

For Wives:

Five Tips to Help Your Husband Overcome Childhood Sexual Abuse

If you know – or suspect – that your husband was sexually abused as a child, you probably want to help in any and every way you can. But that’s easier said than done. Unfortunately, the scars of abuse often persist into adulthood, and feelings of guilt and shame prevent many victims from talking about their past. That’s especially true for guys; it’s not uncommon for men to shut down the subject completely – and in doing so, shutting out and hurting those who care for them the most.

While the devastating and long-lasting emotional damage that results from sexual abuse can have significant impact on a person’s ability to engage in healthy relationships, it’s not the end of the story. *There is hope for healing.* Here are five things you can do to help your husband:

1. Stand with him

It’s vital to remember that this is *his* battle. You can’t fight it for him, and he will need to take it at his own pace. But he also needs the comfort and reassurance that comes from a strong support system – and that starts with you. Begin by communicating your unconditional care and confidence in him. Knowing that the woman he loves “has his back” can fuel his courage to address these issues and do what he needs to do as he travels a difficult road of discovery and healing.

2. Lay the burden at the feet of Jesus

We’re taught in Luke 4:18 that Jesus came to *proclaim good news to the afflicted, joy to the brokenhearted, liberty to the captives and comfort to those who are crushed and bruised.* You and your husband can take hold of this promise and make it yours as a couple – memorizing it, hiding it in your hearts, and praying over it day and night. It is the Word of God, and its power can be fully unleashed in your lives as you drink deeply from the well of its truth and allow the Holy Spirit to weave it into the very fabric of your hearts and minds.

3. Emphasize that it’s not his fault

The third step is to help your husband realize and accept that the abuse he endured as a child was *not* his fault. It’s common for victims to blame themselves, whether consciously or subconsciously, but that guilt is false. He needs to make a conscious attempt to leave it behind; of course, while that sounds simple, it can be very difficult to accomplish. An abuse victim can begin the process by affirming daily (and *being* affirmed, especially by you) that he is pure and spotless in the sight of God – regardless of what may have happened at the hands of others.

4. Study up

Next, get some outside input. Books can be helpful in this regard, and we've listed several below that we'd like to recommend for your consideration. All of these titles are available through our ministry and can be ordered by calling our offices or visiting our [Online Store](#).

5. Seek qualified professional assistance

Finally – and this is key – seek out the help of a trained Christian therapist. Accurate information is a good place to begin the restorative process, and that's where many guys will tend to start (and maybe stop). But head knowledge by itself isn't enough to bring the needed healing to completion. When children are violated, their sense of trust is damaged. As a result, thorough restoration can only take place within the context of healthy relationships. Your marriage can be the core of this process, especially if you are loving and patient. Still, the task is simply too big for the two of you to tackle alone. A person who experienced childhood abuse needs deep emotional, psychological and spiritual guidance. This is a job for a skilled and gifted professional.

With all this in mind, we'd like to invite you or your husband to call and speak with a member of Focus on the Family's Counseling staff. Our counselors can help you both get started on the journey of healing and provide referrals to qualified marriage and family therapists practicing in your area.

If your marriage is seriously struggling – from the fallout of the abuse your husband suffered, and/or other factors – we also recommend considering the in-depth services available through the [Focus on the Family National Institute of Marriage](#). This unique organization was created for the specific purpose of saving relationships in crisis. Headquartered in Branson, Missouri, NIM has served as a pioneer in the development of the Marriage Intensives Model. This innovative approach to crisis counseling has been revolutionary in rescuing marriages in distress and on the brink of divorce. Follow-up research indicates that *85 percent* of these couples remain married two years after their Intensive Experience.

You may speak to one of our staff counselors (at no charge), or inquire about Intensive Marriage Counseling at the [National Institute of Marriage](#), by calling **1-800-A-FAMILY (232-6459)**.

Resources:

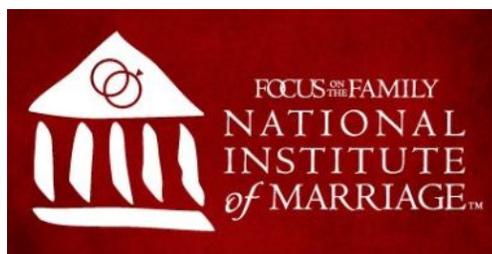
[*When a Man You Love Was Abused: A Woman's Guide to Helping Him Overcome Childhood Sexual Molestation*](#) (book)

[*No Place to Cry: The Hurt and Healing of Sexual Abuse*](#) (book)

[*The Wounded Heart: Hope for Adult Victims of Childhood Sexual Abuse*](#) (book)

[*On The Threshold of Hope: Opening the Door to Healing for Survivors of Sexual Abuse*](#) (book)

[*Hush: Moving from Silence to Healing After Childhood sexual Abuse*](#) (book)



Helping Families Thrive