

General

WHO SEXUALLY ABUSES OR ASSAULTS OTHERS?

There is no typical profile of someone who commits sexual abuse or assault. People who sexually offend cross all socioeconomic, educational, gender, age, and cultural lines.

Although 90-95% of abusers are males, females also commit sexual abuse. However, female abusers are more likely than males to abuse younger children.

Sometimes people are abused or assaulted by strangers but most times the abuser knows the victim. This could mean the perpetrator may be:

- Family members (including parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, etc),
- Neighbors,
- Friends,
- Friends of the family,
- Caregivers, or
- Someone who works or volunteers at a place you visit.

WHY DO PEOPLE SEXUALLY ABUSE OR ASSAULT OTHERS?

There is no single reason people sexually abuse or assault others.

Some reasons may include:

- General delinquency and criminal attitudes,
- Anger and antisocial attitudes,
- Intimacy deficits and loneliness,
- Sexual preferences,
- Sexual arousal to violence,
- Hypersexuality, or
- A desire for power and control.



Regardless of the reasons why someone sexually abuses or assaults another person, it is never the victims fault. Helping victims to understand that they did nothing wrong is an important part of the treatment process.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO REDUCE RISK?

Education is one of the most important things that can be done to help individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities reduce their risk of sexual abuse or assault. Specifically education in the following areas:

- Sex education including anatomy, sexuality, and sexual acts.
- Relationships including friendships and romantic relationships.
- Body autonomy and understanding they have control of their bodies and who touches them, including with any personal care.
- Self-advocacy skills that can help them speak up for themselves and their needs.