

# Child Abuse Definitions:

Child abuse comes in many different forms such as neglect, physical abuse, fetal abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and spiritual abuse. The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) has these definitions:

- **Child abuse and neglect** - At a minimum, any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker, which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation, or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.
- **Sexual abuse** - the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct; or the rape, and in cases of caretaker or inter-familial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children, or incest with children.

## NEGLECT

- **Physical neglect** – Includes abandonment or inadequate supervision, and failure to provide for safety or physical needs. Includes failure to thrive, malnutrition, unsanitary conditions, or injuries from lack of supervision.
- **Educational neglect** – Includes not enrolling child in school, or allowing child to engage in chronic truancy.
- **Emotional neglect** - Includes withholding of affection or attention, failure to provide psychological care, ignoring the child's emotional needs.
- **Medical neglect** – Includes delay or denial of dental or health care, or withholding medical care due to religious beliefs. Some states will not prosecute due to withholding of health care due to religious beliefs but court orders are occasionally obtained to save a child's life.

### **Neglect Indicators**

- Poor hygiene, including lice, scabies, severe or untreated diaper rash, bedsores, body odor
- Squinting
- Unsuitable clothing; missing key articles of clothing (underwear, socks, shoes); overdressed or underdressed for climate conditions
- Untreated injury or illness
- Lack of immunizations
- Indicators of prolonged exposure to elements (excessive sunburn, insect bites, colds)
- Height and weight significantly below age level

## **PHYSICAL ABUSE**

Physical abuse is the most obvious form of abuse. It is an act that results in physical injury to a child. Punching, beating, kicking, biting, burning, breaking bones, hair pulling and shaking a baby are examples of physical abuse.

### **Physical Abuse Indicators:**

- Recurrent injuries with unexplained, guarded, implausible, or inconsistent explanations
- Oddly shaped or patterned bruises or lacerations (from an object)
- Uncommon locations for injury (underarms, neck, back, genitals, stomach, thighs)
- Lacerations
- Burns (cigarette, immersion)
- Welts
- Broken bones and intracranial trauma
- Hair loss
- Wearing long sleeve clothing out of season
- Hesitation on showing certain body parts (not dressing out for P.E.)
- Acts out aggression on others
- Fear, withdrawal, depression
- Fantasies, art work, or threats related to violence
- Regression
- Nightmares, insomnia

## **FETAL ABUSE**

- Fetal alcohol Syndrome (FAS) – Caused from the consumption of alcohol during pregnancy.
- Drugs – tobacco, marijuana, cocaine, methamphetamines, heroin, PCP, LSD.

### **Indicators of fetal abuse due to FAS**

- Mental retardation
- Prenatal and postnatal growth deficiency
- Facial malformations
- Central nervous system dysfunction
- Varying degrees of major organ dysfunctions
- Developmental delays

### **Indicators of fetal abuse due to drug usage**

- Miscarriage
- Low birth-weight
- Premature birth
- Developmental delays
- Behavioral and learning problems
- Drug dependency and subject to withdrawal (tremors, sleeplessness, muscle spasms, and difficulties feeding)
- Susceptibility to HIV

## SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse is any misuse of a child for sexual pleasure or gratification. It is the involvement of children in sexual activities that they do not fully comprehend, that they are unable to give informed consent to and/or that violates societal taboos.

**Non-touching sexual abuse** - Indecent exposure or exhibitionism, exposure to pornographic material or any sexual act, including masturbation.

**Touching sexual abuse** – Fondling, making a child touch an adult's or another child's sexual organs, penetration of a child's vagina or anus by an adult or an object, and any other sexual act with a child.

**Sexual exploitation** - Engaging a child for the purposes of prostitution or using a child to film or photograph pornographically.

### **Sexual Abuse Indicators:**

- Compulsive masturbation, teaching others to masturbate
- Excessive curiosity about sex or seductiveness
- Sexual acting out with peers, others
- Bruises or bleeding in external genitalia or stained, torn, bloody underclothing
- Frequent, unexplained sore throats, yeast or urinary infections.
- Bed-wetting, soiling, playing with feces
- Complains of pain or itching in genitalia
- Difficulty in sitting or walking
- Excessive bathing
- Withdrawn or aggressive
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Pregnancy, especially in early adolescence
- Sexual inference in school artwork
- Substance abuse
- Legal issues
- Overly compulsive behavior
- Fears and phobias
- Running away
- Sleep problems
- Fire starting
- Depression
- Somatic symptoms (stomach aches, headaches, etc.)

## EMOTIONAL ABUSE

*“When it comes to damage, there is no real difference between physical, sexual and emotional abuse. All that distinguishes one from the other is the abuser’s choice of weapons.”- Andrew Vachss*

- Emotional abuse is a pattern of behavior that can seriously interfere with a child's positive development, psyche and self-concept.
- Emotional abuse is hard to identify due to no physical evidence.
- **Rejection and Ignoring** – Telling a child in a variety of ways that he or she is unwanted, having a lack of attachment, showing no interest, not initiating or returning affection, and/or not listening to the child. Not validating feelings. Breaking promises. Cutting the child off while he or she is speaking. Pretending to hear concerns, but then disregard them.
- **Shame and Humiliation** –Telling a child he or she is stupid, etc. or evoking criticism when performance is not perfect. Judging what the child does as wrong, inferior, or worthless. Using reproaches such as "You should be ashamed of yourself," or "Stop crying or I'll give you something to cry about." Pride is also a feeling that is often met with shameful condemnations, such as "Who do you think you are, Mr. Big Shot?"
- **Terrorizing** – Accusing, blaming, insulting, criticizing, punishing and threatening with abandonment, physical harm, or death. Sabotaging success by making unreasonable demands or labeling the person as a loser. Taking advantage of the person’s weakness or manipulating. Slandering.
- **Isolating** – Not allowing the child to engage with peers or activities, keeping a child in a room or small area, and not exposing the child to stimulation. Withholding information.
- **Corrupting** - Engaging children to witness or participate in criminal acts such as stealing, drug dealing etc. Telling lies to avoid justifying actions or ideas.
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### Emotional Abuse Indicators

- Hiding his or her eyes
- Lowering his or her gaze
- Biting lips or tongue
- Forcing a smile
- Fidgeting
- Annoyance
- Defensiveness
- Exaggeration
- Confusion or denial
- Feeling of nakedness, defeat, alienation or lack of worth
- Regression
- Poor self-esteem
- Angry acts
- Withdrawal
- Insecurity
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Depression
- Suicide
- Difficulty in relationships
- Eating disorders
- Sleep disorders/nightmares
- Speech disorders
- Developmental delays
- Nervous disorders or somatic symptoms

## SPIRITUAL ABUSE

- Mind control or thought reform.
- The misuse of a position of power, leadership, or influence to further the interests of someone other than the individual who needs help.
- Psychological, sexual, and/or physical abuse by members of a specific religion or cult.
- Withholding medical care in lieu of prayer.
- Using religious texts for justifications for abuse.
- Psychological, sexual, and/or physical assault committed by one or more people whose primary motive is to fulfill a prescribed ritual or satisfy the perceived needs of a deity or other being. This may include exorcisms or sacrifices.
- Satanic or Sadistic Ritual Abuse (SDA) is an organized, secret, often multi-generational group who engage in mutilation, ritual killing, cannibalism, drinking of blood, systematic torture to produce robot-like, programmed, children, etc.

### **Common Characteristics of Abusive Groups**

- **Authoritarian** – The group claims to have been established by God and leaders in this system claim the right to command their followers. Followers may be told that God will bless their submission even if the leadership is wrong.
- **Image Conscious** –History, character flaws, etc are misrepresented or denied to validate the revered image of the group. Irrationally high standards are placed upon followers and their failure to live up to these standards is a constant reminder of the follower's inferiority to his or her leaders.
- **Suppresses Criticism** – Questions or open discussions about issues are not allowed. The group or religion is promoted as favored by God and a person who questions becomes the problem rather than the issue he or she raised. Questioning anything is considered a challenge to authority and doubting God.

### **Spiritual/Ritual Abuse Indicators**

- Child believes he or she is evil or causes others to be evil
- Mistrust of others outside the group
- Strong fear of God
- Overly obedient or perfectionistic
- Strong feelings of shame or guilt
- Programmed statements or behaviors
- Sleep problems or nightmares

## **If you think someone is abusing a child:**

It is important that you listen to them most of all.

### **DO NOT**

- Investigate
- Ask leading questions (a question that suggests the answer or contains the information the questioner is looking for – That man touched you, didn't he?)
- Make promises
- Notify the parents or the caretaker

### **DO**

- Provide a **safe environment** (be comforting, welcoming, and a good listener).
- Tell the child it was **not his/her fault**
- **Listen** carefully
- Document the child's **exact quotes**
- Be supportive, not judgmental
- Know your limits
- Tell the truth and make no promises
- Ask **ONLY** four questions
- **What** happened?  
**Who** did this to you?  
**Where** were you when this happened?  
**When** did this happen?
- Asking any additional questions may contaminate a case!

### **Report it!**

- Call your local law enforcement agency
- Call your local Child Protective Services Agency
- Call the **24-Hour Childhelp® National Child Abuse Hotline** and we will connect you to the appropriate agency.

## STATISTICS

- Based on a rate of 47.8 per 1,000 children, an estimated **3,503,000 children received an investigation** by CPS agencies in 2004. Of those, based on a victim rate of 11.9 per 1,000 children, an estimated **872,000 children were found to be victims**.
- The National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) reported an **estimated 1,400 child fatalities in 2002**. This translates to a rate of 1.98 children per 100,000 children in the general population.
- Research indicates very young children (ages 3 and younger) are the most frequent victims of child fatalities. NCANDS data for 2002 demonstrated children **younger than 1 year** accounted for **41 percent** of fatalities, while children **younger than 4 years** accounted for **76 percent** of fatalities.
- **Types of Maltreatment** - During 2004, **62.4 percent** of victims experienced **neglect**, **17.5 percent** were **physically abused**, **9.7 percent** were **sexually abused**, **7.0 percent** were **psychologically maltreated**, and **2.1 percent** were **medically neglected**. In addition, **14.5 percent** of victims experienced such "**other**" types of maltreatment as "abandonment," "threats of harm to the child," or "congenital drug addiction." States may code any condition that does not fall into one of the main categories—physical abuse, neglect, medical neglect, sexual abuse, and psychological or emotional maltreatment—as "other." These maltreatment type percentages total more than 100 percent because children who were victims of more than one type of maltreatment were counted for each maltreatment.
- In 2002, **more than one-third (38 percent) of child maltreatment fatalities** were associated with **neglect alone**. **Physical abuse alone** was cited in more than one-quarter (30 percent) of reported fatalities. Another **29 percent** of fatalities were the **result of multiple maltreatment types**.
- **Sex and Age of Victims** - For 2004, **48.3 percent** of child victims were **boys**, and **51.7 percent** of the victims were **girls**. The youngest children had the highest rate of victimization. The rate of child victimization of the age group of **birth to 3 years** was **16.1 per 1,000 children** of the same age group. The victimization rate of children in the age group of **4-7 years** was **13.4 per 1,000 children** in the same age group. The youngest children accounted for the largest percentage of victims. **Children younger than 1 year accounted for 10.3 percent of victims**. Nearly three-quarters of child victims (**72.9%**) **ages birth to 3 years were neglected** compared with **52.4 percent of victims ages 16 years and older**. For victims in the age group of **12-15 years**, **22.8 percent were physically abused** and **16.5 percent were sexually abused**, compared with **16.8 percent** and **9.1 percent**, respectively, for victims in the age group of **4-7 years** old.
- **Perpetrators of Maltreatment** - Nearly **84 percent (83.4%)** of victims were **abused by a parent** acting alone or with another person. Approximately two-fifths (**38.8%**) of child victims were maltreated by their **mothers acting alone**; another **18.3 percent** were maltreated by their **fathers acting alone**; **18.3 percent** were abused by **both parents**. Victims abused by such **non-parental perpetrators as an unmarried partner of parent, legal guardian, or foster parent** accounted for **10.1 percent** of the total

## SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

### **Direct Costs**

- Hospital costs for medical treatment of injuries sustained as a result of physical abuse
- Costs for police and Child Protective Services
- Court and other legal costs
- Foster care costs resulting from the removal of children from abusive homes
- Crisis intervention counseling
- Ongoing family intervention services

### **Indirect Costs**

- Lower academic achievement
- Juvenile and adult crime increase
- Court and other legal costs
- Mental health problems
- Cycle of violence continuum



## REPORTING

Mandated reporter laws are similar but they slightly vary from state to state. These are the Arizona laws: Arizona Revised Statutes 13-3620 is a duty to report abuse, physical injury, neglect and denial or deprivation of medical or surgical care or nourishment of minors.

- **Any person who reasonably believes that a minor is or has been the victim of physical injury, abuse, child abuse, a reportable offense or neglect** that appears to have been inflicted on the minor by **other than accidental means** or that is not explained by the available medical history as being accidental in nature or who **reasonably believes** there has been a **denial or deprivation of necessary medical treatment or surgical care or nourishment with the intent to cause or allow the death of an infant** who is protected under section 36-2281 **shall immediately report or cause reports to be made** of this information **to a peace officer or to Child Protective Services** in the Department of Economic Security, except if the report concerns a person who does not have care, custody or control of the minor, the report shall be made to a peace officer only.

### **Reports must be made by:**

- Any physician, physician's assistant, optometrist, dentist, osteopath, chiropractor, podiatrist, behavioral health professional, nurse, psychologist, counselor or social worker who develops the reasonable belief in the course of treating a patient.
- Any peace officer, member of the clergy, priest or Christian Science practitioner.
- The parent, stepparent or guardian of the minor.
- School personnel or domestic violence victim advocate who develops the reasonable belief in the course of their employment.
- Any other person who has responsibility for the care or treatment of the minor.

### **How to make a report:**

- Reports shall be made immediately by telephone or in person and shall be followed by a written report within seventy-two (72) hours.
- **The reports shall contain:**
  - a. The names and addresses of the minor and the minor's parents or the person or persons having custody of the minor, if known.
  - b. The minor's age and the nature and extent of the minor's abuse, child abuse, physical injury or neglect, including any evidence of previous abuse, child abuse, physical injury or neglect.
  - c. Any other information that the person believes might be helpful in establishing the cause of the abuse, child abuse, physical injury or neglect.

- **Child Protective Services**

- Call 1-888-SOS-CHILD
- Follow up with a written report

- **Local Law Enforcement Agency**

- City of Glendale - 623-930-3000
- City of Mesa - 480-644-2211
- City of Peoria - 623-773-8311
- City of Phoenix - 602-262-6151
- City of Scottsdale - 480-312-5000
- City of Tempe - 480-966-6211

- **Listing for other local law enforcements can be found at:**

<http://www.realpolice.net/arizona-police-departments.html>

- **To get further information, call Childhelp 24-Hour National Child Abuse Hotline:**

**1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453)**

**You can also find out more information about our organization by visiting our website at:**

[www.childhelp.org](http://www.childhelp.org)