



# What is Child Sexual Abuse?

Child sexual abuse is the use of force, coercion, or persuasion to engage in a sexual act with a child. It can be perpetrated by an adult or another minor and includes acts beyond sexual contact such as exhibition, exposure to pornography, voyeurism, and communicating in a sexual manner via the internet or by phone<sup>1</sup>.

1 in 4 girls AND 1 in 6 boys will be sexually abused before the age of 17<sup>2</sup>.

## What we Know About Child Sexual Abuse

- 90% of child sexual abuse is committed by someone the child knows. Of that, 30% are victimized by a family member with the remaining 60% victimized by a non-family member who the family trusts.
- The dynamics of grooming children makes it so many children may not tell anyone. This is especially present if they are threatened by the perpetrator.
- Survivors of child sexual abuse are 3-7 times more likely to be victims of sexual assault later in life.
- More than 33% of child sexual abuse is committed by someone under 18.
- For every 100 acts of child sexual abuse, three perpetrators are convicted<sup>3</sup>.
- CONNSACS certified sexual assault crisis counselors met with 2,019 victims of child sexual abuse and their non-offending parent or guardian during the 2012-2013 fiscal year.

## Tactics Used by Sexual Abusers:

- Often times, abusers will “groom” a child.
- Grooming begins by identifying and targeting a child, followed by gaining trust and access, being involved in the child’s life, isolating the child, creating secrecy about the relationship, and then perpetrating sexual abuse.
- Secrecy is the main focus of the relationship and of the grooming process. This takes time and is purposeful on the part of the perpetrator targeting the child and simultaneously gaining trust from the victim’s family<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Townsend, C., & Rheingold, A.A., (2013). Estimating a child sexual abuse prevalence rate for practitioners: studies. Charleston, S.C., Darkness to Light.

<sup>2</sup> CDC & 1in6.org

<sup>3</sup> Finkelhor, D. (2012). Characteristics of crimes against juveniles. Durham, NH: Crimes against Children Research Center.

<sup>4</sup> CONNSACS. Presentation intervention strategies for law enforcement working with victims of sexual violence.



# What is Sexual Assault?

Sexual assault or sexual violence refer to any unwanted sexual act against or without a person's consent—any sexual, physical or visual, act that forces a person against their will to have unwanted sexual contact or attention.<sup>5</sup>

15.5% of CT high school females AND  
7.5% of CT high school males  
have been forced to have sex with someone.<sup>6</sup>

## WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT SEXUAL ASSAULT:

- By the time they are captured—if they are captured—a sexual offender has often victimized scores or even hundreds of individuals.<sup>7</sup>
- Victims of sexual violence face both immediate and chronic psychological consequences including, shock, denial, withdrawal, post-traumatic stress, depression and alienation.<sup>8</sup>
- In a nationally representative survey, 42.2% of female rape victims were first raped before age 18, and 29.9% between the ages of 11-17.
- 73% of sexual assaults were perpetrated by a non-stranger.<sup>9</sup>
- Prevention programs can change attitudes, behavior, and the culture.

## TACTICS USED BY SEXUAL OFFENDERS:

- Plan and premeditate their attacks, using sophisticated strategies to groom their victims for attack, and to isolate them physically.
- Exhibit strong impulse control and use only as much violence as is needed to terrify and coerce their victims into submission.
- Use alcohol deliberately to render victims more vulnerable to attack, or completely unconscious.<sup>10</sup>
- Use psychological weapons—power, control, manipulation, and threats—most victims of sexual assault will not sustain outward injuries during an assault.

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<sup>5</sup> Joyful Heart Foundation, [www.joyfulheartfoundation.org](http://www.joyfulheartfoundation.org)

<sup>6</sup> Connecticut School Health Survey, 2013, Department of Public Health and State Department of Education

<sup>7</sup> DavidLisak.com

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/sexualviolence/consequences.html>

<sup>9</sup> Rape Abuse Incest National Network, [rainn.org](http://rainn.org)

<sup>10</sup> David Lisak, 2011, <http://www.davidlisak.com/wp-content/uploads/pdf/SARUnderstandingPredatoryNatureSexualViolence.pdf>