



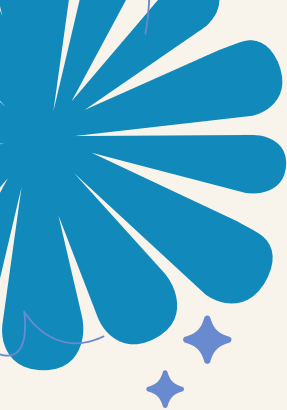
# RESPONDING TO A DISCLOSURE

MASHKAWIZII CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER

Nobody wants to find themselves in this situation, but if you do it is important to be prepared. MCAC can help!

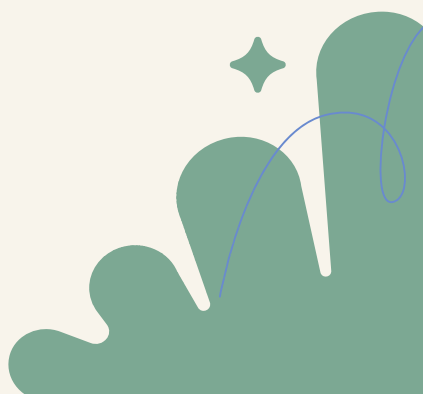
- ***Warning Signs of Abuse***
- ***Warning Signs of Grooming***
- ***SLS Procedure***
- ***Do's and Don'ts***
- ***Preparing your Child***





# WHAT DOES DISCLOSURE MEAN?

- Not always a single event
- Most of which is hidden or internal
- Direct disclosure: The child directly says what happened.
- Indirect disclosure: The child doesn't share details of the abuse, or they do so in a roundabout way.
- Purposeful disclosure: The child tells someone to stop the abuse, seek support, or protect others.
- Spontaneous disclosure: The child spontaneously shares details of the abuse after recognizing it has happened.



# THE DISCLOSURE PROCESS: A RISK BENEFIT ANALYSIS

1. Traumatic event/s
2. Denial
3. Processing the event/s
4. Reluctance (siblings, family dynamics, legal implications, etc.)
5. Decision
6. Planning: who to tell, how to tell, how much to tell
7. Tentative Disclosure: reaction, trust
8. Active Disclosure (Partial or Full)
9. Action
10. Recantation (reluctance factors)
11. Reaffirmation







## **WARNING SIGNS OF ABUSE**

Signs of abuse vary and can look different for each situation. Knowing some of the more common warning signs can help you make an informed decision to help keep children safe. If you see something, say something!



## EMOTIONAL

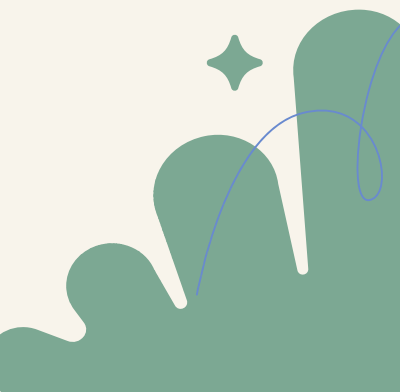
- Loss of interest in activities
- Decline in academic performance
- Increased difficulty regulating emotions
- Social withdrawal

## PHYSICAL

- Disturbed sleep patterns
- Aggressive behavior or language
- Frequent marks on the skin
- Injuries not seeming to match the cause provided

## SEXUAL

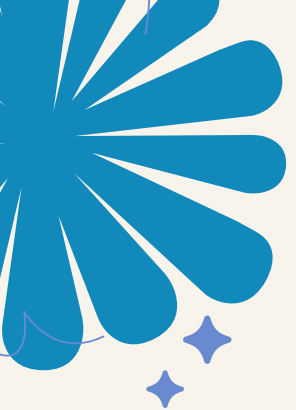
- Avoidance of a particular person
- Unusual toileting behaviors
- Increased sexually explicit language





## WARNING SIGNS OF GROOMING

Grooming is the process of normalizing inappropriate behavior. Offenders often use grooming techniques to get closer to their potential victims.



## **SECRECY**

Asking someone to keep things secret, or being secretive about how they spend their time together.

## **ISOLATION**

Making someone feel isolated, or finding excuses to spend time alone with them.

## **GIFTS**

Giving someone gifts or compliments that seem too good to be true, or that they can't explain.



## **INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR**

Touching in inappropriate ways, often disguised as normal behavior within a certain context.

## **MANIPULATION**

Trying to find out things about someone to be used against them. Leading them to believe that what is happening is normal.



# RESPONDING TO A DISCLOSURE- SLS PROCEDURE

When a child responds it is important that we react in a way that supports both the child victim and their investigation. Sometimes, this means overriding our natural instincts. The SLS Procedure can help keep us on track when responding to a disclosure.



## WHAT IS THE SLS PROCEDURE?

Stay Calm

Listen

Support



# 1. STAY CALM

It is easy to become upset, worried, or shocked. Try to remain calm so that the child feels comfortable.



Don't show panic, fear, anger, or shock. These emotions may accidentally lead a child to feel unsafe or uncomfortable.



Do support the child and thank them for telling you. Reassure the child that they are not in trouble and that this is not their fault.

## 2. LISTEN

Listen to the child. If the child is having difficulty talking about it, be patient.  
Allow the child to explain things in their OWN words.



Don't interrogate. Asking too many questions can overwhelm the child or retraumatize them.



Do make note of what the child tells you (including their language used). Allow them to disclose at their own pace.



### 3. SUPPORT

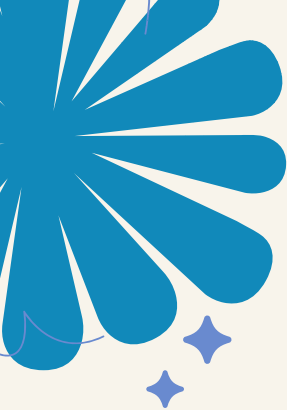
Ensure the child is not in immediate danger, then report the incident by calling Law Enforcement or MDHHS. Use the child's exact language when possible.



Don't keep this a secret to protect the offender. This can lead to revictimization of the child.

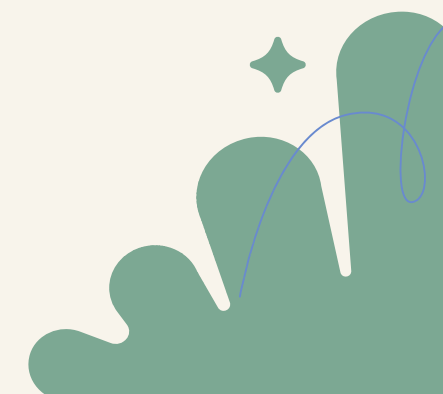


Do report the disclosure as soon as possible.



## PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

- Learn about the Child Forensic Interviewing process at [www.eupcac.org/your-appointment](http://www.eupcac.org/your-appointment)
- Let the child know that a safe adult wishes to talk to them about what they told you (or who the child disclosed to)
- Encourage them to tell the truth
- Don't ask further questions about the disclosed event/s
- If you or your child has questions, feel free to contact the Forensic Interviewer before your appointment
- Less is more!



## QUESTIONS?

Thank you all for your time!  
Learning these processes can  
help you to act quickly during a  
tough time. Supporting our  
children starts with education!



**FEEL FREE TO CONTACT MCAC WITH QUESTIONS, CONCERNS,  
AND COMMENTS. WE ARE HERE TO SUPPORT YOU!**

Website: [www.eupcac.org](http://www.eupcac.org)

Facebook: Mashkawizii Child Advocacy Center

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