



Oak Hill Christian Service Camp

8451 Oak Hill Camp Road
Mechanicsville, Virginia 23111
804-779-3050 (O) / 804-819-9612 (C)
www.oakhillcamp.org
[Travis Jones, Camp Manager](#)

ABUSE GUIDELINES FOR PROFESSIONALS

Developed April 2007

(Adapted from Henrico County - Reprint permission from Henrico County, Virginia.)

How Teachers And Other Child Care Professionals Can Respond to the Sexually Abused Child:

How you respond when a child tells you that he or she has been sexually abused is very important to the child's emotional recovery and adjustment. The openness and understanding you provide is a first step in helping the emotional wounds to heal. The following list is a guideline for responding to the sexually abused child.

1. Let the child tell you about the sexual abuse.

Do NOT interrogate the child or initiate/lead discussions dealing with the topics of abuse, but make yourself available to listen if a child wants to talk to you. Children often feel the need to talk to relieve the burden they feel from keeping a secret for a long period of time. Encourage the child to express his or her feelings about the abuse. Provide a private place for the child to talk to you without distraction. Be certain to use the "buddy system" during these talks. (Another counselor (same sex as the child being counseled), who can be in eye contact with you and the camper.)

2. Be aware of your feelings about sexual abuse.

Try to remain calm and non-judgmental. It is important not to express negative feelings about the parents for whom the child may have mixed feelings.

3. Let the child know that you believe them.

Children rarely lie or make up stories about such serious offenses. At any rate, the childcare professional is not to make judgments of truthfulness that is to be left to investigators.

4. Reassure the child that they are not to blame for what happened.

Children usually have deep feelings of guilt and shame about the sexual abuse. They often feel that their participation makes them at fault rather than understanding that adults are responsible for their own behavior.

5. Respect the privacy of the child. This is especially important in a medical setting.

Do not tell other people who do not need to know about the abuse.

6. Explain to the child what will happen next.

Let the child know that the disclosure is a way of getting help for all involved. Explain the role of protective services or others who may be involved. Act as an advocate for the child.

7. Report immediately to your local Child Protective Services.

Guidelines for Interviewing Children:

DO:

- Make sure the interviewer is someone the child trusts
- Conduct the interview in private
- Sit next to the child, not across a table or desk
- Ask the child to clarify words/terms which are not understood
- Tell the child if any future action will be required. (I.e. Interview with Child Protective Services etc.)

DON'T:

- Allow the child to feel "in trouble" or "at fault"
- Disparage or criticize the child's choice of words or language.
- Suggest answers to the child
- Probe or press for answers the child is unwilling to give
- Display shock or disapproval of parents, child or the situation.
- Force the child to remove clothing.
- Conduct the interview with a group of interviewers.