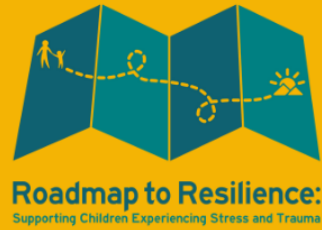


SUPPORTING CHILDREN WHO EXPERIENCE SEXUAL ABUSE



PREVENTION

- Teach children the correct and proper names for their body parts (genitalia). Try to avoid nicknames or made-up terms.
- Help children understand what their boundaries are and who is allowed to touch them.

RESPONSE TO DISCLOSURE



Stay as calm as possible. If you get upset, you risk making the child upset, too.



Limit the amount of questions you ask. Say "help me understand" to conduct a discussion rather than an interview.



Gather enough information to make sure the child's experience isn't a misunderstanding.

SUPPORT

- Understand the potential impacts of sexual abuse and victimization.
- Tell the child "you are not alone" and "I believe what happened to you."
- Recognize that no child is responsible for their own abuse. Reassure the child that it wasn't their fault.
- Be an active listener to whatever the child wants to talk about.
- Use supportive phrases such as:

"I'm sorry this happened to you"

"I'm so glad you told me about this"

"We're going to work together to keep you safe"

"I'll always be here for you"

"I won't be upset if you tell me"

"Let's discuss who you can talk to if anything like this happens again"



Advice from **Dr. Viola Vaughan-Eden**, Associate Professor and PhD Program Director with the Ethelyn R. Strong School of Social Work at Norfolk State University. She serves as a consultant and expert witness in child maltreatment cases – principally sexual abuse.

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