

HANDOUT INDICATORS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Physical Indications

- Bruises and/or hickeys on the face or neck area, groin, buttocks and inner thighs
- Sexually transmitted diseases and/or pregnancy
- Unexplained trauma, bleeding or pain in the genital area
- Burning during urination
- Vaginal discharge
- Abdominal pain
- Torn or stained clothing

Behavioral Indicators

- Fear or repulsion when touched by an adult or fear of a particular type of person or gender
- Excessive and/or compulsive masturbation
- Overt sexual acting out toward adults and/or stimulation of sophisticated sexual activity with children, animals or toys
- Knowledge of sexual matters and details of adult sexual activity inappropriate for the age or developmental level
- Fear of and/or refusal to undress for gym class or other activities
- Sexualized play, artwork, written assignments, language, etc.
- Sexual activity combined with violence
- Excessive layers of clothing, especially when going to bed
- Disturbances or sudden changes in sleep patterns including nightmares, fear of going to bed, bedwetting, difficulty falling asleep, etc.
- Relationship/intimacy problems and/or sexual dysfunction
- Child prefers to be alone; self-isolation
- Shutting down emotionally or behaviorally in the presence of a particular person
- Use of chemical substances (alcohol or drugs) to stop painful emotions
- Development of rigid and controlling lifestyle as an attempt to compensate for lack of control during the abuse
- Aversion to going home or running away from home
- Eating disorders
- Self-destructive behavior, risk taking
- Pseudo-maturity
- Criminal activity
- Fire-starting
- Any sudden, noticeable changes in behavior (acting out, drop in grades, changes in personal hygiene, regression)

Psychological

- Panic reactions/phobias/anxiety
- Depression
- Self-hatred, low self-esteem
- Shock/disbelief/denial
- Sense of unreality/dissociation
- Anger/rage
- Guilt/self-blame
- Feeling dirty or different; feeling that everyone can tell they are a victim
- Suicidal tendencies

(This material was excerpted and adapted from the Volunteer Training Manual at Sexual Assault Counseling and Information Services (SACIS) in Charleston, Illinois and used with permission)