



Nineline **1-800-999-9999** it's free!

abuse

Are you concerned about a child or teen suffering from prejudice, neglect, emotional, physical or sexual abuse, survival sex, prostitution, domestic violence or crime?

what kinds of abuse are youth facing today?

There are many kinds of abuse from prejudice to survival sex. If you are concerned about a child or teen suffering from **prejudice, neglect, emotional, physical or sexual** abuse, **survival sex/prostitution, domestic violence** or a **sex-related crime**, this is the place to talk to someone who can help at the Nineline.

When someone under the age of 18 is emotionally, physically or sexually hurt, taken advantage of, or neglected by a parent or someone else responsible for protecting them, it is considered child abuse.

Whether the abuser is a member of the child's community like a peer, friend, teacher, counselor or the abuser is member of the family like a stepparent or a parent's boyfriend or girlfriend, this behavior is still considered abuse. The abuse may happen only once, but often it continues until the child or someone else tells someone who can help.

Any kind of abuse hurts emotionally, even when no force is used or when there's no infection, bruising or other physical signs. The emotional hurt may show up soon after the abuse begins or many years later. That is why it's important to get help for the child or teen you are concerned about now.



what are the warning signs?

Warning signs of an abused child can be very subtle and it may be difficult to engage in a dialogue with children about the abusive situations they are facing. Some typical warning signs are visible injuries such as constant fractures, welts, and or bruises, or if you frequently notice questionable wounds. Other signs to look for are: sleeplessness, irrational fears, depression, anxiety, and change in weight, nightmares, anger, low self-esteem, and privacy issues. The signs do not necessarily mean a child is being abused, however if you notice multiple symptoms for an extended period of time, it is better to be safe than sorry and talk to the child.

If the child or teen you are concerned about answers yes to three or more of the questions below, they may be in an abusive situation that requires help:

1. Are you afraid or too depressed to concentrate in school, make or keep friends?
2. Does the abusive behavior you've experienced make you fear physical closeness?
3. Do you feel you have an unusual interest in sexual things because of abuse?
4. Is the abuser in your life often irritated and angry with you for no apparent reason?
5. Does the abuser refuse to discuss the problem, making it impossible to resolve it?
6. Does the abuser's behavior embarrass you in front of friends and family?
7. Does the abuser's personality change when he or she drinks or does drugs?
8. Does the abuser find it impossible to apologize or admit they are wrong?
9. Do they always blame their behavior on you?
10. Does the abuser try to take advantage of you sexually?
11. Do you feel afraid of the abuser?
12. Do you feel you are inferior to the abuser?
13. Do you keep the abuse secret out of fear?



what can I say or do to help the child or teen I care about?

The first thing you, as a caregiver, can do is offer your respect and support. Let them know that the abuse is not their fault.

You can report abuse yourself or bring it up with the child or teen's school guidance counselor, teacher, social worker or principal. These professionals can help you figure out if the child is being abused and will know how to report abuse. In fact, they are required by law to report abuse if they suspect it is happening.

Each state has an agency that is set up to protect kids. It might be called Child Protective Services (C.P.S.), the Department of Human Services, Child and Family Services, or something similar. States and counties also have hotlines which takes child abuse reports.

There are also telephone counselors you can call anonymously. They will listen and try to help you sort out what to do.

Call the **Covenant House Nineline** at 1-800-999-9999; TTY: 1-800-999-9915 or follow this link to the **Nineline Forum on abuse**. The Nineline staff is ready to talk with you any time of day.

Other resources we recommend include:

Child Help USA provides crisis counseling, referrals and help in reporting child abuse: 1-800-422-4453

National Council on Child Abuse and Family Violence provides information and referrals for help: 1-888-222-2000

National Domestic Violence Hotline has a Web site <http://www.ndvh.org> and crisis line: (800) 799-SAFE (7233) or (800) 787-3224 (TDD)

National Family Violence Helpline has three numbers for child abuse, domestic abuse and elder abuse:
(800) 422-4453 (Child Abuse)
(800) 799-7233 (Domestic Abuse)
(800) 879-6682 (Elder Abuse)