

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

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*Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them,
for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." (Matthew 19:14 NIV)*

The purpose of this document is to raise awareness of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) and provide resources. Education, preparation, awareness and honest conversations by everyone are the best protection for CSA prevention and early detection.

IMPORTANT: *If you know of a child or minor currently in danger of abuse, call 911 and report immediately.*

DEFINITIONS

Child / Minor – anyone younger than 18 years old.

Child abuse – the abuse of a child, whether emotional, physical, sexual, or by neglect.

Consent – *Warning: by law, children are never considered capable of consent.* The age of consent ranges from 16 - 18yo, depending on local laws.

CSA – Child Sexual Abuse (sometimes referred to as Child Molestation); see <https://tinyurl.com/CalifCSAinfo>

CWS – Child Welfare Services (in AZ, it is CPS - Child Protective Services; the name may differ in your state).

Pedophilia – sexual abuse of a pre-pubescent child (in California, a child less than 14 years old).

Rape – the use of force, threats, coercion or fraud to engage in non-consensual sexual intercourse with another person.
Warning: by law, children are never considered capable of consent.

Recidivism – the tendency of a person to commit a similar crime after completing a sentence and/or completing therapy for a previous offense.

Sexual assault – any type of sexual activity or act that happens without consent.

Sexual grooming – The deceptive process prior to the commission of child sexual abuse that an abuser uses to select, gain access, isolate, gain trust, and desensitize a minor. For more info, see “Be Aware of Sexual Grooming” section, below.

Sexual harassment – intentional or unintentional, unwelcome and inappropriate sexual remarks or physical advances. It is defined by the impact on the victim, not by the intent of the perpetrator.

Undue familiarity – developing an intimate or personal relationship that is inappropriate for a profession.

CSA INFORMATION

What CSA is: Child Sexual Abuse is *exploiting a child for one's own sexual gratification*. This includes activity of any sexual nature involving a minor, such as lewd behavior or exposing oneself, touching them or causing them to touch themselves or others inappropriately, fondling, obscene conversations/texts, producing/owning/sharing pornography depicting minors, etc. CSA fact sheets: <https://tinyurl.com/CSAFactSheet> and <https://tinyurl.com/CSAFactSheet2>

Laws regarding CSA

CSA is a serious crime – the majority of CSA crimes are considered *felonies with 3-10 years in prison and lifetime listing on the National Sex Offender Registry*. The *seriousness* of the crime is *not* decided by the specific ‘actions’ of the perpetrator, but rather by the age of the child, and the age difference between child and abuser.

Consent – *Warning: by law, children are never considered capable of consent to any type of sexual activity.*

Statute of limitations – in many states, there is no time limit as to when CSA may be prosecuted. A person who was abused as a minor may report the crime to law enforcement at any later date, even decades after the offense.

Who are CSA abusers? – There is no one specific type of person who engages in child sexual abuse. Research suggests that child sexual abusers come from all walks of life and may be of any age, gender, race, or socio-economic status. Risk factors that may increase the risk of engaging in CSA include mental health issues, substance abuse, history of childhood sexual abuse, or antisocial or borderline personality disorders. Research also shows that child sexual abuse can be perpetrated by individuals from all walks of life, regardless of their religious beliefs, marital status, or sexual orientation.

What if I'm inclined towards CSA activity? – If you struggle with thoughts or inclinations to commit child sexual abuse, it's important to seek professional help from a licensed therapist or counselor. If you're looking for additional resources or support, see: (1) *The National Sexual Assault Hotline*: 1-800-656-HOPE (4673) or chat at www.rainn.org or (2) *Stop It Now!*: This organization provides support to prevent CSA: 1-888-PREVENT (773-8368) or www.stopitnow.org or (3) National Suicide Hotline, call 988 or see <https://www.samhsa.gov/suicide>. As is the case with many destructive/addictive human behavior patterns, the safest course of action is intentional abstinence from triggering situations (i.e. close contact with minors). Remember, seeking help is a sign of strength and is the responsible thing to do.

CSA Recidivism – In CSA, recidivism is a significant concern, as offenders are at a high risk of repeating their offenses. The exact rate of recidivism in CSA is difficult to determine (may be as high as 50% over a 10-year period; lower for single-incident abusers), as it depends on age, gender, and type of offense, as well as the length and intensity of treatment received. Preventing recidivism requires early detection, appropriate legal sanctions, and effective treatment programs that target the underlying causes of the offender's behavior. There is no evidence that this pattern of behavior is “curable” by any available treatment. The best defense against further harm to children is clear and consistent separation between the offender and all minors in any intimate setting. See <https://tinyurl.com/CSArecidivism> for more information.

CSA Victim information – State laws are severe in child sexual abuse cases because CSA often has a significant and long-lasting impact on children, including negative effects on their mental and physical health, and their social and emotional development. Abusers are either not aware of, or unconcerned about the depth of psychological and spiritual damage to their young victims. The effects can last a lifetime and may include symptoms such as anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), substance abuse, sexual dysfunction, and difficulty forming healthy relationships.

CSA Victim Support – To help a victim of CSA, it's important to provide support, validation, and encouragement to seek professional help. Listen to them, believe them, and help them find resources such as therapy, and medical attention. Avoid blaming or shaming the victim, and respect their autonomy and decisions regarding their healing journey. Recommended trauma therapies for CSA victims: Eye Movement Desensitization & Reprocessing (EMDR), Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), or Narrative Exposure Therapy (NET). Additional information:

- <https://tinyurl.com/EMDRinformation> or <https://tinyurl.com/TFCBTtherapy> or <https://tinyurl.com/NETtherapy>
- <https://tinyurl.com/InfoForVictims> or <https://tinyurl.com/FindingAGoodTherapist> or <https://tinyurl.com/HowToOfferSupport>

CSA Perpetrators – Perpetrators of child sexual abuse may experience a range of needs and sufferings, including guilt, shame, and a desire for help to stop their behavior. However, it's important to remember that the focus should be on supporting and prioritizing the needs of the victims and preventing further harm. Perpetrators should be held accountable for their actions through legal and social consequences and seek appropriate treatment to address their harmful behavior.

Your Responsibility for Reporting Child Sexual Abuse: *it's all about protecting vulnerable children* –

Protection for those who report – Anyone who makes a report in good faith, based on reasonable grounds is immune from prosecution or liability. Identity information of the reporter is kept confidential.

Mandated Reporters – Mandated reporters are individuals who are required by law to report known or suspected child maltreatment. They are primarily people who have contact with children through their work (ministry). In some states, ALL adults are considered mandated reporters.

Penalties for not reporting – A person who fails to make a required report is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by up to six months in jail and/or up to a \$1,000 fine (California law).

All should report – any person who acquires the knowledge or suspicion of child abuse or neglect must report.

How sure do I need to be? – Based on observations or information received, if you have "reasonable suspicion" that abuse has occurred, then report. It's better to err on the side of caution and report suspected abuse than to fail to report it, as failing to report can result in legal consequences and more importantly, can put children at risk. Trust your instincts. You do not need proof. Reporting transfers liability from yourself to the investigating agency.

When to report – mandated reporters are required to report suspected abuse or neglect by phone as soon as possible and follow up with a written report within 36 hours (California law).

How to report – report suspected child abuse to the police (911) or to CWS / CPS:

- In California, call 911, or see <https://tinyurl.com/CalifReportCSA>
- In Arizona, call 888-767-2445, or see <https://tinyurl.com/ArizonaReportCSA>
- In Nevada, call 833-803-1183, or see <https://tinyurl.com/NevadaReportCSA>
- In Hawaii, call 808-832-5300 or 888-380-3088, or see <https://tinyurl.com/HawaiiReportCSA>

Do not investigate – *Do not* attempt to investigate on your own – especially physical signs. Do not interview, question or discuss the abuse with the child. Proper interviewing and investigation should be carried out by trained interviewers and law enforcement at a Child Advocacy Center: <https://tinyurl.com/FindCAC>

Reporting when a minor victim is now an adult – once a victim is an adult, it is up to them whether or not to report their abuser. However, if the perpetrator is known and a present danger to other children, you should report.

Signs of abuse, and how to respond if a child discloses abuse – see <https://tinyurl.com/SignsAndResponse>

Training resources for recognizing and reporting – the following are resources that provide mandatory reporter training and CSA awareness and are *recommended for everyone, to increase awareness and safety*:

- California Mandated Reporter training (free, certificate) – <https://tinyurl.com/MandatedReporterCA>
- Arizona Mandated Reporter training (free) – <https://tinyurl.com/MandatedReporterAZ>
- Nevada Mandated Reporter training (free) – <https://tinyurl.com/MandatedReporterNV>
- Hawaii Mandated Reporter training (free) – <https://tinyurl.com/MandatedReporterHI>
- Ministry Safe training (paid, certificate) – <https://ministrysafe.com/>
- Little Warriors Prevent it! Online Workshop (free, certificate) – <https://tinyurl.com/LittleWarriorsWorkshop>

GUARDING AGAINST CSA

Guarding against child sexual abuse requires a multifaceted approach that involves a combination of education, prevention, and intervention efforts. Some things that you can do: Educate yourself and your children; Create a safe environment; Report suspected abuse.

Be Aware of Sexual Grooming

Grooming is the deceptive process by which a would-be abuser, prior to the commission of the child sexual abuse, selects a victim, gains access to and isolates the minor, develops trust with the minor and often other adults in the minor's life, and desensitizes the minor to sexual content and physical contact. 93% of child sexual abuse victims *know and trust* their abuser. Parents can detect grooming by observing changes in their child's behavior, keeping an open dialogue with their child, and monitoring their online and offline activities. A parent might also notice an adult singling out a particular child for special attention or privileges. While this is not necessarily an unhealthy pattern on its own, it deserves monitoring by parents to protect the child's safety and best interests. It's important to educate children on healthy boundaries and safe touch, and to seek professional help if necessary.

Spotting Sexual Grooming Behavior

- A clinician mother of five wrote a helpful book about grooming: [Duck Duck Groom](#) (Anna Sonoda)
- Online information about grooming behavior: <https://tinyurl.com/AboutGrooming>

Families with children:

What Parents Can Do – Educate yourself and your children about what child sexual abuse is, how to recognize it, and what to do if it happens. Teach your children to trust their instincts and to speak up if they feel uncomfortable or unsafe. Create a safe environment for your children by establishing open lines of communication, setting clear boundaries, and monitoring their interactions with others. Screen potential caregivers. Teach your children about appropriate boundaries, healthy relationships, and consent. Teach your child that they are allowed to say “NO” to adults who cross a boundary that you have set, no matter what relationship that adult has with the child or the family. If you suspect that a child is being abused, report it immediately to the appropriate authorities. Do not try to handle the situation on your own.

Talking with your children:

- Responding to child disclosure: <https://tinyurl.com/ChildDisclosure> and <https://tinyurl.com/ChildDisclosure2>
- What to say to children of every age: <https://tinyurl.com/WhatToSayAtEveryAge>
- Age appropriate conversations: <https://tinyurl.com/AgeAppropriateTalk>
- Talking to kids about CSA: <https://tinyurl.com/TalkingToKidsAboutCSA>
- Keeping Kids Safe: <https://tinyurl.com/KeepingKidsSafeInfo>
- How can I protect my child?: <https://tinyurl.com/HowCanIProtectMyChild>

NATIONAL SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY INFORMATION

The National Sex Offender Registry is a searchable national database that contains information on individuals who have been convicted of at least one sex crime. The Registry is available for public access and is used to help law enforcement agencies track and monitor the activities of registered sex offenders in order to protect communities and prevent future crimes.

Sex Offender Registry link – <https://www.nsopw.gov/> Use this link to search for an offender's name or address.

Importance of the Registry – A person listed on the National Sex Offender Registry has been convicted of a sex crime. Unfortunately, not all abusers are in the Registry. Once a person has been convicted of a sex crime and put on the Registry, it is very difficult to remove their name: For example, in the state of Oregon, a person must have only one sex crime conviction; 10 years since crime; no other crimes; completed sex offender treatment; the sex crime was misdemeanor or lowest-level felony; passed sex offender risk test; and considering age, number of victims, degree of violence, and considering non-criminal behavior both before and after the conviction.

RESOURCES

Websites and Online Information:

- **RAINN** 1-800-656-HOPE (4673) or www.rainn.org – the nation's largest anti-sexual violence organization
- **Stop it Now!** 1-888-PREVENT (773-8368) or www.stopitnow.org
- **Guidance For Responding to Adults Disclosing Childhood Abuse:** <https://tinyurl.com/AdultDisclosure>

Books

- For Children:**
- * “Your Body Belongs to You” by Cornelia Spelman
 - * “A Terrible Thing Happened” by Margaret M. Holmes
 - * “I Said No!: A Kid-to-Kid Guide to Keeping Private Parts Private” by Zack King & Kimberly King
- For Adults:**
- * “The Gift of Fear”, and “Protecting the Gift” by Gavin de Becker (re: spotting red flags & grooming)
 - * “Boundaries” by Henry Cloud and John Townsend
 - * “Getting Past your Past” by Francina Shapiro
 - * “What Happen to You” by Dr. Bruce Perry
 - * “The Body Keeps the Score” (Bessel van der Kolk)
 - * “Walking the Tiger” (Peter A. Levine)