Caregivers Information Package
On Child Sexual Abuse
What is child abuse?
Child abuse includes all forms of physical and emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, and exploitation that results in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, development or dignity.

Forms of child abuse

» Physical abuse: is that which results in actual or potential physical harm to a child e.g. Beating, hitting, burning, biting etc.

» Emotional abuse: These includes acts of threatening the child, denial of food, isolation, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing or other non-physical forms of hostile treatment.

» Neglect: is the failure to provide for the development of the child in all spheres: health, education, food, shelter, and safe living conditions.

» Child sexual abuse: When an adult has sex with a child or between a child and another or where a child is used for the sexual stimulation of an adult or other child. It can include both touching and non-touching behaviours. Touching behaviours may involve touching of the vagina, penis, breasts or buttocks, oral-genital contact. According to the Kenyan law, child sexual abuse includes, but is not limited to defilement (sex with a child), incest (a relative having sex with a child), child trafficking, child prostitution, and child pornography, among others.
Key message:
Research shows that both boys and girls experience sexual violence during their childhood.

Who is likely to sexually abuse children?
Many at times, children are sexually abused by persons well known to them or their families.

Child sexual abuse can be in form of:
- Incest - child abuse by a blood relative e.g father, cousin, uncle etc
- Defilement - sex with a child
- Pressured sex - use of persuasion or enticement.
- Forced sex - use of force or threat of harm

Child sexual abuse can happen in different environment:
- In the home
- Schools
- Neighbours’ house
- During movies or parties
- In public places
- In children homes and safe spaces
- In churches

What you need to know about child sexual abuse
- Any child can be defiled - a boy or a girl of any age, etc
- No one deserves to be sexually abused, no matter what they wear, where they are, or what they have done.
- A child can be sexually abused by a stranger, or by someone they/you know and trust.
- Child abuse is an abuse of the child’s rights and is against the law.
- Absence of physical injury on the child does not mean abuse did not happen.
How to tell if a child has been sexually abused

Sexually abused children may display a range of emotional and behavioural reactions, like:

» Shows distrust towards adults or other children
» Sleeping difficulties, either sleeping a lot or fear of sleeping due to nightmares
» Bed wetting
» Withdrawn or violent behaviour
» Difficulty in relating to adults or peers
» Bruising or bleeding in the genital area
» Gets angry easily
» Has unexplained bruising to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs
» Unable to explain an injury, or providing explanations that are inconsistent to the injury

» Has a sexually transmitted infection
» Difficulties in concentrating at school or at home
» Creating stories, poems of drawings about abuse or violence
» Telling you about it, directly or indirectly e.g., ‘________ hurts my wee-wee,susu,dudu’
» Fear of being left alone with a particular individual(s)
» Display of sexual knowledge, sexual language, and/or behaviours that are inappropriate for the child’s age
» Is pregnant
How sexual abuse affects Children

Child sexual abuse is a painful experience that affects a child physically and emotionally. Children who have been abused may experience:

» Depression and anxiety
» Low self-esteem; a child not appreciating oneself
» Not interested in eating or eats a lot
» Drug abuse e.g taking alcohol, bhang
» Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
» Suicidal attempts
» Problems in relating with other people including family and friends
» Feeling insecure in relationships
» Poor academic performance
» Engagement in crime
» Reckless sexual behaviour
» Disability
» Infection with diseases
» Pregnancy
» Death

What to do when a child reports being sexually abused?

» Stay calm, listen carefully, and NEVER blame the child.
» Thank the child for telling you and reassure him or her of your support.
» Don’t tell them that IT’S OK they will get over it
» Seek help from the nearest hospital.
» Report the case to the police after treatment in the hospital

Why you should speak out about child sexual abuse

» Abuse affects the child for the rest of their life
» Every child has the right to be protected by caring adults.
» Failure to report an abuse increases the risk of the child to further abuse
» A child is never to blame if they have been abused.
Speaking out may enable the child get help
Key message:
Seek for help immediately in a hospital first then police station
A child who has been sexually abused can take time to heal. You need to be there for them and provide the care they need.
If you suspect that a child has been abused it is better to report it, even if you are not sure, rather than do nothing.

What your child will want from you
As a parent, relative, friend, teacher or neighbour to a child who has been sexually abused, you may feel it is easier to stay silent for fear of not knowing what to tell the child. DON’T keep quiet!
A child who has been sexually abused will want you to:
» Listen and try to understand
» Let them tell you what happened to them when they are ready
» Show love with words.
» Not to judge them for what happened
» Realise that while they may be confused with what happened to them, they still understand better their experience than anyone else
» Give him/her time to heal from what they have gone through
» Help him/her to get help, to take medication, to attend follow-up visits at the hospital up to the 5th visit or as required.
Remember:
To trust and support your child through the healing process

Why Report to a Health Facility?

It is important for you to ensure your child reports to the nearest health facility as soon as possible for the following services:

» Drugs (PEP) to prevent the child from acquiring HIV.
» These drugs work if they are given before the end of 3 days (72 hours) from the time of abuse.
» Drugs to prevent sexually transmitted disease.
» Drugs to prevent the child from getting pregnant.
» Vaccination to prevent the child from getting Hepatitis and Tetanus.
» Counselling and information on HIV and how to deal with the effects of child abuse.
» Lab services.
» To get a copy of a filled Post Rape Care (PRC) form and P3 form.
Remember:

It is important that you report child sexual abuse to the hospital immediately. The sooner PEP is initiated after the abuse, the higher the chances that it will prevent HIV transmission.

PEP pills do not guarantee protection against HIV.

It is important for a child to have further HIV tests after completing treatment to determine if they are still HIV negative.

A child can get pregnant if they have been sexually abused.

It is important for the child to take and finish all the drugs as instructed by the doctor.

Examination and evidence collection

» At the hospital, the health provider will request for your permission to examine your child for any evidence that will show they have been sexually abused.

» You will be requested to sign a consent form to allow for the examination of the child.

Why is examination important?

» To help the provider collect and document in the hospital records information on what is observed and the complaint presented by the child.

» Enable the provider know the type of services to offer to the child based on type of abuse, when the abuse occurred and age of the child.

Why samples are collected?

» The provider will be able to collect samples for further analysis in the laboratory which can help in the treatment but also in linking to the person who abused the child.

» Samples are important in proving that someone had a sexual encounter with the child.

How to support a child to receive health services

You can support a child by:

» Accompanying them to the hospital.

» Sitting in the room as they are being attended to.

» Providing additional information that will help in determining the type of services to be given. For example, name of the child, age, place of residence, when abuse occurred, medical history, among others.

» Safeguarding copies of all their medical records.

» Accompanying them to the hospital for their continued care and counselling.
Where to get help

If you suspect a child has experienced sexual abuse, or is at risk of being sexually abused, there are a number of institutions that can provide support and advice. You can call child line through 116, Youth Hotline at 1190 and GBV Hotline 1195.