TIME OUT

A toolkit on ENDING Violence Against Children

Sexual Violence Is No Joke
# Youth Enhancement Services (YES)

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Introduction

In 2015, UNICEF partners received grant funding to build capacity of students, teachers and coaches to respond to child abuse. As part of this initiative, YES has developed a training toolkit to be utilized by YES and other organisations in Belize to reach children and youth with information on how to recognise and respond to different types of violence.

YES has incorporated its existing materials on sexual violence as well as UNICEF’s TIME OUT Campaign materials into a toolkit that will support the training of students, teachers and coaches involved in national and district level sporting competitions organized by the National Sports Council. While the toolkit addresses all forms of abuse, there is an emphasis on Sexual abuse and exploitation and non-violent conflict resolution.

The TIME OUT strategy focuses on providing children and youth with a space to express their suggestions for solving conflicts with positive and non-violent methods. One of the main outcomes of this toolkit is therefore increased skills in conflict resolution and empowerment of children, teachers, coaches and parents to respond to abuse and violence. The children participating in the sessions should feel empowered to say no, solve conflict and to report abuse.

When used by different organisations working to end violence against children in Belize, the toolkit will ensure that the information and messages disseminated are consistent and standardized. The Toolkit is divided into 2 sections: Lessons for upper division students and Information and activities for teachers and coaches. Lessons for upper division include an easy step by step activity guide for facilitators as well as printable scenarios and worksheets for children.

Information and activities for coaches are also organized in an easy step by step activity guide. Each session is complemented by a power point presentation as well as background information to assist facilitators in preparing for the sessions.
Recommendations for the Facilitator

Educating children about abuse can be a very sensitive issue for both children and facilitators. It is important that facilitators research and prepare thoroughly for sessions. It is always a good idea for facilitators to talk to teachers and other members of the community to learn more about the situation of violence in the community. This will ensure that they are aware of the experiences faced by children and will also help them to be more sensitive when giving examples or making references to situations of abuse.

Facilitators should ensure that sessions are conducted in a quiet place with no intrusions. Children need to feel comfortable and safe with facilitators and other students. Facilitators should ensure that ground rules are clearly established and that children are reminded of these rules at the start of every session. These rules such include privacy, confidentiality, respect when others are sharing, and respect for each other etc. The general idea is to ensure that an atmosphere of trust and respect is established.

Facilitators should take time to listen to children’s feedback and to engage children in participatory activities that will allow them to feel comfortable enough to share.

It is important to remember that activities and information during the session may prompt a child to disclose situations of abuse. Even though children won’t be directly asked about their experiences, they might remember something that has happened to them or want to tell a story. Being prepared for such an event is very important. Below are some tips on how to respond to such situations.

- Find a private place to talk with the child.
- Reassure the child that it is good to tell, you’re sorry if it happened, and you know it’s hard.
- Don’t be overly critical of the offender. The child may care for that person, regardless of what happened.
- Simply tell the child the perpetrator needs help, because what they did was wrong.
- Don’t promise not to tell.
- Tell the child you believe him/her.
- Don’t panic or express shock.
- Reassure the child that it’s not his/her fault, even if she/he participated with some willingness.
- Use the child’s vocabulary.
- Determine the child’s immediate need for safety.
- Let the child know what you will do, and what will happen when the report is made.
- Report to the proper authorities.
- Recognize your own feelings about abuse. If you do not, you might project them onto the child and harm the relationship.
- Talk at the child’s pace. Probing questions can cause anxiety and guilt for a child who seeks support and trust.
- If a disclosure occurs during a lesson, acknowledge it (e.g., “That sounds like something we should talk about – let’s do it after class, o.k.?“)
- It is best to present a lesson on preventing abuse before playtime or recess, so that you can talk with the child privately, if they come forward.
- Remember, your role is not to investigate the situation. It is your responsibility to report the abuse, set in motion the investigation, and be supportive of the child.
Section 1:

Lessons and Activities for Students of Upper Division
Pre and Post Test

Pre-test on violence against children

Answer True or False for each of the following questions:

1. If an adult slaps and pinches you this is a form of physical abuse. T or F
2. If an adult calls you mean names or hurts your feelings this is a form of emotional abuse. T or F
3. If someone gives you money or gifts to have sex with them this is a form of sexual abuse. T or F
4. If parents do not give their children food for 2 days this is a form of neglect. T or F
5. Children don't have a right to be protected. T or F
6. Children must keep abuse a secret. T or F
7. Most children are abused by someone they know. T or F
8. If a child is abused they should tell an adult they can trust. T or F
9. Children under the age of 16 can say yes to sex if they want to. T or F
10. If you are on Facebook and someone sends you a picture of their private parts this is a form of sexual abuse. T or F
Lesson 1: What is Abuse?

Introduction: Knowing more about abuse and the various types of abuse can help those in abusive situations recognize their need to get help, while others can use this information to help those in abusive situations seek help. This lesson focuses on identifying various types of abuse and signs of abuse.

Estimated Time: 40 Mins

Objectives:

Children will be able to:
1. Understand the concept of abuse.
2. Identify the 4 types of abuse that exist.
3. Identify ways in which violence can be addressed and resolved non-violently.

Materials Needed: flash card with the term abuse, flip chart paper, markers

Activities:

Activity 1: Place the word ABUSE on a flash card. Ask children to brainstorm for the meaning of the word abuse. Make a list on flip chart. Based on the list from brainstorming, explain to children what abuse is. Explain that there are different types of abuse: Neglect, Physical, Emotional and Sexual abuse (see information sheet at the end of lesson)

Discuss the different types of abuse with children and give examples.

Activity 2: Place children in groups and give each group a scenario (see scenarios at the end of lesson). Ask them to read scenarios and say if the scenario is describing abuse or not. Discuss why it is or isn't abuse. Have them say what type of abuse they think is being described.

Activity 3: Discuss with children some signs that they can look for in a friend, student or relative that may be abused. (see information sheet at the end of lesson 1).

Activity 4: Discuss with children some ways in which they think that violence could be resolved, or ways in which especially adults could act INSTEAD of using violence. Ask them how they think parents can help them learn and build a relationship of understanding, respect and love in different ways.

Use the scenarios of Thomas and Hilda as examples and ask the children to discuss in groups how they think the parents should have dealt with the situation instead. Explain that the groups will be given 10 minutes each to prepare and then come up “on stage” to present their ideas in a short acting skit. Allow for some time to discuss their plays afterwards.

Activity 5: Show TIME OUT videos on emotional abuse, physical abuse and neglect. Ask children to discuss what happened in the videos and identify the types of abuse.

Activity 6: Question Box: Pass around slips of papers to children and ask them to write any questions they may have about abuse. Take a few minutes to address some of the questions that they place in the question box.
Background Information for Lesson 1:

Types of Abuse:

**PHYSICAL ABUSE:** Any act which results in pain, trauma or injury to any part of a child's body. It includes all corporal punishment and all other forms of torture, cruel or degrading treatment. Corporal punishment is any punishing which is used or intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort. It may happen once or many times. It may include:

- smacking
- slapping
- spanking,
- shaking or throwing children
- scratching
- pinching
- burning

**EMOTIONAL ABUSE:** An attack on a child's self-concept and self-worth. It is a pattern of ongoing behaviour that interferes with healthy development. This includes all persistent harmful interactions with a child. It may take various forms including:

- verbal attacks, threats, humiliation, unrealistic expectations, rejection
- name calling, belittling, and hurting feelings
- inappropriate accusations
- cyber bulling
- corruption (allowing a child to use alcohol or drugs, participate in criminal activity)
- being ignored, isolated or restrained
- exposure to violence or severe conflict
- chronic exposure to alcohol/drug abuse

**SEXUAL ABUSE:** Comprises of any sexual activity imposed by an adult on a child. The inappropriate exposure of a child to sexual contact, activity or behaviour caused by anyone, including a parent, relative, friend, or stranger. It may take various forms including:

- any sexual touching or intercourse
- obscene phone calls or e-mails
- exposure to pornography or flashing
- sexual exploitation (engaging a child in sexual activities for exchange of money, gifts, shelter, food, etc.)
- trafficking, sale of children for sexual purposes, forced marriage
- using a child in pornography; luring a child via the internet for sexual purposes

**NEGLECT:**

**PHYSICAL NEGLECT:** Failure to meet the child's physical needs (adequate nutrition, clothing, shelter, health care and safety). This includes:

- Lack of supervision
- Lack of basic necessities, food, shelter, clothes, basic medical care
EMOTIONAL NEGLECT: Failure to meet the child’s emotional needs (affection and belonging), this may include:

- Chronic inattention
- Being psychologically unavailable
- Exposure to violence, drug and alcohol abuse

SIGNS OF ABUSE MAY INCLUDE:

- Hinting or talking out rightly about abuse
- Unexplained and/or repeated bruises or injuries
- Burns that leave a pattern outlining the object used to make the burn (iron, rope)
- Often being hungry, unsuitably dressed for the weather and/or always dirty
- Being left alone often as a young child
- Not wanting to go home,
- Being aggressive, angry or hostile,
- Appearing withdrawn or afraid, or appearing afraid of certain individuals
- Reacting with fear to sudden and rapid movements
- Difficulties concentrating
- Refusing to participate or dress appropriately for physical activities
- Showing unusual knowledge of sexual matters or acting out sexually
- Repeatedly running away from home
- Poor school attendance
- Overly sexualized behaviour or use of explicit sexual language that’s inappropriate for the child’s age
- Changes in sleeping patterns including frequent nightmares, difficulty falling asleep. Both may result in the child appearing tired or fatigued

SUGGESTIONS FOR CHILDREN TO DEAL WITH VIOLENT DISCIPLINE AND BUILD A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR PARENTS:

- Explain how violence makes you feel, put words on your feelings
- Ask your parents what different situations make them feel angry/upset and try to make a list together and find solutions and “rules” & “consequences” together for that don’t include physical or emotional violence..
- Suggest ways in which you would like to spend more time with your parents in ways where you both will have fun together.
- Make a list of situations when your parents feel that you are helping them in different ways, or when you make them happy and relax. This can help you do nice things when you know that your parents are sad or angry.
- Ask your parents to tell you how different situations make them feel so you can better understand each other, and try to agree that you will both do your best respect important feelings such as fear, worry or anger
Scenarios for Activity 2: Is this Abuse?

Scenario 1:

Andrea is in Standard 6. She likes Tom who is 17 and lives on his own. A few months ago, Tom began pressuring her to have sex with him. Andrea wasn't sure whether she wanted to, but Tom said if she loved him, that she should want to.

Sometimes Tom drinks too much and calls her names. Last week, Andrea decided to go ahead and do it. Now she's not sure she did the right thing because Tom wants to have sex all the time.

He never wants to go out any more, but instead tells her to come over to his place. Andrea knows that if she goes, she will be expected to have sex with him.

Andrea is afraid to talk to anyone about this because her family and friends do not know she has a boyfriend. She often tells her mother that she is going to study with her friends when she is really going to Tom's place. She doesn't talk to her friends about Tom because she believes they will think she is stupid. Andrea loves Tom, and doesn't want to hear bad things that are said about him.

1. Is this abuse?
2. If this is abuse, what type of abuse is this? Explain.
4. Does Tom have the right to treat Andrea this way? Why or why not?
5. What advice would you give Andrea?
6. What would you say to Tom to help him understand and change his ways?

Scenario 2:

Thomas is in Standard 5. He lives with his mom, dad and sister. Tom loves going to school and is doing well in school. Tom has chores around the yard that he is responsible for. One day before leaving for school, his mother reminded him to make sure he takes out the garbage before going to school so that the garbage truck can pick it up. Tom forgot to take out the garbage.

When they got home in the evening the dog had knocked over the garbage can and there was garbage all over the yard. Tom's dad was very angry that he had to always remind Tom to do the chores. He lashed Tom with a belt and sent him to clean up the yard.

1. Is this abuse?
2. If this is abuse, what type of abuse is this? Explain.
3. How do you think Tom feels?
4. Does Tom's Dad have the right to treat her this way? Why or why not?
5. What advice would you give Tom?
6. What would you say to Tom's dad?
Scenario 3:

Joey is 13 years old and lives with his mom. No one knows where his dad was. He and his mom moves around a lot. Most of the time, Joey’s mom has a boyfriend but she never stays with them for very long. Each time a new boyfriend starts to come over, Joey’s mom would ask Joey to go play with his friends until she goes to get him.

Whenever she breaks up with a boyfriend, Joey’s mom would lie on the sofa in front of the TV all day and all night. She would cry and tell Joey that men are no good. Joey is left to fix his own food and wash his clothes. Because they move a lot, Joey is always starting at a new school. Joey is very smart so he didn't have any problem paying attention in class and doing homework. He usually gets good grades. Sometimes the stress gets to him and he would miss school to sleep.

Sometimes he would try to find odd jobs like cleaning people’s yard, selling bottles and doing errands to buy food and the things he needed for school. He often misses school because of that.

Joey is beginning to think that he might as well quit school, move out and get a job.

1. Is this abuse?
2. What type of abuse is it? Explain.
3. How do you think Joey feels?
4. Does Joey’s mom have the right to treat him that way?
5. What advice would you give Joey?
6. What would you say to Joey’s mom to help her be better a better mom?

Scenario 4:

Hilda is a very bright student. She works hard in school and always gets high grades. Everyone likes Hilda and she has a lot of friends.

Hilda is not very happy at home. Her parents find fault with everything she does. They call her stupid when she brings home grades lower than 90 and do not give her anything to eat if she doesn't come first in class. They tell her that she will never be like her older sister who always comes first in class.

During the weekend and holidays when her friends and cousins are playing and taking a break from school, Hilda must stay inside reading and studying. Hilda likes schools and wants to be a doctor but she is hurt that her parents do not believe in her and calls her names to discourage her.

1. Is this abuse?
2. What type of abuse is it? Explain.
3. How do you think Hilda feels?
4. Do you think her parents have the right to treat Hilda like that?
5. What advice would you give to Hilda?
6. What would you say to Hilda’s parents to help them be better?

NOTE TO FACILITATORS: If children's' literacy level is low then it is recommended that facilitators do not place students in groups. Facilitators should read out scenario to them and then discuss.
Lesson 2: Sexual Violence and Exploitation?

Introduction: Sexual exploitation is the sexual abuse of children and youth through the exchange of sex or sexual acts for drugs, food, shelter, protection, other basics of life, and/or money. Sexual exploitation also includes involving children and youth in creating pornography and sexually explicit websites.

Estimated Time: 40 minutes

Objectives:

Children will be able to:

1. Discuss what is sexual abuse and exploitation
2. Identify ways to avoid sexual abuse and exploitation
3. Discuss what to do if they have or are being abused or exploited
4. Discuss that sexual abuse and exploitation can happen to both boys and girls.

Materials Needed:

Hush Little Baby- a story about Incest, flash card with the word exploitation

Activities:

Activity 1: Read the story Hush Little Baby from Sexual Violence is No Joke for children. Ask children if they think it is abuse and what kind. Discuss the story with children making sure to point out that the abuse was done by someone she knew and trusted. Ask them if they think Samantha should keep it a secret. Why not? Be sure to explain that even if someone is your favourite uncle or aunt or cousin etc. it is not okay for them to have sex with you. Discuss with children what Samantha must do.

Activity 2: Place the word exploitation on a flash card and ask children to read the word. Explain that when anyone (stranger or someone we know) offers us money, gifts, food etc. in exchange for sex it is called exploitation.

Explain to children that a young person cannot say yes to sex before the age of 16. Also emphasize that even if the young person is 16 or older they can be exploited.

Provide children with a handout describing some scenarios and ask them to give thumbs down if it is sexual exploitation and a thumbs up if it is not sexual exploitation.
Worksheet

Give a thumbs down if the scenario describes sexual exploitation and a thumbs up if it is not sexual exploitation

1. Your cousin tells you that he will buy you some ice cream if you help him to clean the yard.

2. Your uncle tells you that he will give you money if you let him touch your breast.

3. An older boy who lives on your street tells you that he will buy you food and drinks if you let him kiss you and touch your private parts.

4. The lady who sells tacos tells you that you are a handsome boy and gives you a dollar tacos for free. She says that you must study hard and do well in school.

5. Your teacher buys you a new cell phone and says that he will give it to you if you stay after school to keep his company.

6. Your stepfather tells you he will give you $10 if you let him come into the bathroom and take a picture of you while you bathe.
Lesson 3: Unacceptable Advances

Introduction: Data from abuse shows that the child who is abused often knows the abuser. This can include relatives (uncles, aunts, cousins, grandparents), step-parents, family friends or neighbours. However, there are also many cases of abuse by strangers. While it is difficult to tell children not to trust relatives or family friends, it is important to ensure that children know what are acceptable and unacceptable advances from strangers and from persons they know.

Estimated Time: 40 minutes

Objectives:

Children will be able to:

1. Identify different types of unacceptable advances
2. Discuss characteristics of abusers

Materials Needed:

Copy of Story “Tell, tell, tell”, flip chart , markers, handout with acceptable and unacceptable advances

Activities:

Activity 1: Share story of Anna with students (see story in information section). After sharing the story with children ask them to tell what they think of the story. What they liked? What they didn't like? How it made them feel? Etc.

Activity 2: Ask students to share what they think about what Anna’s uncle did to her. Why is it wrong? Brainstorm with students and make a list of other advances that are unacceptable. (see some suggestions attached). Discuss with children why this is wrong.

Activity 3: Who can be abusers and who can be victims?

Ask children to identify who can be an abuser and who can be a victim. Ask children if they think boys can be abused. Explain to them that an abuser can be anybody - be someone they know and trust or a stranger. Emphasize the importance of identifying the “cues” of unacceptable advances. Discuss with children who are people they know and who are strangers. Be careful to explain that this does not mean that everyone they know are abusers but they must watch out for unacceptable advances. Emphasize that both boys and girls can be sexually abused.

Show the Time Out Video on Sexual Violence and discuss with children.

Activity 4: Provide children with a list of acceptable and unacceptable advances and ask them to draw a sad face beside the ones that are unacceptable and a happy face beside the ones that are acceptable.
Background Information for Lesson 3:

Story: “Tell, tell, tell”

Anna is 11 and lives with her mother in Belize City. Anna’s favourite uncle is Uncle Carl. Uncle Carl always visits the house and brings lots of nice things for Anna. He brings her ice cream, chocolates and special toys.

Uncle Carl always hugs Anna and Anna sits on his lap. He tells Anna that she will never be too old to sit on his lap.

Sometimes when Anna’s mother has to work late or go out of town she leaves Anna with Uncle Carl. Anna loves staying with Uncle Carl as he allows her to watch TV late and to play games on his cell phone.

One day Uncle Carl came to pick Anna up from school in his new car. He told her that her mother was working late and so he will take her for a ride. He bought Anna her favourite ice cream and then took her to the park.

Anna had lots of fun. When they got to Anna’s house, her mom was still not at home. When they got inside the house, Uncle Carl held Anna’s hand and told her that she was getting to be a big girl now. Anna did not like the look on Uncle Carl’s face. He kissed her on the mouth and told her that she was beautiful.

Anna began to feel strange. She did not like the way Uncle Carl was touching her.

He told her that he would come and pick her up in his nice car the next day after school and take her to a special place.

Anna’s mother came home at that moment. She told Uncle Carl thanks for all his help. Anna said goodbye to Uncle Carl but was feeling confused because Uncle Carl never looked at her or kissed her like that before.

Some Unacceptable advances

Unacceptable sexual advances can include:

- Touching you on the breast, vagina, penis buttocks or any other body part
- Kissing you on the lips, cheeks, breasts, vagina, penis, buttocks etc.
- Inviting you to touch him/her on the chest, penis, vagina, buttock
- Placing his penis in your mouth, vagina or anus
- Asking you to place your penis in his or her mouth, vagina or anus
- Offering you money to do any sexual act
- Offering you gifts, food, or other material things to do any sexual act
- Calling or texting you to ask you to do any sexual act
- Asking you to take a picture or video of any of your private parts or of yourself naked
- Sending pictures of themselves naked or showing private parts
- Asking you to watch while they touch any of their private parts
Student Worksheet

Place a happy face beside acceptable advances and a sad face beside unacceptable advances

1. Your aunt or uncle pats you on the back.

2. A stranger on the street offers you $10 to come to his house with him.

3. Your cousin asks you if he/she can take a picture of you without your clothes on.

4. Your neighbour tells you he will give you a cell phone if you let him put his penis in your vagina.

5. Your stepfather kisses you on the cheek because he is happy that you got 100% on your test.

6. Your uncle gives you a hug because he is happy to see you.

7. Your neighbour asks you to send him a photo of your penis.
Lesson 4: Reporting Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

**Introduction:** It is important that children learn to tell someone they trust if they experience any unacceptable advances or if they are being abused. Often children do not tell because they are told to keep it a secret. Children must be taught that they should tell even if they are asked to keep it a secret because it is wrong.

**Estimated Time:** 40

**Objectives:**

Children will be able to:

1. Role play responses to unacceptable advances by abusers.
2. Identify adults they trust that they can tell.
3. Discuss what to do if they have been abused.

**Materials Needed:** Story from previous lesson, scenarios.

**Activities:**

**Activity 1:** Read story “Tell, tell, tell” from previous lesson to refresh children’s memories. This time use a boy, Michael, in the story instead of Anna. Ask them to brainstorm for some things they would do if they were Michael. Discuss these with them and ask why they would take such actions.

Explain to children that they must always tell someone they trust when they experience unacceptable advances or if they are abused. Help them make a list of people they can tell.

**Activity 2:** Explain to children that it is not always easy to tell because sometimes we are afraid or the person tells us to keep it a secret. Be sure to explain that sexual abuse is wrong and that they must always tell.

**Explain the concept of “Good Secrets and Bad Secrets”:** Explain that even if a child has promised to not tell a secret, there is always an exception to the rule for children if the secret makes them feel sad or uncomfortable, especially for different kinds of abuse that is happening to them or their close friends. Good secrets can be kept, but secrets that make us sad are bad secrets and have to be shared. Adults have the responsibility to protect children but can only do so if they know the facts.

Place children in groups and give each group a short scenario. Explain that they will practice telling if they experience an unwanted advance or if they are abused. Help children to frame responses and then have them role play their responses to the larger group.

Discuss the responses. Ask them to think of other ways they could respond.

**Activity 3:** Explain that some children (both girls and boys) are sexually abused. Explain that this is wrong and it is never their fault if they are abused. They should not feel ashamed. Emphasize the need to tell a trusted adult right away.
Background Information for Lesson 4:

Scenarios for Activity 2:

Scenario 1:
Your neighbour, Mr. John, comes over to the house and finds you alone at home. You tell him that your parents will be back in a few minutes. He comes into the house and starts kissing you and tells you that you are beautiful. Your mom and dad comes homes and he acts like nothing has happened. What will you do? Who will you tell?

Scenario 2:
Your older cousin is living with you because his mother went to the states. One day when you are at home alone with him, he takes you into the bedroom and forces you to play with his penis. He tells you not to tell anyone because it is your little secret. What will you do? Who will you tell?

Scenario 3:
One day when you and your friends are walking home from school you meet a strange man on the street. He tells you and your friends that he will give you $10 each if you go to his house with him. You promise to keep it a secret and not tell anybody. What will you do? Who will you tell?

Scenario 4:
Mr. Mark is your father’s friend. He drives a taxi. One day it was raining and your dad asked him to pick you up from school. While he is driving you home, he touches your legs and tells you that you are beautiful. What will you do? Who will you tell?
Lesson 5: How and When to Say No to Adults

**Introduction:** Children have been taught that they should obey adults. For this reason many adults are able to convince children to engage in sexual acts with them. It is important that children learn that they can say no to an adult when they are being asked to do something that is not appropriate.

**Estimated Time:** 40 minutes

**Objectives:**

Children will be able to:

1. Identify situations in which it is okay to say no to an adult
2. Practice saying no

**Materials Needed:**

**Scenarios**

**Activities:**

**Activity 1:** Share with children the story of Tom and the older boy at school. Ask students what they think about the story and what Tom should do. Ask them to share times when they did not like how they were been treated by someone older. How did they feel? What did they do?

Explain to children that sometimes it is okay to say no to people who are older than us. If they do not like how they are being treated or they do not like what an adult is asking them to do they should say no and tell someone they trust.

**Activity 2:** Share a few situations (not related to sexual abuse) in which children may want to say no to help them practice saying no (see some examples below). Ask children to say why they want to say no in those situations. Explain that it is okay to say no, even to an adult if they are asking us to do something we do not like or something that is not appropriate and wrong.

**Activity 3:** Share a short scenario about sexual abuse and ask children if it is okay to say no in this situation. Why? Discuss with children why they must always say no to sexual abuse even if it is an adult.

Share a few more scenarios and have the entire group practice saying no.
Background Information for Lesson 5

Scenario for Activity 1
Tom is in Standard 4. He is 10 years old but a bit small for his age. Everyday Tom is harassed by an older boy, Timothy, who is in Standard 6. Timothy teases tom, trips him when no one is looking and sometimes takes away his lunch money. Timothy tells Tom that if he tells the teacher, he will beat him up on the way home from school.

How do you think Tom feels? What should Tom do?

Scenarios for Activity 2
Melissa is 11 years old. She is in Standard 5. Melissa's mother works until very late so Melissa stays with the neighbour after school. Melissa does not like how she is being treated by the neighbour. She shouts at Melissa and allows her children to say mean things to her. Melissa knows that the neighbour is her mother’s friend and she does not want to tell her mother how she feels.

How do you think Melissa feels? What should Melissa do?

Misty is 11 years old. She is in Standard 6. The girls in her class say that after school they do not go directly home. They hang out with older boys from the high school down the street. They ask Misty to go with them after school. Misty does not want to go but she knows that the girls will call her names and will stop being her friend if she does not go.

How do you think Misty feels? What should Misty do?

Mario is 10 years old. Mario is in Standard 5. Mario likes school and is getting good grades. His mother is proud. Mario does not live with his father but he visits his home on weekends. Mario’s dad drinks a lot of beers. When Mario is there is gives Mario beers and tells him not to tell his mom because it’s their little secret. Mario does not like the beer. When he drinks it he feels sick and wants to sleep. He doesn’t want to tell his dad no because his dad says he is a big boy and big boys drink beers.

How do you think Mario feels? What should he do?

Scenario for Activity 3
Shanice is 12 years old. She lives with her mother and stepfather. One day when she is at home alone with her stepfather he tells her that she is getting to be a big girl. While she is standing by the stove, he comes over and touches her on the breast and tells her that she has nice breast. He tells her that if she allows him to touch her private parts he will buy her nice things when he gets paid. He tells her that it is their little secret and she should not tell her mother.

How do you think Shanice feels? Is it okay for Shanice to say no? Why? What should Shanice do?
Lesson 6: Consent

Introduction: Sexual violence is when a person is forced to have sex by another person. When a person doesn't express consent or say YES to sex or inappropriate touching, this is sexual violence. This is why it's important for everybody to learn that it is okay to say no. In Belize, a person under the age of 16 cannot say yes to sex. It is against the law.

Estimated Time: 40 minutes

Objectives:

Children will be able to:

1. Understand the concept of consent
2. Understand what the law says about consent
3. Use scenarios to demonstrate appropriate behaviour when consent is not given

Materials Needed:

Scenarios

Activities:

Activity 1: Facilitator will read a short story about Victor and Anna. Elicit from children the main events of the story. Place a flash card with the word consent and ask children to read it. Explain that Victor committed a crime because Anna did not give her consent to having sex with him. Elicit the meaning of the word consent based on the story.

Activity 2: Provide Children with the dictionary meaning of consent. Consent means: At the time of the act, there are words and physical actions indicating that both partners freely agree, and really want to do the same thing. Checking for consent is a process that each person needs to keep doing. Explain to children that when it comes to sexual activity, consent must be given or it is a crime. Discuss the list of sexual activity for which consent must be given.

Activity 3: Explain to children that the laws of Belize state that a girl or boy under the age of 16 cannot say yes to sex. Even if he or she considers the person to be his/her boyfriend or girlfriend and is interested in having sex with the person. Discuss the penalties for this.

Activity 4: Provide children with scenarios and have them work in groups to determine if consent was given or not. Have them share with class.

Activity 5: Have children complete My Values and Boundaries Worksheet.
Consent is words and actions that show that someone really wants to do what they are about to do. Consent is talked about in many different places, we sign consent forms to let doctors see our health information, we have consent waivers that say we agree to play on a sports team and abide by the rules of that team. When it comes to sexual and physical touch and activity there is no form to sign when we ask someone if we can touch them and so we have to be careful to make sure that we are very clear about what we want to do and if we have permission to do that with the other person.

This kind of consent applies to a wide range of sexual touch and activity including:

- kissing
- holding hands
- hugging
- touching or rubbing under or over clothes
- being fully or partially naked with or in front of each other
- sending fully or partially nude pictures (sexting) of ourselves or someone else
- All other forms of sexual contact

Each activity needs to have clear consent from each person involved every time.

If you want to touch someone or be sexual with them in a non-touching way, it is your responsibility to make sure you have the other person's consent. It is not the other person's responsibility to have to say no or yes once you start, though they have the right to do that or even change their mind part way through if they want. The responsibility of consent falls on the person who is initiating the touch or activity.

THE LAWS OF BELIZE

The Age of Consent in Belize is 16 years old. The age of consent is the minimum age at which an individual is considered legally old enough to consent to participation in sexual activity. Individuals aged 15 or younger in Belize are not legally able to consent to sexual activity, and such activity may result in prosecution for statutory rape or the equivalent local law.
Belize statutory rape law is violated when an individual has consensual sexual intercourse with a person under age 16.

Belize does not have a close-in-age exemption. Close in age exemptions, commonly known as “Romeo and Juliet laws” in the United States, are put in place to prevent the prosecution of individuals who engage in consensual sexual activity when both participants are significantly close in age to each other, and one or both partners are below the age of consent.

Because there is no close-in-age exemption in Belize, it is possible for two individuals both under the age of 16 who willingly engage in intercourse to both be prosecuted for statutory rape, although this is rare. Similarly, no protections are reserved for sexual relations in which one participant is a 15 year old and the second is a 16 or 17 year old.

**STORY FOR LESSON 6:**

**No Means No**

Anna is 16 years old. She is in first form of high school and doing very well. She wants to become a doctor. She likes Victor who is 18 years old. Victor is also in high school. He is in fourth form.

Victor walks Anna home after school every day. Lately, Victor has been asking Anna to have sex with him. He says that he has been waiting for a long time. Anna says that she is not ready yet and that she would like if they wait until she is a bit older.

Victor is not happy that Anna does not want to have sex with him. No one was at home one day when they reached Anna’s house after school. He asked Anna if he could come inside and she said yes. They talked for a while and then he began to kiss Anna. It felt good and Anna allowed him to kiss her. He started to take off her blouse but Anna said no. She didn’t want him to. Victor told Anna to stop acting like a little baby. Anna said no a second time. Victor told her that she was his girlfriend and girlfriends are supposed to have sex with their boyfriends.

Anna said she was not ready.

Victor pushed her onto the sofa and had sex with her. Anna was crying and asking him to stop but he did not stop. When he was done, he told Anna that he loved her and that she should not cry because he only wanted to show her that he loved her.

Anna was not happy. She did not like that Victor did not listen to her. He kissed her on the cheeks and went home. Anna was very confused. She liked Victor a lot but she was not happy that he did not want to wait and that he did not listen when she said no.
Scenarios:

Melissa is 17 years old. John is 19 years old. They met each other at a party. They were both drinking. Melissa got drunk after taking a few drinks. John offered to take her home. As soon as she got in his car she fell asleep. John had sex with her while she was sleeping. She woke up but didn't stop him because she was too drunk. When she realized what was happening she started to cry and asked him why he did that to her. He told her that she did not try to stop him so he thought it was okay.

1. Did Melissa give her consent?
2. If she did not say no, does that mean that it was okay for John to have sex with her?
3. Has John committed a crime?
4. What should Melissa do?

Mark is 15 years old. He likes Joan, a girl in his class. She is also 15 years old. One evening after school, Mark and Joan decided to have sex at his house. They both wanted to have sex with each other. Mark's dad came home and found them together. He was very upset and told them that he will call the police because they should not be having sex. Mark and Joan says that they did not do anything wrong because they both like each other.

1. Did Mark and Joan give consent?
2. Can Mark and Joan give consent?
3. Why can't Mark and Joan give consent?
4. What do you think will happen to Mark and Joan?

Lisa is in Standard 6. She is 14 years old. Her Uncle Harold is always buying her nice things. One day he buys her a really nice cell phone. He tells her that she is his favourite niece and that he will give her the cell phone if she allows him to kiss her and touch her breast. He promised her that it will not hurt and that he will stop if she said so. Lisa gave him permission to touch her breast.

1. Did Lisa give consent?
2. Can Lisa give consent to Uncle Harold?
3. Why can't Lisa give consent?
4. Uncle Harold did not have sex with Lisa. He only touched her breast. Did he commit a crime?
Test Your Knowledge:

1. It is legal for a 19 year old to engage in sexual activity with a 15 year old. T or F
2. A 21 year old can legally consent to sexual activity with a 13 year old. T or F
3. Consent means that the person said yes out loud. T or F
4. When a person says no, it is okay to convince them to say yes. T or F
5. 2 types of sexual activity you need consent for are:
6. Circle the situation below in which consent not possible:
   a. Both people are 15, they have talked about protection.
   b. One person is 16 and the other is 18
   c. One person is 24 and the other is 15.

MY VALUES AND BOUNDARIES

A value is a belief or feeling that is important to you and helps you make decisions. An important piece of consent is knowing what YOU want and don't want to do- which make it easier for you to talk to someone else about what they want to do and respect their boundaries and values. When you are in the heat of the moment sometimes your judgment may get foggy. Thinking about these things ahead of time will help us resist pressures to act in ways that don't fit with how we are thinking. Take a moment to think about what you value and how you can respect others!

1. What don’t I feel ready to do or want to try?
2. What do I feel ready to do or want to try?
3. These are some ways I can let someone know what I want to or don’t want to do:
4. These are some ways that I can ask someone else what they like:
5. If we don’t agree on what we want to do together, these are some things I can do or say:
6. I know it is important to never pressure anyone into something they don’t want to do. I can make sure I don’t do this by:
Introduction:

Many children are allowed to have a Facebook page, Instagram and other social media. While this activity might not apply to all children you work with, if you are aware that they are active on Facebook the material below can be shared and discussed with them.
Section 2:

Information and Activities for Teachers and Coaches
Session 1: What is Sexual Abuse and Exploitation?

Introduction: Data from the Ministry of Human Development shows that children 10-14 years are most vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation. Children develop relationships of trust with teachers and coaches. Therefore, teachers and coaches can play a crucial role in providing children with information to prevent abuse.

Estimated Time: 1 hour

Materials Needed:

Projector, screen, laptop, power point presentation 1, YES sexual violence is no joke ads for boys and girls, markers, flip chart

Objectives:

Teachers and coaches will be able to:

1. Define sexual abuse and exploitation
2. Understand the situation of child sexual abuse in Belize
3. Discuss how teachers and coaches can assist in prevention of sexual abuse and exploitation

Activities:

Activity 1: Present Power point 1, slides 1 to 17 to teachers/coaches. Ask them for feedback, especially on the situation. Ask them to share their experiences, if any, of situations of abuse that they have dealt with. How did they respond?

Activity 2: Ask teachers/coaches if they think they have a role in preventing sexual abuse. Ask them to brainstorm for ways in which they can help. Make a list of suggestions on flip chart.

Present power point 2, slides 18-22, to teachers/coaches.

Activity 3: Share Sexual Violence is No Joke, Ad for boys and girls. Elicit responses from teachers/coaches.
Background Information for Session 1

Child Sexual Abuse in Belize:

Child sexual abuse or child molestation is a form of child abuse in which an adult or older adolescent uses a child for sexual stimulation.

Touching and Non-Touching Behaviors

All sexual touching between an adult and a child is sexual abuse. Sexual touching between children can also be sexual abuse when there is a significant age difference (often defined as 3 or more years) between the children or if the children are very different developmentally or size-wise. Sexual abuse does not have to involve penetration, force, pain, or even touching. If an adult engages in any sexual behavior (looking, showing, or touching) with a child to meet the adult’s interest or sexual needs, it is sexual abuse. This includes the manufacture, distribution and viewing of child pornography.

A Gradual Process

Most often child sexual abuse is a gradual process and not a single event. By learning the early warning signs and how to effectively step in and speak up, sexual abuse can be stopped before it starts and a child is harmed. Adults must take the primary responsibility for preventing child sexual abuse by addressing any concerning or questionable behavior which may pose a risk to a child’s safety.

Commercial Sexual Exploitation

- Exchange of money or some form of gift given by EXPLOITERS in exchange for the ACT which the CHILD or ADOLESCENT performs.
- Goods is handed over to either the intermediary who facilitated the transaction or directly to the child who in return hand over to intermediary.

In Belize there are specific laws that respond to all forms of child abuse. These include:

- Child Abuse Reporting Regulations, 1999 – defines sexual abuse or exploitation
- Criminal Code Amendment – defines rape and criminalizes sexual assault, unlawful sexual intercourse, unnatural crime, incest

In Belize, the following trends are noted as it relates to the abuse of children:

- Chn ages 5-9 years are the most vulnerable for neglect, physical abuse and abandonment.
- Chn ages 10-14 years are the most vulnerable for sexual abuse including CSEC, emotional abuse.
- Chn ages 15 – 17 years are most vulnerable for trafficking.
- 90% of referred perpetrators are within the child’s family. The remainder are known to the child.
- Mothers are consistently the #1 most referred perpetrator of neglect, physical abuse, abandonment & emotional abuse.
- Fathers and stepfathers are the #2 most referred perpetrator of sexual abuse.
Session 2: Signs of Abuse

Introduction: Teachers and coaches can assist with identifying signs of abuse in children. While they may be unable to confirm that abuse is occurring, being aware of the physical and behavioural indicators of abuse will allow them to engage in relevant discussions with children to detect cases of abuse.

Estimated Time: 1 hour

Objectives:

Teachers/Coaches will be able to:

1. Discuss the different types of abuse
2. Identify physical and behavioural indicators of abuse

Materials needed:

Power Point 2, flip chart paper, markers, UNICEF Time Out Videos, Projector, laptop, screen

Activities:

Activity 1: Present power point 2 (slides 1 – 8) on the different types of abuse to teachers and coaches. The 4 main types to cover include; physical, sexual, emotional and neglect. Ask teachers/coaches to share their experiences with the different types of abuse in children they have worked with.

Share the UNICEF Time Out Videos on Physical and Sexual Abuse with teachers/coaches. Ask them to discuss what they think about the videos and what they can learn about sexual and physical abuse from the videos.

Activity 2: Place teachers/coaches in 4 groups and provide newsprint and markers. Assign one type of abuse to each group. Ask them to brainstorm and make a list of physical and behavioural indicators for the type of abuse assigned to the group. Ask each group to share their list.

Present Power Point 2 (slides 9-18). Discuss the physical and behavioural indicators of abuse that teachers/coaches did not identify during brainstorming.

Provide teachers/coaches with handout on the physical and behavioural indicators of abuse.
Background Information for Session 2

Signs of Abuse

Physical Abuse:

Physical Indicators:
Unexplained bruises and welt; Human bite marks; Bald spots, unexplained burns, rope burns on arms, legs, neck or torso; Unexplained fractures; Unexplained lacerations or abrasions

Behavioural indicators:
Wary of adult contact; Apprehensive when other children cry; Behavioral extremes: Aggressiveness or Withdrawal; Overly compliant; Afraid to go home; Reports injury by parents; Exhibits anxiety about normal behavior (i.e., napping); Complains of soreness and moves awkwardly; Destructive to self and others; Early to school or stays late as if afraid to go home; Accident prone; Wears clothing that covers body when not appropriate; Chronic runaway; Cannot tolerate physical contact or touch.

Physical neglect:

Physical Indicators:
Consistent hunger, poor hygiene, inappropriate dress; Consistent lack of supervision, especially in dangerous activities or long periods; Unattended physical problems or medical needs; Abandonment; Chronic Lice; Distended stomach, emaciated.

Behavioural indicators:
Begging or stealing food; Constant fatigue, listlessness or falling asleep in class; States there is no caretaker at home; Frequent school absences or tardiness; Destructive; School dropout; Early emancipation from family.
Sexual Abuse:

Physical Indicators:

Difficulty in walking or sitting; Torn, stained or bloody underclothing; Pain or itching in the genital area; Bruises or bleeding in external genitals, vaginal or anal areas; Frequent urinary or yeast infections; Frequent unexplained sore throat; Encopresis (involuntary soiling); Enuresis (inability to control urination).

Behavioural indicators:

Unwilling to participate in certain physical activities; Sudden drop in school performance; Crying with no provocation; Bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual behavior or knowledge; Anorexia; Sexually provocative; Poor peer relationships; Reports sexual abuse by caretaker; Fear of or seductiveness toward males; Suicide attempts; Chronic runaway; Early pregnancies.

Emotional Abuse:

Physical Indicators:

Speech disorders; Lags in physical development; Failure to thrive; Asthma, severe allergies or ulcers; Substance abuse.

Behavioural indicators:

Habit disorders (sucking, biting, rocking, etc.); Conduct disorders; Neurotic traits; Behavior extremes: Compliant, passive, aggressive, demanding; Overly adaptive behavior; Inappropriately adult; Inappropriately infantile; Delinquent behaviors.
Session 3: Teaching Children How to Tell About Sexual Abuse

Introduction:

Disclosing sexual abuse is difficult on so many levels. Children may have been threatened or bribed. They may be worried that the abuse is their fault and that they will get in trouble. They may fear that they won’t be able to live at home any more, that it will cause divorce or the breakup of a parent’s relationship, or that someone they care about will be put in jail. Confusion, shame, and fear are powerful and silencing feelings. And children may just not have the words, know what to say, or how to say it. We need to teach children the importance of telling, but we also need to teach them how to tell.

Estimated time: 45 minutes

Objectives:

Teachers/coaches will be able to:

1. Identify ways to help children disclose sexual abuse
2. Practice ways to help children disclose abuse

Materials needed:

Power Point 3, scenarios for teachers/coaches to role play

Activities:

Activity 1: Present power point 3 to teachers/coaches. Discuss each of the pointers on how to help children tell about abuse. Ask teachers/coaches to add any other pointers that has worked for them. Be sure to emphasize that telling is very difficult for children. Discuss some reasons why children may not tell and brainstorm for some tips to help children overcome these barriers.

Activity 2: Divide teachers/coaches into 2 groups. Provide each group with a scenario and ask them to role play telling. After the role play, discuss the experience. How difficult/easy was it to tell? Were they helped by the first person they told?
Important information to share with children on sexual abuse:

Identifying trusted adults, both in and out of school.

Children are often quick to rattle off a list of adult names, point out that just because you know somebody doesn’t mean you would want to talk to them about something uncomfortable. Ask them to give names of the trusted adult that they would tell. Make sure that it’s someone that they see regularly, and that any brothers/sisters/cousins they list are 18 or over.

Your body belongs to you and you get to say who touches it.

Your whole body; that includes someone wanting to hold your hand or lean their leg on you. Beginning the conversation with this concept is a great way to lay the groundwork for sexual abuse prevention lessons for children. Revisit the concept every year.

It’s important to let them know that occasionally a doctor/nurse (at their office/hospital) or parent might need to check their private parts if they have a rash, are having trouble going to the bathroom, or something is hurting them, but in that case it would be a quick thing and, although kind of embarrassing, would never be a secret. Even a doctor or parent has to ask for permission to see the private parts and explain why they are doing it.

The private parts of your body are the parts of the body that are covered by a bathing suit.

This is Straightforward and easy to remember. If parents are sensitive about discussing the correct anatomical terms with children then this is a safe way to approach the topic. However, if parents are okay with discussing anatomical terms then discuss with children the proper names for those private parts.

Older children or teenagers or adults who touch the private parts of a child’s body know that it’s wrong and they don’t want to get caught, so they try to trick children!

Children really get the idea of “tricking” and this is a good way to help them understand how grooming works. It also helps them understand that these situations are complicated and that someone might be an adversary without them realizing it. Incorporate the concept of tricking into your lessons. Give scenarios for them to respond to or role plays for them to act out. Say things like, “Hmm, I’m trying to think of a tricky one…” “This one is going to be really hard!” “Do you want a tricky one?” and, toward the end, “I can’t trick you guys at all!” At the conclusion of the class say to them, “You really know what to do if someone touches the private parts of your body or makes you touch their private parts! I tried really hard to trick you, but I couldn’t!”

No secrets about touching!

Let children know that if someone tells them to keep a secret about touching, that’s a clue to tell! Use the word “clue” because it indicates that abusive situations are often confusing and difficult to sort out. Give scenarios to the children that all have the same answer – “Tell an adult you trust!”
Here are a few examples:

What should you do if an older child or teenager or adult . . .

- Touches the private parts of your body?
- Tries to touch the private parts of your body but you stop them?
- Makes you touch the private parts of their body?
- Tries to make you touch the private parts of their body but you don’t?
- Tells you not to tell?
- Says they will hurt you if you tell?
- Made you promise not to tell?
- Gave you a present or money so you wouldn’t tell?
- Says it’s a special secret just between the two of you?
- Says that nobody will believe you if you tell?
- Says that you won’t be able to live at your house anymore if you tell?
- Says that all kids do this but none of them talk about it?
- Says that you will get in trouble if you tell?
- Did this to you a long time ago, but it’s not happening any more?
- It didn’t actually happen to you, but your friend told you that it happened to him/her?

Trust your yucky feelings. Let children know that if they are having yucky or uncomfortable or mixed up feelings, that’s a clue that they need to tell a trusted adult. Yucky feelings are your brain’s way of telling you that something is wrong or unsafe. Ask if they’ve ever had yucky feelings about something. Tell them that the brain sends a signal to the stomach and they will usually feel their yucky feelings in their belly. Ask them where they feel their yucky feelings.

Sexual (or physical) abuse is not your fault. This needs to be said over and over. It is hard for some children to grasp this concept, and you need to be quite specific about it. Give scenarios to the children that all have the same answer – “No!”

- Is it the child’s fault if someone touched the private parts of her body?
- Is it the child’s fault if someone made him touch the private parts of their body?
- Is it the child’s fault if someone touched his/her private parts or made them touch their private parts and...
  - The child didn’t tell them “No?”
  - The child promised that she wouldn’t tell?
  - The child kept it a secret for a long time?
  - The child didn’t try to get away?
  - The child took a present or money from the person who touched him?
  - The person who did it tells the child it’s his/her fault?
  - An adult the child tells about the touching says it’s the child’s fault?
  - The child wasn’t supposed to hang out with the person who touched them?
  - The child wasn’t supposed to be where the touching happened?
  - It didn’t actually hurt?
After a bit, children will notice a pattern and call out, “The answer is always no!”

The best way to stop sexual abuse is to tell a trusted adult about it. This is not a problem that children can solve by themselves and they need adult help. It doesn’t stop just because a child wishes it will stop. People who sexually abuse children often do it to more than one child. When a child tells about someone sexually abusing them they help themselves and other children that the person might try to touch.

If you tell but the abuse keeps happening, tell another trusted adult. Keep telling until the abuse stops!

There are lots of ways to tell. Encourage children to just take the first step.

• Say, “I have something to tell you but I don’t know how to say it”
• Draw a picture
• Write a note that says, “I need to talk” or “I need help”
• Write a note that tells the whole story
• Close your eyes or turn your back and tell
• Just tell what happened
• Use a puppet or stuffed animal to do the telling
• Start by just talking about the feelings you are having

Practice, Practice, Practice. Role playing is key if you really want to help children build skills. Have children practice telling an adult that someone touched the private parts of their body. Have them practice telling, verbally or by note, encouraging a friend to tell, and telling on behalf of another child.
**Session 4: Mandatory Reporting**

**Introduction:** Teachers/coaches are often reluctant to report cases of abuse for many reasons. Some fear attacks from adults, some are not sure of how to report, the perpetrator may be another teacher/coach/someone they know etc. Teachers/coaches need to be aware that reporting of all types of abuse is mandatory and that they can be charged for not reporting.

**Estimated time: 40 minutes**

**Objectives:**

Teachers/Coaches will:

1. Become aware of the law on Mandatory reporting
2. Become aware of how to report suspected cases of abuse

**Materials Needed:**

Copy of mandatory reporting form, frequently asked questions handout, flip chart paper, markers.

**Activities:**

**Activity 1:** Ask teachers/coaches if they have ever reported a suspected case of abuse. Ask them to share their experience. Why did they report? To whom did they report? What was the outcome? Any challenges in reporting. Explain to teachers/coaches that besides being a moral duty, reporting of child abuse is mandatory. Family members, health workers, social workers, education professionals and any other person working with children must report any suspected cases of child abuse.

Explain what the penalties are for not reporting.

Ask teachers/coaches to brainstorm and come up with a list of reasons why cases are not reported.

**Activity 2:** Share with teachers/coaches a copy of the mandatory reporting form. Ask them to work in pairs to review the form and become familiar with it. Provide handout on frequently asked questions and discuss these with teachers/coaches. Provide opportunities for teachers/coaches to express any other concerns they may have about mandatory reporting.
Frequently asked questions

How can I be sure that the child is being abused?

You can’t be! And you don’t have to be. The law doesn’t require you to be sure, it states that you must report if you have reason to suspect abuse or neglect. An investigation of the report will be done by the Police or the Department of Human Services. Your job is to help protect children by reporting any suspicions you have to the proper authorities.

I don’t want to meddle. It’s really none of my business.

Helping a child is not meddling. And keeping children safe is everyone’s business!

Abuse doesn’t happen to the types of kids in my class, does it?

Child abuse can affect all types of kids and all types of families. It crosses socio-economic, gender, age, religious and racial boundaries. Anyone can be affected by abuse and neglect, but anyone can be helped as well!

Can I report anonymously?

Yes, but it is helpful if you provide information so the social worker can contact you if he/she has further questions.

What happens after I make the report?

The social worker will assess your report to determine whether or not it meets the requirements for further investigation. If it does meet the statutory definition of abuse/neglect, a second assessment will be made to determine the level of risk. Lower risk situations will receive an assessment, and families will have the opportunity to participate in services. High risk situations will receive an investigation, and services may be mandated.

I have made reports, and I never hear back!

The disposition of a case is confidential, so it’s likely that a worker will not call you and tell you the outcome of a case. Often times they will involve you or other school personnel if the family has signed a release of information so that all involved parties can work together to help the child and family.

How can I address the parents after a report has been made?

It could be awkward if the parents are aware that you made a report. You can help minimize this by being non-judgmental and supportive in your interactions. Remind parents of your duty to report and of your concern for their child/children.