
— Chapter One —

Sharing Your Story

In this chapter, you will learn what sexual abuse is and about taking responsibility. You will meet some other girls who have sexually abused others. You will then share your story. Hopefully you are in a group with other girls who have also sexually abused. If not, you can share your story with your therapist, your parents, or a close and trusted friend. Sharing your story is important. Keeping this locked up inside of yourself can hurt. A part of healing is sharing and learning from what you have done, and realizing you are NOT alone.

I What is Sexual Abuse?

There are many definitions of **sexual abuse**, but basically it is touching someone else in a not okay (inappropriate) sexual way. For example, when an adult touches a child in a sexual way, that is definitely sexual abuse. *ANY* inappropriate sexual interaction with a child is sexual abuse. So now we have to figure out what is inappropriate. You may have touched someone younger than you or you may have touched someone who did not give you permission nor did that person want to be touched. You may have touched a family member or a neighbor child when you were babysitting. *Check which of the following you were accused of doing and/or applies to your situation:*

- Touching a younger child on the genitals.
- Grabbing someone your own age on their genitals without his or her permission or **consent**.
- With a group of peers, touching another peer on the genitals without their permission or consent.
- Taking sexual pictures of a peer or peers without their consent and allowing others to view the pictures.
- Exposing younger children to sexually explicit material, like dirty magazines, **pornography** off the Internet, movies with sex, or telephone sex lines.
- Making children be sexual with one another while you watch.
- Taking your clothes off in front of younger children and having them look at you.
- Playing sexual games with younger children or making them be sexual with one another in front of you.

DEFINITION BOX:

A person is in a **Position of Trust** when they are taking care of younger kids or they are an older family member. They are often looked up to.

Pornography is material that is very sexual and explicit. It's often used as a tool to get "turned on."

Consent happens when a person voluntarily agrees to do something. You'll learn more about this later.

II Taking Responsibility

Sometimes when people begin therapy for sexual abuse, it is difficult for them to accept and take responsibility for what they were accused of doing. There are many reasons for this, but the main reason is because taking responsibility is SCARY! A girl who sexually offends may deny it because she feels much guilt and shame for what she did, or it may be because she fears her family will not love and support her if the truth were to come out. Perhaps she doesn't want to remember what she did or she is embarrassed about it, so doesn't tell the whole truth. When a girl sexually offends and does not tell the whole truth, she is denying. She may deny many different things about the sexual abuse. Some examples are:

1. Denying any abuse occurred at all - "I didn't do it."
2. Denying the number of times it occurred - "I only did it once, not twice."
3. Denying the harm to the victim - "He wasn't really hurt when I touched him; he wanted to do it."
4. Denying certain behavior happened - "I only touched her on her breast, not her vagina."

Questions

1. What do you think are some other things a person could deny when they are accused of sexual abuse?

2. What are the three biggest reasons why you think someone would deny what they did?

3. Are there certain things you were accused of that you deny doing? If so, what?

Although denial is considered normal and understandable, it is extremely important that you admit to *everything* that you did. If you don't feel comfortable talking about what you did with your parents, make sure you tell your therapist. Your therapist knows how hard it is to admit to sexual abuse, but the best way she or he can help you and the best way you can really help yourself is by being 100% honest. It will be hard, very hard. But in the end, the more honest you are, the better you will feel inside!

III Girls Share Their Stories

Rianne

“Hi. I’m Rianne and I’m 13. People sometimes act stupid and say I sexually offended because that’s what black people do. That is just stupid and racist. I’ll tell you why I think I did it, but it certainly wasn’t because of no skin color. My momma and daddy divorced when I was just a baby. My momma raised me and had two other kids by two different guys. I didn’t like that very much - other men around momma instead of my dad. I rarely saw HIM. He went to prison for drugs. My momma eventually shacked up with another man who ended up touching me where he shouldn’t have - in my privates. He also tried to put his penis inside me. I was 10 or 11 years old at the time. I was afraid to tell anyone so I kept it a secret for a long, long time. I kept it a secret until I got in trouble for touching a young boy. I was at a friend’s house for a sleepover. I pulled down my friend’s younger brother’s pants, pulled down my own, and made him touch my privates. His momma caught me and asked me why I was doing this. I told her my momma’s boyfriend did the same thing to me. Because someone was listening, I told her another secret - I touched my younger sister in her privates too.

I don’t know if I did this just because I was touched by momma’s boyfriend. There were other things going on too: I was lonely and confused. My momma paid more attention to her boyfriend and my younger bro and sis than me. I didn’t have anyone to talk to. I felt ignored. There was a time when I told momma that Donny had touched me and she didn’t believe me, so I shut up about it until I was caught. Sometimes I think I did it so I would get caught and somebody would finally hear me. Donny got in trouble too. He ended up in jail for touching me the way he shouldn’t have. Momma pays more attention now. I’m in therapy, which is a good thing too. Sometimes it’s hard. I don’t like talking about this stuff, but it can help.”

Questions

1. What do you think about Rianne’s story? _____

2. How is it like your own story? _____

3. How is it different from your story? _____

4. What feelings come up for you when you read Rianne's story? _____

Katie

"I'm 17 and have been used all my life. I trust very few people on this planet. It has to be that way or else I might get hurt again. For a white girl I'm pretty mature, rather than being a spoiled white chick with parents to depend on. I had to grow up fast. My mom and dad weren't there for me. I don't care if I ever see either one of them again. It all started when I was one. My dad hit me pretty bad. He sexually abused me too. Would you believe he actually put his penis into my vagina before I was 5? How sick is that? My mom married some other guy when I was 7. He touched me in my privates too. This same guy touched my brother in his privates. My brother, who is a few years older than me, started touching me. He had sex with me many times. Because of all this abuse, I was separated from my mother, brother, and sister, and put into foster care. I've been in and out of 30 foster homes. My mom is out of the picture, and I prefer she stay that way because she let ALL that stuff happen to me.

*I bet you're wondering what I did. I was in a foster home and I had stupidly allowed myself to get close to my foster parent. Then two young girls, ages 3 and 4, came to live with us. I thought my foster mom was really cool but I was wrong. She decided to adopt the younger two girls leaving me behind. I was age 13 at the time. Here I was trusting another adult and getting thrown to the curb again. I mean I don't know why I ever trust anybody! I got back at my foster mom the best way I knew how - by sexually abusing the girls. I touched them in their vaginas and rubbed up against them as if we were having sex. I did it to each of them over 20 times. I wanted them to hurt the way I hurt. They were brats anyway. Of course they told, and guess what happened to me? I got slammed into another stinkin' foster home. I'm on juvenile **diversion**, which is a program that helps kids. If I do everything I'm supposed to, I won't end up in **detention** and I won't have a record following me wherever I go."*

DEFINITION BOX:

Probation happens when someone has been charged with an offense and sentenced by a judge.

Diversion is a program offered to some kids to get on the right track instead of probation. If kids complete diversion requirements, like therapy, their records will be sealed. If they do not complete the requirements, then they could end up on probation, in detention, or out of home placement.

Detention is a lock-down place where kids can be held after they have committed a crime.

Questions

1. What do you think about Katie's story? _____

2. How is it like your own story? _____

3. How is it different from your story? _____

4. What feelings come up for you when you read Katie's story? _____

Nancy

"I'm 14 and in the 8th grade. I don't know why I sexually abused two different boys when I was 13. I babysat for them for a long time. I was never sexually abused. I guess you could say I come from a loving family. I mean I don't really know my birth parents. I was adopted, so was my extremely obnoxious younger sister. She gets all the attention - "Miss Perfect." She is so spoiled. I always get in trouble. My parents never think she does anything wrong. I, on the other hand, am constantly blamed for everything that goes wrong in our family. They don't listen to me. They treat me a lot differently than they treat "Miss Perfect." That really pisses me off. Okay, I know I'm not the perfect child, but they have no clue how mean and back stabbing my sister really is.

*I sexually abused those boys in pretty bad ways. There was a lot of oral sex. I made them lick my vagina and I licked their penises. I tried to have **intercourse** with them too. I was feeling curious about sex at the time. None of the boys at school would have anything to do with me. Everyone said I was a "lez." In other words, they thought I "liked" girls. I was made fun of at school, so I didn't really fit in. I didn't feel attractive. The boys I touched were both five years old. They did what I told them to and I learned about sex.*

I felt attractive and sexy too when I was touching them. Maybe I wanted some of my parents' attention since my "perfect" sister gets most of it. I don't know. Through therapy I am beginning to understand why I did what I did, but I still have a long way to go."

DEFINITION BOX:

Intercourse is commonly referred to as "sex" or when the penis goes into the vagina.

Questions

1. What do you think about Nancy's story? _____

2. How is it like your own story? _____

3. How is it different from your story? _____

4. What feelings come up for you when you read Nancy's story? _____

Julie

"My name is Julie. I'm 18 years old and Hispanic. When I first had to go to therapy, I was SO angry. I didn't admit to ANYTHING. I told my mom, the police, and my therapist that I didn't sexually abuse two young kids who lived in my neighborhood!!! Part of that is true you know. I didn't touch them, but I did make them touch each other in their privates, which was not a good thing to do. It took about two months for me to finally admit to what I did. I was SO scared. I was afraid my mom would not love me anymore if she knew the truth. She's a single mom, and she's had to work very hard to support my younger sister and me.

My parents divorced when I was 5. They divorced because my pop was sexually abusing me. He would also beat up my mom in front of my sister and me. I don't remember my pop sexually abusing me, but I do know he went to jail because of it. He's not involved in my life now. I was 12 when I sexually abused those two kids. They were only 6 and 7. When this happened, I remember my mom was dating this guy who didn't treat her very well. I thought she was stupid to allow him to treat her like crap. I would never allow a man to treat me like that. My mom was paying more attention to José than me and I thought of a way to split them up for good and get her attention. I made these two kids get on top of each other and pretend they were having sex. I was curious about sex at the time too because some friends from school were talking about sex.

There are many reasons why I sexually offended. I was sexually abused when I was young. I was learning about sex and got curious. I wanted mom's attention and was feeling ignored. I wanted Jose out of the picture for good. I was on probation for two years and court ordered to attend offense-specific therapy. I completed everything I needed to and am now moving on with my life."

Questions

1. What do you think about Julie's story? _____

2. How is it like your own story? _____

3. How is it different from your story? _____

4. What feelings come up for you when you read Julie's story? _____

Jeannie

"I'm 14 years old and have been raised in a very strict Hispanic home. My father is a minister. My parents have been married for over 30 years. I have two brothers and one sister, all older than me. Our family activities are centered around the church. Sometimes that bugs me because I want to do different things with friends and stuff, but my parents want me with them. I was raised to be a "good" daughter but I guess I'm not since I sexually abused my nephew. I was 13 at the time and he was 6. I touched his penis a few times and told him to keep it a secret. Sometimes I would lie on top of him and rub my body back and forth against him. Oh yeah, I was sexually abused when I was younger by two different men. I never told anyone, not until I got into therapy anyway. I don't know if that is one of the reasons why I sexually abused. After all, there are many girls who are sexually abused who do not end up sexually abusing others. I'm not sure why at this point. I just started therapy. I also think I wanted to be my own person. You know - not just do everything your parents say."

Questions

1. What do you think about Jeannie's story? _____

2. How is it like your own story? _____

3. How is it different from your story? _____

4. What feelings come up for you when you read Jeannie's story? _____

Cindy

"I'm Cindy. I am 20 years old and physically challenged. I sexually abused my stepmother's granddaughter when I was 15 years old and she was 3. I was born with a rare medical condition that left me in a wheelchair. I was often made fun of at school. People would say really mean things to me and call me a cripple. No boys were interested in me. I felt rejected and alone. When I sexually offended, I lived with my father, stepmother, brother, two older sisters, and stepbrother. I hated and still hate my "stepmonster." I would get her pissed by not doing my chores, refusing to take care of my medical stuff, stealing from family members, and lying lots. I have really hated her because I hate the fact my real mom is not involved in my life. She really bailed on me. I have not seen or heard from her in years so I had to live with my dad. I don't know if I was ever sexually abused, but I know my sisters were sexually abused by a babysitter when they were 7 and 8 years old, and they told me I was too. I would have been 4 at the time, but I don't remember anything.

I touched my victim in her vagina and she told immediately. I got in major trouble and my stepmother hated me for doing that. I was charged with sexual assault on a child and put on probation for two years. I think I committed my offense to get attention from my dad who was often not around, and maybe to hurt my stepmother. I remember feeling sorry for myself a lot back then. I finished therapy and now I live on my own. I express my feelings better and take better care of myself than I used to. I still don't speak with my stepmother, and my dad is not involved in my life like I would like him to be, but things are okay. I go to school at a community college now and work part time."

Questions

1. What do you think about Cindy's story? _____

2. How is it like your own story? _____

3. How is it different than your story? _____

4. What feelings come up for you when you read Cindy's story? _____

As you can see, girls who sexually abuse others are a diverse group. They come from different types of backgrounds. Many have been sexually abused, quite a few have not. Some are black, some are Hispanic, some are white, some are other colors of the multicultural rainbow. Some are religious, some are not. Basically, there is not one "type" of girl who sexually offends. Girls that sexually abuse often seem like the girl next door. Many times they are. They have many strengths, along with weaknesses. None of them are bad people; they may have engaged in negative behavior but that does not mean they are bad for who they are. Therapy is a learning and growing process. As you go through it, do your best not to judge the other girls who share their story in this workbook or yourself. Since you have learned about some girls who have sexually abused, now it is time to begin sharing your own story.

IV Your History

Many of these questions may feel intrusive and personal, but it is important for you and your therapist to understand what you have experienced so far in your life, especially sexually. There is no need to be embarrassed by the questions or your answers. Please be honest in your responses and detailed.

1. Write about your background. Where were you born? What is your cultural and religious background?
Who is in your family?

V Your Sexual History

1. Have you ever been sexually abused? If so, by whom and how old were you?

2. There are many forms of sexual abuse. *Check if you have been the **victim** of any of the following and write by whom, how old you were, and for how long it occurred.*

Inappropriate sexual comments (An example of this would be a family member saying to you “Nice tits” or “Great ass.”)

Watching you bathe or dress

Videotaping you while you are naked or doing something sexual without your consent

Exposing their genitals to you

Touching your genitals

Penetrating your genitals

Anything else which has made you feel sexually uncomfortable (please explain)

3. How old were you when you first had sexual contact with someone? Was it a positive or negative experience?

4. What kind of sexual contact was it?

5. Have you ever played games such as "Truth or Dare," "Doctor," or "Spin the Bottle"? Did you enjoy or dislike those games?

6. If applicable, how many sexual partners have you had so far? What are their names and for how long did you go out with each one?

7. Describe the worst sexual experience you have had so far:

8. Describe the best sexual experience you have had so far:

Masturbation is when you touch your own genitals for sexual pleasure. A sexual **fantasy** is something you imagine which is sexually exciting. Many people fantasize when they masturbate.

9. How old were you when you started **masturbating**? How often do you **masturbate** now?

10. What do you think about when you masturbate? Do you see pictures in your mind? What's in the pictures and how do they make you feel? In other words, what do you **fantasize** about?

11. Are you currently having any sexual contact with anyone? If so, with whom? Does he or she know about your offense(s)?

12. Describe how far you have gone sexually, such as kissing, holding hands, touching private parts, or having sex (intercourse):

13. Are you currently using birth control? If so, what kind?

14. Have you ever seen pornography? If so, what kind (X-rated movies, magazines, internet sites)?
When and how much?

15. Have you ever read adult novels with sexually explicit scenes? Any scenes including sexual abuse?
If so, please describe.

VI Your Sexual History Timeline

Part of this timeline will be reviewing what you have already written but this time writing it in a different way. Doing a timeline will help your therapist and you better understand your sexual life so far. Draw a long line on a separate piece of paper. Use as much paper as you need (you may need a few sheets if you have had many sexual experiences in your life). Place marks which represent each year of your life, from your first sexual experience and each year after that, until your present age. On this timeline, write the following:

Your sexual experiences (kissing, playing “Spin the Bottle,” oral sex, etc.).

Your feelings at the time of the experience (happy, scared, angry, etc.).

Overall if the experience was positive or negative for you.



Here is an example from Jeannie’s timeline:

“At age 3 and 4, my sister’s boyfriend sexually abused me. He probably touched me around 50 times total. He would touch my genitals and sometimes rub his body against me. He would usually have his clothes on and he would slip my underwear down. I felt scared and confused at the time. It was a negative experience.”

“At age 11, I was sexually abused by a family acquaintance in a swimming pool. I didn’t really know how to swim. He touched me in my vagina. I was really scared since I was depending on him to help me get out of the pool. It was really scary and a negative experience.”

“At age 13, I kissed a boy my age on his cheek. I hugged him too. I felt excited at the time and happy. It was a good experience.”

“At age 13, I sexually abused my nephew. I touched his penis and sometimes rubbed up against him in the same way I was sexually abused. I felt angry at the time towards my sister and also curious about sex. Some of the touching felt good but it was definitely a negative experience.”

3. What is your understanding about why you sexually abused someone?

4. Were you charged with an offense? If so, which one(s)? What is your sentence?

5. How do you think others feel about your sexually abusive behavior?

a. Your family members:

b. Your friends:

c. Your victim(s):

6. How do you feel about your victim(s)?

7. What differences do you think there are between girls and boys who sexually abuse?

8. Have you known other girls who have sexually offended before? How do you feel about girls who sexually offend?

9. How do you feel as a girl who has sexually offended?

10. How do you feel about your offending behavior (ashamed, disappointed, okay, hurt, confused, guilty, angry, etc.)?

11. How do you feel about getting caught?

12. What would you like your therapist, or whoever might be helping you through this process, to know or understand about you?

13. What other things would you like to share about yourself before moving on to the next chapter?
