



Honor Thy Children

Archdiocese of Louisville continuing education for the awareness and prevention of child abuse

APRIL IS CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH - RECOGNIZING THE ABUSE

Prevention starts with understanding

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. American children are suffering from a hidden epidemic of child abuse and neglect. National child abuse estimates are well known for being under-reported. The latest 2015 Child Maltreatment Report from The Children's Bureau was published in January 2017. The report shows an increase in child abuse referrals from 3.6 million to 4 million. The number of children involved subsequently increased to 7.2 million from 6.6 million. The report also indicates an increase in child deaths from abuse and neglect to 1,670 in 2015, up from 1,580 in 2014. Some reports estimate child abuse fatalities at 1,740 or even higher.

The United States has one of the worst records among industrialized nations - losing on average almost five

(5) children every day to child abuse and neglect. Understanding different types of child abuse will go a long way in indentifying and preventing abuse. There are three main types of abuse, physical, emo-

tional and sexual. Physical abuse is any non-accidental act that results in physical injury. Inflicted physical injury most often represents unreasonably severe corporal punishment or unjustifiable punishment. This usually happens when a person is frustrated or angry and strikes, shakes, or throws the child. Intentional, deliberate assault, such as burning, biting, cutting, poking, twisting limbs, or otherwise torturing a child, is also included in this category of child abuse.

Just as physical injuries can scar and incapacitate a child, emotional maltreatment can cripple and handicap a child emotionally, behaviorally and intellectually. Self-esteem can be damaged. Severe psychological disorders have been traced to excessively distorted parental attitudes and actions. One of the hallmarks of emotional abuse is the absence of positive interaction

(e.g. praising) from parent to their child. Emotional and behavioral problems may be present, in varying degrees, following chronic and severe emotional child abuse, especially when there is little or no nurturing. Signs of emotional abuse include being withdrawn, depressed and apathetic. Emotional abuse (or deprivation) has also been defined as ". . . the deprivation suffered by children when their parents

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If you need support or someone to talk to:

- ☉ Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky or Indiana: 800.CHILDREN/ 800.422.4453 www.pcaky.org www.pcaain.org
- ☉ Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline 800.4.A.CHILD 800.422.4453 www.childhelp.org

Signs of Possible Sexual Abuse

- Unexplained pain, itching, redness or bleeding in the genital area
- Increased nightmares or bedwetting
- Withdrawn behavior
- Angry outbursts/mood swings
- Loss of appetite or difficulty swallowing
- Sudden/unexplained avoidance of certain people or places
- Sexual knowledge, language or behavior that is unusual for the child's age.



APRIL IS NATIONAL
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APRIL (CONT...)

do not provide the normal experiences producing feelings of being loved, wanted, secure, and worthy." Finally, sexual child abuse is a type of maltreatment, violation, and exploitation that refers to the involvement of the child in sexual activity to provide sexual gratification or financial bene-

fit to the perpetrator. It includes contact for sexual purposes, molestation, statutory rape, prostitution, pornography, exposure, incest, or other sexually exploitative activities.

SOME SIGNS OF POSSIBLE ABUSE

Physical

- Unexplained injuries such as bruises, welts, bumps, fractures, burns or broken bones
- Injuries that don't match explanations
- Injuries that are left untreated - medical and dental

Sexual

- Use of explicit sexual language that's age inappropriate
- Over sexualized behavior or sexual interest that's inappropriate to the child's age
- Infections, sexually transmitted disease, pregnancy
- Trouble walking, sitting, running or doing normal activities

Emotional

- Loss of self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-image
- Delayed emotional development
- Social withdrawal or loss of interest/enthusiasm for things they previously enjoyed
- Symptoms such as headaches, stomachaches, pain without any medical cause
- Desperately seeks affection and love

ADULT SIGNS OF AN ABUSER

- Shown little or no concern for the child
- Appears to be indifferent or not recognize physical or emotional distress in the child
- Denies knowledge of any problems at home or instead of confronting the problem, blames the child for the issue(s)
- Uses negative terms to describe the child such as "bad," "evil," "worthless," and other derogatory terms

UPCOMING TRAININGS

A current list of trainings is always available at www.archlou.org/safe
All trainings are at 6:30p unless otherwise indicated.

5.23.18

Assumption High School

6.11.18

St. Gabriel (summer)

8.6.18

St. Gabriel (fall)

8.23.18

St. James (Elizabethtown)

More trainings are in the process of being scheduled and will be posted as soon as confirmed.

Keep checking

www.archlou.org/safe for updates as trainings cancelled due to inclement

There are about a million things going on in the life of a parent from one moment to the next — grocery lists, job tasks, social media and nonstop "breaking news." Technology has made it easier than ever to multitask, but it's also made it easier to lose focus on your children. Even our "down time" is often dominated by television, social media or video games. Electronic distractions can rob us precious time and attention needed to keep children safe and healthy.

Remember that putting down the cell phone or turning off your big screen is one of the most powerful ways you can connect with your child. It will make them feel important and loved. From infants to teenagers, children know when they are the center of your attention — and when they're not.

LIFE AFTER DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

When one person in a relationship uses any kind of abuse to control the other, this is domestic violence.

Here is some helpful advice for those who are leaving a relationship filled with domestic violence.

You may have recently left a relationship that is abusive, or you may still be in one. Your children may have heard or seen the abuse, or they may have been targets themselves.

Living with domestic violence takes a toll on all family members. Your children may still feel afraid, even if the danger is past. But with your help, they can find ways to cope with stress, be safe, and heal.

What might you be seeing? Some children living with abuse do not show signs of stress.

Others struggle at home, at school, or in the community.

You may notice increased fear or anger, clinging, difficulty sleeping, or tantrums.

If the abuse goes on for a long time, children can experience more serious problems, like depression or anxiety, skipping school, or using drugs.

So what can you do? A strong relationship with a caring, nonviolent parent is important to help your children grow up in a positive way. You can help them by taking the following steps:

- Plan for safety. If you are still in an abusive situation, make a safety plan with your children. Teach them how to call 911, where to go for help, and never to get in the middle of an adult fight. Local domestic violence advocates can help you plan!

- Take care of yourself. Finding ways to cope with your own stress is good for you and for your children. Make time to connect with friends, exer-

cise, listen to music, take a bath, or do something else that helps you relax and refocus.

- Help your children feel secure. Keep your kids close to you when you can, and give them lots of eye contact, kisses, and hugs. Play together, even if just for a few minutes at a time. Provide routines such as bedtime reading and regular meal times.

- Stay calm. Children who have lived with violence will sometimes act in ways that make life more chaotic. Set clear limits and follow through, but keep your voice calm. Get help if you need it.

- Talk about it. Be willing to listen to your children talk about what has happened and how they feel. Tell

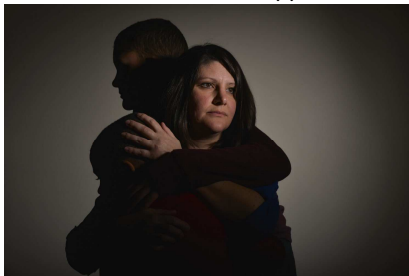
them the truth when they ask questions. Reassure them that you are working to keep your family safe.

- Help your children develop relationships. Positive relationships

with peers and other supportive adults can help your children manage stress and stay strong and happy.

- Celebrate their strengths. Find the things your children are good at. Encourage them in school and other activities

Remember; you are the most important person in your children's lives. Your children need to know that you are there for them, you love them, and you will do all you can to keep them safe.



MONTHLY SAFE ENVIRONMENT TIP

As the school year draws to a close, now is the best time to look at your safe environment program heading into the fall.

For schools: Are new teachers and staff Safe Environment compliant? Are some coaches already in place for fall sports? Are they compliant?

There are trainings being scheduled for the summer (awaiting final confirmation). The summer is a great time to get members in your parish or school to a training before fall schedules get busy.

Should you have any questions or need assistance with Safe Environment please contact

Scott Fitzgerald
Coordinator of Safe Environment Services

fitzgerald@archlou.org
or 502.471.2132

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Children's Bureau "Child Maltreatment 2015" report — released in 2017 — shows a jump in child abuse cases in both Kentucky and Indiana.

LOCAL ABUSE ON THE RISE

The commonwealth had just under 19,000 victims (18,000 in the 2014 report), or about 19 out of every 1,000 children, while the Hoosier state reported more than 26,000 cases (23,000 in the 2014 report), or 17 out of every 1,000 kids. Kentucky's rate is more than double the national average.

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No child or adult should ever experience abuse by anyone, especially a church minister. We all have the right to be treated with dignity and to expect our church to reflect the goodness of God in all of its dealings.

We hope that this information is helpful to all in our communities who are working to prevent and respond to childhood sexual abuse. Please let us know if you need further assistance or information by calling or emailing our victim assistance coordinator, Ms. Martine Siegel, at 502/636-1044; victimassistance@archlou.org or the Chancery at 502/585-3291.

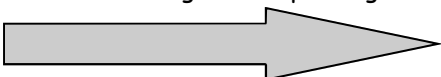
We must heed God's call to care for the most vulnerable among us and to continue our efforts toward wholeness and health in dealing with sexual abuse.

ALWAYS BE ALERT

Child sexual abuse is one of those topics no one wants to confront. Despite our best efforts to keep our children safe, sometimes the unthinkable happens. You should be prepared to respond appropriately, should your child tell you he or she has been sexually abused.

When a child tells an adult he/she has been sexually abused, the adult may feel uncomfortable and may not know what to do or say.

It is always important to listen, respect and support children who talk to you about an experience of sexual abuse. There is no perfect way to talk to them, but here are some guidelines to understanding and responding.



WAYS CHILDREN TELL OTHERS

- Through play, such as with dolls or through drawings.
- Through behavior, i.e. nightmares, angry outbursts, insomnia, appetite changes.
- Telling others with whom they feel safe.
- Indirectly, i.e. "Uncle John wears funny underwear."
- Saying things such as "A friend at school told me her dad was hurting her. What should I do?"
- Asking questions about sexual abuse.

CONSIDER WHEN RESPONDING

- Stay calm and try not to appear shocked or angry.
- Tell them you are glad they told you.
- Let them talk at their own pace.
- Do not promise things you cannot be sure will happen, i.e. "I will make sure that person goes to jail." or "I promise not to tell anyone else."
- Don't blame the child for what happened.
- Most importantly - tell the child you believe him/her.
- Immediately report the situation to your local child protection agency (1-877-KYSAFE1) (1-877-597-2331) or the local police.