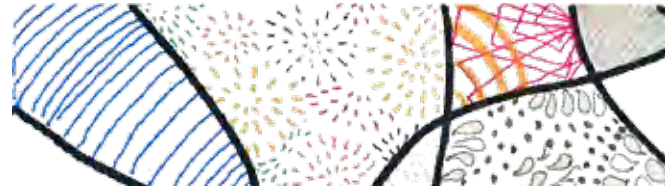


Time to Facilitate:
5 hours



MODULE #4

HOW CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IMPACTS RELATIONSHIPS

MODULE SUMMARY

This module will explore how child sexual abuse affects survivors' relationships differently, including with advocates. In this module, facilitators will need to emphasize how trust, power, and communication affect connections of different types, lengths, and strengths. Facilitators should intentionally connect with participants and foster space for participants to connect with each other during this module.

HOW CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IMPACTS RELATIONSHIPS LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- ▶ Explore how abuse in childhood impacts a survivor's relationship building skills
- ▶ Examine how relationships can affect a survivor in the various areas of their life
- ▶ Explore how you can collaborate with survivors to strengthen relationship-building skills

STRUCTURE OF HOW CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IMPACTS RELATIONSHIPS MODULE:

Time to facilitate: 5 hours total

Lesson 4.1 How Does Child Sexual Abuse Affect Relationships (0.5 Hours)

Lesson 4.2 Roleplays (1.5 Hours)

Lesson 4.3 What does this Mean for Advocacy? (2.5 Hours)

Lesson 4.4 Midway Check-In (0.5 Hours)

MATERIALS FOR HOW CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IMPACTS RELATIONSHIPS MODULE

Lesson	In Person	Virtual
4.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="573 537 786 569">▶ Computer <li data-bbox="573 669 971 701">▶ Projector or large TV <li data-bbox="573 800 889 926">▶ Speakers that participants can hear <li data-bbox="573 1024 813 1056">▶ PowerPoint <li data-bbox="573 1155 971 1577">▶ Video Building Resilience Conversation Series Episode 4: How Does Child Sexual Abuse Impact Relationship Building by the Resource Sharing Project <li data-bbox="573 1675 971 1852">▶ Copies of, or link to, Building Resilience Coloring Page Episode 4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="1040 537 1408 1003">▶ Building Resilience Conversation Series Episode 4: How Does Child Sexual Abuse Impact Relationship Building by the Resource Sharing Project <li data-bbox="1040 1102 1408 1230">▶ Building Resilience Coloring Page Episode 4

Lesson In Person

- 4.2 ▶ Copies of, or link to, Roleplay Cards: How Child Sexual Abuse Impacts Relationships

Virtual

- ▶ Roleplay Cards: How Child Sexual Abuse Impacts Relationships

Lesson	In Person	Virtual
4.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Computer ▶ Projector or large TV ▶ Speakers that participants can hear ▶ PowerPoint ▶ Video Building Resilience Conversation Series Episode 4: How Does Child Sexual Abuse Impact Relationship Building by the Resource Sharing Project ▶ Copies of, or a link to, Building Resilience Coloring Page Episode 4 ▶ Copies of, or link to, What are Personal Boundaries worksheet by TherapistAid.com ▶ Copies of, or link to, Strategic Planning worksheet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Building Resilience Conversation Series Episode 4: How Does Child Sexual Abuse Impact Relationship Building by the Resource Sharing Project ▶ Building Resilience Coloring Page Episode 4 ▶ What are Personal Boundaries worksheet by TherapistAid.com ▶ Strategic Planning worksheet

Lesson In Person

- 4.4
- ▶ Whiteboard or chart tablets
 - ▶ Markers (dry erase and permanent)
 - ▶ Large sticky notes
 - ▶ Paper
 - ▶ Writing utensils

Virtual

- ▶ Mentimeter or another live polling platform

Notes for Preparation for Lesson 4.1 How Does Child Sexual Abuse Affect Relationships

- ▶ Facilitators will open the module with a grounding exercise or activity that allows participants to get to know each other better. An activity that training facilitators can try (adapted from [Icebreaks.ws](https://www.icebreaks.ws/)):
 - » Categories (or Similarities Game): Divide your group into teams. Ideally, you should end up with at least 4 different teams with a minimum of 4 people per team.
 - ◆ When dividing teams, try to make teams of people that are not already close with each other.
- ▶ Instruct each team to talk among themselves and find things that every single group member has in common with the other members.
 - » You might consider not allowing teams to use simple things like working in the same state/ area/territory or how they are all advocates. Limiting the similarities to non-physical things helps people to learn more about each other and engage in active, more meaningful conversations that will promote inclusion and lasting connections between team members.

- ▶ This game is played as a race, and each team competes to come up with the most similarities in a set amount of time.
- ▶ If the training facilitators would like to do the opening ACTIVITY in-person, it might help training participant pairs focus on the conversation if they leave the training space for the activity and come back at set time.
- ▶ The points under the LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION should be displayed on a PowerPoint that the facilitators will need to create and modify to fit your training needs.

Lesson 4.1 How Does Child Sexual Abuse Affect Relationships

Estimated time: 0.5 hours



ACTIVITY Open the module with doing an exercise to help training participants get to know each other better.

Give the participants the following instructions:

“This module is all about building relationships, which is a key part of building our advocacy skills. We are going to start off the module by getting to know someone else in this training that you may not know very well.”

Put the participants in pairs with people from different organizations, and if possible, in pairs that haven't yet connected in the training.

Have them stay in pairs for 5-10 minutes, having conversations and getting to know one another. Make sure both people in the pair have a chance to answer.



Facilitator's Note: Here are some sample prompts the participants can ask if they are unsure how to start:

- ▶ What made you come to this training?
- ▶ Do you have children?
- ▶ Do you have pets?
- ▶ What are your hobbies?
- ▶ What is your favorite food?
- ▶ What is your passion in life?
- ▶ Where would you most like to visit/travel?
- ▶ What would you change if you could?
- ▶ What music/food/weather do you most enjoy?
- ▶ What do you like best: words, numbers, pictures, or sounds?
- ▶ What is your most underused strength?
- ▶ What's your name?
- ▶ Where are you from?
- ▶ What do you do for work?
- ▶ What is something you are working towards getting better at?



WATCH Show the video Building Resilience Conversation Series #4: How Does Child Sexual Abuse Impact Relationship Building?



Play from 11:07 (How relationships are impacted by others in the community) to 15:05 (Components of relationship building)



HANDOUT Distribute Building Resilience Coloring Page: Episode 4.



LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION Facilitate a large group discussion about the video and relate it back to the video segment. Emphasize:

- ▶ Abuse in childhood makes it difficult for survivors to build relationships.
- ▶ The impact of the abuse makes trusting someone much more complex. They may struggle to trust anyone new, or do they easily trust folks who end up being unsafe because they prey on vulnerabilities.

- ▶ The impact of the abuse means that survivors learned coping mechanisms in childhood which may now make it difficult to build relationships and determine whether other people are safe. Dissociation is one example of a coping mechanism.
- ▶ Setting boundaries with others may be difficult.

NOTES FOR PREPARATION FOR Lesson 4.2 Roleplays

- ▶ The activity can be done in small groups or as one large group. If the facilitators choose to do the activity in one large group, it is suggested that the facilitators take the Survivor Prompt and have participants do the corresponding Advocate Prompt, working together. This can be a reassuring strategy for participants, as they take turns playing the advocate and helping each other. Facilitators may also invite two participants to do the roleplay and have the other participants watch. The sample Roleplay Cards: How Child Sexual Abuse Impacts Relationships that accompany this activity can be found on page xix.

Lesson 4.2 Roleplays

Estimated time: 1.5 hours



TEACHING The following points should be displayed on a PowerPoint that the facilitators will need to create and modify to fit your training needs.

- ▶ Coping mechanisms and the impact of trauma can make it difficult for survivors to build trust with others. The roleplaying exercise we will do after this illustrates the ways this can come about. The point of this exercise is to highlight the difficulties that adult survivors of child sexual abuse can have with anyone in their life.
- ▶ It's hard for survivors to be themselves in relationships because the environment they grew up was unsafe, and/or did not have many examples of open, respectful, reciprocal, honest, and initiative-taking boundary relationships.

- ▶ It's hard to trust people.
- ▶ It's hard to figure out, set, and keep boundaries.
- ▶ Many survivors have fear of or deference to authority often related to the fawn response of the autonomic fight-flight-freeze-fawn response).
- ▶ It's difficult to determine what they want and like in sexual relationships as well as friendships.



ACTIVITY The sample Roleplay Cards: How Child Sexual Abuse Impacts Relationships that accompany this activity can be found on page xix. Give the instructions for the roleplays:

“We have four conversations to play out – the goal for the advocate is to accomplish the prompt while building trust with survivor. When you receive conversation prompts, you will see one is labeled advocate, and one is labeled survivor. Please do not share what the prompts say with anyone.”



HANDOUT The facilitators will give out guidance prompts (Roleplay Cards: How Child Sexual Abuse Impacts Relationships) for participants who volunteer to play the roles of either the advocate or the survivor.

Options for exercises:

- ▶ Option 1 – do the exercise in small groups where one person does that prompt of the survivor, one does the prompt of the advocate, and the rest of the group are the observers, listening to what is being done by the survivor and advocate. After about 3 minutes, end the roleplay and discuss how it went. Make sure the people playing the- two different roles don't disclose the prompt they have been given. After the pair has finished the roleplay, debrief in their small groups, and then as a large group. Emphasizing the role is not to problem solve with the survivor but to try and build a relationship with them.
- ▶ Option 2 – do the exercise in a large group. Ask for two volunteers, and facilitate the process. In a large group, you can stop the role play at different times, and the person playing the advocate can ask for advice from the audience on what they should do. Make sure the volunteers playing the survivor don't disclose what their prompt is until the end of the entire exercise.
- ▶ Option 3- do the exercise in a large group, but one of the facilitators does the survivor role. In a large group, have one of the training facilitators read the survivor prompt, and have the whole participant group read the advocate prompt.

After each conversation ends, discuss the learning points from the Conversation Prompts. DO NOT read the learning points to the participants before starting the conversations.

Conversation Prompts #1:

- ▶ Survivor prompt: Observe and appease the advocate.

- ▶ Advocate Prompt: You have 10 minutes to figure out what the survivor needs from the grocery store and get back to the office for your next meeting.

The learning point here is that adult survivors of child sexual abuse have used appeasement as a coping mechanism, and it is still one of the things they will do that can complicate relationships. This is not a choice, but an automatic response to trauma.

Conversation Prompts #2:

- ▶ Survivor Prompt: talk about the last time you went to the grocery store. Stream of consciousness and all over the place... Don't talk about your feelings except how you felt in the grocery store.
- ▶ Advocate Prompt: you only have 10 minutes to talk to the survivor and find out how they are feeling today.

The learning point here is that survivors of trauma have a hard time feeling and speaking in a linear manner.

Conversation Prompt #3:

- ▶ Survivor Prompt: everything the other person tells you may not be true except when you ask them a yes or no question.
- ▶ Advocate Prompt: you have 10 minutes to tell them what you like about grocery shopping.

The learning point here is that survivors have difficulty trusting people.



Conversation Prompt #4:

- ▶ Survivor Prompt: you are impatient and frustrated and want to end the conversation as soon as possible.
- ▶ Advocate Prompt: you have 10 minutes to get the person to tell you about their hopes and dreams.

The learning point here is that challenges in building relationships can be triggering for survivors, and that can show up in any number of ways, including frustration, anger, and impatience.



LARGE GROUP DEBRIEF Facilitate a debrief as a large group. Ask the participants:

- ▶ What did it feel like to be the survivor in the conversations?
- ▶ What did it feel like to be the advocate?
- ▶ What did it feel like to be the observer? What are some of the things you noticed?
- ▶ Think about the way you provide advocacy. How could communication affect how you provide support to survivors?

**NOTES FOR PREPARATION FOR
Lesson 4.3 What does that Mean for Our Advocacy?**

- ▶ The points under TEACHING #1 and #2 should be displayed on a PowerPoint that the facilitators will need to create and modify to fit your training needs.

Lesson 4.3 What Does This Mean for Advocacy?

Estimated time: 2.5 hours



WATCH Show video [Building Resilience Conversation Series #4: How Does Child Sexual Abuse Impact Relationship Building?](#)



Play from 11:07 (How relationships are impacted in the community) to 27:18 (Pause, take a breath, take care of yourself).



LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION As one group, ask the participants to reflect on what they saw in the video.

To conclude this discussion, consider emphasizing the following points:

- ▶ It's important to build a relationship with survivors because we all need connections to be able to survive and meet our needs in life. Without having a relationship with the survivor you're working with; your interactions can seem transactional and inauthentic.

It's difficult to do advocacy if you don't know the person (and some of their experiences, wants, motivations, and needs

- ▶ Advocates should model a safe and consent-based relationship, and that includes:
 - » Having boundaries.
 - » Being able to express your needs without fear of the consequences.

- ▶ It is important to be authentic and be okay (and transparent) with making mistakes.

- ▶ How to build relationships with survivors:
 - » Ask for consent and ask frequently.

 - » Learn more about trauma.

 - » Be transparent to build trust.

 - » When trust is lost, be willing to build it again; do not stop communicating with a survivor if you make a mistake.

 - » Don't be defensive.

 - » Be patient; trust builds over time.

- » Be genuine- survivors can tell when you are simply parroting things you think you should say.
- » Proactively acknowledge your power as an advocate, as someone who has knowledge and access to resources they might not.
- » Believe survivors and be willing to hold multiple truths and multiple perspectives.
- » Apologize when you mess up and ask if there is anything the survivor needs from you to repair the harm you have caused.
- » Encourage survivors to set boundaries with you and tell you when they disagree.
- » Ask survivors if they have experiences with things (i.e., certain systems, strategies, or coping mechanisms) before assuming they don't. Ask them if would like feedback or would like more information before launching into explanations of things.

- » If a survivor wants you to share information about how a system will respond (including your own organization), make sure to not speak as if the system were right and the survivor wrong. Instead, share the system's perspective and acknowledge injustice if systems (or your organization) are not operating in ways that are healing for the survivor.



TEACHING #1 Use the following points to create a PowerPoint, made to fit your training needs.

- ▶ Boundaries are the limits and rules we set for ourselves within relationships.
- ▶ In order to have healthy relationships, boundaries have to exist.
- ▶ Adults who have experienced child sexual abuse have had their boundaries violated; sexual abuse is a boundary violation.

- ▶ Adults who experienced child sexual abuse often have trouble identifying, setting, and maintaining their personal boundaries: sometimes from lack of experience, and other times because people are pressuring them to break their boundaries
- ▶ Helping survivors identify, set, and maintain boundaries is part of the role of the advocate



HANDOUT and **ACTIVITY** Distribute copies of the [What are Personal Boundaries Worksheet by TherapistAid.com](#) and have the participants read through it independently. Remember that some learners benefit from having more time to read and digest materials. We suggest giving all reading assignments to trainees before the session, even if you plan to give time for reading during the session.

After the participants have finished reading, inform them that this is a tool they can use for themselves, and give to survivors.

- ▶ As a support group activity, this can be a helpful tool for discussing boundaries as a group.
- ▶ With individual survivors, this can help them identify places in the life with the different types of boundaries in the sheet



ACTIVITY Ask the participants to take out their Strategic Planning worksheet and think about one place in their advocacy in which they have rigid boundaries, and one place where they have porous boundaries.

Fill out the sheet and form a plan for modifying those boundaries.



TEACHING #2 The following points can be displayed on a PowerPoint that the facilitators will need to create and modify to fit your training needs.

- ▶ Setting, identifying, and maintaining boundaries can be a part of a survivors' emotional safety plan.
- ▶ Adult survivors of child sexual abuse may especially struggle with setting boundaries with:
 - » Family, especially who:
 - ◆ Did the sexual abuse
 - ◆ Knew and didn't stop the sexual abuse from happening



- ◆ Who want to support but are still not respecting boundaries
 - » Authority Figures
 - » Romantic Partners
- ▶ The only way to be better at setting boundaries is to practice setting boundaries.



BREAK OUT GROUP DISCUSSION Ask participants to get into groups and discuss:

- ▶ What are some methods of helping survivors with relationships in their lives?
- ▶ What are some phrases you could practice with a survivor when they want to set a boundary?



DEBRIEF Have the participants share out. As part of the debrief, be sure to emphasize the following:

- ▶ Help survivors pinpoint what is getting in the way of their relationships, reflect on past and current relationships
- ▶ Roleplay relationships in their life
- ▶ Help survivors identify boundaries- What helps you feel safe, listened to, and cared for? What makes you feel unsafe, ignored, or rejected? How would you like to express those things to those around are you?
- ▶ Practice setting boundaries- What would like to happen? What would not like to happen? What would you like to stop?
- ▶ Help survivors maintain boundaries- If someone violates a boundary, how would like to respond? What's your plan? If someone continues to violate that boundary, what's your plan?
- ▶ Help survivors set relationships goals and figure out what they want and need in relationships

- ▶ Practice new skills with the advocate
- ▶ Recognize and celebrate with the survivor when they tell you about or you observe them using their new/renewed skills
- ▶ Reflect on new relationship skills being used with others in the community
- ▶ Create opportunities for community-building among survivors in your program and in the community



CONCLUSION Conclude this module with a grounding exercise or the reflective journal prompts below.

Reflective Journal Prompt:

- ▶ Trust. Think about how trust shows up in your own life. What does it feel like to trust someone? What does it feel like to mistrust someone? How do you build trust? What does it feel like when trust is broken?
- ▶ What are some things you can do to build trust with survivors you work with?
- ▶ What relationship do you want to build or strengthen in your life? What is one relationship you want to end? What is a relationship you want to repair? What are the similarities in these relationships? What are the differences?

NOTES FOR PREPARATION FOR

Lesson 4.4 Midway Check-in

- ▶ Facilitators will lead a large group check-in about the training, as this is the halfway completion point of the modules. If this activity is not the halfway point (i.e., content was added or removed), move this lesson to where it is appropriate in the schedule. For in-person training, the facilitators may want to facilitate a large group discussion with the suggested questions in the lesson, or they can do a sticky note activity like that in Lesson 1.1.
- ▶ For virtual training, the facilitators may want to facilitate a large group discussion or use a virtual platform like Menti-meter (which has a free basic subscription) or another live polling tool and ask the suggested questions in the module. Facilitators should adapt the questions to what works best for their training style and participant needs.

Lesson 4.4 Midway Check-In

Estimated time: 0.5 hours



LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION Congratulate the participants that they have made it to the halfway point of the training and facilitate a group discussion and ask the following questions:

- ▶ How do you feel the training is going?
- ▶ What's coming up for you during the training?
- ▶ What have you learned so far?
- ▶ What's making it easier for you to learn in this space?
- ▶ What's making it difficult?

FURTHER LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

ABOUT HOW CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IMPACTS RELATIONSHIPS

- ▶ [Enhancing Knowledge: Discussion Guide Episode 4](#) by the Resource Sharing Project
- ▶ [Motherhood as a Means to Healing: A BR Interview with Tashmica Torok](#) by the Resource Sharing Project

Healing in Motion: Coalitions Supporting Growth and Change in the Lives of Adult Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse

July 2023

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