



# HOW TO HELP

## #GoBlueToba

### KEEPING KIDS SAFE – IT TAKES A TEAM

Child abuse can occur in any community and can affect anyone. Be part of the solution when you commit to knowing the signs of abuse and what to do if you suspect a child is being abused.

### Know the Signs of Abuse

As adults, we can't rely on children to tell us about abuse; oftentimes, children tell no one what's going on. Pay attention when a child begins to show signs that have no reasonable explanation.

#### THINGS TO LOOK FOR INCLUDE:

- Sudden changes in behaviour or performance
- Unexplained injuries or injuries that don't match the child's explanation of the injuries
- Extreme behaviours like aggression, risk-taking, avoidance or withdrawal
- Sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond a child's stage of development
- Children who don't want to be at home or who run away from home
- Always hungry, sick, or not suitably dressed for the conditions or environment

Every child responds differently to abuse but these signs can be indicators that something is happening within a child's life that needs to be explored further.

### Know What to Do if a Child Discloses

If a child comes to trust you, and talks about suspicious behaviour, they may believe you can help them. While it is common at this point to feel panic, fear, disbelief, anger or sadness, you must set aside personal feelings.

**Remain calm.** Your initial reaction to the child's story is critical on the child's path to healing.

#### **Listen. Believe.**

- Allow the child to do most of the talking. If you need more understanding about the context, use an open-ended question like "Tell me more."
- Do not investigate for details once you suspect abuse.
- Reassure the child that telling you was the right thing to do.
- Explain to the child that you will need to tell someone who can help them. You cannot keep it a secret.

Write down comments verbatim made by the child, parent, caregiver, or anyone else relevant to the situation.

# KNOW HOW TO REPORT ABUSE

If you suspect a child is being abused, take action. In fact, it is everyone's legal duty to report suspected child abuse.

Whether a child tells you about abuse or you suspect a child is being abused or is in need of protection, they are counting on the adults around them to help. It is not your responsibility to prove abuse; simply report your concerns for the professionals to investigate and take steps to ensure the child's safety.

## Child and Family Services

Within Winnipeg:  
**All Nations Coordinated Response Network**  
**204.944.4200**

Outside Winnipeg:  
**1.866.345.9241**

## Online Exploitation

**Cybertip.ca**  
**1.866.658.9022**  
or online at  
**CyberTip.ca/Report**

## Police

Within Winnipeg:  
**Winnipeg Police Service**  
**204.986.6222**

Outside Winnipeg:  
**Contact your local police agency**

## In an Emergency

**Dial 911 or your local police emergency number**



Too often, we learn that people suspected abuse, but were too uncertain or afraid to do anything about it. That's why #GoBlueToba is so important. Let's be clear, it's your responsibility as much as it is mine, to know what to do if you suspect abuse is happening.

—CHRISTY DZIKOWICZ, TOBA CENTRE CEO

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