

**CARES Northwest
Family Support Program
Part of Multnomah County Mental
Health and Addiction Services**

The CARES NW Family Support Team offers free, confidential, and caring support to families who have been in contact with CARES NW. Please call us if you have questions or need someone to talk to about how abuse or trauma has affected your family.

A key component of our program is helping families obtain counseling for their children. We have a large network of counseling resources available based on the family's resources, age of the child, and therapeutic needs of the child and family. In some cases the Family Support Program offers treatment to children whose parents have no other resources.

In addition we offer a Parent Support Group. This group discusses the dynamics of sexual abuse, information about offenders, the legal process, and parenting abused children.

To Request Services:

A family support team member may have been assigned to you on the day of your evaluation. Call her or the CARES NW front desk and they will direct you to a family support team member

**CARES Northwest
Emanuel Professional Building
2800 N. Vancouver, Suite 201
Portland, OR 97227
503-276-9000**

"Although the world is full of suffering, it is full also of the overcoming of it."

Helen Keller



The Family Support Program provides:

- crisis intervention to help stabilize families
- referral to mental health providers
- help accessing community resources
- on-going parent support
- family education
- counseling for the child victim
- community education and resources

The family support team works with many parents whose children have been sexually abused. By bringing your child to CARES NW for an assessment, you have started on the path of recovery and healing for your child. We are here to support you as you support your child.

Here are some suggestions on how to respond to your child:

1. Remain calm and supportive of your child. Moderate your feelings in front of your child. Your support will help her/him to feel more powerful, reduce her/his feeling of isolation, and help them to believe that the abuse was not her/his fault.

2. Acknowledge that the abuse has occurred, and allow your child to come to you with their concerns without pressuring them with too many questions. Complete silence about abuse can support secrecy and shame. Make sure your child know that you are aware of what happened, and that you are available to talk when your child feels ready.

3. Consider finding a qualified professional to help your child process her/his feelings. Some common issues that children have due to sexual abuse are: sleep disturbances, irritability, loss of appetite, bedwetting, fears, and acting like a younger child. Appropriate treatment may lessen emotional and behavioral difficulties for your child and family.



4. Be a good listener. It is helpful for you to allow your child to express her/his own feelings. If she/he feels that you are too upset or angry they may feel that she/he has to care for you at a time when she/he needs to feel she/he can count on the adults in her/his life.

5. Respect your child's privacy, by not always discussing the abuse in front of them with others. Whenever you can, ask your child who it is OK to tell, and then respect the answer.

6. Follow your regular routine around the home. Expect the usual chores, bedtimes, household rules and school attendance. Your child may feel different from others due to her/his abuse, so maintaining her/his daily routine will help her/him feel "normal."

7. Take time to take care of yourself. It is natural for parents to feel overwhelming shock, guilt, disbelief and outrage at the discovery of their child's abuse. It is important to process your own feelings and feel the support of someone that you trust. Consider professional counseling for yourself.