

SeXuAL ABuSE

Before tackling this topic, **get the facts**. Contact organizations that specialize in child abuse, for example: the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, 2101 Wilson Blvd., Ste. 550, Arlington, VA 22201 or the Kempe National Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse, 1205 Oneida, Denver, CO 80220. Ask for information specifically written for high school teens. Be aware that you may be ethically and legally bound to report disturbing information heard in this discussion.

Review the information gathered **before the session** and invite group members to share their views and feelings about sexual abuse. Discuss:

- How aware are you of sexual abuse among your friends and classmates?
- What is our responsibility if we know of sexual abuse in our families or among our friends?
- To whom would you go if you knew about or suspected sexual abuse? What would you risk by telling? by *not* telling?
- What would we want to say to someone who has been or is being sexually abused? to the sexual abuser?
- Respond to these statements about sexual abuse, expressing agreement or disagreement and explaining why:
 - Sexual abuse is a problem in many families—even in “happy” families.
 - Sexual abuse is a crime and a sign that something is wrong with the abuser.
 - No one deserves to be sexually abused; it is not the fault of the abused.
 - Your body is yours and a gift from God. You have a right to say no, angrily.
 - Healthy families do not keep secrets. If you are sexually abused, *tell someone!*
 - Sexual abuse angers God. If you are abused, God is on your side.