

Sample Scripts for Psychoeducation: Sexual Abuse

What is child sexual abuse?

"Child sexual abuse can be really confusing. A lot of kids aren't even sure whether or not they've been abused! Child sexual abuse is when an adult or someone older than you touches or rubs your private parts. Sometimes the older person asks the child to touch *their* private parts. The person who does this is a sex offender. He or she may make you do these things by being mean and hurting you. He may pretend it's just a game and give you money or a toy. The offender can be someone you know, like your relative or a close family friend. Or, the offender could be a complete stranger. Sexual abuse is always wrong, and it's always the adult's fault."

Who is sexually abused?

"Unfortunately, sexual abuse happens to a lot of kids. It happens to boys and girls of all different ages. It doesn't matter whether you're rich or poor—sexual abuse can happen to lots of different kids. The important thing to remember is that being sexually abused is not your fault; it's not about what you look like or anything that you did. It's ALWAYS the adult's fault."

Who sexually abuses children?

"It's hard to understand why anyone would sexually abuse kids. There are lots of reasons—some adults have sexual feelings for children which *most* people don't have. Some offenders choose to sexually abuse a child even though they know that it's wrong. Some sexual offenders even use tricks or make kids scared so that they can get what they want. Most sex offenders are men, but sometime women do sexually abuse kids. You can't tell offenders by the way they look or act or dress. Even though there are some people who sexually abuse kids, there are MANY more people who only touch kids with ok touches."

How do kids feel when they have been abused?

"The emotions kids have when they are sexually abused can be very hard to understand. Sometimes, the sexual touching feels good, and you may even like or love the person who did this to you. It's ok to have lots of different feelings about the abuse. Some kids feel really mad at the person or afraid of him. Some kids even feel guilty about what happened. Sometimes these feelings can affect how kids behave. Like maybe you're feeling scared about the abuse and you don't want to sleep alone or you just don't like to be alone. Some kids feel mad a lot and they get into lots of fights. Some kids feel real sad and just want to cry all the time. It really helps to talk about all of these feelings."

Why don't children tell about being abused?

"Sometimes it's hard for other people to understand why kids don't tell about being abused. And you know what? There are lots of reasons why kids don't tell. Sometimes, the person who did the abuse tells the child that it's 'a secret,' and that they shouldn't tell anybody. Sometimes the person makes threats and says things like 'if you tell anyone, I'll hurt you, or I'll hurt your mom.' The person who hurt you may even tell you that if you tell, no-one will believe you. Sometimes, kids don't tell because they're ashamed or embarrassed or afraid that they'll get in trouble."

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Sample Script for Step 2: Specific information about the traumatic event(s)**Physical Abuse**

"Parents sometimes do things that hurt kids. For instance, some parents say things that hurt kids, such as calling them a mean name. Some parents do things that hurt, such as hitting or pushing. Most parents don't do this because they're bad or mean. Most of the time they do this because they're trying to teach kids something or are trying to keep kids from hurting themselves. However, this isn't the right way for parents to teach. Some kids may believe that they're responsible for their parents hurting them. This isn't true! All kids misbehave sometimes and do things that their parents don't like. You're no different from other kids. It's important to remember that no matter what you do or say, you're not responsible for your parents' or any other adults' behavior. You're only responsible for yourself and how you decide to behave."

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Sample Script for Step 2: Specific information about the traumatic event(s)**Witnessed Violence**

"Sometimes kids blame themselves for their parents fighting and arguing. It's really important for you to know that none of this was your fault. Your parents (put in appropriate adults) should never hit each other, even when they're really mad. People who live together disagree about lots of things, and it's 'ok' to be angry. But, there are better ways to handle things than hitting and yelling at each other. It's your parents' (or appropriate adults') job to find better ways to handle things when they're feeling mad at each other. Just remember, it's ok to be mad, but it's not ok to hurt someone."

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