

A close-up photograph of an adult's hand gently holding a child's arm. The child is wearing a colorful patterned garment. The image is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the hands.

Caring for Child Survivors Of Sexual Abuse (CCS) Training (Second Edition)



Caseworker Attitudes and Biases

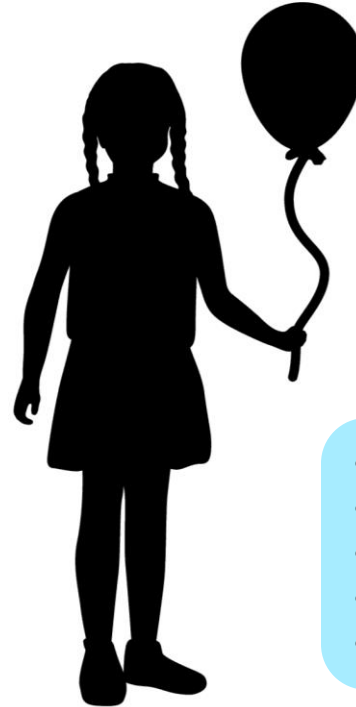
Module 3

Objectives

- To explore common attitudes toward child survivors of sexual abuse in the local context.
- To understand child-centered and survivor-centered attitudes.
- To become familiar with the CCS Attitude Assessment tool.

What do People Say to Child Survivors of Sexual Abuse?

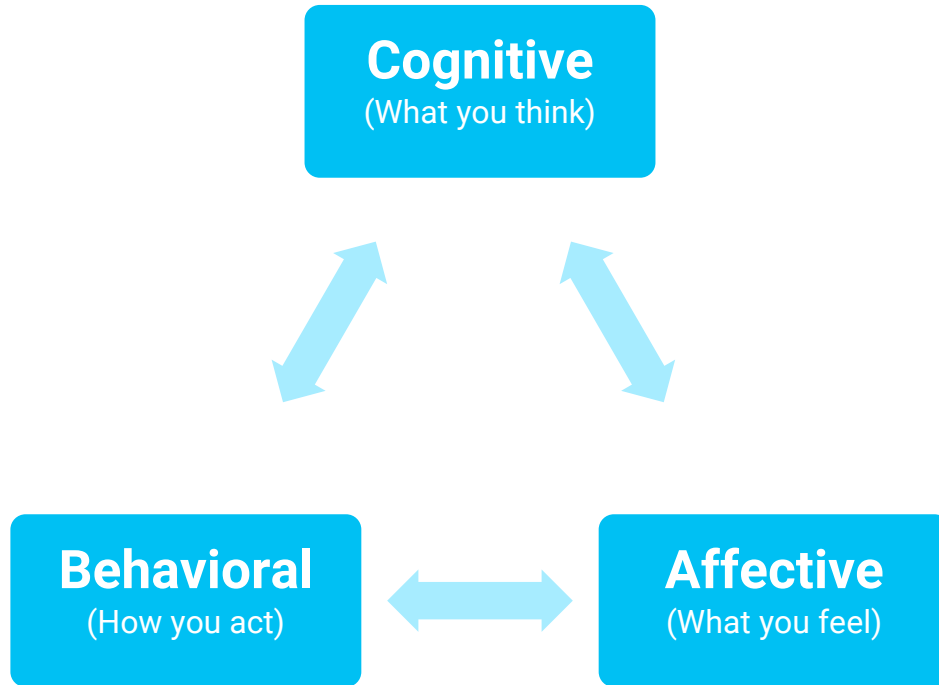
- Young girl survivor.
- Adolescent girl survivor.
- Young boy survivor.
- Adolescent boy survivor.
- Child survivor with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, and sex characteristics.
- Child survivor with disabilities.



- Family
- Friends
- Community leaders
- Service providers
- Religious leaders

What is an Attitude?

Understanding Attitudes





Agree, Disagree, or Unsure?

**Child sexual abuse is a
common problem.**

Agree

**Children lie or make up stories
about sexual abuse.**

Disagree

Only a stranger would sexually abuse a child. No one known and trusted by the family would do this.

Disagree

It is appropriate and necessary to talk about sexual and reproductive health and sexual abuse with children.

Agree

Sometimes girls are to blame for being sexually abused because of the way they dress or behave.

Disagree

**Adolescent boys can be
sexually abused.**

Agree

Child survivors should not be trusted if they cannot remember the details of the sexual abuse and recall them every time they are asked.

Disagree

If a man sexually abuses a boy, the boy survivor will become gay/homosexual.

Disagree

**A girl's value lies in her purity;
therefore, if she is sexually abused,
she no longer has value to the family
or community.**

Disagree

**Children who are sexually abused
might not show signs of physical and
emotional distress.**

Agree

If a child is sexually abused, they will end up abusing other children or be perpetrators later in life.

Disagree

**Community or religious leaders
should be involved in cases of
child sexual abuse.**

Disagree

Harmful Attitudes Lead to Harmful Behaviors

Belief/Attitude	Behavior
"Nothing happened to my child. She is lying for attention."	Denial
"This happens to many girls. She should be happy he finds her beautiful."	Minimizing
Avoiding to talk about the sexual abuse or keeping it a secret.	Remaining Silent
If a girl has begun menstruation, it does not matter if she is still a child. She can get pregnant and therefore is ready for marriage.	Justification
"She should not have been alone with the man. Why did she go with him?"	Victim-Blaming
"This doesn't happen often. Boys being forced into fighting happens so much more. We must focus on that."	Comparing Victimhood
We must not let girls attend school because they are at risk of sexual abuse there.	Reinforcing Harmful Norms

Moving towards helpful attitudes.

Child-centered Beliefs and Attitudes

- Children are resilient individuals.
- Children have rights, including the right to healthy development.
- Children have the right to care, love, and support.
- Children have the right to be heard and involved in decisions that affect them.
- Children have the right to live a life free from violence.
- Information should be shared with children in a way they understand.
- Children's behavior does not justify the use of violence against them.
- Children with disabilities have the same rights, including the right to education, as any other child.
- Children should not be criminalized nor treated as adults.

Survivor-centered Beliefs and Attitudes

- People have the right to live a life free from violence.
- Survivors are not at fault or to blame for the violence they experience.
- Survivors should not be stigmatized, shamed, or ridiculed for the violence they have experienced.
- Survivors speak the truth about the violence they have experienced.
- Survivors should not be forced to disclose or report their experience to anyone.
- Survivors have the right to make their own decisions about their care and about their lives.
- Survivors can recover and heal from their history and experiences of violence.

Foundations for Safe Attitudes: Child Sexual Abuse

Core Knowledge Areas

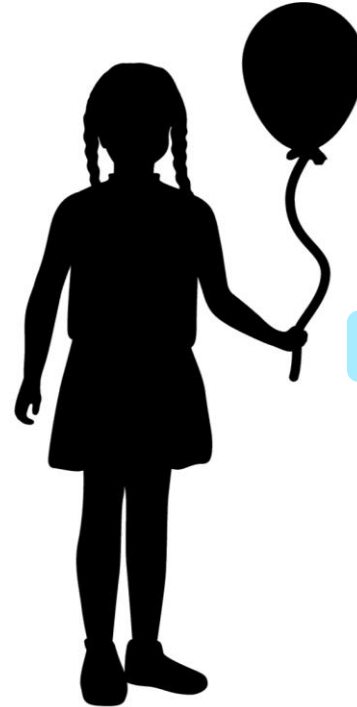
- Definition
- Scope of the problem
- Perpetrators
- Disclosure
- Gender
- Age/developmental stage
- Intersectionality
- Risk and protective factors Supporting non-offending caregivers

Self-Awareness/ Reflection

- How clearly we understand our own beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors.
- Taking time individually and in supervision to think about our interactions with the child survivor and non-offending caregiver and be curious about the thoughts and feelings that came up for us that may have affected our service delivery.
- Identifying and working to change harmful beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors.

What should Caseworkers Say To/Do with Child Survivors?

- Young girl survivor.
- Adolescent girl survivor.
- Young boy survivor.
- Adolescent boy survivor.
- Child survivor with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity/expression and sex characteristics.
- Child survivor with disabilities.



CASEWORKERS

Child Survivor-friendly Beliefs and Attitudes

- Child survivors are resilient.
- Child survivors can recover and heal from sexual abuse.
- Child survivors are not at fault for being sexually abused.
- Adolescent survivors are not adults and need support, care, and safety too.
- Child survivors need reassurance that their feelings and reactions are normal.
- Child survivors have the right to privacy. They should be given the opportunity to decide how they tell their story and to whom.
- Child survivors tell the truth about sexual abuse.
- Adults have the responsibility to help child survivors heal.
- Child survivors should not be stigmatized, shamed, blamed, or ridiculed for their abuse.
- Child survivors, including girls, need safe spaces and activities with peers, not restriction.
- Child survivors need to understand what happened to them and the services that are available and accessible at an appropriate level for their age and development.

Actions toward helpful Attitudes

- Get curious about your personal values, beliefs, and attitudes.
- Identify different forms of oppression faced by child survivors of sexual abuse.
- Recognize and acknowledge how gender and age impact child survivors' experiences and comfort in case management.
- Discuss thoughts and feelings towards child survivors in supervision and ask supervisor for feedback and support.
- Allow child survivors and non-offending caregivers to voice their opinions and state their needs and actively listen to them.



Key Messages

- Caseworkers must reflect on their personal attitudes towards child survivors and non-offending caregivers.
- Caseworkers' attitudes towards child survivors and non-offending caregivers will directly impact service delivery.
- Caseworkers must have child survivor-centered attitudes to help child survivors recover and heal.
- The core child sexual abuse knowledge areas service as a foundation for child survivor-centered attitudes.
- Caseworkers must continually work towards child survivor-centered attitudes with the support of their supervisors.

Questions?