

# MOTHERING THROUGH THE PAIN

## NURTURING A VICTIM'S JOURNEY TO HEALING



*A guide to healing a child after trauma is a gradual process , but with love, support, and the right resources, they can rebuild their strength and sense of safety.*

BY KANDICE RANDALL



# Introduction

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I'm so sorry you have to think about this. It's an incredibly difficult and heartbreaking topic. It's important to remember that children may show a variety of emotional, behavioral, and physical signs if they've experienced sexual abuse, but these signs don't necessarily confirm abuse. However, recognizing potential red flags is an important first step.

“Becoming a parent to a victim is both a delicate and empowering role. While the road may be long and fraught with challenges, your love, understanding, and support will be critical in helping them overcome their pain and rebuild their life. It is not an easy path, but with patience, compassion, and the right tools, healing and recovery are possible.”

# About Me

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"As a mother, my world has always been centered around protecting, nurturing, and supporting my children. But what no one can prepare you for is the unimaginable moment when your child becomes a victim of something beyond your control. This journey has been one of heartbreak, strength, and resilience. As a mother of a victim, I have learned that there is no script for this path—just the unwavering love and determination to see my child heal, find justice, and reclaim their peace. Every day brings new challenges, but I remain steadfast in my commitment to being the voice for my child, the protector of their well-being, and the advocate for the support they need to overcome this tragedy."

*Kandice*

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# 01

# Emotional and Behavioral Signs

Children who are victims of trauma, abuse, or other distressing experiences may exhibit a range of emotional and behavioral signs. These signs can vary depending on the child's age, the nature of the trauma, and their individual coping mechanisms. Here are a few common emotional and behavioral signs in a child who is a victim:

## Emotional Signs

## Behavioral Signs

<b>Depression or Sadness</b> – Persistent feelings of hopelessness or withdrawal from activities they once enjoyed.	<b>Aggressive or Violent Behavior</b> – Acting out, bullying others, or showing cruelty toward animals.
<b>Anxiety or Fearfulness</b> – Unexplained fears, excessive worrying, or being overly cautious.	<b>Withdrawal from Social Interactions</b> – Avoiding family, friends, or social activities.
<b>Low Self-Esteem</b> – Expressing feelings of worthlessness or self-blame.	<b>Sudden Changes in Academic Performance</b> – Difficulty concentrating, falling behind in school, or losing interest in learning.
<b>Mood Swings</b> – Rapid emotional shifts, from extreme happiness to anger or sadness.	<b>Self-Harm or Suicidal Thoughts</b> – Engaging in self-injury (cutting, burning) or talking about death.

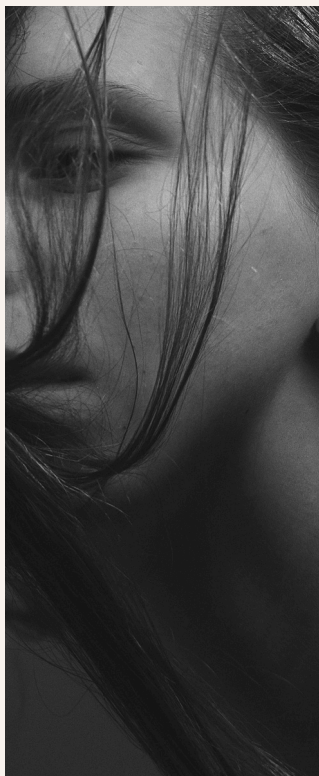


If you notice these signs in a child, it's important to provide support, seek professional help, and ensure their safety.

# 02

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## Physical Signs



*Child sexual abuse is a deeply traumatic experience that can leave both emotional and physical scars. While children may not always disclose their abuse due to fear, shame, or manipulation by the perpetrator, there are often physical signs that can indicate something is wrong. Recognizing these signs is crucial for early intervention and ensuring the child's safety.*

- Pain, itching, or bleeding in genital areas. This can include redness, swelling, or discomfort.
- Difficulty walking or sitting: Complaints about pain or discomfort.
- Unexplained bruises or injuries: Particularly around private areas.
- Frequent urinary tract infections (UTIs) or yeast infections.
- Stained or bloody underwear.

It is important for caregivers, educators, and medical professionals to be vigilant and to take any signs seriously. If physical indicators of abuse are present, immediate medical evaluation and professional intervention are essential to protect the child and provide them with the support they need.



# 03

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## 🚩 Red Flags in Behavior 🚩 Toward Others



- *Unusual secrecy or withdrawal: reluctance to be alone with a particular person.*
- *Reluctance to participate in physical activities (e.g., swimming, sports) that require changing clothes.*
- *Over-compliance or unusually mature behavior: Trying to please adults excessively or acting overly responsible.*

If you notice multiple red flags in a child, it's important to take action.

## What to do if you suspect abuse

- Stay calm and reassuring: If a child discloses something, remain calm and supportive. Let them know they are safe and believed.
- don't push for details: Allow trained professionals to handle questioning.
- Report concerns: If you have reason to suspect abuse, contact child protective services, a local child advocacy center, or law enforcement.
- Seek professional help: Therapy and counseling are essential for children who have experienced trauma.



You're being incredibly strong by seeking this information. Let me know if you need resources, hotlines, or help finding support services.



Being a parent to a victim is heartbreaking and overwhelming, but your love and support are vital to your child's healing. It's natural to feel a mix of emotions - grief, rage, guilt, confusion - but just by being present and seeking guidance, you're already making a difference.

**Supporting your child emotionally:**

- Believe them: The most important thing is to affirm their experience. Let them know you believe them and they are not to blame.
- Create a safe space: Be patient and offer consistent reassurance. Your child may struggle with trust or feel unsafe, so creating a secure and predictable environment is essential.
- Respect their boundaries: Let them decide when and how much to share. Don't pressure them to talk.

You make sure you say this to your child:

“I'm so sorry this happened to you, it's not your fault. I love you, and we will get through this together.”



# Managing Your Own Emotions for Parents

<p><b>Allow yourself to grieve and feel anger:</b> It's okay to feel brokenhearted, furious, or helpless. These emotions are valid.</p>	<p><b>Seek your own support:</b> You don't have to do this alone. Consider therapy, support groups, or counseling specifically for parents of abuse survivors.</p>
<p><b>Avoid displaying intense emotions in front of your child:</b> As hard as it is, try to shield them from your pain, so they don't feel responsible for your feelings.</p>	<p><b>Don't blame yourself:</b> Many parents experience guilt or self-blame. Remember, the blame lies entirely with the abuser.</p>

The biggest thing I did  
was blame myself



# Helping Your Child Heal

- **Be patient with setbacks:** Healing is not linear. There may be mood swings, nightmares, or changes in behavior - it's part of the process.
- **Reinforce healthy boundaries:** Teach them about body autonomy and empower them to say "no" to anything that makes them uncomfortable.
- **Maintain routines:** Structure and predictability can help them feel safe.
- **Celebrate small victories:** Whether it's opening up about their feelings or enjoying a favorite activity again, acknowledge their progress.

Supporting my daughter  
has helped her healing process tremendously

“

*Being a mother to a victim hasn't been easy. However, it's been my daughter's strength, courage, and bravery that has helped me get through it. I do not label her a victim, I tell her she is a SURVIVOR!*

- KANDICE RANDALL

*Her Story  
Matters*

# Additional Resources



## Therapists and Counselors

- **Child Psychologists and Therapists** - Specialized counselors can help children process traumatic experiences and develop coping mechanisms.
- **Trauma-Informed Therapists:** These professionals are trained in understanding how trauma affects children and can offer treatment that addresses the specific needs of abuse survivors.

## Hotlines and Helplines

- **National Child Abuse Hotline (USA):** (1-800-4-A-CHILD) provides 24/7 confidential assistance for children and adults.
- **The National Domestic Violence Hotline (USA):** (1-800-799-SAFE) offers support to anyone experiencing domestic violence, including children who may be living in abusive homes.
- **National Sexual Assault Hotline (USA):** RAINN (1-800-656-HOPE) provides confidential support for survivors of sexual abuse and assault.

## Child Advocacy Centers

**Local Child Advocacy Centers (CACs):** These centers offer a range of services, including forensic interviews, counseling, and coordination with law enforcement and child protective services.

## Public Health and Social Services

- **Child Protective Services (CPS):** In many countries, CPS is the agency responsible for investigating abuse cases and intervening when necessary to ensure the child's safety.
- **Social Workers:** Trained to assist families in crisis and can connect children and families with community resources, therapy, and legal assistance.

# BONUS PAGE

## My personal experience and signs to being a mother to a victim



I want to start off by saying that I have always talked to both of my children about body safety. From the time they were old enough to talk and communicate with me. But, with my daughter I started noticing some unusual signs. I noticed she started touching herself inappropriately and I would always get onto her and she kept doing it and so I took her to see her pediatrician where he told me that it was normal for a child to touch themselves. But, little did I know that I would get a phone call from my mother-in-law saying that she just walked in on her husband touching my daughter. I find out five years later that she had been sexually molested by her own grandfather since she was five years old. She was 10 years old when I found out. But, to make a long story short we did go to court and we got justice for my daughter and we won. My personal signs that I didn't see was that my daughter kept peeing on herself when I was trying to potty train her, and she was also receiving excessive gifts and she wouldn't tell me why, she would also call me when she was at her grandparents house saying she wanted to come home and she wouldn't give me a reason why, and when I would tell her that she was going to her grandparents house; she would tell me that didn't want to go and she wouldn't give me a reason why. But, little did I know that was her way crying out to me and I didn't realize it. Now, my daughter and I did go to the Carl Perkins Center for therapy. We went for seven months and that helped us both a lot. Now, I have shared my own personal experience. Every sign within a child is going to be different. But, always stay observant and listen to your child. Let them know they will not be in trouble for anything and that you will not be mad at them. Let your child know they can trust you and that you support them no matter what. Let them know they are safe. All of that is very important! There is not a manual that prepares you for a time like this but you are not alone. Just know that you have support and resources. Remember you and your child will get through this and you and your child will heal with time.

# Top 3 signs to look for that I personally experienced myself:

When I found out that my daughter was being sexually abused there were signs that were right in front my face and I did not notice them because I did not know what to look for. So, I am want to point out signs to be aware of and to take action.

Be aware of these signs and please don't ignore them. I wish I would have known these signs sooner. Always be alert of what your child is saying and doing. Your child is trying to reach out to you and you have to be the one to listen. I hope this information is helpful. Remember, you are alone!



## Top 3 Signs to look for:

- 1 Excessive Gifts. If your child receiving gifts no reason and they can't tell why they received in the first place.
- 2 If your child tells you they don't want to go to someone's house or go with anyone.
- 3 If your child calls you telling you they want to come home and they don't want to be somewhere.

# Conclusion and Next Steps

You're incredibly strong for being there for your child. Let me know if you need specific resources, support groups, or any other assistance. You're not alone in this!



Listen to your child even if they are crying out to you in their own way but not actually giving you a reason why.  
**ALWAYS BE PATIENT WITH YOUR CHILD**

*Don't ever ignore your child! Your child will open up to you in their own way, but you have to be the one to listen. Always make your child feel safe. Let them know they can trust you.*



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