



About Child Sexual Abuse

What is Child Sexual Abuse?

Child sexual abuse (or CSA) constitutes a broad range of behaviors occurring along a continuum from voyeurism to rape, and usually happens over an extended period of time. Child abuse is possible because of the differences in power and control between the offender and the victim.

How Common is It?

Child sexual abuse is occurring in pandemic proportions and causes grave physical and psychological trauma, along with social havoc. In the United States alone, child sexual abuse affects one-third of girls and one-sixth of boys by the time they are 18 years old. Many countries have not yet conducted the research to identify the extent of child sexual abuse, but, from the research available, we know that it is a worldwide pandemic and that prevalence rates have been identified as high as 60 percent in some places and as low as 2 percent in others.

It is difficult to know the true extent of child sexual abuse. Most child sexual abuse is never reported (due to shame, fear, stigma, manipulation, and other factors). The information that does get reported can look quite different depending on who is reporting it — for example, whether recounted by a child to various authorities as opposed to by an

adult who has found out as a result of trauma or pregnancy. Also, authorities often minimize or dismiss the abuse reported, blame the victim, and/or protect the abuser. Only one in 10 children in the United States actually let someone know that it has occurred. We also know that more than two-fifths of women and more than one-third of men who have been sexually abused in the United States never disclose the experience to anyone.

What are the Consequences?

We all privately and/or publicly know survivors who have not only survived, but thrived; it has taken work for them to get there. CSA often has extremely severe consequences. They include:

- Depression, anxiety, PTSD, and other psychological problems
- Anti-social behaviors
- Decreased school performance/delinquency
- Substance abuse
- Promiscuity
- Teen pregnancy
- Sexually transmitted infections and diseases, including HIV
- Prostitution

- Homicide and suicide
- Incarceration
- Chronic disease

Decades of research documents that adults who were sexually victimized as children have a higher likelihood of being negatively impacted in their adulthood by numerous types of psychological and physiological ailments and sociological pathologies, including post traumatic stress disorder, self

destructive and violent behaviors, and even chronic disease. CSA has been definitively implicated as a precursor to, and a part of, the commercial sexual exploitation of children. CSA costs the nation billions of dollars each year between medical and psychiatric treatment, social services, special education, and legal and judicial and incarceration costs.

~Dr. Pamela Pine, Founder and CEO of Stop the Silence®

Stop the Silence® is an international non-profit organization committed to advocacy, prevention and healing with regard to child sexual abuse. We provide help and resources through awareness, education, prevention, treatment and mitigation. We know that CSA is preventable and that there is life and happiness past the pain and trauma of abuse! Healing and wellness can be achieved through embracing one's past, seeking help, and speaking out.

~Jillian Short, Advocate/International Spokesperson, Stop the Silence®

*Hope is our lighthouse,
showing us little blips of
light here and there so we
can take another step. And
then another.*

-Jillian Short

Please visit us at:

www.stophthesilence.org

Do you want to connect with other survivors? You may also visit www.alwaysavoic.com for web-based and local support.