

Characteristics of True and False Allegations of Child Sexual Abuse

—adapted from Green, *Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry*, 1986, 25, 455.

Typical of TRUE	Typical of FALSE
Delayed, conflicted disclosure, often with retractions spontaneous	Disclosure easy and apparently rehearsed or well thought out
Disclosure usually accompanied by painful and depressive affect	Disclosure with absence of negative affect
Child uses age-appropriate sexual terminology	Child may use adult sexual terminology
Child initially reticent to discuss abuse with mother or others	Child discusses abuse when prompted by mother (checks with mother)
Child rarely will confront father with the allegation, even with mother present	Child will often confront father with allegation in mother's presence
Child usually fearful in father's presence, congruent with ideation unless molestation was gentle	Discrepancy between child's angry accusations and apparent comfort in father's presence
Mothers often depressed; no other specific psychopathology (mother's)	Prominent paranoid and histrionic psychopathology in mother
Child usually demonstrates signs and symptoms of child sexual abuse	Child might be sexually preoccupied, but does not exhibit signs and symptoms of child sexual abuse
Not in divorce or litigation context	Divorce or litigation context
Specific description of events (concrete, relevant details)	General or vague description with irrelevant details and pauses to think
Plausible statements, descriptions	Implausible statements, descriptions
Consistent facts	Changing facts