

HOW TO HANDLE AN ABUSE DISCLOSURE

If you are the trusted adult a child turns to for help disclosing physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, or neglect, use these five steps to proceed in a trauma-informed way:

- 1 Believe what the child says.
- 2 Stay calm and re-establish a sense of safety for the child.
- 3 Limit questions to facts only, with your body language open and calm.
- 4 Do not hug or touch the child.
- 5 Get help by making a report.

At YPAD™, we consider all certified studio owners and staff to be mandated reporters of suspected abuse, including child sexual abuse. If you have received a disclosure or you suspect any kind of child abuse or neglect, you must make a report. You do not need to have proof to make a report. You can make an anonymous report if you are concerned about privacy.

One resource is called a child advocacy center (CAC). CACs exist in most cities and coordinate the legal and social services involved with child sexual abuse. They can evaluate your concerns and help you make a report.

To find a CAC near you, contact the National Children's Alliance, the national association and accrediting body for CACs: **1-800-239-9950**

You can also contact a child abuse helpline with trauma-informed staff, such as Darkness to Light: **1-866-FOR-LIGHT** or Childhelp: **1-800-4-A-CHILD**

When in doubt, err on the side of reporting.

Sources:

[Childhelp](#)

[Darkness to Light](#)

[Stein Counseling and Consulting Services](#)

Jessica Michaels, speaker, advocate, and [founder of 3JoannesSAFR](#)