

Victims can get help!

Molestation is a painful and devastating violation, one that can affect the physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual future of a child. Children and adults however, are extremely resilient, and with the proper support and professional care, can heal and go on to lead healthy, happy, successful lives.

No matter what age they come forward. It is never too late!

Quality professional treatment can help a victim of child abuse process the experience in a healthy manner and thus minimize or eliminate long-term damage. There are different types of professional trauma treatment available to help victims of molestation heal. There is no one way that works for every person at every time for every issue. Each treatment method has its pros and cons, and through professional guidance, the proper care can be found. Primary evidence-based methods include:

Types of support include:

- **Crisis hotline** –an anonymous hotline for counseling and support by a quality trained volunteer. The volunteer can support victims emotionally and/or help guide them in the right direction towards professional interventions and legal actions.
- **Psychotherapy:** A qualified psychologist, social worker, or other mental health professional that specializes in children, trauma and molestation, can help a victim work through their experiences and regain their sense of control, security, stability and trust. Therapy can help victims heal from the trauma and go on to lead healthy lives. **When choosing a therapist, it is important to ensure that they are adequately trained, licensed in their state, and certified in evidence-based trauma treatment methods.** Evidence-based trauma treatment includes:
 - Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)
 - Trauma-Focused CBT (TF-CBT)
 - Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT)
 - Prolonged Exposure (PE)
- **Group therapy:** Molestation is isolating, and victims often feel tremendous shame and loneliness. As such, group therapy can be a significant tool of healing for victims. It is very helpful for adolescents and adult survivors of sexual abuse to both give and get support from other people who have been through similar experiences.
- **Medication:** In some cases, medication may be used to treat mental health conditions resulting from the trauma in order to help the victim work through the trauma and function in a healthy way. Medications can include anti-depressants and anti-anxiety medications to help treat PTSD, depression and anxiety. Medication should only be taken only under the guidance of a professional licensed psychiatrist **with experience and expertise treating trauma victims of molestation.**

Finding the right therapist, type of therapy, medication and/or group can take time.



Sometimes victims feel like failures and that they are beyond help when therapy doesn't work out. This is not the case.

Not every therapist is a fit for every client and not every healing method is right for every person and every point in time; every person is unique. Healing takes time, patience and commitment.

Before choosing a therapist:

Clinics are often the ideal option for affordable and professional multidisciplinary trauma treatment. Many federally funded clinics have trauma therapists available and can match a victim with a suitable therapist within a short amount of time.

When choosing a therapist :

Whether choosing a therapist for ones self or making a referral, consider the following guidelines:

- Ensure sure they have an advanced degree (MA or PHD) in a clinical therapeutic field (psychology, social work, or art therapy).
- Ensure they are trained in evidence-based trauma methods (EMDR, TFEBT, DBT, PE).
- Ensure they have a few years of experience treating victims of abuse **in your age group**.
- Ensure that they are receiving professional supervision (yes, even the experts need supervision).
- Ensure that they are licensed in the state you are being treated in (this can be checked online through the local licensing board).
- Try and get a reference or two about them from professionals.
- Google them.
- Therapy can take time so make sure the therapist works at an affordable fee so that the victim can go through the necessary process.
 - o Ask them about the length of the session and fees
 - o Ask them if they take insurance – see if the victim is covered
- If relevant, ensure that they are willing to work with any additional caregivers are seeing (e.g. psychiatrist, group therapist, MD or addictions counselor). A holistic approach is important for trauma treatment.

