



CARIBBEAN BROTHERS ASSEMBLIES CONFERENCE 2017
Cascadia Hotel, # 67, Ariapita Road, St. Ann's, Port of Spain, Trinidad.

Workshop Title: 'Identifying and Preventing Childhood Sexual Abuse'

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Who is a Child?

In Jamaica, the Child Care and Protection Act (CCPA) defines a child as "anyone under the age of eighteen years".

What is Sexual Abuse?

The Child Care and Protection Act (CCPA) of Jamaica describes sexual abuse as "the sexual exploitation of children or the involvement of a child in sexual acts and sexually motivated behaviours. These acts may include fondling, prostitution, incest and encouraging or forcing a child to participate in pornographic activities."

The Jamaica Gleaner of April 9, 2017 published a report from the Office of the Children's Registry which showed an alarming total of 13, 948 reported cases of Child Abuse in 2015. In terms of Child Sexual Abuse cases the statistics were as follows: Rape: 1%; Oral Sex 4%; Incest: 4%; Fondling: 11%; Exhibitionism: 1%; Sex with a person under 16: 52%; Buggery: 2%. s.

Physical Signs of Sexual Abuse

- Torn stained or bloody clothing
- Difficulty walking and sitting
- Pain or itching in genital areas
- Difficulty with bowel or bladder control
- Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)
- Pregnancy



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Psychological/Emotional Signs of Sexual Abuse

- Low Self Esteem
- Suicidal ideation
- Depression
- Post-traumatic Stress Disorder
- Hostility
- Anger

Behavioral Signs of Abuse:

- Change in appetite
- Substance abuse
- Headaches, Nausea and diarrhoea
- Fear of adult contact
- Inability to concentrate
- Slips of the tongue
- Frequent absence from school
- Sudden drop in performance in school
- Constant tiredness

Preventing Childhood Sexual Abuse – Some ideas

1. Strengthening family bonds, especially between mothers and daughters.
2. Social Network and Resources – connecting people, communities and organizations.
3. Presentations at social events.
4. Use of social media to raise awareness.
5. Using the Visual and Performing Arts to raise awareness.
6. Education and Workshops.
7. Family Life Centers for Counselling.
8. Nationwide campaign on the prevention of child sexual abuse.
9. Stiffer penalties for perpetrators.
10. Greater support for single parents e.g. child care facilities and flexible working hours



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What should the Church's Response Be?

- ◆ Never be silent or treat the subject as taboo – create forums where victims can feel free to speak about their experiences;
- ◆ Teach children from the Word of God of their worth and pray with them and teach them to pray for daily protection;
- ◆ Arrange parenting workshops.
- ◆ Provide a Victim's Support Unit;
- ◆ Encourage Perpetrators to seek help & forgiveness;
- ◆ Support Government agencies & NGO's who do research and help children who are abused;
- ◆ Teach children how to protect themselves and how to identify when they are touched in an uncomfortable way;
- ◆ Have a notice board with current information on this topic and make literature available;
- ◆ Make counselling available that is free or reasonably priced.