

Workshop 1

Myths and Stereotypes about adults abused as children

Here is a list of popular myths and stereotypes.

In your groups, discuss:

- How accurate do you believe them to be?
- How might these stereotypes influence or hinder your responses to disclosure?

Myths and Stereotypes about adults abused as children



- Most people will never personally come across childhood abuse
- Children are generally abused by male strangers
- People abused in childhood generally get over it
- Boys who have been abused will go on to question their sexuality
- My child would speak up if he or she was being abused
- Adults abused as children go on to become abusers

Workshop 2

How to respond when an adult survivor discloses his/her childhood sexual abuse

1. Come up with two lists:
 - What might be helpful to say or do
 - What might be unhelpful to say or do
2. What impact might it have on you?
3. Discuss the options available to you for support

Hearing Disclosure



- ❑ It is frightening for the client and requires enormous courage
- ❑ Thoughts about:
 - ❖ What have I started?
 - ❖ Where will it go?
 - ❖ Can I control this?
- ❑ Feelings of :
 - ❖ Disbelief
 - ❖ Being dirty
 - ❖ Betrayal
 - ❖ Self blame, guilt and shame
- ❑ The story may be confused, jumbled, contradictory, and even jocular
- ❑ There may be no emotion
- ❑ The client may wish to protect *you* from the horror

Some questions you may hear



Clients will often ask:

- Why me?
 - What have I done?
 - Why do I deserve this?
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- ❖ These questions are destructive and re-enforce feelings that it's my fault
 - ❖ They can be very can be debilitating and it is important to reassure clients that it is not about them
 - ❖ It is about the abuse of power by the perpetrator

Some DOs and DON'Ts of hearing disclosure



DO



- Be calm
- Make it safe
- Listen attentively
- BELIEVE
- Be empathic
- Be yourself
- Focus on the survivor

DON'T



- Rush the survivor
- Challenge the "story"
- Make comments
- Make assumptions
- Blame
- Judge
- Talk about the abuser

