

**If you experience any of the following, please contact Help & Shelter for help**

- ⇒ You feel lonely and isolated with no one to turn to
- ⇒ You feel nervous and unable to cope
- ⇒ You feel you have no control
- ⇒ You feel that you are not a good parent
- ⇒ You are depressed
- ⇒ Your problems seem overwhelming
- ⇒ You're afraid of what you might do to your child
- ⇒ You sometimes hurt your child
- ⇒ You experience sexual feelings toward your child
- ⇒ You suspect your child or another child may be experiencing abuse

If you want more information about child abuse, please look at some of our other brochures or contact Help & Shelter.

## Services Offered by Help and Shelter

- ◆ Counselling for all forms of abuse
- ◆ Support through the court experience for victims of rape and child sexual abuse
- ◆ Consciousness raising for the community
- ◆ Training of new volunteers
- ◆ School talks to educate young people about violence

Our Phone number: **231-7249**

When you can call: 24 hours/day, 7 days/week

Who will talk with you: A trained counselor

All information is confidential

The Production of this leaflet has been sponsored by



Help & Shelter

# For Parents



## Help & Shelter

c/o Ministry of Housing Annexe  
Bottom Flat  
Homestretch Avenue  
Durban Park  
Georgetown

Phone: 22-73454, 22-54731, 22-78353

Email: [hands@sdnp.org.gy](mailto:hands@sdnp.org.gy)

Website: <http://www.sdn.org.gy/hands>

HOTLINE—**231-7249**

Acknowledgements:

The Crisis Centre

Knowles House

Princess Margaret Hospital, Bahamas

## What you need to know about the sexual abuse of children

## Symptoms of Child Sexual Abuse

- ◆ Unexplained bleeding or discharge from the genital or anal areas
- ◆ Sexually Transmitted Diseases
- ◆ Loss of appetite
- ◆ Unexplained vomiting or gagging
- ◆ Nightmares
- ◆ Low self-esteem and self-confidence
- ◆ Feelings of guilt and shame
- ◆ Depression
- ◆ Loneliness and isolation
- ◆ Difficulty forming healthy, trusting relationships
- ◆ Long-term emotional problems
- ◆ Destructive coping methods including drug and alcohol abuse and suicide
- ◆ Promiscuity

If you suspect child sexual abuse, call your nearest Probation and Welfare Department, or call Help & Shelter at **231-7249**.

## What is Child Sexual Abuse?

Child sexual abuse is the involvement of a child in any sexual activities with an adult or older child. This includes fondling, sexual touching, making suggestions of a sexual nature, and penetration (anal, oral, or vaginal).

The perpetrator may be a stranger, or someone the child trusts. It can be a parent, grandparent, sibling, relative, teacher, friend, or acquaintance.

## What if a Child Tells you He/She is being Sexually

- ◆ Make sure the child is safe from the abuser
- ◆ Believe the child – children rarely, if ever, make up stories of abuse
- ◆ Reassure the child that he/she is not at fault
- ◆ Tell the child that he/she did the right thing by coming to you
- ◆ Make sure that the child knows you will help and protect him/her
- ◆ Take your child to the doctor
- ◆ Keep photocopies of all records
- ◆ If the assault has just occurred, do not bathe the child or dispose of the child's clothes. Doing so may destroy evidence needed if charges are laid
- ◆ Call Help and Shelter for information and counseling **231-7249**

## How to Protect Your Children Against Sexual Abuse

- ◆ Teach your children at a young age about good and bad touching
- ◆ Teach them to be assertive, to say:
  - “No, leave me alone”
  - “Mommy told me not to do that”
  - “I don't like it”
- ◆ Encourage your children to share their concerns with you. If they know you will be supportive, they will be more likely to tell you what is happening to them.
- ◆ Discuss an action plan so that if someone approaches or touches them in any way that makes them feel uncomfortable they know where and who to go to for help.
- ◆ Develop clear rules for safety in and out of the house – how to answer the phone or doors, how to get to and from school etc.
- ◆ Help your young children to memorize their full name, address, telephone number, parent's name and number, and another person they can call in an emergency.

Sometimes parents do not want to believe that their child has been molested.

**PLEASE BELIEVE YOUR CHILD!**

Believing your child will help him/her deal with the trauma of being abused.

