

How to Help a Child Who Has Been Abused

Carole and Ronald Krist Samaritan Center for Counseling and Education

- Children do not have adult vocabularies, so be aware of non-verbal clues to abuse.
- Encourage children to talk of their experiences as frequently as they need to. Believe what they say.
- Children tend to blame themselves when something goes wrong, so the abused child may have difficulty reporting and will experience self-blame because he/she needs to believe parents are trustworthy.
- Respect the child's privacy by not discussing the abuse in the child's presence except with the child. Refrain from relating the story except when necessary.
- Comfort the child and be emotionally available.
- Manage your own anger by expressing your feelings to another adult rather than the child.
- Tell the child she/he does not have to keep the abuse a secret.
- Offer your protection. Reassure the child that you will do everything you can to prevent the abuse from happening again.
- In the case of sexual abuse, the child will have to deal with confusion about sex and love. You can help by acknowledging feelings and guiding behavior.

- Some children show no visible signs while being abused. Look for changes in behavior or ways of relating.
- Report to appropriate authorities. If you suspect abuse, either physical or sexual, the law mandates you report. In the state of Texas, only attorneys connected with the case are exempt from this requirement.

Children's Protective Services:

Harris County
1.800.252.5400

Brazoria County CPS
Central & West: 979.864.1428
South: 979.388.1428
North: 281.756.1428

Galveston County CPS
409.763.0277