

## Child Sexual and Abuse Warning Signs

Cindy Sproles – Author of Mercy’s Rain

Mercy’s Rain is a novel that brings into light the atrocities of childhood sexual abuse. The signs of sexual abuse in children can be easily overlooked. Here are a few warning signals that might save a child’s life.

- 1) Changes in eating habits - Fear and anxiety, along with stress will cause the eating pendulum to swing both directions. Watch for sudden excessive weight gains or weight loss.
- 2) Performance in school grades and attendance – Teachers may see a sharp decline in grades, behaviors, and notice an increase in absenteeism.
- 3) Behavioral changes – Changes in attitude, acting out, becoming reclusive, even resorting to early childhood behaviors such as thumb sucking or bedwetting may occur.
- 4) Fear – Children may not want to return home. They may show fear toward adults, especially those who are causing the abuse.
- 5) Injuries – Bruises, bleeding vaginally or rectally, swollen lips and other odd injuries that can result from sexual abuse.
- 6) Sleep habits change – Normally good sleepers may begin to fear sleep, nightmares, or even the dark. Children may become depressed and not want to get out of bed or refuse to sleep.
- 7) Risk levels may increase – Children who would normally not take big risks may begin to exhibit a “no fear” attitude toward physical activities – i.e. recklessness in play, lack of attention to their safety.
- 8) Inappropriate sexual behaviors toward others – Children of sexual abuse may begin to exhibit inappropriate actions toward friends or loved ones.
- 9) Lack of attention – Children may daydream, stare, become disengaged and stop talking.

### If you suspect childhood sexual abuse, contact:

\* Your local 911 or 1-888-PREVENT (888-773-2362).

\*The Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline – 1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453)

\*Darkness to Light – 1-866-FOR-LIGHT (866-367-5444) – Any individual, child or adult, who needs resources about sexual abuse can call the Helpline.

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Resources you can trust from:

