

Prevention of child abuse is an important goal in GSUSA and Black Diamond Council's commitment to safeguarding the health and well-being of girls, and to help them grow into mature, responsible women.

- Child Abuse Awareness & Prevention Training is required for all volunteer positions who work directly with girls.
- This training must be renewed every three years.

During this training, we will cover your responsibility as a volunteer when it comes to being aware of and reporting child abuse, as well as what the four different types of child abuse are and indicators of each.

You will also learn signs of accidental and intentional injuries.

You will also learn the reporting process and we will show the need for confidentiality.

We will finish off with ways to create a safe environment for Girl Scouts and how to help girls develop skills to prevent child abuse.

Alarming Statistics

Each year over one million children are victims of serious neglect and abuse and between 2,000 and 5,000 of these children die.



Child abuse is a social problem that cuts across all ethnic, social, economic, and religious groups.

Many children are at risk as their families and communities are subject to the stresses of today's society.

The total impact of child abuse cannot be fully assessed since many cases go unreported.

Did you know:

- In 94 percent of child abuse cases, abuse has occurred on more than one occasion.
- As many as one in four girls and one in eight boys have a sexually abusive experience before the age of 18.
- In cases of child sexual abuse, 85 percent involve a relative or family friend, or someone else whom the child knows well.
- 15 to 25 percent of the known victims of child abuse are under age six.
- Many abused children grow up to be abusive parents.
- Neglect is the most common form of child abuse.

Children who are more vulnerable to abuse include:

- those who were born prematurely or with low birth weight,
- those who have difficult temperaments
- those who are physically disabled or mentally challenged,
- those who were unwanted.

Who are the abusers?

- They are most frequently persons the child knows and trusts—parents, relatives, neighbors - though in some cases the abuser is a stranger.
- Child abusers represent all economic, racial and religious groups.
- Social and economic stresses contribute to an increased tendency toward becoming an abuser—
- Poverty, unemployment, marital discord,
- alcoholism, social isolation, lack of familial supports,
- or limited parenting skills - all contribute to the incidence of child abuse.
- Children, particularly those who are weak in some way or are difficult to handle, often become scapegoats - innocent victims in troubled times.

Types of Abuse

Child abuse is committed to a child under the age of 18.

It can include physical abuse, physical neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional maltreatment.

Physical abuse is bodily injury.

Some abused children have faced severe beatings, scalding, suffocating, human bites, and strangulation.

The result may be broken bones, bruises, internal injuries and even death.

Physical Neglect is the failure to adequately provide food, clothing, shelter, care and supervision. Physical neglect is often linked to a child's failure to thrive.

Sexual Abuse is the exploitation of a child for the gratification of an adult.

Sexual abuse includes sexual touching, intercourse.

It can include incest, rape, and sodomy, as well as exhibitionism, voyeurism, and use of children in pornography.

Mental/Emotional Abuse often involves emotional neglect and failure to provide love, care, support and guidance necessary for healthy psychological development.

Emotional maltreatment also includes verbal abuse, such as excessive teasing, belittling, rejection or verbal attacks.

It is important to know that many children will be afraid to tell anyone that they are being abused. They may, however, reveal this fact indirectly - in their drawings, through their stories, or through the way they respond when someone touches them.

Child abuse often has specific symptoms.

More than one symptom is usually present in most cases of child abuse.

Note that the presence of any of these signs does not necessarily mean that abuse has occurred.

However, if a child is displaying several of these symptoms, it might be cause for concern.

Common Symptoms of the Types of Abuse

Physical Abuse

- Frequently has unexplained injuries, bruises, or burns that are left untreated.
- Fears receiving medical help
- Has bald spots (sign of hair pulling)
- Has abdominal swelling
- Avoids physical contact with others
- Wears clothing that covers arms and legs, even in hot weather
- Displays antisocial behavior (cheating, stealing, lying, etc.)
- Displays a fear of going home to family, or avoidance of a person
- Is often late or absent

Physical Neglect

- Wears clothes that are soiled, the wrong size, or torn
- Has poor hygiene
- Is often tired
- Is often hungry
- Is hoarding food
- Craves attention
- Has infected sores or other skin infections
- Has a nervous habit such as rocking
- Displays destructive behavior
- Is often absent or late



Sexual Abuse

- Has unusual interest in or knowledge of sexual matters
- Is fearful of a certain person or place
- Has extreme changes in behavior (crying spells, nightmares, withdrawal, overly aggressive)
- Has poor relationships with the opposite sex
- Receives unexplained gifts or money
- Runs away from home often
- Exhibits regressive behaviors such as bed wetting
- Has itching or pain in the genital area

Mental/Emotional Maltreatment (Abuse)

- Has a poor self-image
- Is easily upset when she makes mistakes
- Is often afraid to go home
- Fears new situations or changes
- Displays either extremely passive or extremely aggressive behavior
- Laughs when feeling hurt or sad
- May suffer from asthma, an ulcer, or severe allergies



Having reviewed this brief listing of indicators, you may be thinking that you have a girl in the troop who is in an abusive situation.

Child abuse is an ongoing situation for a child; in most cases it is not a single incident. However, if you suspect abuse is occurring report it.

Think about this

If you suspect a child is in an abusive situation what is leading you to this conclusion?

- Leaders working with girls have always been encouraged to become familiar with each girls' family situation so they can help girls progress toward their achievement of the Girl Scout Mission.
- Each family sets it's own living standards and ways of interaction. However, there are baseline social standards.
- What type of family living situation could a girl have, that while not the best situation, would not necessarily be an abusive situation?

If you notice or become aware of possible child abuse, you need to act responsibly and cautiously, and always act with the girl's best interest in mind. The safety and wellbeing of our girls is our top priority.

It is important to distinguish abuse from accident.

What would help you distinguish between accidental and non-accidental injury?

Make sure you ask yourselves these questions before proceeding to file a report.

- ◆ What is the location of the injury? Certain locations are more likely to sustain injury—what areas?
- ◆ How frequently does a girl have injuries? Does she has a number of injuries or bruises at the same time? The **greater** the number of injuries, the **greater** the cause for concern.
- ◆ Are the size & shape of the injury marks (bruises) undefined? Marks from accidental injuries do not have a defined shape. Those from non-accidental injury bear strong resemblance to the object causing the injury.
- ◆ Is the description of how an injury occurred consistent with the type of injury?
- ◆ Is the injury consistent with developmental characteristics?

If after responding to these questions, you continue to be concerned that abuse may be happening, make the report!

Making a report is “a request for the healing process to begin.”

Not making a report when abuse is suspected could lead to permanent damage or death.

Girl Scouting

- Girl Scouting is seen by many girls as a safe place to truly be “themselves.”
- Girls develop a trusting relationship with their peers and with their leaders.
- Girl Scout activities encourage girls to share their feelings and their thoughts about issues of concern.
- Girl Scouting frequently presents opportunities for girls to “just hang out and talk”, for example girls often have sleepovers, spend time traveling to and from events, and troop camping.

This environment can result in girls making disclosures about what is happening in their lives, including abusive situations. If this happens, a friend of the girl may go to a leader with her concerns for her friend or the girl may tell her leader that she is in an abusive situation.

As a leader, how will you respond?

Listen seriously to what girls have to say. They seldom lie about being abused.

Help girls with child abuse problems by knowing how, when, and where to get professional help.

So, what do you do if a girl tells you she has been abused?

- Believe what she has told you
- Tell her that it is not her fault
- Tell her that you are glad she told you
- Tell her that you are sorry about what happened and that you will do your best to protect and support her.

When you are talking with a girl about a possible abuse situation, you want to do everything you can to keep her calm and make sure she feels safe. You want to remain calm and allow her to talk. Reassure and support her as she opens up about her life.

When you are presented with evidence that abuse is occurring, you must take action and report it. This may just save her life.

You want to make sure that you do not panic or overreact, she will react to your emotions, so you want to stay calm.

Do not press her to tell more information. Allow her time to compose her thoughts and for her to make sure she is safe telling you what is going on in her life. She may become overwhelmed if you ask her a bunch of questions and she will shut down and stop talking.

Make sure she knows that you do not blame her for what is going on, and you are not minimizing her feelings.

Be careful to not promise her something you cannot control, do not tell her that you will not tell anyone.

Under no circumstances are you to confront the offender, you are not the police, you cannot deal with this on your own.

- Do:
- Remain calm
 - Believe her
 - Allow her to talk
 - Show interest and concern
 - Reassure and support her
 - Take action. It could save her life
 - Report within 24 hours

- Don't:
- Panic or overreact
 - Press her to talk
 - Overwhelm her with questions
 - Promise anything you can't control
 - Confront the offender
 - Blame or minimize her feelings

Reporting Child Abuse of Any Kind

As a volunteer working with youth in Ohio, Maryland, West Virginia or Virginia you ARE legally mandated to report suspected child abuse.

As a volunteer with Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council, you have agreed to act in a responsible, caring manner that ensures the safety of our girls.

Again, all adults working directly with girls are required by law to report suspected child abuse.

If the girl requires medical attention, or the offender is on scene and causing a problem, make sure the girl and you are safe, and call 911 as soon as possible.

Adults working with girls in the Girl Scout setting are required to report suspected child abuse.

If abuse is suspected, report it. If a girl tells you that she is in an abusive situation or if you determine from the information the girl is sharing that she is in an abusive situation, report it.

Reporting is “a request for the healing process to begin.”



Reporting Procedure

There are three steps: **call** the hotline, **state** the facts and **inform** your local Council Field Staff.

- All reports are confidential.
- Please take the time to write down the numbers for any areas that your troop may need and keep them in your troop documents.
- You will also want to add them as contacts in your phones.

1. Call the Child Abuse Hotlines for the area the girl is from:

- West Virginia — (800) 352-6513
- Virginia — (800) 552-7096
- Maryland — Garrett County (301) 533-3005 or (301) 334-1911 for after hours
- Ohio — (855) O - H - CHILD (855-642-4453)

2. State the Facts you know.

- Provide the name, address and telephone of the girl,
- The names of her parent(s)/guardians(s)
- and the observations that have resulted in a report being made.

3. Inform the local Council Staff member serving the area that a report has been made.

- You can contact Customer Care at 304-345-7722 to begin this process also.

If you are uncomfortable making a report, report it to the local Council Staff member serving the area and the reporting process will be completed by that individual. Provide them with the same information given in the report.

- All reports are confidential.
- Once the report has been made to the appropriate agency, the agency will investigate.
- The individual making the report should not discuss the situation with anyone unless given permission by the investigating agency. This includes the parents, as this may place the girl at further risk or interfere with the investigation.

Make sure you add the Child Abuse Hotline number for your area to your phone and have them available for your troop girls to access if they are needed. If a girl is in an abusive situation, she may call the hotline herself, or a friend may call for her. Make sure they have access to these numbers.



It is evident that child abuse is a serious issue and needs immediate attention from the community. Girl Scouting can play an important preventive role in working with this tragic problem.

Leaders have a responsibility to provide a safe environment for all concerned, including themselves.

How can you create a safe environment can be created and maintained throughout the year?

- Follow Girl Scout safety guidelines when selecting and conducting activities.
- Have at least two or more adults present during meetings and activities.
- Ensure good discipline practices are in place and that they are followed.

One of the most important ways you can create a safe environment for your girls is to be a positive role model.

Here are some ways you can be a positive role model for your girls.

- Demonstrate how to keep your cool when asking girls to comply with instructions
- Assist girls in resolving conflicts in a calm, fair manner
- Ask a girl's permission before touching her to guide her through a skill (i.e. drawing a bow in archery or threading a needle for a quilting project)
- Speak to girls in a manner that is friendly, respectful, clear and supportive

Be sure to keep parents or guardians in the loop.

- They should know what is taking place during Girl Scout activities.
- Make sure parents or guardians are informed when picking their child up from a meeting (or contacted if the girl is carpooled or walks home from meetings)
- Let them know if their daughter is involved in a conflict that was upsetting during the meeting.
- Make sure to communicate deadlines and expectations to them as soon as you can, and then remind them of them often.

Parent /guardian communication is essential to your girls having an awesome troop experience.

Take a preventative approach.

Provide non-threatening, preventive child abuse activities that will help girls feel positive about themselves.

For example, if girls participate in activities that increase self-esteem, they will be better able to protect themselves from persons who try to harm them. Remember, the primary role you play is that of a caring adult.

In most cases, it is not appropriate for you to talk with a girl about a situation unless she initiates the conversation. Remember, if you suspect a girl has been abused, report it!

Child abuse prevention programs not only must provide factual information but should seek to address the causes of the problem in a non-threatening manner.

The basic goals of such programs should be to enhance self-esteem; to develop skills in communication, assertiveness, problem-solving, stress management, personal safety, family living; and to present support services that are available.

How can you help girls develop skills that will help prevent child abuse?

- Become familiar with background information about child abuse: symptoms, detection methods, and state reporting procedures.
- Provide an atmosphere of openness, freedom, and trust so that girls will feel comfortable expressing themselves, asking questions, and seeking advice.
- Be sensitive to girls who may be overachievers due to parental pressure.
- Encourage them to perform at a realistic level, rather than trying to please someone else.
- Give girls praise, recognition, and increased responsibility, and let them know you value and care about them.
- Girls who feel accepted are less likely to allow others to abuse them.
Help girls become assertive and let them know that it's alright to say no to an adult if they need to protect themselves.

GSUSA and Black Diamond Council have a commitment to keeping our girls and our volunteers safe from all harm. You can be an important link in helping someone to get the help they need.

Congratulations - you've successfully completed this tutorial and are well on your way to a successful Girl Scout year.

[Please click here to be taken to the online training credit form.](#)

- **You will need to select the training: CHILD ABUSE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION**
- **You will also need to provide a valid email, preferably the one you used to sign up with Girl Scouts.**
- **You will receive a printable pdf of your training completion certificate in the email you provide.**
- **This certificate is good for 3 years and will need to be renewed at that time.**

Thank you for all you do to keep the Girls of Black Diamond safe!

If you do not have access to the internet, you can print the following quiz (Please keep the rest of this document for your reference) and mail the quiz to council.

Name: _____ Email: _____

Phone: _____ Troop: _____

QUIZ

Please mail the following 3 pages only to:

Girl Scouts of Black Diamond – Volunteer Training
321 Virginia Street West, Charleston, WV 25302

- 1. How often are volunteers of Black Diamond required to take Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention?**
 - a. Every Year
 - b. Every Three Years
 - c. Once

- 2. Who is required to take Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention?**
 - a. All Volunteers working directly with girls
 - b. All Troop Leaders
 - c. All Troop Drivers

- 3. True or False: Child abuse is a social problem that cuts across all ethnic, social, economic, and religious groups.**
 - a. True
 - b. False

- 4. Each year over one million children are victims of serious neglect and abuse. How many of these die as a result of the abuse?**

- 5. In most cases of child sexual abuse, 85% involve this group:**
 - a. Strangers
 - b. Relative, family friend or someone else the child knows well

- 6. What is the most common form of child abuse?**

- 7. What should you do if a girl tells you she has been abused?**
 - a. Believe what she has told you
 - b. Tell her that it is not her fault
 - c. Tell her that you are glad she told you
 - d. Tell her that you are sorry about what happened and that you will do your best to protect and support her
 - e. All the Above

8. Match the type of abuse to the correct description.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| ___ Physical Abuse | 1. The exploitation of a child for the gratification of an adult. |
| ___ Sexual Abuse | 2. The Failure to adequately provide food, clothing, shelter, care and supervision. |
| ___ Physical Neglect | 3. The failure to provide love, care, support and guidance necessary for healthy psychological development |
| ___ Mental/Emotional Maltreatment | 4. Bodily injury to a child. |

9. Fill in the Type of Abuse based on the Signs and Symptoms

_____ Abuse

- Frequently has unexplained injuries, bruises, or burns that are left untreated.
- Fears receiving medical help
- Has bald spots (sign of hair pulling)
- Has abdominal swelling
- Avoids physical contact with others
- Wears clothing that covers arms and legs, even in hot weather
- Displays antisocial behavior (cheating, stealing, lying, etc.)
- Displays a fear of going home to family, or avoidance of a person
- Is often late or absent

Physical _____

- Wears clothes that are soiled, the wrong size, or torn
- Has poor hygiene
- Is often tired
- Is often hungry
- Is hoarding food
- Craves attention
- Has infected sores or other skin infections
- Has a nervous habit such as rocking
- Displays destructive behavior
- Is often absent or late

_____ Abuse

- Has unusual interest in or knowledge of sexual matters
- Is fearful of a certain person or place
- Has extreme changes in behavior (crying spells, nightmares, withdrawal, overly aggressive)
- Has poor relationships with the opposite sex
- Receives unexplained gifts or money
- Runs away from home often
- Exhibits regressive behaviors such as bed wetting
- Has itching or pain in the genital area

_____ Maltreatment (Abuse)

- Has a poor self-image
- Is easily upset when she makes mistakes
- Is often afraid to go home
- Fears new situations or changes
- Displays either extremely passive or extremely aggressive behavior
- Laughs when feeling hurt or sad
- May suffer from asthma, an ulcer, or severe allergies

10. Volunteers working with youth in Ohio, Maryland, West Virginia or Virginia:

- a. Are legally mandated to report suspected child abuse
- b. Are recommended to report suspected child abuse
- c. Are required to report only child sexual abuse

11. Please fill in the three steps to reporting Child Abuse:

1. _____ the hotline
2. _____ the facts
3. _____ your local Council Field Staff.

12. Write the Child Abuse Hotline number(s) for the areas that you serve in:

13. What facts should you provide to the Child Abuse Hotline if you know them?

14. How can you create a safe environment throughout the year?

15. How can you help girls develop skills that will help prevent child abuse?
