

HOW TO SPOT  
**ABUSE**

# HOW TO SPOT ABUSE

## Staying away from certain people

They might avoid being alone with people, such as family members or friends.

They could seem frightened of a person or reluctant to socialize with them.

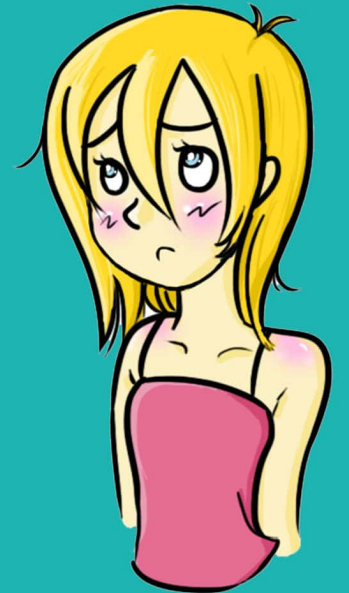


## Show sexual behavior that's inappropriate for their age

A child might become sexually active at a young age.

They might be promiscuous.

They could use sexual language or know information that you wouldn't expect them to.



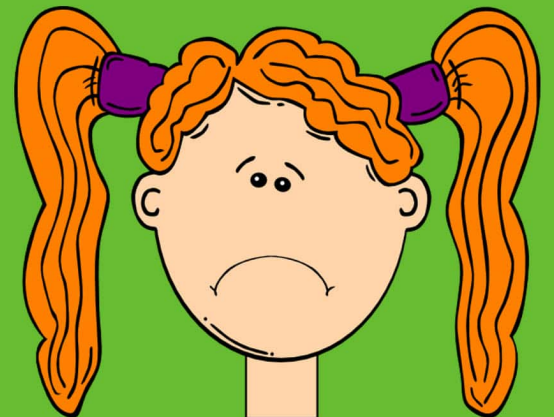
## Have physical symptoms

Anal or vaginal soreness.

An unusual discharge.

Sexually transmitted infection (STI).

Pregnancy.



Sexual abuse is more likely to be identified through behavioral indicators, rather than by physical indicators.

## PHYSICAL INDICATORS

Difficulty in walking or sitting

Anxiety related illnesses, such as anorexia or bulimia

Discomfort in urinating or defecating

Recurrent urinary infections

Evidence of physical trauma, to the oral, genital or anal areas, manifested as bleeding, discharge, soreness and/or itching

Bruising and other injury to breasts, buttocks and thighs and other parts of the body

Sexually transmitted disease in a child of any age

Unexplained pregnancy



# BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS

Behavioral indicators in and of themselves do not constitute abuse. Together with other indicators they may warrant a referral.

Learning problems, inexplicable fall in academic grades, poor memory and concentration

Reluctance to participate in physical or recreational activities  
Regression to younger behavior, such as thumb-sucking, acting like a baby, bed wetting and/or speech difficulties

Tendency to cling or need constant reassurance

Sudden accumulation of money or gifts

Complaining of headaches, stomach pains or nausea without a physiological basis

Fatigue and sleeping difficulties

Poor self-care/personal hygiene

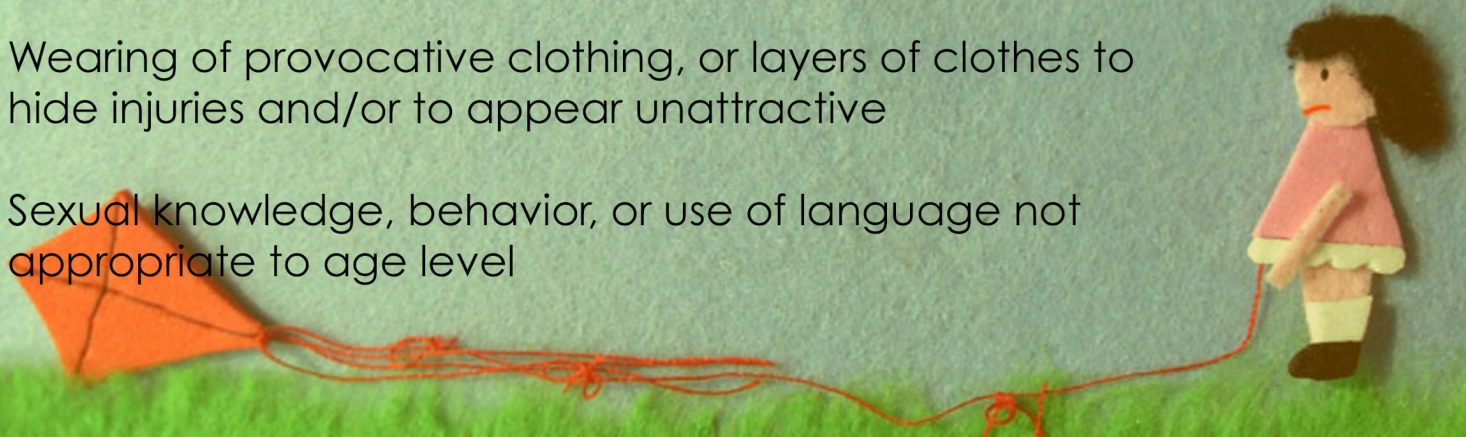
Depression

Social withdrawal (such as poor or deteriorating relationships with adults and peers)

Developing fears, phobias and anxieties (A fear of a specific place related to abuse, a particular adult, refusing to change into sports/swimming clothes)

Wearing of provocative clothing, or layers of clothes to hide injuries and/or to appear unattractive

Sexual knowledge, behavior, or use of language not appropriate to age level



If you are concerned that a child is a victim of abuse, you may not be sure what to do or how to respond. Child sexual abuse is a crime that often goes undetected. No matter what your role is—parent or other family member, coach, teacher, religious leader, babysitter—you have the power to make a positive difference in this child's life.

You must equip yourself to be intuitive and become attentive about such indicators, since the chances of a child confessing are very low.



If you're worried that a child is being abused, watch out for any unusual behaviors such as -

withdrawn    suddenly behaves differently    anxious    clingy  
depressed    aggressive    problems sleeping    eating disorders  
wets the bed    soils clothes    takes risks    misses school  
changes in eating habits    obsessive behavior    nightmares  
drugs    alcohol    self-harm    thoughts about suicide