
What Do I Do if a Child Discloses?

Reporting abuse is a responsibility. You can be anonymous, and don't have to have evidence. It's seen as a good faith call. Make calls to 703/324-7400.



Listen:

Don't fill in words for the child. If they are having a hard time talking, don't help with words that you think they are going to say. Don't ask probing questions. Let them share in their own words.



Tell:

TELL the child that you're glad they told you. And you believe in them.

"It was not your fault." Don't make promises about keeping it confidential or about the future.

At the end of the conversation – Reassure them that they aren't in trouble, and that it took a lot of courage to share.



Stay Calm:

Don't express panic and shock. Be careful of questions that start with W: who, what, where, when or why.

Don't be critical of the offender. Children are protective of people they care about, even if they are being abused.

Be aware of your feelings about abuse so you won't project these onto the child.



Report Immediately

Call police or child protective services immediately. You do not need IMMEDIATELY proof. You can be anonymous. It's called a good faith report to authorities. Please call 703/324-7400.

The only necessary information is the child's name, address and age, parent's name and address, and the nature of the abuse.

