

“Even though it may seem frightening to accept that you have been abused, it is an important step and there is support out there when you need it ”

If you were sexually abused, these ideas might help:

- talking to someone you trust can help you feel less alone
- it can be a relief to accept that the abuse really happened and that it caused you great pain. This pain is a normal reaction to trauma
- try to trust your memories and feelings
- remember—it was not your fault—the person who hurt you is to blame
- you have lived through the abuse and survived

There are services that can help

In Victoria, Centres Against Sexual Assault can offer you:

- free counselling and support
- information about other understanding counsellors and groups
- information on your legal rights

Sexual Assault Crisis Line

T 1800 806 292 (Freecall, 24 hours)
www.casa.org.au

Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria

- information on support groups and services
- a lending library with books, articles and videos

T 03 9486 9866 (Monday to Friday 9-5pm)
E dvrcv@dvrcv.org.au
www.dvrcv.org.au

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Information for adults sexually abused as children

You are not to blame

“Now I know it wasn't my fault ”

“ I didn’t tell anyone at the time because I thought no-one would believe me ”

You are not alone

It is against the law for adults to behave in a sexual way towards children. But this happens to many children, both girls and boys. It often involves someone you know and trust such as a parent, sibling or other family member, carer, babysitter, religious leader, teacher, or friend of the family.

Any form of sexual activity with a child by an adult or older person is abusive.

This could include sexual touching, sexual acts, flashing, making sexual comments, being made to watch sexual acts or pornography.

If you remember this happening you may feel:

- scared to tell anyone
- worried about what people will think or that they won’t believe you
- sad because you lost a part of your childhood
- disbelief that it happened
- angry at the person who did this and because no-one protected you
- guilty because they tricked you into thinking you did something to make it happen
- ashamed at not being able to stop it
- confused about what happened or because it was someone you liked
- betrayed

It’s OK to feel angry

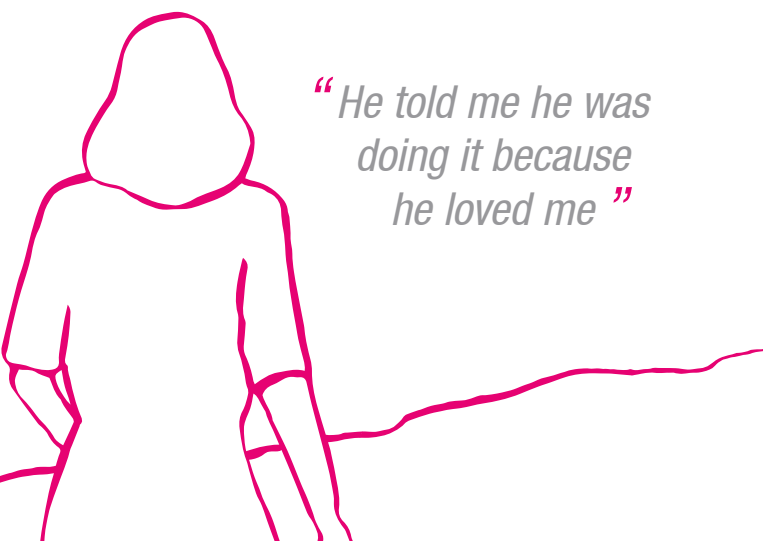
It’s not your fault, you were a child, they knew it was wrong. Child sexual abuse is a crime.

The trauma of sexual abuse shows up in different ways because everyone has their own way of coping. The effects may not be noticed for many years.

“ For many years I blamed myself for the abuse because I didn’t stop it ”

Many people who were abused say they:

- hate their body
- feel bad about themselves
- don’t trust anyone or find intimacy in relationships difficult
- often ‘space out’
- sometimes feel crazy ‘without reason’
- hurt themselves
- force themselves to be busy and ‘on the move’ all the time
- feel angry at someone or angry at everyone
- have nightmares and flashbacks of the abuse



“ He told me he was doing it because he loved me ”

“ I think my mother suspected what was happening, but she was too afraid of my stepfather to do anything about it ”