

KNOW HOW TO RESPOND

If you suspect a child is being hurt, it's important to know what to do:

DO

- Talk to the child and let them know that you're interested in how they're doing.
- You can say things like: *"I'm concerned about you. You seem (worried, sad, anxious, afraid, etc.)"*. Or, *"I noticed you (missed a few days of school, seem tired, have been behaving differently). Is everything is ok?"*
- Use language that fits the child's age that they will understand.
- Be patient and try not to insert words when they are talking.
- Let the child tell you what they choose to tell when they are ready and able.
- Listen carefully to what the child is saying.
- Let the child use their own words.
- Reassure the child that they have not done anything wrong.
- Let the child know that it was brave to tell, that you care about them, and that you are going to get help.
- Remain calm. This may feel challenging, but remember that the child has identified you as a person that they can trust. If the child senses you are upset, they may think they have done something wrong.

- Make sure the child is in a safe place and contact Child Protective Services or the police. If the child is in immediate danger, call 911.

DON'T

- Don't try to conduct an investigation or gather all the facts. Leave the details to the professionals.
- Don't ask leading or suggestive questions. Instead of *"Did someone do that to you?"* ask *"How did you get hurt?"*
- Don't ask "W" questions such as who, where, when or why.
- Don't promise the child that you won't tell anyone else. Let the child know that their safety is important and that you have a responsibility to tell other adults to make sure that they are safe.
- If the child is worried about others knowing, ask *"What are you worried will happen?"* Be reassuring but, again, do not make promises about the future.
- If the suspect is named, do not try to contact them, or let them know what was shared with you.
- If you know the suspect, do not make any judgments or comments about that person. It may be someone that the child loves (and possibly someone that you care about, as well).

If you suspect abuse, call:

Department of Children & Families
1-800-792-5200

Boston Police Department
617-343-4000

Chelsea Police Department
617-466-4855

Revere Police Department
781-284-1212

Winthrop Police Department
617-539-5800

**IN AN
EMERGENCY,
CALL 911**

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