

### **Signs of sexual abuse in children**

- Unusual interest in or avoidance of all things of a sexual nature.
- Depression or withdrawal from friends or family.
- Fear of entering into new relationships or activities.
- Sleep problems, nightmares, fear of the dark.
- Loss of appetite or trouble eating or swallowing.
- Stomach illness all the time with no identifiable reason.
- Regressive behavior such as bedwetting, thumb sucking, baby talk.
- Self-destructive or self-abusive behavior such as self-cutting or burning, suicidal thoughts.

### **Responding to a child who has been molested**

- Remain calm, supportive and caring.
- Do not make judgmental or blaming comments.
- Take the child seriously, listen carefully, and try to understand his/her point of view.
- Tell the child the abuse is not their fault and he or she is not to blame for it in any way.
- Report any suspicion of abuse to local authorities.
- Seek professional treatment.

### **Behavioral characteristics of sex offenders**

- Insists on hugging, touching, kissing, tickling, wrestling with or holding a child even when the child does not want this affection.
- Manages to get time alone or insists on time alone with a child.
- Spends most of his/her spare time on activities involving children, not adults.
- Regularly offers to babysit for free or takes children on overnight outings alone.
- Looks at child pornography.
- May be seen at parks, playgrounds or places frequented by children or teenagers.

### **Sexual Abuse Prevention Internet resources:**

<http://www.stopitnow.com/mn>

<http://www.missingkids.com>

<http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/projectaxis/myths.html>

<http://www.aacap.org/publications/factsfam/rspdabus.htm>

[http://www.kids.nsw.gov.au/info/1023241445\\_28888.html](http://www.kids.nsw.gov.au/info/1023241445_28888.html)

[http://www.puberty101.com/aacap\\_sexualabuse.shtml](http://www.puberty101.com/aacap_sexualabuse.shtml)

<http://nsi.org/Tips/sexabuse.htm>

<http://www.familymanagement.com/facts/english/facts28.html>

[http://www.futureofchildren.org/pubs-info2825/pubs-info\\_show.htm?doc\\_id=74215](http://www.futureofchildren.org/pubs-info2825/pubs-info_show.htm?doc_id=74215)

<http://pediatrics.about.com/od/childabuse/>

<http://www.prevent-abuse-now.com/stats.htm>

<http://www.csom.org/pubs/mythsfacts.html>

<http://ojdp.ncjrs.org/juvsexoff/sexbibtopic.html>

<http://www.co.cowlitz.wa.us/sheriff/rso/tips.htm>

<http://www.jwf.org>