



Information for Family Members

The shock of finding out

Most family members experience a multitude of emotions when they find out that a man in their family has sexually abused and is attending the STOP programme. Some of the most common reactions are shock, anger, fear, disbelief, guilt, disgust, shame, hurt, confusion and doubt.

Family members may start asking all kinds of questions:

"How could he do such a thing?"

"Why wasn't I told?"

"Am I the only person this has happened to?"

"How could it happen without my knowing?"

"How could this happen in my family?"



It's not your fault

Sometimes family members may start blaming themselves for not knowing what was happening. It is really important to remember that you are not responsible. The **offender is responsible** for his actions.



Mixed feelings

While you are still trying to come to terms with what has happened, you may find you have some very mixed feelings about your family member. On top of the shock and guilt you may feel betrayed and confused. You may try to search for explanations as to how the abuse could have happened. Some family members may recall their own experiences of having been sexually abused.

Family members frequently feel victims of the abuse as well as the abused person. They can find themselves caught up in a chain of events and reactions over which they feel they have no control.





Often family members become isolated from each other as well as outside friends and relatives as a means of surviving the distress and shame that is frequently felt. Sometimes people are afraid to talk with others for fear of being judged and blamed. Often family members want someone supportive to talk to. This is where STOP can help.

AT STOP

STOP recognises the range of emotions for family members of having a man in their family who has sexually abused. For these reasons STOP has family workers available who offer support, information and counselling.

