

## THE FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

Serving Kershaw and Lee Counties

Telephone: (803)425-4357 • 24-Hour Hotline 1-800-585-4455

### Sexual Abuse

### Teacher and Counselor Guidelines

*In general, few children will speak directly about sexual abuse. In many cases, there is no physical sign of abuse. The following is a list of some of the behavioral characteristics of children who have been sexually abused. These indicators are offered with a gentle caution against overzealous case identification. Any one of these indicators alone does not necessarily mean there is sexual abuse.*

#### Possible indicators of child sexual abuse:

- Sudden changes in a child's behavior
- Drop in school performance, severe drop in grades
- Depression, perhaps excessive crying
- Frequent absence and/or late arrival at school
- Inappropriate dress: tight or revealing clothing, wearing too many layers of clothes regardless the weather
- Inappropriate sexual behavior or knowledge
- Talking about a "friend" who has been sexually abused
- Low self-esteem
- Aggressive or seductive behavior with classmates, teachers, or other adults
- Excessive masturbatory behavior or sexual acting out
- Fear of a particular person or place
- Eating and sleeping disorders, drastic appetite change
- Child seems afraid to say "no" or express him/herself
- Suicidal questions or threats
- Self destructive behavior such as alcohol or drug abuse, running away or causing intentional physical harm to self
- Extreme moodiness
- Sleepiness
- Regressive behavior
- Sudden modesty and wish for privacy
- Newly acquired bodily complaints, especially stomach aches

#### Physical Signs of Sexual Abuse in a Child:

- Physical pain or soreness in genital/rectal area may be accompanied by bleeding
- Blood stained underwear or discharge in the genital area and/or odor
- STDs, HIV/AIDS, or pregnancy

#### Response to Suspected Abuse:

- If a student tells you of abuse, stay clam.
- **Praise** the student for telling you about the abuse and tell the student it was not his/her fault.
- **Believe** the student: people rarely make up stories about sexual assault and abuse.
- Remember that the abuser may be another teacher, relative, sibling, parent, family friend, and is rarely a stranger.
- **Safety** should be a primary concern.

*As a teachers, counselor, or employee of the school, you are a **mandated reporter** of child abuse or neglect under SC Code Ann §20-7-510. The law requires that reports be made to the local social services agency (DSS) or local law enforcement agency. Each school has its own internal policies that must be followed, but remember that the state mandated reporting laws supercede your employer's policies.*

Our counselors here at The Family Resource Center provide initial services to any person who requests them. The Family Resource Center may provide written counseling to any minor who has reached the age of sixteen. Any minor under sixteen must have written consent. The Family Resource Center provides support to survivors of sexual assault, their families and friends, and professionals in the community. Services' include: a 24-hour crisis hotline, hospital accompaniment and follow-up contact, individual and group therapy, advocacy in the criminal justice system, information and referral, and community education.

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