

Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

Recognizing the Symptoms

Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation

Objectives

Upon review of this module, you will:

- Gain a clear understanding of the types of abuse
- Recognize types of abuse
- Understand your role in reporting abuse
- Become aware of the causes and results of abuse

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Types of Abuse – General Definitions & Signs

Abandonment – Desertion by an individual who assumed responsibility for providing care to a child or elder.

Physical Abuse – Intentional infliction of physical force to a child, spouse/significant other/elderly person that may result in bodily injury, pain or impairment. Signs include:

- Bruises, fading bruises, welts, lacerations or other marks
- Bone fractures
- Lab reports indicating medication overdose or under utilization of prescribed drugs
- Sudden changes in behavior
- Caregiver refusal to allow visitors

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Types of Abuse – General Definitions & Signs

Spiritual Abuse – Including using a person's religious or spiritual beliefs to manipulate, dominate or control them. It may include preventing someone from engaging in spiritual or religious practices, or ridiculing their beliefs.

Stalking – Stalking is harassment of, threatening, another person, especially in a way that haunts the person physically or emotionally in a repetitive and devious manner. Stalking can occur at or near a victim's home, near or in their workplace, in route to another destination, or on the Internet (known as cyber-stalking).

Stalkers employ a number of threatening tactics including:

- Repeated phone calls, sometimes with hang up
- Following, tracking
- Finding the person through public records, online searching or paid investigations

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Types of Abuse – General Definitions & Signs.

Cyber Stalking - Cyber stalking is the use of telecommunication technologies such as internet or email to stalk another person. Cyber stalking can advance to real stalking and to physical violence.

- *Stalking is unpredictable and should always be considered dangerous.*

Sexual Abuse – Consists of any sexual threats, sexually inappropriate remarks, unwanted touching/fondling or other sexual activity that is inflicted on a person without their consent or when the individual is unable to understand, unwilling to consent, threatened or physically forced to engage in sexual activity. Signs include:

- Bruises around the breasts and genital area; unexplained bleeding
- Unexplained venereal diseases/genital infections
- Unexplained pregnancy in a child (usually under the age of 14)

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Types of Abuse – General Definitions & Signs.

Psychological/emotional Abuse – The infliction of anguish, pain or distress upon a child, spouse or other adult, ranging from insults and verbal assaults, threats, humiliation, harassment or intimidation. Signs include:

- Being extremely withdrawn and non-responsive, passive behavior
- Unusual behavior (e.g. sucking, rocking, biting, etc.)

Material & Financial Abuse – The illegal and/or improper use of spouses/elders funds, property or assets. Examples include:

- Withholding money that is necessary to buy food or medical treatment.
- Forging signatures/cashing personal checks
- Misusing or stealing money or possessions
- Improper use of conservator-ship, guardianship or power of attorney

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Active, Passive and Self Neglect

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Active, Passive and Self Neglect

Active neglect occurs when the caregiver/parent does not meet the needs of the child/elder person *intentionally*.

Passive neglect occurs when a parent/caregiver unintentionally fails to meet the elderly person/child's needs, often due to the parent/caregiver's burdens or lack of knowledge of how to appropriately provide care.

Self neglect occurs when an elderly person fails to meet his/her own physical, psychological and/or social needs.

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Active, Passive and Self Neglect

Indicators of Neglect

- Injury that has not been cared for properly
- Dehydration or malnutrition without illness-related cause
- Poor coloration, sunken eyes or cheeks
- Soiled clothing or bed
- Lack of necessities such as food, water, or utilities
- Withdrawn, depression, non-responsiveness
- Isolation, resignation, ambivalence
- Same clothing all of the time
- Fleas, lice on individual
- Unkempt, dirty
- Hair matted, tangled or uncombed

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Child Abuse - General Causes & Risk Factors

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Child Abuse-General Causes & Risk Factors

All of the causes of child abuse are not known, but a significant amount of research points to several factors that put children at risk for abuse. There are many reasons why some people have difficulty meeting the demand of parenthood including:

- Immaturity and unrealistic expectations
- Unmet emotional needs
- The stress of child care
- Economic crisis
- Domestic violence
- Lack of parenting knowledge
- Difficulty in relationships
- Depression or other mental health problems
- Drug or alcohol problems

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Child Abuse - The following MAY signal child abuse

The child:

- Has not received help for physical or medical problems brought to the parents attention
- Has learning problems that cannot be attributed to specific physical or psychological causes
- Lacks adult supervision
- Is overly compliant, passive or withdrawn

The parent:

- Shows little concern for the child
- Denies existence of or blames child for child's problems in school or at home
- Asks teachers or other caretakers to use harsh physical discipline if the child misbehaves
- See the child as entirely bad, worthless or burdensome
- Demands a level of physical or academic performance the child cannot achieve

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Child Abuse - The following MAY signal child abuse

The parent & child:

- Rarely touch or look at each other
- State that they do not like each other

Signs of physical abuse

The child:

- Seems frightened of the parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home
- Shrink at the approach of adults

Possibility of physical abuse when the parent or other adult caregiver:

- Offers conflicting, unconvincing or no explanation for the child's injury
- Describes the child as "evil" or in some other very negative way
- Uses harsh physical discipline with the child
- Has a history of abuse as a child

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Child Abuse

Consider the possibility of neglect when the child:

- Is frequently absent from school
- Begs or steals food or money
- Lacks medical care
- Is consistently dirty or has severe body odor
- Lacks sufficient clothing for the weather
- Abuses alcohol or other drugs
- States there is no one home to provide care

Consider the possibility of neglect when the parent or other adult caregiver:

- Appears to be indifferent to the child
- Seems apathetic, depressed or behaves irrationally or in a bizarre manner
- Is abusing alcohol or other drugs

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Child Abuse

Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when the child:

- Has difficulty walking or sitting
- Suddenly refuses to change for gym or to participate in physical activities
- Reports nightmares or bedwetting
- Experiences a sudden change in appetite
- Demonstrates bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge or behavior
- Reports sexual abuse by a parent or other adult caregiver

Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when the parent or other adult caregiver:

- Is unduly protective of the child or severely limits the child's contact with other children, especially of the opposite sex
- Is jealous or controlling with family members

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Child Abuse – Signs of Emotional Maltreatment

Consider the possibility of emotional maltreatment when the child:

- Shows extreme behavior, such as overly compliant or demanding behavior, extreme passivity or aggression.
- Is either inappropriately adult (parenting other children, for example) or inappropriately infantile (frequently rocking or head banging for example)
- Is delayed in physical or emotional development
- Has attempted suicide

Consider the possibility of emotional maltreatment when the parent or other adult caregiver:

- Is unconcerned about the child and refuses to consider offers of help for the child's problems
- Overtly rejects the child

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Elder Abuse and Domestic Abuse – Warnings & Risk Factors

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Elder Abuse

Who is at Risk?

- Elder abuse can occur anywhere – in the home, in nursing homes or other institutions.
- It affects seniors across all socio-economic groups, cultures, and races. Based on available information, women and older elders are more likely to be victimized.
- Dementia is a significant risk factor. Mental health and substance abuse issues, both abusers and victims, are risk factors. Isolation can contribute to risk.

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Elder Abuse - Types & Warning Signs

Physical Abuse – Slap marks, unexplained bruises, most pressure marks and certain types of burns or blisters such as cigarette burns

Neglect – Pressure ulcers, filth, lack of medical care, malnutrition or dehydration

Emotional Abuse – Withdrawal from normal activities, unexplained changes in alertness or other behavioral changes

Sexual Abuse – Bruises around the breasts or genital area and unexplained sexually transmitted diseases

Financial Abuse/Exploitation – Sudden change in finances and accounts, altered wills and trusts, unusual bank withdrawals, checks written as loans or gifts and loss of property

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Domestic Abuse

What is domestic abuse?

- Willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault and/or other abusive behavior perpetrated by an intimate partner against another
- It affects individuals in every community
- Violence against women is often accompanied by emotionally abusive and controlling behavior; part of a systemic pattern of dominance and control
- Domestic violence results in physical injury, psychological trauma and sometimes death

Types of domestic abuse include:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse or Spiritual abuse
- Verbal or nonverbal abuse
- Stalking or cyber stalking
- Economic abuse or financial abuse

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Domestic Abuse – Risk Factors

There is no specific cause for domestic violence, although women at highest risk include those with male partners who:

- Abuse drugs (especially alcohol)
- Are unemployed
- Have not graduated from high school
- Are or have been in a romantic relationship with the victim

Unmarried individuals in heterosexual relationships tend to be more at risk for becoming victims of intimate partner abuse.

Research shows that those who grew up in a household in which domestic violence took place are more likely to become either perpetrators or victims of intimate partner violence as adults.

Teenagers who suffer from mental illness are also at risk for being in an abusive relationship as young adults. African Americans and Hispanic teens have been found to be at higher risk for being victims of domestic violence. Another risk factor for teen dating/domestic violence is lower grades.

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Interventions

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Intervention – General Considerations

- Intervene immediately when you suspect abuse and neglect.
- The primary concern is protecting the victim.
- If someone is in immediate, life-threatening danger, immediately call the police or 911.
- Witnessed abuse must be documented and investigated accurately. The sooner it is documented the more accurate the information will be.
- The incident should be reported to the legal department and appropriate state and local authorities.

Remember –

- *The first step in the process is to recognize the signs.*
- *When abuse or neglect is suspected, action must be taken. EVERYONE should report an incident.*

Thank you.

