

Problems That May Be Seen In Children Who Have Been Sexually Abused¹

The following is a list of some common problems experienced by child victims of sexual abuse. These warning signs are only indicators and should not be used to assume sexual abuse has occurred. A professional should be sought for appropriate assessment.

- Fear of specific people
- Fear of the dark
- Fear of a particular gender
- Anger
- Loss of appetite
- Tendency to run away from home
- Behavioral problems
- Aggressive behavior
- Sexual acting out or inappropriate sexual behavior
- Compulsive behaviors (e.g., excessive bathing)
- Fear of specific places
- Anxiety
- Fear of harm to a family pet
- Depression
- Excessive appetite
- Poor school performance
- Sexual promiscuity
- Insecurity
- Fear of being alone
- Irritability
- Fear of being alone
- Fear of abandonment
- Advanced sexual knowledge
- Withdrawn behavior
- Alcohol or drug use and abuse
- Self-mutilation
- Nightmares
- Flashbacks
- Sleep disturbances
- Regressive behavior
- Fear of harm to a family member or close friends

¹ Freeman-Longo, R., & Blanchard, M. (1998). *Sexual Abuse in America: Epidemic of the 21st Century*. Brandon, VT: Safer Society Press, 135.