

Safe Adults

Every child needs adults in their life they can talk to if they have been hurt or are concerned about their safety. They need adults they can trust to help keep them safe.



Consider these facts

- 1 out of 7 children ages 10-17 have been sexually solicited online.
- 1 out of 10 children will be sexually abused before they reach the age 18.
- 90% of abuse is by someone a child knows and trusts, not a stranger, (30% by a family member).

The concept of Safe Adults is taught to public school students across Elkhart County as part of MBF Prevention Education Programs. This same concept can be taught to all children using the information below.

Who is a Safe Adult?

A Safe Adult is someone a child can go to if they ever feel unsafe, have ever been hurt, or if they're not sure if a situation is unsafe. A Safe Adult is someone who:

- is an adult that can trust to get them help if they're hurt or unsafe.
- doesn't break the Safety Rules, or try to get the child to break them.
- the child feels comfortable with and can easily talk to about things that may be difficult or tough to talk about.



Why do we ask children to identify "Safe Adults" instead of "trusted adults?"



Many children have had trusted adults who have hurt them. Simply identifying trusted adults does not ensure those adults are safe. So, in addition to an adult a child trusts, we identify other factors that makes them a Safe Adult.

The MBF 5 Safety Rules® Motions



Know What's Up



Spot Red Flags



Make a Move



Talk It Up



No Blame | No Shame

Safe Adults

What should children talk about with their Safe Adults?

Children should be encouraged to talk with their Safe Adults any time they feel unsafe, or any time they aren't sure if a situation is safe. They would want to talk to them:

- any time they are hurt, or have been hurt in the past.
- about anything unsafe that is happening, or has happened, to them or a friend.
- about Red Flags they have spotted that tell them someone, or something, might not be safe.



What is the role of a Safe Adult?



A Safe Adult needs to understand that if a child tells them they have been hurt, or if they suspect a child is being hurt or is unsafe, they need to act in the best interest of the child. It is an adult's responsibility to protect children. They can help by:

- listening carefully to what the child tells them.
- telling the child they believe them.
- being aware of uncomfortable feelings and controlling their own emotions if a child discloses abuse.
- acting right away to help the child:
 - report bullying to the school or organization where it occurred.
 - report unsafe online behaviors to law enforcement or the CyberTipline at 800-843-5678.
 - report child abuse to your state child welfare agency.

What can Parents and other concerned adults do?

- Ask your child who their Safe Adults are and assist them with identifying at least two Safe Adults.
- Let your child know that telling a Safe Adult about bullying, abuse, or other unsafe situations is helping, not tattling or snitching.
- Tell them they can always come to you, or another Safe Adult, and you will listen and support them.
- If your child discloses that they don't want to be around a particular person, such as a babysitter, relative, or family friend, don't force them.

