

“RED FLAG” INDICATORS OF KIDS IN CRISIS

This list is a collection of red flags. This is not, nor is it meant to be a checklist that proves or disproves abuse. This list presents red flags that would indicate to a parent, caregiver, or interested adult that they need to be more observant and seek input from others who are a part of the life of the child in question. If you require more information contact the King County Sexual Assault Resource Center at 1.888.99VOICE or at www.kcsarc.org

PHYSICAL INDICATORS

- Hungry, poor hygiene, inappropriate clothing
- Consistent fatigue or listlessness
- Unattended physical problems or medical needs
- Unexplained bruises and welts
- On face, ears and extremities
- On torso, back and buttocks
- In various stages of healing
- Unexplained burns
- Cigarette burns on soles of feet, palms, back or buttocks
- Immersion burns (sock-like, glove-like doughnut shaped burns)
- Patterned burns -like electric burner, hair curler, hair dryer
- Unexplained lacerations, abrasions, fractures
- Delay in physical and/or social/emotional development
- Enuresis or encopresis
- Loss of appetite, or trouble eating or swallowing
- Frequent stomach illness for no identifiable reason
- Spacing out at times

BEAVIORAL INDICATORS

- Any extreme change in behavior
- Begging or stealing food
- States no one to care for him/her
- Child easily attaches to attentive adult ("clingy") or is overly wary of contact with adults
- Acting out behaviors subsequent to low self esteem (delinquency, drug/alcohol abuse)
- Poor school attendance
- Wary of physical contact with adults
- Apprehensive when other children crying
- Over eating or under eating
- Seems frightened of parents
- States they are afraid to go home
- Reports injury by parent

- Overly adaptive behaviors that are either inappropriately adult (e.g. parenting other children)
- Inappropriately infantile (head banging or thumb sucking)
- Habit disorders such as sucking, biting, or rocking
- Conduct disorders; withdrawal and antisocial behavior; destructiveness, cruelty and stealing
- Psychoneurotic reactions including hysteria, obsession, compulsion, phobias and hypochondria
- Behavior extremes such as appearing overly compliant, extremely passive or aggressive
- An older child behaving like a younger child, such as bed-wetting or thumb-sucking.
- Sexual activities with toys or other children, such as simulating sex with dolls
- Asking other children / siblings to behave sexually.
- New words for private body parts.
- Refusing to talk about a "secret" he or she has with an adult or older child.
- Talking about a new older friend.
- Suddenly having money.
- Cutting or burning herself or himself as an adolescent.
- Attempted suicide or suicide ideation
- Explicit sexual play or behavior inappropriate to age and development
- Onset of excessive masturbation (public/private)

EMOTIONAL INDICATORS

- Fear, extreme fear of “monsters”
- Confusion
- Guilt feelings, burdened by guilt feelings
- Anger, rage
- Shame
- Extreme sadness
- Fear of certain people or places. For example: a child may not want to be left alone with a baby-sitter, a friend, a relative, or some other child or adult; or a child who is usually talkative and cheery may become quiet and distant when around a certain person

VERBAL

- Explicit sexual knowledge or language, inappropriate to age and development level
- Clear statement of abuse and/or a clear statement of inappropriate touching.