Child Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse occurs when a child is exploited sexually by another person. It may take many forms: exposure of the genitals, obscene phone calls, obscene internet solicitation, voyeurism, use of pornography, fondling, and oral, vaginal, or anal intercourse.

Children are most commonly sexually abused by someone they know and trust. When these acts occur within a family, the sexual abuse is called incest. There may be a single occurrence, but most likely the abuse will continue over a period of time, often for years. The abuse generally begins with acts such as fondling. The child is coerced and manipulated into remaining silent. Victims are terrified of revealing the abuse due to confusion, guilt, and fear of being blamed, punished, or not believed.

The vast majority of child perpetrators are teenage or adult males. Most are heterosexual men, many with children and a wife or girlfriend. Perpetrators come from all socio-economic levels, religions, and ethnic backgrounds. Victims/survivors of child sexual assault do not cause the abuse and are never to blame. The offender, not the victim, is responsible. If you know or suspect a child is being or has been sexually abused, you can call your local rape crisis program, child protective service agency, or the 24-hour National Child Abuse Hotline for assistance and referral: 1-800-422-4453.

Nationally (2008)

69,184 victims/survivors children reported to Child Protective Services for suspected child sexual abuse

roughly 15% of males and 30% of females have been victims of child sexual abuse


Race and Child Sexual Abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>10,953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>13,728</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>1,164</td>
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<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>120</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>7,174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>33,959</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 68,002 (data from 49 states)

Perpetrators: 60,749

- Parent
- Foster Parent
- Legal Guardian
- Daycare Provider
- Friends/Neighbors
- Other professionals
- Other Relative
- Residential Fac. Staff
- Dating Partner of Parent
- Unknown

WCASA is a membership agency comprised of organizations and individuals working to end sexual violence in Wisconsin. Among these are the 56 sexual assault service provider (SASP) agencies throughout the state that offer support, advocacy and information to victims of sexual assault and their families. For information sheets on other topics and for more information about sexual assault, please visit our website. This sheet may be reproduced in its original format only.

This information does not constitute legal advice.