



NEW REPORT SHOWS HIGH RATE OF PAST CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IN BERMUDA

Partnership between SCARS and the Bermuda Health Council announces new research on child sexual abuse on the island.

According to a new survey by the Bermuda Health Council and SCARS, one in three Bermudians have been the victim of child sexual abuse before the age of 18.

The survey was distributed in November 2017 to 5,000 past participants of SCARS child sexual abuse prevention training, Darkness to Light's Stewards of Children®. Participants answered questions ranging from basic demographic information to specifics about the age, gender, and relationship of the person who assaulted them.

"This report confirms what we've discovered during our years of training in Bermuda. Child sexual abuse is a crisis that the island has been avoiding for decades, and we now have the data to show just how severe the epidemic has been."

According to the Bermuda Health Council's findings, which provide the most current national rates on child sexual abuse for Bermuda, several statistics for Bermuda align with other countries around the world. Among those findings:

- One in three adult residents of Bermuda reported being the victims of sexual abuse prior to age 18.
- The majority of victims knew their abuser, classifying them as either family, friend, or a neighbor.
- Among victims, only 41% disclosed to anyone, and the majority of those disclosed at least 25 years following the abuse.
- 90% of victims identified as female, 10% of victims identified as male.

SCARS and the Bermuda Health Council will be working together toward publishing the data.

The data was collected by surveying SCARS participants, a database of over 5,000 residents of Bermuda who have completed the three-hour Darkness to Light Stewards of Children® child sexual abuse prevention training offered by the organization. The training, delivered in-person across the country by SCARS, focuses on five steps to help adults prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse.

There are adults in our community who were victims of sexual abuse as children, prevention training gives them back their power to protect others and can bring them great healing."

Bermuda is one of seventeen countries around the world to utilize Darkness to Light's training to make communities safer for children, and the first country to reach 12% of its population trained. Bermuda is the first country to reach "tipping point," a measurement Darkness to Light uses based on Malcolm Gladwell's book of the same name. Additionally, organizations across the island have made significant investments in the protection of children in partnership with the prevention organization.

As quoted by Ricky Braithwaite, Director of Health Economics at Bermuda Health Council, "Data collection such as the Health Council's collaboration on a sexual abuse survey with SCARS, represent the investments needed in building an evidence base for combatting social determinants of health. It is a reminder that only 20 percent of health results from health system use, while the larger 80 percent pieces often get overlooked and too often marginalized."

As quoted by Darkness to Light President and CEO Katelyn Brewer, during a recent visit to the island, "SCARS and Bermuda are the perfect example of how grassroots movements can change culture. Darkness to Light is proud to partner with SCARS and to see the real impact their passion is making in Bermuda. We're eager to see what work they'll accomplish in the coming years to keep all children in Bermuda safe and to help adult survivors realize they aren't alone."

WHAT IS CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE?

Any sexual act between an adult and a minor, or between two minors, when one exerts power over the other. Forcing, coercing or persuading a child to engage in any type of sexual act. It also includes non-contact acts such as exhibitionism, exposure to pornography, voyeurism and communicating in a sexual manner by phone or Internet. Often traumatic for children and teens.

A CRIME PUNISHABLE BY LAW!