



## Common Reactions of Non-offending Parents

1. Disbelief – The parent may question whether or not the abuse occurred and/or whether the named offender committed it.
2. Shock or emotional numbness – The parent may find herself in a state of shock following the allegations. It may be difficult for the parent to believe what has happened, and this can make it difficult to talk to investigators.
3. Confusion, helplessness, and uncertainty about what to do – Many parents feel confused about who to believe, and unsure about how best to navigate the legal system. The parents may feel unsure of how to protect or advocate for their child.
4. Aloneness – The parent may feel alone and may lack adequate social support. Even if a parent has good support, they may feel embarrassed or afraid of how people will respond if they tell them.
5. Feeling hurt, betrayed and a sense of loss -- Parents may feel hurt or betrayed by the offender, and may feel that part of their child's innocence has been lost.
6. Anger – Many parents feel angry towards a lot of people, at the offender for the abuse, at themselves for not knowing, and at the child for not telling them sooner.
7. Guilt and self-blame – Some parents feel that the abuse was their fault or that they should have known.
8. Fearfulness – Many parents feel afraid of losing their children or partner. They may have a general sense of fear about what the future will hold.
9. Sexual inadequacy/rejection or jealousy – Parents whose partners sexually abused their child may question their own sexual adequacy.