



**A School's Role in
Keeping Our Kids Safe:
Guide to Conversation**



calgary & area child advocacy centre

A School's Role in Keeping Our Kids Safe: Guide to Conversation

In the fall of 2015, the Sheldon Kennedy Child Advocacy Centre (now the Calgary and area Child Advocacy Centre) conducted an online survey with a diverse group of eight school districts to determine the confidence of staff to recognize potential abuse and understand the factors that influence the decision to report it to Children's Services.

Key results from the survey include:



- 47% of staff suspected abuse with at least one student, **yet only 48% of these individuals reported their concerns** to Children's Services.
- Only 12% of staff are confident in their ability to recognize abuse; 28% are confident when responding to a disclosure; 27% are confident in their ability to report abuse; and 26% are confident in their ability to support a student who has been abused.

When these results were shared with superintendents in the participating school districts, they requested a 'tool' to use with staff to clarify the procedures required by the Duty to Report and build capacity to recognize, respond to and report suspected child abuse. *A School's Role in Keeping our Kids Safe* was produced to equip ALL school staff with the information and competencies to recognize potential child abuse and know what to do if abuse is suspected.

Note to Facilitators

Given the complex, and difficult topic of child abuse, it is recommended to view and discuss the video as a group, rather than individually. The guidelines provided are intended to support a facilitated approach to:

- reinforcing key messages
- clarifying understanding
- promoting discussion
- generating further conversation or action.

As facilitators, you play a critical role in setting a positive, supportive tone to build the confidence and capacity of staff. Thank you for taking the time to ensure all staff to feel empowered to do the right thing to keep our kids safe.

SECTION
6

Safe, Caring Learning Environments and Self-Care

NOTES

Key Messages (Self-Care)

- It's very important to take care of yourself:
 - Be aware of the signs of stress.
 - Respecting confidentiality, discuss or debrief the situation with a friend, colleague, school counsellor or administrator.
 - If signs of compassion fatigue are still evident after two to three weeks, or you are dealing with an unresolved traumatic experience, seek counselling with a professional who is knowledgeable about trauma. Ask your principal or supervisor about services that may be available to you.

Possible Discussion Questions

1. Discuss signs of stress and healthy strategies for reducing stress and maintaining balance. [The Canadian Mental Health Association](#) has further information about recognizing and managing stress. You may be aware of other quality resources in your area. Ensure staff are aware of how to access resources through the school district and their Employee Benefits plan.

Key Messages (Creating Welcoming, Caring, Respectful, Safe Learning Environments)

- Be approachable. Let students know you care.
- Support positive behaviour by establishing predictable routines and consistent, fair expectations.
- Keep an open mind. Check your assumptions, observe and be responsive.
- Teach **all** students the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships and how to ask for help when they need it.

