

Why Don't Children Tell?

- ❖ They are afraid they won't be believed.
- ❖ They are afraid of getting into trouble themselves. They feel it is their fault and/or they caused the abuse to occur.
- ❖ They may fear threats made by the offender.
- ❖ They try to protect the offender. They may love the offender.
- ❖ Children may not know "how" to tell. They may not know correct words or may describe the situation in vague terms.
- ❖ Children may not know the sexual activity is wrong or even that it is something anyone would want to know about.
- ❖ Some children fear peer reaction – being singled out, laughed at.
- ❖ If it was sexual abuse involving a person of the same sex, they may fear being labeled a homosexual.
- ❖ Some older children are embarrassed to discuss sexual issues and intimate details, especially with people of authority.
- ❖ Some children don't know whom to tell.
- ❖ Children may not feel there was an "appropriate" time or opportunity to tell.
- ❖ They don't want to be labeled a tattletale.
- ❖ They have been told "nice girls/boys" don't use those words that refer to body parts or sexual behavior.

Why Do Children Finally Tell Someone?

- ❖ The molestation escalates in frequency or type of behavior and alarms the child.
- ❖ The child receives some sexual abuse prevention information and realizes that what has happened to him/her is wrong and should be reported.
- ❖ If the offender has told the child to keep the sexual abuse a secret, sometimes the child may brag or want to share the secret with a best friend, who then reports it.
- ❖ The victim's younger brother or sister is now at the age when the victim was first sexually abused, and the victim does not want him or her to be abused as well.
- ❖ The child reaches adolescence and fears pregnancy, resents the offender's efforts to control her or his life, dating, etc....
- ❖ The child encounters a caring adult he or she can trust and feels confident in disclosing to.
- ❖ The child has a urinary infection or other physical problem that causes him or her to seek medical care.