



ADULT SURVIVORS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

COMMON LONG-TERM EFFECTS

Child sexual abuse can have lifelong effects. Everyone is different and how the abuse impacts the individual's life depends on a variety of factors, including duration of the abuse, relationship to the offender, and when the memories emerged. Some common long-term reactions for adult survivors of child sexual abuse can include:

SHAME	The belief that you did something bad, wrong, or dirty.
GUILT	It is common for survivors to believe that abuse was their fault. Very often, this is what the perpetrator tells them.
DENIAL OR MINIMIZING	“He didn’t mean to hurt me” or “It was only when he was drinking.”
FEARFULNESS	Fear is a common tool to keep children from telling about the abuse. For some, this fear does not diminish in adulthood.
GRIEF	The grieving process is a normal and necessary part of healing.
BOUNDARY CONFUSION	A lack of understanding about physical boundaries and personal space is common for survivors.
ADDICTIONS & SELF-ABUSE	Self-destructive behavior is a common result of child sexual abuse. Drug/alcohol abuse can be a way to escape painful memories.
INTIMACY ISSUES	May interfere with healthy relationships.

