged goods, easy to seduce. Patience is key, coupled with keen analysis of what approach works best. Provide opposite needs: rejection=acceptance; beating, physical abuse=soft, soothing touch and massage; forced sex=seductive, pleasurable sexual arousal

~ summarized from Prendergast, William E. *Sexual Abuse of Children and Adolescents: A Preventative Guide for Parents, Teachers, and Counselors*. New York: Continuum Publishing, 1996.

# Handout # 6

## Functional or Dysfunctional Family<sup>1</sup>

### General Characteristics of the Functional Family :

1. The climate of the home is positive. The atmosphere is basically nonjudgmental.
2. Each member of the family is valued and accepted for who he or she is. There is regard for individual characteristics.
3. Each person is allowed to operate within his or her proper role. A child is allowed to be a child and an adult is an adult.
4. Members of the family care for one another, and they verbalize their caring and affirmation.
5. The communication process is healthy, open, and direct. There are no double messages.
6. Children are reared in such a way that they can mature and become individuals in their own right. They separate from Mom and Dad in a healthy manner.
7. The family enjoys being together. They do not get together out of a sense of obligation.
8. Family members can laugh together and they enjoy life together.
9. Family members can share their hopes, fears, hopes, concerns with one another and still be accepted. A healthy level of intimacy exists within the home.

### General Characteristics of the Dysfunctional Family:

Dysfunctional families lack much of the acceptance, openness, affirmation, communication, love, and togetherness of healthy families. In many cases, a dysfunctional family is the product of a dysfunctional husband-father, one who has failed to fill a healthy, positive role due to *noninvolvement, domination, illness/death, or perhaps desertion/divorce*.

A dysfunctional family has strayed off course. Each newly married couple wants to build a functional family. However, many things can go wrong in families: feelings get hurt, needs and expectations go unmet. If these minor errors are not corrected, greater problems arise: *love and acceptance are withheld, "me" and "mine" take priority over "us" and "ours."*

The children of dysfunctional families are thrust into adulthood feeling empty and incomplete, afraid and unable to fully trust because their needs went unmet. Feeling insecure in themselves, they look for some type of security outside themselves. This constant quest to have needs met leads people to create or adopt compulsive or addictive behavior patterns, and to make poor choices for marital partners or place impossible demands upon their spouses.

---

<sup>1</sup> Derived from H. Norman Wright, *The Premarital Counseling Book*

Any family can be dysfunctional for a period of time, especially during a crisis when people don't function at their normal levels. But in a dysfunctional family a crisis is perpetual and the roles, behaviors, and reactions of family members are usually constant.

### **Characteristics:**

#### **1. Abuse:**

- verbal, physical, emotional mistreatment, sexual, or even neglect
- can be blatant (screaming, hitting) or subtle (ignoring)
- one form often overlooked is "emotional mistreatment"

#### **2. Perfectionism:**

- rarely considered an unhealthy symptom yet a common source of family problems
- perfectionism is un-attainable but excellence is attainable
- a perfectionist parent conveys his or her standards and expectations through verbal rebukes, corrections, frowns, penetrating glances, smirks, which continually imply, "It's not good enough." Such parents live and lead by **oughts, shoulds, and musts.**

#### **3. Rigidity**

- unbending rules and strict lifestyles and belief systems; life is full of compulsions, routines, controlled situations and relationships, unrealistic and unfounded beliefs; very little joy, surprise, spontaneity

#### **4. Silence**

- gag rule: no talking outside these walls; don't even share family secrets with anyone; don't ask for help outside the family

#### **5. Repression**

- emotions (anger, sadness, joy, and pain) were controlled and repressed instead of identified and expressed (this can be the death of your marriage!); denial of reality and disguise of your true identity by wearing the "family mask"
- emotions are like a "pressure valve" - clogging this valve by repressing or denying feelings may lead to many physical problems such as ulcers, depression, high blood pressure, headaches, and susceptibility to many other ailments
- repressing feelings can trigger overeating, anorexia, substance abuse, etc.

#### **6. Triangulation**

- communication process in which one family member uses another family member as a go-in-between (father tells daughter to find out whether mother is still angry and gets the assignment to tell her he still loves her; mother responds negatively to message and gives daughter a unkind message to bring back...);
- may lead to guilt collection and culture the attitude of "I have to be fixer"

#### **7. Double Messages**

- words do not match the actions (Yes, I love you...but actions say "I don't care about you at all" or "Your presence is not exciting but a bother")

#### **8. Lack of Fun**

- no loosening up, little or no play and fun; overbalance to seriousness; motto is "Be Serious Always; Work Hard; You Are What You Do;

#### **9. Martyrdom**

- excessive tolerance of personal abuse and pain taught and exemplified by parents

#### **10 Entanglement**

- members are emotionally and relational entangled in each other's lives;
- individual identities are enmeshed; no clear cut boundaries between each member;
- everybody is poking his nose into everybody else's business (like Mom makes Dad's problems her problems or child makes parents problems his/her problems
- everybody blames everybody for the state they are in

## **Handout # 7**

### **Ten Most Common Characteristics of a Predator**

1. Refusal to take responsibility for his/her actions and blames others or circumstances for failures
2. A sense of entitlement
3. Low self-esteem
4. A need for power and control
5. A lack of empathy
6. An inability to form intimate relationships with adults
7. A history of abuse
8. A troubled childhood
9. Deviant sexual behaviors and attitudes
10. Drug and/or alcohol abuse

\*Remember that each one of these characteristics alone does not necessarily define a predator. There are many individuals who manifest these traits and will never sexually abuse a child. However, the combination of these attributes and the degree to which they control a person's behaviour distinguish a sexual predator from other individuals.

## **HANDOUT #8**

### **Common Behavioral Warning Signs in Sexually Abused Children**

#### Infancy to 12 months

- Listlessness
- Loss of appetite
- Apathy
- Little eye contact
- Inability to be soothed
- Change in sleeping habits
- Startle response: physical reaction to loud noise or unexpected movement that involves the infant's arms rising and legs stiffening

#### 12 months to 2 years

- Regression of developmental milestones, such as loss of speech, motor skills, toilet training
- Chronic stomach aches, fever and pains when there are no medical explanations
- Biting others
- Increase in temper tantrums
- Night terrors
- Change in eating or sleeping patterns
- Separation anxiety that intensifies or resurfaces
- Preoccupation with his or her own genitals and the genitals of others, even when the child is redirected to other play
- Uncontrollable crying
- Becomes nervous or jumpy when hearing a loud noise or is startled or jumps when unexpectedly touched

#### 2 to 4 years

- Baby talk or other regressive behaviors, such as loss of toilet training
- Frequent or painful urination that has no medical explanation
- Preoccupation with genitals or feces
- Nightmares or night terrors
- Pervasive fear of separation
- Development of certain phobias, such as fear of snakes, water, etc.
- Startle response
- Hypervigilance
- Reacts negatively to any change in the environment
- A new fear of a person that the child has previously known
- Overly aggressive with other children, such as frequent biting

#### 4 to 6 years old

- Baby talk and other regressive behaviors
- Night terrors or nightmares
- Insistence on sleeping with parents
- Difficulty going to sleep
- Chronic stomach aches, headaches, or other somatic (bodily) complaints
- Increased irritability and anger, including hitting or biting other people
- Uncontrollable bouts of crying
- Temper tantrums that involve destruction of property or damage to self and/or other people
- Refusal to talk
- Listlessness, loss of interest in activities
- Difficulty concentrating
- Inability to learn new tasks, such as reading or writing
- Increased masturbation
- Display of inappropriate sexual activity with peers or acted out with toys
- Rigid fears of certain people, things, or situations
- New words for genitals
- Refusing to talk about a “secret”
- Talking about a new older friend
- Having toys, money, candy, or new clothes that you didn’t give your child

#### 6 to 12 years old

- Marked change in academic performance
- Loss of concentration
- Premature focus on stereotyped roles of sexuality (e.g. little girl wants to dress ‘sexy’)
- Inappropriate displays of sexuality or focus on opposite sex peers
- Increased masturbation, and use of objects
- Inappropriate sex play with other children
- Increased displays of aggression toward others
- Destructiveness with toys and personal property
- Withdrawal, isolation, and periods of listlessness
- Loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities
- Change in eating or sleeping habits
- Noticeable weight loss or gain
- Wetting or soiling pants in the day or at night
- Poor self-esteem evidenced in statements such as “I hate myself”, or “I wish I were dead”

## Adolescence

- Failing grades
- Sudden onset of behavioural problems, such as drug use, lying, stealing, truancy, and running away
- Suicidal thoughts
- Self-harm, such as excessive body piercing, tattoos, cutting one's body
- Drastic change in appearance manifested in type of clothes worn, hairstyle, etc.
- Withdrawal from family and/or friends
- Dressing in sexually provocative clothes
- Sexual promiscuity
- Increased sleeping
- Change in appetite
- Marked change in body weight
- Loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities
- Increased anger and irritability
- Persistence of fears or avoidance of certain foods, people, or situations
- Avoidance of opposite sex relations
- Sense of hopelessness

## Physical Warning Signs in Sexually Abused Children

- Unexplained bruises, redness, or bleeding of the child's genitals, anus or mouth
- Pain at the genitals, anus or mouth
- Genital sores or milky fluids in the genital area
- The sudden onset of painful or frequent urination
- Frequent infections in the urinary tract and/or vagina

Dr. Leigh Baker: Protecting Your Children From Sexual Predators, pages 271-275

\* Any of these symptoms *alone* or even *several* of these symptoms do not necessarily indicate sexual abuse. They may also apply to other situations/causes, such as your child is being bullied; feels guilty about wrong-doing; a soured friendship; feels lonely, needs attention from parents; troubled by a particular worry or fear; a health issue; a loss (pet, a move, etc.)

However, these "red flags" are warning signs that you should not ignore because they usually indicate your child is distressed about something. They are indications your child needs urgent attention. It is especially important to take notice of sudden *changes* in your child's behavior.

If your child cannot or does not give a satisfactory cause for the change in behaviour, be extra alert, spend extra time with him/her, watch for other pieces of the puzzle, and review who he/she has been with, what he has done, or where he has been lately when you began to notice the changes. Be supportive and gently pursue until you know the reason your child seems to be distressed.

## Handout 9

### Educate your child about *boundaries, body awareness, sex education and safety*

#### A. Infants, toddlers & preschoolers

##### 1. Set appropriate **boundaries**

- Most sexual abuse starts with the violation of a boundary.
- Teach, model and enforce personal boundaries in the family:
  - Respect others' feelings (be gentle, kind)
  - Respect others' property (don't touch Sis' things)
  - Respect others' body (no biting, kicking, etc.)
  - At this age, most emphasis on child learning to obey without a fuss, delay or tantrum (unconditional obedience).
  - Yet there is a place for beginning to give the child a choice and respecting that: don't force cuddles on him/her
- Teach, model and enforce God's boundaries (10 commandments)
  - Discuss authority structure: child, parents, other authority, God.
  - Give reasons for why we do what we do as "God says so" "God wants us to say kind words"
  - Children should know and obey clearly defined rules; parents use loving, calm, consistent teaching and discipline

##### 2. Teach **body awareness** from infancy

- Which body parts are private
- Repeat many times that their private parts are theirs and not to be touched or looked at by anyone. Natural time to discuss is at bath time or if the child runs out in the family room naked
- Remind them often that if anyone tries to look at or touch their private parts or does anything that makes them feel unsafe or that they don't like, they should tell mommy or daddy
- Use books to describe what "safe" and "unsafe", "comfortable" and "uncomfortable" mean.
- Use and teach correct terms for genitals and private parts
- Difference between good / bad touch and how child might feel
- Many children have already been abused by the time parents talk about sensitive subjects. Teaching them with vocab and knowledge is arming to identify something is wrong.
- Make use of teachable moments through books or stories.
- Teach difference between 'a secret' and 'a surprise'



### 3. Safety consciousness:

It's up to the parents to be aware of the dangers and keep child from harm. Toddlers have no ability to discern safety issues. At this stage, they should be constantly supervised. Make certain other people you leave your child with are safe; and follow through on asking your child about the time spent. Be aware of warning signs in infants and young children.

## C. School Kids (ages 4-10)

### 1. Boundaries:

- Boundaries and authority should be established by now. Now is the time to begin teaching that there are situations when the boundary is not so clear: what if the adult says to do something that is wrong? Feels uncomfortable?
- Don't want to be influenced by world's growing disrespect, but equally dangerous to ONLY teach unconditional obedience
- Confusing: when can they say "no" and when will they be disciplined for saying "no"?
  - ***Teach them that people in authority are sinners too, and the exception to God's command to honor and obey those in authority is if they tell the child to do something sinful.***
  - ***Obedience without question does not mean obedience without thinking. Teach what is right and wrong (not, do it because I told you to.)***
  - Teach "I have a right to speak up", but how to do this respectfully to those in authority. Teach children boundaries are maintained by ability to say "NO".
  - "When parents teach children that setting boundaries or saying no is bad, they are teaching them that others can do with them as they wish. They are sending their children defenseless into a world that contains much evil. Evil in the form of controlling, manipulative, and exploitative people. Evil in the form of temptations. To feel safe in such an evil world, children need to have the power to say things like:
    - No
    - I disagree
    - I will not
    - I choose not to
    - Stop that
    - It hurts
    - It's wrong
    - That's bad
    - I don't like that touch
- Don't just empower them to say no to strangers but also people in authority or family members. Don't make them show affection when they don't want to (parents feel obligated to family members).

- Continue to foster respect in your family for others' rights to safety, privacy, personal space, opinions. Children who are treated with love and respect for their dignity at home should not fear authority figures. Healthy families allow children to express their feelings (with self-control of course) without rejection, teasing, ridicule or punishment.

## 2. Body awareness & sex education

- Teach about correct terms for body parts and answer questions about bodies, sexuality and reproduction with correct, age-appropriate information
- Begin to teach that sexuality is God's gift and that He forbids sexual behavior outside of marriage for our good
- Don't let them go to school without knowing the basics of what sexual abuse is, potentially dangerous situations and what to do about it. Note that the highest risk category is 8-12 years of age. Over 1/3 of *all* sexual assaults are against victims under the age of 12.
- Teach girls and boys about modesty and why it is commanded. Make sure girls are decently dressed for activities (playground peeps)
- Teach it is sin to touch, look at someone else's private parts or pictures of it in magazines or on electronic devices.
- Teach them specifically about what sexual sins are (lust; adultery; fornication; incest Lev 18; masturbation, homosexuality, pornography) and how they are harmful. If children are unaware of sexuality is, or that sexual behaviors outside of marriage are sin, then they may have a vague feeling that something is wrong when they are being abused, but most likely they will say nothing if they aren't sure. Also, this sets the foundation for standing firm on counter-cultural sexuality
- Kids have a lot of questions: answer them specifically and age-appropriately. Don't shy away from the truth: foster open communication and use correct vocabulary.

## 3. Safety consciousness

- As children begin to have more independence, teach "stranger-danger"
  - What is a stranger?
  - Can we tell if someone is unsafe from looking at them?
  - Blow the myth of stereotypical molester: young, clean, "nice", rich, friendly, female. It can be ANYONE!
- Emphasize that risks are much greater from people who are NOT strangers!
- Teach your child to always have a buddy with him any time he/she needs to go somewhere away from the group (bathroom, store, park, etc.)

- Rule: Always check with Mom or Dad before going somewhere. Kids at this age still need parents to oversee their safety. Not always having knowledge or ability to discern dangers.
- Teach how to recognize a potentially dangerous *situation* (not a potentially dangerous person, because we can't see from outside who is safe/unsafe)
- Discuss safe ways of answering the phone, opening the door
- Teach self-defense skills; discuss action plans for if they find themselves in a dangerous situation. Teach them to run, scream "help" "no". Practice it! Permission to bite, kick & scream if someone grabs them or harms them.
- Specify what they need to do if approached by anyone for sexual activity
- Point out what tricks people can do that might lead to dangerous situations in which they could be physically or sexually harmed; or gradually led into sexual abuse without even knowing it

## **D. Tweens and Teens (10-19)**

### **1. Boundaries:**

- Help teens set limits for themselves and others that are biblically based and how to communicate that to their friends and others
- Discuss what to do if they are in a situation in which someone violates their boundaries: here love, open communication and trust come into action. Permission to call you any time of day or night to come pick them up.
- Empower your teen to trust his/her intuition (that is cultivated in normal family interactions, in which you listen to your teen, allow him/her to follow up on his/her own intuition, and provide positive feedback on their actions)
- Do they need help becoming more assertive? Are they able to say no and mean it?

### **2. Body awareness & sex education:**

- Pre-teens: don't be too late with sex education about specifics of male/female bodies and reproduction.
- Teach positively about marriage, God's gift of sexuality, His protective walls of purity, abstinence till marriage, modesty, respect for women & girls. Peers will share the information (very negative); be sure you don't wait too long.
- Continue an open discussion about sexual perversions that have become acceptable in today's society. Listen to what your child has to say and find biblical grounds why those practices are wrong and how to deal with such who live unbiblically in the area of human sexuality. There are good books/resources to use to teach about their bodies, personal safety, boundaries, sexuality.

- Be aware that there can be tremendous peer pressure in locker rooms or from peer communications as kids as young as 10 brag about their sexual exploits (often untrue), which have led to *countless* kids abusing younger children (siblings) in order that they aren't different from peers; or teens seek or allow sex experiences online just so they don't have appear different from their peers.
- Empower them to stand up for what is right to their peers (socially & sexually) and to be unashamed of their Christian witness about saving their virginity for their future husband or wife. Discuss and give biblical & practical reasons why abstinence is the better option, give opportunities for them to practice at home responding to various scenarios they might meet with at school, etc. Also, make your child aware of the serious consequences teens have who interact sexually with any other child/teen.
- When your teen begins to date:
  - set clear expectations for both boys and girls to respect each other's purity during the dating period
  - talk openly about the temptations and pain that comes from soiling oneself with sexual sin before or outside of marriage
  - Solomon warns his son about sexual temptations and pitfalls abundantly in Proverbs!
  - Encourage teen and boy/girlfriend to discuss and set their own biblical boundaries
  - Have ongoing open communication about how they are doing in regards to their boundaries and invite them to use you as accountability partners
  - Set house rules that reinforce expectations for purity and abstinence
  - Do not allow casual dating, and if this practice is common among your teen's friends, go through the dangers of date-rape and help your teen come up with an action plan. Back to boundaries.

### **3. Safety consciousness**

- Older they are, more independence and less supervision from you. Risk of dangerous situations may increase, but so will their ability to discern risks.
- Alcohol, drugs, peer pressure are bigger risks. See section on boundaries.
- Make sure they know how to recognize potential safety issues of walking, exercising, driving, or parking in crime-prone areas or desolate areas (forest, empty or dimly lit parking lots, parks). "Take a buddy" still applies!
- Self-defense class (martial arts) may be a good idea
- At this age, the greatest danger by far comes to them right at home: on their electronic devices. See section below "Internet safety" under minimizing opportunity.

## List of Useful Books

- Sands, Christa. *Learning to Trust Again: A Young Woman's Journey of Healing from Sexual Abuse*. Grand Rapids: Discovery House Publishers, 1999. ISBN 1-5729-055-1. A first-hand story written by a 23 year old woman who was sexually abused in her home by a family friend. Her parents were caring, supportive, wonderful parents, but she didn't tell them for eight years after the repeated abuse took place. A look at how this can happen in "happy" families and why children wouldn't tell loving parents. Also a testimony of this woman's healing journey by faith in Jesus Christ.
- 
- Cloud, Henry and John Townsend. *Boundaries: When to Say Yes, How to Say No to Take Control of Your Life*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992. ISBN 978-0-10-24745-6. Available as ebook at [www.zondervan.com/ebooks](http://www.zondervan.com/ebooks). Biblically based and practical counsel on how to set boundaries. Part One: What Are Boundaries?; Part Two: Boundary Conflicts; Part Three: Developing Healthy Boundaries.
- 
- Hansen, Chris. *To Catch a Predator: Protecting Your Kids from Online Enemies Already in Your Home*. New York: Penguin Group, 2007. ISBN 978-0-525-95009-7. True story of NBC correspondent's sting operation for purpose of televising an investigation of online sexual predators.
- 
- Baker, Leigh. *Protecting Your Children From Sexual Predators*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002. ISBN 0-312-27215-4. This 278 page volume informs about and discusses common characteristics and types of personalities perpetrators often display; how they lead victims through stages of grooming and sexual abuse; information on juvenile offenders and cybersex; how to use the sex offender's registry. Many examples and profiles given.
- 
- Prendergast, William E. *Sexual Abuse of Children and Adolescents: A Preventative Guide for Parents, Teachers, and Counselors*. New York: Continuum Publishing, 1996. ISBN: 0-8264-0892-3. Author worked with convicted sexual abuse offenders for 34 years and offers expertise on who and why of offenders. Part One: The "Who" of Sexual Abuse; Part Two: Prevention; Part Three: Recognition and Treatment.
- 
- Wurtele, Sandy K. *Out of Harm's Way: A Parent's Guide to Protecting Young Children from Sexual Abuse*. Seattle: Parenting Press, 2010. ISBN 978-1-884734-97-7. Downloadable book at [www.ParentingPress.com](http://www.ParentingPress.com). This booklet (29 pages) gives an overview of practical steps to preventing sexual abuse. Chapter 1: How to recognize sexual abusers of children; 2: Personal safety at home and while out and about; 3: There's no place like home... for talking about sexuality and body safety; 4: keeping your children out of harm's way.
- 
- 
- **Books to Use With Children**
- 
- Hansen, Diane. *Those Are MY Private Parts*. Redondo Beach: Empowerment Productions, 2003, 2007. ISBN 0-9761988-0-0. Ages 2-6+. Picture book is illustrated by a 4 year old and words set on colourful pages. Message is "My body is mine". The "empowerment" message comes through strongly, which I find humanistic rather than biblical, but it does have the basic message that others can't look or touch the child's body and what she/he can do about it if someone crosses that boundary.

- ProFamilia. *My Body Belongs to Me from My Head to My Toes*. New York: Skyhorse Publishing, English Translation, 2014. Translated from German *Mein Körper gehört mir!*, 1994, 2002, 2011. ISBN 978-1-62636-345-8. Picture book, story about Clara who discusses good and bad touches and what to do when you don't feel comfortable with someone's touch. Presented in a non-threatening or scary way.
- MacGegor, Cynthia. *Stranger Danger*. New York: Rosen Publishing, 1999. ISBN 0-8239-5347-9. Ages 4-10. Covers what is a stranger and tricks strangers may try to do; how to protect yourself and find help; street safety rules and rules for home safety. More of an informative type book; has large print.
- Pearl, Debi. *Samuel Learns to Yell & Tell*. Pleasantville: No Greater Joy Ministries, 2010. ISBN 978-1-61644-016-9. Ages 2-8. Story is narrated by Samuel's mom who teaches her son about aspects of sexual abuse from another child, an adult, books, a bully. Set in context of God made everyone, knows everything, and teaches us what is right/wrong, good/evil. Lessons are flee from sin and evil, learn to yell, always tell.
- Pearl, Debi. *Sara Learns to Yell & Tell*. Pleasantville: No Greater Joy Ministries, 2010. ISBN 978-1-61644-017-6. Ages 2-8. Sara and her mom make puppets while mom teaches her seven clues that can keep her safe, such as private parts are to be covered and not be touched, tricks some friends may try to do. Encouragement to yell and tell.
- Berenstain, Stan and Jan Berenstain. *The Berenstain Bears Learn About Strangers*. New York: Random House, 1985.
- Osilaja, Peter. *My Body Is Mine!* Chino Hills: Amandla Publishing, 2007. ISBN 1-884413-84-6. Ages 5-10. Picture book that is a story of a 6 year old nervous about going to his first sleepover party. Discusses body awareness, trusting your feelings, private parts, what to do if you are uncomfortable with touch. It is set in the story about what they play and do at the birthday party, and he has a very positive experience.
- Elliott, Michele. *Feeling Happy, Feeling Safe: A Safety Guide for Young Children*. London: Hodder Children's Books, 1991. Ages 5-10. Four young kids are featured in seven short stories in this book that explore various scenarios and what the child should do if he/she is in that situation: Feeling Safe; Getting Lost; Saying No; Bullies; Someone You Don't Know; Touching; Secrets. Each short story finishes with three questions such as: What can you do if you feel unsafe? What should you do if you ever get lost? Have you ever been lost? Answers to "What should you do if you get lost?": Stay where you are, ask the shop lady, wait patiently, all three with an accompanying illustration.
- Hyde, Jerry and Terra Hulse. *Child Survival Skills: How to Detect and Avoid Dangerous People*. Oakhurst: Bentle Books, 2004. ISBN 0-9746904-4-9. Ages 6-12. This book is a workbook format with pencil illustrations. It has seven lessons: The Dangerous Myths; Awareness; Avoidance; Escape; Where to Find Help; But What If? [it's someone I know?]; Staying Safe in Cyberspace. In each lesson, there is a page of additional or background information for parents, but the main part of the book is written directly to kids and there are pages for them to write their own responses. This workbook has the most practical information of the children's books that I've seen, from specific tips on how to distract an attacker, how to run smart, using obstacles to drawing a picture of what a dangerous person might look like (to debunk myths). An excellent resource for teaching about stranger-danger and awareness/ avoidance/ and self-defense tactics. Its weakness is that it's balance makes it seem like the greatest danger comes from strangers rather than acquaintances. But though the risk of abduction may be lower than seduction from a family/acquaintance, this book teaches skills I would like my children to know.
- Nelson, Sara. *Stay Safe! How You Can Keep Out of Harm's Way*. Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2009. ISBN 978-0-8225-7551-1. Ages 10+. Informational book aimed at pre-teens and teens. Covers personal safety, boundaries, bullying, assault, abuse, five steps of safety (think safety, voice, escape, defend, tell). A

quiz and a discussion page with various “what-if” scenarios at the end. Gives detailed and practical advice on how to be aware and how to defend yourself. The “Think Safe” at home, school, on the street, on the Internet section is especially good.

- List of other books: [https://www.parentbooks.ca/Child\\_Abuse\\_Resources\\_for\\_Kids.html](https://www.parentbooks.ca/Child_Abuse_Resources_for_Kids.html)
- <http://www.caresnw.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Book-List-Sexual-Abuse-Prevention.pdf>