

## PROTECTING KIDS FROM PREDATORS, 28 MAY 2010

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*Protecting the vulnerable: Merican teaching school counsellors at the workshop to recognise signs of sexual abuse in children.*

DETERMINED to prevent child sexual abuse in Perak, two societies are working feverishly to teach counsellors in schools to recognise signs of such abuse in children.

Perak Women For Women (PWW) and Soroptomist International Ipoh, with help from Women Centre for Change (WCC), are going around Perak, which has the fourth highest number of rape and incest cases in the country, to conduct workshops to create greater awareness.

According to PWW vice-president Halida Mohd Ali, perpetrators of sexual abuse could be anywhere and anyone.

“Thus, children must be taught what acceptable behaviour is and what is not.

“They must know not to keep quiet if something is wrong,” she said.

“We hope teachers, who attend the workshop, will go back to their respective schools and tell their pupils this,” Halida said after the opening of the ‘Ok Tak Ok’ workshop in Taiping on Tuesday.

A total of 118 counsellors from schools in Larut, Matang and Selama districts attended the workshop conducted by WCC programme director Dr Prema Devaraj and project officer Tasha Merican.

WCC has successfully conducted child sexual abuse prevention workshops using its ‘Ok Tak Ok’ programme and video in primary schools around Penang and Kedah since 1997.

Soroptomist International Ipoh president Jeyamalar Jeyaratnam said it was the duty of parents, guardians and teachers, as responsible adults, to provide children with a safe environment.

“Most children are trusting and they do not see danger until it is too late.

“We have to keep reminding our children of the dangers out there,” she said.

Those interested in the workshop can call 05-5469715.