

## **Safety Tip of the Month: Sexual Abuse Information for Students**

### **Sexual Assault Safety Tips for Young Children**

Most grown-ups are nice to kids and care about what happens to them. But every now and then there is a grown-up who tries to touch a child in a way that is not okay. It might be a person you know and trust, like a relative, teacher or neighbor. **There are a few things you should know that can help if this ever happens to you:**

1. Your body belongs to you.
2. No one has the right to touch you if you don't want them to. That includes teachers, grandparents, uncles and aunts, mom, dad, everyone!
3. There are places on your body that are private – like places your swimming suit covers – that an adult should not try to touch, unless it is your doctor and your parent or guardian is in the room with you.
4. Trust your feelings. If something feels funny or wrong to you, **YOU CAN SAY NO**. It is good to say no to an adult who tries to do something that is wrong.
5. Tell someone you trust what happened, even if the person said it was a secret or that they would hurt you or someone else if you told.
6. If someone does something to you that is wrong, they may tell you it is a special secret or make you promise not to tell. **TELL!** It is absolutely okay to break this kind of promise – the person who made you promise knows they are doing something very wrong.
7. Keep telling until someone listens. Some adults do not know what to do when a young person tells them about sexual abuse. An adult may tell you not to talk about it or to forget it. They may even accuse you of making up stories. Don't give up. Find someone to tell who will help. The adult who gave this paper cares about you. She or he might be a good person for you to talk to.

### **Remember, adults and older kids should:**

- **Never** ask you to keep a secret about touching.
- **Never** touch you anywhere that is private, like where your bathing suit covers you.
- **Never** ask you to touch them anywhere private.
- **Never** reach under your clothes or try to get you to take off your clothes.
- **Never** ask you to keep a secret about something wrong.
- **Never** try to take pictures of you without your clothes.

- **Never** ask you to touch yourself or other kids anywhere private. Everyone likes to be hugged or touched by someone they care for. But there are some kinds of touching that are not considered good for kids. Some of this kind of touching might feel good. Some of this kind of touching might feel bad or even hurt. If you aren't sure about a touch, talk to a trusted adult about it.

### **Tips for Middle School-age Students**

Sexual abuse occurs when someone older than you touches the private parts of your body (that's the parts your bathing suit covers) or has you touch the private parts of their body. It can also be when someone older than you tries to get you to take off your clothes or touches you or kisses you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable.

### **What kinds of kids are sexually abused?**

Any kid can be sexually abused. It can happen to boys or girls. It can happen to big kids or little kids--no matter how young or old, weak or strong.

### **Who abuses kids?**

Most adults care about kids and never sexually abuse them. But some people have serious problems and think it is okay to be sexual with a child. Sometimes a sexual abuser is a stranger, but usually a sexual abuser would be someone you know. It might be your parent, or stepparent, or a teacher, or a neighbor, or a minister or a friend of your parents. It might be someone in your family, or someone that you like a lot.

### **Why would someone do this?**

Someone who sexually abuses a child has a problem, and needs help. People can do bad things — even nice people. It is sometimes hard to believe that someone we love or who is nice to us can sexually abuse us.

### **Is it my fault if this happens to me?**

**Never.** Some kids blame themselves, but they shouldn't. Adults sometimes use tricks like telling you that you are bad and that this is why this happened. Also, the attention can sometimes seem nice. Maybe this person gives you really good gifts or money when he or she wants to touch you. Maybe this person is very gentle when he or she wants to touch you. Maybe it is the only time he or she is "nice" to you. But whether it is violent or gentle, it is very, very wrong and it must be stopped. No matter what, if you are being sexually abused, it is never your fault.

### **How can I stop it?**

The best way to stop sexual abuse is to talk about it. Sexual abuse is against the law. **YOU DO NOT HAVE TO KEEP IT A SECRET!** Even if the abuse only happens once, or seems like it's over, it's important to tell. The person who abused you will probably try to do this to many other boys and girls. There are many people who can help you and help the abuser, if you tell them what has happened.

### **What if I'm afraid to tell?**

People who touch children in inappropriate ways may tell children that something bad will happen if they ever tell anyone. Maybe someone told you that you would be hurt if you told. Or that someone you love wouldn't love you anymore. You may have been told things that scared you and made you very afraid. If the abuser is a family member, you may be afraid the family will break up if the secret is told. No matter what, it is important to tell an adult you trust about what has happened.

### **Will anyone believe me?**

Yes. There are many adults who will believe you and who will help you. Some adults may not want to believe that you could have been abused. Some adults may tell you to forget about it. If this happens to you, find someone else to tell. Keep telling until someone listens.

### **What will happen to the abuser if I tell?**

The abuser will get help. A person who sexually abuses children needs help. Most abusers can get counseling. If the abuser is someone in your family, you may see less of him or her for awhile. Because sexual abuse is against the law, some abusers might go to jail.

### **There are some important things for you to remember if you are sexually assaulted:**

- **It's your body.** No one has the right to touch you. You can say no.
- **Abuse is never your fault,** even if you don't say no.
- **Abuse always hurts.** It can hurt your feelings or your body.
- **Keep telling until someone listens.** Even if the first adult you tell doesn't help you, someone will. Telling the right person is the way to make abuse stop.