



DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE CATEGORIES & DIFFERENT INDICATORS OF CHILD ABUSE

PHYSICAL ABUSE:

Physical abuse may involve: hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child, a parent or carer fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately inducing, illness in a child.

This is not to say that whenever an injury is caused to a child, it must be a case of physical abuse. An adult or older child might inflict an injury by accident, for example while playing football. What matters is whether the child was knowingly put at risk or whether the parent or carer paid reasonable attention to the child's safety.

NEGLECT

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to seriously damage their health or development. In pregnancy, this can happen as a result of maternal substance misuse.

Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, including excluding the child from home or abandoning them
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision, including the use of inadequate care-givers
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- It may also include neglecting or being unresponsive to a child's basic emotional needs.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse occurs when someone exploits their power, authority or position and uses a child sexually to gratify their own needs. Both boys and girls are sexually abused and it can begin with babies who are only a few months old. People outside the family also abuse children – they are usually people known and trusted by the child.

Sexual abuse involves someone (an adult or another young person) forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve:

- physical contact, including penetrative (e.g., rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts
- non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or producing sexual, online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.



EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child causing severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

Emotional abuse may involve:

- conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only because they meet the needs of another person
- imposing expectations that are inappropriate to the age or development of the child – e.g., over-protecting the child, limiting their exploration and learning, preventing them from taking part in normal social interaction
- seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of someone else
- serious bullying which causes the child frequently to feel frightened or in danger of exploitation or corruption.
- Emotional abuse is a part of all types of abuse and neglect but it may occur alone.

BULLYING

Bullying happens when an individual or group of individuals show hostility towards another individual and this can be; emotional, physical, sexual or racist. Emotional bullying is by far the most common but usually the most difficult to spot.

Bullying can take many forms but usually includes the following:

- Physical – hitting, kicking, pinching, punching, scratching, spitting or any other form of physical attack.
- Damage to or taking someone else's belongings may also constitute physical bullying.
- Verbal – offensive name calling, insults, racist remarks, sexist or homophobic jokes, teasing, threats, using sexually suggestive or abusive language.
- Indirect – spreading nasty stories/rumours about someone, intimidation, exclusion from social groups.

Cyberbullying

This is a form of bullying which uses technology to deliberately harm or upset others.

This type of bullying can happen in many ways, using mobile phones or the internet and could include:

- Sending hurtful messages or using images
- Leaving malicious voicemails
- A series of silent calls
- Creating a website about other people to humiliate them
- Exclude them from chat/messaging rooms/areas
- 'Happy slapping'- sending video/images of people being bullied, so others can see

Bullies might be using this form of bullying because it's very difficult to trace the senders.



HOW TO RECOGNISE SIGNS OF ABUSE

Recognising abuse can be very complex; some indicators are really obvious whilst others are not so obvious. Some children and young people will go to great lengths to try to hide any possible signs that something is wrong. This can make the identification process even more difficult.

The following signs are possible indicators that abuse may be happening but doesn't always mean abuse is happening. However, staff must always report their concerns. Staff should remember that it is not their responsibility to investigate or draw conclusions, only to report what they have noticed or been told.

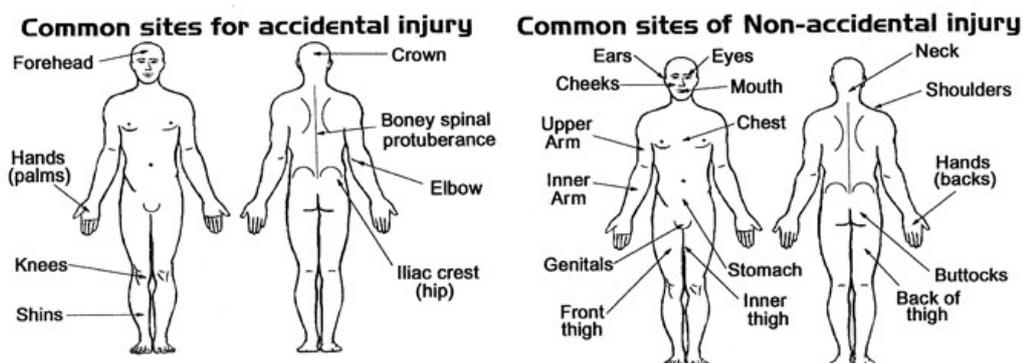
Physical Abuse (Non-Accidental Injuries):

When injuries have occurred it's always important to listen to what the child tells you, if they are able to tell you. You need to consider if their story matches with the nature of the injuries and all other available information before reaching a conclusion.

Indicators of Physical abuse may include:

- Injuries in unusual positions which it's hard to explain the nature of i.e. back, chest, torso, buttocks, neck, behind ears, inside thighs, face, head, genitals, back of hand
- Injuries inconsistent with the age, abilities or lifestyle of the child
- Finger marks, slap marks, bites, fractures, burns and scalds
- Damage to the mouth such as bruised or cut lips or torn skin where the upper lip joins the mouth
- Clusters of injuries forming regular patterns
- Injuries at different stages of healing
- Object marks, clear outlines of objects
- The child appears frightened
- An explanation of injuries is avoided or inconsistent (child and/or carer)
- Delay in seeking treatment for injuries
- The child behaving aggressively towards others

Certain locations on the body are more likely to sustain accidental injury. These include the knees, elbows, shins, and forehead. Protected body parts and soft tissue areas, such as the back, thighs, genital area, buttocks, back of legs, or face, are less likely to accidentally come into contact with objects that could cause injury. The following diagram illustrates the areas of the body that are most likely to receive accidental injury and also which areas are most common for non-accidental injuries.





Neglect:

Long term, sustained neglect is damaging emotionally, socially and educationally and is likely to cause far more developmental delays and medical impairments than any other form of abuse.

Indicators of Neglect:

- Failure to thrive
- Constant hunger and/or tiredness, malnutrition, steals food
- Poor hygiene
- Frequent accidental injuries and illnesses
- Untreated medical problems
- Developmental delays
- Poor state of clothing
- Unable to make friends, lack of social relationships
- Low self esteem
- Treated differently to other children by their carer
- Carer appears stressed and unable to cope

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse can be harder to detect than the other types of abuse and may need to be assessed over a period of time through monitoring the child's behaviour with the responses of the carers towards the child.

Emotional abuse may be experienced at any age just as the other types of abuse. It may be experienced on its own but very often in combination with other types of abuse. It may also be experienced in isolation as a one off but is more likely to be experienced over a longer period of time. The adverse effects of emotional abuse can have a significant impact on all areas of the child's development, mental health and self-esteem.

It is also important to consider the possibility of bullying and racism within the context of emotional harm.

Indicators of Emotional Abuse might include:

- Physical, mental and emotional developmental delays
- Needy or clingy
- Difficulty with genuine trust, intimacy and affection
- Negative, hopeless and negative view of self, family and society
- Lack of empathy, compassion and remorse
- Low self-esteem, deference and resignation
- Change in appetite
- Extremes of passivity and aggression
- Poor concentration
- Difficulty making friends
- Sudden speech disorders
- Unexplained fear, defensiveness, ambivalence
- Emotional withdrawal
- Sleep disturbance
- Carer constantly rejects and ignores the child, depriving them of responsiveness and stimulation
- Carer isolates the child and prevents them building relationships and making friends
- Carer shows little warmth and affection towards the child
- Carer constantly criticises or humiliates the child and appears unable to give praise



Sexual Abuse:

Perpetrators of sexual abuse may be male or female and aren't always adults. They may be a child or young person themselves.

Indicators of Sexual Abuse:

- A detailed sexual knowledge inappropriate to the age and developmental stage of the child
- Sexually explicit language/behaviour
- Increased frequency of visits to the toilet, bed wetting
- Behaviour that is excessively affectionate or sexual towards other children or adults
- A fear of medical examinations
- A fear of being alone
- Sudden loss of appetite, compulsive eating, anorexia nervosa or bulimia nervosa
- Excessive masturbation
- Sexual approaches or assaults on other children or adults
- Urinary tract infections, sexually transmitted diseases
- Bruising to the buttocks, lower abdomen thighs, and genitals and other rectal areas. Bruises may be confined to grip marks where a child has been held so that abuse can take place
- Drawing pornographic or sexually explicit images or writing about the same.
- Depression and low self esteem

Bullying:

The effects of bullying can lead to young people:

- becoming depressed - they actually become ill
- experience low self esteem
- becoming shy and withdrawn
- experiencing physical complaints, like constant stomach aches and headaches, which are brought on by stress

Some of the ways in which young people have described bullying include:

- being called names and teased
- being pushed or pulled around
- having money or personal possessions taken or damaged
- having rumours spread
- being ignored or left out
- being hit, kicked or physically hurt in some way
- being threatened or intimidated