

Characteristics of Abuse - What does it look like?

What the child target looks like

1. Age, friendliness, shyness, good manners, naivety, curiosity, isolation
2. Single parent home
3. Drug/alcohol abuse by parents
4. Parents emotionally unavailable
5. Stepfather or Mother's boyfriend living in home
6. Parents working different shifts
7. Pornography in the home
8. Inadequate parental supervision
9. Any need that an offender can fill

What the molester looks like

Characteristics of Child Molesters – these are some common traits, although not all offenders will demonstrate these characteristics.

1. Adults who seem preoccupied with children.
2. Single adults who work or volunteer with children's clubs/activities.
3. Adults who work with children and also frequently spend their free time doing "special" things with kids.
4. Adults who volunteer with youth groups who DO NOT have kids in those programs.
5. Adults who seem to engage in questionable contact with kids, ie, casual touching, caressing, wrestling, tickling, roughhousing, combing hair, lap sitting.
6. Adults who act like, emulate kids (styles, behaviors, hobbies) or allow kids to do questionable or inappropriate things.
7. Adults who want to take your kids on special outings too frequently, or plan activities that include being alone with your child.
8. Adults who DO NOT have children and seem to know too much about current fads, music, games etc that are popular with children.
9. Adults who "infiltrate" "family" functions and are "always available" to watch the kids.
10. Many hold responsible jobs and frequently align themselves with reputable organizations, sports leagues and churches.
11. Most do NOT have a criminal record.
12. Most are HIGHLY likely to re-offend.

*List primarily derived from CBI resources available on the internet through Oprah.com.

What the behavior looks like

Behaviors to look out for:

1. Overly Helpful – one sided
2. Instant Insider status – overstep normal boundaries
3. Peer like play – doesn't employ normal parenting intervention
4. Prefer the company of children – gravitate toward kids in a group setting
5. Roughhousing and tickling
6. Fail to honor clear boundaries
7. Seeks time alone with child(ren) too much – always available/inviting
8. Goes on the offensive – narcissistic personality

Identifying when you and/or your child is being targeted:

1. Forced teaming
2. Charm and niceness
3. Too many details
4. Typecasting
5. Loan-sharking
6. The unsolicited promise
7. Discounting the word “no”

What the victim looks like

Indications that a child may be a victim of sexual abuse:

1. Changes in modesty
 - a. Suddenly refuses to change for gym or to participate in physical activities;
 - b. Demonstrates bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual knowledge or behavior;
2. physical symptoms
 - a. genital pain
 - b. stomachaches
 - c. headaches
 - d. Has difficulty walking or sitting;
 - e. sleep disturbances
 - f. bed wetting
 - g. Becomes pregnant or contracts a venereal disease, particularly if under age fourteen;
3. Unexplained fear of places or people
 - a. (e.g., a child may not want to be left alone with a baby-sitter, a friend, a relative, or some other child or adult; or a child who is usually talkative and cheery may become quiet and distant when around a certain person).
4. school problems
5. social problems
6. crying or depression
7. escape – running away/drugs or alcohol
8. **Abrupt changes in behavior**
9. Reports sexual abuse by a parent or another adult caregiver.
10. An older child behaving like a younger child, such as bed-wetting or thumb sucking.
11. Sexual activities with toys or other children, such as simulating sex with dolls or asking other children/siblings to behave sexually.
12. New words for private body parts.
13. Refusing to talk about a “secret” he/she has with an adult or older child.
14. Talking about a new older friend.
15. Suddenly having money.
16. Cutting or burning herself or himself as an adolescent.