



Prevention. Intervention. Healing.



CARES

Child Abuse Response
2421 Washburn Way

Suite H
Klamath Falls, OR
97603

541-274-6289

KLAMATH LAKE CARES

GUIDEBOOK TO ADVOCACY

What Happens Next?

➤ *The Investigation*

Child abuse is a crime and always the responsibility of the alleged offender, not the child. During the investigation, if you learn of additional information that has not been reported, it is important to tell the detective or, the DHS/Child Welfare caseworker assigned to your case. Do not coach your child or tell them what to say.

A team of professionals will work with you and your child. A specialized interviewer, who is trained to work with children, will interview your child. Interviews are designed with the child's best interest in mind. A specialized medical professional will provide your child with a head-to-toe check up. If the alleged abuse involved a family or household member, a DHS caseworker may be assigned to investigate child safety issues. A police detective will investigate the criminal component of the child abuse allegations. If criminal charges are filed, your child will be assigned a prosecutor from the District Attorney's Office.



What Happens Next?

➤ *Family Support and Advocacy*

Klamath-Lake CARES is designed to guide families on their journey to healing by providing comprehensive advocacy for the life of the case. Specially trained family advocates may help in the following ways:

- Provide on-going supportive services for parents, caregivers, children, and teens
- Assess family safety and immediate needs
- Screen for Crime Victim Compensation benefits
- Provide mainstream resources and referrals
- Assist with case navigation
- Provide Court accompaniment, should the case go to Court

You will receive a follow-up phone call from an advocate at Klamath-Lake CARES to see how you and your child are doing and to see if you have any other questions.

Will We Have To Go To Court?

Because child abuse is a crime, criminal charges may be filed against the alleged offender, and if so, a Grand Jury Hearing will be held. At that time, you will be contacted by a victim advocate from the District Attorney's Office who will help guide you through court proceedings. If the Grand Jury believes there is enough evidence that the alleged offender committed a crime, the case will then be assigned to a deputy district attorney. Some cases are settled without your child having to testify; however, there is always a chance that you and/or your child may be called to testify during the trial process.

As a caregiver, you might be hesitant to allow your child to testify in the criminal proceedings. An advocate is available to both children and their caregivers to support them through the court process, to include accompanying them to any trial or Court proceedings. As your Court date approaches, you will be contacted by the district attorney's office to begin Court readiness.

Why Didn't My Child Tell Me?

Most children do not disclose abuse immediately. There are many reasons why children might not tell:

- They were told to keep it a secret
- A threat was made
- They feel embarrassed, guilty, or ashamed
- They feel powerless to stop it
- They worry about what will happen
- They still care about the alleged offender and do not want to get them in trouble, even if they want the abuse to stop
- They may not understand that what was happening to them was wrong
- They are afraid that they might get in trouble
- They worry that no one will believe them

How Do I Respond?

Your acceptance and support are important to your child's healing. Be sensitive to your child's needs. They will need a great deal of encouragement, reassurance, and comfort. You are the most important person to your child during this time.

Remember to:

- Stay calm
- Listen without judgement or questioning
- Acknowledge their feelings and how difficult it must be
- Be thoughtful about what you share with family and friends
- Protect your child from any further contact with the alleged offender
- Never confront the alleged offender or their family
- Surround yourself with supportive people
- Lean on trusted adults in your life for support, not the child
- Be mindful of your emotional reactions in front of the child



Your Child needs to hear you say the following:

- I believe you
- It is not your fault
- I am proud of you for telling
- You are so brave
- Nothing about you made this happen
- I will take care of you
- I am sorry this happened to you
- It is okay to cry or be mad
- You don't need to take care of me

How will the abuse affect my family?

It is very normal for children to exhibit new or worsening behaviors after the abuse. Please note that children who have experienced trauma may have the following symptoms:

- Crying and sadness
- Fearfulness
- Nightmares
- Anger
- Aggressive behavior
- Changes in sleep habits
- Withdrawing from others
- Clinging to parents
- Anxiety
- Changes in school performance
- Sexually inappropriate behaviors
- Changes in appetite or eating patterns
- Bed-wetting or soiling

- Temper tantrums
- Daydreaming or difficulty concentrating
- Complaints of stomachaches or headaches
- Poor self-esteem
- Running away
- Self-harm
- Suicidal thoughts
- Substance abuse
- Perfectionism
- Avoidance of people, places, thoughts, or feelings

It's also possible your child will exhibit no symptoms at all. It is important to be aware of any changes in your child's behavior and seek professional counseling if needed.



Child abuse affects not only the alleged victim or witness, but also the entire family. Learning that your child has been abused may be one of the most devastating experiences of your life and can leave you feeling helpless and overwhelmed. Every family is different, and each family member may have a different response, including siblings who were not abused. Some families or family members may experience:

- A divide or a conflict in the family
- Finding the abuse hard to believe because a trusted friend, family member, or partner is the alleged offender
- Grief and sadness
- Guilt
- Anger
- Difficulty supporting the child because of their own abuse history
- Not wanting to think or talk about the abuse
- A change in the way you discipline your children
- Concerns about the future

If you are experiencing these or any other symptoms, please reach out for support to trusted friends, family, an advocate, or seek professional counseling if needed. It can be hard to think about yourself when you're dealing with the aftermath of child abuse. It helps if you remember that you are the most important person in your child's life and the biggest influence on how they respond to stress. If you don't take care of yourself, both your body and mind, you will have less to give your kids in the way of guidance and support. Being able to cope with your own stress is good for you and your children.

If you suspect abuse contact:

Oregon Child Abuse Hotline: 1-855-503-SAFE (7233)

If you are in an emergency, call 9-1-1

Helpful Resources:

Klamath Basin Behavioral Health 541-883-1030

Klamath County District Attorney's Office: 541-883-5147

Crime Victims' Compensation: 503-378-5348;

<https://www.doj.state.or.us/> VINE: 1-877-OR-4-VINE (1-877-674-8463);

<https://www.vinelink.com/>

Important information regarding your case:

Child and Family Advocate:

Law Enforcement:

Report #:

DHS Case Worker:

Forensic Interviewer

Medical Provider:

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