

MYTH or TRUTH?

In order to effectively prevent abuse of children, church personnel, volunteers and parents should be well informed on the risks and signs of sexual abuse. Please take this "true or false" quiz to see how well you understand child sexual abuse.

The answers are listed on page 4.

1. Child sexual abuse is often committed by strangers. T F
2. Fifty percent of child abuse is committed by males. T F
3. Most children are so frightened by child sexual abuse that they immediately report it to a parent, teacher or trusted friend. T F
4. Most sexually abused children do not suffer physical injuries. T F
5. Most children who are sexually abused engage in the behavior because they are threatened with physical injury to themselves or a loved one. T F
6. Children may not report child sexual abuse because the behavior makes them feel good. T F
7. Children often do not report child sexual abuse because they feel responsible for the abuse occurring. T F
8. If a child is sexually abused, a physical exam can generally detect that the abuse occurred. T F
9. Most sexual abuse involves intercourse. T F
10. Girls are sexually abused more often than boys. T F
11. If a young child discloses sexual abuse, it usually happened. T F
12. If a child has been sexually abused, they may deny it if directly asked. T F
13. Over half of all child abuse is committed by parents and parent substitutes. T F
14. Developmentally delayed children are rarely sexually abused. T F
15. Many of the reports to the Child Protective Services about incidents of child abuse come from those working in the school system. T F
16. Teachers are the only professionals required to report child sexual abuse to Child Protective Services. T F
17. If a child reports child sexual abuse, the law requires that it be reported within 24 hrs. to Child Protective Services or law enforcement. T F
18. An adolescent girl who has been sexually abused will often react by internalizing the hurt. T F
19. An adolescent boy who has been sexually abused may react by withdrawing. T F
20. Younger children who are sexually abused may "act out" sex in play. T F

Please click on these websites to learn more:

WWW.DRVC.ORG
WWW.VIRTUS.ORG

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ANSWERS: MYTH or TRUTH Quiz

1. False. The vast majority of child abuse is committed by people known to the child.
2. False. About 94% of reported child abuse is committed by males.
3. False. Many children are confused by child sexual abuse, but not frightened. Most children do not tell anyone immediately about the abuse.
4. True. Most children who are sexually abused are not physically injured.
5. False. While some children are threatened, much of the child abuse is accomplished through positive reinforcement of the child, or engaging the child in activity to the point where the child feels responsible and therefore cooperates with the behavior.
6. True. Sexual abuse behavior, both physical and emotional, often makes the child feel loved, needed, and physically stimulated. Children may not immediately report the behavior.
7. True. The activities of the abuser (grooming), gradually engage the child in the activity, often making the child feel responsible. In addition, the children feel that because they engaged in the behavior, it is their fault.
8. False. Most child sexual abuse does not involve physical injury. 95% of reported cases have normal physical exams with no evidence of abuse.
9. False. The nature of child sexual abuse, because it occurs in secrecy and does not involve activities that would scare children, usually include touching, oral sex, masturbation, fondling, or other sexual activity that does not involve intercourse.
10. True. National statistics of reported cases of child sexual abuse indicate that one in four girls and one in six boys are abused before the age of 18. Experts suspect that more boys are abused than the reported cases might indicate, but boys do not report sexual abuse because it is confusing to them.
11. True. If a child is talking about sexual activity, they generally have experienced it, or witnessed it, because young children are generally not aware of sexual activity without personal experience.
12. True. Experts estimate that approximately half of the children who are directly confronted about sexual abuse will deny that abuse occurred; they may not want the adult to get in trouble or they do not want to disappoint the adult.
13. True. According to national statistics, parents or parent substitutes are responsible for over half of the child abuse cases. Parent substitutes live in the home and are responsible for the parental care of the child.
14. False. Developmentally delayed children are abused at a much higher rate than normal children.
15. True. The schools are one of the largest sources for reporting child abuse to Child Protective Services.
16. False. NYS requires mandated reporters who suspect child abuse or maltreatment to report abuse immediately by telephone at any time of day.
17. True.
18. True. However, not every girl will react this way; some girls may react aggressively by expressing anger or engaging in risk-taking behaviors.
19. False. Boys often react by showing anger and aggression. Keep in mind that not every child reacts in the same way.
20. True. Playing is often the only way that younger children can express what they are feeling, and thus they act sex out in play as a way of telling what has happened to them. In addition, children play in ways that they have experienced, so they may act out sexual acts with no knowledge of the social or moral implications of what they are doing.

Signs and Symptoms of Child Sexual Abuse

As a parent, what signs and symptoms should you watch for in your children? A child may exhibit a variety of signs and symptoms. Signs of child sexual abuse can be physical and/or emotional. A particular child may have one or several of the signs or symptoms.

Physical Indicators

- Torn or stained under clothing
- Pain or itching in genital area
- Bruises or bleeding genitalia
- Venereal disease

Behavioral Indicators

- Withdrawn, depressed; running away; truancy; uncomfortable with physical contact; mood swings
- Inappropriate sex play; premature understanding of sexual issues
- Massive weight change; eating disorder; sleep habit changes; changes in toilet habits
- Sudden school difficulties; sudden changes in behavior and attitudes

Often, there are no physical signs or symptoms. If you suspect abuse, talk to your child and take your child to a professional who can determine if the signs and symptoms stem from child sexual abuse.