

### Community Services

#### Contact Telephone Numbers

Annapolis County	532-2337
Antigonish	863-3213
Sydney	563-3667
Glace Bay	842-4010
North Sydney	794-5100
Eskasoni	379-2433
Colchester County (Truro)	893-5950
Cole Harbour	435-7472
Cumberland County	667-3336
Dartmouth	424-3298
Digby	245-5811
Guysborough	533-4007
Halifax	422-9424
Hants County	798-3669
Inverness-Richmond	625-0660
Kings County	678-6176
Lunenburg County	543-6186
Mi'kmaq Hants County)	758-3553
Pictou County	755-5950
Queens County	354-3525
Sackville	869-3600
Shelbourne County	637-2137
Yarmouth County	742-0700

### About Avalon Sexual Assault Centre Who We Are

Avalon Centre is the only sexual assault centre in the Halifax Regional Municipality. We are a registered, not-for-profit, community based, charitable organization. The agency was established in 1983 and incorporated in 1984. We are a women-centred organization and provide a leadership role in ending all forms of sexual violence against women and children. We are committed to providing support programs, counseling, education, and advocacy for women affected by sexual violence. Our vision is to eliminate sexual violence, social injustice and other forms of oppression.

We gratefully acknowledge the core funding support provided by the Province of Nova Scotia, Department of Community Services; Capital Health; and the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia.

All donations from the public are gratefully accepted. Tax receipts will be issued upon request. We are an Associated Member of the Metro United Way's Donor Option program.

Avalon Sexual Assault Centre  
1526 Dresden Row, 4th Floor  
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 3K3  
Business Line: (902)422-4240  
After Hours Response Line: (902)  
425-0122  
Fax Line: (902)422-4628  
E-mail: [avaloncentre@eastlink.ca](mailto:avaloncentre@eastlink.ca)  
[www.avaloncentre.ca](http://www.avaloncentre.ca)



## Non Offending Parent

### Avalon Sexual Assault Centre

1526 Dresden Row, 4th Floor  
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 3K3

Business Line: (902) 422-4240

Fax Line: (902) 422-4628

SANE Business Line: (902) 422-6503

SANE Fax Line: (902) 422-4962

SANE Response Line: (902) 425-0122

[avaloncentre@eastlink.ca](mailto:avaloncentre@eastlink.ca)

[bzareski\\_saneprogram@yahoo.com](mailto:bzareski_saneprogram@yahoo.com)

[www.avaloncentre.ca](http://www.avaloncentre.ca)

## Child Abuse occurs when

### What is Child Sexual Abuse?

Child Abuse occurs when an adult or an older child (a person in a position of power and trust) violates a child in any way for sexual gratification. It is the misuse of power and a child's trust.

Child sexual abuse ranges from speaking to a child in a sexually explicit way, to inappropriate touching, to genital contact. Abuse includes the coercion of the child to speak/ sexually act onto the perpetrator.

Sexual abuse is a criminal act. It can have harmful long-term emotional, physical and social effects on a child. The abuse must be stopped and the child may need medical treatment and counselling.

### How Common is Child Sexual Abuse?

Child Sexual Abuse is much too common. You and your child are not alone. The majority of cases go undetected because the children are afraid to tell anyone. It is difficult information for a parent to hear and cope with but parents need and deserve help with this process. It is important that parents do not project their feelings of the abuse and abuser onto the child because children tend to adopt the cues and reactions of loved ones.

### Possible Reactions of the child:

- Fear, insecurity
- Guilt, shame, embarrassment
- Feeling dirty, soiled
- Fear of consequences from abuser, parents, system
- Guilt because some things may have been pleasurable
- Anger, hostility, self-blame, self-doubt
- Betrayal– by the abuser or by parent protector
- Uncertainty and/or confusion about what has happened

### Possible Reactions of the parent:

- Rage & the urge for retaliation
- Guilt & self-blame
- Fear for your child & shock
- Embarrassment, secrecy
- Numbness
- Distance
- Disbelief or denial
- Confusion & helplessness
- Blaming the child
- Grief and grieving process

### What Can I Do?

Parent reactions are normal yet is important to provide an atmosphere that feels safe physically, psychologically, and emotionally for the child.

There is nothing you can do to change the fact that your child has been sexually abused. In fact, there was probably little you could have done to prevent it. But there is much you can do to lessen the effects and help you and your child cope.

The first step in the healing process is telling about the abuse. As a parent you need to believe your child and do not react in a manner that shames the child. Let the child *know* you believe her/him.

Seek medical attention for the child if necessary and provide information to the child about what is happening.

Normalize the child's world as much as possible. Don't over focus on the abuse. Let the child know that her/his feelings/fears are normal.

Reassure the child that she/he is not to blame for what happened.

Listen to the child. Allow her/him to express feelings.

Respond to questions in a calm and open manner. Do not pressure the child to talk.

Give reassurance to the child. Reaffirm the future in hopeful terms.

Respect the child's privacy in terms of who you disclose the abuse to.

Be honest, show courage and give love to the child

Report the abuse as soon as possible to the proper authorities as it shows the child that you and other adults believe the abuse happened and take the matter seriously.

### Why Didn't She/he Tell Me?

Children often do not tell their parents about the abuse, instead they tell a favorite relative, teacher or friend. While it is hard for a parent to understand why a child did not disclose the abuse, or disclose it sooner, there are reasons why this occurs. Children are bribed and threatened by the abuser not to tell the secret. Children often feel they are to blame for the abuse. They are afraid. The important thing is the secret has been told. Now it's time to take action.