



napac

The National Association for  
People Abused in Childhood

You are not alone

Booklet 4

Supporting recovery from childhood abuse

You are not alone

A vibrant blue sky filled with soft, white, fluffy clouds. The clouds are scattered across the frame, with some larger, more prominent ones near the top and bottom, and smaller, wispy ones in between. The overall atmosphere is bright and uplifting.

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 most people can bear to think.

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 'one in four' or 'one in five' and we now have little doubt that there are millions of adult survivors in the UK.

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 many of them feel alone.

## **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 difficult to hear about. 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.

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.**

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

Because it's difficult

Because I feel embarrassed

Because I feel ashamed

Because I'm afraid

Because I might get so low that I won't know how to pull myself out

Because I might get so angry that I'd do something I'll regret

Because I want to still be me and not a 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 I am too busy and don't have time to sort it all out and get on with the rest of my commitments

Because I let it happen... I didn't stop it

Because no-one will believe me

Because I'll be labelled mentally ill

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 others to know my dirty secret

Because I don't want people feeling sorry for me

Because people will think I'm unlovable

Because people will think I'm promiscuous

Because I don't want to hurt anybody

Because it would upset my family,  
my children

Because I don't want to be  
a burden

Because my partner would  
kill them

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

Because there's nothing they can  
do about it

Because it's not a big deal –  
nothing much happened anyway

Because I'm trying to put it to the  
back of my mind

Because I've moved on and I don't  
want to go back

Because I don't want to think  
about it or remember the details

Because no-one will know what to  
say anyway

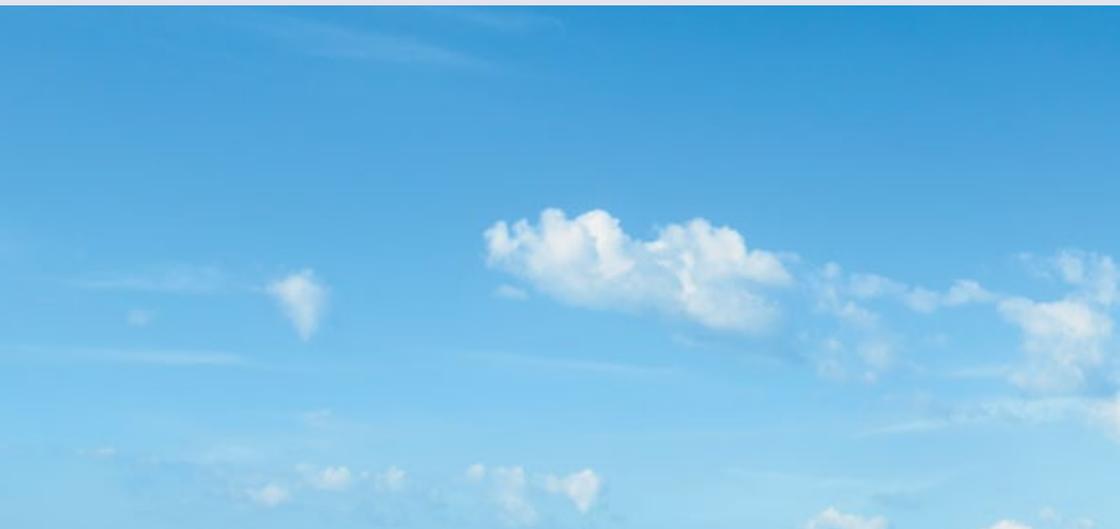
Because the perpetrator won't  
be brought to justice, so what's  
the point?

Because the facts in my head are  
a bit blurry so I don't want to say  
things that aren't 100% true

Because it's overwhelming –  
there's too much and if I start  
talking will I ever stop talking?

Because I don't want my abuser to  
win by letting it affect my life now

Because I don't want counselling...  
only weak people need counselling



**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.

And that healing is possible, if given the right support.

**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.**





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[napac.org.uk](http://napac.org.uk)

Support line 0808 801 0331

Free from landlines and mobiles

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Scottish charity No SC049296

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