



Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is any sexual experience that is imposed on a person by another or others. Sometimes it's really obvious like forcing someone to kiss, touch or have sex when they don't want to. Other times it's more subtle like showing pornography, talking 'dirty' or rubbing up against a person. Sometimes it can be disguised as a game as part of washing or affection which can be very confusing. The main thing that defines abuse is that it is not done to meet the needs of the person that it is being done to.

Common things that people who've experienced sexual abuse say:

It was my fault
I should have done something to stop it
I enjoyed it – that makes me bad
I feel so dirty and disgusting now.
I want to make this experience go away
I hate sex.
I hate my genitals/breasts/body/ I want to cut the abuse out of me
I am going to have sex with anyone now.
I can't tell anyone, they will hurt me even more

As you can see it's very easy to be confused and traumatised through sexual abuse.... but it is important to know that:

- * It is **never** the fault of person who was abused.
- * Even if your body responded or you liked the attention in some way, it can still be abuse.
- * If someone is threatening you with more violence if you tell, it is really important that you get help rather than live your life in fear.

If you are under 18 you can call [childline](#) and if you are over 18 you can call [here](#)

What if it's my parents or my boyfriend / girlfriend who are abusing me?

Sadly it is quite common for abuse to happen within relationships and families. It is very important that you do talk to someone else about this and it takes a lot of courage to do so. If someone is hurting you in any way, even if they say it's because they love you it is not ok.

People who hurt others need help and people who are being hurt need support. If you are or have experienced sexual abuse from anyone you can get support [here](#)

Even though sexual abuse can be devastating, it is possible to get over its affects. Many people say the most important thing has been to talk about what's happened to help break the secrecy and let out any hurt and shame.