

UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND SHAME

UNDERSTANDING SHAME

Offenders often use shame to manipulate children. They say things like:

“If you tell anyone, you’ll get in trouble” or

“You’ve done something wrong and your parents will be angry with you.”

Shame from chronic trauma is a defense mechanism, and it can be scary to let go of shame to risk connecting with others. Open conversations about shame can help children, adolescents, and adults be free of the shame of their abuse.

WHY NORMALIZE SHAME AS A RESPONSE TO ABUSE?

- Helps survivors identify feelings of shame and understand where those feelings are coming from
- De-stigmatizes the things that are difficult for survivors to talk about
- Helps survivors accept praise, validation, or recognition

HOW CAN PARENTS PROTECT THEIR CHILDREN?

HAVE OPEN CONVERSATIONS

Eliminate the potential for shame and have open, non-judgmental dialogue with your children. Reassure your child that they can always come to you and you won't be angry.



BE AWARE OF ONLINE SPACES

Be familiar with the online spaces your children are in. Create environments where technologies are used publicly. However, it's important that these practices are not overly strict that they interfere with your child's right to privacy or sense of trust.



SET BOUNDARIES

Set rules and boundaries about screen time and help your child understand what online practices are safe.

