

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: IF I REPORT ABUSE, WILL ANYONE BELIEVE ME?

Yes. If you report abuse your case will be fully investigated to uncover evidence that proves what happened.

Q: WILL THE PERSON WHO ABUSED ME BE ALLOWED TO HAVE CONTACT WITH ME?

No. After a report of abuse is made, the person who allegedly abused you is removed from contact with you during the facility's investigation. This does not mean you will be released from the facility or moved to another facility, but you will be protected.

Q: WILL THE FACILITY PUNISH ME OR TREAT ME DIFFERENT (RETALIATE) IF I REPORT ABUSE?

No. If you make a report of abuse and have told the truth, you should not be punished, treated differently or receive any discipline. You will be protected from harm and the case will be investigated. If you are retaliated against, report it to a trustworthy adult or TJJD immediately and it will be investigated.

Q: WILL I HAVE TO TESTIFY IN COURT?

The facility and TJJD investigators will ask you questions about what happened. If the abuser faces criminal charges, you may be asked to testify in court.

Q: WILL REPORTING AFFECT MY JUVENILE COURT CASE, MY DETENTION OR PLACEMENT STATUS?

No. Making a report of abuse will not extend your stay in detention, lengthen your probation term or change your current placement status.

Q: WHAT IF I LIE ABOUT BEING ABUSED?

All reports of abuse are taken very seriously and investigated thoroughly. Anyone who makes a false report may be charged with a serious criminal offense. Remember, reporting abuse is not a game and you should always tell the truth.

Q: WHAT IF THE ABUSE HAPPENED AT HOME?

If the abuse happened at home, at school or in your community you should report it to an adult you trust, to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services at 1-800-252-5400, or to the police.

**ABUSE IS A CRIME. . .
TELL SOMEONE NOW!**

What Else Can I Do?

The Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) investigates abuse, neglect and exploitation in all Texas juvenile justice facilities and programs. There is a toll-free phone number you can call to report abuse if you do not feel comfortable talking to someone in the facility. Your report will be investigated by TJJD if you report it to facility staff or if you call TJJD directly.

**THE TOLL-FREE PHONE NUMBER
TO REPORT ABUSE IS:**

1-877-STOP ANE (786-7263)

When you call, you will be asked to tell exactly what happened to you in the facility. Your name and your identity will be protected and kept confidential.

NO ONE SHOULD BE ABUSED.



TEXAS
JUVENILE JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT

11209 Metric Blvd., Building H, Austin, TX 78758
Post Office Box 12757, Austin, TX 78711
(tel) 512.490.7130

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.tjld.texas.gov

A TEEN'S GUIDE TO
**Reporting Abuse,
Neglect & Exploitation**
IN JUVENILE JUSTICE FACILITIES



IF ABUSE HAPPENS TO YOU...
END THE SILENCE



TEXAS
JUVENILE JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT

Can Abuse Happen to Me?

In a juvenile justice facility or program, you have the right to be safe and protected against abuse. Abuse includes physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and exploitation. Texas juvenile facilities make every effort to keep you safe from harm. Despite the best protections in place in each facility and program, abuse does sometimes happen. It is important that you know what to do if it happens to you.

What is Physical Abuse?

Physical abuse is something done to you that causes physical pain or injury to your body, often called an assault. It may involve hitting, kicking, punching, choking, shoving, or other acts done by another person.

What is Sexual Abuse?

Sexual abuse is a sexual act committed against you or the intentional touching of your body in a sexual way by another person. Sexual abuse happens when someone asks you to flash or expose the private areas of your body or asks you to engage in sexual intercourse or other sexual behaviors.

What is Neglect?

Neglect happens when persons responsible for taking care of you fail to do so. For example, neglect may involve the unreasonable delay or refusal to allow you to see a doctor or nurse when you are sick or injured. It also may involve facility staff not giving you medicine prescribed by your doctor. Neglect may involve staff not providing proper supervision of you and the other kids in the facility. If staff is not present or paying attention when you are assaulted or hurt in any way by one of your peers, that is neglect.

What is Emotional Abuse?

Emotional abuse is an action by another person that may cause you extreme embarrassment, mental or emotional harm instead of physical harm. For example, emotional abuse may involve a person, making remarks or mean or hateful comments about you, your race, your gender, your family or the way you look.

What is Exploitation?

Exploitation happens when someone in authority takes advantage of you. Exploitation may involve facility staff ordering you to do personal favors for them or someone else. For example, if a staff member takes you from the facility to his home to mow his lawn or perform some other type of labor, this may be exploitation.

Who can Commit Abuse?

It is not easy to know what an abuser looks like. Abusers can be someone you know, a friend, relative or a stranger. Any person in a facility may commit abuse. Abusers are not always supervision officers or facility staff members. They can be visitors, volunteers, probation officers, medical personnel, counselors, teachers, or other persons in the facility that you meet. Abuse committed by any person against you is wrong and should be reported immediately. **No one deserves to be abused and abuse is always a crime...period.**

What if the Abuser is Another Juvenile?

Other residents in the facility may commit abuse against you. This may involve physical and sexual assaults. Abuse by other juveniles should also be reported. **You have a right to be protected at all times from other juveniles in the facility.**

What if I See or Hear About Someone Else Being Abused?

If you see another resident being abused or you hear about someone else being abused, you should report this. All abuse is wrong and everyone deserves to be protected at all times in a facility. **You can help others by reporting abuse.**

Who can Help?

If you are the victim of abuse, there are many people who want to help you. The important thing is to tell someone about the abuse, neglect or exploitation immediately. Do not be silent.

Trustworthy Adults

In the facility, there are many adults who you see every day that will help you and protect you. If you feel comfortable, you should talk to a facility staff member, counselor, teacher, or medical professional and tell them if you have been abused. There are also many adults who may visit you in the facility who can also listen and help, such as your attorney, your probation officer, your parent, guardian, or other family member.

Facility Grievance System

Each juvenile justice facility has a way to handle your complaints or problems, sometimes called “grievances” and this is called a *Grievance System*. For example, if you have a complaint about the food in the facility, or if you disagree with the way the rules are enforced, you should report these problems by using the grievance system in the facility. You can also report abuse using the facility grievance system if you feel comfortable doing so. The facility grievance system is a choice that is always available for you if you do not feel comfortable talking to a staff member directly. If you report abuse this way, the Texas Juvenile Justice Department will be notified of your case and will conduct an investigation of the situation along with the facility’s investigation.

**ABUSE IS A CRIME. . .
NO MATTER WHERE
YOU LIVE.**