

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is child abuse, occurring when family members, friends, strangers, or others in a position of power or control have sexual contact or exploit a child or adolescent. It may involve touching and/or non-touching acts. Sexual abuse is **never** the victim's fault.

Effects of Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse usually has devastating effects on a child or adolescent's normal health development. Some of the consequences may be:

- Extreme feelings of guilt and shame
- Intense fear, anxiety, and confusion
- Mistrust of parents and other adults
- Increased likelihood of further sexual exploitation
- Sexuality problems later in life

Victims can overcome these devastating effects by sharing thoughts and feelings in a therapeutic, support setting.

Accessing Services

Sexual abuse of minors (18 and under) must be reported to a local human services department for investigation and validation prior to being referred to the Sexual Abuse Counseling and Support Program. To report child sexual abuse, call the Human Services Department in your county:

- Crawford County: (608) 326-0248
- La Crosse County: (608) 785-5875
- Monroe County: (608) 269-8600
- Trempealeau County: (715) 538-2311, ext. 290

Other Resources:

- National Center for Victims of Crime (victimsofcrime.org)
(855) 4-VICTIM – (855) 484-2846
- Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (rain.org)
(800) 656-HOPE – (800) 656-4673