

## Patterns and clues

The sexual abuse of a child is very traumatic. Children who are victims create ways of coping that help to get them through their pain. But these methods may cause problems in adult life.

- Repeat victim-Childhood abuse victims may continue to see themselves as victims as they grow up. They may feel helpless about changing their lives and get into relationships where they are victims again.
- Victimizer-Feelings of great pain, rage, and loss of control can lead abuse victims to abuse others in some way.
- Substance abuser-Survivors of childhood abuse may develop problems with use of alcohol and other drugs, or they may develop eating disorders.

## If you need help...

Dealing with the long-term effects of childhood sexual abuse can be very hard for you – the abuse survivor – and for you partner.

With services provided through the Victim Assistance and Sexual Assault Program, you can overcome your past and create a better future.

**For more information, please contact:  
Victim Assistance and Sexual Assault  
Program (VASAP)  
1301 Piccard Drive Suite 4100  
Rockville, Maryland 20850  
(240) 777-1355  
(240) 777-1347 TTY  
(240) 777-4357 24 hour crisis line  
[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/vasap](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/vasap)**

**Montgomery County, Maryland  
Department of Health and Human Services**



## There's Help For Adults Molested As Children



**From the Victim Assistance and Sexual  
Assault Program (VASAP)  
(240) 777-1355**

## **You may feel very much alone ... but you are not.**

More than one-fourth of this country's Children-both boys and girls-are victims of sexual abuse.

When a child is abused, the trauma may still have effects in adult life. Many men and women suffer in silence.

If you were molested as a child, then most likely you know what it's like to



- feel alone and different from other people;
- feel bad about yourself;
- be anxious, depressed, very fearful, or mistrustful;
- carry memories of pain, anger, and shame;
- find it hard to form and maintain close relationships;
- find it hard to achieve success or to value your success.

## **Adults who suffered childhood sexual abuse are survivors...**

But many do not know what that means. The bad feelings that adult survivors suffer are hidden scars from childhood sexual abuse. And scars mean that healing has begun.

You are strong, and you can overcome your painful past. With guidance and support from specially trained professionals, you can

- Let yourself remember what happened, even though it's painful.
- Place the blame where it belongs- with the abuser. It was not your fault!
- Credit yourself for your courage. You got yourself through a terrible time; now you can use your strengths to recover from it.
- Deal with your anger in helpful ways: You can use anger to fuel creative energy!
- Learn to be kind to yourself. Change takes time: Be patient and as kind to yourself as you are to others.

## **There are services that can help you toward recovery ...**

If you are a Montgomery County resident you may qualify for:

- individual counseling
- couples counseling
- group therapy.

You can also get information about services from other sources.

Those who have health insurance or can pay on their own will be helped by the VASAP staff to find the best referral resource. Our program is part of a large network of mental health care providers in both public and private agencies.

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