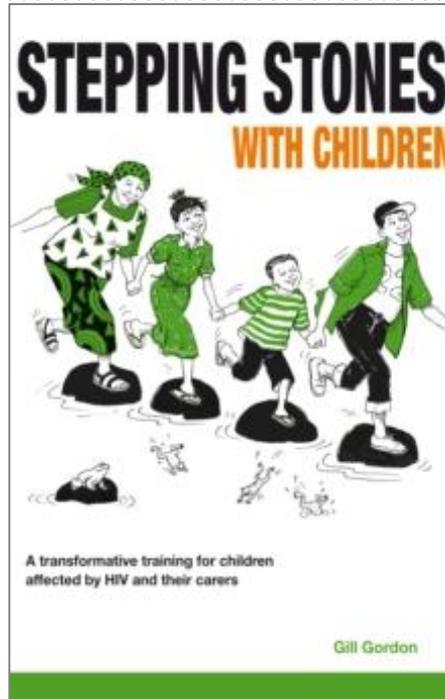


## Handouts for *Stepping Stones with Children*



This *Handout for Stepping Stones with Children* is to be used with the *Stepping Stones with Children* training manual published by Practical Action Publishing, 2016.

You can download this handout for free for use with this training manual from the [www.stepsstonesfeedback.org](http://www.stepsstonesfeedback.org) website.

On this website there are also many other resources to support you with this training manual and the original *Stepping Stones* training manual.

*Stepping Stones* and *Stepping Stones Plus* as well as *Stepping Stones with Children* are both programmes created and supported by Salamander Trust, [www.salamandertrust.net](http://www.salamandertrust.net)

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## **PROTECTING EACH OTHER FROM SEXUAL ABUSE**

Child sexual abuse happens in all countries and communities and involves people from all backgrounds. The person abusing the child may be male or female; they may abuse a child of the same or different sex as themselves; and they may be a peer of the child, an older child, or an adult.

### **1. Unsafe situations**

The situations in which children are abused vary, but they share common characteristics:

- Any situation where the abuse can happen *unseen by others or where people will not intervene* to prevent it;
- Any situation where children are alone with someone who has some kind of *power over them* increases risk. Power over the child links *to getting the child's silence*.

### ***The story of Kali***

Sarah and Kali were 8 years old and travelled to school together on the bus. It was often very crowded. One day a man told Kali to sit on his lap, so that more people could enter the bus. As the journey continued, the man started to rub his body against her and she could feel his hard penis against her private parts. He put his jacket over her lap and touched her private parts. Kali did not know what to do; she felt embarrassed and ashamed, and afraid that if she said anything people would not believe her and that the man would be angry.

*Questions:*

- What happened in the story? Was what the man did OK?
- What could Kali have done differently?
- What could the other passengers on the bus have done differently?

### **2. Caring, sexual, and confusing touches**

*Caring touches* are essential for bonding between children and adults and each other. They support a child's emotional and social development.

*Sexual touching* ideally gives pleasure, soothes and comforts, and can lead to intercourse and conception. If it happens with mutual consent between mature people who care for each other, sexual touch increases wellbeing, and strengthens bonding between sexual partners.

*Child sexual abuse* is when an adult touches a child in a sexual, harmful, and unwanted way, or has sex or sexual activities with them. It includes: exposing the genitals to a child or looking at a child's genitals; touching a child's genitals; making a child touch the adult's genitals or someone else's genitals; fondling the breasts and sexual kissing; having oral, vaginal, or anal sex with a child; showing sexual

magazines, pictures, or audio tracks or films, or telling sexy stories or jokes to a child.

Any type of sexual touching between an adult and a child is wrong. This is true even if the person says 'I love you' or the child loves them too, or they give the child presents. Sexual abuse is never the fault of the child, even if a part of them enjoys the attention and touching from a loved person. It is always the older person's responsibility to behave in a moral way.

#### **Is a touch caring or sexual? Questions to ask**

- How does the child feel? How does the older person feel about the child?
- What does older person say to the child? Do the words match the touching?
- Which parts of the body are being touched, and how?
- Why is the older person touching the child or asking the child to touch them?
- Is the child told to keep the touching a secret?

### **3. Effects of sexual abuse on children**

Sexual abuse of children can be very harmful to them. It can cause them to:

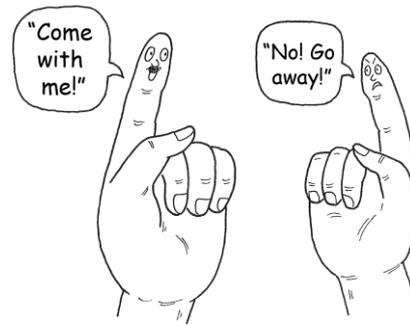
- feel sad and low, angry or withdrawn, dirty, guilty, and confused;
- have lower self-esteem;
- engage in risky sexual behaviour;
- have problems developing relationships for the rest of their lives;
- abuse others, or fail to prevent abuse as it may be normal to them.

However, if families, communities, and services believe children who report abuse, and love and support them as they grow up, they can survive the abuse and recover from these effects.

### **4. What can children do to protect themselves and each other from sexual abuse?**

- Know that it is wrong for older people to touch your body to give themselves sexual pleasure. Tell your friends and let adults know that you know your rights.
- Be assertive. You always have the right to say 'no' clearly and strongly to any behaviour which you do not want or like. This includes an adult or peer touching you, talking to you, looking at you, showing you something, or giving you something unusual to eat or smoke.
- Be alert to whether touches are caring, confusing, or sexual. If you are not sure, or are not sure what to do, talk to a trusted friend or adult.
- Watch out for danger signs, for example: if someone asks you to keep touching or sexual activities secret, or threatens you if you tell.
- Be careful about offers of favours or gifts for help with schoolwork or exams; the person may expect sex in return. Talk about the offer with a trusted adult and friend and do not be alone with the person.

- Say 'no' clearly and strongly to anyone doing something that makes you feel bad. Say that you will tell someone what they are doing. Practise this.
- Run away, or shout for help, so that others will hear you and come. Be prepared to make a big noise in order to protect yourself or someone else.
- Try to move in pairs or groups with friends, especially in places that you think are less safe because there are few people around or because it is dark.
- Some girls decide to wear clothes such as undershorts and trousers, which make it more difficult for boys and men to touch their genitals and give them more confidence. This is not to suggest that abuse is ever girls' fault because of what they are wearing.
- Trust your feelings about people: if you feel uneasy with someone, get away.
- Tell a trusted adult if anyone, even a family member touches you in a way you don't like, touches your private parts, asks you to take off your clothes, or talks to you about sexy things or having sex.
- If the first person you tell doesn't believe you, or tries to tell you it isn't a problem, tell another person, until someone takes it seriously.



## 5. What can caregivers and family members do to prevent sexual abuse of children?

- Be aware that children are at risk and be protective and above suspicion.
- Teach children that males and females can control their sexual feelings, that sexual abuse is violence and violence is wrong. Everyone has a right to say 'no' to sexual touching.
- Give children love and attention. If they feel sad and alone it is easy to seduce them with kind words, cuddles and promises.
- Talk about caring and sexual touches.
- With your children, make a list of five people that they can speak to if they ever feel scared or abused.
- Teach your children ways to respond to sexual approaches. You can practice together using puppets or toys.
- Talk to your children about their day, and ask them to tell you about one good thing that happened and one thing that they didn't like.
- Know the signs of sexual abuse and always listen to a child who reports abusive behaviour. Take it seriously and find out more about the situation.
- Keep your eyes and ears wide open so you recognize unsafe situations and abuse. Sexual abuse is often more common from family members and friends than from strangers. Children may hide the abuse if they are worried that the abuser may go to prison, or that the family would split up.
- Be aware of your children's safety when they sleep in the same room as others.

- Look at the things that protect your children and those that might be unsafe in your household and neighbourhood. Make a plan to keep the children safe.
- Talk with relatives, including males, about their roles as loving and protective family members. How you can work together to ensure that the children are safe and they are trusted.

## 6. Ways of responding to sexual approaches

**Flight:** Run away to other people or to a place to hide, if these are nearby and you can run faster than the abuser. Or jump up and shout, 'Ouch, I've got cramp!', to escape from the abuser's lap or arm without shaming or confronting them. Then move away fast.



**Fight:** Be assertive: tell the abuser that what they are doing is wrong, it is your body, and they have no right to touch you. For example: say 'Stop that! It is a sin and a crime' or 'If you touch me like that, I'll tell my mother/father/brother/teacher/the police.'

Shout and yell, and use your strength to hurt and surprise the person, and then run away. For example, poke their eyes, kick their knee or between a male's legs, or push the heel of your hand up and under their nose. This may work if you are big and strong, people can hear you, you are determined, and you have some fighting skills.

**Freeze:** Hide and keep absolutely still. Act as if you are dead or very sick. While pretending to be unaware, watch out for an opportunity to get away.

**Appease:** Try to please the abuser, calm them down, give them respect, or make them feel compassion. For example:

'When you touch me in that way, I feel very unhappy. I would be glad if you behaved in your usual wise and respectful way.'



Call forth their virtues of compassion or responsibility by crying, urinating, telling them about your dreams, the virtues of your religion, or asking them to imagine that you are their own child.