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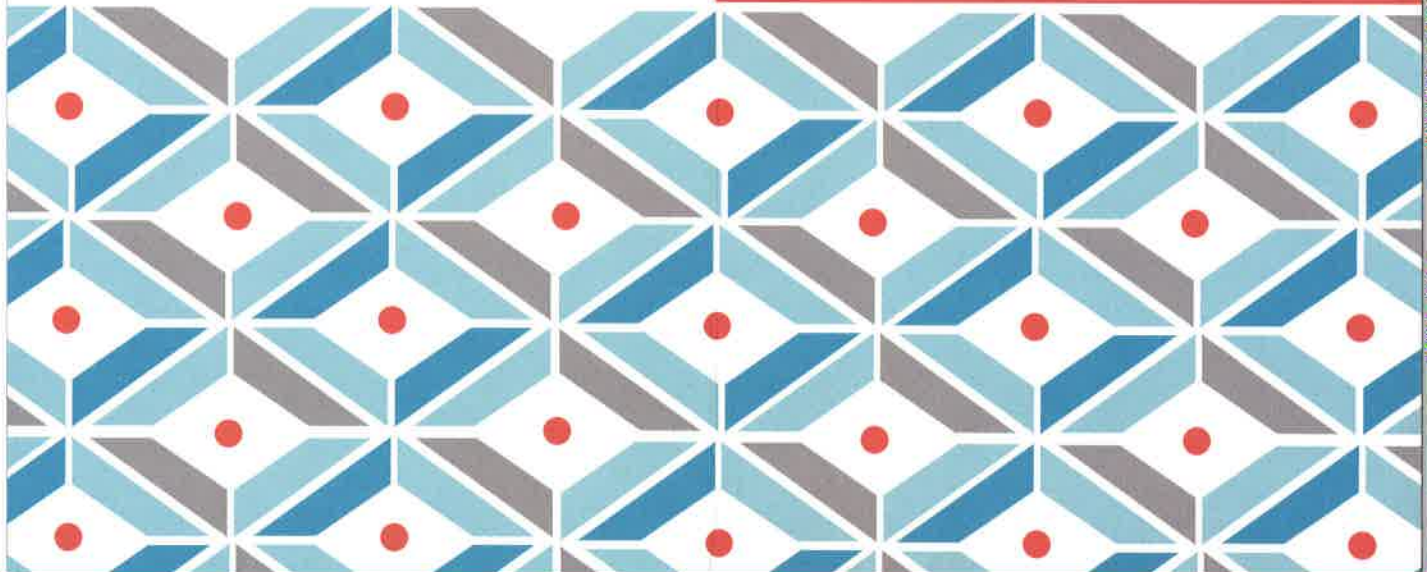


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# HOW TO RESPOND TO AN OUTCRY OF ABUSE



1

### REMAIN CALM.

2

### ALWAYS BELIEVE THE CHILD

Children rarely lie about such an intense and painful topic. In fact, statistics indicate that children only lie about abuse 2-8% of the time! Your response to the disclosure of abuse is critical to the child's ability to resolve and heal.

3

### ASSURE THE CHILD THAT THEY DID THE RIGHT THING IN TELLING.

A child who is close to the abuser may feel guilty about revealing the secret. The child may feel frightened if the abuser has threatened to harm the child or other family members as punishment for disclosing the abuse.

4

### TELL THE CHILD THAT THEY ARE NOT TO BLAME FOR THE ABUSE.

In attempting to make sense of the abuse, most children will believe that somehow they caused it or may even view it as a form of punishment for imagined or real wrongdoings.

5

### DO NOT MAKE PROMISES.

- Each year, 40,000 children receive critical services at one of over 60 children's advocacy centers in Texas.
- Of the total number of children served last year
  - 74% were involved in sexual abuse cases
  - 99% knew their perpetrator
  - 27% were not old enough to attend kindergarten
- The Texas network of children's advocacy centers now officially serves over 160 counties where 94% of the Texas population resides.

6

### LET THE CHILD TELL THEIR STORY BUT LEAVE THE QUESTIONING TO THE PROFESSIONALS.

In child abuse cases, the child's statement will often be the key evidence utilized by investigators to determine the facts of what has occurred. Preservation of the statement is critical to ensuring the integrity of the investigation. Therefore, when responding to an outcry, let the child use his/her own words to tell you what has happened, but leave the detailed questioning to the professionals. This is critical to ensuring the integrity of the investigation.

7

### FILE A REPORT WITH CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES WITHIN 48 HOURS.

HOW TO FIND YOUR LOCAL CENTER  
[www.cactx.org](http://www.cactx.org)

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IF THE CHILD IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER, CALL 911  
STATEWIDE INTAKE 24/7 - 1.800.252.5400

[www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org)