

Myths about child sexual abuse

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Child Sexual Abuse
is not as common as
people make out!

- ◆ 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6-8 boys.
- ◆ this is only the tip of the iceberg.. many children never tell

Girls are more at
risk of CSA than
boys..

- ◆ The two studies conducted in India itself found the prevalence of CSA higher in boys.
- ◆ boys may find it difficult to reveal CSA due to cultural stereotypes

strangers
sexually
abuse
children..

- ◆ 80-85 % of the offenders of CSA are known to the child.
- ◆ girls are more likely to be abused at home and boys more likely in the community.

CSA occurs only
in certain
communities/
cultures/ classes

- ◆ It occurs in all communities, culture and social classes
- ◆ it can happen to any child

CSA occurs
only in
dysfunctional
families..

- ◆ Families do not abuse children; individuals do.
- ◆ CSA can occur in any family, even the functional ones.

child sexual
abusers are
monsters..

- ◆ ' Monsters do not get close to children.. nice men do !'
- ◆ majority of abusers present themselves as kind and caring people.

Child sexual
abusers are
easily
identifiable..

- ◆ these abusers
come from all
classes, ethnic bg
and ages
- ◆ they appear
normal
- ◆ they are seen as
the pillars of the
community

child sexual
abusers are
mad, sad or
bad..

- ◆ this myth is dangerous as it tends to remove the responsibility from the abuser
- ◆ majority are normal
- ◆ only a small percentage has mental illness

all child sexual
abusers were
sexually abused
in childhood..

- ◆ only some paedophiles have history of child abuse.
- ◆ this myth leads to the belief that only those who have been abused are capable of abusing.
- ◆ majority of survivors do not go on to abuse.

only gay
men sexually
abuse boys..

- ◆ majority of child sexual abusers are heterosexual

women do not
sexually abuse
children ..

- ◆ 20-25% of CSA is perpetrated by women
- ◆ children under 5 years of age are most at risk

CSA is always
violent..

- ◆ it can be violent, but the way in which it is carried out does not always physical violence
- ◆ majority of CSA is conducted through deception, coercion, manipulation and subtle brainwashing of the child.

CSA never involves
pleasure for the
child..

..or if it gives
pleasure to the
child it is not CSA.

- ◆ sexual arousal during
CSA could be normal
physiological
response - does not
mean that child
wished to be abused.
- ◆ using arousal abusers
manipulate the child
into believing that
he/she wanted the
sexual contact.

it is not child
sexual abuse if
the child has
consented..

- ◆ child is not capable of knowing what they are getting into or the consequences of that behaviour.
- ◆ it is submission, not informed consent.

child
pornography is
like adult
pornography and
is harmless..

- ◆ in adult pornography there is consent, child is unable to give consent; it is an act of CSA
- ◆ abusers use it to normalise CSA, they encourage the child to look at it to desensitise and 'give evidence' that it is normal for children to have sexual contact with adults.

preschool children
are not at risk of
being sexually
abused..

- ◆ a 3rd of victims are b/w 12-18 yrs, a 3rd b/w 6-12 yrs and a 3rd are below 6 yrs of age.
- ◆ abuse of preverbal children decreases risk of disclosure
- ◆ abuse from very young age: the child may feel that this is normal

children are
sexualised by the
media and fashion
industry, making
them more
vulnerable to CSA

- ◆ most paedophiles like innocent, vulnerable children; those who are stereotypically childlike in their appearance and dress.
- ◆ since nowadays girls as young as 7-8 years may dress in sexualised fashions or wear makeup; there is a trend to abuse younger, more childlike children.

parents and
adults should be
able to tell if a
child is being
sexually abused..

- ◆ many abusers
groom parents as
well
- ◆ parents cannot be
all knowing and
ever watchful
- ◆ responsibility of
protecting children
lies with all adults.

counsellors and
child-protection
workers lead
children to make up
stories about CSA

- ◆ most professionals in this field are acutely aware of not contaminating disclosure, and do not prompt.
- ◆ this myth leads to continued disbelief of survivors of CSA, people working for their welfare are marginalised and discredited.