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Abuse Awareness Reading List

The following titles for children, teens, and adults offer personal narratives of surviving abuse, stories that explore the trauma stemming from abuse, and facts and information that can help prevent abuse and break the cycle. Because these titles address sensitive topics, please be aware that the subject matter may be disturbing to some readers.

This list was created for National Child Abuse Prevention Month, but we hope it will be useful any time of year.

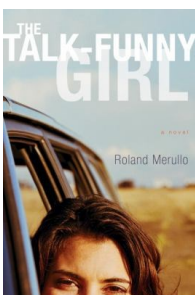
ADULT FICTION



Betty

Tiffany McDaniel | FIC MCDANIEL, T.

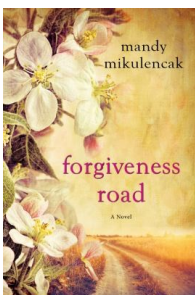
A stunning coming-of-age novel set in the rolling foothills of the Appalachians. Born in a bathtub in Arkansas in 1954 to a Cherokee father and white mother, Betty is the sixth of eight siblings. The world they inhabit is one of poverty, racism, abuse, and violence-- both from outside the family, and also, devastatingly, from within.



The Talk-Funny Girl

Roland Merullo | FIC MERULLO, R.

Raised by parents so intentionally isolated that they speak their own hybrid dialect, abused youth Marjorie witnesses her parents' submission to a sadistic cult leader before she is rescued by another abuse survivor. By turns darkly menacing and bright with love and resilience, this novel is the story of one young woman's remarkable courage, a kind of road map for the healing of early abuse, and a testament to the power of kindness and love.



Forgiveness Road

Mandy Mikulencak | FIC MIKULENCAK, M.

Set in 1970s Mississippi, this powerful novel tells of three generations of women whose lives are thrown into upheaval when a dark secret is brutally exposed. And over the course of an unlikely road trip, a mother and daughter will confront the truths they've hidden from the world and themselves, finding courage, deep-rooted resilience, and a bond tender and tough enough to transform them both.



The Color Purple

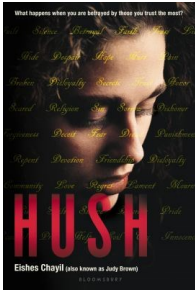
Alice Walker | FIC WALKER, A.

This powerful cultural touchstone of modern American literature depicts the lives of African American women in early twentieth-century rural Georgia. This acclaimed novel breaks the silence around domestic and sexual abuse, narrating the lives of women through their pain and struggle, companionship and growth, resilience and bravery.



Abuse Awareness Reading List

TEEN FICTION



Hush

Eishes Chayil | YA FIC CHAYIL, E.

Inside the closed community of Borough Park, where most Chassidim live, the rules of life are very clear, determined by an ancient script written thousands of years before down to the last detail--and abuse has never been a part of it. But when 13-year-old Gittel learns of the abuse her best friend has suffered at the hands of her own family member, the adults in her community try to persuade Gittel, and themselves, that nothing happened. Forced to remain silent, Gittel begins to question everything she was raised to believe.



Swagger

Carl Deuker | YA FIC DEUKER, C.

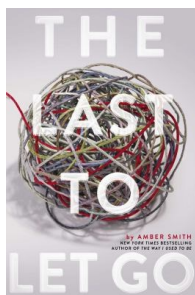
When high school senior Jonas moves to Seattle, he is glad to meet Levi, a soft-spoken guy and fellow basketball player. Suspense builds like a slow drumbeat as readers start to smell a rat in Ryan Hartwell, a charismatic basketball coach and sexual predator. When Levi reluctantly tells Jonas that Hartwell abused him, Jonas has to decide whether he should risk his future career to report the coach.



After the Fire

Will Hill | YA FIC HILL, W.

Moonbeam survives a devastating confrontation between government forces and the cult she grew up in, but will need a lot of help to heal mentally, emotionally, and physically. She isn't sure what's better, before or after-- all she knows is that there are questions she can't answer, and if everything she's been told is a lie, how can she know who's telling the truth now? This gripping and unforgettable story of survival after life in a cult was inspired by the survivors of the Branch Davidian siege in Waco, Texas, 1993.

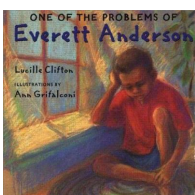


The Last to Let Go

Amber Smith | YA FIC SMITH, A.

Brooke Winters is starting fresh, and making plans for college so she can finally leave her hometown, her family, and her past behind. When her mother is arrested for killing Brooke's abusive father, Brooke and her siblings are on their own. As she confronts the shadow of her family's violence and dysfunction, Brooke must struggle to embrace her identity, find her true place in the world, and learn how to let go.

CHILDREN'S FICTION



One of the Problems of Everett Anderson

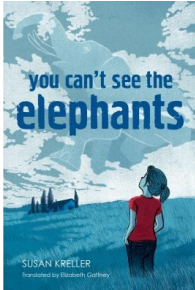
Lucille Clifton | J PIC CLI

Everett Anderson wonders how he can help his friend Greg, who appears to be a victim of child abuse. This moving picture book explores a difficult topic in a way that is approachable for young readers.



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You Can't See the Elephants
Susan Kreller | J FIC KRELLER, S.

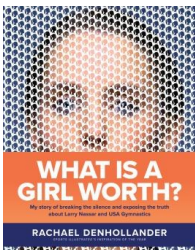
When 13-year-old Mascha is sent to her grandparents' for the summer, she spends her lonely days at a nearby playground. There she meets Julia and Max, two young siblings who are incredibly shy and withdrawn. Mascha begins to suspect that they are being physically abused by their father, a prominent member of their community. She tells her grandparents and the authorities, but they all refuse to believe her. Mascha can't let the abuse go on, so she takes matters into her own hands.



When You Know What I Know
Sonja Solter | J FIC SOLTER, S.

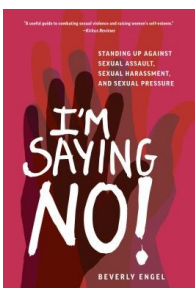
One day after school, Tori's uncle does something bad. Afterward, Tori tells her mom. Even though telling was a brave thing to do, her mom doesn't believe her at first. Her grandma takes his side. And Tori doesn't want anyone else- even her best friend- to know what happened. Now Tori finds herself battling mixed emotions as she deals with the trauma. With the help of her mom, little sister, best friend, and others, Tori must find a way to have the last word.

ADULT NONFICTION



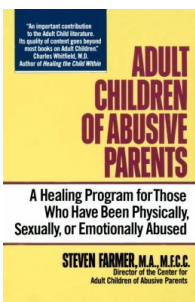
What is a Girl Worth?
Rachael Denhollander | 364.153092 DEN

The first victim to publicly accuse Larry Nassar, the former USA Gymnastics team doctor who abused hundreds of young athletes, Denhollander reveals her full story for the first time in this deeply personal and compelling narrative. She shines a spotlight on the physical and emotional impact of abuse, why so many survivors are reluctant to speak out, and how we can learn to do what's right in the moments that matter most.



I'm Saying No
Beverly Engel | 364.153 ENG

Engel--an internationally recognized psychotherapist and acclaimed advocate for victims of sexual, physical, and emotional abuse--offers a ground-breaking program to help all the women who have been silenced by past trauma, women who were raised to believe they didn't have a right to say no, and women who have spoken out in the past only to go unheard.



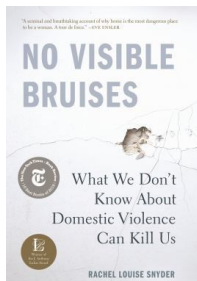
Adult Children of Abusive Parents
Steven Farmer | 616.8582 FAR

Drawing on his extensive work with Adult Children, and on his own experience as a survivor of emotional neglect, therapist Steven Farmer demonstrates that through exercises and journal work, his program can help lead you through grieving your lost childhood, to become your own parent, and integrate the healing aspects of spiritual, physical, and emotional recovery into your adult life.

STEVEN FARMER, M.A., M.F.C.C.
Director of the Center for
Adult Children of Abusive Parents



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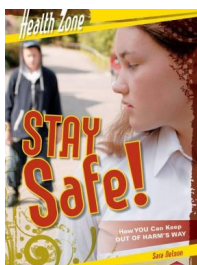


No Visible Bruises

Rachel Louise Snyder | 362.82 SNY

Journalist Rachel Louise Snyder investigates the true scope of domestic violence. Through the stories of victims, perpetrators, law enforcement, and reform movements from across the country, Snyder explores the real roots of private violence, its far-reaching consequences for society, and what it will take to truly address it.

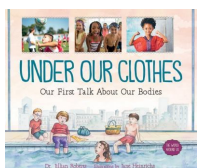
CHILDREN'S NONFICTION



Stay Safe!

Sara Nelson | J 613.6 NEL

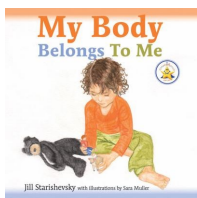
Adults try to make your world safe. But you can't always predict when something bad will happen. Whether it's a bully in the hallways of your school or a stranger on a street corner, you need to know how to deal with threats to your safety. What should you do when danger appears? How can you be more aware of what's going on around you? Why do some people want to hurt others? Explore the answers to these questions and find out how you can stay safe.



Under Our Clothes: Our First Talk About Bodies

Jillian Roberts | J 306.4613 ROB

Child psychologist Dr. Jillian Roberts introduces children to the topics of body safety and body image, with a final call to action empowering children to build their own confidence and speak up when something doesn't feel right.



My Body Belongs to Me

Jill Starishevsky | J362.7672 STA

Speaking to children on their own terms, this critically acclaimed book sensitively establishes boundaries for youngsters. This guide teaches kids that when it comes to their body, there are some parts that are for no one else to see and empowers them to tell a parent or teacher if someone touches them inappropriately.

RESOURCES

If you are experiencing abuse or know someone who is being abused, please don't hesitate to use the following resources:

National Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-422-4453

National Dating Abuse Helpline 1-866-331-9474

The National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-7233

National Resource Center on Domestic Violence 1-800-537-2238