



arpan
Towards Freedom from
Child Sexual Abuse

**Spreading awareness on
Child Sexual Abuse**
– An Arpan Endeavour

 **Child sexual abuse is a violation of a child's body as well as of the trust, implicit in a care giving relationship. This violation can have a significant impact on how the child, as a victim and later on as an adult survivor, sees and experiences the world. The effects of child sexual abuse can be damaging but need not be permanent.** 

Statistics show that one in every two children is sexually abused!

- 53% children reported having faced one or more forms of sexual abuse.
- 22% reported facing severe forms of sexual abuse and 50.76% other forms of sexual abuse.
- 5.7% reported being sexually assaulted.
- Boys were equally at risk as girls.
- 50% abusers are persons known to the child or in a position of trust and responsibility.(family member, close relative, friend or neighbour).
- Most children did not report the matter to anyone.
- Though young children aged between 5 and 10 years did experience sexual abuse, greater incidence of abuse was seen between the age group of 10 to 15 years.

Source: National Study on Child Abuse in April 2007, Ministry of Women and Child Development

According to WHO (World Health Organization), India has the world's largest number of sexually abused children, with a child below 16 years raped every 155th minute, a child below 10 every 13th hour and one in every 10 children sexually abused at any point of time.

Most children quietly suffer, and don't talk about Sexual Abuse, But we need to TALK about it, so that WE can PREVENT IT and HEAL it's ill effects.

Child sexual abuse is any act using a child for the sexual gratification of the more powerful person.

Child sexual abuse (CSA) includes the following contact and non contact behaviours:

Contact	Non Contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Penetration of anus, vagina, oral sex• Fondling child's private body parts• Making the child fondle private parts• Forcible kissing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Making the child exhibit private body parts• Exhibiting private body parts to a child• Photographing a child in the nude• Making the child view pornographic materials• Using sexually explicit talk and sexually abusive language with the child

CSA affects the child negatively, causing:

- Shame, guilt & anger
- Fear, shock and confusion
- Constant illnesses
- Possible exploitative relationships in the future
- Social withdrawal
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour

One of the important ways for prevention is to teach children about Touches. Just like we teach our children safety rules about crossing the road, we should also teach them about 'Safe' and 'Unsafe' Touch.

Safe Touch	Unsafe Touch
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anything that makes us feel good and leaves us happy and comfortable• Holding hands with friends, sharing meals, warm hug from loved ones	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anything that makes us feel confused and leaves us uneasy or uncomfortable• Touches involving our special parts that are private to us, touches that are told to be kept secret

Emphasise that they must say "NO" to any action/touch that causes discomfort or unease to them. For example, if the child is feeling uneasy about anybody giving them a hug, don't pressurise them to do so.

Respect the child's liking/disliking to touch and hugs.

Most importantly you must teach them

RULES FOR PERSONAL SAFETY

- RULE NO. 1**
- It is NEVER all right for someone to TOUCH, LOOK or TALK about your private body parts except to keep them clean and healthy.
 - It is never alright for someone older or bigger to ask you to TOUCH, LOOK or TALK about their private body parts.

- RULE NO. 2**
- If someone tries to break this rule, say “NO” and GET AWAY.

- RULE NO. 3**
- TELL someone you trust and KEEP TELLING until you get the help you need.

Parenting tip: Give this information in an age appropriate manner.

Aware parents and caretakers can help a sexually abused child better.

Sometimes, despite our best efforts, our children become victims of sexual abuse. We need to help our children through this by the following:

Step 1 Recognizing that the child has been sexually abused



Step 2 Helping the child talk about this experience



Step 3 Seeking professional support to help the child heal

Step 1:

Recognizing that the child has been sexually abused

Recognizing an abusive situation is a skill for both parents and caretakers. Most children don't report abuse, so parents and caretakers need to understand abuse based on children's behavioural changes. No **one** behaviour alone determines that a child has been sexually abused; it could be a combination of many, such as:

- Drop in academic performance
- Repeated urinary infections
- Unexplained pain or swelling in genital area
- Excessive increase or decrease in food intake or sudden weight loss or weight gain
- Sudden disproportionate fear of a place/person/color, etc.
- Seems sad, talks very little
- Social withdrawal, hostility or aggression
- Suicide attempts
- Passive or overly pleasing behaviour
- Hints, indirect comments about the abuse
- Use of abusive sexual language
- Sexualized behaviour - that includes excessive sexual play, inappropriate sexual comments or gestures
- Sexual activity at an early age

Important: These behavioural changes MAY be indicative of sexual abuse, but are NOT necessarily a result of sexual abuse, there could be other factors as well.

Step 2: **Helping the child talk about abuse**

Rule # 1: Remember that the child is not at fault.

Rule # 2: Make sure the child understands Rule # 1.

Always keep the above rules in mind whilst talking to the child. However, before encouraging the child to talk, it is important to first understand why they don't talk about sexual abuse themselves and what enables them to talk about it sometimes later.

Why They Don't Talk

- “How do I say it? What words should I use?”
- “Mummy and Daddy won't believe me!”
- “I don't even know how to say what happened, I just feel weird about it”
- “Uncle didn't really mean to be bad to me or did he?”
- “My teacher might fail me if I tell Mummy”
- “I am scared, Uncle told me not to tell anyone, it's a secret.”

Why They Talk, Eventually

- Awareness and understanding of the abuse.
- Discussion with an understanding parent or other adult with whom they are comfortable.
- Inability to bear the abuse anymore.
- Physical illnesses following sexual abuse.
- Secure adult relationships that provide confidence to deal with prior trauma.
- Revelation during counselling for any other reason.
- Desire to prevent abuse of other children.

Parenting Tip: Create an understanding and open environment to help the child talk about the abuse.

When children finally do talk about abuse, it's very important to handle it carefully.

Rules in handling disclosure...

- Keep calm
- Believe the child
- Listen to the child
- Answer the child's questions honestly
- Respect the child's privacy by not telling other people
- Give positive messages: "I know you could not help it", "It is not your fault", "I am with you" or "I am proud of you for telling"
- Get professional help from counselors, doctors after taking the child into confidence.
- Arrange a medical exam if necessary.

Parenting Tip: It is of utmost importance to keep open communication channels and have a good constant rapport with the child.

DON'T

- **Blame the child**
- **Panic or overreact**
- **Pressure the child to talk**
- **Confront offender in child's presence**
- **Make the child repeat the story**

**Remember, disclosure is difficult for children.
It may take days, months, years or even longer,
before a victim or survivor to be able to talk about
sexual abuse. Be patient and supportive.**

Step 3:

Seeking professional support to help the child heal

Sexually abused children often feel guilt, anger, sadness, shame and confusion.

Child sexual abuse is NOT the child's fault – but the child doesn't understand that.

Professional counselling usually helps the child:

- Realise that abuse is NOT his/her fault
- Reduce the shame and guilt
- Feel accepted, safe and secure
- Rebuild their self esteem and confidence
- Minimise focus on the traumatic past, heal and move on
- Come to terms with the consequences about the abuser when reported and action is taken

The family also needs counselling to cope with the abuse situation and help the child heal.

Arpan provides professional help and support in dealing with all stages of support for Child Sexual Abuse, ranging from counselling to legal guidance.

A team of trained professional counselors provides therapeutic services to those who wish to heal from the effects of CSA and the associated trauma. Members of the team have had several years of experience in working with individuals who have undergone CSA. They have also conducted several prevention and training programs on CSA.

You can reach our counselors on support@arpan.org.in or call on +91.98190.86444



Arpan is a registered NGO based in Mumbai working on the issue of child sexual abuse with a team of dedicated and skilled professionals since the year 2006.

Our Vision: World free of Child Sexual Abuse

Our Mission: To empower individuals, families, communities and society with prevention and intervention skills to reduce the occurrence of child sexual abuse and heal its psychological, social, sexual and physical consequences.

Our effort is also to break the silence around child sexual abuse in our society and make people aware of the impact of this phenomena on their lives as well as support them into a process of healing.

Our Activities include:

Empowering:

- Parents, teachers, NGO professionals, caretakers and student professionals with prevention and intervention skills to help prevent CSA through awareness and training
- Children and adolescents with personal safety skills to protect themselves from CSA through teaching in classroom setups in schools
- Mental health professionals with therapeutic skills to deal with CSA cases effectively through regular trainings and workshops
- Child, adult survivors and rescued minors to heal from trauma caused by CSA through counseling and other therapeutic activities like dance, yoga
- Sex offenders with therapeutic assistance to prevent re offence through counseling

Advocating with:

- Policy Makers for specific laws on CSA to prevent and reduce the occurrence of CSA.
- School and Educational systems to incorporate personal safety skills into their curriculum to empower children and adolescents

Arpan has so far reached out to over 50,000 parents, teachers, children, NGO professionals, caretakers and mental health professionals directly and over 1,50,000 individuals indirectly with our various prevention and healing programs.

You, too, can help by:

Talking about the issue

- Talk to your friends and family about CSA. Learn more about CSA on www.arpan.org.in.
- If you have experienced CSA or know of someone who has, reach out to us on support@arpan.org.in or 98190.86444.

Volunteering

- We need individuals with varied skills and resources to help our work grow.
- Tell people about Arpan and the work we do.
- Help us get access to networks like schools, clubs, residential societies, NGOs, any platform to talk about CSA and create awareness.

Donating

- Sponsor Teaching @ Rs. 1500 X ____ no. of children personal safety skills
- Sponsor Training @ Rs. 200 X ____ no. of parents, teachers and other adults on CSA.
- Sponsor Counseling for _____ no. of survivors heal @ Rs. 1500 per month per person.

Ways to donate:

- You could send a cheque in the name of 'Arpan' to our office.
- For bank transfer details contact us on finance@arpan.org.in.

You will be sent a receipt and 80G tax exemption certificate.

If you are an NRI holding Indian passport you can pay directly to Arpan from any account either in India or abroad.

If you are a PIO (holding passport other than of India) or a person of foreign origin you can donate to our partner 'Connect India' in the UK. Send a cheque in the name of 'Connect India' to P. O. Box 667, Borehamwood, London, United Kingdom, WD6 9DR.

For bank transfer details contact us on info@arpan.org.in

For more information contact us on

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Understanding, Preventing and Coping with Child Sexual Abuse

A Short Recap

Child sexual abuse is any act using a child for the sexual gratification of the more powerful person.

- Sexual Abuse affects children negatively, yet most children don't report it.
- Aware parents, caretakers and children can help prevent child sexual abuse.
- Teach children about Safe and Unsafe Touch and to say “NO” to Unsafe Touch.
- Teach children Personal Safety Rules “NO”, GET AWAY, TELL, KEEP TELLING.
- Aware parents and caretakers can help a sexually abused child better.

Step 1 Recognizing that the child has been sexually abused

Step 2 Helping the child talk about this experience

Step 3 Seeking professional support to help the child heal

It is very important to remember and remind the child that Sexual Abuse is NOT the child's fault. Parents need to be compassionate, patient and encouraging.

For more information on Child Sexual Abuse visit www.arpan.org.in