

INFORMATION ABOUT ABUSE

Child abusers can be parents, caretakers, friends, neighbors or anyone who comes in to contact with your child. They can even be other youth. Everyone has a responsibility and plays a role in preventing abuse. Below are the four types of child abuse that are recognized by most states:

EMOTIONAL

Any chronic and persistent act by an adult that endangers the mental health or emotional development of a child including rejecting, ignoring, terrorizing, corrupting, withholding love and support, constantly criticizing, making mean remarks, insulting, and giving little or no love guidance, or support.

PHYSICAL

An injury or pattern of injuries that happen to a child that is not accidental. These injuries may include beatings, burns, bruises, bites, welts, strangulation, or broken bones.

SEXUAL

Sexual abuse is the sexual assault or sexual exploitation of children. Sexual abuse may consist of numerous acts over a long period or a single incident. Children can be victimized from infancy through adolescence. Sexual abuse includes rape, incest, sodomy, fondling, exposing oneself, oral copulation, penetration of the genital or anal openings, as well as forcing children to view or appear in pornography (possibly internet based). The perpetrator keeps the child from disclosing through intimidation, threats, and rewards.

NEGLECT

Neglect occurs when adults responsible for the well being of a child fail to provide for or protect the child. Neglect may include not giving food, clothing, or shelter; failing to keep children clean; lack of supervision; and withholding medical care.

Child abuse can happen from an adult to a child, or from one child to another (peer-to-peer abuse).



CHILD SAFE RESOURCES

Department of Children and Families:

1 855 INFO DCF (1 855 463 6323)

To report child abuse or neglect call the hotline:

1 877 NJ ABUSE (1 877 652 2873)

Child Protection and Permanency (CP&P):

800 392 2735

New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission:

1 609 292 1400

New Jersey Sex Offender Information:

www.njsp.org/sex-offender-registry/

Mental Health–Crisis Helpline:

1 855 995 9489

Domestic Violence and Rape Helpline:

1 800 572 7233

Family Resource Center:

1 800 843 5437

Legal Aid Services of New Jersey:

1 888 576 5529

New Jersey State Bar:

732 249 5000

Mercer County Victims Advocates:

609 292 6766

Court Appointed Special Advocates Program (CASA):

609 434 0050

Mercer County Mental Health:

609 989 6574

Hospital Behavioral Health:

609 396 4357

National Crisis Text Line:

Text HOME to 741741

Support Groups for Abuse Survivors and Families

Our County Mental Health:

1 800 367 6274

New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault:

1 800 601 7200



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

CHILD SAFETY IS OUR PRIORITY

HOPEWELL VALLEY YMCA

HOPEWELL VALLEY YMCA
62 South Main Street, Pennington, NJ 08534
www.hvymca.org 609 737 3048



OUR COMMITMENT:

A SAFE CHILD ENVIRONMENT

The Hopewell Valley YMCA serves over 1,200 members throughout the community and is dedicated to helping members develop and maintain a healthy spirit, mind, and body. We provide safe and engaging activities for pre-schoolers through adults in Hopewell, Hopewell Township and Pennington at numerous locations throughout Hopewell Valley.

We are proud and respectful of the trust parents place in our YMCA. A safe environment for children combined with quality programming is our number one priority. Our core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility are integrated into everything we do.

Please read this document and ask us questions to learn more about what you can do to protect children from abuse.

OUR CHILD SAFE POLICY

The Hopewell Valley YMCA focuses on screening, hiring, training and education, and supervision, as well as performance management and feedback systems. We have more than 120 staff members and volunteers working with the youth in programs we offer.

OUR SCREENING

To keep children in our programs safe, we take the following steps in our intensive screening of staff and volunteers:

- Detailed application forms
- Comprehensive interview process
- Thorough reference checks
- Criminal background, sex offender record checks, and fingerprinting

OUR TRAINING

All staff members complete an extensive child abuse prevention training program before their first day of work. Supervisors and managers complete additional training to further promote a child-safe environment. All staff members are mandatory reporters of any suspicion of child abuse in accordance with New Jersey State Law.

OUR POLICY

Policies are enforced to ensure staff and volunteers are never alone with a child. All interactions with adults and children are designed to be observable and interruptible. Parents are encouraged to express concerns to staff members in charge or the CEO. Staff are prohibited from being one on one with a child outside of the YMCA (including babysitting) and contacting youth over social media). Please alert us immediately if you observe a member of our staff or a volunteer violating these policies.

PREVENTION IS THE ANSWER

The Hopewell Valley YMCA has partnered with Darkness to Light to bring the Stewards of Children child sexual abuse prevention training to our community. Stewards of Children is the only evidence-based training available nationally that is proven to increase knowledge and change child protective behavior. Our Y is working with schools, day care centers, community organizations, faith groups, local businesses and more, to train community members to keep our children safe. When adults actively seek to make a difference, a cultural change can occur. We're working to shift from a norm where society is kept in fear and denial around child sexual abuse and children are easy targets, to a community where every child is protected by trained and aware adults.

BE THE ONE WHO MAKES A CHANGE

Visit the advocacy link (<https://hvyymca.org/programs/health-and-safety/>) on our home page and take the first step in protecting children.

If you think your child has been physically injured, seek medical attention. If you have any questions or concerns regarding a member of our staff, please contact us immediately. If you are not comfortable sharing this information directly with us, please make a report to one of the resources in this brochure.

WORKING TOGETHER FOR SAFETY

The Hopewell Valley YMCA is asking you to partnership with us to ensure your child is safe and healthy while under our supervision. Please learn more about advocacy, talk to your child, drop in on your child's programs, trust your instincts, know the warning signs of abuse, look for signs of special attention, and as always ask questions.

LEARN more by following the advocacy link (<https://hvyymca.org/programs/health-and-safety/>) on our website.

TALK to your child about his or her experiences in YMCA programs, school, sports, and other activities. Encourage your child to tell you or another trusted adult if anything happens.

DROP IN on your child's programs.

TRUST your instincts. Don't wait to tell us if something seems "strange." Speak up!

KNOW WARNING SIGNS of abuse:

- Unexplained bruising or other physical markings
- Disturbed sleeping or eating patterns
- Abrupt changes in behavior: anxiety, clinging, aggressiveness, withdrawal, depression
- Fear of a certain person or place
- Discomfort with physical contact
- A child bullying other children

SPECIAL ATTENTION may include favors, treats, gifts, rides, increased affection or time alone, particularly outside the activities of school, childcare, or other programs. Listen and watch for the signs of your child receiving special attention that other children or teens are not receiving.

On occasion, **ASK** your child these questions:

- What does safe mean to you?
- How do you know when you are safe?
- Is anyone scaring or threatening you?
- Has anyone asked you to keep secrets?
- Has anyone said anything to you to make you feel bad?
- Is anyone touching you in a way that you don't like or you are not sure about?

READ our Code of Conduct listed on our web site. If someone is non-compliant, let us know immediately.

