

# Disclosing abuse you suffered if you are **under 18**

If you or someone you know are currently being abused,



find the **ChildHelp** hotline in your country [HERE](#), or speak to someone you trust.

“Disclosing” is when you finally tell someone that you are being (or have been) sexually abused. You can disclose by speaking to someone, writing them a letter or, if that feels too scary, you can text them or tell them online, but we have some advice to help you decide which way is best.

If you have been sexually abused, it is really important that you find a way to tell someone. You have done nothing wrong and you have nothing to be ashamed of. We understand that disclosing the abuse might seem scary, but it can help make it stop, and it can help you begin healing from it all.

## Do's

Choose one person you know and trust, preferably an adult. You can tell more people later if you want to, but start with one person you know will listen.

If that person does not do anything to help, you can choose another person you trust. School teachers, counselors or therapists will most likely help you. Don't give up, there are safe adults that want to help, keep telling until you are supported.

Before you speak to them, decide what you want to tell them and what you don't. If they ask something you don't want to share, just say “I don't want to talk about that.”

Remember that hearing about what has been done to you might be upsetting for them too, because they care about you. So choose a time and place that you can both talk without rushing.

Practice what you are going to say in your head but don't worry if it doesn't come exactly out the way you hoped.

Think about how you can help yourself feel calm and safe before and after you have this conversation. What do you like doing that makes you feel ok, plan to do that.

Feel proud of yourself for speaking to someone you trust..

Even if you have started sharing, you can end the sharing if you feel uncomfortable at any time. Just because you start telling someone, doesn't mean you have to finish telling them if you change your mind.

## Don'ts

Do not worry if you do suddenly disclose before you are ready or while you are very upset. This is natural and perfectly okay.

Do not feel you have to answer a question or speak to someone if you don't want to or you don't feel safe with.

Do not share online or in public without first speaking to someone, preferably an adult, you know and trust. Online and public sharing includes many risks, and is something you should only consider once you have had time to share with those close to you, once you have had a chance to process the trauma with people close to you, and done with guidance and support from caring adults in your life.

Do not worry if the person you told is upset - you are not responsible for their emotions. These are difficult things to hear about. Everyone needs their own time and space to deal with them.