

MONIQUE BURR
FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN, INC.
PREVENTION EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Dear Educator,

A report of child maltreatment is made every 10 seconds in the United States.¹

At the Monique Burr Foundation for Children (MBF) we want to “pull back the curtain” on child abuse. There are many factors that may increase a child’s risk of being victimized. These include, but are not limited to: a child with special needs, financial stress, divorce, death, illness, caregiver substance abuse, and domestic violence. If a report of child victimization is made every 10 seconds, how often does an event go unreported? Every adult can help prevent abuse by being aware of the problem and alert to the signs.

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month.

MBF is providing the attached supplemental lesson plan for use in classrooms to help educators teach students developmentally-appropriate strategies to promote personal safety, bring awareness to Child Abuse Prevention Month, and to prevent victimization. In addition to the lesson plan, we have also included our *Safety Brief: Identifying and Reporting Abuse* as a professional reference in the event a student discloses abuse after the lesson.

The lesson plan includes a review of the **MBF 5 Safety Rules®** from the **MBF Child Safety Matters® and MBF Teen Safety Matters®** prevention education programs. If your school is using MBF Prevention Education Programs, the 5 Safety Rules will be familiar to students. If you are not, the 5 Safety Rules are important concepts that will be introduced to help keep students safe. We encourage you to learn more about our comprehensive, evidence-based/evidence-informed, fun, and easy-to-use programs.

Known benefits of consistent prevention education implementation, such as that provided by **MBF Prevention Education Programs**, include:

- Lower dropout rates
- Improved attendance
- Improved school culture
- Increased test scores and grade point averages

Additionally, the lessons can be delivered virtually, and we also have mental health and substance abuse supplemental lessons. **To learn more about our programs, or to order program materials for students in grades K-12, visit www.mbfpreventioneducation.org.** For additional information or assistance, email us at info@mbfpreventioneducation.org or call 904-642-0210.

For more information about child abuse, please review the attached *Safety Brief: Identifying and Reporting Abuse*. We also encourage you to share the attachment, *Discussing Sensitive Topics*, with your students’ parents. For additional information and resources, including free online trainings, visit our website www.mbfpreventioneducation.org.

Sincerely,
The MBF Team

¹ www.childhelp.org

Grade Level	6-8		
Lesson Length	45 minutes		
Lesson Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will understand child abuse and how to recognize indicators of abuse. • Students will better understand how to be an Upstander and report unsafe situations and/or people. • Students will identify Safe Adults and ways they can help adults keep them safe. • Students will learn the <i>MBF Teen Safety Matters®</i> 5 Safety Rules and will identify ways to use them to help them stay safe. 		
Key Terms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bystander • Child Abuse • Emotional Abuse • Inappropriate Images • Neglect • Peer • Physical Abuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Porn • Pornography • Safe Adult • Safe Friend • Sexual Abuse • Upstander 	
Materials Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MBF Safety Rules Poster (optional) • MBF Think-Pair-Share Worksheet (attached) for each pair of students or a piece of paper • Pen/Pencil • White board or chart paper 		
Related Florida Standards & Related Florida Standards for Health Education	6th Grade LAFS.6.L.1.1 LAFS.6.L.2.3 HE.6.B.4.2 HE.6.B.4.4 HE.6.B.5.1 HE.6.B.5.2 HE.6.P.7.1 HE.6.P.8.1 HE.6.P.8.3 HE.6.P.8.4	7th Grade LAFS.7.L.1.1 LAFS.7.L.2.3 HE.7.B.4.1 HE.7.B.4.2 HE.7.B.4.4 HE.7.B.5.1 HE.7.B.5.2 HE.7.P.7.1 HE.7.P.8.1 HE.7.P.8.3	8th Grade LAFS.8.L.1.1 LAFS.8.L.2.3 HE.8.B.4.1 HE.8.B.5.1 HE.8.C.1.4 HE.8.P.7.1 HE.8.P.8.1 HE.8.P.8.3 HE.8.P.8.4

Additional Resources (For teachers and parents)	<p>Monique Burr Foundation for Children www.mbfpreventioneducation.org</p> <p>Darkness to Light - Resources on Child Sexual Abuse www.d2l.org</p> <p>Nemours Child Health – Child Abuse Information for Children https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/child-abuse.html</p> <p>Prevent Child Abuse America www.preventchildabuse.org</p> <p>The Role of Educators Preventing and Responding to Child Abuse www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/educator</p>
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Prior to the Lesson:

- Print and display the MBF 5 Safety Rules® poster. If you don't have a poster, write the following information where students will be able to see it during the lesson: on the board, on an overhead, or on a sheet of chart paper.
 - **The MBF 5 Safety Rules**
 - Safety Rule #1 - Know What's Up
 - Safety Rule #2 - Spot Red Flags
 - Safety Rule #3 - Make a Move
 - Safety Rule #4 - Talk It Up
 - Safety Rule #5 - No Blame | No Shame
- Note: Bolded and underlined words in the script are key terms that students need to understand. The definitions of these terms are explained throughout the lesson. Please explain their meaning as you present the lesson to ensure comprehension. It may be helpful for students to have paper and a pen/pencil out during the lesson to write down any words or concepts they don't understand, questions they may have, or stories they may wish to share with you later.

Begin the Lesson:

- *At the beginning of the lesson, reinforce classroom and small group expectations for respectful discussions (i.e., listen before responding, don't interrupt, respect the opinions of others). Remind students to use "I" language rather than the more accusatory "you" language when responding to others. If they have personal stories to share, remind them to wait and share at the end of the lesson if there is time.*
- Good Morning/Afternoon students. April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. Today, we're going to talk about what abuse is and how you can use the 5 Safety Rules to help keep you and others safe.
- How many of you have heard the term abuse? *(Raise hands)*
- Who can share what they think abuse means? *(Elicit several responses)*
- **Child Abuse** is when an adult, or another child, hurts a child on purpose. Child Abuse can happen to anyone under the age of 18 and it can happen by a stranger, but it most often happens by an adult you know and trust. Typically, by someone you are close to or someone in a position of authority. A **peer**, someone who is your own age, can also hurt and abuse you.

- There are four types of abuse:
 - Neglect - **Neglect** is when a child or teen is not given the things they need to be healthy and safe, such as food, clothing, shelter, medicine, or even love.
 - Physical Abuse - **Physical Abuse** is when someone intentionally hurts a child or teen leaving injuries like bruises, broken bones, burns, and scratches.
 - Emotional Abuse - **Emotional Abuse** is when a child is repeatedly told hurtful things like an adult calling them “stupid” or telling them “I never want to see you again.” Emotional abuse is repeated, and it’s hurtful and hateful.
 - Sexual Abuse - **Sexual Abuse** can happen in different ways and involves behaviors of a sexual nature.

- Adults are responsible for keeping kids safe from abuse, but there are things you can do to help keep yourself safe. Let’s start by talking about the **5 Safety Rules** from the *MBF Teen Safety Matters®* program that can help you identify what abuse is and help you know what to do if you or someone you know is ever hurt.

- *If you have a poster visible or wrote the 5 Safety Rules on the board prior to the lesson, point to each rule as you talk about it.*

- **Safety Rule #1 is Know What’s Up.** Knowing what’s up means you know what abuse is and you know important safety procedures when you are at school, out in public, or at home.

- What are some safety strategies you already know? (*Elicit several responses such as follow the rules during school safety drills, don’t get in a car with someone you don’t know, don’t share your personal information online.*)

- **Knowing What’s Up** includes:
 - knowing your personal information.
 - knowing your parents’ or guardians’ contact information, including having their cell phone number memorized.
 - being aware of the social interactions you have online and offline and knowing whether people and/or situations are safe and appropriate.

- **Safety Rule #2 is Spot Red Flags.** Spotting Red Flags means recognizing potential dangers, online or offline. Red Flags of abuse may include:
 - someone touching your private body parts or asking you to touch theirs.
 - someone talking about things that are sexual in nature or asking you questions about your romantic relationships.
 - someone touching you in inappropriate ways, with or without your clothes on.

- someone showing you inappropriate pictures of people without their clothes on.
- someone asking you to send them pictures of you without your clothes on.
- Other Red Flags can include:
 - bullying, cyberbullying, or other inappropriate online behavior.
 - adults or other teens trying to trick, force, or manipulate you into making unsafe or unhealthy choices.
 - someone you meet online messaging you and asking about personal information or asking you to meet in real life.
 - someone sharing or asking for **inappropriate images**, such as pictures, drawings, or cartoons of people without their clothes on, either in a magazine, book, or on a device such as a laptop, tablet or phone.
 - controlling behaviors or emotional or physical abuse between partners in a relationship.
- **Safety Rule #3 is Make a Move.** After you **Spot a Red Flag**, or recognize that a situation or person is unsafe, you can **Make a Move** by:
 - getting away from an unsafe situation or person if you can, or
 - staying away from unsafe or inappropriate people and situations.
- Can anyone think of an example when you, or someone you know, made a move to keep themselves safe? (*Elicit responses*)
- **Safety Rule #4 is Talk It Up.** Talking It Up means using your voice to help keep you and others safe. Many times as children and young teens, we are told to not say “No” to adults, but you need to know your body is yours and you have a right to say “No” to anyone who is violating your personal boundaries, acting in an unsafe way, or doing anything that makes you feel uncomfortable.
- There are several ways you can **Talk It Up**.
 - If someone is violating your personal boundaries, acting in an unsafe way, or encouraging you to make unsafe choices, you can use an assertive and confident voice to say, “No.”
 - If someone hurts you or if you Spot any Red Flags, you can Talk It Up by reporting to a Safe Adult.
 - A **Safe Adult** is someone you know and trust to keep you safe, someone you can talk to about unsafe situations or people, and someone who doesn't break any safety rules or ask you to break the rules. Examples of Safe Adults could be a parent, a teacher, a school counselor, or a coach.

- What characteristics would you want in a Safe Adult? (*Elicit responses such as someone who is a good listener, someone they can talk to about difficult topics, someone who follows the Safety Rules, and does not encourage them to break the Safety Rules.*)
- You should try to choose at least two Safe Adults, one in your home and one outside of your home.
- You can also talk to a **Safe Friend**, a peer you trust, who will support you and help you talk to a Safe Adult. A Safe Friend is someone who can help you talk to a Safe Adult, not a replacement for a Safe Adult. You should always tell a Safe Adult about unsafe or inappropriate situations or people.
- And remember, any relationship you have with a Safe Adult or a Safe Friend should be a positive relationship that makes you feel supported.
- Something else you I want you to understand is that telling a Safe Adult is reporting; it is not tattling or snitching. Reporting unsafe behavior is a way to get help for yourself and for others who may be in a similar situation.
- Another way to Talk It Up is by being an Upstander. In most unsafe situations, we have two choices - we can either be a Bystander or an Upstander.
 - **Bystanders** allow unsafe behaviors to happen by standing by and watching, doing nothing to stop it.
 - **Upstanders** speak up and try to help themselves and/or others in an unsafe situation.
- Being an Upstander means you are able to consider the needs of others, seek to better understand your environment and the people in it, and have empathy for others. When you have a better understanding of how others may feel, it helps you treat them with kindness and helps you to be an Upstander.
- **Safety Rule #5 is No Blame | No Shame.** The last Safety Rule means if you are ever hurt or abused, you are never to blame and you should never be ashamed to tell a Safe Adult.
 - If something does happen, it may feel overwhelming and devastating, but there is help. You may be surprised by the support of your family and friends.
 - No matter what anyone does or says to you, even if they tell you no one will believe you or you will get into trouble if you tell, you are never to blame, and it is never too late to tell.

- Let's review the **5 Safety Rules** together:

Safety Rule #1 – Know What's Up

Safety Rule #2 – Spot Red Flags

Safety Rule #3 – Make a Move

Safety Rule #4 – Talk It Up

Safety Rule #5 – No Blame | No Shame

Activity:

Note: Research says young people need opportunities to think about what they would do in a dangerous situation BEFORE it happens. There are several options for presenting this activity to students. It may be done as a class, as a small group activity, or presented virtually. Ideally, it would be done in a small group so students can discuss a scenario with a classmate and then share their responses with the class.

Option 1: Class Activity

- Distribute copies of the Think-Pair-Share Worksheet to each student, or a piece of paper, and a pen/pencil for the class activity. If students are using their own paper, have them divide the paper into three columns:

Possible Responses	Consequences	Best Safe Response

- Let's do an activity together to give you a chance to apply the **5 Safety Rules**. I am going to read three scenarios. You are going to brainstorm different ways you could respond to each situation. Think about the consequences of each response and brainstorm the response you think would be the safest and aligns with the **5 Safety Rules**.
- After reading scenarios to students, pause for "think time", and ask them to identify Red Flags or warning signs of abuse, and think about different ways to respond to potentially dangerous situations.

Option 2: Small Group Activity

- *Think-Pair-Share – This activity is great for encouraging collaboration and sharing ideas. It is important for students to be able to **Spot Red Flags**, or warning signs of abuse, and to have opportunities to practice responding to potentially dangerous situations.*
- *Each pair or small group of students will need a copy of the Think-Pair-Share Worksheet, or a piece of paper, and a pen/pencil for the activity. If students are using their own paper, have them divide the paper into three columns:*

Possible Responses	Consequences	Best Safe Response

- *Arrange students in pairs (teacher or student choice).*
- *Read a scenario from the list.*
- *Pause for “think time.”*
- *Partners do traditional Think-Pair-Share, identifying **Red Flags** and brainstorming as many possible ways they can think of to respond to the situation, writing their answers down on the Think-Pair-Share worksheet or a sheet of paper.*
- *Do the first scenario together as a group. Then allow students to work in pairs on the last two scenarios. Have students share their response to each of the scenarios.*
- *Let’s do a Think-Pair-Share activity to give you a chance to apply the **5 Safety Rules**. I am going to read three scenarios. You and your partner or group are going to brainstorm different ways you could respond to each situation. Think about the consequences of each response and brainstorm the response you think would be the safest and aligns with the **5 Safety Rules**.*

Option 3: Virtual Lesson

- *If delivering the lesson virtually, provide students with a digital copy of the Think-Pair-Share Worksheet or instruct students that they will need a piece of paper and a pen/pencil for the activity. If students are using their own paper, have them divide the paper into three columns.*

Possible Responses	Consequences	Best Safe Response

- Let's do an activity together to give you a chance to apply the **5 Safety Rules**. I am going to read three scenarios. You are going to brainstorm different ways you could respond to each situation. Think about the consequences of each response and brainstorm the response you think would be the safest and aligns with the **5 Safety Rules**.
- *After reading scenarios to students, pause for "think time", ask them to identify Red Flags, or warning signs of abuse, and think about different ways to respond to potentially dangerous situations.*

Scenario 1

A new friend of your mom's has been spending more and more time at your house, including time alone with you while your mom runs errands. You do not know this person well, and you are uncomfortable with how close they get to you and the way they talk to you. Lately they've been rubbing your shoulders and hugging you in a way that doesn't feel comfortable. Recently, they touched your private body parts and said, "sorry, it was an accident," but it doesn't seem accidental.

What are some Red Flags? *(Elicit responses such as time alone, inappropriate conversations, inappropriate touching.)*

Take a minute or two to think about some ways you could respond. Write them down on your worksheet/paper, and also include possible consequence(s) to your response. Keep in mind that there could be a lot of ways to respond, but not all may be safe or follow the **5 Safety Rules**.

*After 2-3 minutes ask the students to share some of their responses, AND the possible consequences. As a group, have them pick the best/safest responses that aligns with the **5 Safety Rules**. (Elicit responses such as **Talk It Up** to a Safe Adult or use an assertive voice to say how your mom's friend is making you feel or **Make a Move** to avoid these types of one-on-one situations.)*

Scenario 2

An older teen who helps coach your middle school sports team has asked you to send pictures without your clothes on. They promise they won't share it with anyone, and they tell you if you don't send them, they will limit your play time at games.

Talk with your partner, and brainstorm different ways you could respond to the situation. Write everything down on your worksheet (or paper). Make sure to include possible consequences, and finally, pick the best/safest response.

*After 2-3 minutes ask students to share some of their responses, and possible consequences. As a group, have them pick the best/safest responses that aligns with the **5 Safety Rules**. (Elicit responses such as **Talk It Up** to a Safe Friend who will support you reporting the situation to a Safe Adult. This is Upstander behavior if it's happening to others.)*

Scenario 3

You are video chatting with a group of friends. Someone suggests playing Truth or Dare and taking off items of clothing. One of your friends is taking screen shots.

As you talk with your partner, keep in mind that any picture shared on the internet can become public and can be on the web permanently. Also, taking and/or sharing pictures of without clothes on may be considered child pornography and against the law in many states.

Talk with your partner, and brainstorm different ways you could respond to this situation. Make sure you include possible consequences, and finally, pick the best/safest response.

*After 2-3 minutes ask students to share some of their responses, and possible consequences. As a group, have them pick the best/safest responses that aligns with the **5 Safety Rules**. (Elicit responses such as **Make a Move** to leave the video chat or **Talk It Up** by using an assertive voice to tell the group of friends what they are doing is wrong or reporting to a Safe Adult what has happened.)*

Wrap-Up:

- Great work today, students. Thank you for participating in the lesson to recognize Child Abuse Prevention Month. I hope we all remember that prevention and personal safety should be a priority throughout the year.
- Every child deserves to be safe, and no child ever deserves to be abused. You can use the **5 Safety Rules** if you ever feel unsafe or are concerned that someone else is unsafe. You can be an **Upstander** and talk to a **Safe Adult** to get help for you or others.

- Let's end with a quick review of the **5 Safety Rules:**

Safety Rule #1 – Know What's Up

Safety Rule #2 – Spot Red Flags

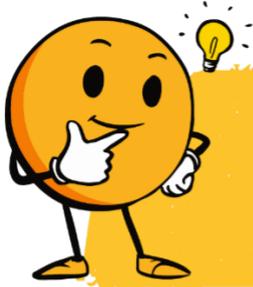
Safety Rule #3 – Make a Move

Safety Rule #4 – Talk It Up

Safety Rule #5 – No Blame | No Shame

- *Allow students time to ask any questions they may have regarding the lesson.*

THE 5 SAFETY RULES[®]



Know What's Up



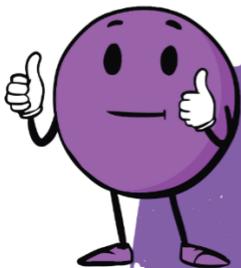
Spot Red Flags



Make a Move



Talk It Up



No Blame | No Shame

Think - Pair- Share

Possible Responses	Consequences	Best Safe Response

IDENTIFYING & REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse and neglect, which is defined by state statute, impacts millions of children every year in the United States. Therefore, it is important to recognize the indicators of abuse, and understand one's obligations to report abuse to protect children.

Indicators Of Abuse

- » Malnourished/Hungry
- » Tired/Lethargic
- » Chronic injuries
- » Bruises
- » Human bite marks
- » Untreated injuries
- » Head injuries
- » Non-accidental burns
- » Poor relations with peers
- » Poor academic performance
- » Change in behavior or attitude
- » Disruptive, impulsive, aggressive
- » Passive, depressed, withdrawn

Disclosure

Disclosure is often a process, not a one-time event.

- » Less than 1/4 of victims disclose immediately after abuse occurs.
- » Less than 1/4 may disclose from 1 month to 5 years later.
- » Over 1/2 may wait more than 5 years to disclose, if at all.

Ways children may attempt to disclose abuse:

- » **Hinted Disclosure:** "A neighbor is messing with me."
- » **Questioned Disclosure:** "What would happen if somebody was hurting a kid and they told someone about it?"
- » **Conditional Disclosure:** "I need to tell you something, but if I do, you have to promise not to tell."

Do...

- » Support, believe, and reassure the child
- » Understand your limits, you are not an investigator
- » Provide a quiet, safe environment
- » When you are done talking to the child, write down the child's exact words
- » Ask limited, open-ended questions
- » Respect the child's right to privacy
- » Seek help and advice
- » Report any suspicions of abuse/neglect

Don't...

- » Make assumptions or promises
- » Show shock or other emotions
- » Interrogate or investigate
- » Put words in the child's mouth
- » Be judgmental about the abuser; it is often someone the child loves/trusts
- » Assume someone else will report abuse

Reporting Abuse

In all states, professionals that work with children are **Mandatory Reporters**. In some states, **EVERY ADULT** is a **Mandatory Reporter**. You do not have to have proof abuse is occurring. If you have a **reasonable suspicion** that a child is abused, abandoned, or neglected, you **must report** it to your state's child welfare agency. Visit www.childwelfare.gov/organizations for a list of state agencies and contact information. For abuse in sports organizations, report to the U.S. Center for SafeSport. For more information and additional resources, visit www.mbfpreventioneducation.org.

SAFETY BRIEF: DISCUSSING SENSITIVE TOPICS

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Prevention education is extremely important for children and teens today, as they face new and varied dangers more than ever before. Yet for a variety of reasons, many adults think discussing topics such as abuse, sexual abuse, online dangers, sexting, and pornography is inappropriate for children and teens. Some think that children and teens don't know what the concepts mean, and that having these conversations will expose them prematurely to material that might cause them emotional distress. However, research tells us that is not the case. Education does not take away a child's innocence, experiences do.

The Problem:

Victimization, including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, is very real starting at a very young age. Research shows:

- » 1 in 4 children will suffer some sort of trauma or victimization before they turn 18.
- » 1 in 10 children will be sexually abused before they turn 18.
- » 1 in 4 students will be bullied and 1 in 5 will be cyberbullied while in school.
- » The fourth most frequently searched term on the Internet for children under the age of 7 is "porn."
- » 90% of 8–16 year olds have viewed pornography online.
- » 42% of Internet users aged 10 to 17 surveyed said they had seen online pornography in the past 12 months.
- » Approximately 1 in 5 (19%) of teens have engaged in some kind of sexting; of those, 9% sent a sext; 17% received a sext; and 3% forwarded a sext.
- » 11 years old is the average age of first Internet exposure to pornography (meaning many students are exposed much younger).

The Solution:

- » Children need to be educated and empowered with prevention education curricula from caring and trained adults. MBF Prevention Education Programs are comprehensive, evidence-based and evidence-informed prevention programs. *MBF Child Safety Matters*® for elementary school (grades K-5) and *MBF Teen Safety Matters*® for middle school (grades 6-8) and high school (grades 9-12), *MBF Athlete Safety Matters*® (for youth athletes), and *MBF After-School Safety Matters*® (for after-school and youth-serving organizations) are available. The programs teach students 5 universal Safety Rules® and other age and developmentally appropriate strategies, to prevent, recognize and respond appropriately to bullying, cyberbullying, the four types of child abuse (physical, emotional, sexual, neglect), digital abuse, and other digital dangers. Our goal is to reach every child and teen with these safety programs. To learn more, please visit www.mbfpreventioneducation.org and/or download our "Child Safety Matters" app at no cost from the App Store or Google Play.
 - » In addition to students receiving prevention education, parents or guardians need to discuss safety issues with their children. These are not always the easiest conversations to have, but they are important. So, we have provided you here with tips and activities to help make these conversations easier.
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SAFETY BRIEF: DISCUSSING SENSITIVE TOPICS

Keys to Successful Communication:

- » Become familiar and comfortable by researching a topic, such as sexual abuse, digital abuse/safety, cyberbullying, or sexting, before talking with your child/teen. Becoming informed and comfortable about a topic prior to discussing it is the key to having a productive conversation and not distressing your child/teen. Our website and app have downloadable Safety Briefs and free online trainings for parents on these topics and more; we also provide resources for you to find additional help.
- » Ensure your conversations are developmentally appropriate for your child's age. If you need help understanding their developmental level, see the Safety Brief: Child Development on our website.
- » Allow children/teens the opportunity to talk and to ask questions before you start talking. Often they know more than parents think, or they have incorrect information that you can correct once you begin the conversation.
- » Have ongoing conversations rather than one "big talk." If your child/teen is asking about an issue, answer them honestly and provide safety knowledge to educate and satisfy their request, but avoid giving too much information, or information that is too developmentally advanced.
- » Reinforce your child's use of the 5 Safety Rules to respond to unsafe situations. Learn more by visiting www.mbfpreventioneducation.org and reviewing our 5 Safety Rules.

Activities to Facilitate Ongoing Conversations:

- » **Letters/Journals** – Sometimes it is easier to write thoughts than to articulate them verbally. If you are having difficulty beginning a conversation about a topic, ask your child/teen to write you a letter explaining what they already know and any questions they may have. This gives you a starting point for the conversation and questions to address directly. Should it still be difficult for you to have a face-to-face conversation with them, you can reply in turn with a letter.
 - » **Topic Cards** – Keep a "Conversation Jar" available; you or your child/teen can write down a topic or question you want to discuss on a card and place it in the jar to discuss at an appropriate time.
 - » **Books** – Books often naturally lead to questions or conversations, so they are great for facilitating discussions about sensitive topics. Depending on the child's age and the topic, you may choose to read a book with your child, or ask them to read it first and then discuss it.
 - » **Websites** – In addition to books, there are many great websites available to help facilitate discussions about sensitive topics. Look for websites with credible sources and authors for your child/teen to review, to help educate them, and to help you start conversations.
 - » **Media** – Look for everyday opportunities to have discussions with your child/teen about tough and sensitive topics. Movies, TV shows, and even commercials can often lead to a conversation about something of concern. Begin by asking them about the movie or show, what they thought, was there anything they saw they did not understand, was there anything they noticed that might not be safe, or anything that concerned them? Use these questions as starting points for a more in-depth conversation.
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SAFETY BRIEF: DISCUSSING SENSITIVE TOPICS

Talking to Your Child About Concerns:

- » If you suspect that something has happened to your child, such as abuse or bullying, do not be afraid to ask them specific questions. The conversation is important, the key is how you approach it.
- » Start by asking your child if they have noticed any Red Flags anywhere in their community or with anyone they are frequently around.
- » You can also ask them if someone has ever made them feel uncomfortable or unsafe.
- » If your child begins to express concerns, listen carefully and ask open-ended questions such as, "what happened next," or "tell me more" to keep the child talking.
- » Do not ask specific or leading questions such as, "did someone touch your private parts?"
- » Be sure you don't inadvertently cause your child to feel guilty by asking questions such as, "why didn't you run away" or "why didn't you tell me sooner."
- » If it seems your child does not want to talk about it, respect that and don't push.
- » If you have concerns, or if your child discloses abuse or victimization to you, report your concerns to your state child abuse reporting hotline. Contact information can be found at www.childwelfare.gov/organizations.
- » If your child has been through an MBF Prevention Education Program, reinforce your child's use of the 5 Safety Rules in your discussion. Learn more by visiting www.mbfpreventioneducation.org and reviewing our 5 Safety Rules.

As a parent, your main concern is to protect your child/teen. The best way to do that is to stay active and involved in their life to assess any risks they may be facing and to educate and empower them to protect themselves. Ongoing conversations about tough and sensitive topics are a great way to do that.

Every child deserves to be safe!
