



2023 Campaign Theme



Every person was born with mana, everyone is sacred, and no-one was born to be abused (Egan-Bitran, 2022). Abuse is never okay. Unfortunately, Aotearoa has high rates of child abuse when compared to other developed countries (UNICEF, WHO).

Child Safeguarding Week 2023 is placing a spotlight on preventing child sexual abuse.

In 2019, more than **one in four girls** and almost **one in ten boys** (Year 9 – 13 students) reported that they had been touched in a sexual way or made to do sexual things that they did not want to do ([Youth19 Safety & Violence brief](#)). Due to increased risk factors and fewer protective factors some children are more vulnerable and are at increased risk of being sexually abused than the general population. This includes Māori, Pacific, Takatāpui/MVPFAFF/LGBTQIA+ and disabled children.

Due to the grooming, stigma and shame often associated with sexual abuse, it is unlikely that those who have been abused will disclose their experience. If they do, it is often many years after the abuse has occurred. As a result, the statistics currently available only represent a portion of the sexual abuse taking place. We need to think about how we protect those groups and communities of children, tamariki, rangatahi.

The evidence is clear that for children being sexually abused, the negative social, economic, psychological, spiritual and health effects are detrimental and have long-term costs for individuals, family and whānau, communities, and society. Directly or indirectly, sexual abuse impacts us all.

We understand that child sexual abuse is a sensitive and difficult issue to talk about. Unless we talk about it as a nation and we step up as adults, fully embracing our responsibility to protect children and respond effectively when we suspect, or when a child discloses sexual abuse, we need to ask ourselves - can we live with the consequences?

Join the movement to STOP child sexual abuse. Abuse is PREVENTABLE not inevitable!

