SEXUAL ABUSE AMONG UNDERAGED CHILDREN

Sexual abuse is a sexual behaviour or act forced upon a woman, man or child without their consent. History records that Nigerian culture forbids sexual abuse and those that are involved are castrated and sometimes banished from the society. These days however the sexual offenders are usually trailed and punished with appropriate jail terms. Sexual abusercould even be a family member, relatives (aunties, uncles, and etc.), friends or strangers. Recently a sexual abuse of children has become very rampant in the Nigerian Society and to some extent the world at large.

Sexual abuse can also have psychological, emotional, and physical effects on under aged children, but they are not easy to deal with, therefore, the right help and support is required to manage an abused child.

**Features of sexual abuse**

1. Physical force/violence is very rarely used; rather the perpetrator tries tomanipulate the child’s trust and hide the abuse.
2. The perpetrator is typically a known and trusted caregiver.
3. Child sexual abuse often occurs over many weeks or even years.
4. The sexual abuse of children frequently occurs as repeated episodes thatbecome more invasive with time. Perpetrators usually engage the child in agradual process of sexualizing the relationship over time (i.e. grooming).
5. Incest/intrafamilial abuse accounts for about one third of all child sexualabuse cases.

 **Causes of sexual abuse**

1. Alcohol

Sexual abuse can be caused by alcohol because when someone is drunk, it can make the person to commit crimes like rape.

1. Being in the wrong place

There are some places that people are not suppose to go to but as a result of disobedience, people go to such places like lonely places and as a result they get raped.

1. Illiteracy

This can also cause sexual abuse as young children who are not educated are deceived by people in order to rape them.

1. Poverty

This is a situation when people do not have enough money to take care of themselves and as a result they are not able to go to school and be educated, and as a result they are deceived and raped.

1. Flirty behaviour

This is when someone is sexually attracted to someone but playfully rather than with serious intentions.

Sexual abuse can be caused with the following reasons;

1. Depression

This is the most common effects. It is a situation whereby a victim feels that he/she is no longer accepted in life. Some may even lose their self-esteem and feel worthless.

1. Flashback

During a flashback, memories of past traumas feel as if the abuse is taking place in the again and again as they reflect.

1. Post traumatic stress disorder

This is when a victim have feelings of anxiety, stress or fear after a traumatic event, thereby making it difficult to adjust or cope for sometime afterwards.

1. Self harm

Deliberate self harm, or self injury is when the victim inflicts physical harm on himself or herself, usually in secret.

1. Dissociation

This is when a victim feels like he/she is separated from others in a community/society.

**Prevent of sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse can be prevented by the following suggestion;

1. Be a nurturing parent.

Children need to know that they are special, loved and capable of following and achieving their dreams.

1. Help yourself

When the big and little problems of your everyday pile up to the point you feel overwhelmed and out of control, take time out to rest, don't take it out on your kid.

1. Promote programs that can educate children/Parents.

Teaching children, parents and wards, the various prevention strategies that can help to keep children safe.

1. Report suspected abuse or neglect.

If you have reason to believe a child has been or maybe harmed ( sexually abused), local department of children and family services should be notified.

**Conclusion**

in conclusion, I would emphasize that sexual abuse poses an obstacle to peace and security in our society. Many women lose their health, livelihoods, husbands, families and support networks as a result of rape. This, in turn, can shatter the structures that anchor community values, and with that disrupt their transmission to future generations. Children accustomed to acts of rape can grow into adults who accept such acts as the norm. This vicious cycle must stop, as we cannot accept a selective zero-tolerance policy.