

## IF YOU SUSPECT A CHILD HAS BEEN A VICTIM OF ABUSE:

### Always report any suspicions of child abuse

You may save a child from further harm if you report your suspicions. If you have questions or you want to report suspicions of child abuse, call the Department of Children and Families Child-At-Risk Hotline at 800.792.5200 or your local police department.

## IF A CHILD DISCLOSES ABUSE TO YOU:

### Remain calm and thank the child for telling someone

The child has undergone a potentially traumatic experience and could be more frightened by your response than the abuse itself. Be sure to thank the child for being honest and courageous enough to tell someone.

### Be sure to acknowledge that it is not the child's fault

Child abuse is NEVER the fault of the victim. The child may feel ashamed and embarrassed or feel that they allowed the abuse to happen. Explain to the child that it is not their fault. They are not to blame and they are not in trouble.

### Encourage the child to talk openly

In abuse situations a child tends not to trust people as easily, because the abuser has violated that trust. Once a child discloses abuse, he or she may feel like a weight is lifted off them. Encourage them to talk freely with you or someone they trust about what happened without pressuring them for answers.

*1 in 5 children will be sexually solicited while online.*



Providing Hope and Healing  
for Abused Children

### PARTNER AGENCIES

The Cape & Islands District Attorney  
Department of Children & Families  
Department of Public Health

Contact Children's Cove for more information:  
508.375.0410 • info@childrenscove.org



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Established in 1997, Children's Cove is a nationally accredited and child-friendly Children' Advocacy Center. We are staffed and equipped to provide comprehensive and coordinated multidisciplinary services to victims of sexual abuse, severe physical abuse, witness to domestic violence and commercial sexual exploitation.

The multidisciplinary services are provided in cooperation with our partner agencies. These include The Cape & Islands District Attorney, the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, as well as local and state law enforcement.

As pioneers of this innovative and collaborative approach, Children's Cove provides a single location for child and youth victims to tell their story; and for both the victims and non-offending caregivers to receive support and start the healing process.



## FORENSIC INTERVIEWS

- A non-leading, trauma-informed, developmentally and culturally appropriate interview that is conducted in a comfortable and neutral location.
- Obtains an impartial account of the child's abuse without causing further trauma to the child.
- Children's Cove provides interviews to children, adolescents, and adults with developmental or intellectual disabilities.

## MEDICAL SERVICES

- Children's Cove is staffed by an experienced Nurse Practitioner specializing in pediatric and adolescent sexual abuse and forensic evidence collection.
- On-site emergency and non-emergency forensic medical exams are available to all victims of suspected sexual or physical abuse.
- All medical services are provided in collaboration with the Department of Public Health PediSANE Program.

## MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

- Provides information and referrals regarding trauma-informed mental health treatment for the child and impacted non-offending caregivers.
- Works as a liaison between the family and the service provider as the family begins the healing process.

*1 in 6 boys will be sexually abused before their 18th birthday.*

## ADVOCACY FOR ALL

All services provided by Children's Cove are free of charge and meet the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA). Interpreters are provided in-person or over the phone for anyone who accesses our services.

## ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT SERVICES

- Coordinates referrals and information with community resources to assist victims with community-based organizations to provide natural supports and tangible needs.
- Advocates for and supports the family throughout the criminal justice process and protective matters.
- Provides regarding the Massachusetts Bill of Victims' Rights and assists in the completion of the Victim Compensation application.

*1 in 4 girls will be sexually abused before their 18th birthday.*

## EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

- Provides professional training to partner agencies and youth-serving organizations such as child daycare centers, schools, pediatricians, and recreational programs to aid in recognizing, responding to and reporting child abuse.
- Provides community awareness and prevention education to community members, faith organizations and service providers to improve the Cape and Islands response to child abuse.

*90% of child victims are abused by someone they know and trust.*