

What To Expect

After the Forensic Interview

A child's disclosure of abuse can be a traumatic experience for you and your child. Recovery is a process. It is important that you take care of yourself and your family. With this in mind, we offer the following tips for what to expect after the forensic interview.

Some things you can do:

- **Stay calm and remain supportive.**
Although it may be difficult to hear, it is important that your child can talk to someone who will believe them.
- **Respect your child's privacy.**
Your child's experience is personal to them. Try to minimize discussions with others about their experience.
- **Do not question your child about the abuse but listen if they want to talk about it.**
- **Remind your child that they are the boss of their body and that their personal space should be respected.**
We have resources to assist with this conversation.
- **Your child and your family should return to a normal routine as soon as possible.**
Structure and consistent routines promote a sense of safety for children.
- **Your child may need an extra sense of physical security.**
Stay close, assure your child that you will keep them safe. Allow them to use nightlights, leave a door open, or to be physically close to you.
- **Avoid the suspect.**
Have no contact with him/her.
- **Whenever possible, try to manage your own emotional needs in private when you are away from your child.**
Utilize a trusted adult family member or friend for your own support.
- **Remember, you are not alone.**
Children's Cove and all of your team members are available to support you and your family through this process.

SOME THINGS YOU CAN SAY TO YOUR CHILD:

- I believe you.
- I know it's not your fault.
- I am so proud that you told, that was a brave thing to do.
- Nothing about YOU made this happen.
- I am upset, but not at you.
- You may see me cry sometimes but I am ok. You do not need to take care of me.
- You can still love someone but not like what he/she did.

SELF-CARE SUGGESTIONS:

RELAX: Try different relaxation activities like yoga or meditation. There are free phone apps you can use to try different types of meditation.

TIME OUT: Give yourself a mental health break daily or several times a week.

SET PRIORITIES: Do one thing at a time and take things day by day.

EXERCISE: Physical activity is a proven stress release.

SLEEP: Sleep is essential to your health. Try to set a routine sleep schedule.

PLAY: Have outside interests, nurture a circle of friends, and do things you enjoy.

BREATHE: Take slow, long, and deep breaths.

EAT and DRINK: Try to make healthy choices and stay hydrated.

FEELING: There is no "right" way to feel. Your feelings are normal, appropriate reactions to an abnormal situation. Be kind to yourself and ask for support.

Taking care of yourself and your own emotional and physical needs is not selfish, rather it is a necessary first step to be able to then take care of your child and your family.



**Children's
COVE**
The Cape & Islands
Child Advocacy Center

