

Appendix 1 Types and Signs of Abuse

Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children are harmed by someone often in a position of power. It may not be our responsibility to decide whether child abuse is occurring but we are required to act on any concerns and report it to the appropriate party. The health, safety and protection of a child is paramount.

a. PHYSICAL ABUSE

- i. Can include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, suffocating or causing any form of physical harm to a child.
- ii. Possible signs include:
 - Unexplained injuries or burns
 - Refusal to discuss injuries
 - Improbable explanations of injuries
 - Untreated injuries or lingering illness
 - Admission of punishment which appears excessive
 - Shrinking from physical contact
 - Fear of returning home or parents being contacted
 - Fear of undressing
 - Fear of medical help
 - Aggression/ bullying
 - Over compliant behaviour
 - Running away
 - Significant changes in behaviour
 - Deterioration in work
 - Unexplained pattern of absences

b. EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- i. This is persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It can include:
 - conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved
 - placing inappropriate age-related expectations on children
 - making children feel frightened or in danger on a frequent basis
- ii. Possible signs of emotional abuse include:
 - Continual self-deprecation
 - Fear of new situations
 - Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
 - Self-harm or mutilation
 - Compulsive stealing/ scrounging
 - Drug/ solvent abuse
 - 'Neurotic' behaviour — obsessive rocking, thumb-sucking
 - Air of detachment 'don't care' attitude
 - Social isolation
 - Attention-seeking behaviour
 - Eating problems
 - Depression, withdrawal

c. SEXUAL ABUSE

- i. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. They can include non-contact activities such as involving children looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Approved: September 2020

- ii. Possible signs include:
 - Bruises, scratches, burns or bite marks
 - Scratches abrasions or persistent infection in the anal or genital regions
 - Pregnancy
 - Sexual awareness inappropriate to the child's age
 - Frequent public masturbation
 - Attempts to teach other children about sexual activity
 - Refusing to stay with certain people or go to certain places
 - Aggressiveness, anger, anxiety, tearfulness
 - Withdrawal from friends
 - Inappropriate drawings, writing or art work

- d. **NEGLECT**
 - i. Neglect is also a form of abuse. It is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs and can affect the child's health and development. It might include failure to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failure to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failure to ensure appropriate access to medical care and treatment.
 - ii. Possible signs include:
 - Constant hunger
 - Poor personal hygiene
 - Inappropriate clothing
 - Frequent lateness or non-attendance
 - Untreated medical problems
 - Low self-esteem
 - Poor social relationships
 - Compulsive stealing or scrounging
 - Constant tiredness

If a member of staff suspects a combination of types or isn't sure which type of abuse they see signs of, they should discuss with the DSL so that decisions can be made regarding what information to be placed on any referral.