

KEEP KID MOLESTERS AT BAY, 24 MAY 2012

GEORGE TOWN: Some 40 primary school counsellors were enlightened on two kinds of child molesters – the grabbers and groomers’ in a workshop on child sexual abuse.

In the first session, Women’s Centre for Change (WCC) project officer Tasha Merican said the “grabbers” were strangers unknown to their victims while the “groomers” would take time to establish a trusting relationship with their victims and even the victim’s parents.

“The groomer will befriend the child and gain his or her trust. They would first pat the child on the shoulder in a friendly way, which they will also do in front of the child’s parents.

“The child will think it is normal behaviour.

“The perpetrator will then attack’ some time later by touching the child inappropriately, after which he will threaten the child and make him or her promise to keep quiet about it,” she said during the workshop held at the WCC premises in Jalan Burma yesterday.



Helpful material: Dr Prema (left) showing ‘A Teacher’s Manual on Child Sexual Abuse: Teaching Children to be Safe’, to the press. With her is WCC project officer Mangleswary Subramaniam.

The workshop, held for the fifth time in Penang, aimed to equip the teachers with knowledge on how to teach children personal safety by using the child sexual abuse prevention package “Bijak Itu Selamat” (Be Smart, Be Safe).

The package consists of four components A Teacher’s Manual on Child Sexual Abuse: Teaching Children to be Safe, a pictorial booklet for children entitled “Saya dan Suara Kecil Saya”, a CD and user’s guide on the Personal Safety Program “OK Tak OK” and a storybook “Nina And Her Secret”.

WCC programme director Dr Prema Devaraj said abused children may not get the help they need from their families or people close to them.

“A large number of sexual abuse victims are those aged below 18. Many of these young people are molested by those they know, including family members.

“Because they spend so much time in school, very often they will turn to the teacher as a source of help or protection,” she told a press conference.

Dr Prema added that it was important to equip teachers with an understanding of child sexual abuse so they would be aware of the problem.

She also said child protection teams in the country should be visible and accessible for those who are involved in the protection of children.

“Established under the Child Act 2001, the team consists of a welfare officer, a medical officer and a police officer,” she added.

One of the workshop participants said students had approached her to tell her of their experiences after she introduced the programme in school.

“The package has brought a lot of good. It should be introduced nationwide especially among primary school teachers,” she said.

Information on the package, which costs RM35 including postage, is available at <http://www.wccpenang.org/resources/edu-packages/>.

- *The event was also covered in the [China Press](#) and other Chinese mainstream papers such as Kwong Wah Yit Poh, Guang Ming Daily, and Oriental Daily.*