

“What should I do if a male child tells me he has been abused?”

1

Let him know that you believe him. Tell him:

- ▶ You understand there may have been no way he could have stopped the abuse when it occurred.
- ▶ You want to help him take care of himself and get the protection and support he deserves.
- ▶ You are open to hearing as many details as he feels comfortable telling you... and that it is okay to tell you in little bits and pieces.
- ▶ You will find him professional help as needed.
- ▶ You are not angry with him for what was done to him; in fact, you really feel good he is trusting you to tell you the truth.

2

Let him know it is not his fault, no matter what the abuser told him. Tell him:

- ▶ It is normal to feel responsible for the abuse. It is normal to feel ashamed, guilty, helpless, powerless, or angry.
- ▶ He is not responsible to protect the person who abused him.
- ▶ It is important for him to disclose who abused him so other vulnerable kids/adults can be protected.
- ▶ It is absolutely possible to heal from the wounds of this abuse with support and love and information.

4

Reassure him that you will do something about what he has shared with you.

- ▶ Understand that he may be afraid of what will happen next.
- ▶ Continue to offer active reassurance.
- ▶ Give honest feedback about realistic options for what may occur next. Do not offer false promises

3

Understand that he may feel immense loyalty to protect the abuser because they may have treated him in “special ways.”

5

Make a commitment to remain engaged with him throughout whatever comes next.



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Overcoming Sexual Victimization of Boys and Men

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