Sexual Abuse Prevention

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Prevalence

- In 2010, over 60,000 individual children were reported.

- Sexual abuse is
  - < 10% of all child maltreatment
  - Appears to be on the decline
Myth: Stranger Danger

Facts: Most offenders are known to the child; they are often adults in positions of authority.
Prevention

- What to tell kids
- Tips for parents
- Tips for youth serving organizations

Acknowledgement: www.enoughabuse.org, a CDC-funded project of Massachusetts Citizens for Children.
3 rules for kids

1. Adults shouldn’t be interested in your private parts.
2. Adults never need a child’s help with his / her body.
3. Adults should never tell a child to keep something secret from their parents.
What to do?

- Tell your mom or dad
For Parents

- Encourage your child to talk with you
  - You are a special person and deserve to be treated with love and respect.
- Support activities in group settings
- If child is in one-one activities (ie mentoring)
  - Its OK to drop in unexpectedly
  - Encourage meetings in public places
  - Sign up with an organization that monitors
For youth serving organizations

Adult Behavioral Signs

- Prefers the company of children / teens to adults
- Has a special friend among the children
  - Gives child gifts for no particular occasion
  - Finds ways to be alone with a child
  - Encourages child / teen to discuss sexual feelings
- Ignores cues rejecting touch (hugs, kisses, tickling)
- Doesn’t respect child’s privacy
Identification

- Typical presentation is nonspecific
  - Physical irritation
  - Somatic complaints
  - Behavior changes

- Warning signs:
  - Reluctance to be with a particular person
  - Having gifts – money, clothes, music
  - Reluctant to give details about what they do together
Myth: Doctors or NPs can tell if a child has been abused by physical exam

Fact: Most abused children appear normal
Reporting

- Reporting is based on *suspicions* – not *certainty*
- Ask for referral to a child advocacy center
  - Forensic interview
  - Forensic exam
  - Child friendly environment
Factors that indicate need for quick evaluation

- Recent sexual contact
  - May be able to collect forensic evidence
- Child still exposed to alleged perpetrator
- Family crisis
Summary

- Steps for prevention
- Identification is difficult
- Reporting is required