

WHY SURVIVORS FIND IT DIFFICULT TO DISCLOSE ABUSE

Abuse destroys trust in others so survivors often don't know who to tell or what people will do with the information.

Survivors may fear that if they tell - their abuser will find out, they will be disbelieved, disliked, judged, pitied, lose their own children, thought of as an abuser or potential abuser, confidentiality will be breached, it will result in the loss of relationships, or their sexuality being questioned.

Survivors often feel guilty, ashamed, to blame for their abuse and fear that others will think/say the same.

They may still be subject to abuse by their original abuser and /or others.

The worker is not aware/confident in this area and does not create a suitable atmosphere for disclosure.

Survivors often have very mixed feelings about their abuser(s) and may not want to tell in order to protect them.

They may have an associated difficulty to hide i.e. substance misuse, violence, mistreatment of children or other crime.

They may worry that if people know their opinion of them will change i.e. they will not be thought of as well.

They may feel that they do not deserve help.

Survivors are so accustomed to blocking out/denying their memories/feelings that they become difficult to recall.

Survivors often feel that if they tell and are put in touch with their painful feelings (anger / sadness) that they will be unable to cope, will lose control/become mentally ill or do something dreadful as a result.

Sometimes survivors find it hard to find the right words to describe what happened or are uncomfortable/embarrassed talking about sex.

Survivors often worry that they will be asked to disclose every detail of what happened.

Sometimes they simply don't know where to start – it all seems such a mess and too confusing.