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Subject: A Holiday Recipe for Prevention from Stop It Now!



Stop It Now!

Together We Can Prevent the Sexual Abuse of Children

November 21, 2006

Dear Friend,

As you prepare to gather with family and friends, consider how you can take advantage of this singular opportunity for preventing child sexual abuse. Honest and caring conversation is the best recipe for true prevention. Bring this to the table over the holidays and you may look back on this year with a real reason to give thanks.

Wouldn't it be great if a conversation about prevention could be on every table this Thanksgiving?

Please use the forward link (bottom of message) to share this recipe with everyone you care about.

Best wishes for a safe and relaxing holiday!

The Staff of Stop It Now!

A Holiday Recipe for Prevention

When planning this year's Thanksgiving dinner, consider introducing a new menu item—honest conversation. A taste of positive and hopeful language can do wonders when carving through a silence that's been complicating family gatherings for generations. The truth is, silence isn't *really* golden.

When we gather this week to celebrate the Pilgrim families' survival, it's likely that among those lovingly preparing the meals, cheering on the favorite football teams, and playing childhood games in the next room, will be survivors of another kind of familial ordeal. In most instances, their experience of childhood sexual abuse will be unknown, unacknowledged or unspoken. That's a loss for all of us.

Ironically, the time we spend together over the Thanksgiving weekend may be our best chance all year to nurture a family culture that could protect our children from sexual abuse. Contrary to conventional wisdom, honest, heartfelt conversations among family members who care for one another — adults talking to adults — offers the best promise of real sexual abuse prevention. But most often, we just keep quiet.

Our collective silence makes the current generation of children vulnerable to experiences



that could actually be avoided—if we have the courage to face some simple truths about sexual abuse.

Most sexual abuse of children is committed by someone the child already knows and often loves—a family member or close family friend who we care about, but who has tragically lost control of their impulses, someone who needs our help and support to stop. Surprisingly, as much as half of all sexual abuse is committed by another adolescent or child. Many children are abused in settings just like the gatherings most of us will participate in this week.

Embracing that knowledge gives us an incredible opportunity to think about the real ways we can prevent sexual abuse. Ultimately, honest discussion is more productive than quiet worry or seething anger. Let's face it. Most everyone wants to prevent child sexual abuse. Just getting the topic on the table can be a huge step toward creating a safer, more open environment. In the best of cases, a loving conversation could redeem two lives — a person at risk of hurting a child and a potential child victim.

And let's all resolve to also create a society where harsh punishment is only one of a range of options for those people we love who are at risk of sexually harming a child — where they can also get the help they need to gain control and to lead positive, productive lives.

Look around your Thanksgiving table. Changing the dynamic may require courage, but not necessarily confrontation. Pass these words around to start a caring conversation. Maybe someday, you'll look back on this year and find a real reason to give thanks.

By Peter Pollard, Director of Public Education

[Click here to download your copy of "the recipe"](#)

But how do I talk to other adults about this?

To learn more about how to discuss this sensitive topic with other adults, you can listen to Peter's recent appearance on the Darkness to Light radio talk show, Breaking the Conspiracy of Silence. Peter talks with Kathleen Brooks about the importance of - and



strategies for - helping adults talk to other adults about situations that may lead to or involve the sexual abuse of a child. [Listen to the archived show here.](#)

You can also [download a free copy of Let's Talk](#) - our guide to talking with other adults about this difficult issue.

To purchase multiple copies of [Let's Talk](#) and our other guides through Safer Society Press, go to our [Publications](#) page.

Find more resources at stopitnow.org

Please make an investment in prevention now.

Together we can prevent the sexual abuse of children.

Stop It Now!

email: mstein@stopitnow.org

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web: <http://stopitnow.org>

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