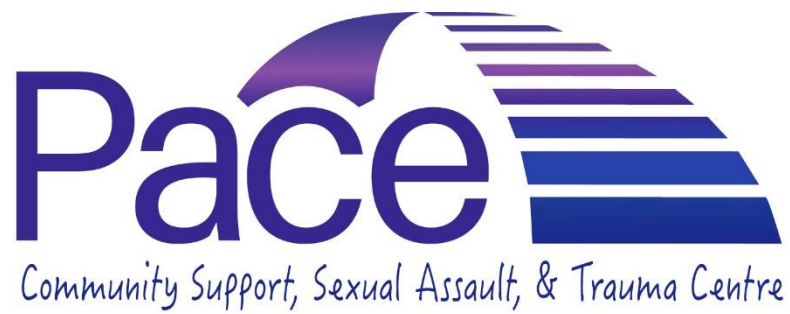


Parent Info Package

“Who Do You Tell?”™



Background Information:

The "Who Do You Tell?"™ Program is a child sexual abuse education program for children/youth, their parents, and teachers. The "WDYT?"™ Program was first introduced in Calgary, in 1983. Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse (CCSA) has owned and offered the program since 1994. Since that time, the program has been evaluated, revised, and updated to ensure its continued effectiveness. The "WDYT?"™ Program has the approval of both the Calgary Public and Catholic Boards of Education. In February 2008, Pace – Community Support, Sexual Assault, and Trauma Centre purchased the rights to the "Who Do You Tell?"™ Program, has approval from the Grande Prairie Public, Grande Prairie Catholic, Peace Wapiti, Holy Family Catholic, Northern Gateway, and Peace River School Boards, and has facilitated the program in various Peace Region Schools. Pace has been providing community services and public education to the Peace Region for the past 33 years.

Why do we need a child sexual abuse education program?

The Report of the Committee on Sexual Offences Against Children and Youth (Badgley, 1984), indicates that one in four girls and one in ten boys is sexually abused before the age of eighteen in Canada. In Calgary alone, police investigate 600-700 child sexual abuse cases per year. Some of the specific symptoms of childhood sexual abuse, that **may** manifest themselves in childhood, or later in adolescence or adulthood are:

"withdrawal, depression, suicidal feelings/actions, engagement in high risk behaviours, feelings of guilt, irritability, difficulties with anger, fears and anxiety, concentration and learning difficulties, self harming behaviours, eating disorders, substance abuse, nightmares, flashbacks, low self-esteem, lack of belief in a just world, distrust of others and significant relationship difficulties"
(Briere, 1996; Dolan, 1992; Herman, 1997).

This is clearly a life altering experience for children with consequences that continue into adulthood, especially when children do not feel safe to disclose the abuse or do not receive appropriate support from those they do tell.

Components of the "Who Do You Tell?"™ Program

Staff Information Session: (30+ minutes)

The staff information session provides a brief outline of the program, as well as info. on child sexual abuse myths and how to respond to disclosures. Staff members are also informed of their responsibilities during the "Who Do You Tell?"™ Program.

Parent Evening Information Session: (45-60+ minutes)

The evening information session familiarizes parents/guardians with the history and content of the "Who Do You Tell?"™ Program as well as information about common myths of child sexual abuse and how to handle a disclosure. Parents/guardians are welcome to ask questions about the Who Do You Tell? Program and child sexual abuse.

Classroom Presentations: (Two – approx. 60 minute sessions/per class)

Classroom presentations are tailored to the grade and developmental level of students. The program uses a variety of teaching tools to deliver key messages of the program, such as; stories, videos, cartoon pictures and role plays.

Who Do You Tell Learning Objectives for Children

- Understand that child sexual abuse is any inappropriate touching or viewing of a child's private parts by a bigger or older person for no good reason, or when a bigger or older person wants a child to look at or touch their private parts, or if they show a child pictures, videos, or websites of other people's private parts or people touching each other's private parts.
- Be able to identify the private parts of the body and learn the correct terminology for private parts.
- Know that they have the right to respond assertively against any sexually abusive advance or behaviour.
- Be aware of possible tricks that might be involved with child sexual abuse such as bribery and/or threats.
- Understand that child sexual abuse is never the child's fault.
- Be able to name adults that they can tell or talk to if they feel uncomfortable, scared, or have been abused.

The key messages of the program are:

- **Children have the right to say “No” to abuse**
- **It is never a child's fault when abuse occurs**
- **Children need to tell an adult they trust**

Presentation Outline

DAY ONE: (approx. 60 minutes)

- Introductions and rules
- Talk about 4 different kinds of touches
 - o Ok Touches (touches that make you feel loved and cared about)
 - o Hurtful Touches (touches that are hurtful to your body – kick, punch)
 - o Not Ok Touches (touches to private parts – sexual abuse)
 - o Necessary and Helpful Touches (Dentist, having a bath, changing a diaper)
- Define Child Sexual Abuse
- What are Private Parts – learn proper anatomical names for private parts

- Key messages of WDYT Program
- Tricks: bribes and threats
- Make a list of adults children can tell and talk to
- Read story or watch a video and discuss
- Students have the opportunity to ask questions and speak one-on-one with a WDYT Educator if desired.

DAY TWO: (approx. 60 minutes)

- Review of day one
- Answer questions from day one
- Review a scenario in skit form with puppets or by watching a video and discussing
- Sing "Hands Off" song and hand out bookmarks

Due to issues of spontaneous disclosures and confidentiality, parents are not invited to attend their child's presentations.

Definition of Child Sexual Abuse:

According to the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act of Alberta, **a child, under the age of 18 years old, is sexually abused if the child is inappropriately exposed or subjected to sexual contact, activity or behaviour including prostitution related activities. This definition recognizes that child sexual abuse exists on a continuum. Child sexual abuse can include showing a child any type of pornography, using sexual language with a child, engaging in sexual touching with a child, and any type of sexual intercourse with a child.**

Possible Indicators of Sexual Abuse

The following may not always be signs of child sexual abuse; many of these indicators may be signs of various stresses in a child life. **The most important thing to remember is to notice changes in a child's behaviour and inquire as to what is causing these changes.** Every child's situation must be assessed individually.

Possible Indicators for children and youth can include:

- Signs of physical illness, stomach aches, sore throats, yeast infections, recurring urinary tract infections without apparent medical cause
- Signs of physical injury to genitals and/or diagnosis of venereal disease
- Compulsive masturbation
- Regression in patterns of behaviours or skills: thumb sucking, baby talking, wetting or soiling self
- Change in the level of scholastic achievement (decrease or increase)

- Change in school relationships
- Changes in behaviour patterns, possibly hostile or passive
- Easily distracted, has problems concentrating
- Overt sexual acting out or sexualized attention-seeking
- Shrinking away from physical contact
- Depression, excessive worrying
- Sudden fear of the dark
- Fear of being alone
- Fear of specific adults/teens or being alone with them
- Feces smearing
- Attempting sexual behaviour with other children, especially younger children, possibly in an angry aggressive or controlling way
- Constant hand washing; child fears being dirty
- Compulsive lying and/or stealing
- Combination of violence or sexuality in artwork, written school work, language and play. Genital areas may be exaggerated or diminished, proportions may be skewed.
- Marked increase in receiving or giving of presents and/or money
- Fire starting or cruelty towards animals
- Self destructive behaviours such as drug/alcohol abuse, running away, or deliberate self injury (cutting, burning, etc...)
- Truancy
- Promiscuity/prostitution
- Eating disorders such as anorexia, bulimia, sudden weight gain/weight loss, or obesity
- Pregnancy
- Suicide attempts/behaviour
- Limited social life/withdrawn

Children are vulnerable to sexual abuse because:

- Children are dependent on adults/teens, physically, emotionally, mentally, financially...
- Adults/teens are often more powerful, physically and psychologically, etc.
- Children are often taught "blind" obedience to adult authority, especially to family members and trusted adults/teens.
- Children are often not believed when they disclose abuse

- Children often believe the myth that only strangers are dangerous
- Children may not know what child sexual abuse is, or that it is harmful
- Children are isolated from community supports
- Children might believe that child sexual abuse cannot happen to them and that they would fight off would-be offenders
- Children may have low self esteem

Children often find it hard to disclose because:

- Disclosing abuse can be very traumatic
- Child may not have the appropriate vocabulary
- Children can be uncomfortable, ashamed or too embarrassed to talk about the abuse
- Children may not know who they can tell
- Children may want to protect the offender
- Children may have been threatened
- Children may be afraid of not being believed
- Children often believe it is their fault
- Children may be afraid of getting into trouble
- Children may be afraid of showing disloyalty
- Children may have blocked out the abuse entirely

Possible ways children disclose or say they need help

Children may not disclose the abuse directly to an adult. They may have a difficult time talking about what happened and they can be vague in their descriptions.

- "I don't like Mr. Smith anymore"
- "Uncle is strange/weird"
- "I'm not getting along at step-mom's house anymore"

Children may think they have told you, but statements like these are easily brushed aside or ignored by adults. Instead of brushing these comments off, inquire more deeply into what the child is saying and find out why the child is feeling a certain way. Asking questions can allow for meaningful clarification of what the child is expressing to you in order figure out exactly what is going on.

When talking with a child it is important to always ask **Open-Ended Questions** which allow the child to explain what is going on in their own words. Examples of open-end questions are:

- "Why don't you like Mr. Smith anymore?"
- "What do you mean when you say uncle is weird/strange?"
- "What has been going on at step-mom's house lately?"
- "What has been bothering you?"

****IT IS VERY IMPORTANT NOT TO ASK LEADING QUESTIONS**** For example:

"Did she touch you on your _____?"

"Did he put his hand on your _____?"

- Leading questions direct the conversation and guide the child to say what they think you want to hear, instead of describing the facts in their own words.
- Leading questions do not allow the child to tell their story or allow them to feel empowered.
- Leading questions can often seriously jeopardize an investigation of abuse.

Responding to a disclosure of sexual abuse

- Work to remain calm. Children can often feel confused and/or responsible for sexual abuse that occurs and your reaction can have an immense impact on how the child copes following the disclosure. Strive to react in a way that lets the child feel supported, rather than discouraged or insecure, etc.
- Listen and let the child tell you what is going on in their own words. **Do not ask leading questions.**
- Reassure the child they have done the right thing by telling an adult.
- **Communicate** to the child that **you believe what they have told you and that the sexual abuse is not their fault.**
- Use the child's terminology.
- Use open ended questions so not to lead the disclosure or prompt the child with specific language.
 - o Asking leading questions can seriously jeopardize an investigation.
- Report the abuse to Child Services and get further instructions from them.
 - o You do not need to make a detailed disclosure report. You need to get enough information to establish a reasonable belief that the abuse occurred, who the offender is, and how much access the offender has to the child.
 - o Child Services Phone Numbers:

- Grande Prairie Child Services Phone Number: 780.538.5102
 - Fairview Child Services Phone Number: 780-835-7199
 - Peace River Child Services Phone Number: 780-624-6460
 - High Prairie Child Services Phone Number: 780-523-6678
 - Slave Lake Child Services Phone Number: 780-849-7220
 - Grande Cache Child Services Phone Number: 780-827-2245
 - High Level Child Services Phone Number: 780-926-4441
 - Valleyview Child Services Phone Number: 780-524-4106
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- Thank the child for telling you.

 - Get support for yourself. You will probably experience strong emotional reactions when a child discloses abuse. Acknowledge your own feelings. It is normal to feel overwhelmed. It may be difficult to hear what the child is telling you.
 - o Practice self-care

Key information to gather:

- Child's full legal name, age and birth date
- Child's address and phone number
- Parents names and correct spelling
- What happened (general, brief idea of what has occurred)
- When the abuse occurred and if it is still ongoing
- Full name of person who abused the child (offender)
- Does the offender still have access to the child? If so, how much?

"WDYT"™ and School Protocol for Disclosures:

When a child discloses abuse, the "WDYT"™ Program educators will:

- Document what the child said
- Report the disclosure to Child Services and/or RCMP
- Inform the school contact that a disclosure has occurred
- Provide support and resources to the child/family/parents where appropriate.

Adult Responsibilities

- *Adults have a legal responsibility to report disclosed or suspected child abuse to Child Services and the Police.*

- The individual receiving the disclosure has the primary responsibility to report child sexual abuse to Children Services, according to the *Child, Youth, and Family Enhancement Act of Alberta*.
- You do not need to prove that the abuse has occurred; your only responsibility is to report observations, what the child has said, and/or suspicions of abuse.
- You cannot be sued for reporting child abuse if you are reporting in good faith and without malice.

Alberta Children's Services is the government department with the responsibility to protect children in Alberta. For further information, check out www.child.gov.ab.ca

A child is deemed to be in need of protective services if:

The child has been, or there is substantial risk that the child will be, physically injured or sexually abused by the guardian of the child,

or

The guardian of the child is unable or unwilling to protect the child from physical injury or sexual abuse.

Sexual abuse is defined by the Act as follows:

A child is sexually abused if the child is inappropriately exposed or subjected to sexual contact, activity or behaviour.

If you suspect a child is being sexually abused:

- Monitor the child's behaviour
- Document each concerning incident
- Build a rapport with the child and provide a warm, trusting atmosphere
- Report disclosure or suspicions to Child Services – for phone numbers see above

How do I talk to my child about sexual abuse?

(1) Teach children proper names for genitals and that they are not shameful (this is so that children can explain sexual abuse more accurately if it happens)

(2) Give examples of okay touches and not okay touches and attach feelings to them, teaching your child to trust their feelings.

(3) Teach them to say “no” to touches they don't like.

(4) Create a list of people they could go to if they ever have a problem or questions.

-Continue to have open ongoing conversations with your child. Parents and guardians should be the primary educators on this topic.

-The more you begin to talk with your child about sexual abuse at a young age, the more natural and easy these conversations become. Communicate that these are okay things to talk about; then they will be more likely to tell if it happens to them or a friend.

-Remember: Educating a child about sexual abuse is not about instilling fear in them but rather empowering them with the knowledge of what to do if it happens to them or a friend and that it is never their fault.

Suggested follow up activities to the “Who Do You Tell?”™ Program:

- Have a discussion following the “WDYT?”™ presentations to review the information.
- Ask the child(ren) to draw a picture or write a story about what they have learned.
- Follow up questions and answers about the WDYT content are provided on the following pages.

WDYT Review Questions

1. Sexual abuse is when someone bigger or _____ than you tries to force or trick you into touching or looking at the _____ parts of their body or yours.
2. Does sexual abuse always happen at night? _____
3. Are people who abuse children always strangers? _____
4. What are the proper names for private parts for a boy and a girl's body?

5. List two things adults may do to trick a child:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
6. List two things children can do if someone is making them feel uncomfortable:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
7. Name two people who you trust and could tell:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____

8. What would you do if the person you told didn't help or didn't believe you?
9. Is it ever the child's fault if someone hurts them or touches them in a way that is not okay?

Answer Key:

1a. Bigger or Older (or same age – this might happen in an unhealthy romantic relationship ie. older youth dating situations)

1b. Private

2. No – it can happen at any time and anywhere.

3. No – 85% of the time it is someone the child knows.

4. Boys have private parts on the front called a penis and testicles and on the back a bum. Girls have private parts on the front called a vagina and breasts and on the back a bum.

Mouth is a private part for two reasons:

1. Not just anybody can give you a kiss on the lips – you decide who gives you a kiss.
2. You don't put just anything in your mouth – healthy food, candy, and a toothbrush belong in your mouth. Dirt, anything poisonous, etc. does not belong in your mouth.

Your entire body is private and belongs to you. Some parts are more private than others.

5. a. Bribe – go for ice cream, do nice things for you, spend time with you and then the person also touches your private parts.

b. Threat – If you tell... no one will believe you. If you tell... you'll get in trouble.

6. a. Tell them to stop.

b. Go tell an adult that you know and trust about the not ok touches (sexual abuse).

7. a. _____

b. _____

8. Go tell another adult until someone believes you and wants to help.

9. NO. Abuse is never a child's fault.

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