



The impacts of childhood sexual abuse

Information for young survivors

Helpline: 0808 802 9999
Telephone: 0208 683 3311

What is childhood sexual abuse?

Childhood sexual abuse is when a child has is forced, told or asked to take part in any kind of sexual activity with another person. It involves an abuse of power and of trust. If you have been sexually abused as a child it's not your fault and you're not alone.

Power and Control

Abusers hurt others because they want to feel power and control.

They know what they are doing is wrong. This is why they might tell you not to tell anyone or try and make you believe that it is OK.

He may have been an adult or an older child - a relative, family friend, a neighbour or a peer. He was probably someone you thought you could trust.

Common feelings

Experiencing sexual abuse can leave you feeling all sorts of emotions. However you feel is a natural response and is a reaction to trauma.

- Angry:** You might want to lash out and hurt the person responsible. You may also feel like this towards yourself - even though it wasn't your fault.
- Shock:** You might feel 'numb' or calm. You might feel shocked and like you can't understand what happened.
- Guilt:** You might be blaming yourself for what happened or be angry with yourself for not stopping it.
- Fear:** You might have flashbacks or nightmares and feel frightened about being alone.
- Depressed:** You could feel hopeless or sad - like you don't have anything to look forward to anymore.

It is important to understand that however you have been affected, and whatever your feelings, it is OK - your feelings are individual and normal.

Talking about feelings

If you have people around you who you trust, you can try to talk to them, if you feel able.

You can call our helpline on 0808 802 9999 to talk through what happened and how you are feeling. A support worker can talk and listen to you without ever judging you. You have a right to be heard.