



Sexual Assault Response Services *of Southern Maine*

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To a Sexually Abused Child

What had happened to you may have been very scary. It will help if you have someone - a family member, a teacher or a special friend - to talk about how scared you felt.

You may still feel very scared. This is normal. Even grown-ups feel scared for a while after something like this happens to them.

Someone who loves you very much who will want to help you when you feel scared. Ask this person for help if you want to, or ask them to listen to you, or ask them to leave you alone if this is what you want.

You may feel sad or angry, or as if you want to cry and scream. If you want to, that's okay. It is okay for you to feel the way you do, for a while. You might want someone special with you when this happens, or you might want to be left alone in a special place. Find the place and/or person that is best for you.

What happened to you might make you feel that all grown-ups are mean and bad, and want to hurt children. Even though you met a person like this, most grown-ups do not want to hurt, scare or worry children. Right now you may not like to be with grown-ups, even those you know you love. That's okay because that's how you feel. In a little while, you will begin to remember how good most of the grown-ups you know are, and you will want to be with them again and feel better together.

You might not feel well for a while. You might not want to go to sleep, eat your dinner, or do your schoolwork or what grown-ups tell you to do. This feeling may last for a while, but if you talk about it with someone you trust, you will feel better. Don't be afraid to ask for whatever will make you feel better. Your bad feelings will probably go away soon. Talking about them usually helps them go away.

Maybe you will start doing things you haven't done for a long time, like sucking your thumb or even wetting the bed. If these things happen, try not to worry about them too much. It is a normal feeling to want to act younger or even like a baby after something scary happened to you. Even some grown-ups do this after being very scared. It will probably not last.

You may not want to go to school. You might feel that the other kids will ask where you've been or why you're acting funny. It may be hard to go back to school. But remember you don't have to answer the kids' questions if you don't want to. You can say, "It's none of your business," or "I don't want to talk about it." If you act serious when you say these things, your friends will probably believe you.

Even though something scary has happened to you, it is important to remember that you are still you, and always will be. None of what happened to you was your fault. Some grown-ups do bad things to children. We don't really know why, but most grown-ups are not like this and those who love you will want to help you get over this very scary time. It might mean being very brave and asking them to help you, but asking for help can help you feel better.

Help, Hope, and Healing