

Abused kids live with trauma all their lives

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TIMES VIEW

They are harmless, yet they're the ones at the greatest risk. Children, the epitome of innocence, are increasingly becoming victims of abuse. Instead of brushing the matter under the carpet, parents should help the child overcome the trauma with additional love and support. They should also look out for strange behaviour because often children can't verbalize their experience. But the onus doesn't lie on the family alone. Schools should also do their bit by conducting extensive background checks before hiring drivers/attendants and reporting the matter to police. The custodians of law should show more alacrity in bringing the perpetrators to book.



TIPS FOR PARENTS

- If abuse happens in the home or is committed by a kin, deal with it
- Read the signals children sends out. More often than not, they don't know how to respond or are in doubt about how parent will react
- If the child doesn't want to go to school, it could be more than the regular 'stomach ache'; look for unusual behaviour

It's when the probe begins that the horror enfolds. "When my child's offender confessed he was a serial rapist, I shuddered. He could be carrying so many diseases that might have got transmitted to my child," says a father.

Last week, when cops interrogated a juvenile who raped a nine-

year-old girl on her way to school, the 14-year-old confessed that he watched porn. "In this case, both the victim and the offender need treatment and counselling. Why is a 14-year-old watching porn? It's a larger issue. The law puts him in a juvenile justice home where the scene is worse," says Kushalappa.

"I've seen parents who are hesitant to talk to the (abused) child. That's dangerous. The child must be reassured that there's an adult she can count on," says Meera Ravi, a counsellor at Prerna Academy.

"Such scars stay with the kids forever. Physical trauma can be cured. Mental agony refuses to go away, for they've lost their childhood in a few moments."

(Names of all child abuse victims have been changed to protect their identities)

Little Sneha asks daddy to punish 'auto driver uncle'

Kids Vulnerable All The Time, Warn Experts

Seethalakshmi S | TNN

Bangalore: Every morning for a week now, little Sneha asks her father if he has punished 'Driver Uncle'.

The helpless father lifts his little girl, all of three years, on to his lap and assures her the driver is in jail. "Do they beat him there? If not, you should beat him," asks Sneha, clutching a Barbie gifted to her on her last birthday. Her innocent words reflect her trauma. Little Sneha was sexually assaulted by an autorickshaw driver.

In another home in HRBR Layout, Rehna, 4, asks her

LISTEN TO THE CHILD

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Child counsellors and psychologists say it's very important to talk to your child every day on what's happening in their lives.

- Don't blame the child
- Make the child feel safe, reassure that you're always there
- Explore options with an open mind, take corrective action immediately

mother why she's taken to the doctor so frequently. "What's wrong with me?" The mother fumbles for words: how does she explain to her daughter that her dad is a monster.

For a family, the trauma of child abuse begins to unfold only when the little one comes home and speaks about it or when parents notice something abnormal in

his or her behaviour.

"The driver in whose autorickshaw my daughter commuted to school would take little girls to a bush, remove their clothes and stare at their naked bodies," says a mother who noticed a sudden change in her daughter's behaviour.

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