

Identification of forms of abuse



Awareness of what is child abuse is essential to protect children.

There are four main forms of abuse:[1] ? Physical abuse (involves: hitting, throwing, shaking, squeezing, burning /sometimes by cigarettes/, poisonous and harmful substances /including alcohol/, suffocating and any other physical harm) ? Emotional abuse (all forms of abuse involve emotional harm but some children may be emotional abuse whilst receiving good physical care. It may include failing to show love and attention for a child such as continuous criticism, ridiculing, and severe, persistent rejection.) ? Sexual abuse (it is where an adult uses child to satisfy their own sexual needs and involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. Physical activities may include penetrative acts, including fondling, masturbation, or sexual intercourse) ? Neglect (persistent failure to meet the basic physical, emotional or psychological needs of the child, including: failing to provide food, warmth, clothing and appropriate stimulation.)The others met often are: ? Harassment and bullying (e.

g. name calling, sarcasm, racist or sexual taunts, physical gestures, interference with personal belongings and physical assaults)Abused children present various signs and symptoms. It is divided into behavioural and physical indicators of abuse: o Physical indicators of physical neglect: [2] ? Child may be underweight; ? Clothing may be inappropriate for the weather, and be smelly and dirty; ? Child may have poor skin tone and dull matted hair; a baby may have a persistent rash from infrequent nappy changing; ? Child may be constantly hungry, tired and listless; ? Child has frequent health problems, and is prone to accidents.

o Behavioural indicators of physical abuse and neglect. Changes in behaviour may include:[3] ? Being sad, listless, preoccupied or withdrawn; ? Being extra vigilant about what is going on around them (sometimes referred to as an expression of ??? frozen watchfulness??); ? Showing signs of poor self-esteem; ? Being aggressive towards other children; ? Showing signs of false independence or offering indiscriminate attention to any adult who shows interest; ? Bedwetting, bizarre behaviour or eating problems; ? A delay in physical and emotional development; ? Lacking concentration.

o Physical indicators of emotional abuse and neglect:[4] ? Physical signs are mainly in terms of body language: there may be withdrawn movements, or signs of frustration; anger and sadness in the form of temper tantrums. Emotional abuse or neglect is, therefore, not easy to detect.

o Behavioural indicators of emotional abuse and neglect:[5] ? Some children become withdrawn and will not play or take an active part in things. Life does not seem to be fun to them. Their self-esteem might be low, showing itself in a lack of confidence and reluctance to ??? have a go??? at doing things. ? Other children react by constantly seeking attention. Tantrums might continue to a later age than usual, and speech disorders might emerge, the child might tell lies, and even steal.

o Physical indicators of sexual abuse:[6] ? Children may have bruises or scratches, as in an accidental injury; ? There may be itching, or even pain, in the genital area. This might make walking or sitting uncomfortable for the child. Often infections of genital area and urine system might occur; ? It might lead to bed-wetting and poor sleeping and eating patterns; ? Underclothes might be bloody or torn, and there may be discharges from the penis or vagina.

o Behavioural indicators of sexual abuse:[7] ? Child might become rather withdrawn from other children or from adults; ? Child may seem to be lacking in self-confidence, and wanting to be ??? babied???. ? Sexual abuse leads to poor self-esteem and feelings of being dirty or bad on the part of the child; ? Child may not eat or sleep well; ? Child might show an unusual knowledge of sexual behaviour, demonstrated by the things that they say, play with (often in the home area) or draw; ? Child might seem fascinated by sexual behaviour and may flirt with adults, as if trying to please.-----

[1] ??? Take Ten for Play??? group work Furzesham Publishing and Playwork Partnerships, p. 4-5, module 8[2] Followed by: ??? Child Care and Education??? by T. Bruce and C. Meggitt, 2002, p.

513[3] Followed by: ??? Child Care and Education??? by T. Bruce and C.

Meggitt, 2002, p. 513[4] Followed by: ??? Child Care and Education??? by T.

Bruce and C. Meggitt, 2002, p. 514[5] as above[6] Followed by: ??? Child

Care and Education??? by T.

Bruce and C. Meggitt, 2002, p. 515[7] Followed by: ??? Child Care and

Education??? by T. Bruce and C.

Meggitt, 2002, p. 515