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Symptoms of Childhood Sexual Abuse (for parents and professionals)

1. Child shows sudden changes in home and school behavior and school performance
2. Child has not received help for physical or medical problems and illnesses even when the parent knows about the problem
3. Child has difficulty concentrating or had learning problems that can't be attributed to specific physical or psychological causes
4. Child is hyper alert as if waiting for something bad to happen
5. Child lacks adult supervision
6. Child is overly passive, compliant, or withdrawn
7. Child comes to school early and says late and does not want to go home
8. Child displays a fear of a certain person or place
9. Child displays unusual fear of a physical exam by a doctor
10. Child displays unusual or unexpected response when touched by someone
11. Child makes drawings of sexual acts or plays in sexual ways with dolls or toys
12. Child begins bedwetting or loses control of bowels
13. Child shows sudden awareness of genitals or sexual acts or sexual words
14. Child attempts to get other children to perform sexual acts
15. Child behaves in sexual ways with adults: inappropriate touching, behavior, language
16. Adults in child's life notice that the child rarely looks at or touches one or both caregivers
17. Child states that he/she does not like one or both caregivers
18. Adults in the child's life notice that the relationship between child and caregivers is entirely negative
19. Child has sleeping problems or appears exhausted at school on a regular basis
20. Child has and reports nightmares and night terrors
21. Child wears clothing that is not age appropriate or is sexually provocative

Symptoms: Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse

Some of these symptoms can be present for reasons other than sexual abuse.

1. Low self-esteem / feeling worthless
2. Fear of abandonment and other abandonment issues

3. Displays acting out behaviors and does not know how to identify, process or express intense feelings in a productive way
4. Displays unexplained fear of being alone at night
5. Often experiences nightmare and night terrors
6. Feels overly grateful for small favors
7. Displays boundary issues
8. Displays a need to be in control, has power issues and displays fear of losing control
9. Experiences various eating disorders, compulsive overeating, binge eating, anorexia
10. Frequent headaches, arthritis and joint pain, gynecological disorders, stomach aches and other frequent somatic complaints
11. Unexplained anxiety when with people from childhood
12. Extreme guilt and shame
13. Displays obsessive / compulsive behaviors: Does not have OCD
14. History of abusive and violent relationships
15. Memories of domestic violence during childhood years
16. Sexual addiction, prostitution, performing in porn films
17. Distorted body image or poor body image: Hiding sexuality with clothing
18. Hypervigilance
19. History of ambivalent or intensely conflictive relationships
20. Depersonalization of the self: feels unreal and everyone else is real or feels everyone else is unreal and they are the only real people
21. Loss of memory for periods of one's life
22. Loss of memory related to specific individuals or family members
23. Lots of victim talk and victim behavior
24. Thrives on high risk behavior or cannot take a reasonable risk
25. Suicide ideations or suicide threats: may be associated with a triggering event or with a flashback
26. Intense fear of gynecological exam
27. Fear of suffocation
28. Inability to have a healthy sexual relationship