

## WAYS THAT CHILDREN WILL DISCLOSE ABUSE

- 1.) Hints are often not direct in nature and will be said in an indirect way. For example, “daddy comes into my bedroom in the middle of the night.”
- 2.) The child blames or projects the problem on a friend, such as saying, “my friend, Susie, has a problem with touching.”
- 3.) Some children will write the abuse down in a diary or in a school folder and will journal what is happening to them.
- 4.) Will tell you that they want to tell you a secret, but you can’t tell anyone else what they are going to tell you because they will “get in trouble.”

How to appropriately respond to a child after they have disclosed abuse to you

- 1.) Most importantly, tell the child that you believe what they are telling you.
- 2.) Discuss this in a private place away from others
- 3.) Provide them with reassurance that they are doing the right thing by telling someone about what happened to them.
- 4.) Determine if the child is safe in their current situation or if they need to be removed immediately.
- 5.) Discuss the abuse in language they are able to understand, if you talk over them in adult language, the child will be even more intimidated and scared by what you are saying to them.
- 6.) Remain calm with the child and tell them your plan or what you are going to do to keep them safe from any further harm. A child should know what you plan to do from here.

In working with a child that has been abused it is very important that they know that you are on their side. Once abuse is reported, a number of individuals are now involved in your child’s life such as child protective services, the police, an attorney and the child needs to know above all else that you support them and love them regardless of what has happened to them. They are still the same person and they still have the same problem (the abuse), however there is hope for the future. Validate their feelings throughout the entire process of reporting abuse.

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