

listen.



Our mission is to assure that the voices of children and adolescents are heard.



CornerHouse®

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CornerHouse Tips for Recognizing Sexual Abuse

Children experiencing sexual abuse may not be able to show or tell us that something is wrong. When children do exhibit signs that there is a problem, it could be that it's something else and not abuse at all. It's important to talk to a child when we have concerns, let them know it's okay to talk to us and keep the door open for the future in case the child just isn't ready to tell what is going on.

Some signs of abuse or other issues in *young children* may include:

- Problems sleeping
- Problems eating
- Frequent complaints of stomachaches or headaches
- Problems or regression with toileting
- Other regressive behavior, such as thumb sucking or temper tantrums that the child had previously outgrown
- Self-destructive or injurious behavior
- Fears and worries; may be specific to certain people or certain types of people (e.g. men, women)
- Fear of being alone/clingy behavior
- Impulsive behavior
- Acting out behavior
- Sexual behavior or knowledge that seems age inappropriate, that persists despite appropriate redirection, that appears obsessive or harmful or that occurs with anyone other than a child who is of similar age and functioning¹

Some signs of sexual abuse or other issues in *older children* may include:

- Truancy
- Running away
- Self injurious or self destructive behavior including cutting and suicidal thoughts or behaviors
- Eating issues such as anorexia or bulimia
- Substance abuse issues
- Depression
- Delinquency
- Promiscuity

Sexual abuse may show itself through multiple symptoms or a child who is being abused may show no apparent signs at all. There is greater cause for concern when multiple indicators are present and/or the child's functioning appears greatly impacted. Of course, the best way to know if a child is being sexually abused is if they make a report.

**** If you suspect a child you know is being abused, contact your local law enforcement or child protective services agency and see CornerHouse's Tips for Reporting Abuse for more information.***

¹ See <http://www.tcavjohn.com/products.php> for a more detailed explanation of children's normative and potentially concerning sexual behaviors

