RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURES
IF SEXUAL ABUSE HAS OCCURRED
OR IS SUSPECTED

► Stay calm – don’t panic or overreact.
► Allow the child to talk.
► Believe them.
► Assure the child that they are not to blame for what happened.
► Let them know it was brave to tell someone.
► Let the child know you are glad they told someone.
► Encourage a medical exam, even if there are no visible injuries.
► Consider connecting the child with a counselor who can provide therapeutic support.
► Utilize your local rape crisis center for support for parents and other family members.

REPORT
Make a report of suspected abuse and neglect to the WVDHHR hotline at 1-800-352-6513 and to local law enforcement.

SOMEONE IS WAITING TO LISTEN AND HELP
CONTACT THE RAPE CRISIS CENTER HOTLINE IN YOUR AREA

Advocating a Way for Adults & Youth
Beckley: 304-255-2559 / 1-888-825-7836
Centers Against Violence
Elkins: 304-636-8433 / 1-800-339-1185
CONTACT Huntington
Huntington: 304-399-1111 / 1-866-399-7273
Eastern Panhandle Empowerment Center
Martinsburg: 304-263-8292
Family Crisis Center
Keyser: 1-800-698-1240
Family Crisis Intervention Center
Parkersburg: 304-428-2333 / 1-800-794-2335
Family Refuge Center
Lewisburg: 304-645-6334
HOPE, Inc.
Fairmont: 304-367-1100
Rape and Domestic Violence Information Center
Morgantown: 304-292-5100
REACH – The Counseling Connection
Charleston: 304-340-3676
Sexual Assault Help Center
Wheeling: 1-800-884-7242
Stop Abusive Family Environments
Welch: 1-800-688-6157
OR
THE NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT HOTLINE
1-800-656-HOPE

CALL US

MAKE REPORTS

RECOGNIZE
signs of sexual abuse

RESPOND
to disclosures of abuse

REPORT
suspected abuse

West Virginia Foundation for Rape Information and Services, Inc.
www.fris.org
What is child sexual abuse?

Any sexual act with a child (a person under 18 years of age, not emancipated) by another person that may or may not involve touching, often with the purpose of sexual gratification. It does not matter if force, deception, bribery, threats or pressure is used, or if the child understands the sexual nature of the act. Children cannot give consent in these situations.

Examples of sexual abuse include:

- Having sexual intercourse with a child
- Performing oral sex on a child
- Making a child perform oral sex
- Touching or asking to see a child’s sex organs
- Making a child touch or look at another person’s private parts
- Using a child as a sex worker
- Showing pornography to a child
- Taking pornographic photos of a child
- Sexting with a child

About 1 in 10 children in the U.S. experience contact sexual abuse. (Townsend, C., & Rheingold, A.A., 2013)

Most child victims know their abuser.

Abusers may be family members, family friends and other trusted individuals.

Talk About Safety

Talk openly with children under your care about personal safety. Teach them proper names for sexual body parts, so they have the words to talk about abuse if it occurs. Teach them about safe and unsafe touches, and appropriate physical affection. Establish simple personal safety rules with them, that apply to people they know as well as to strangers.

Examples of safety rules:

- It’s okay to say “no” to touches or behaviors that make you uncomfortable.
- Never keep secrets about touching.
- It’s NEVER your fault if someone sexually abuses you.
- Tell a safe adult if someone makes you feel uncomfortable.