



SAVING CHILDREN
AND REVEALING SECRETS

SCARS ADULT *EMPOWERMENT GUIDE* **FOR CHILDREN & TEENS**

I AM SPECIAL • I AM WORTHY • I HAVE PURPOSE

It is an adult's responsibility to protect children. Adults are responsible for children's safety. Adults should respect children. Adults should care for children. Adults should protect children because children are important and they are worthy! Children are entitled to be safe and to feel safe, to be listened to, and to be believed.



As parents and caregivers it is important to help children feel special. This booklet contains some ways parents and caregivers can do that. You will find a list of topics and sentiments that you can share with your children. They are organized into three different groupings. Some of the suggested topics may not be ones that you are comfortable talking about or that you feel very knowledgeable about; however, you can call on other professionals and school counselors for assistance.

I AM SPECIAL

INTRODUCTION:

At this age, children need to know they are valued and loved. The suggestions below are some concepts that are great to work on and discuss with this age group. They need to know that as parents and caregivers we are listening to them and not just talking at them. 😊 Build self-esteem and confidence. Regardless of what someone says or does, let children know that **THEY ARE SPECIAL!**

THEME: Every child is special!

DISCUSSION POINTS:

1. You are special
2. What is love; who loves you, do you feel loved?
3. Your body is very special and it belongs to you
4. The parts of your body have a proper name, including your privates. (Parents avoid pet names for private parts)
Teach children the names of their private parts
(Mouth, Breasts, Vagina, Penis, Buttocks)
5. Your private parts are private and so are other peoples
6. You must respect other's bodies
7. You shouldn't feel forced to give affection and you shouldn't force other people to give you affection.
8. You can say 'No' even when someone you know and love makes you feel uncomfortable (Even an adult) NO means NO! Tell someone about any confusing feelings
9. Respect when others say NO. NO means NO!
10. Listening to your 'uh oh feelings'. Pay attention to any butterflies in your tummy

- 11.** The difference between a surprise and a secret. Give examples: Surprises make everyone happy when revealed. (Surprise parties, birthday presents, a special outing, something made at school) Secrets can be hurtful, scary, cause sadness or anger. (Being bribed, threatened, told not to tell, coerced into not telling). Tell someone you trust when a secret or surprise makes you uncomfortable
- 12.** Finding your voice and using your words to be SAFE
- 13.** Healthy ways to cope with sad, angry, scared feelings
- 14.** Cyber Safety – How to protect yourself on the Internet (Visit www.cybertips.bm)



AGES 9 YEARS – 12 YEARS

I AM WORTHY (IMPORTANT)

INTRODUCTION:

As children get older it is very important to keep lines of communication open and watch for signs of shutting down. These years are very important because children who have good self-esteem, i.e. feel good about themselves, are more likely to share what's going on and "tell" if need be. Having discussions on topics suggested below will help you get to know your child and also equip them with strategies and tools just in case. (Research shows that the median age that sexual abuse occurs is 9 years old)

THEME: Build Self-Worth – understanding what sex is, what boundaries are, and how to use their voice

DISCUSSION POINTS:

1. Re-inforce earlier teachings (Ages 4 years – 8 years)
2. No one should make you feel uncomfortable (because YOU ARE worthy AND YOU ARE important)
3. There are times when you won't feel special, or feel smart, or feel like you belong. Remember you are special, you are smart and you DO belong! Feelings are just your thoughts and you can change your thoughts to change your feelings. Just because you feel a certain way, doesn't make that feeling a fact
4. Your body is changing. (Talk about puberty, hormones, what to do with these changing physical feelings)
5. What is sex; the benefits and the risks. (Reinforce making effective decisions, especially with social media) Stop, think & choose are steps your children are familiar with)
6. How to manage your sexual feelings and express your sexual behavior. (Teach communication skills to manage peer pressure)

7. How to manage and cope with peer pressure (Reinforce positive decision making)
8. Talk about what is sexual abuse. (Teach them that abuse is when one exerts power over another. A child is sexually abused when they are forced or persuaded to take part in sexual activities. This doesn't have to be physical contact and it can happen online)
9. Reinforce the importance of having a safe person, in addition to you, to talk to. Ask them "who are your safe persons?"
- 10 Reinforce the importance of establishing boundaries. Let your children know that regardless of someone's role in a family or community, adults or older youth should NEVER touch a child in their private parts or ask a child to touch them. They should never ask them to view someone's private parts or be asked to view their private parts. Most sexual abuse starts with the violation of a boundary
11. Have a conversation about comfortable versus uncomfortable feelings, and appropriate versus inappropriate behaviors
12. Explain what grooming is: (How do you protect yourself from grooming?) (If someone does groom you or harm you - role-play here – how would I tell? Who could I tell about anything and about anyone)
 - a. Gift Giving - this does not equate to allowing someone to touch you or to speak to you inappropriately, to ask you to view something inappropriate, to touch others in their private parts, to show others your private parts
 - b. Tickling - touching you anywhere near or on your private parts; accidental touching

- c. Playing sexual games that are inappropriate & telling inappropriate jokes
 - d. Telling you that you look pretty and violating your boundaries (touching your private parts as an example)
 - e. Asking you to keep 'a secret'
- 13. Practice resistance skills by role-playing to help them protect themselves from grooming. Role-playing assists children with practicing to use their voice to say NO and to tell someone if it happens. Remind them to tell you or their other safe person immediately if anyone tries any of the above behaviors.
- 14. Cyber Safety – How to protect yourself on the Internet (Visit www.cybertips.bm)



AGES 13 YEARS – 18 YEARS

I HAVE PURPOSE

INTRODUCTION:

As our children mature and become their own person, parents and caregivers can still help shape their paths using the discussion topics suggested below. Despite the fact that they seem grown up, they still need to know that there is someone who cares and listens.

THEME: Every child has a purpose in this life. Helping your child to understand self and others

DISCUSSION POINTS:

1. Discovering who you are How are you wired? What are your gifts and talents? (Remember children are all different; talented in many ways and passionate about different things.)
2. You are special. What do you think your purpose is?
3. Are you having any relationship/friendship difficulties? (Let them know that it is normal for them to dislike you sometimes and that they will not always agree with parental decisions. Reinforce that they can always talk to you.)
4. How do you fit in with peers and do you try to please others?
5. How do you deal with rejection, abuse, and abandonment? (Reinforce positive coping skills; especially how to release anger, shame, hurt, and frustration in healthy ways)
6. Respecting others' differences, opinions, and choices
7. Choices have consequences (sex, drugs, crime, social media posts)
8. Cyber Safety – How to protect yourself on the Internet (Visit www.cybertips.bm)

9. Abuse is when one exerts power over another. Exerting power over others is NEVER OK. Why do you think people do it? Bullying tactics and hurting others with our words, why do we do this? (Self-preservation etc.)
10. Dealing with Shame - shame can be a form of self-protection. Shame can be the voice of perfectionism. Nothing silences us more than shame. We all struggle with feelings of not being good enough, not having enough, and not belonging enough. Overcoming these feelings of inadequacy is to share our experiences. Telling our stories takes courage – speaking from the heart without repercussion or feeling judged
11. Respecting others privacy, except when it involves them getting hurt or hurting others.
12. EMPATHY (Understanding what someone is experiencing. Reinforce that developing empathy can enrich our relationships. Empathy is the ability to put ourselves in someone else's shoes. How would you feel? It's not what we say it's how we say it. Is it constructive? Is it respectful? It is being funny without being hurtful?)
13. For Daughters: Beauty comes from the inside. Help girls understand that being a good person and treating others with respect makes you look beautiful.
14. For Sons: Talk about their masculinity and explore any fear that they might not be as masculine as other boys. Ask them how do they talk about what hurts them; deal with harassment from other boys, and manage troubled relationships with their fathers. (If they were harmed – dealing with the fact that they were unable to protect themselves and reinforcing the fact that it doesn't make them weak or a coward)

15. All children need to feel valued and respected by their parents and caregivers. Talk about responsibilities of adults versus children. Children were not meant to be abandoned, rejected or abused, by any adult. If they have experienced one of these, encourage them that this experience does not have to identify them.

**THEY ARE SPECIAL, THEY ARE
WORTHY AND THEY HAVE PURPOSE**



RESOURCE BOOKS FOR CHILDREN (WITH PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT) – MANY BOOKS BELOW ARE AVAILABLE IN OUR SCARS LENDING LIBRARY

Some Secrets Should Never be Kept – by Jayneen Sanders
(Recommended for ages 3-5 years old)

No means No! – by Jayneen Sanders *(Recommended for ages 3-8 years old)*

My Body! What I say Goes! – by Jayneen Sanders
(Recommended for ages 3-10 years old)

My Body belongs to me – by Jill Starishevsky
(Recommended for ages 3-5 years old)

It's My Body – by Lory Freeman *(Recommended for ages 3-8 years old)*

A Secret Safe to Tell – by Naomi Hunter
(Recommended for ages 3 years and up)

I said No – by Zack & Kimberly King *(Recommended for ages 3 years and up)*

Fred the Fox shouts “NO” – by Tatiana Y Kasil Mathews
(Recommended for ages 3 years and up)

Don't be Scared to Tell - by Catherine Chatterton
(Recommended for ages 3-8 years old)

Miles is the Boss of His Body – by Samantha Kurtzman Counter
(Recommended for ages 3- 8 years old)

When I was Little like You - by Jane Porett *(Recommended for ages 4 years and up)*

The Right Touch - by Sandy Kleven and Jody Bergsma
(Recommended for ages 4 years and up)

Some parts are not for sharing – by Julie K. Federico
(Recommended for ages 4 years and up)

The Trouble with Secrets - by Karen Johnsen
(Recommended for ages 4-10 years old)

God made all of Me – by Justin S. Holcomb and Lindsey A. Holcomb
(Recommended for ages 4 years and up)

Good Pictures Bad Pictures – by Kristen A. Jensen MA and Gail Poyner PHD
(Recommended for ages 5 years and up)

Boys, Girls, & Body Science – by Meg Hickling

Sex is a funny word - by Cory Silverberg *(Recommended for ages 8-10 years)*

(Suggest taking the '5 love languages test for children ages 9-12)
– <http://www.5lovelanguages.com/profile/children>

(Suggest taking the '5 love languages test for children ages 13-17)
– <http://www.5lovelanguages.com/profile/teens>

www.cybertips.bm

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS (NON-LEADING) TO ASK CHILDREN AFTER THEY ATTEND EVENTS OR SLEEP-OVERS:

Ask privately:

1. Did you enjoy yourself?
2. How did you spend your time?
3. What was your favorite part of the party or your day/night?
4. What was the least favorite part?
5. Did you feel safe?
6. If applicable, you seem sad today, is there anything you want to share?
7. Was there anything else you wanted to share?

WHAT TO REINFORCE IF YOUR CHILD DISCLOSES THEY WERE ABUSED:

1. I believe you
2. What happened wasn't your fault and it shouldn't have happened
3. Thank you for telling me
4. I will keep you safe
(This should be a priority of the parent/guardian)
5. I love you and am here for you
6. I will get the support and help you need in your journey of healing
7. What happened to you is against the law. Laws are like rules, only much more serious. There are consequences when people break rules.
8. We can talk about this as much or as little as you like. Communication is important and revealing your feelings is part of the healing
9. I'm so sorry that I couldn't protect you. I love you and we will get through this together



SAVING CHILDREN
AND REVEALING SECRETS

“Parenting will never be an exact science as we have to consider each child’s individual needs. However, one thing that every parent/guardian must do is keep the lines of communication open with their children. Some of the conversations will be difficult, but necessary. I welcome this SCARS Empowerment Guide as a parent resource”

**LeeAnn Simmons, Education Officer Counselling, Bermuda
Department of Education**

“Sexual abuse has a deleterious impact on a child’s sense of self. SCARS have provided us with a guide to facilitate conversations about self-worth and sexual abuse. Such discussions are paramount in promoting awareness and prevention of child sexual abuse.”

**Dr. Tina J. Arorash, Ph.D.
Registered Bermuda Psychologist**

P.O. Box HM 3003, Hamilton HM MX, Bermuda

(441) 297-2277 | info@scars.bm

[/SCARSBDA](https://twitter.com/SCARSBDA) | [/SCARSBDA](https://facebook.com/SCARSBDA)

www.scarsbermuda.com