

## Possible Ways to Handle Sibling Abuse

- **Separate** the children when violence does occur to avoid any further conflict
- **Conduct** a family meeting with the children involved after a cool-off period
- **Listen** to the children with understanding and compassion
- **Help** the children work together on a project or other activity to reach a positive goal
- **Convey** clear expectations to the children involved
- **Monitor** the children when they play
- **Educate** the children on how to manage their anger
- **Ensure** the victim is not ignored, blamed or punished for speaking out about abusive behavior

Sibling abuse is the most common form of domestic abuse. It is

**FIVE TIMES**

more common than spousal abuse or parental abuse



If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call 911 or the local police for help. If the danger is not immediate, please confide with a trusted doctor, friend, or family member. Remember, you are not alone. There are many people who care and can help.

**STOP ABUSE FOR EVERYONE** is an organization that provides information, resources, educational brochures, a media campaign, an advocacy program, and expert speakers on an array of abuse topics.

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**ARE YOU**  
(or someone you care about)  
**A VICTIM OF**  
**SIBLING ABUSE?**



**SAFE**

**STOP ABUSE FOR EVERYONE**  
A HUMAN RIGHTS AGENCY

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*Physical, emotional, or sexual abuse of one sibling by another is called sibling abuse. Physical abuse can be mild, such as pushing or shoving, or severe forms of aggression, such as using weapons. Sibling abuse is harder to detect until serious harm occurs because parents and society expect fights and aggression among siblings.*

## Types of Sibling Abuse

- **PHYSICAL:** fighting that includes hair pulling, punching, pushing, shoving, or slapping. This type of physical abuse is often mistaken for normal childhood or teenage behavior. As a result, parents see it as sibling rivalry rather than as a sign of abuse.
- **PSYCHOLOGICAL:** name calling, belittling, demeaning, humiliating, frightening, and threatening.
- **SEXUAL:** making sexual comments, exposing genitals, looking at another child's genitals, inappropriate touching, sexual acts, voyeurism, exposure to pornography or physical sexual assaults and rape. Although this type of abuse can occur between full brothers and sisters, it is more common when half siblings or step siblings are brought into a family.

## Facts About Sibling Abuse

- According to Vernon Wiehe of the University of Kentucky, 53% of children have committed at least one act of aggression towards their siblings.
- Although abuse can take place between sisters or be perpetrated by a female on a male, male children are more likely to be abusive towards siblings than female children.
- Approximately 3 in 100 children are dangerously violent towards their siblings.



- 1 in 20 boys and 1 in 5 girls are victims of child sexual abuse.
- Between the ages of 7 and 13, children are most vulnerable to child sexual abuse.
- Sexual abuse of a child occurs more often at the hands of another child than adult.
- More than 40% of all child sexual abuse is perpetrated in sibling relationships, but Child Protective Services focuses mainly on adult-child sexual relationships.
- After surveying 800 college students, David Finkelhorn found that 15% of females and 10% of males had been sexually abused by a sibling.

<http://www.med.umich.edu>  
<https://victimsofcrime.org>  
<http://thesinglemother.com>

## Signs of Sibling Abuse

### PHYSICAL

- Acts out abuse in play
- Avoids and fears their sibling
- Negative relationships between siblings
- Overly compliant or withdrawn when interacting with sibling
- Unexplained bruises or scrapes after hanging out with sibling
- Increase in pushing and shoving between siblings

### PSYCHOLOGICAL

- Delayed or inappropriate emotional development
- Stomach aches and headaches without a medical cause
- Loss of self-confidence or self-esteem
- Social withdrawal or a loss of interest or enthusiasm
- Depressive thinking or suicidal thoughts
- Attempts at running away and suicide
- Rebellious or defiant behavior
- Unexplained bruises or scrapes after hanging out with sibling

### SEXUAL

- Acts out intercourse
- Asks frequent questions about sex, even after questions have been reasonably answered
- Forces their sibling or other children to play doctor
- Frequently rubs genitals instead of playing
- Persists in watching adults use the bathroom