

10 Reasons Children Do Not Disclose Sexual Abuse



1 Fears or Threats

A child may be afraid of what will happen if they disclose. An abuser may threaten to harm the child or someone the child loves (parents, siblings, pets, etc.). An abuser may also threaten to take away something child has or wants.

2 "Keep it a Secret."

A child may be told by an abuser to keep it a secret and not tell anyone the sexual abuse is happening.

3 Blame Game

A child may be manipulated by an abuser to believe that the sexual abuse is the child's fault - that the child is the root cause of the abuse and therefore is the one to blame.

4 Punishment

If a child believes they are at fault, the child may keep silent to avoid getting in trouble or being punished for not abiding by the abuser's demands.

5 Don't Know Who or How to Tell

A child may not know the proper names of their body parts, how to explain the sexual abuse, or who they can go to for help.

6 Shame

Shame, embarrassment or even cultural rules about "privacy" can sometimes keep a child from telling. Children often hesitate disclosing to their parents for fear they'll disappoint or shame them.

7 Grooming

Sexual abuse is normalized as the abuser trains the child victim to accept, or even welcome, the abuse. The abuser may try to gain the child's acceptance through gifts or special favors.

8 Dissociation

A child victim may "dissociate" or mentally disconnect from episodes of abuse and may not fully understand they are being abused.

9 "No One Will Believe You."

Abusers may convince a child that no one could believe the sexual abuse happened and that the child holds no credibility or believability.

10 Love

Over 90% of sexually abused children are harmed by someone they know, love, or trust. A child may want to protect the relationship with the abuser, therefore they may not disclose.