

### What about my feelings?

You may feel shocked, horrified, upset, sick etc by what you are hearing. The feelings you are experiencing are justified, but may add to the upset of the survivor. They may feel responsible for upsetting you and you must remember that you are hearing this but they have lived through it and survived.

It is important to seek support for yourself and further support for them if required.

You can contact Safeline for advice and where to go for help.

### Further Reading

- Boyd, A  
"Blasphemous Rumours"  
Prism Press
- Sinason, V  
"Treating Survivors of Satanic Abuse"  
Routledge
- Mayer, R  
"Satan's Children"  
Putman
- Sakheim, D & Devine, S  
"Out of Darkness: Exploring Satanism and Ritual Abuse"  
Lexington Books



For more information or an informal chat please contact us at:

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- Nuneaton & Bedworth Safer Communities Partnership
- Lloyds TSB Foundation for England and Wales
- BBC Children in Need
- Warwickshire County Council
- Stratford-upon-Avon Town Trust - a registered charity
- Home Office
- The Coalfields Regeneration Trust



**Safeline**  
Surviving Abuse

# Information about ritual abuse for survivors and supporters

Ring us today for free confidential advice in a safe environment

**01926 408 315**

Counselling Support Groups  
Library Services  
Befriending  
Website  
Freephone Helpline:  
0808 800 5005

# Ritual Abuse

**Most abuse is ritualised in some way and generally people accept that children can be subjected to a range of terrifying and repetitive abusive experiences.**

One definition of ritual abuse is when one or more children are abused in a highly organised way, by a group of people who have come together and subscribe to a belief system which, for them, justifies their actions towards that child. This usually extends into family involvement and may have been practised as a religion or a way of life for years. Although survivors speak of differing experiences, many elements are common.

- Elaborate rituals, 'games' set ups and 'ceremonies'
- Systematic emotional, physical and sexual abuse
- Being used in child pornography and prostitution
- Being forced to take drugs and alcohol
- Being tortured almost to the point of death
- Being forced to participate in the abuse of others

**If you are a survivor of ritual abuse you may feel...**

**Trapped** – you may feel that you cannot escape. Although it can be difficult to get away from such abuse, it can be done. Many survivors have successfully escaped and are able to move on with their lives.

**Fear** – that you or someone else may be killed, that you may be re-involved, fear of talking, fear of reprisals, fear that they have power over you, loneliness, disbelief etc. These fears are understandable and are based on past or present experiences. It is possible to overcome this though it takes time and courage.

**Distrust** – you may feel that you can trust no-one at all. This is completely understandable given that you have never had someone trustworthy in your life. Trust has to be earned by people and in time you may feel that someone has earned it enough to be trusted a little.

**If you are supporting a survivor of ritual abuse**

**Believe** – why would they lie? Only two parties know what happened, the abusers and the survivor. Survivors must be allowed to tell and be believed. Believe what they are saying even though you may find it difficult especially as the memories they are telling may, at first, be fragmented and confusing.

**Listen** – to what they have to say and let them take their time, it will not be easy to start talking about events that they have kept silent about for a long time. It may be difficult for them to begin to feel trust in you or safe enough to talk to you.

**Respect** – both their feelings and decisions. Remember they have their own coping mechanisms which have helped them survive the abuse. These may still be needed by them.

**Remember** – it is not their fault. No-one asks to be abused and they cannot be blamed for any part of it. They cannot be blamed for participating in an act that they did not understand, or were forced into, or in which they had no choices that weren't abusive. The blame lies only with the abusers.

