

The ICARE Program: Breaking the Silence



One in four girls and one in six boys are sexually abused before their 18th birthdays. 63 child sex abuse cases were filed in Kootenai County last year. Child molesters are not strangers — 61 percent of adult offenders were acquainted with their victims.

In seconds, a childhood can be shattered, innocence stolen forever. Worse still, the lingering effects haunt victimized children for years, increasing the likelihood of drug and alcohol dependency, eating disorders, teen pregnancy, delinquency, violent crime and debilitating fear.

In response to this situation, the ICARE program has begun to offer a training program called Stewards of Children developed by the Darkness to Light national organization. It addresses what we can do as parents, as professionals working with children and as community members to prevent, recognize and react responsibly to child sexual abuse.

Child sexual abuse is a community problem. It is a collective problem. It is caused by the calculated sexualizing of a child by a perpetrator, the fear or denial of adults who have awareness of the abuse but do not act, and the inexperience of potentially helpful adults.

Contact the ICARE program to learn when the next Stewards of Children training will be held: 676-1515. Training is also available online for \$15 at www.darkness2light.org.

Seven Steps to Preventing Child Sexual Abuse

1. Learn the facts and understand the risks. Realities — not trust — should influence your decisions regarding your child.
2. Minimize opportunity. If you eliminate or reduce one-adult/one-child situations, you'll dramatically lower the risk of sexual abuse for your child.
3. Talk about it. Children often keep abuse a secret, but barriers can be broken down by talking openly about it.
4. Stay alert. Don't expect obvious signs when a child is being sexually abused. Signs are often there but you've got to spot them.
5. Make a plan. Learn where to go, who to call and how to react.
6. Act on suspicions. The future well-being of a child is at stake.
7. Get involved. Volunteer and financially support organizations that fight the tragedy of child sexual abuse.

Here's What's Up With Workfirst

In the Workfirst program, self-reliance is the main goal and it's backed up with action. The plan is simple; if anyone needs help finding employment, has special considerations that must be addressed for employment, needs training or simply needs better interview skills — we will assist them as they help themselves become successful. Weekly workshops focus on preparing participants for job search. These workshops cover everything from appearances and resumes to the actual interview. While participants are generally referred by Health & Welfare or the Department of Corrections, anyone is welcome to attend.

The program helps participants maintain employment as well as finding jobs. Job retention is a serious problem for many people and once personal issues are addressed most participants become successful at maintaining employment. Then they are fully self-reliant.

With offices in Coeur d'Alene, Sandpoint, Bonners, Kellogg, St. Maries, Lewiston, Orofino, Moscow and Grangeville, there are always workshops available to attend. Please call Carol Carey at 1-800-664-1396 or 667-4045.

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