**Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Assault**

Child sexual abuse is a sexual act of power, aggression and violence imposed on a child. The crime of luring a child into sexual activities is sadly common because of the powerful and dominant position of the adult or older adolescent perpetrator. This is in sharp contrast to the child's age, dependency, lack of knowledge, and subordinate position. Authority, power, corruption of affection, and (sometimes) force, enable the perpetrator to easily coerce the child into sexual compliance.

The most common perpetrators of child sexual abuse are: fathers, step-fathers, uncles, siblings, other family members and/or neighbors. These are people close to the children that they are victimizing. Children are often taught to trust those in authority positions and the perpetrators take advantage of this.

**Common Effects of Abuse**

The effects of child sexual abuse often last into adulthood. Sometimes the effects of the trauma are so difficult for the adult victim/survivor that it interferes with their current relationships. Some of the lasting effects of child sexual abuse are:

- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Sexual dysfunction
- Vulnerability to subsequent abuse and exploitation
- Promiscuity
- Prostitution
- Discomfort in intimate relationships
- Isolation
- Marital problems
- Depression
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Suicide
- Eating disorder

*Source: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, 2005*