

Talking About Abuse : Script

<child's name>, come and sit down. I have something very important I would like to speak to you about. Some of the things that Mummy is going to talk about are very grown up, and might seem a little bit difficult, but it is important for you to know because I love you and I want you to be safe. Unfortunately, sometimes there are people that may want to hurt you. And the way in which they can hurt you is to touch your body in places that they shouldn't. Mummy and Daddy have told you that your body is private and that you get to show the people that you want to, and that people shouldn't touch you in those private places. There may be some people who would want to touch you in those places. Some of the ways that they might try to hurt you are to get you alone. They may want to touch your bottom, or your vagina. They may want you to touch their private parts. They may tell you, this is okay. They may tell you that it feels good. They are not allowed to do this, because it is your body. If somebody does something to you, I want you to come and tell Mum or Dad. If Mummy or Daddy are not around, please tell a teacher. They may tell you that you will get into trouble if you tell anyone. That is a lie [filling cabinet]. I will always want to know if this has happened to you. If you don't tell me, it is difficult for me to protect you. Unfortunately, a person that may want to hurt you in this way may not always be a stranger – so even if you think it is somebody that Mummy likes or is friends with, I still want to know.

Then I let my child ask questions

Then I ask them questions to make sure that they have understood – such as ‘What happens if somebody asks you to touch their penis?’ ; at this point I would want my child to say, “I would say no”. And then I would ask ‘What happens if they want to touch your vagina?’ ; ‘What would you do if they said it was okay?’ ; ‘What would you do if they said not to tell Mummy?’

This is a really good example of why we cannot use vague language when talking to our children about these things. If I said to my child, don't let somebody touch you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable, or a way that you don't like – that could be very confusing, in an abusive situation. And it allows the perpetrator to twist that moment for their gain. We need to be explicit with what is and is not correct touching, with the rights over our body, and we need to empower our children if necessary with the exact words to say in a situation when they are under threat. We need to let them know that we will listen, that we are here to protect them, that we are their best advocate and we will take action. This is not something we can say once. This needs to be repeated over and over and over – much in the same way that I have taught my children my telephone number off by heart if they get lost – they need to be able to say the word no, they need to be able to tell me when they have been harmed.

Child-Initiated Questions : “Take Five”

Child: “What is sex?”

Take Five

1) **A** – 2) **B** – 3) **C** – 4) **D** – 5) **E**

Affirm – **B**ackground – **C**larify – **D**iscuss – **E**xam’

Affirm

“That’s a very good, and a very important question. I want you to know that I’m always interested in hearing these kinds of questions and talking with you.”

- Validate and encourage your child. You want your child to know they have done the right thing asking you, and that you want to talk to with them about these things.

Background

“What have you heard about sex already?”

- Establish their current knowledge/understanding ; to know where they are coming from, also gives the opportunity to then address any myths or misunderstandings they have absorbed

Clarify

“What would you like to know?”

- They may have a very specific question, or want a general discussion.

Discuss

- Now you can answer.
Try and make your answer a discussion rather than a one-way explanation.

‘Exam’ ... time for a Quiz

- Check in on your child’s understanding. An opportunity to ensure you have explained in a way they can understand, or have they misunderstood something – gives an opportunity to re-explain or correct.

*REMEMBER: It is okay to say...

“I don’t know ... I’m not sure how to best answer that question” ...

“That is a really tricky question for me ... can I think about that so I can give you the best answer?”

So you can think, pray, talk with others about how best to answer. Then go back to your child.