

Eighteen And Under



Sexual Violence

Abuse

What is abuse?

So what is abuse? Here is a list of some of the things which count as abuse:

- Witnessing your mum being beat up by her partner
- Someone flashing at you or making you touch them
- If your mum hits you all the time
- Being constantly told you are worthless
- Being raped
- Being neglected
- Sex talk or comments that make you feel bad
- Being left alone in the house for long periods of time (e.g. days)

None of these may have happened to you but you still may have been abused. Think of it this way, if someone has done something to you that feels wrong or bad, you have been abused. Remember you have the right to feel safe.

Watch out

Most abusers are not two headed monsters, nor are they strangers. Anyone who has more power that you do can be an abuser.

Sometimes abusers are really nice people that you know and trust.

Young people can be abused by anyone such as family, babysitters, relatives or neighbours, and many young people are abused by their boy/girlfriends.

Most abuse happens at home or in the home of the abuser and often you can be too afraid to tell anyone what is happening. Even if you do want to tell, you may not know who to trust, or you may feel that you won't be believed.

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It is important to remember that you belong to you, and no one has the right to do anything to you that you don't want. If someone touches, hits or makes you unhappy then it is abuse. It is their fault not yours.

It's Good To Talk

You must realise that absolutely no one has the right to hurt or frighten you, no matter who they are.

If you have been or are being abused and want help to sort things out in your head, there are places that you can go. You have a right to speak about what has happened to you and be believed.

If you feel able to talk to someone, and you do, you may be more able to deal with your feelings or even get help to stop the abuse.

If you want to talk but feel you have no one to talk to, you can talk privately and confidentially to a worker at 18 & Under. We won't tell anyone unless you want us to.

We can also contact other places for help if you want us to.

We won't tell you what to do, but instead will inform you and will support you no matter what you decide to do. We can help you to sort your head out.

Rape

Exploration

We are not going to tell you don't date or experiment! As everyone does it (including your parents!!!). Experimenting with touch and feelings is part of growing up.

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You will probably decide at some point to go all the way with a particular partner. This is fine, but do be careful about pregnancy and disease, so use a condom!

The important thing about sex is that you both want to do it. If you want to stop at any certain point you have the right to say, "Stop".

When you say "no" to a partner, he or she should listen to you and respect your limits. People can stop at any stage they want to.

Some partners will try to put pressure on you to sleep with them using all sorts of arguments. They have no right to do this, and if they really care about you, they won't do it.

Remember, it's your body and what you do with it is your choice.

If anyone forces you to do things you don't want to, then it's rape!

What's Inside

If you have been raped you will have many different feelings about it. As everyone is different we cannot tell you what you will feel, however here are some of the feelings people have experienced.

Fear: This is a natural reaction and can pass, speak to someone you trust about it.

Nightmares: Bad dreams may make the fear stronger. Talk to someone about it.

Lonely: You may find it hard to talk about your feelings, or may feel that there is no one to tell. People you do tell may not understand. It is important to remember that you are not alone!

Guilt: You may feel that it was your fault. This isn't true! Try to remember that the abuser is the one to blame!

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Anger: You have a right to feel angry about what has happened, but try to be angry with the abuser and not yourself!

Remember - Whatever your feelings they matter, and the YWC is only a phone call away.

Excuses Excuses!

Here are some of the excuses that abusers and the general public use:

- Men can't stop because if they do it damages them.
 - Men can stop if they chose to and it doesn't damage them.
- Wearing short skirts and tight tops is asking for it.
 - You have the right to dress the way you want and not be raped.
- If a boy takes you out, then he has the right to expect something in return.
 - You have the right to say "NO!" remember it is a privilege to take you out not a bargain.
- If you didn't struggle you wanted it.
 - Men are stronger and often women freeze, or are afraid to fight back.
- Rape isn't serious, its just sex when you don't want it.
 - Rape is a crime that affects women for a long time afterwards.

Getting Help!

Speak to someone you trust. This could be anyone such as a friend or relative or a teacher.

If the person you tell doesn't listen to you or understand you, keep telling until someone does listen.

There are people who can help you if you have been raped or sexually abused; people such as the workers at Eighteen And Under.

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We will listen and do our best to understand what you are going through, your feelings and problems.

We don't pretend to know all about it but anything we do not know we will try to find out for you.

We won't make your decisions for you but we will give you enough info to make an informed decision for yourself.