

WHY SURVIVORS MAY BELIEVE THAT THEY ARE TO BLAME FOR HAVING BEEN ABUSED

They may have been told that they were to blame by their abuser/s and/or others.

They may feel that they must have done something to deserve it i.e. were/are bad, naughty, evil.

They may feel that they should have been able to stop the abuse in some way, for example, by telling someone, saying 'no; avoiding, resisting or running away from their abuser(s).

They may feel guilty because:

- their bodies responded in some way
- they enjoyed the attention/affection
- they took what was on offer, i.e. bribery – money, sweets, presents etcetera.

They may feel that they cannot blame their abuser(s) as they are dependent on them, and therefore, can only blame themselves.

They may believe that the abuse was something to do with their personality, the way they looked, behaved etcetera i.e. they believe they caused the response. (Abusers often say this to children.)

They may feel that they participated in some way i.e. were made to do something rather than or as well as had something done to them i.e. masturbating abuser.

They may have been made to abuse others as part of their own abuse.