

# Oakland University

## SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING, DO SOMETHING

### A Guide for Faculty and Staff on Protecting Youth from Abuse

#### What is child abuse?

- The physical or mental injury, sexual abuse or exploitation, negligent treatment, or maltreatment of a child (a person under age 18, unless the state law in which the child resides specifies a younger age for cases not involving sexual abuse by a person (including employees of a residential facility or any staff person providing out-of-home care) who is responsible for the welfare of the child).

#### What to do if this happens to a child

- Report to police immediately

#### Recognizing sexual abuse

- Sexually provocative or degrading comments
- Risqué jokes
- Intimate, romantic and or sexual contact
- Touching of breast, buttocks or groin
- Physical punishment
- Showing pornography or involving youth in pornographic activities
- Watching a child undress or use the bathroom

#### Respectful, appropriate and acceptable behaviors

- Touching in response to the need of the child, not the need of the adult
- Touching with the child's permission
- Resistance to touching must be respected
- Touching should be done in the open, not in private
- Touching with a brief, limited duration
- Praise
- Positive reinforcement for good work or behavior
- Pats on the back or shoulders

#### Behavioral symptoms in a sexually abused child

- Nightmares or sleep problems
- Sudden or unexplained personality changes, including being withdrawn, angry, moody or clingy
- Significant changes in eating habits
- Older child behaving like a younger child, such as bedwetting or thumb-sucking
- Fear of certain places or being left alone with an adult for unknown reasons
- Resistance to routine bathing, toileting or removing clothes in appropriate situations
- Play, writing, drawings or dreams of sexual or frightening images
- Refusal to talk about a secret they have with an adult or older child
- Stomach aches or illness with no identifiable reason
- Use of new or adult words for body parts
- Engagement in adult like sexual activities with toys, objects or other children
- Development of special relationships with older friends that may include unexplained money or gifts
- Intentional harm to oneself

#### How to avoid sexual abuse of children

- Identify for children adults they can trust
- Teach children to recognize appropriate behavior and to avoid exploitative or inappropriate behavior towards others

**NOTE:** Most offenders are not strangers and are not easily identifiable. They get to know the children and place themselves in settings that involve children. Offenders might be teachers, coaches, pastors, etc.