Rock Against Child Pornography and Abuse

is a registered charity working to give a voice to the silent victims of childhood abuse. The children of yesterday, today. and tomorrow.

RACPA UK can be found at

www.racpauk.org

and on Facebook and Twitter.

We can also be contacted confidentially at:

racpauk@gmail.com

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Further important information can be found at

www.virtualglobaltaskforce.com

www.ceop.gov.uk

www.iwf.org.uk

All these agencies work on a national and international basis to protect children from online exploitation of any kind and have simple reporting procedures for child pornography websites, inappropriate content or contact concerning children or young people and for advice and information in all aspects of internet safety.

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What you need to know about Grooming

Advice and information for parents and carers

Grooming is a term that most people have heard of, either in media stories or on social platforms, but it is often a very misunderstood term. It is a technique used by predators to gain the trust of young people thus leaving them open to exploitation and abuse.
There are many ways that groomers approach young people.

They pretend to be someone they are not, lie about their age or gender.

They give a child who may be having family problems their attention and sympathy, they may buy gifts for the child.

They put themselves forward as someone who understands how the child feels.

They work on further breaking down of the family relationship.

They isolate the child from family and friends, making them even more vulnerable.

They share *secrets* as this shows trust being given to the child.

Once the trust relationship has been established, it is then taken one step further using threats and intimidation to control the child and force them into doing what they want them to. The child's sense of shame can be used against them - *You must do this, or I will tell everyone about what you have already done*

This is something we here at RACPA UK have come across more than once, the fear and loss of self-esteem that prevents a child speaking out, feeling ashamed of what they have done, what they feel they ALLOWED to happen, backed up of course by the abuser who needs this to be able to continue the abuse. Sometimes the child will offer obscure hints about what is happening to them, hoping that you will pick up on it and they will then be able to tell you all about it, but often, although most certainly not all the time, the child's behaviour may begin to change:

They may grow secretive and stop talking to you properly

They may stop performing well in school

They may stop wanting to go out with their friends

They may start bedwetting or soiling themselves

They may become aggressive

They may have trouble sleeping

They may stop taking care of themselves, personal hygiene slide

They may stop wanting to spend time with certain family members

As many as 9 out of 10 children will know their abuser. It could be a member of the family, a teacher, a family friend or someone in a position of trust. This can make disclosing even harder, as the child may think that it is their fault, they won't be believed or may even be punished for speaking out. This is made even worse if family members are involved; the conflicted emotions that can be suffered then are enormous. The child may love their abuser, may be afraid the family will be split up, may not want to hurt the other family members by speaking out.

If you have **ANY** concerns about a child, please contact your local Child Protection Unit. Your local police station is the first point of contact, and they will put you in touch with specialist officers who **WILL** listen, take your concerns seriously, and be able to help both you and the child through the whole process of reporting the abuse, as well as explain everything that will follow.