

Sexual Abuse

Background Notes

Sexual abuse is defined as a person using or attempting to use a child for their own sexual gratification. Frequently DHS is involved in a case for other reasons and, after the child is placed in a safe substitute care placement, they report sexual abuse. The child's worker may be the person who works most closely with the child after reporting the abuse. They need to be able to believe and support the child as well as work with the birth family to resolve the abuse through counseling and the court process. Frequently children display sexual behaviors in their foster home that require the foster parent to have special skills to care for them. Counseling for the victim, non-offending parent and offender are crucial to the long-term health of all members of the family.

Tasks / Assignments:

- Ask your supervisor to provide you with a case file to read which involves sexual abuse.
- Identify the common feelings children have about their sexual abuse from reading the handout in the appendix, entitled Parenting the Sexually Abused Child.
- Ask your supervisor what agency provides treatment to victims and non-offending parents.
- Ask your supervisor about the Crime Victim's Assistance program.
- Ask your supervisor about visitation between a victim and the relative offender. What are the general practices surrounding contact between the victim and offender if the offender is a relative?

Discoveries:

- *What did I feel when I read the case file?*
- *How many times was the child interviewed?*
- *How supportive is the non-offending parent in the case?*
- *How is the abuse affecting the child's current behavior?*
- *How long does a child have to wait for counseling?*
- *How is the abuse affecting the non-offending parent?*
- *How is a referral for treatment made? Victim, non-offending parent, perpetrator?*
- *What services are covered under the Crime Victim's Assistance program?*

