



You are not alone

napac

The National Association for
People Abused in Childhood

“There are many others who have had to put up with the ‘shame’. I often have nightmares about the abuse, but somehow I managed to keep it “under my hat”. Who would believe me anyway?”

You are not alone.

Why doesn't anyone understand? Am I the only one? I feel so alone - I hate carrying this secret! Why won't anyone believe me? Will anyone believe me? How many people were abused as children? Why don't more people talk about it? I really want to talk to others who understand.

Nobody can be entirely sure how many have suffered childhood abuse... but we know it's a much bigger problem than anybody has ever dared to admit.

Children are battered physically and emotionally every day in the UK. They are ignored, they are mistreated and they are sexually assaulted on a daily basis.

We used to wonder about figures such as "1 in 4" or "1 in 5" and we now have little doubt that it could easily stretch to those proportions.

**So are you on your own?
The answer is a resounding no!**



You are one of many millions of people who have suffered.

Silence and secrecy are some of abusers' favourite tools. Silence and secrecy enable them to continue abusing children without getting caught. It's not at all uncommon for survivors to feel isolated and overwhelmed. Many survivors feel so alone that they continue to carry the secret of what happened to them for many years.

One of the best ways to start tackling abuse is to **break the secrecy and silence.**

Trust.

We know that abuse can make trust difficult, but please trust us when we tell you that you are not alone.

Everyone's experiences are different and the ways we handle things are different... but in the UK millions of adults have been abused as children over the decades and most of them feel alone.

So come alongside us and we will come alongside you.

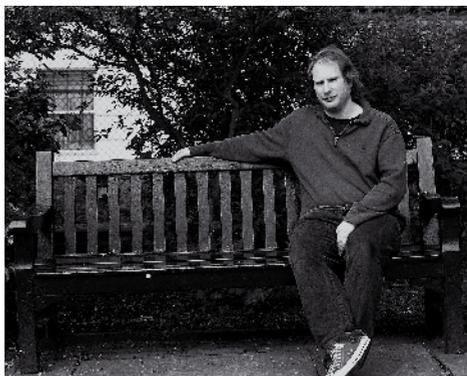
You are not alone.

There **are** people who understand the issues of childhood abuse and the vast impact that it can have when we become adults... it may just be a case of finding these people sometimes.

As well as those who have an understanding of what you have been through (and are currently going through) there are also those who may not. Fortunately the majority of adults in the UK were not abused as children – so they don't have the same understanding as survivors. How could they?

There has been very little education about child abuse and its consequences. This needs to change.

Child abuse continues to be a taboo. If somebody hasn't experienced abuse then it must be very hard for them sometimes to believe what they are hearing. **It's the most secretive and covered up of crimes.** It can also, for those who haven't experienced it, seem like the most unbelievable of crimes. It's hard to believe why anyone would want to hurt a child! Some people don't want to believe that children are abused because it can be too overwhelming for them and they may not necessarily know how to support you.



We believe you.

You may also be met by survivors who don't want to remember what happened to them because it's all too painful. It's not that they don't understand what you are going through... it's more a case of them not being in the right place to support you at the moment. These survivors may distance themselves from you to protect their own emotions.

You are still not alone.

If the first person you tell doesn't believe you then we hope you find the strength to tell someone else until you find someone that does.

We believe you. You are not alone!

You know your truth and we won't disbelieve you. Truth is not something that is negotiable and sometimes it's the only thing that will set you free. So keep speaking out.

You are not alone.



Because...

If we aren't alone then why don't more people talk about it?

- "Because it's difficult"*
- "Because of the repercussions"*
- "Because of what everyone else might think"*
- "Because I don't want to hurt anybody"*
- "Because no-one will believe me"*
- "Because there's nothing they can do about it"*
- "Because I'm now an adult... so I have moved on"*
- "Because I'm trying to put it to the back of my mind"*
- "Because it's not a big deal – I'm an adult now"*
- "Because it happened a long time ago"*
- "Because the family would be torn apart"*
- "Because they'll think I'm going mad"*
- "Because I don't want to be a burden"*
- "Because I'll be labelled mentally ill"*
- "Because I feel embarrassed"*
- "Because I feel ashamed"*
- "Because it would upset my family, my children"*

- "Because no-one will know what to say anyway"*
- "Because it's not a big deal – nothing much happened anyway"*
- "Because no one's going to be able to do anything about it now"*
- "Because the perpetrator won't be brought to justice, so what's the point?"*
- "Because the facts in my head are a bit blurry so I don't want to say things that aren't 100% true."*
- "Because everyone else seems to have it all together and I don't want to stand out as the one that's in need"*
- "Because I don't want to look like an attention seeker"*
- "Because I don't want to draw attention to myself"*
- "Because nobody else is talking about it and I'll feel like the only one"*
- "Because I don't want others to know my dirty secret"*
- "Because I didn't think about talking about it until now"*
- "Because I'm afraid"*
- "Because I don't want to get low"*



*“ **Because** I might get so low that I won’t know how to pull myself out”*

*“ **Because** it’s overwhelming – there’s too much and if I start talking will I ever stop talking?”*

*“ **Because** I want to still be me and not a victim”*

*“ **Because** I don’t want people feeling sorry for me”*

*“ **Because** I don’t want my abuser to win by letting it affect my life now”*

*“ **Because** I’ve moved on and I don’t want to go back”*

*“ **Because** I don’t want counselling... only weak people need counselling”*

**Everyone has needs.
Everyone has problems.
Counselling provides a safe environment for exploring difficult issues. Counselling is for those who are strong enough to face their pasts head on.**

*“ **Because** I might get so angry that I’d do something I’ll regret”*

*“ **Because** I don’t want to think about it*

or remember the details”

*“ **Because** I let it happen... I didn’t stop it”*

*“ **Because** people will think I’m unlovable”*

*“ **Because** people will think I’m promiscuous”*

Being voluntarily vulnerable will not make someone a victim. Voluntary vulnerability is something only those who are really strong can face.

*“ **Because** I don’t like being vulnerable – to me ‘vulnerability’ means ‘victim’ ”*

*“ **Because** I don’t know what words to say – I don’t know where to start”*

*“ **Because** my abuser is still alive and I couldn’t face having to go to court”*

*“ **Because** my partner would kill them”*

*“ **Because** I am too busy and don’t have time to sort it all out and get on with the rest of my commitments”*

*“ **Because** people are too busy to listen”*

*“ **Because** people have their own problems – they don’t want to hear mine”*

*“ **Because** the last time I talked about it I wasn’t helped”*

Moving on.

These are only some of the reasons why survivors don't speak out.

**But we are not alone.
You are not alone.**

The reactions we sometimes get as survivors can prevent us wanting to speak out. We can be made to feel isolated.

Often when survivors decide to face what happened to them they find it helpful if they can **talk to others**.

Someone was once told that they lived in the past.
Their response was simply "no, the past lives in me".

This is true to an extent - but **we can move on and leave the past behind** – and often it takes other survivors to help us and to enable us to do that and that's what NAPAC is really all about.

Helping all survivors know that they are not alone.





“My family have had a lot of problems over the years and I have always blamed myself for choosing bad relationships and being left with the aftermath of physical and mental abuse to my children and myself. When I asked for help for my oldest son, girlfriend and their children then 2yr, 3yr, 4yr the social worker put them into care and they were abused physically, sexually and mentally. After fighting for them to come home for 7 years they finally had information given to them about the abuse and we are still suffering as a family, but thanks to reading about someone else’s problem I now hope we can start to heal. Thank you.”

Kindly sponsored by:
Jeff Anderson Ann Olivarius Law



www.aoadvocates.com

Tel: 020 3080 3911

napac

The National Association for
People Abused in Childhood

If you are a survivor of abuse, or someone who supports a survivor, have a look at the NAPAC website for more information and support.

Or call our national freephone Support Line.

0800 085 3330

www.napac.org.uk

Sponsored by Jeff Anderson Ann Olivarius Law
www.aoadvocates.com

With grateful thanks to Johnny Mobasher at
streetphotography.co.uk

© NAPAC 2009

NAPAC is a registered charity No. 1069802



LOTTERY FUNDED