



# Continuum of Conversation

## Can I talk to you?



Talking to children about sexual abuse can be something we feel uptight about. However, it is also something that can help to create a healthy sense of development. Sexual Abuse does not only affect a person's physical, mental and spiritual well being, it also impedes on a persons emotional wellness.

### Age Appropriate Information:

This is the key to speaking to children regarding body safety. If you are able to speak to your child regarding their bodies and healthy development, the conversation might prove to be helpful for your child.

When discussing sexual abuse, please try to use the terms properly so as to allow your child to understand that it is okay to discuss these issues together.

You may wish to refer to the discussion as body safety as well so as to approach the topic as a healthy and positive issue.

Children are aware of the fact that there are bad things that can happen, sometimes they just do not have enough accurate information to understand the dynamics of such issues. It is up to adults and parents to provide accurate information to allow children to feel comfortable asking questions or talking about such difficult matters.

### What can I do?

- \* Talk to children in a calm manner, giving them the opportunity to ask questions.
- \* Name the private parts of the body with proper names, not nicknames.
- \* Teach children that stranger danger is a problem, but when you know someone, love them, trust them it is not okay for them to hurt you or tell you to keep bad secrets.
- \* Explain the difference between bad secrets and good and bad or confusing touches. Include information related to child abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. Explain that you can not always see the hurt from abuse such as through physical injury.
- \* 90% of the time children are sexually abused by someone they know and trust. Remember to explain to your child that if a friend has been hurt we may need to get help for our friend as well.
- \* Give your child specific examples of good or bad touch, "when someone hugs you too tight it might feel uncomfortable or when someone punches your arm you might feel bad, it is okay to tell the person to stop and get help from an adult."
- \* Talk to your children about internet safety and photography safety.
- \* Have your child make a list of who they can talk to and make certain to tell them if they ever need help they keep telling until they get help.
- \* Encourage your child's school to be proactive in body safety classes.
- \* If your Child ever discloses abuse, please remain as calm as possible.
- \* An adult's reaction may affect the child's process of healing and can effect whether or not the child retracts (takes back) their statement. Remember a child's retraction does not mean the child is lying.
- \* Do not ask a lot of questions, REPORT and get help immediately.
- \* La Piñon has a 24 HOUR crisis line. CYFD and law enforcement officials are available to take calls 24 hours a day.
- \* Reassure the child they did the RIGHT thing by telling.
- \* NEVER blame the child.
- \* Get counseling for the child and for your family.

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