



# Every Child Has the Right to be Free from Sexual Harm

## EVEN IF THEY ARE BEING HELD IN CUSTODY/ SECURE FACILITIES

### What are we talking about?

All people held in secure facilities (detention, residential placement, lock-ups, jails, prisons, etc.) have the legal right to be free from sexual harm including, but not limited to, sexual exploitation, coercion, sexually harassing words, phrases, gestures, touching; rape and all other sexual acts whether performed willingly\* or not).

(\*There is an imbalance of power whenever someone is held in custody that does not allow for the possibility of legal consent.)

Sexual harassment and abuse, in any form, can have long-term, traumatic impact.

If you even think something isn't quite right, and there might be any possibility that your child (or someone else's) may be at risk of sexual harm...

**REPORT IT!**

Saying something could make a BIG difference.

Federal law requires facilities to investigate all allegations.

### It Can Happen to Anyone...

Unfortunately, sexual harm happens at both male and female facilities, by other youth residents and staff.

Often times, predatory grooming tactics are used to manipulate others into thinking that they're "friends" or in a "relationship". People do not always realize the impact of what's happening to them.

**It is wrong... it is an abuse of power.**

There is zero tolerance for sexual activity of any kind:

**"No" means no; and "Yes" is not allowed.**

Reporting sexual harm is the right thing to do!

Holding people accountable for causing sexual harm to others is NOT snitching !

The abuse needs to stop; awareness of the real problem is the first step.

No one should ever feel badly for making a report of sexual harm.

You can make a report (for your family or others) by contacting the facility

PREA Coordinator:

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or the

PREA Compliance Manager:

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You can also reach out to individuals who are not directly connected to the facility:

- Ombudsperson:
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- Your child's lawyer
- Counselor or Community Advocate

# “How Would I Even Know (if my child was being sexually harmed) ?”

## Pay Attention to Any Changes in Behaviors

- Do they seem more anxious or fearful than usual?
- Do you notice that they act differently around certain people?
- Are they more withdrawn, less talkative or responsive than usual?
- Are they showing anger, lashing out or being aggressively silent for no reason?
- Are they overly interested in or being flirtatious with staff?
- Are they questioning their sexuality?
- Have they denied or refused visits?
- Have they stopped making phone calls home?
- Do they seem unusually happy or content with their current situation?

## Talk to Your Loved One; Ask Questions



- How are you feeling? -
- Do you feel safe? Is anyone threatening or hurting you?
- Did something happen? Is anyone touching you inappropriately?
- Have you been sexually abused?
- Do you ever feel like hurting yourself or others?
- How are you able to call me like this?  
(if it's late or if the calls last longer than usual)
- Why are you getting special privileges?  
(extra calls, longer visitation hours, special food or clothing)

## Look for “Red Flags”:

- Changes in personal appearance, like weight loss, poor personal hygiene/ not showering; body shaming
- Scars and bruises on hands, wrists or arms (could be signs of self-harming)
- Talking about death
- Irregular body language: excessive sweating; little to no eye contact or looking down a lot; rocking back and forth; fidgety, wringing hands, tapping fingers, legs shaking; slouching in chair
- Talking excessively about a specific individual from facility (staff or youth)
- Extra attention to physical appearance and attire
- Unprofessional interactions and conversations with staff
- Little interest in being released

### KEEP IN MIND:

Facilities are required to provide support for individuals who report abuse and protect them from retaliation.

Victims of sexual harm who don't get the resources they need may struggle with extreme emotional, mental health and behavioral issues even after they come back home and the abuse has ended.

Victims can be triggered and retraumatized; and many have resulting anxiety, depression, and/or substance abuse issues. The pain can last a lifetime.

Reports can be made anonymously (you don't even have to give your name).

Staying quiet might mean that it happens to someone else.

# What Happens Once a Report Is Made?



Once an allegation of sexual harm is made, regardless of who is making the report (victim, family member or other third party), even if it is made anonymously, the facility is required to inform its designated investigators.

The facility response must include access to victim advocates and emotional support services; and ensure the safety of victim and reporter and protection from retaliation.



No cost emergency medical treatment, including emergency contraception and treatment for and protection from STDs must also be provided.

Notification must be made to agency leadership, parent/caregivers; and, if a resident of a youth facility, to their attorney, as well.



Alleged victims must be monitored and provided follow up services for at least 90 days .



Designated facility investigators will work to collect evidence and determine whether or not the allegations are substantiated, unsubstantiated, or unfounded.



Resident must be informed of the outcome of the investigation . Substantiated cases MUST BE referred for prosecution.



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## “What Else Can I Do to Support My Child?”

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**Most importantly, continue to pour love into them.**

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### Additionally, you can:

- Create a safe space for them through your time together on visits, and during telephone and virtual video calls together.
- Show compassion and listen to your child.
- Be patient...don't judge or push for answers.
- Validate their experiences and let them know that you believe them and believe in them.
- Work with them to identify positive coping skills.
- Emphasize self care.
- Talk about strategies that may help your child protect themselves, like creating a distress (code) word with your child.
- Encourage your child to participate in counseling and support services\* (both within facility and in community when they come home).
- Get connected to a family support resource (community organization, church, positive peer group, etc.)
- Advocate for a facility change.

\*Your loved one is entitled to therapeutic support services, inside and outside of facilities, even if they move throughout their period of incarceration.

# Our Focus is on You and Your Family's Well-Being...

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is a national network of family members who have lived experiences in child welfare, juvenile, and/or adult criminal justice systems.

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We hear from hundreds of families each year that are unaware of federal PREA legislation (the Prison Rape Elimination Act), which provides protection from sexual harm for all incarcerated individuals, regardless of age, across the United States.

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This resource has been developed in partnership with justice impacted families to help you, as a parent/caregiver, better understand what you can do to support your child even while they are away from home in secure facilities.

## YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

We understand what it's like to have loved ones who aren't home with us.

To get connected  
contact:

[www.justice4families.org](http://www.justice4families.org)

Phone #: (347) 269-7998

or for more information  
scan here:

