


COMMON MYTHS ABOUT CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Child sexual abuse (CSA) myths are incorrect beliefs and stereotyped assumptions about CSA, victims, and perpetrators. The following gives Teachers & Parents the facts behind the myths.



1  **✗ CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IS RARE**
✓ 1 in 10 Children will experience sexual abuse before the age of 16. This is the EQUIVALENT OF 3 CHILDREN IN EVERY CLASSROOM.

2 **✗ CHILDREN ARE SUGGESTIBLE AND THEY CAN "MAKE UP" STORIES OF ABUSE.**
✓ Children can distinguish between reality and fantasy. Research shows that children resist making false reports during leading and suggestive interviewing techniques.




3 **✗ CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS ARE LESS LIKELY TO BE SEXUALLY ABUSED.**
✓ Children with disabilities and special needs are 3 times more likely to suffer abuse.




4 **✗ CHILDREN USUALLY TELL SOMEONE ABOUT THEIR ABUSE.**
✓ 1 in 3 NEVER DISCLOSE. Many do not speak up for years as they are silenced through threats or fear of not being believed.



5 **✗ WE CAN SPOT AN ABUSER.**
✓ Abusers are cunning and compartmentalize their behaviour. They can abuse a child and then act like a normal family member or family friend. The idea that we can spot abusers is both dangerous and reckless.



6 **✗ SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN SEXUALLY ABUSED AS A CHILD IS LIKELY TO GO ON TO BECOME AN ABUSER AS AN ADULT.**
✓ This is a perhaps the most damaging myth to victim survivors of abuse who fear they will harm their own children. Evidence shows that most abusers were not abused in childhood, additionally most abusers are male, and most victims are female.



7 **✗ CHILD ABUSE ONLY HAPPENS IN SOME PARTS OF SOCIETY.**
✓ Child abuse happens across all social classes, religions and ethnicities.




8 **✗ ONLY MEN SEXUALLY ABUSE CHILDREN.**
✓ Although much fewer, women also abuse children.



9 GREATEST ABUSE MYTH

✗ STRANGER DANGER **✓ MORE THAN 90% OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IS CARRIED OUT BY A FAMILY MEMBER, OR SOMEONE KNOWN TO THE FAMILY.**


10 **✗ IF A CHILD HAS BEEN SEXUALLY ABUSED THERE WILL BE MEDICAL EVIDENCE.**
✓ Medical evidence is found in less than 5% of substantiated child abuse cases.




11 **✗ SEXUAL ABUSE COMMITTED BY BOYS IS NOT AS SERIOUS AS THAT COMMITTED BY ADULT MEN.**
✓ Children are damaged by sexual abuse whoever the perpetrator is.



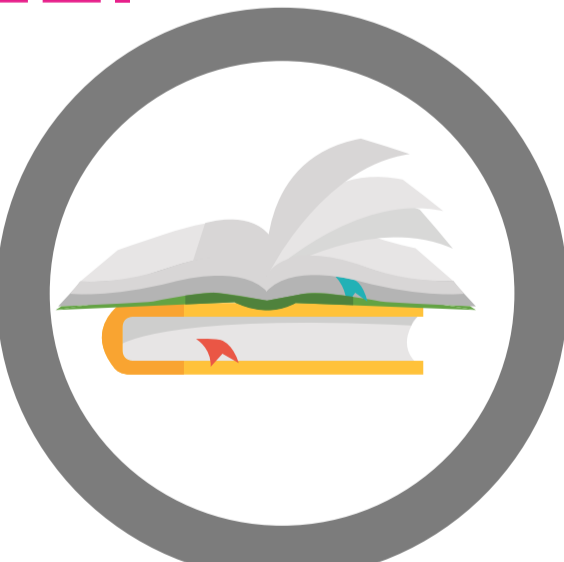
12 **✗ CHILD ABUSE ONLY TAKES ONE FORM.**
✓ There are many types of sexual abuse such as gang, online grooming, street grooming and peer to peer, with abuse by a known individual being the highest form.




13 **✗ PAEDOPHILES ONLY ABUSE ONCE**
✓ Evidence shows that a typical paedophile can abuse between 100 – 150 times throughout their life, therefore it is vital they are caught and convicted.




14 **✗ CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IS NOT PREVENTABLE.**
✓ Child sexual abuse is preventable through Teachers and Parents learning early warning signs & prevention education.



15 **✗ BOYS ARE LESS LIKELY TO SUFFER LONG TERM TRAUMA FROM SEXUAL ABUSE.**
✓ The long term severity of trauma is equal in boys and girls.



16 **✗ PEOPLE LIE ABOUT CHILD ABUSE FOR ATTENTION AND SYMPATHY.**
✓ Research, including police and court statistics shows that it is very rare for a person of any age to state they were abused when they were not. However, "false negative reports" of abuse are common e.g. many adults state that they were not abused as children when they were.



17 **✗ CHILDREN "GET OVER" BAD EXPERIENCES IN CHILDHOOD.**
✓ Adults are often deeply affected by childhood trauma and abuse. You cannot just "get over" it. Survivors need the right care and support to overcome the impacts of abuse, recover and live full and healthy lives.



18 **✗ PEOPLE WHO SEXUALLY ABUSE CHILDREN ARE MENTALLY ILL.**
✓ Most people who sexually abuse children are not mentally ill. They are often married or have sexual relationships with adults as well. In anonymous surveys, a significant minority of men in the community indicate a sexual interest in children.



CALL FOR INFORMATION, ADVICE OR IF YOU JUST WANT TO TALK



IF YOU SUSPECT ABUSE CALL NSPCC HELPLINE
0800 800 5000

IF YOU'RE A CHILD & WANT HELP CALL CHILDLINE
0800 1111

NNECA
 NATIONAL NETWORK TO END CHILD ABUSE
WWW.NNECA.ORG.UK
WWW.CHILDABUSEHELP.ORG.UK

