

SPECIALIZED RESOURCES



Specialized Resources is a column designed to share books, websites, apps, and other resources that may be helpful for child life specialists working with a specific population. This column represents only the personal views of the author, and the Association of Child Life Professionals does not endorse or sponsor the products or services mentioned. In addition, the authors of this column verify that they have no affiliation with the companies or organizations related to the products and services mentioned in this article.

Sexual Assault Examinations in a Pediatric Emergency Setting

Janine Patton, MS, CCLS

TEXAS CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL, HOUSTON, TX

When working as a child life specialist in an emergency department, many different procedures can come your way each day. One of the most sensitive areas where child life services are provided is in supporting sexual assault examinations. Although these examinations may not be as frequent as other procedures in the emergency department, 1 in 9 females and 1 in 53 males under the age of 18 will experience sexual abuse or assault ("Children and Teens," 2014). Supporting these patients and families can be challenging. Below are some resources for support before, during, and after a sexual assault examination in a hospital setting.

REFERENCE

Children and Teens: Statistics. (2014). Retrieved from <https://www.rainn.org/statistics/children-and-teens>

PARENT/CAREGIVER RESOURCES

- Walker, P. (2012). *The broken road (A mother's journey)*. Bloomington, IN: Xlibris.
This book is written by a mother who discovered that her eight-year-old daughter had been abused by a family friend. The book follows the author on her journey through the emotional experience and how she learned to use her feelings to help both her daughter and herself heal.
- Brohl, K., & Potter, J. C. (2004). *When your child has been molested: A parent's guide to healing and recovery*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. Brohl & Potter's book is an educational resource that walks a parent through the experience of having a child who is sexually abused. It begins from the moment the parent learns of the abuse and discusses coping with the examination and beyond.
- RAINN: Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (<https://www.rainn.org>) is a national organization that can provide help directly to victims and families and connect victims and families to resources and services local to their area.

PATIENT RESOURCES

- Sanders, J., & Smith, C. (2013). *Some secrets should never be kept*. Victoria, Australia: Upload.
This children's book discusses safe and unsafe touches in a storybook format. This can be beneficial to educate children on how to identify abuse, as well as help children cope if the abuse has already occurred. Suggested age range: preschool, school age

- Wachter, O., & Aaron, J. (2002). *No more secrets for me: Sexual abuse is a secret no child should have to keep*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown.
Utilizing the format of a children's book can help promote important conversations. This book incorporates four different scenarios to portray situations with presumed "safe" adults, supervisors, or caregivers that are acting inappropriately towards the child. It empowers children with the tools to advocate for themselves and report the situation. Suggested age range: school age
- Daugherty, L. B. (2006). *Why me?: Help for victims of child sexual abuse (Even if they are adults now)*. Roswell, NM: Cleanan Press.
Beneficial to both victims and their parents, this book discusses common questions surrounding sexual abuse, includes first-hand accounts from victims, and shares how the abuse can impact the whole family. It is written at a mature level and should be shared with victims appropriately. Suggested age range: adolescents, adults

CHILD LIFE/PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES

- Naumann, E. & Garrison, C. (Producers). (2017). *A team approach: Child life's role in pediatric sexual abuse cases* [Video webinar]. Retrieved from <http://www.kidsta.org/page/ChildLifesRole1>
- Mian, M., Marton, P., & Lebaron, D. (1996). The effects of sexual abuse on 3- to 5-year-old girls. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 20(8), 731-745. doi:10.1016/0145-2134(96)00061-0
- Palusci, V. J., & Mchugh, M. T. (1995). Interdisciplinary training in the evaluation of child sexual abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 19(9), 1031-1038. doi:10.1016/0145-2134(95)00065-g
- Everett, B., & Gallop, R. (2001). *The link between childhood trauma and mental illness: Effective interventions for mental health professionals*. London, England: Sage.
- Campbell, R., Patterson, D., & Lichy, L. F. (2005). The effectiveness of sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE) programs. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 6(4), 313-329. doi:10.1177/1524838005280328
- Crawford-Jakubiak, J. E., Alderman, E. M., & Leventhal, J. M. (2017). Care of the adolescent after an acute sexual assault. *Pediatrics*, 139(3) e21064243. doi:10.1542/peds.2016-4243

Janine Patton, MS, CCLS, has been a practicing child life specialist since 2016, and spent a large portion of that time working in a pediatric emergency setting. During that time, Janine supported numerous patients for sexual assault exams, providing preparation and support for the examination process to the patient and family. Although no longer primarily working in the emergency department, Janine continues to develop her professional knowledge of working with this population and finding new ways to provide coping support in traumatic circumstances.