



ABUSE AWARENESS



While we all hope that everyone would be treated with respect, some people seek to hurt, control, or manipulate others. Such harmful behavior is called abuse. It is contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ, which teaches us to love one another and to treat others as we would want to be treated (see Matthew 7:12; John 13:34; Doctrine and Covenants 121:36–37).

Victims are often abused by those they know.

The offender may be a relative or someone they have met before. This is not to suggest that we should worry about everyone we know, but we can watch for—and teach our children to watch for—these four other signs.

Offenders often seek out the vulnerable.

Offenders search for those who might not be able to give consent or defend themselves.



Offenders often try to isolate victims.

Using isolation or threats, offenders often seek to keep their victims from reaching out for help.

Offenders often begin by violating boundaries.

Abuse occurs when there is a serious violation of the limits for the appropriate behavior and language toward others. Offenders may completely ignore boundaries or begin with small violations in order to desensitize the victim.

Offenders may gradually seek to establish trust before the abuse.

This is known as “grooming” and often happens to youth and children. Grooming behaviors can include requests for time alone, encouraging secrecy, talking about sexual topics, or showing pornography to or initiating physical contact with a child.