



Eastbourne Survivors is a self help group open to men, women and their partners.

If you're suffering the consequences of sexual abuse and want the support and understanding of other survivors, why not come and join us on the

FIRST or THIRD Tuesday of every month.

7.30 - 10.00pm at



Brightview, 6 Saffrons Road, Eastbourne BN21 1DG

for further details:

Telephone: 01323 416 316 Ask for Phil or Mel

E-mail: info@eastbournesurvivors.org

www.eastbournesurvivors.org



About
Adults
who were
Abused
as
Children

www.eastbournesurvivors.org

Who Are Adults Abused as Children?

They're the grown-up survivors of child abuse. They come from all races, religions and social classes. Adults abused them in ways that may have been:-

PHYSICAL	EMOTIONAL	SEXUAL
• Beating • Shaking • Pushing • Kicking • Bruising • Burning • Scalding • Choking etc. • Their physical needs, such as food, shelter and clothing may have been neglected	• Excessive Shouting, • Criticism, Ridiculing and Humiliation. • Failing to provide appropriate guidance and love. • Threatening abandonment or Physical Harm.	• Seductive Behaviour, • Indecent Exposure, • Sexual Touching, • Fondling or Gameplaying, • Oral, Anal or Vaginal Sex. Boys as well as girls may have been sexually abused. Incidents may have occurred just once or many times.

Many Adults Abused as Children -

try to block out the memories of their abuse. Others remember, but don't recognise:

- The **COURAGE** they showed as children
- The **IMPACT** the abuse has had, and still has, on their lives

When a Child's Trust is Betrayed...

by an adult, the child can feel depressed, insecure, angry and much more. These feelings can continue into adult life.

IN ADULT LIFE

The impact of the abuse often continues. It's effects may result in some of the problems below:

- Low self-esteem
- Violent or destructive acts
- Drug or Alcohol abuse
- Self Harming
- Troubled relationships
- Problems raising children
- Problems at work
- Eating disorders
- Thoughts of suicide
- Sexual Problems
- Sleeping problems
- Depression
- Anxiety



IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO GET HELP!

Many adults struggling with these problems have no idea that childhood abuse may have been the cause.

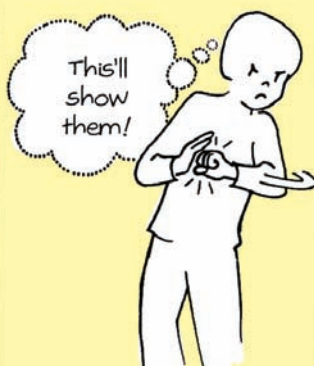
Understanding of the consequences of childhood abuse is improving all the time. Even if you have not been heard in the past, help is available.

You may be able to find help through your GP, support groups, telephone helplines, charities and counsellors.

Seeking help can be the first step towards a happier life.

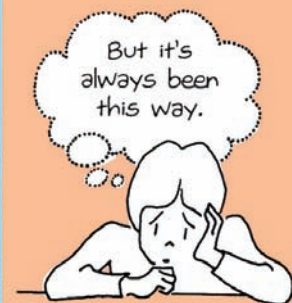
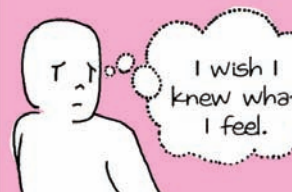
Abused Children Learn "Survival Skills"

To protect themselves emotionally or physically, children may respond in different ways. for example They often :

DENY that the abuse is occurring. Some daydream that they're somewhere else or that the abuse is happening to someone else. Many try to dis-associate themselves from what's happening. Others try to block out the memory of the abuse 	WITHDRAW, since adult attention so often brings abuse. These children can learn that it's not safe to express themselves or take chances. 	SEEK APPROVAL from adults by trying to be 'perfect' - trying to be the best at school, doing extra chores, trying to help or rescue other people etc. 
TURN OFF FEELINGS since adult attention so often brings abuse. These children can learn that it's not safe to express themselves or take chances. 	MISBEHAVE to express anger and frustration, or to get attention, even when it hurts or is self destructive. 	TAKE THE BLAME for the abuse and think that they're 'bad'. It's hard for children to see that it can be the adults who are misbehaving. 

They May Carry These Patterns into Adult Life

There can be many damaging effects. Some results may be:

A LACK OF TRUST Adults abused as children may believe that it's dangerous to trust people, or to trust their own feelings. They may also be loyal beyond reason to people who don't deserve their trust. 	FEAR OF CHANGE Old and familiar patterns of living and relating to others feel 'safe' - even if they're actually destructive or damaging. 	CARING TOO MUCH Many try to help others through nursing, social work etc., trying to give the world the love that they never had. Some wear themselves out because they try so hard. 
TROUBLE RECOGNISING OR SHOWING EMOTIONS It's hard for some adults abused in childhood to be aware of their feelings, share them with others, or ask for help. 	TROUBLE COPING WITH STRESS When things go wrong or they are finding it difficult to cope, they may turn to food, alcohol, drugs, self-harming or violence. A small number even abuse other children 	LOW SELF ESTEEM Some adults still think that they're worthless. Some think that they deserve abuse then and now and continue to let others abuse or take advantage of them. 

Years Later, The abuse can still take its toll-

Many survivors suffer from problems such as:

DEPRESSION

Symptoms may include excessive sleeping, listlessness or even thoughts of suicide.



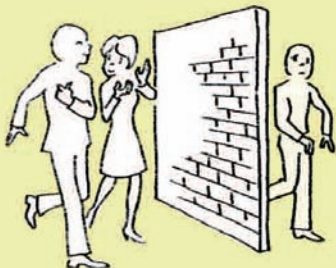
A SENSE OF DRIFTING

Their daily lives may be without direction, pleasure or hope.



FEELINGS OF ISOLATION

They may feel 'different' from others and may spend a lot of time alone.



TROUBLED RELATIONSHIPS

Adults abused as children often find it difficult to form or maintain close relationships.

Some allow themselves to continue to be abused.

Others can become abusive towards their partners or even their own children.



SELF-DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOUR

Adults can be left with a sense of being worthless or bad and can even punish themselves. These feelings can result in:

- Eating disorders
- Prostitution or reckless promiscuity
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- self-harming

Some may sabotage themselves - ruining their chances of achievement at work or in education etc. Many find can end up unemployed.

Problems Raising Children

Adults abused as children were often let down by their parents while they were growing up. If they later have children of their own, they may:

NOT KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT

from children at different ages. For example, a parent might assume that a baby can be toilet trained or that a 5 year old can understand how an adult is feeling. Some expect too much love from their children.

ABUSE THEIR OWN CHILDREN

emotionally, physically or even sexually as this is what they learned from adults when they were children.

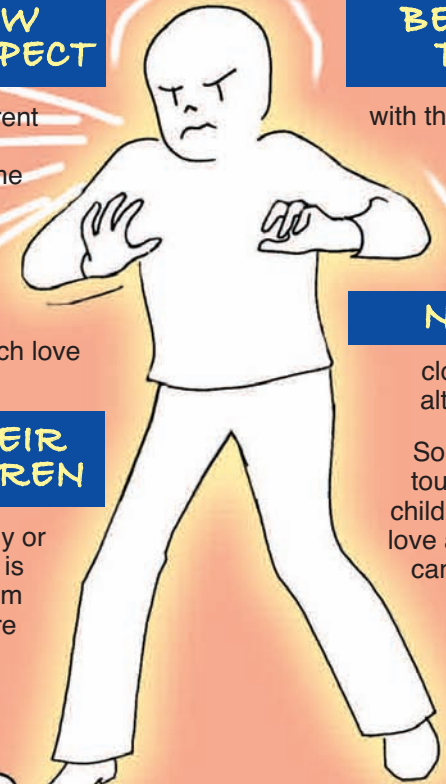
BE UNABLE TO COPE

with the stress that raising children can bring.

NOT FEEL

close to their children, although they want to.

Some may be afraid to touch or hold their own children or to show them love and affection as this can be associated with their own childhood abuse.



But these Parents CAN Break the Cycle of Abuse...

If they:

- **UNDERSTAND** why they behave as they do
- **LEARN** new parenting skills
- **RECEIVE NEEDED SUPPORT** while bringing up children

Some Myths about Child Abuse...

If a child doesn't report the abuse or run away, it can't be that bad.

Don't believe it!

A child can still love an abusive adult, even if it hurts. Children can often think that the abuse is 'normal'. Others think that they won't be believed as many abusers are in positions of trust and authority such as teachers or priests who children think will always be believed.

Children think that they may be 'put in a home' or taken away from their friends and family if they tell.

Adults abused as children are doomed to abuse their children.

This is not true!

Although some may be more likely to be abusive, **THE VAST MAJORITY** of adults abused as children **DO NOT** go on to become abusers.

Abusive parents hate their children.

Not So!

Some parents may be emotionally immature. In times of stress, they may vent their frustrations on the nearest and dearest things within their power - their children.

If adults abused as children are attracted to people who abuse them, they must enjoy it.

No! Some adults may be drawn into relationships that recreate the roles they learned in childhood. They may even mistake the calmness of a healthy relationship for a lack of interest or desire.

Parents have a duty to discipline their children.

True - but 'discipline' is not the same as physical or psychological punishment.

Discipline teaches children rules and self-control. Beating, shaking etc. and humiliation teaches children to gain obedience by threatening and hurting others.

Children encourage sexual abuse by being provocative.

No! Today's society can encourage children to dress and act in a manner beyond their years, but these children are not looking for sex. They're usually just trying to please or to appear more 'grown-up'.

ANY kind of abuse is entirely the adult's responsibility.

If I was
abused as a child, how can I
OVERCOME MY PAST
?

KNOW THAT YOU ARE NOT ALONE

MILLIONS of today's adults were abused as children. There are many books and websites on the subject which can help.

Support is available
- see pages
12 & 13

RECOGNISE WHAT HAPPENED

Let the memories surface, despite the pain. Try not to downplay the abuse ('*it only happened a couple of times*' - '*It wasn't as bad as what happened to her*' etc.)

Events that seem minor in your adult eyes could have been major to you as a child.

PLACE THE RESPONSIBILITY

for the abuse where it belongs: on the abuser, not on you!
Don't make excuses for the abuser -

He was under a lot of stress.

He didn't know what he was doing - etc.

ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR COURAGE

You worked hard to survive a terrible time in your life.

Now you can use that energy to help you move forward to a positive future.

By breaking old patterns of living and thinking - and by discovering new ways to relate to yourself and other people.

DEAL WITH YOUR ANGER

You can:

- **TALK** with a counsellor or therapist or even a good friend
- **WRITE** your feelings down in a diary
- **EXERCISE** - even just going for a walk can reduce stress and tension.



TRY SOMETHING NEW

Do things that you never had a chance to do as a child, like: ride a horse, learn to play a musical instrument, be creative, go fishing etc. You may learn to take risks in the process.

BE PATIENT WITH YOURSELF

Just talking about your pain and anger won't change things overnight.
Healing takes time.



IDENTIFYING YOUR STRENGTHS

As a child you may not have received the praise and recognition that you deserved.

You have been strong and found ways to survive this far.

Recognise your strengths!

Some possible sources of help...



Your G.P. can help with many problems that you may be experiencing as a result of your childhood abuse. They may also be able to direct you to more specific help.



The **National Association for People Abused in Childhood** is a charity, based in the UK, providing support and information for people abused in childhood.

NAPAC provides a freephone support line for adults who have suffered any type of abuse in childhood.

Call **0800 085 3330** for free from landlines, 3, Orange and Virgin mobile phones.

Call **0808 801 0331** for free from O2, T-Mobile and Vodafone mobile phones.

www.napac.org.uk



Support services to men (18+) who have experienced childhood sexual abuse and/or adult sexual assault at any time in their lives. Mankind developed from the need for an agency in Sussex that could provide appropriate services to men.

Mankind offers counselling and groups which are now open to women and partners too.

www.mankindcounselling.org.uk



Supporting female survivors of sexual violence and abuse

01273 203380

www.survivorsnetwork.org.uk



The Survivors Trust is a national umbrella agency for over 130 specialist rape, sexual violence and childhood sexual abuse support organisations throughout the UK and Ireland.

www.thesurvivorstrust.org



MACSAS is a support group for women and men from Christian backgrounds who have been sexually abused by Ministers or Clergy, as children or as adults. Supporting survivors who have remained within their Christian communities and for those who have left.

Free Helpline: 0808 801 0340

The Helpline available: Tues, 2 - 5pm Weds, 6 - 9pm

www.macsas.org



S:VOX is a national survivor-led self-help organisation that addresses issues affecting survivors of any form of violence and abuse, be that physical, emotional, sexual or spiritual, experienced in childhood or adulthood.

www.svox.co.uk



Samaritans is not just for people who are suicidal. You can call and be heard whatever difficulties you are struggling with, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

08457 90 90 90

www.samaritans.org



The NHS Direct service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Call: 111



Al-Anon provides support to anyone whose life is, or has been, affected by someone else's drinking, regardless of whether that person is still drinking or not.

Confidential Helpline 020 7403 0888

www.al-anonuk.org.uk



Alcoholics Anonymous

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

Helpline: 0845 769 7555

www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk



The National Drugs Helpline

is a 24-hour, seven-days a week, free and confidential telephone service that offers advice and information for those who are concerned, or have questions, about drugs. The service is available to anyone.

0800 77 66 00



Action for Change is a charity providing a range of services to enable people of all ages to take positive action so that they can lead meaningful and healthy lives.

Advice, information and support around the impact of alcohol, drugs, smoking and other health and social issues which can have an impact on an individual or a family.

0300 111 2470

www.action-for-change.org



National Self Harm Network

Support individuals who self harm to reduce emotional distress and to improve their quality of life

Helpline: 0800 622 6000

www.nshn.co.uk



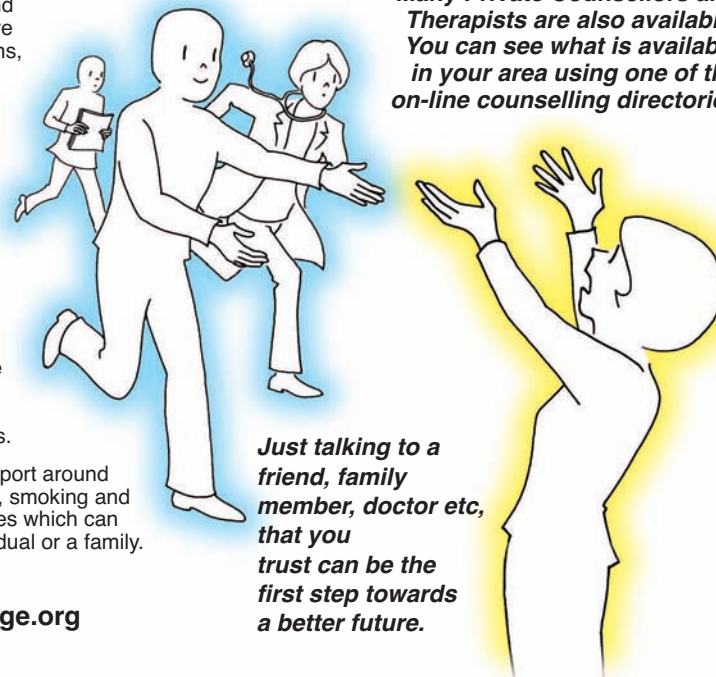
Low Cost Counselling

Counselling Plus is a charity which offers confidential, one to one counselling to people aged 16 years plus, in the Hastings and Eastbourne areas, at such times of stress, change, pain or loss. One main aim is to provide a service for those on low income or living on benefits

01424 428300

www.counsellingplus.org

Many Private Counsellors and Therapists are also available. You can see what is available in your area using one of the on-line counselling directories



Just talking to a friend, family member, doctor etc, that you trust can be the first step towards a better future.

Some Questions and Answers



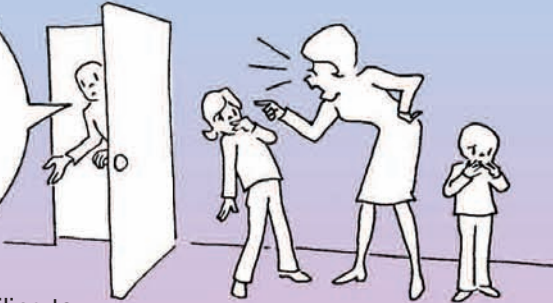
Why didn't other adults protect me from abuse?

They may have been unaware of the abuse, told themselves it couldn't happen or simply didn't know what to do.

The partner of an abuser could also have been afraid.

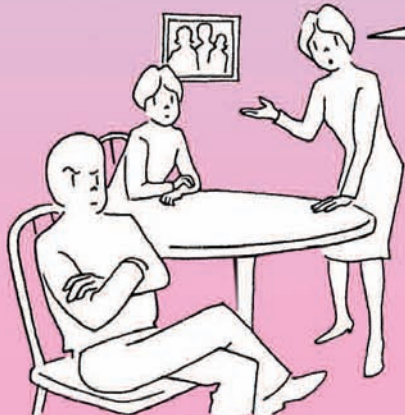
Are other children in the family affected when a brother or sister is abused?

Yes, Many can feel guilt for failing to stop the abuse or for not sharing the pain. They may have feared that 'they were next' and may have tried to be perfect and not say anything to avoid the abuse themselves.



Should I confront my parents if they abused me as a child?

It's up to you, but consider talking it over with a counsellor, support group or someone you trust. If you do confront your parents, don't expect them to change, admit the abuse or beg for forgiveness. Instead, try to focus your energy on working towards a future as a more independent, confident adult.



So... Adults abused as children are SURVIVORS

- but most carry deep hidden scars.
It's important that they try to:

RECOGNISE

how adult life can be affected by abuse in childhood.

REALISE

that they may leave themselves open to further abuse in adult life, or even repeating the abuse.

SEEK

help and advice to deal with the past - for their own sake and for the sake of those that they love.

Eastbourne Survivors

If you were abused as a child,
it was not your fault then -
and you're not alone now!

www.eastbournesurvivors.org