

Cause for concern

You should be suspicious if a child demonstrates bizarre or unusual sexual knowledge or behaviour; has difficulty walking or sitting; or has torn, stained or bloody underclothing.

Effects on children

The impact and consequences of sexual abuse can be measured in two parts. The first is the impact on the child at the time, which takes the form of a gradual decline in the psychological functioning of the child.

The second is the impact of the abuse when growing up and moving into adulthood.

This can take the form of the young person or adult experiencing difficulties in developing interpersonal relationships.

Definition of neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and / or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Me Learning Ltd

Basepoint Business Centre
Ropetackle
Shoreham-by-Sea
West Sussex
BN43 5EG

enquiries@melearning.co.uk

01273 455 194

Cause of neglect

There is no single cause for neglect. Most neglectful families experience a variety and a combination of adversities ranging from depression and domestic violence to substance misuse and poverty.

Signs of neglect

A child who experiences neglect can appear listless, apathetic and unresponsive with no apparent medical cause.

They may appear emaciated, constantly dirty, have severe body odour or have untreated medical problems.

Overall effects on children

Persistent neglect can lead to serious impairment of health and development, and long-term difficulties with social functioning, relationships and educational progress.

In extreme cases, neglect can also result in death.

Summary

In summary,

- A person may abuse or neglect a child either directly by inflicting harm, or indirectly, by failing to act to prevent harm
- It is important to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse in order to help prevent harm
- The consequences of abuse and neglect can be serious and long term - or in some cases, fatal



enquiries@melearning.co.uk

01273 455 194

Recognising Abuse and Neglect

Refresher Guide



Definition of physical abuse

Physical abuse is abuse involving contact intended to cause feelings of intimidation, pain, injury, or other physical suffering or harm.

This includes: hitting, shaking, kicking, punching, scalding, suffocating or giving a child harmful substances, such as drugs, alcohol or poison.

If a parent or carer reports non-existent symptoms of illness in a child, or deliberately causes illness in a child, this is also a form of physical abuse.

Causes of physical abuse

The NSPCC suggest that stress, possibly caused by financial problems and difficulties in the parents' relationships, may increase the likelihood of physical abuse.

They also suggest that mental illness, domestic violence and substance abuse increase the likelihood of physical abuse.

Signs from the victim

The presence of a single sign, such as a bruise, does not prove that a child is being physically abused: children sustain injuries accidentally and there may be a simple explanation.

However, when unexplained bruises appear repeatedly or there is a sudden change in the child's attitude or behaviour, you should be concerned and explore the possibility of physical abuse.

Signs from the abuser

Adults who physically abuse children also give away signs of being culpable; such as:

- Offering conflicting, unconvincing or no explanation of the child's injury
- Describing the child negatively
- Using harsh, physical discipline

Effects on children

Physical abuse can cause physical injury, brain damage or disability and may lead to children developing emotional, behavioural or educational problems.

Definition of emotional abuse

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Causes of emotional abuse

Most emotional abuse occurs for many of the same reasons that physical abuse occurs.

Emotional abuse may occur with or without physical abuse, but there is often an overlap.

Components of emotional abuse

Emotional abuse can take many forms, including:

- Rejecting
- Isolating
- Terrorising
- Ignoring
- Corrupting

Signs of emotional abuse

Children who are emotionally abused may blame themselves.

They can also believe that they are 'bad', 'evil' or even 'possessed'.

They may appear passive and over-compliant or aggressive and angry. Often self-harm or suicide attempts can provide indications of emotional abuse. The child may be very slow to learn or be easily distracted at school.

Signs from the abuser

Sometimes the indicators of possible emotional abuse come from the child's parents or carers as much from the child themselves.

- Constantly blaming the child
- Appearing unconcerned about the child
- Belittling the child in front of others
- Excessive demands on a child's performance
- Penalising the child for no reason
- Favouring other siblings

Effects of emotional abuse

During their childhood, victims of emotional abuse may fail to thrive or their developmental progress may be halted. Some may also become poorly adjusted emotionally and psychologically.

As teenagers, they may find it difficult to trust, participate in and achieve happiness in interpersonal relationships, and resolve the complex feelings left over from their early childhood experiences.

Definition of sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves 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.

They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking

at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Grooming

Grooming is where people with a sexual interest in children attempt to engage them in sexual acts either over the internet or in person.

Contact can often be through social networking sites, chat rooms or games - with the perpetrator pretending to be the friend of a friend, or a child of similar age to their chosen victim.

Once a relationship is established the offender may start to introduce sexual themes to the conversation, for example, asking the child about their sexual experiences or asking them for sexual pictures of themselves.

Often the offender will attempt to get a child to meet them in order to abuse them.

Signs of sexual abuse

The presence of a single physical sign, such as complaining of stomach pains or headaches do not prove that a child is being sexually abused.

However, when these signs are unexplained and appear repeatedly, you should be concerned.

Signs from the abuser

Adults who sexually abuse children also give away signs of being culpable; such as:

- Being unduly protective of the child or severely limiting the child's contact other children, especially of the opposite sex
- Being secretive and isolated
- Being jealous or controlling with family members