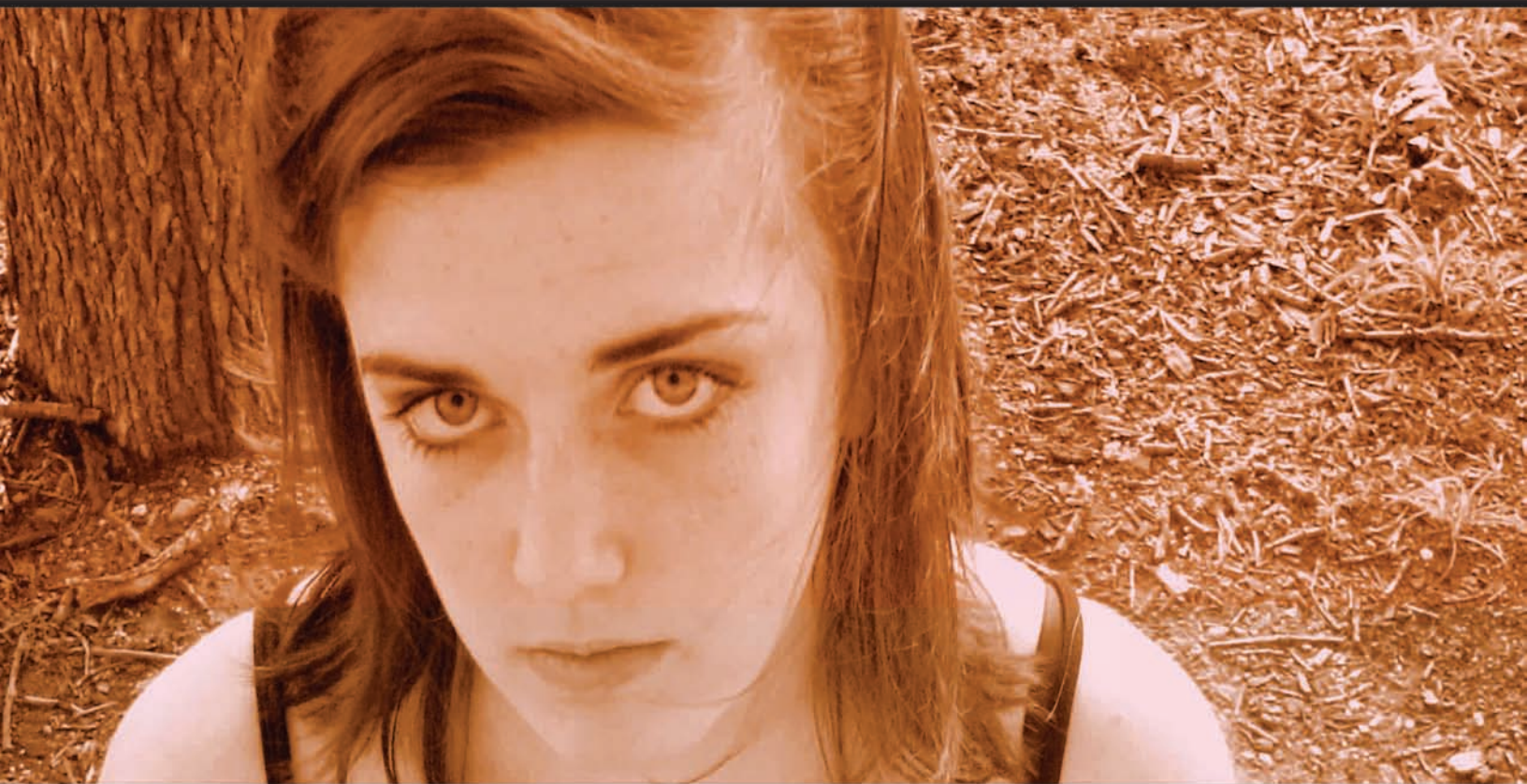


SEE US - HEAR US!

SCHOOLS WORKING WITH SEXUALLY ABUSED YOUNG PEOPLE

**The voices of young survivors from Pathway
and 18 And Under, and supported by Barnardo's Skylight.**



A VIP Publication
Edited by Sarah Nelson

**Dedicated to the memory of
Scott Andrew Heary
29th August 1988 - 26th December 2007**



Q. How did the abuse make you feel?

A. I was never a child, always grown up. I always felt an outsider.

“People jump in, in defence of themselves and their systems. We lose sight of what the actual DOING should be, because we spend so much time worrying that the PROCESS is done right. Teachers are terrified if it’s discovered three months down the line that they handled it wrong. They say ‘the training we’re aware of is all about guidelines and demarcation lines. It’s not about looking at the behaviour of children. The emphasis is skewed”

(Head Teacher, Angus)

A Vip Publication

Editor Sarah Nelson

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By the Editor and 18 And Under

Thanks to all the young survivors for their courage, creativity and determination to see this project through. The quotes and poems are by users of Pathway (Edinburgh) and 18 And Under (Dundee). Their staff and those of Barnardo's Skylight Project (Edinburgh) - all agencies with long experience of supporting sexually abused young people - give additional comments based on what abused young people have told them, and on their direct witness of child protection processes.

The Pathway Group were aged 18-plus, and were: Carol, Carolyn, Denise, Helen, Lauren, Laura-Ann, Lindsay and Viv. 18 And Under's young people were both boys and girls, aged 13-17.

We are very grateful to the Scottish Executive's Education Department (Children, Young People and Social Care group) for commissioning and funding the full report by Sarah Nelson from which most quotations for this booklet are drawn. Thanks to Martin Henry for his wise comments, Sharon Guest for sterling support, and the production team (Aileen Hunter and Brigid Galea of Little Voice Communications Ltd.), who very skilfully and patiently brought the booklet to fruition.

Sarah Nelson

All photographic images are posed by models, and do not identify abused young people

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The aims of this booklet are:

- To help people working in schools understand better the feelings, behaviour and needs of young people who have suffered sexual abuse;
- To help them find ways of enabling young people to break the silence and tell;
- To help them assist abused young people, by responding in child-centred ways throughout.

Who is the booklet for?

We hope it will prove useful for many people, including school guidance staff, and staff with a child protection remit; all other teaching/non-teaching staff working in schools; staff and volunteers working with vulnerable young people and young people at risk; and members of child protection committees.

Why are school staff so important?

Of course, school staff only form one part of a multi-disciplinary child protection process. This is NOT about imposing extra burdens or responsibilities on them. It's about saying they're especially valuable and important to children, as a vital link in the process of protecting them. This is because the amount of time they spend together enables them to notice more than other adults can - and to observe changes over the years. *Nothing matters more to abused children than somebody noticing and somebody caring what happens to them.*

Impetus for the booklet

At the moment, sexually abused children and teenagers often receive inadequate help, or go undetected throughout their school careers. We hope the booklet will reduce problems like these:

- Most abused young people find it very hard to tell adults directly what is wrong. Instead they send oblique messages, which pass unnoticed or are misinterpreted as difficult behaviour;
- The voices of sexually abused young people have rarely been heard directly. It's hard for staff to know what they would like adults to do;
- Many adults feel nervous and inadequate about tackling the issue of sexual abuse or raising it with children. That's one major barrier to support and intervention.

All these difficulties reduce detection of harm to children - harm which often causes great distress throughout their lives. The young people wanted child protection in schools to be informed directly by their own views and experiences. They were keen to put together a booklet which gave some helpful suggestions, gave practical examples of good and bad practice and increased the confidence of staff.

Responding to Scottish Executive policies

We believe this booklet also responds to the Scottish Executive's aims. The goals of the Child Protection Reform Programme, set up in response to the Child Protection Audit and Review (2002), are to improve protection of children at risk of neglect and abuse and reduce the numbers who need protection. Key outputs include better identification of children at risk; better access to support and services, including information for staff; and improved support for families.

This booklet responds particularly to Protecting Children and Young People: The Charter (2004). That urges adults to *"speak with us, listen to us, take us seriously, involve us, respect our privacy...help us be safe."* The Executive pledges to listen seriously to young people, and to get them help when they need it, from competent, confident and properly trained people.

The Scottish Executive publication "Safe and Well: good practice in schools and education authorities for keeping children safe and well"(2005) is an excellent document all school staff should read in full. It says teachers and school staff have a vital role in protecting young people from harm, and must be effectively prepared and supported. Schools should ensure each staff member is trained in seeing signs that children need support, are at risk, are suffering neglect or are being abused. Staff must also know how their school will support them.

Help us campaign for change!

Most improvements described here, which young survivors would like to see, can be incorporated within the existing child protection system. Sometimes their wishes - e.g. for much more directly-worded questions, or for a "confidential space" to discuss worries and fears before further action is taken - may be difficult for schools to implement within existing child protection guidelines. That did not seem a reason to amend the young people's wishes. It is important that you, and the professionals who construct child protection guidelines, should know what these are.

Young survivors' belief that a "confidential space" would enable far more victims to seek help and gain strength to speak has been confirmed by many years of practice experience at 18 and Under. Time taken to address their fears in confidence, to give them back some control and build resilience, means retractions through fear or intimidation are almost unknown. Please join the movement pressing for a "confidential space", which is supported by leading children's charities in Scotland including Children 1st and Childline. And please campaign for more support projects like 18 And Under.

Thank you.

His Sins

**He tried to make me always his to keep
His sins are my pain, that's why every night I cry
myself to sleep**

**His face was in every boy and man I saw, please
believe me it wasn't your flaw.**

**You and your kindness were sweet, but then and
always in my mind I was living a
Nightmare I could not speak.**

**His illness in my head I still need to treat
Every day the remote is on repeat.
I just hoped I could have felt your arms around me,
telling me it was alright, an image
I wish I could keep.**

**It wasn't you; it wasn't me, if I just had a key to set me
free.**

**All the others came and went, it was the same with
them, a problem years spent.**

If I was distant, it wasn't with intent.

**I was forced to build a wall, it's still there to protect me
but often makes me fall.**

I was stripped of the love any man could give.

**I will live, I will see it through, if your intentions are
true, make me trust, make me
Believe in men again.**

Lindsay H

CHAPTER 2

WHAT DOES CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE INVOLVE?

Definitions: What is child sexual abuse? Here are two useful definitions:

"The involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared, or that violates the laws or social taboos of society. Children can be sexually abused by both adults and other children, who are - by virtue of their age or stage of development - in a position of responsibility, trust or power over the victim."

(World Health Organisation 2006)

"(Sexual abuse occurs)..When any person, by design or neglect, exploits the child...in any activity intended to lead to the sexual gratification of that person or other person(s), including organised networks."
(Edinburgh & Lothians Child Protection Guidelines, 2005)

Children and young people of all ages, of both sexes, and all social and religious groups, are sexually abused. As captured internet child pornography has revealed, this even includes toddlers and babies. For the great majority, assaults begin before puberty.

Nature of CSA: Many people imagine that CSA is just "a bit of fondling that shouldn't happen" or "inappropriate touching". This can be correct, but it's important to realise CSA often involves serious and degrading assault - one reason why it can have distressing, long-term effects.

The reality of sexual abuse is unpleasant for any of us to think about, but we do just need to be aware of what may happen to children. This also helps us to understand why they often feel unable to admit it to anyone.

CSA can involve:

Non-contact abuse. This can include being watched repeatedly in private situations, such as going to the toilet or having a bath; being forced to watch the abuser masturbating; being made to watch group sex or pornography, which might involve watching sex with young children or animals.

Contact abuse can include repeated vaginal, oral or anal assault by one or several abusers, or by an organised group; penetration with objects or weapons; forced participation in group sexual activities; forced acts with animals; involvement in child prostitution, trafficking or pornography, which can include sadistic acts for the "pleasure" of paying customers; forced abuse of other children; being urinated on, or other forms of ritualised humiliation.

Additional physical violence during abuse which adult survivors have reported includes repeated beatings, burning, scalding, torture with electrodes, use of weapons, tying of wrists or ankles, isolation, drugging and deprivation of sleep, food or drink.

Who commits CSA?

Despite common public stereotypes of “paedophiles”, perpetrators are drawn from all social classes, educational levels, ethnic groups and occupations - and you can’t “tell by looking at them”. For instance, in recent international police “sweeps” against users of internet child pornography, the majority of offenders were found to be educated professional men, most with no criminal records. It is estimated that 25% of child abusers are other young people, and that about 10% are women.

Effects: People react in different ways to sexual abuse, and many manage to have successful lives and careers. However, it can also have very distressing effects in childhood and later life including suicide attempts, self-harm, heavy substance misuse, eating disorders, flashbacks, nightmares, depression, anxiety, other mental health problems and a range of physical ill-health. That’s why it’s so important to protect children as early as possible.

Most of all, sexual abuse strikes self-respect. A sense of worthlessness and destruction of self-esteem are, after all, not difficult to understand. Children have been used as objects, purely for the gratification and profit of others. Their own feelings counted for nothing. They have been humiliated and degraded because others found this exciting. Their personal privacy has been profoundly invaded. Abuse is often a betrayal by those they trust, love and depend upon, which may include one or both of their parents.



CHAPTER 3

WHY DON'T CHILDREN TELL?

It's very important for people who work with children to start by understanding how many barriers to telling exist, and how the world looks through abused children's eyes. It's also important to think about how those fears and anxieties might be reduced.

As this chapter shows, young survivors described numerous reasons why children find it difficult or impossible to tell about sexual abuse. In fact they often tried actively to conceal it from their classmates and teachers.

Further, boys usually find it even harder to tell anyone than girls do. Like girls, they often imagine they must be to blame, but in addition boys are brought up to believe they should not be victims, but in control; they find it hard to talk about their emotions generally; and abuse makes them question their masculinity and sexuality. Many assume that if other boys knew about the assaults, "they would slag me off as a poof". Thinking about how we might reduce fears of telling means thinking about the barriers that exist for both sexes.

Here are some of the many reasons why young survivors said they could not tell:

They didn't know what would happen, or would have no control over events

"I was asked when I was 11 but I said no. I did want to say yes, but I didn't know what would happen."

"I was scared of being on my own if I told - I thought: who will look after me? I looked forward to school, it was all I had."

"Fear of the consequences. Fear because police are involved, you don't have any control over who you tell or what you want to happen...child protection tell the abuser that you've told. If we knew they didn't do that, it would make such a big difference."

They didn't have the words or were stuck, paralysed, confused

"I couldn't tell anyone. I did try to tell the school about physical abuse and bullying, but I even got stuck on that - you don't have the words."

"First you don't know it's wrong; then when you find out, you're stuck and trapped; then if I wanted to tell, physically my tongue would not move."

"Confusion - it felt wrong but we had not been told it was wrong".

They couldn't trust anyone

"I was asked if I was OK, and always said yes...I thought all grown-ups were the same anyway, didn't trust them, and that they would hurt me."

"Because it was my mum, I expected every person to treat me like her. Therefore, I couldn't dare to trust anyone."

In denial, couldn't face reality of abuse or pretended it wasn't too bad

"You can block a lot when it's actually happening but it can be much harder to deal with later on. You tell yourself it can't be that bad. I'm fine, you say, it doesn't bother me."

"It was never mentioned when the subject came on telly - it wasn't talked about in front of the family - so it was as if it didn't exist. You begin to doubt it yourself."

"Confusion - I would find chocolate in the morning as a reward for what went on at night. I would go to school another person, the one who coped with the world - we didn't even know each other existed...to live through it, you have to be detached and shut off. Even to admit it, to feel all that, would have been overwhelming."

They would get in trouble

"We'd get in trouble (they'd say 'why didn't you tell before?')"

"We'd be told 'you shouldn't have allowed this to happen'."

"I even worried that I wasn't going to heaven and thought God hated me!"

"I assumed I'd be hated by my mum, that I was to blame."

They would not be believed

"My parents were respected. My father was a good community man. Everyone admired him and we lived in a reasonable house. It seemed impossible to me to present people with a different image"...

"You know, the neighbours say 'oh I've known that person for years, he would never do that' - and all the character witnesses would come forward..."

"Fear of being disbelieved. Who would believe me over the doctor?"

Fear of reprisals from abuser(s) – bad things would happen

"I was made to see the psychologist, but my mum told me not to speak."

"I was told people would die if I told. This was the threat. I thought then that I would have the power to make people die. I actually held that belief 'til about a year ago."

"I feared for my life. I believed my abuser would know if I told. They had such power over me. I was so brainwashed into believing I was bad. 'You're guilty, you're bad and if you tell anyone, bad things will happen'."

Already blamed themselves, felt shamed and humiliated - and sometimes this is how communities do react to victims

"I felt I was responsible, not stopping the abuse."

"To admit that my own mother was abusing me...the only way to survive was to say it must be my fault. So you can't tell."

"I was being approached by boys from the age of about 7. It's as if you have a signal coming off you, and it makes you feel even more to blame."

18U: "Young people have experienced being spat on as the victim, and ostracised in their communities. There is the idea of bringing shame on the family and the community. Until we make it something not to be ashamed of, this will continue and they will be afraid to speak."

In particular, they couldn't face their peer group knowing

"It's worse to think of your own age group. Not just how the bullies would react, but also nice people can give you a terrible response at times. You feel scared...that they'll think you are dirty and minging'. So you go out of your way to hide the whole thing."

"I already seemed weird to my peer group. They thought I was a snob, aloof."

"If you are different, you're targeted - you tell one person and then the whole school finds out."

"You wouldn't speak to other kids about something like that because of the bitchiness nowadays."

They assumed children must obey adults

"It's drummed into you that you must 'respect your elders' and do what you are told."

"I was brought up to respect my elders (in the religious group) - to me I was doing what I was told, because the abuser was my elder."

They were loyal to, or had mixed feelings towards the abuser

"I used to comfort my abuser who cried after abusing me."

"My abuser wasn't well and I often took on the caring role."

"You feel sorry for them...you actually protect them. Or you protect your mum because it would hurt her."

"My abuser was only like that some of the time...you always hoped he would change."

Skylight: "There are such complexities if the perpetrator was the primary carer... they often have mixed-up, warm feelings toward the perpetrator. Some people can't understand that, though they can understand the child who's traumatised and distressed..."

They didn't want to upset other people

"You don't want to upset people."

"I was afraid I would contaminate other people."

"Even now, I don't want to poison people's brains (with the news)"...

It felt futile - they believed telling would make no difference.

"I thought running was futile and that every action of mine would be futile. That I would be pronounced mad."

"We did the Feeling Yes Feeling No thing at school, I knew I was getting the no feeling, but I believed it wouldn't matter what I said, it wouldn't make a difference."

In publicity about keeping safe, abused children are repeatedly urged to tell someone. But the strength of these many barriers against telling suggests they will not do so unless we address proactively the specific fears which keep children silent.

Some questions to ask....

- Do your school's personal safety and sexual health programmes address problems like children's ignorance of the right words, their fear of being in trouble, or their confusion about whether abuse is wrong?
- Do your programmes try to reduce shame and self-blame, by naming and challenging common "blaming tactics" abusers use with children?
- Does your school reinforce or challenge the idea that children must always obey adults whatever they ask?
- Given children's fears about their own peer group, does your school try to find ways in which young people can support and understand each other whatever their problems?
- Does your child protection training allow adults to examine their own prejudices about whether children should be believed?

A Child's Plea

**Why does everybody choose to abuse me?
Of what crime am I guilty?
I know it's my fault. I am to blame.
All I can feel is such guilt and such shame.
It must be my fault. I must be bad.
To be punished in such a dreadful way
I must have done something terrible
For which I have to pay.
I must deserve the hurt inflicted on me,
Not just once but twice, almost daily.
What did I do to make you make me feel this pain?
Please tell me and I promise I'll never do it again.
And if I promise will you stop? Please say you will.
I won't say a word. I won't move. I'll keep very still.
I won't tell anyone. I can keep a secret.
I'll do anything. Anything you say.
If you'll just stop this; make this pain go away.**

Helen W



CHAPTER 4

SIGNALS TO NOTICE

Abused young people feel very ambivalent about the signals they send out at school. Part of them very much wants an adult to notice and ask the reason, while part of them, through fear and shame, wants to hide what is wrong. Often they don't understand at the time why they behave as they do. Some children don't "act out" through bad behaviour, but become over-conforming and very withdrawn - which is less likely to be noticed by busy staff.

The young survivors make four key points about how they would like adults to respond:

- 1) Always look for the reasons behind the behaviour instead of reacting instantly, and consider abuse as a possibility.**
- 2) Always notice changes in behaviour, achievement, attitude or self-presentation.**
- 3) Always take seriously distressing things that children act out, draw or write. Don't dismiss them as badness or attention-seeking nor make disrespectful remarks, but inquire sensitively. If children seek attention, it's because they need it.**
- 4) Look at patterns over time. Don't assume from a single sign (after all lots of things upset children from dyslexia or dyspraxia to peer group bullying and family problems like divorce, separation or bereavement). Notice if there's a pattern over time, and record your worries (which also means improving primary-secondary liaison).**

Here are some examples of the way sexually abused young people may behave. These examples "flesh out" the rather dry lists of signs and behaviours given in official child protection guidelines.

Repeated self-harm

"I self-harmed in my teens. Part of me wanted to hide it, I would deny doing it. Yet I wanted people to know. It became very severe self-harm, and I was in a unit at age 22, having started at 14. People were scared, they didn't know what to do. They were confused. When people started to notice, I panicked. I started hiding stuff and becoming bulimic. Then I thought, nobody would know."

"When I was 9 and got really angry, I used to scratch my face. I told my mum I'd done it, but not why. I was really skinny, cried a lot...my P6 teacher used to comfort me, she was very good....but I almost didn't know what WAS wrong at that time... trouble is, people are scared to find out why you're doing it! It's another stigma."

"We cut and we didn't know why".

Suicide attempts

"I wanted people to notice, but then I got scared when I did get a referral to the doctors'. I knocked myself out with whisky and was annoyed when I woke up, but my mother didn't even notice."

"I tried to kill myself at 4 and 10, but that was at home."

"A friend kept trying to kill herself. Nobody noticed or took it seriously - it was said, 'oh, she's always attention-seeking'. Just because someone tries many times, it doesn't mean they don't really mean it."

Eating disorders or eating problems

"Eating paper gave some sort of relief. Tore the covers off books and ate them."

"I was not eating...for days at a time....I was losing a lot of weight...and friends would say 'you look really good'!"

"I self-harmed and had an eating disorder, I was overdosing and had a lot of behaviours. I was asked why I (didn't eat) and said I didn't know because I really didn't understand myself."

Hints through writings, drawings or comments

"I tried to tell, I wrote in my English class about it. The teacher slammed it down, she said 'never talk about it again' so I didn't."

"I couldn't say the words but I began writing darker and darker poetry. The teacher told me to stop because I was scaring everyone! People thought I was making it all up."

Bad behaviour and acting out

"In my first year (secondary) I caused disturbances, I was really bad - people thought I was just difficult."

"I started to look like a problem child, so everyone did turn against me. He (the abuser) encouraged me to antagonise other people. I became very angry..."

"The guidance staff would just sit there, seeing kids one after the other - they didn't have time - they would just say, 'WHY are you behaving like this? What's this for?' I couldn't talk to them."

"At the moment, as soon as a child starts acting out they're looked on as a troublemaker. 'I just can't teach that child', or 'she refuses to learn'..."

At the other extreme, very withdrawn or “over-perfect” behaviour...

“I was so good and well-behaved people didn’t notice a thing. I tried to let people know something was wrong by skipping school and walking down the street during the day in my school uniform. But because I was such a perfect student, everyone just assumed I must have permission and must be there for a reason!”

“I was quiet anyway, but became even quieter. I was trying so hard to hide it. Everything I did had to be perfect...I plunged into school work and got every award going. I was the best smiler, there was never anything wrong, I mustn’t show it.”

“It can be a sign in itself if the kids love school and hate being home...or if for instance they’ve got nothing to say about what they’ve done in the holidays.”

Persistent truanting

“I hardly ever went to school. I had anxiety and depression. I slept during the day. Home felt safe...the only thing I could manage to do was go to my ballet. It was a safe place. I felt threatened by teachers and by then I had missed so much school...”

“I just stopped going, you know? I’m not sure they even noticed. They didn’t care probably, because I was such a problem.”

Crying for no obvious reason

“I cried all the time when I was nine. You are just waiting for one person to ask that question”.

“The symptoms you display - for example, if you cry a lot - I found a verse in my schoolbag about a crybaby...people thought I was just doing it for attention. It is easy to hate people who call for attention - in our culture ‘attention’ is seen as so negative. Nobody looks at the reason why kids are doing this.”

“I always said I was fine if teachers asked why I was crying. I used to bang my head on the wall, I didn’t know why, and I rocked a lot, I didn’t know why.”

Repeated daydreaming and “spacing out”

“I was also daydreaming a lot, I was always going somewhere else (in my head).”

“I was ‘not present’ mentally. I was falling asleep...I was accused at times of being aloof and a snob.”

Ashamed look, can’t meet your eye

“Normal children are usually quite confident, and confident with their parents too...we were not, we looked different.”

“I was so ashamed at ballet that I couldn’t keep my head up.”

Sudden changes in personality or behaviour

"They should have picked up on the huge change in my personality. I started to look like a problem child, so everyone did turn against me".

"I went from being a cheeky, loud and popular girl to a quiet, withdrawn, very tearful girl - I began to get bullied and my life was hell."

"Another way to spot it is, if a child goes away on holiday and comes back a totally different child. For instance, scared to have anyone near you."

Sexual acting-out in primary school

"I was caught doing stuff with dolls, and I was banned from a friend's house. I showed a sex book to other kids at school and got in trouble - got it taken off me. You should wonder why a child of that age should be doing something. At certain ages, you shouldn't know so many details. It's over-knowledge, not normal kids' stuff."

"I was always really interested in sex when I was very young which isn't normal for a child aged 8 to 12."

Apparent "promiscuity" in secondary school

*"My whole life people have used me for sex for free....now I'm 16 they can pay me for it. Now **I'm** using **them**. It means nothing to me any more as the worst is over."*

"I just want people to like me. No one ever liked me before. Everyone hurt me. I'm not being exploited by the men, it's me who is exploiting them. I choose who I have sex with. They all want me so why shouldn't I? No one cared about me before."

"Teachers and social workers call me stupid and promiscuous, but I'm not. I got pregnant because of rape but I couldn't tell them. I couldn't tell anyone, they just assumed I was sleeping around but I wasn't."

"It's what you are supposed to do isn't it? Everyone thinks that sex is great. Even the teachers make jokes with the lads and think it's okay for boys to be doing it with girls. I pretend and join in when they are all talking about it but I'm scared 'cos I might be gay. I think maybe that's why I get abused but I don't know."

Being "easy", "a slag", "sleeping around", stigmatises girls almost more than anything else with both their peers and teachers. Adults readily conclude negative things about the young woman's moral character, so it becomes part of the whole "package" of the difficult delinquent teenager. Boys' promiscuous sexual behaviour is more likely to be seen as reckless and "laddish", but as a result its possible causes tend to be dismissed without much thought.

However, as the three girls and one boy quoted above - most aged 13 or 14, all service users of 18 and Under - suggest, there are many sad and serious reasons for "promiscuous" behaviour. In particular, being used and exploited as an object from an early age brings a sense of personal worthlessness, a vulnerability to being used again, an illusion of being in control when one is not, and a desperate search for affection. In boys - as the last quote suggests - it can lead to great confusion about gender identity and sexuality, and contempt for oneself.

It is sexual behaviour and some of its results - early pregnancy, abortions, miscarriages, sexually transmitted diseases - which can give us the biggest clue to sexual exploitation in young people, most especially in younger teenagers.

Some questions to ask...

- Signs and behaviours suggesting sexual abuse are extensively detailed in written child protection guidelines, and on child protection training courses. The Safe and Well document also wants staff to be informed of these. We need to ask why such signs are described, unless adults are able to respond.
- Does your school have clear, sensitive procedures, informed by knowledge of abuse and maltreatment, for addressing incidents of self-harm, suicide attempts, eating disorders or constant states of unhappiness? Is CSA routinely considered as one possibility behind serious behaviour problems?
- Do your guidance staff and your sexual health programmes consider that early pregnancy, miscarriage, abortion or STDs may be signs of sexual abuse or a coercive peer relationship, as well as of signs of a consensual relationship?
- Does your school always sensitively explore the reasons for repeated or prolonged absences?



Silent Words

**I crouched in the corner
Curled up as small as can be.
One part hoping that you
Wouldn't notice me.
The other half hoping that you'd
Hear the words I'd spoken
Without uttering a word.**

Helen W



CHAPTER 5

CREATING ENVIRONMENTS WHICH HELP CHILDREN TO TELL

Given the strong barriers which exist against speaking out, how can adults create an atmosphere which makes it feel safer for young people to break their silence?

Young survivors put as much emphasis on the need to create a respectful, tolerant environment in general as they do about sexual abuse specifically. A setting where bullying or homophobia is tolerated, or where teachers make sarcastic remarks, is a setting where it's also harder to reveal sexual abuse.

The need for a wider school environment which opposes prejudice and intimidation is in line with the whole-school policies that the Scottish Executive's Safe and Well document wants to promote. Challenging homophobic prejudices and rigid gender stereotypes is an added help to abused boys (whether they themselves are straight or gay) who may want to disclose to someone. This is because they're often very uncertain of their own sexuality, because they fear being branded "poofs" by other teenage boys, or because some become strongly homophobic through assuming their male abuser must have been gay, and that this is how **all** gay men behave.

Here are some changes young survivors would like to see – with practical ideas of their own about what would help... Could your school adopt some of these if it hasn't done so already?

Schools should stress that children shouldn't always do what adults tell them, if it feels wrong

"Kids have to be taught that they don't have to put up with what's happening to them."

"It's about educating kids about their own personal space and their right to have it."

"The need for teaching that children are not responsible for what an adult does to them."

Schools shouldn't tolerate crass or prejudicial remarks to young people in their care. Always be respectful

"My biology teacher called me Flirty Girl because I had more boy-mates than girls."

"Two teachers told me I was paranoid and neurotic. I thought, if that's what they think of me now, what will they think of this?"

"My science teacher gave me a long hosepipe to hold in a class demonstration. He said 'I bet you're enjoying that' - the whole class started laughing."

Having strong policies against bullying, racism or class prejudice sets a tone for children to disclose other problems

"They need to extend anti-prejudice stuff in school. Not just racism or homophobia...they should also teach kids about prostitution or child sexual abuse. Schools could talk upfront about self-harm at assembly or in class - being general about it, rather than singling anyone out. One of the biggest lessons to combat the stigma of sexual abuse is to teach pupils, it can happen to ANY of you."

"Because the school tolerated a lot of bullying I could not get any help there..."

"I was already slagged off for the parents I had, and for that to come out as well...?"

Tackle abused children's strong fears of seeming different to their peers. Advertise services anonymously, in places where ALL children go

"If it's happening to you, you will notice a poster put up in a school. A poster in the girls' toilets would be good. We all spent a lot of time there! They could sit in a cubicle and think about calling the number. They could write the number down without being seen, and without other kids thinking 'why is SHE looking at that poster?'"

"A lot of schools have lockers now. You could have stickers on the inside of locker doors."

"If you could get leaflets (lying around) with a phone number – at least you could give this to a friend if they told you...and you could say, 'it's OK to go there'."

All children should be informed about places where they can seek advice without the abuser finding out

"The trouble is, you're paranoid that somehow the abuser will find out...if adults said, 'you could ring this number anonymously from a phone box for free' or if they told kids that Childline numbers don't appear in phone bills - we didn't know that."

Make sure that devices set up to help children in school actually work!

"I had a box in my primary school where you could put in (on paper) things that gave you safe or unsafe feelings. But nobody looked at the contents I don't think! I was scared, but also hoped that someone would look at it."

Have one regular safe, quiet place to go in a school or youth project

"If in a school, say, they had a day regularly and a safe place you could go where you could express yourselves, and if a person was always there...without directing it to any individual child. You could have a permanent art room..."

"If you had someone in the school who was just there at certain hours, certain days...where you could go in for a chat, when you felt ready, if it was informal or just for the person to listen...I had some decent teachers, but it's probably better to have someone from outside, an independent person."

A counsellor or support person in every school would be valuable

"They should have some type of counsellor in a school, - so they could say 'Would you like to go and talk to someone? It's confidential.'"

"Let children decide and have the power to see a counsellor without parental consent if they're under 16."

But make sure your support person is a kind, helpful, relaxed kind of person and someone they can get to know

"I was asked to go to the school psychologist. She sat primly behind a desk with her pen and paper... I could have opened up to a warm, relaxed, sincere person."

"Couldn't speak to the school counsellor because I didn't know her. If you don't know the person, if they change or if a different person is sent out each day, it's very hard. You have to get to know them first."

"The abuse takes away your trust - sending different people out all the time just makes you lack more confidence in them."

If adults have already formed suspicions about a particular child, find imaginative ways of enabling children to say without words

"They (teachers) could write down words like 'hurt' to point to if kids can't voice it...or they could show images, like faces with different emotions..."

"Younger kids might respond to using a playbox, older ones to expressing things through art, poetry etc, even if they didn't have any words."

Show you have noticed, and tactfully give them the option to answer

"The mother of one of my friends, who was good when I self-harmed, she said 'Oh, how did you get that scratch? The cat? The garden? You? Your mum?' She made a joke of it yet gave me the opening. If somebody notices, they ARE seeing you, even with no words."

"Don't say 'don't do it any more' (self-harm). Persuade them to do it as safely as possible and try to find out the reason."

"You hoped teachers would hear the words you hadn't spoken."

Find helpful ways to raise your worries and gain their trust

"Well, say a teacher might ask: 'Is there anything people are doing that you don't want them to be doing? That you're not happy with?' If the kid says no, keep saying: 'I worry about you...if you want to share anything with me, you know where I am...if there's anything you don't feel comfortable with?'"

Arrange to enquire in settings where children would actually be free to answer...

"Education welfare officers were sent out (to my home), and so obviously I wasn't telling them (in front of parents). They asked me a lot of questions about my dad. I would have been too frightened to tell them anyway."

Young survivors want staff to ask children gently but more directly, if oblique questions don't work

"My dance teachers were really, really nice. They did ask me what was wrong, but they would have needed to ask directly, because I didn't even have the words."

"You are just waiting for one person to ask that question."

"They should just have asked me, because I didn't know how to say it."

"Staff need to ask direct questions, instead of tiptoeing around kids like eggshells. They must look confident to the kids who are already feeling disgusted and ashamed at themselves. They should be more specific when asking a child, because children don't know how to say it. Kids will keep saying that everything's OK. If a teacher is worried, they have to keep asking."

However, a hectoring tone or undue pressure to disclose abuse doesn't help young people either

"On the other hand we don't want 'come on, I know someone's abusing you, I know they are, who is it?'"

Confidence-building and support for staff are needed to reduce common fears about opening themselves up to the issue

The thoughtful quote by the Angus head teacher (see inside cover) powerfully expresses current problems and the widespread fear of "doing something wrong" by the book. Confidence-building training for staff can greatly improve responses to sexually abused children and young people, enabling adults to notice, to "hear", and to find courage to ask.

"Children will know if you can hear or not hear."

"If you're under 16, they don't want to ask because they know they'll have to do something. I felt that because I was under 16 I couldn't get any help. Had to wait till I was over 16 to access services."

18U: "Not enough confidence exists in the classrooms to feel good about the idea that there will be disclosures. Teachers feel shocked, there is a natural fear of the reality of what is happening to children, though they know this in their heads. When we're doing our VIP programme, and say 'there will be disclosures', some people panic then. Teachers are afraid what they do might be 'wrong', according to the guidelines"

Children's peers are often the only confidantes, yet they themselves need support before they can seek help constructively

If children do tell, it's very often (especially with girls) to a close friend rather than an official agency. For instance, in the 18 and Under questionnaires 43% thought it would be easier to tell a friend, compared with 14% who said a teacher. But often, through fear or uncertainty, abused children instruct the friend not to tell anyone else. This, along with a lack of "places to go" with the information, can put a heavy burden of stress on other young people. It can fail to "break the silence" nor produce any help:

"A little girl when I was 9, took me into the woods and put her hands down my pants. She said, 'we have to do this'. She talked about witches all around. How she had died and come back a ghost...I didn't tell anyone about all this, because I liked her, she was nice; and if I told, then people would think she was weird."

Friends need support themselves in order to be able to support the young person, to seek help in the right places, or to give good advice about sources of help. There is a significant need for this peer support but this would need additional safeguards compared with normal peer support programmes. The young helpers would themselves need to be "plugged into" a support system, such as 18 And Under or similar projects. Imaginative solutions might be possible involving child protection committees, groups of local schools and voluntary sector support projects.

Questions to ask:

- Could your school (or group of local schools) pilot and evaluate some of the ideas in this booklet which young people have put forward to create a safer atmosphere for telling?
- Does your staff's child protection training include basic confidence-building, free discussion and the creation of informed awareness, as well as the traditional emphasis on learning guidelines and procedures? And does it include all your staff?
- Can schools, other agencies and specialist services, with local authorities and health boards, find ways of ensuring better staffing continuity in posts working with vulnerable children?
- How can the valuable support of abused children's friends best be harnessed ?

Creating better environments for telling - a practical example:

18 And Under's personal safety work with schools

18 And Under discovered from many teenagers who contacted them that most had been sexually abused much earlier in their lives. Thus their key aim became prevention and early detection. So they drew up their Violence is Preventable (VIP) programme, which sought to involve not just children but their parents, teachers and local communities. These eventually developed into programmes for pre-school children, for primary and secondary pupils.¹

Although this programme with its mix of games, songs and exercises sought to give children skills to identify danger, keep themselves safer, and to go on telling if the first person they spoke to did not listen, 18 And Under were surprised at the number of disclosures it also led to about unhappy experiences for the children or members of their family. Not just sexual abuse, but domestic violence and other ill-treatment in their family or community.

The VIP programmes try to create a space, in the classroom or other settings, where anything can be said and children's attitudes can be expressed, for instance about domestic violence. This often leads to disclosures about violence by a parent or sibling.

Equally, the VIP programmes encourage adults to listen closely to children. For instance, with a noisy school class they wouldn't say "be quiet", which could discourage a child from finding courage to speak, but rather a phrase like "is everyone listening?" When 18 And Under go into schools or youth groups with the programme, (with permission of course) they also always leave means for children to contact the project and website afterwards - e.g. through inscribed pens, wristbands, and key rings - if they need time to decide about telling.

Schools in the Dundee area working closely with 18 And Under on the VIP programme have experienced many disclosures and many positive ways of working together to protect children. When, after a class VIP session, 18 And Under staff and/or the teacher worry about particular children, they offer to go back into the school and do small-group work which includes the children giving anxiety, so no one child is "singled out". They might do this several times before children can speak more freely and clearly about what has happened.

The school then works together with 18 And Under and police/social work to decide the best way forward and the best pace of events for the young person. In some cases the project has been able to accompany a young person for support through stressful meetings or procedures. Schools can also call 18 And Under in for confidential support and advice if they have suspicions about a child, or if a child has made a partial disclosure.

¹. You can learn much more about the content of the VIP programmes by reading the VIP materials listed at the back of this booklet.

CHAPTER 6

AFTER ABUSE IS REVEALED

In this situation, school staff will be asked to follow the relevant child protection guidance relating to education within their multi-agency child protection framework. In this situation too, other agencies such as health, social work and police will usually be involved. So freedom of action will naturally be constrained in many ways. But that doesn't mean there are no choices, in the roles school staff have, between good and poor practice, between thoughtful approaches and thoughtless or abrupt dealings, between rigid behaviour and imaginative ways of making children feel as safe and comfortable as possible.

It remains important for us to know what sorts of responses abused young people value, and what sorts of responses they find distressing, after abuse has been revealed and action is being taken. If, occasionally, changes they want to see are difficult to accommodate under current guidelines, or are the responsibility of other agencies, then we can work together to persuade policymakers of the need for change in future.

Here's how abused young people replied to the 18 And Under questionnaires, when they were asked what helpful and unhelpful teachers did:

Helpful teachers:

She stayed with me.
He listened, and didn't take it out of my hands.
She told me about 18 And Under and took me there.
She listened and was very sensitive towards the situation at the time.
She contacted my (non-abusing) parents and told them for me.

Unhelpful teachers:

He didn't understand.
Expected me to get on with normal school work, and during court.
They didn't care.
They didn't listen. They never noticed anything.
They just said to keep out of the way of him (the abuser).

...And is what they replied when they were asked what change they would make if they were head teachers for a day:

Head teacher for a day would:

Get 18 And Under into school.
Have a drop-in at school with someone friendly who works there.
Train teachers to listen and not judge.
Listen and don't assume.
Have guidance teachers in primary school.
I would let all young people know that teachers are here to help and if a teacher wasn't supportive in any way, it would be dealt with seriously.
Stop the bullying.

Young survivors had many positive ideas when they were interviewed about how schools could better handle disclosures of abuse, or the discovery of abuse. Their support agencies made observations too.

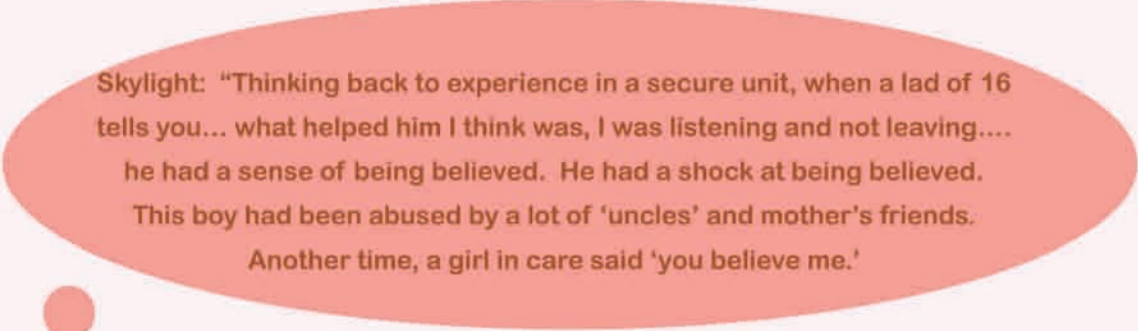
They want discreet confidential handling within the school environment

"Everyone found out in the middle of a biology class. Within hours of telling...the (police) car was at the front door, they drove through the playground...it was like the whole celebrity thing and like they were saying, 'don't look at her!' But of course everyone did."

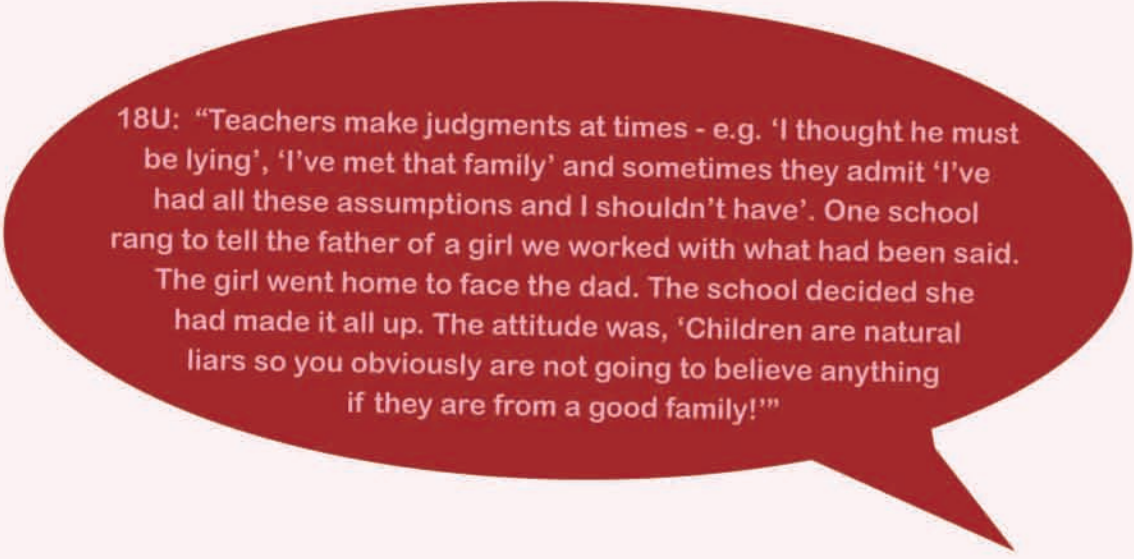
"I was always being pulled out of class (for interviews), so everyone knew there was something wrong."

They want adults to make unprejudiced judgments. It means a great deal to be believed and hits them hard when they sense disbelief

"Young people find it hard in any case to talk to some social workers, police, teachers, etc. They don't take some young people seriously. This is hard and makes them feel even worse. Things need to change for young people to come forward."



Skylight: "Thinking back to experience in a secure unit, when a lad of 16 tells you... what helped him I think was, I was listening and not leaving.... he had a sense of being believed. He had a shock at being believed. This boy had been abused by a lot of 'uncles' and mother's friends. Another time, a girl in care said 'you believe me.'



18U: "Teachers make judgments at times - e.g. 'I thought he must be lying', 'I've met that family' and sometimes they admit 'I've had all these assumptions and I shouldn't have'. One school rang to tell the father of a girl we worked with what had been said. The girl went home to face the dad. The school decided she had made it all up. The attitude was, 'Children are natural liars so you obviously are not going to believe anything if they are from a good family!'"

They want reassurance that the abuser was the one who did wrong and they are not in trouble

"No one ever said to us 'what he did was wrong'. They have to reassure children first, that you didn't have to have that happen to you, it's wrong."

"If they told you first before questioning you - what was right or wrong in a normal relationship."

"Don't go into your home with all guns blazing. They should say 'you're not in trouble – is there anything we can do to help you get back to school?' "

They want other big worries addressed

"What we needed was ...if they asked you first what your worries were about this coming out e.g....(your worries about) telling the police, being afraid of a parent, telling your mum, hurting your parent - whether they're the abuser or not, you still worry."

They need to be asked in settings where they are free to answer!

"They shouldn't ask in front of your mum if you want your mum to be there at the interview...what can you say?"

They want a neutral venue for the interview

"I was offered to be interviewed in my house or my school. I preferred my house - but obviously that wasn't satisfactory either! They should have a local young people's organisation or something."

18U: *"In our experience, young people can find police waiting at their home when they've disclosed to a teacher."*

*18U: "In our experience,
young people can find police waiting at their home
when they've disclosed to a teacher."*

They don't want the abuser informed till a later stage of investigation

"They shouldn't tell the abuser that you've told. If we knew that, it would make such a big difference. If they could fish for evidence first before they approach the abuser...and look back at all the signs and symptoms..."

They want more time before their confidence is broken, to be offered some choice and control, to know the authorities have thought things through

"It's taken completely out of your hands - that's why people don't tell in the first place."

"Slowing down the process would help a lot, although you'd still know they'd have to tell someone else in a week or two."

"The most important thing is that they don't go running (immediately) to tell someone. And that they give the child some choices."

Skylight: *"Time (to work with the young people, to give them enough space) needs to be built into services and costed in... the ability to build time in to think. Time for the child protection process, so that it isn't necessarily any slower, but it's more thought-through."*

They need teachers who are confident and well-supported, not nervous nor rigidly wedded to a narrow understanding of procedures

"One teacher was really nice, she asked to speak to me at lunchtime. I started to tell her but she couldn't (was not allowed to) deal with it. She had to pass it on. I was referred to another teacher who bawled and shouted. It makes you feel really bad - I never spoke to anyone again."

"I helped in a school a few years ago as an assistant, and there was a little girl of 9 who developed anorexia, she even spoke in graphic detail once, apparently about abuse. Yet we still weren't allowed to ask her anything. Her mum went off her head when the girl was questioned. We were told the child needed to speak (of her own volition) to two different adults... (NB please note this is incorrect). I thought it was awful, not being able to do anything for her."

Skylight: *"There needs to be proper supervision, and support for staff at a much earlier stage, to reduce anxieties. Staff are unsure what their roles are and what to do next."*

How not to do it! L's story

"Everyone found out in the middle of a biology class. The school phoned my parents and the police...they left me waiting in a wee room on my own. The guidance teachers were saying 'you should have told us L!' The car was at the front door, they drove through the playground...it was like the whole celebrity thing and like they were saying, 'don't look at her!' but of course everyone did."

When they put me to wait on my own in this wee room, nobody sitting with me, they (Catholic school) gave me a religious book to read. I had just been in the toilets, trying to kill myself, cutting my arms, that morning (after I had told). Then they give me an RE (religious education) book where one of the chapters says you could go to hell if you kill yourself!... I remember I kept thinking, I'm not going to heaven now! If instead, when you went in they started by saying it's great you told someone, it wasn't your fault and nothing you did was wrong...

"The guidance teacher looked at the towel round my arm (where I'd cut myself). She said I think you should go and see the school nurse and see the priest at lunchtime. The priest? They actually knew what was going on, yet I was just left in that room."

How to do it!

While the teacher below gave an exceptional time commitment which many people would not be able to offer, what matters most is the kind of empathy and understanding which she and her school showed:

18U: "We were contacted by a teacher about a young girl who had been raped. The teacher brought the girl to us regularly for support, and continued to support the girl herself. She asked us for advice and information and kept us informed when things were going 'pear-shaped'. The school was great about allowing the girl out when she was struggling - helping her to contact us and letting us go into school when the girl asked for her support worker.

This teacher went with the girl to the police to give a statement and continued to stay involved even after moving to another school. Over the course of nearly three years 'til the court case, this teacher stayed involved with us and the girl.

The court case was fraught, but a guilty verdict was reached. We went to court with her and the teacher was the first person she phoned when it was over. This girl has now moved on with her life and is doing well thanks to the support she received from school, teacher and 18 and Under."

18U: "We have very good experiences of some teachers, who are imaginative and thoughtful...like one other deputy head who was also the child protection officer for the school and was bringing kids here."

Skylight: "People let the girl (aged about 15) know what was happening. There was very much the impression of a team between the school and social worker. They were working together. She appreciated being informed at each step. They really thought before they acted - for example the girl's fear that Mum would be really angry at her and that this would make things even worse....so they spoke to the woman first about what her daughter needed her to do. The girl knew who was being told next.

"In another case, we were involved in a consultation. We met with the police, foster carers, people from the children's nursery...we were thinking about what the impact would be - this network continues now. Safety was secured through that. We ended up in court, the grounds were proven. The children were permanently removed from home.

We were brought in from early on when disclosures were made (the children were very young). We were called in to support the foster carers, nursery staff....there was so much emotion for the children, because they were so young. The planning was so good in this case. They had treatment from an early age. With very young children, working together like this may be easier, in that there is a general expectation that adults will take it all on board for the children."



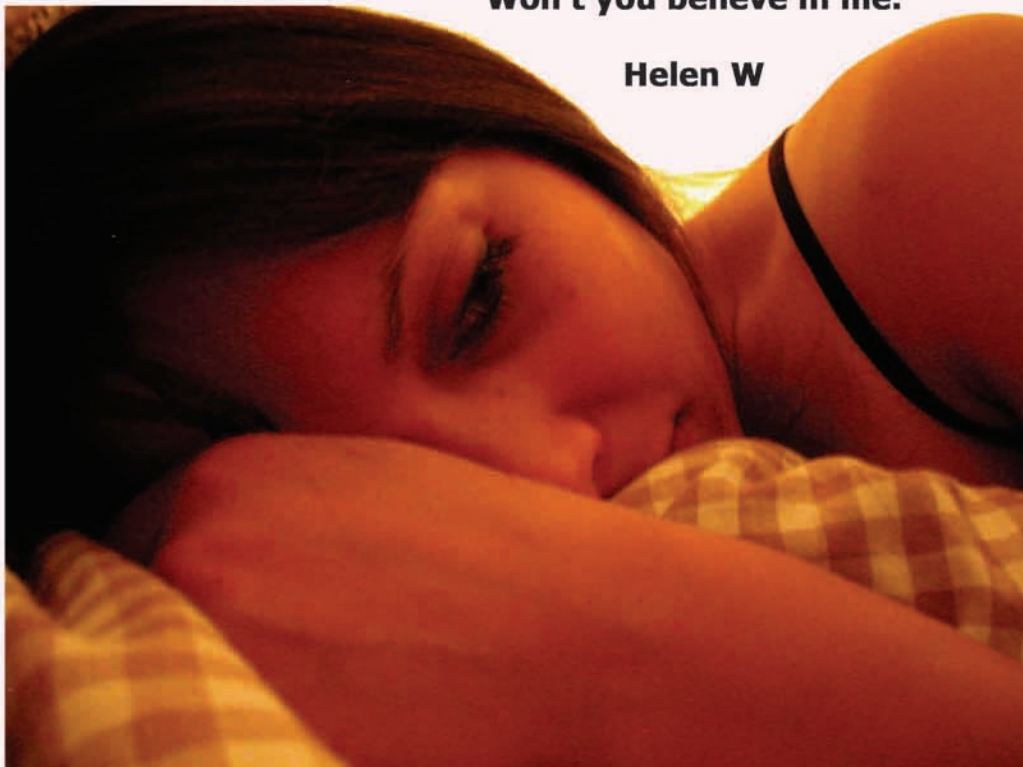
Questions to ask:

- Does your child protection training challenge unthinking prejudices about the kinds of people who abuse, or the kinds of children who don't tell the truth?
- Is the person selected as child protection co-ordinator in your school a kind, sympathetic and approachable person?
- Is your school interpreting child protection guidelines more restrictively than it actually needs to? Has it checked thoroughly whether it is making accurate assumptions about what types of questions or supportive behaviours are permitted?
- Could neutral venues for first interviews after an initial disclosure at school be piloted through co-operation with police, social work and a local young people's organisation?

Believe in Me

**Believe in Me.
Won't you please believe in me?
Am I such a complete failure, such a disaster?
That you can't see
How you can believe in me?
Please give me a chance
A chance to be
Won't you just believe in me?
Listen to me. Hear my side of the story.
Believe. Believe in me.
I'm human and I'm just like you.
With lots of broken down parts that
Can't function as well as yours.
But just like you
I need someone to believe in me.
I may not think like you, feel like you.
How can I after everything I've been through?
I still need you to believe in me
I've been used and abused,
Never been loved or cared for,
Won't you please believe in me?
There's so much more to me than you can see.
Believe in me,
All I seek is a little understanding,
Perhaps if you're willing a little loving.
Please,
Won't you believe in me.**

Helen W



CHAPTER 7

THE AFTERMATH OF THE CASE

Young survivors often find that there's not enough understanding of longer-term effects of abuse, and the need for good follow-up. Good practice can be simple acts of thoughtfulness rather than "rocket science" - for instance letting a girl leave class and go to the support base whenever she feels upset. This acknowledges that distress is often unpredictable.

Even after they're safe, many young survivors still blame themselves - sometimes right through adulthood. They still struggle with mixed feelings of shame, lack of self worth, guilt and confusion. At times this means that mood swings, self-harm, difficult or withdrawn behaviour, fearfulness and underachievement can continue for some time after the children have been protected from further abuse. We should all expect that this may happen, and does not imply that we have "failed" young people in some way.

Young survivors were asked:

What did thoughtful teachers and youth leaders do?

"I had a lovely guidance teacher who stayed in touch with me afterwards."

"I got a pass to go out of class whenever I felt upset, to go to the base."

"She didn't judge me, she understood the kinds of ways I would feel without me telling her...and gave me space even when my behaviour must have seemed weird and didn't make sense - even to me."

Skylight: "One fantastic guidance teacher who's also teaching the sex education course... she did it so sensitively, helping an abused girl to think about what healthy relationships were, and integrating the issues into her work... The qualities of really helpful people who spring to mind are that they are receptive - they don't recoil or judge, and they see change is possible."

But unfortunately many young survivors have negative experiences.

Young survivors want people to recognise that after-effects can be severe and lasting. Yet often children are seen as the "problem"

(After the case) "By the end of the 4th year (in school), the mental health stuff kicked in with me. The school assumed (wrongly) that I didn't want to be there anymore. No one picked up on it - that there was too much stuff in my head."

"I still felt I was the bad one because I went to school in a taxi. Other than that, they left me to it! You felt lost and scared. People look at you like you're a problem."

"Even a little bit of help then would have made such a big difference to my mental health, wellbeing, physical health, my view of the world and relationships...I still have huge big problems with men and my social skills are very underdeveloped."

Sometimes fallout from their family can come later on, and they need help to deal with it.....

"I assumed I'd be hated by my mum - that I was to blame - but she was supportive that day. Only later, it did disrupt the family, it always does. I found myself getting blamed for the most trivial things and she (my mum) would keep saying to me, 'after all our family's been through'..."

"If only I could have had someone to talk to, to get me out of the house and away from my family..."

They meet prejudiced assumptions about sexual abuse survivors...

"The laddies were more interested in me when they knew I was sexually experienced...when word of my abuse got round."

"People find out and you get shouted at, you get a load of (verbal) abuse."

Sometimes the help offered is inappropriate

"Two social workers came to see me (afterwards) then that was it. One guy only wanted to know when I wanted to see the abuser again. I kept saying 'don't you understand? I never want to see him again!'"

"I was offered counselling, but when I went in, she wanted me to tell her exactly what happened. I thought, no thanks! And left. Everybody else thought I was refusing help."

"People should realise you may be scared of men, and help you to deal with being around them."

Sally (below) had both helpful and unhelpful experiences in the way adults responded to her abuse.

Sally's story.

"I was abused when I was six, but the doctor and social worker decided not to do anything because it might cause me more harm. They were trying to protect me, but it would have been better for me to have talked about it because then I wouldn't have been so f---ed up afterwards....I'd bottled it all up."

I was depressed for years at school, and put myself in the victim situation - the bullying at school affected me more than the abuse.

When I was 17, they took my statement, which was fine, and the guy went to court - they were comforting, but otherwise after it, I was left alone. I tried to kill myself twice.

The first time I was referred to a community psychiatric nurse. He let me talk about everything else about the abuse, I put on a happy face. The second CPN was brilliant, like he could read your mind, didn't let me avoid it...he enabled me to talk about how I felt. He was like 18 And Under, he didn't take any shit from me!

"Now I'm not going to let my past get me down. I'm going to let it change my future. I am putting a scrap book together for other young survivors. I've put together material on the Internet - it really helps me if I write - other young survivors have got in touch with me and I'm so pleased about that."

Questions to ask:

- Does your child protection training include information about all the after-effects sexual abuse can have on children and young people?
- Are any supports available in your area for non-abusing parents, siblings and close friends?
- Do any community-based supports exist for the minority of especially distressed or damaged children?
- Might your school (or a consortium of local schools) be able to liaise with a local young peoples' organisation to give follow-up support?

Clues to the qualities such follow-up projects might have come from the questionnaires given to abused young people in 18 and Under. The project is widely used after abuse has happened - whether or not there's been a court case. Asked which features of 18 And Under they found most helpful, these are what young people listed most often:

- BEING FRIENDLY, LISTENING, CARING AND UNDERSTANDING ABOUT ABUSE
- BEING A STAFFED DROP-IN FACILITY, WITH NO APPOINTMENTS NEEDED
- HAVING STAFF WHO STICK WITH THEM OVER TIME
- MAINTAINING CONFIDENTIALITY, WHENEVER THIS IS POSSIBLE.

CONCLUSION

Childhood sexual abuse is a very difficult subject, both for young people who experience it and for adults whose task it is to support them. It's undoubtedly one of the most difficult types of child maltreatment to bring into the open and to address effectively. Staff need and deserve support - they need awareness-raising, confidence-building and information which is more than about learning guidelines by rote.

Some issues raised in this booklet suggest there may be a need for child-centred changes in the formal child protection system or in current legal processes, which it would be beyond the scope of any one profession to change single-handedly. One example was the issue of providing some confidential space after disclosure of abuse, in which protective action could be planned at a pace which gave the young person a bit more control. This change is supported by a wide range of children's organisations in Scotland and there would appear to be scope for accommodating it in Standard 3 of the Scottish Executive's Protecting Children and Young People: Framework for Standards, where professionals need to demonstrate they can "discuss issues in private when a child wants to do so". There is also scope in Protecting Children and Young People: the Charter, where one of the central messages is: "Respect our Privacy".

But there are many other changes which will be easier to make. Hopefully training can reduce insensitive, inappropriate remarks and responses, and challenge thoughtless prejudice. Suggestions which young people made to improve services - like having a quiet room set aside in a school, and publicity leaflets and posters in settings used by all children - could be piloted and evaluated.

In most cases, the changes suggested don't have significant resource implications. Rather, they're about different ways of working, different emphases in existing training courses and different ways of thinking about the needs of vulnerable children and young people.

It's encouraging that when young people praised helpful teachers and other adults, the qualities they appreciated weren't "rocket science". The adults praised were honest, thoughtful, empathetic, kind and imaginative in trying to make difficult and humiliating situations easier for children. Good practice consisted in careful listening and noticing, talking to children with respect, keeping children and support staff informed and involved, staying with them over time and letting them know they believed them.

...Why, when we think about it, should those very simple things be so difficult?

* * *

Note on organisations participating in this booklet

Pathway Project, Health in Mind, 40 Shandwick Place, Edinburgh EH2 4RT

Pathway, the main source of interview quotes for this booklet, offers up to two years of individual/group support to female survivors of sexual abuse over 16 in the Edinburgh area. It helps clients to find and maintain tenancies, offers help on practical, emotional and social issues, and runs a weekly drop-in centre with various activities and discussions. Pathway is now part of the wider Health in Mind organisation. Its work has now been expanded to include male survivors.

18 And Under, 1 Victoria Road, Dundee DD1 1EL

18 And Under, the main source of questionnaire information and staff experiences for this booklet, gives free confidential support and information to anyone up to 18 experiencing sexual, physical or emotional abuse. It offers face-to-face support, drop-in facilities, a self-injury project and telephone support. 18 And Under offers a high level of confidentiality to young people and gives advice and information to agencies who support young people.

18 And Under have developed prevention schemes for schools and communities (known as the VIP programmes - Very Important Person/Violence is Preventable), plus games and publications which encourage awareness about ways of keeping safe. They have publications on many aspects of sexual abuse for different age groups, and run training and conferences.

Barnardos Skylight Project, 27 Ocean Drive, Edinburgh EH6 6PL

Barnardos Skylight Project, whose staff gave their experiences for this booklet, offers individual counselling and therapy to young people, up to 18, who have been sexually abused. It also offers support to non-abusing parents. Skylight has a consultancy service for social work staff, other professionals and carers. It provides training courses and workshops and a resource bank of useful materials. Skylight usually becomes involved after a child protection investigation is completed, but professionals might get in touch halfway through a case.

USEFUL ORGANISATIONS, WEBSITES AND HELPLINES....

As well as the statutory links your school will have with social work, police, education and health, other organisations are often helpful to children and young people, and to staff looking for advice.

*Here are some examples – particularly for helpline numbers, for special issues or needs, and for minority groups of young people. There's not space to list the range of general support/therapeutic services which exist for child and adult survivors across the UK, but for your local area ask the national organisations below. **Directory and Book Services (DABS)** bookstore is also useful, www.dabsbooks.co.uk Tel 01709 86002. In Scotland you can also consult **the Register of Services for Scotland on Violence and Abuse**, WSP, 0141 552 2221.*

*** PLEASE NOTE!! * Many agencies below are not specific to sexual abuse, but deal with a wider range of issues.**

Aberlour Child Care Trust runs many services throughout Scotland for vulnerable children and young people, has carried out research on young runaways and runs a children's refuge in Glasgow. 01786 895007; www.aberlour.org.uk

Ann Craft Trust works against abuse of people with learning disabilities. Offers advice to professionals, parents, carers on 0115 951 5400; www.anncrafttrust.org

Breathing Space Scotland: A national helpline open 6PM - 2 AM for those with depression and suicidal feelings, especially males. 0800 83 85 87; www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk Careline (UK) 0845 122 8622.

Barnardo's runs many services throughout Scotland for vulnerable children and young people, including streetwork, abuse recovery and support services, (such as the **Skylight Project**) foster care, and work with young people who have abused others. Scotland:0131 334 9893 England:020 8550 8822 Northern Ireland:028 9067 2366 Wales:029 2049 3387; www.barnardos.org.uk

Base 75: Glasgow organisation that offers a non-judgmental accessible service to women involved in prostitution. 0141 204 3712.

Childline : Provides confidential help and advice service, and also offers staff training and consultancy. **Helpline:** 0800 1111. **Helpline for children living away from home, e.g. boarding school or residential care:** 0800 664444. Children can write to ChildLine, Freepost NATN1111, London E1 6BR or Childline Scotland Freepost 1111 Glasgow G1 1BR.. There are 11 regional centres throughout the UK. Details can be found on www.childline.org.uk

Child Protection in Sport Service England: 0116 234 7278; Scotland 0141 418 5674; www.childprotectioninsport.org.uk. Training, consultancy, model CP guidelines.

The Scottish Executive's **Child Protection Line** aims to help people share concerns about a child most appropriately. It will "transfer the caller to the most relevant

agency or provide details of who they should speak to next". Tel 0800 022 3222; www.infoscotland.com/childprotection/making-the-call.jsp

Children 1st (formerly RSSPCC) runs many services throughout Scotland including abuse recovery and therapeutic services, young people's rights service, advocacy, befriending, young carers, Parentline and family group conferencing. 0131 446 2300; www.children1st.org.uk (see NSPCC for England/Wales)

(Scotland's) Commissioner for Children and Young People. Promotes and safeguards the rights of children and young people living in Scotland. 0131 558 3733. Young person's freefone 0900 019 1179; www.sccyp.org.uk. England: www.childrenscommissioner.org Tel 0844 800 9113.

Domestic Abuse Helpline (UK) 0808 2000 247 (Scotland) 0800 027 1234. www.domesticabuse.co.uk

18 and Under : See these appendices for detailed description. Confidential service. 01382 206222. Young people's helpline 0800 731 4080; www.18u.org.uk

Enable Scotland works on behalf of people with learning disabilities and has many services across Scotland. National office 0141 226 4541; www.enable.org.uk. (England/Wales, see Mencap)

ECPAT (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children) 0207 233 9887; www.ecpat.org.uk

Ethnic Minorities Law Centre, Glasgow 0141 204 2888; www.emlc.org.uk

Hemat Gryffe Women's Aid : refuge support and information to ethnic minority women and girls experiencing domestic abuse or forced marriage; also assists abused women's children . 0141 353 0859; www.hematgryffe.org.uk. Women's Aid (England)'s website has an extensive list of support orgs. for different minority groups in England www.womensaid.org.uk

Internet Watch Foundation works with many agencies and the public to minimise the availability of child abuse images online. 08456 008844; www.iwf.org.uk

Mencap Major learning disability organisation for England and Wales. www.mencap.org; helpline, 0808 808 1111.

Mosac supports non-abusing parents, grandparents and carers of children who have been sexually abused. National helpline 0800 980 1958; www.mosac.org.uk

NCH runs many services throughout the UK for vulnerable children and young people including alternatives to custody, substance misuse, youth justice, mental health and young carers. Scotland: 0141 550 9010 England: 020 7704 7000 Northern Ireland: 028 9046 0500 Wales: 029 2022 2127; www.nch.org.uk

LGBT Youth Scotland works with and for young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people. 0131 622 2266; Youthline 0845 113 0005; www.lgbtyouth.org.uk

NSPCC Child Protection helpline and e mail service will give help and advice if you are worried about the safety of a child. 0808 800 5000. Asian child protection helpline: 0800 096 7719.

Open Road Project gives emotional support, advice and information to men and boys involved in sexual activity for payment. 0141 552 4789 or 07767 008 294.

Parentline Helpline 0808 800 2222. A helpline for parents on a wide range of issues, but also gives advice to other adults who are worried for safety/welfare of a child .

Pathway (part of Health in Mind) See these appendices for detailed description 0131 225 8508; www.health-in-mind.org.uk

Penumbra has worked extensively on self harm issues. Gives advice, training and consultancy, as well as support services and drop-ins on mental health issues for young people, e.g. Borders Youth Project. 0131 475 2380; www.penumbra.org.uk
National self harm network: www.nshn.co.uk

(The) Place2Be: Delivers services to children, parents and teachers in primary schools - gives children a place where they can express their feelings through talking, creative work and play. 020 7780 6183; www.theplace2be.org.uk

Rape Crisis has a network throughout the UK offering confidential support and help to women and girls, and staff training, and has a list of local centres. Some centres are also doing outreach work with both sexes in schools. Admin. Scotland: 0141 331 4180
England & Wales: 01782 221005 Northern Ireland: 091 563676;
www.rapecrisis.org.uk

Rape and Abuse Line (Highland area) for both female and male callers. Admin: 01349 865316. Helpline 0808-800-0123/0808-800-0122.

Respond for learning disabled people who have been hurt or abused. 0808 808 0700.

Roofie Foundation: Advice support and monitoring in relation to “date-rape” drug rohypnol. 0800 7832980; www.roofie.com

Roshni-No More Secrets raises awareness of child abuse in black and ethnic minority communities, gives support/advice to children young people and carers, also training and volunteering. 0141 433 4343; www.roshni.org.uk

SAFE- supporting survivors of ritual abuse. 01722 410889; PO Box 1557, Salisbury, Wilts SP1 2TP.

Safe Strong and Free Project (Highland) –a programme for pre-school children now offered to nurseries and playgroups throughout the Highland area. 01463 712669; www.ssf-project.org.uk

Save the Children run a wide range of services and campaigns on behalf of children, young people and families, including several projects with **Gypsy Traveller** communities. Scotland:0131 527 8200 England: **020 7012 6400** Northern Ireland: 028 90431123 Wales: 029 2039 6838; www.savethechildren.org.uk

Say Women (Glasgow) Housing support and other services for sexually abused young women, and an advice service for both young men and young women 16-plus. 0141 552 5803; www.say-women.co.uk

Scottish Child Law Centre. Advice, research and publications on any aspect of law and rights relating to young people. Helpline 0131 667 6333. Freefone for under-18s 0800 328 8970; www.sclc.org.uk

Shakti Women's Aid offers refuge, support, advice and information to black and minority ethnic women and their children . 0131 472399; www.shaktiedinburgh.co.uk

Skylight (a Barnardo's project) See these appendices for detailed description
0131 561 1464

Who Cares? Scotland speaks out for young people in care, who are looked after and accommodated in Scotland .It has branches across the country. 0141 226 4441; www.whocaresscotland.org

Trash (Tayside ritual abuse support and help) 01382 206222.

Voice supports people with learning disabilities and other vulnerabilities who have experienced crime or abuse. 0845 122 8695; www.voiceuk.org.uk

Victim Support runs many services including free and confidential advice (including criminal injuries compensation), a witness service and directory of local services. Scotland:0131 668 4486 England 020 7735 9166 Northern Ireland: 028 9024 4039 Wales: 02920 56 90 59; www.victimsupport.org.uk

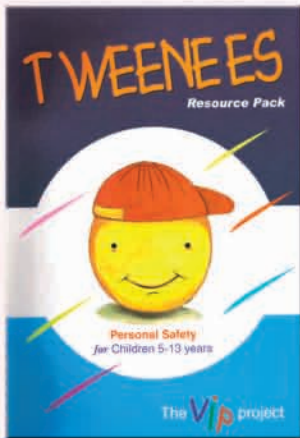
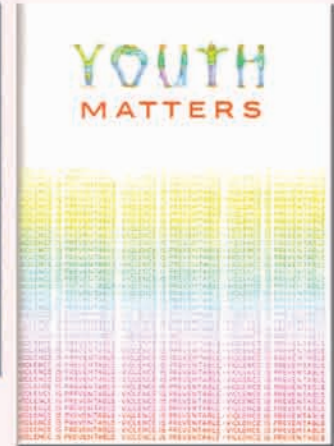
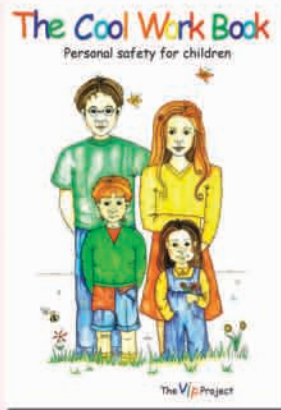
Women's Aid have many refuges and offices across the country and these often have Children and Young People's workers. For local and other info, Scotland:0131 226 6606 www.scottishwomensaid.co.uk England: **0117 944 44 11** www.womensaid.org.uk Wales: **0808 80 10 800** www.welshwomensaid.org Northern Ireland: :(028) 90 249041 www.niwaf.org

Youth Counselling Services Association. Confidential counselling to minority ethnic young people, mainly but not exclusively Muslim. Freefone 0800 917 1723.

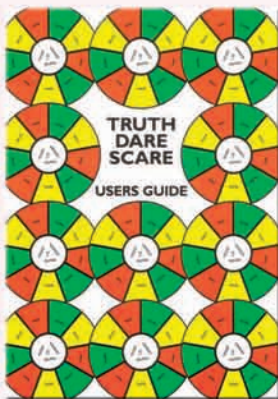
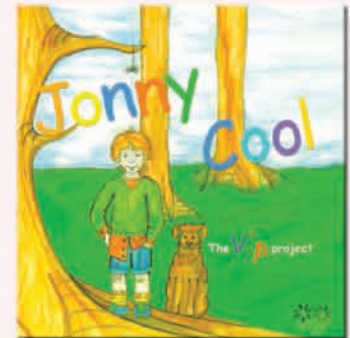
Zero Tolerance Charitable Trust produces primary and secondary school packs under the Respect initiative. Through games, activities and discussion they explore issues of equality, power, violence, gender stereotypes and offer positive choices about developing healthy relationships. 0131 624 8955; www.zerotolerance.org.uk

Organisations -please update/correct us on your info. if necessary!

18 AND UNDER PUBLICATIONS AND MATERIALS



VIP (Violence is Preventable) is a multi award winning abuse prevention programme for children, young people and vulnerable adults throughout the UK. The programme includes a vast array of resources for use with all age groups, as well as books designed to help anyone working with abuse survivors.



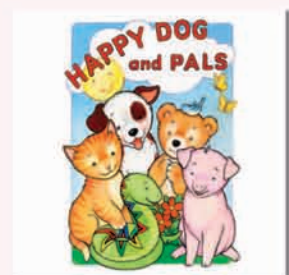
For pre-school children there are story books, a DVD and a fully photocopyable resource pack.

For primary age children there are novels, games, a DVD, workbooks and a fully photocopyable resource pack.

For teenagers there is a DVD, workbooks, novels, games and a fully photocopyable resource pack.

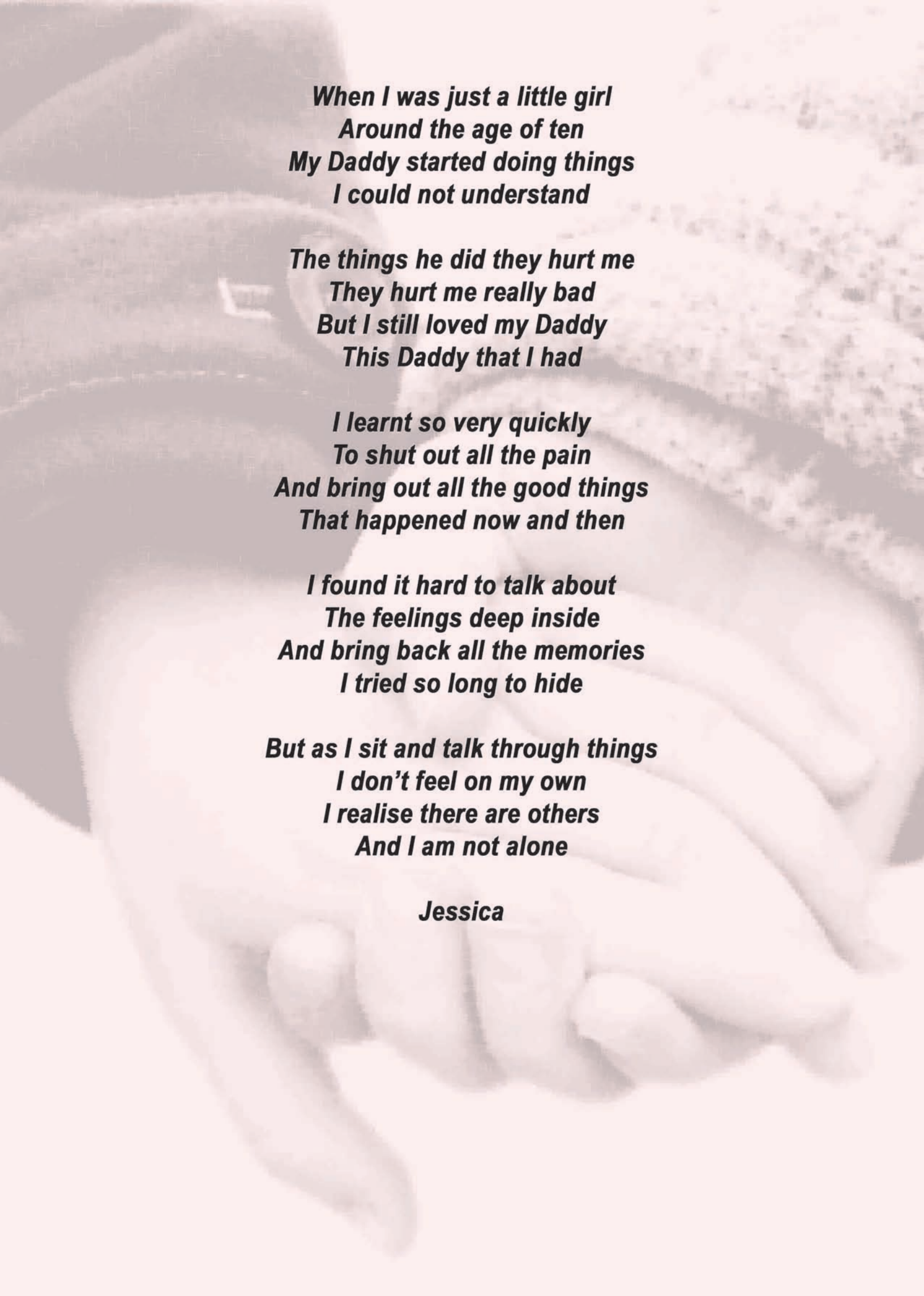
For teachers and agencies there are books on dealing with survivors of abuse and understanding all types of abuse, including ritual abuse.

For more information about all of these resources, visit www.violenceispreventable.org.uk, or call Eighteen And Under on 01382 206222.



NOTE ON THE EDITOR

Sarah Nelson is a researcher and writer who has published widely on many issues relating to sexual abuse of children, and adult survivors of CSA. She is a research fellow at the Centre for Research on Families and Relationships at Edinburgh University and formerly a senior research fellow at Dundee University. Sarah.Nelson@ed.ac.uk



**When I was just a little girl
Around the age of ten
My Daddy started doing things
I could not understand**

**The things he did they hurt me
They hurt me really bad
But I still loved my Daddy
This Daddy that I had**

**I learnt so very quickly
To shut out all the pain
And bring out all the good things
That happened now and then**

**I found it hard to talk about
The feelings deep inside
And bring back all the memories
I tried so long to hide**

**But as I sit and talk through things
I don't feel on my own
I realise there are others
And I am not alone**

Jessica

Funded by



*Supporting communities
nationwide*

“I cried all the time when I was nine. You are just waiting for one person to ask that question”.

School staff make a particularly valuable contribution to protecting the wellbeing of children, The time they spend together enables them to notice more than other adults can - and to observe changes over the years.

Yet many sexually abused children and teenagers currently go undetected throughout school. They find it very hard to tell adults directly what is wrong, sending oblique messages that are easily misinterpreted. Many adults also feel nervous or inadequate about tackling the subject of sexual abuse. Thus children continue to suffer harm that can cause distress throughout their lives.

The voices of sexually abused young people have rarely been heard directly. Now young survivors have helped to put together this booklet, and are quoted directly throughout. They want child protection in schools to be informed by their own views and experiences, and to give adults more confidence to deal with the issue.

The booklet aims to help staff understand the feelings, behaviour and needs of young people who have suffered sexual abuse; to create a safer atmosphere for telling; and to respond in child-centred ways throughout. It will be useful to school staff with a guidance or child protection remit, to all others who work in schools, to youth group leaders, staff and volunteers working with young people at risk, and members of child protection committees.



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GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION
CAMPAIGNE MONDIALE POUR LA PREVENTION DE LA VIOLENCE
PROJETOS PREVENCIÓN VIOLENCIA: ACCIONES PARA LA PREVENCIÓN DE LA VIOLENCIA

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