

# Who Do You Tell?



## Type of intervention

Facilitator led workshops for elementary school aged children to support them in understanding what sexual abuse is, the impacts it can have and how to access help. Awareness raising and training sessions are also delivered to teachers and parent/caregivers alongside.

## Target group/s, level/s of prevention and sub-group/s:

Primary prevention program for elementary school aged children with supplementary training for teaching staff and caregivers alongside.

## Target population

Children aged 4-12.

## Delivery organisation

Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse is a registered charity in Canada. They offer crisis support and counselling for survivors of sexual harassment, abuse, or assault. In addition, they seek to raise awareness of sexual violence through education programs and community development. This service is primarily in Calgary, Canada, and surrounding areas.

## Mode and context of delivery

Education workshops including interactive elements such as role play, group discussions and pictures. This seeks to provide participants with the skills to recognise abuse, understand healthy relationships, develop bodily autonomy, and know how to access support.

## Level/Nature of staff expertise required

Sessions are co-facilitated by two educators who hold a bachelor's degree level of education alongside several years of experience in community work or development.

## Intensity/extent of engagement with target group(s)

The program consists of two sessions running from 45-60 minutes.

## Description of intervention

Who Do You Tell has been developed using research-based ideas and methods. Over two sessions, participants develop the skills to recognise abuse and how to access support from a trusted adult. In addition, they explore

the concept of healthy relationships, bodily autonomy, and the impacts of sexual violence. Key messages of the sessions include:

- Children's bodies belong to them
- Child sexual abuse is never a child's fault
- Tell an adult that you trust

The co-facilitators use a range of age-appropriate delivery methods to enable discussion and interaction from participants. In younger age groups this includes pictures and play skits, for older children the sessions centre around group discussions, videos and pictures. Activities include learning about appropriate touches, help seeking strategies and practicing setting boundaries. Additional resources have been developed specific to the needs of Muslim, East Asian and Indigenous communities.

The program messaging is supported through interaction with teachers and care givers through presentations, handouts and follow up conversations. The parent/caregiver presentation provides them with knowledge on the session contents, how to speak to children about sexual abuse and support children with disclosures and provides a space for questions. The teacher session is designed to help reinforce the program messaging and provide staff with knowledge of sexual abuse and support.

### **Evaluation**

In qualitative interviews with 116 children, participants reported that they remembered the core concepts of the program at follow up several months later. Key messages which had been retained included awareness of what constitutes sexual abuse and that this can be perpetrated by someone in their family. Some aspects of the program were critiques including that certain elements may be too young for older children, and that splitting groups according to gender may be better for older children. The authors conclude that children had very little knowledge of sexual abuse prior to the program, demonstrating its value (Tutty, 2014).

An eight-year evaluation of the program concluded that all students increased their knowledge of child sexual abuse and attitudes related to this as a result of participation in the program (Tutty, Aubry & Velasquez, 2020).

### **References**

Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse. (n.d.). *What is CCASA?* Retrieved from:

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Tutty, L. M. (2014). Listen to the children: Kids' impressions of Who Do You Tell. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 23(1), 17-37. Retrieved from: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/10.1080/10538712.2013.841790>

Tutty, L. M., Aubry, D., & Velasquez, L. (2020). The "Who Do You Tell" child sexual abuse education program: Eight years of monitoring. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 29(1), 2-21. Retrieved from:

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