

MODULE V: CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Note Taking Guide

At the end of this training, you will be able to:

- Explain why children placed in foster care may have experienced sexual abuse they have not yet disclosed
- Discuss potential indicators that a child has been sexually abused or exposed to a highly sexualized environment
- Identify ways to modify home environment and house rules to ensure the safety and well-being of all children in the home

Definitions and Basic Facts about Child Sexual Abuse

- Sexual abuse includes a range of touching and non-touching behaviors.
- Grooming and conditioning are frequently involved as the sexual abuse becomes increasingly intrusive.
- Children placed in foster care may have experienced sexual abuse they have not yet disclosed.

...contacts between a child and an adult or other person significantly older or in a position of power or control over the child, where the child is being used for sexual stimulation of the adult or other person.

(American Psychological Association, 2013)

Potential Impact and Indicators of Child Sexual Abuse

- Caregivers and adoptive parents need to approach all children as individuals. Children who have been sexually abused experience greater or lesser trauma depending on a number of factors.
- Potential indicators of sexual abuse include:
 - Avoidance behaviors
 - Post-traumatic stress reactions
 - Lack of trust
 - Depression or anger
 - Sexual behavior problems

Poly-victimization, also known as complex trauma, is a **greater predictor** of negative impact than any **one type** of abuse

Creating a Safe Environment

- Home environment and house rules need modified to ensure the safety and well-being of all children in the home, including:
 - Educating yourself about sexual abuse
 - Respecting boundaries
 - Teaching and stressing privacy
 - Supervising and monitoring play



Caregivers' and Adoptive Parents' Roles and Responsibilities

- Caregivers have responsibility to inform caseworkers of suspected past or current sexual abuse.
- Caregivers need to be partners in the treatment of children who have been sexually abused.



Recommended Online Courses

Trauma Informed Care for Foster and Adoptive Parents of Sexually Abused Children

Three-hour free online course

Discusses common behaviors exhibited by sexually abused children; how the trauma of sexual abuse can impact a child's thoughts, feelings and actions; basic concepts of Trauma Informed Care and how it can help children who have been sexually abused; and different ways that foster and adoptive parents can help their children recover from the trauma of sexual abuse.

<http://www.fcasv.org/trauma-informed-care-sexually-abused-children>

Caring for Children Who Have Been Sexually Abused

Four-hour online course (\$20.00 or free if approved through your Regional Training Center)

Explores the emotional and behavioral effects of child sexual abuse on children in care and offers strategies to help overcome the challenges foster parents face.

<http://www.fosterparentcollege.com/>

What Caregivers Need to Know About Human Trafficking

One-hour free online course

Helps increase awareness of the scope of human trafficking; understand the dynamics of human trafficking; know factors that increase youth's vulnerability to human trafficking; recognize indicators that a child has been trafficked; and know strategies to help prevent youth from being trafficked.

http://ocwtp.net/Articulate_Projects/Human_Trafficking_Session_1/story.html

Recommended Online Reading Material

Foster Care, Kinship Care, and Adoption Preservice Training

Module V: *Child Sexual Abuse*

Developed by IHS for the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program June 2015

Parenting a Child Who Has Been Sexually Abused: A Guide for Foster and Adoptive Parents

This factsheet from the Child Welfare Information Gateway discusses how foster and adoptive parents can help children and adolescents who have experienced sexual abuse. It provides basic information about sexual abuse and links to other information so that parents can educate themselves about the topic. The factsheet suggests ways to establish guidelines for safety and privacy in the family, and it offers suggestions about when to seek professional help and where to find such help.

https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/f_abused/

Caring for Kids: What Parents Need to Know about Sexual Abuse

This resource from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network – available as [one large document](#) or individual documents – has resources about many topics surrounding child sexual abuse, including managing sexual behavioral problems.

<http://nsvrc.org/publications/websites/caring-kids-what-parents-need-know-about-sexual-abuse>

List three ways you will use the information from this training.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

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What You Will Learn in This Module

Read the Learning Objectives and Competencies and place a ✓ next to those you most want to learn about.

Learning Objectives:

- You will learn that children placed in your home may have experienced sexual abuse they have never shared with anyone – not even their caseworker.
- You will be able to recognize potential indicators that a child has been sexually abused or exposed to a highly sexualized environment.
- You will be able identify ways to modify home environment and house rules to ensure the safety and well-being of all children in the home.

Competencies: At the end of this module you will be:

- Aware of the scope and dynamics of sexual abuse
- Familiar with the signs of sexual abuse in children
- Familiar with ways that a sexually abused child or teen might interact with caregiving family members
- Aware that children who have sexually abused others may act out sexually
- Aware of the caregiver's responsibility to intervene when there is sexual interaction between children or teens in the home

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The Promise: A Timed Worksheet

You have three minutes to list as many facts about child sexual abuse noted in the video.

FACT:	
FACT:	
FACT:	
FACT:	
FACT:	
FACT:	
FACT:	
FACT:	
FACT:	
FACT:	

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My Roles and Responsibilities

As a team, read each case study and list at least one role or responsibility you would have if the child were in your home.

Case Study: Angie

Angie, eight years old, has been with you for three months. You are her third foster family. The two previous families asked her to be removed, saying she was too difficult to handle. You think she is overly affectionate and seems to need a lot of physical contact. Today, you observed her playing with small dolls and overheard her say, "It's OK to touch here, but don't tell anyone because we'll go to jail."

My Role or Responsibility:

Case Study: Louis

Louis is twelve and has been with your family for eight months. He is active in sports, gets along with everyone, and does well in school. Last night, while watching a TV show about a girl who was sexually abused, he suddenly left the room. When you checked on him you could hear him sobbing in his room. He granted you permission to enter and eventually, in tears, disclosed that he had also been sexually abused. He begged you to tell no one.

My Role or Responsibility:

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The Essential Elements Of Trauma-Informed Parenting

Read each element and place a ✓ next to elements addressed in some manner during this module. In the notes section, provide an example from this module.

Addressed?	Essential Element	Notes
	Recognize the impact trauma has on your child: Children who have survived trauma can present incredible challenges. When viewed through the “lens” of their traumatic experience many of these behaviors and reactions begin to make sense. Understanding trauma can help you identify effective strategies to address challenging behaviors and help your child develop new, more positive coping skills.	
	Help your child to feel safe: Safety is critical for children who have experienced trauma. Many are in a constant state of alert for the next threat to their well-being. They may be physically safe and still not feel psychologically safe. Keep your child’s trauma history in mind and establish an environment that is physically safe and work with your child to understand what it will take to create psychological safety.	
	Help your child understand and manage overwhelming emotions: Trauma can cause such intense fear, anger, shame, and helplessness that children are overwhelmed by their feelings. Trauma can also derail development so that children fail to learn how to identify, express, or manage their emotional states. Provide calm, consistent, and loving care to set an example for your children and teach them how to define, express, and manage their emotions.	
	Help your child understand and manage difficult behavior: Overwhelming emotion can have a negative impact on children’s behavior, particularly if they cannot make the connection between feelings and behaviors. Because trauma can derail development, children who have experienced trauma may display problem behaviors more typical of younger children. Help your children understand the links between their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, and take control of their behavioral responses.	

	<p>Respect and support the positive, stable and enduring relationships in the life of your child: Children learn who they are and what the world is like through the connections they make with other people. Positive, stable relationships play a vital role in helping children heal from trauma. Children who have been abused or neglected often have insecure attachments to other people. Nevertheless, they may cling to these attachments, which are disrupted or even destroyed when they come into care. Help your child hold on to what was good about these connections, reshape them, make new meaning from them, and build new healthier relationships with you and others as well.</p>	
	<p>Help your child develop a strength-based understanding of his or her life story: To heal from trauma, children need to develop a strong sense of self, put their trauma histories in perspective, and recognize that they are worthwhile and valued individuals. Help children to develop a strength-based understanding of their life stories.</p>	
	<p>Be an advocate for your child: Trauma can affect so many aspects of a child's life that it takes a team of people and agencies to facilitate recovery. You are a critical part of this team. Ensure efforts are coordinated and help others to view your children through a trauma lens.</p>	
	<p>Promote and support trauma-focused assessment and treatment for your child: Children who have experienced trauma often need specialized assessment and treatment. The effects of trauma may be misunderstood or even misdiagnosed. Fortunately, there are trauma-focused treatments whose effectiveness has been established. Use your understanding of trauma and its effects to advocate for the appropriate treatment for your child.</p>	
	<p>Take care of yourself: Caring for children who have experienced trauma can be difficult and can leave resource families feeling drained and exhausted. To be effective, take care of yourself, and take action to get the support you need when caring for traumatized children.</p>	

Adapted from: Grillo, C. A., Lott, D. A., & Foster Care Subcommittee of the Child Welfare Committee, National Child Traumatic Stress Network. (2010). Caring for children who have experienced trauma: A workshop for resource parents – Facilitator's Guide. Los Angeles, CA & Durham, NC: National Center for Child Traumatic Stress.

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Individual Reflection

Please take a few minutes to reflect on what you have learned in the Preservice training and how it applies to you. Give this sheet to the agency worker who is completing your homestudy.

1. List three things you can do right now to make your home safer for all children including children who may have been sexually abused.

2. When talking to a friend about this training, what three facts regarding child sexual abuse would you pass on?

3. Knowing that children placed in care may have been sexually abused but never disclosed, what are some potential indicators of sexual abuse you may observe?
