

Child Abuse

Listen, Respond, and Act When a Child Discloses Abuse

LISTEN



- Check how they are feeling about their safety
- Respect the fact they may only tell you some details
- Be calm, patient and listen carefully to what they are saying
- Acknowledge their feelings and that it can be hard to talk about
- Let them tell you in their words what happened and how they felt
- Give them time to talk about what has happened from their point of view



RESPOND



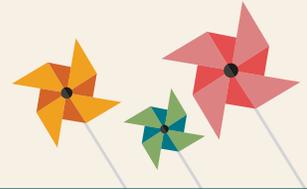
- Respond empathically, objectively and use supportive language
- Acknowledge their feelings and that it can be hard to talk about
- Let them know you want to protect them and what you plan to do next
- Ask open questions like: What happened? How does it make you feel? How often does it happen?



ACT



- Write some notes about what they have told you
- Contact an appropriate authority or child protection service listed below
- Tell them if you don't know an answer and say that you'll find it out for them
- Tell them that you'll need to talk to someone whose job it is to keep them safe



Words a child needs to hear

- “I believe you”
- “You're brave for telling me about it”
- “I want to help you be safe”
- “What's happened is NOT ok”
- “What's happened is NOT your fault”
- “You're not alone”
- “I'm here for you and will support you”
- “You've done the right thing telling me”



What to Avoid

- Filling in the story
- Asking too many questions – *leave the investigating and fact finding to trained professionals*
- Expressing anger about the alleged abuse
- Confronting the alleged abuser
- Making promises you can't keep
- Pressuring the child for information
- Questions that infer blame

