

Self-Care and Clarity of Mind...a weekly column
by Princess Lakshman (Sister Iqra)



Welcome to my weekly column on **Self-Care and Clarity of Mind**. If you're taking time out to read this, pat yourself on the back because you have shown commitment to taking care of your mind and body.

Today, In Shaa ALLAH, we will explore the topic: **What To Do When Your Child Tells You That She/He Has Been Sexually Abused**

One of the things that were normalised in the paradigm of my childhood life was pedophilia. Until I was 33 years old and sobbing uncontrollably in the first session with my psychologist, I was under the misconception that every single home in the whole world had children who were being sexually abused. It took me several psychotherapy sessions to understand that pedophilia was not the norm of every household. That realisation crushed me because now I was faced with the great big question - Why didn't anyone stop these heinous acts from happening, especially when stories were being told and exchanged as though they were talking about mundane things. These acts were carried out on children by adults and young adults - an intergenerational cycle of sexual abuse - and no one stopped them from happening. No one stood up for the children, even when few children did fathom the courage to speak out.

According to a news report from ABC in February 2017, there are 4,444 alleged cases of child sexual abuse recorded against the Australian Catholic Church, where ninety percent of the victims were boys and ten percent girls, all under the age of 12. Source:

(<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-02-06/child-sex-abuse-royal-commission:-data-reveals-catholic-abuse/8243890>)

The heartbreaking truth is that children tend to block such traumatic experiences from their mind when their trust is betrayed and when no one listens or acknowledges their story. Later on in life, these same children live a life yearning for justice. Some pursue their yearning through becoming abusers themselves, some resort to self-harm, alcohol and substance abuse, and some become the voice to advocate for justice for these children and the child that still dwells in them, broken and deeply hurt.

It's never easy hearing a child talk about their experiences of abuse. Here are ways you can help deal with this sensitive issue. It doesn't matter whether the child is under 18 or much older. Treat the person with the utmost respect and dignity.

1. Believe the child's words. Listen and for God's sake, believe the child. No child, no adult for that matter, is ever going to create a story about this traumatic experience. Most children don't even have a language to express what happened and why it happened because they are made to feel like it was her/ his fault.
2. DO NOT cross check the child's story with the person she/ he is naming as the perpetrator.
3. Document everything, record everything.
4. Comfort your child and tell her/ him how very sorry you are that this happened.
5. Assure the child that she/ he is now safe and will NEVER have to see the perpetrator again.
6. Have a close family meeting with trusted individuals. Gather all the recordings.
7. GO TO THE POLICE. It doesn't matter how young or old your child is - 4 or 40, doesn't matter, the incident(s) happened and now it is time to report this heinous crime.
8. Take the child to the GP and get a referral for a psychologist to begin the healing process.
9. Keep the matter private and do not discuss this issue with the perpetrator or the perpetrator's family members. The perpetrator will receive appropriate communication from the law enforcement agencies and the court.
10. Teach the child that while the justice system on earth has limitations, ONLY ALLAH's Judgement Day will give true justice to all. This will help the child heal better.

Remember, you are not your traumatic experiences, you are the force that overcomes them.

Alhumdolillah.

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In Shaa ALLAH, next week we will explore the topic: **Tactful Texting...How To Write**

If you wish to know about a specific topic with regards to Self-Care and Clarity of Mind, please text or email me or visit www.muslimahmindmatters.com. If you wish to have a FREE one hour **Clarity Coaching** phone session, contact me on 0451977786



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