



Diocese of Derby Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults

Definitions, Signs and Symptoms – Information

Introduction

Everyone has the right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.

Abuse and neglect can occur anywhere: in your own home or a public place, while you are in hospital or attending a day centre, or in a college or care home.

You may be living alone or with others. The person causing the harm may be a stranger to you, but more often than not the person is known, and it can be the case that you usually feel safe with them. They are usually in a position of trust and power, such as a health and care professional, relative or neighbour.

Definitions

1. Children and Young People

Anyone under the age of 18 years is legally defined as a child. Therefore throughout this training the terms child and children are used to cover all learners up to the age of 18 years.

2. Adults who are considered as vulnerable

Not everyone over the age of 18 years can be classed as vulnerable. There are a number of different definitions and one is situational vulnerability where an individual can be regarded as vulnerable because of what they experience. This has the advantage that when the individual is no longer experiencing the harm they can come out of being regarded as vulnerable.

3. Safeguarding

The term Safeguarding is sometimes used interchangeably with child or adult protection which can be unhelpful as there is a difference. Child or adult welfare concerns are those concerns likely to affect their ability to reach their potential. Safeguarding is the generic term that encompasses both the protection and welfare concerns. The difference is one of severity. It would be very exceptional for anyone to die as a result of a welfare issue, however death from a protection issue remains a possibility.

4. Child Protection & Adult Protection

Child or adult protection is the term used to describe concerns that are likely to cause significant harm. **'Harm'** means ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development, including, for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another; **'Development'** means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development; **'Health'** means physical or mental health; and **'Ill-treatment'** includes sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment that are not physical. There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm.

Consideration of the severity of ill-treatment may include the degree and the extent of physical harm, the duration and frequency of abuse and neglect, the extent of premeditation, the degree of threat, coercion, sadism, and bizarre or unusual elements in sexual abuse.

Sometimes a single traumatic event may constitute significant harm, e.g. a violent assault, suffocation or poisoning. More often, significant harm is a compilation of significant events, both acute and longstanding, which interrupt, change or damage the person's physical and psychological development. Some children and adults live in families or circumstances where their health and development are neglected. For them, it is the corrosiveness of long term emotional, physical or sexual abuse that causes impairment to the extent of constituting significant harm. In each case, it is necessary to consider any ill-treatment alongside the families' strengths and supports.

To understand and establish significant harm, it is necessary to consider:

- The family context, including protective factors

- The person's development within the context of his or her family and wider social and cultural environment

- Any special needs, such as a medical condition, communication difficulty or disability that may affect the child's development and care within the family

- The nature of harm, in terms of ill-treatment or failure to provide adequate care

- The impact on the person's health and development

- The adequacy of parental or family care

Where there are additional factors that are dynamic in nature the risk of significant harm will increase. Things like drug or alcohol misuse, Domestic Abuse, Mental Health or previous history of abuse will increase the likelihood of harm occurring. Where there is Mental Health, substance misuse and Domestic Violence there is a disproportionate rise in risk and action should be taken to safeguard any children straight away. This is known as the Toxic Trio or Toxic Triangle.

5. Vulnerability

As an adult you're more at risk of abuse at home if:

- you are isolated and don't have much contact with friends, family or neighbours
- you have memory problems or have difficulty communicating
- you become dependent on someone as a carer
- you don't get on with your main carer
- your carer is addicted to drugs or alcohol
- your carer relies on you for a home, or financial and emotional support

'No Secrets' 2000 defines vulnerability as a person "who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness, and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation."

The Care Act 2014 states that adults have a right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances.

Six key principles underpin all adult safeguarding work

- **Empowerment** – People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.
- **Prevention** – It is better to take action before harm occurs.
- **Proportionality** – The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- **Protection** – Support and representation for those in greatest need.
- **Partnership** – Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
- **Accountability** – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

In the Church of England, we have expanded this definition so that we can all be at risk of being vulnerable at different times in our lives. Experiences such as bereavement, redundancy, divorce and separation, mental health episodes and ill

health can all make us susceptible to becoming victims of others. Vulnerable adults however are those who currently meet a legal definition of vulnerability as set out by the government. They include those who have enduring conditions such as learning difficulties and long term mental health conditions. Those who receive services from Adult Social Care are deemed to be automatically vulnerable as are those who are in prison. This definition is due to change in September 2012 to a more situational model of vulnerability. Further guidance will be issued when it is circulated from central Government.

6. What can you do if you think a child is being abused?

The key thing to note is that doing nothing is not acceptable. Your Local Safeguarding Children Board will have local procedures which you should be familiar with and which you can refer at any time. There are also detailed advice for Teachers contained within national guidance “Keeping Children Safe in Education” published in 2015. The NSPCC Childline 08001111 provides advice to professionals as well as having the help line for young people. There will also be local arrangements within your particular place of work which you will need to be aware of. Many places will have a Safeguarding Lead or Designated person to assist you in deciding what needs to happen.

You may find that you alone consider the matter a concern and if so you should still act. Most organisations have a “whistle blowing” policy which you should read and use if necessary.

For further information:

‘When to Suspect Child Maltreatment’ NICE guidelines. Issued July 2009, modified March 2013: <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg89/resources/guidance-when-to-suspect-child-maltreatment-pdf> and **Guidance for the public:** <http://publications.nice.org.uk/when-to-suspect-child-maltreatment-ifp89>

7. What can you do if you think an adult is being abused?

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/pages/vulnerable-people-abuse-safeguarding.aspx> / accessed June 2015

The NHS issued the following guidance which can be accessed via the above link.

I think I am being abused or neglected: what can I do?

Who to talk to if you feel you are being abused or neglected:

- Don't worry about making a fuss – tell someone you trust as soon as possible.
- Speak to friends or care workers, who may have an understanding of the situation and be able to take steps quickly to improve the situation.

- You can also talk to professionals such as your GP or social worker about your concerns, or you could ask to speak to your local council's Adult Safeguarding team or co-ordinator.
- Call [Action on Elder Abuse](#) 0808 808 8141 for advice.
- If you believe a crime is being, or has been, committed – whether it's physical abuse or financial – talk to the police or ask someone you trust to do so on your behalf.

Spotting signs of elder abuse: advice for carers

It's not always easy to spot the symptoms of abuse. Someone being abused may make excuses for why they're bruised, they don't want to go out or talk to people, or they're short of money.

It's important to know the signs of abuse and, where they are identified, gently share your concerns with the person being abused. If you wait, hoping the person will tell you what's been happening to them, you could delay matters and allow the abuse to continue.

Behavioural signs of abuse in an older person include them:

- becoming quiet and withdrawn
- being aggressive or angry for no obvious reason
- looking unkempt, dirty or thinner than usual
- sudden changes in their normal character, such as appearing helpless, depressed or tearful
- physical signs of abuse, such as bruises, wounds, fractures and other untreated injuries
- the same injuries happening more than once
- not wanting to be left on their own or alone with particular people
- being unusually light hearted and insisting there's nothing wrong

Additionally, their home may lack heat, be unusually dirty or untidy, or you might notice things missing.

Other signs to watch out for include a sudden change in their finances, not having as much money as usual to pay for shopping or regular outings, or getting into debt.

Watch out for any official or financial documents that seem unusual, and for documents relating to their finances that suddenly go missing.

If you feel someone you know is showing signs of abuse, talk to them to see if there's anything you can do to help. If they're being abused, they may not want to

talk about it straight away, especially if they've become used to making excuses for their injuries or change in personality.

Don't ignore your concerns, though. That could allow any abuse to carry on or escalate.

I'm worried about someone who may be experiencing abuse or neglect. What should I do?

Start by talking to the person in private if you feel able to do so. Mention some of the things that concern you – for instance, that they've become depressed and withdrawn, have been losing weight, or seem to be short of money.

Let them talk as much as they want to, but be mindful that if they've been abused, they may be reluctant to talk about it because they're afraid of making the situation worse, because they don't want to cause trouble or they might be experiencing coercion by someone or being threatened in some way.

It's best not to promise the person you won't tell anyone what you've heard. If an adult is being abused or neglected, it's important to find help for them and stop the harm. Stay calm while the person is talking, even if you're upset by what you hear, otherwise they may become more upset themselves and stop telling you what's been going on.

It can be very difficult for an abused or neglected person to talk about what's been happening to them. Unless you're concerned for their immediate health and safety and feel it's vital to act straight away, give them time to think about what they'd like to do.

If you're right and the person has been abused or neglected, ask them what they'd like you to do.

Let them know who can help them.

Say you can seek some help on their behalf if they want or if it's difficult for them to do so themselves. It's important to listen to what they say and not to charge into action if this isn't what they want.

Who to contact about elder abuse

If an adult has told you about their situation, you might want to talk to other people who know the person you're worried about to find out if they have similar concerns.

There are also professionals you can contact. You can pass on your concerns to the person's GP and social worker. Local authorities have social workers who deal specifically with cases of abuse and neglect.

Call the person's local council and ask for the adult safeguarding co-ordinator.

You can also speak to the police about the situation. Some forms of abuse are crimes, so the police will be interested. If the person is in danger or needs medical attention, call their GP if known or emergency services if immediate assistance is required.

You can also call the [Action on Elder Abuse](#) helpline, free and in confidence, on 0808 808 8141.

8. Definitions of Abuse and Symptoms

There are four ways in which you may become aware of a concern of abuse to a child or vulnerable adult.

- There are sometimes physical marks;
- you may see behaviours that indicate an abuse history;
- there may be physical symptoms (often associated with neglect);
- or you may receive a disclosure by the victim.

The following signs and symptoms are by no means a definitive list and you may not see all within the situation presented to you. The following definitions of abuse to children are taken from Working Together 2010 and for vulnerable adults from No Secrets 2000. What is always important is that abuse is considered as one of the possible explanations for the signs and symptoms that are presented to you.

9. Definition of Physical Abuse of Children

This can include being assaulted, hit, slapped, pushed, restrained, being denied food or water, or not being helped to go to the bathroom when you need to go. It can also include misuse of your medication.

“Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm can be caused when a parent or carer fabricates or deliberately induces illness in a child.” ‘Working Together’ 2015

Deliberately inducing illness is far more common than most people think. The most usual method of inducing illness is to add increasing levels of salt to the child's diet.

Administering of illegal substances is also becoming more common in our modern society.

Fabricated illness is where a parent or carer subjects the child to spurious medical appointments and even surgical procedures and is often associated with a deep need within the adult for professional attention.

10. Definition of Physical Abuse of Adults

Physical harm includes; hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions. As with children it is possible to induce illness to adults by administering them substances that are harmful, although the frequency is not known to be as common as with children.

11. Symptoms of Physical Harm

- **Physical marks**

These can include cuts and bruising, bite marks, scalds, burns and fractures. The injuries may be caused by the person directly or with the use of an implement. The injuries can also be accidental where the victim is injured in the course of attempting to get away from an attacker. There is often an attempt to conceal physical marks and there are parts of the body where physical injury is less apparent and could go undetected. Often the greater danger lies with internal injury rather than what is visible on the surface. In all instances the injury needs to be considered within the context of the explanation.

- **Accidental v deliberate**

Some injuries have very distinctive characteristics that show they were caused deliberately. The burn from an iron which shows the small steam holes and a clear outline of the iron is unlikely to be accidentally caused. Scald marks that show straight lines across the ankles are more indicative of legs being placed into too hot water than an individual accidentally stepping into too hot water (where the injuries would be less regular in pattern). Cigarette burns are often characterised by a round crater but the comet style tail associated with accidental burning is especially hard to replicate deliberately.

- **Harm from others v self-harm**

Some physical injuries can be self-inflicted as a cry for help and others can be deliberately caused by others as a form of abuse but made to look like self-harm. An example of this is common within girl gang culture where girls are initiated into the gang and receive what have been described as “sergeant stripes” to acknowledge the successful completion of tests designed to elicit loyalty to the gang. Older people also self-harm and this is sometimes the indication that they are experiencing other forms of abuse.

- **Age specific**

There are two aspects where age can play an important role in determining risk. The first is the age of the victim. The very young and the very old are more susceptible to serious injury than older children or younger adults. The force used when hitting an adult (for example), if used on a small toddler or elderly person is more likely to cause them greater injury.

The other aspect of age to be considered is the age of the injury. There is no such thing as a child who bruises easily. There are some medical conditions that can cause bruising and the most familiar of which is Haemophilia; a blood clotting disorder that you and the victim would be well aware of, if they suffered from it.

- **Danger / risk specific**

Some areas of the body are more susceptible to serious injury than others. Children in particular will get knocks and bumps to bony parts of their body through general play. Areas covered by soft tissue are more difficult to injure accidentally. Another example to be wary of is the child smacked around the head which is more likely to cause serious injury than a similar smack across the bottom. The area around the neck is often indicative of abuse in adults and significant internal injury can occur if they have been punched in the abdomen.

- **Analysis of explanation**

Gut reactions should not be the only reason for concern but generally it is a helpful guide to determining whether something is wrong. The person who has been injured accidentally is likely to be happy to tell you how it happened so if you notice a reluctance to share information this could indicate that something is wrong. Similarly, if the explanation is not plausible this could indicate concern although it is worth giving caution to engaging too much detective work in establishing truth. It is the role of the Police, Social Care and the NSPCC to investigate abuse but you need to be reasonably confident that the concerns you have are serious before making a referral to them.

- **Psychological impact / behaviours**

Sometimes it is the behaviour that indicates a person has been harmed on a repeated basis. The person who flinches every time someone bigger, stronger or in a position of power approaches them may indicate that they are used to receiving physical blows and it becomes a natural reaction to self-protect. A very high percentage of bullies have a history of being physically harmed by others. They feel powerless to prevent the abuse and the pent up anger often comes out in the form of retribution against a weaker character person than themselves.

12. Definition of Sexual Abuse of Children

This includes indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, as well as rape. Sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography, witnessing sexual acts, and sexual acts that you didn't agree to or were pressured into consenting to all count as sexual abuse.

Sexual abuse "...involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, *not necessarily involving a high level of violence*, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (*for example, rape or oral sex*) or non-penetrative acts *such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing*. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of *sexual images*, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, *or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet)*. *Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.*" 'Working Together' 2015

There may be a dichotomy or confusion for the younger victim. They may not fully understand what has happened and while they might know it was wrong what occurred may have been pleasurable (especially if they reached orgasm). But abuse may not ever involve any physical contact. The person forced to undress while another films or photographs them can feel degraded and abused as badly as the victim of a sexual assault.

13. Definition of Sexual Abuse of Adults

Sexual abuse of a vulnerable adult includes; rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting.

14. Symptoms of Sexual Harm

- **Few indicative signs**
There may be few physical signs of sexual abuse that you will see. Physical damage and bruising can be sustained but this is usually in areas of the body that will not be on show or visible within the context of your role.
- **Extremes of behaviour – withdrawn ⇔ promiscuous**
There are a whole variety of behaviours that can accompany sexual abuse from the victim withdrawing from the world around them in an attempt to escape from the trauma and hurt through to apparent promiscuity. It has been reported that as many as 90% of female prostitutes say they were the victims of sexual abuse as a child. Some young people get into patterns of behaviour that has little to do with choice. It is important not to make judgements based on presenting behaviours. An example of this is young people caught up in Sexual

exploitation. They are likely to feel particularly powerless and unable to break free from the control exercised by the person exploiting them. This might be equally applicable to substance misuse as well as the sexual activity.

- **Eating and toileting disorders**

Eating and toileting disorders are not exclusively found in young people who have experienced sexual abuse but it is very common amongst victims of abuse that they develop such conditions. Sexual abuse is about an abuse of power and control. Some eating disorders are developed as they replace control back with the individual (e.g. bulimia). Victims often report feeling the need to become less attractive as they wrongly attribute the abuse to sexual attractiveness. This is because to gain compliance the perpetrators of sexual abuse will often say how the victims are attractive. It is often a way in which the abuser justifies their action internally.

- **Self-harm**

Like eating disorders, care must be taken to not assume that all those who self-harm have been sexually assaulted as this is certainly not the case. But there is a link that should be noted. It is again associated with the control of pain which regains the control they have lost as a result of the abusive experience.

- **Very low self esteem**

Victims of sexual abuse often talk about feeling devalued, debased and used to the point of de-humanisation for the sexual gratification of the perpetrator. As a result, they feel less valued and find it extremely hard to feel any form of self-worth. They often feel guilty for the abuse (because they are often told this by the abuser) or they feel responsible for the abuser getting into trouble if they disclose the abuse. Some abusers feel responsible for the protection of younger siblings who may be abused if the abuse to them stops, so they believe they have no option other than to let it continue. This might also have been the threat used by the abuser to gain compliance and retain secrecy.

- **Hearing the voice of the abuser**

Victims often report hearing the abuser controlling their lives actions and decisions even when not present. A characteristic of sexual abuse is that it is rarely an isolated incident and often develops a ritualised pattern. The victim finds themselves knowing when the abuse is likely and what will happen to them if they are unavailable at the time when the abuse usually occurs.

- **Voyeurism**

Many offenders will attempt to suggest that on-one is hurt by their looking at pornographic images or so long as they don't touch. However the perpetrators often ignore the abused victim needed to produce the image or the emotional impact on the person being watched.

15. Definition of Neglect of Children

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. It may also occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve the parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter
- Protect the child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment'

'Working Together' 2015

This is the only section where action can be taken before a child is born. When a pregnant woman takes illegal substances there is a good chance that her unborn baby could be affected. There are examples of babies born of mothers who are high dependency drug users but whose child is unaffected. However, when the drug is taken intravenously the drug will pass over the placenta and into the baby. In this situation there is a requirement to refer the unborn baby as soon as possible.

16. Definition of Neglect and Acts of Omission of Adults

Neglect is also a form of abuse. Neglect includes not being provided with enough food or the right kind of food, or not being taken proper care of. Leaving you without help to wash or change dirty or wet clothes, not getting you to a doctor when you need one, or not making sure you have the right medicines all count as neglect.

The definition of neglect of vulnerable adults includes; ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

17. Symptoms of Neglectful Harm

- **Poor hygiene – dirty and smelly**
Neglect is one of the hardest forms of abuse to recognise partly because, like emotional abuse it can be insidious and prolonged over many years. There are aspects of neglect that are associated with adolescent development; for example, poor hygiene. Most teenagers are reluctant to wash and at times have personal hygiene issues but there is a difference between this and the level of neglect suffered in abuse. Neglected children have ingrained dirt and they have an aroma that is pervasive.

Adults who are neglected can include failure to respond to medical needs such as bed sores. It can be deprivation of food or association so they feel alone or abandoned.

- **Standing out from peers**

Neglected people often stand out from their peers. This is different from non-conformist behaviours which tend to be associated with like-minded peers. The neglected young person has few if any friends and often cannot participate in conversation or activities with peers as they are not experiencing the same life experiences. Neglected adults are lonely and socially isolated.

- **Overweight, thin, pale or tired and listless**

Overweight in humans can have a variety of causes but one is through poor diet and neglect. This is different from comfort eating which is often a response to emotional distress. Being pale tired and lacking in energy may be the result of a variety of medical conditions such as anaemia or severe viral infections but it can also be as a result of poor diet and malnourishment. It is important to distinguish between those who are being neglected and those who are ill. One of the most helpful ways is to look for links between the different symptoms and situations where there are several indicators of possible abuse.

- **Depressed and anxious**

This is very common but not exclusive amongst adults who are neglected. The dawning awareness that their life experiences are different from those others around them, they can feel depressed at the helplessness of their situation and powerless to effect any changes.

18. Definition of Emotional Abuse of Children

“Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child in which they feel unloved, ridiculed, belittled or devalued. It can also involve having unrealistic expectations of the child or not allowing them to express their views. It may involve them seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of others. It may involve bullying (including cyberbullying) causing the child to feel frightened or in danger”. ‘Working Together’ 2015

19. Definition of Psychological Abuse of Adults

This includes someone emotionally abusing you or threatening to hurt or abandon you, stopping you from seeing people, and humiliating, blaming, controlling, intimidating or harassing you. It also includes verbal abuse, cyber bullying and isolation, or an unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or support networks.

The definition of Psychological abuse which best equates to the emotional abuse in children includes; emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks are all forms of psychological harm to adults.

20. Symptoms of Emotional Harm

- **Developmental immaturity?**

There are conditions that can cause developmental delayed. It is important to be aware of these and to include abuse as one of the possible explanations. Developmental immaturity can be associated with a learning difficulty or when individuals struggle with adolescence. Look for signs of regression where the person appears less mature than they were previously. Regression to earlier stages of development may be an attempt to go back to a period before the abuse began.

- **What is 'normal' for this person?**

Because there can be a great range across the population it is important to compare like with like. Therefore, the person who has a degree of developmental immaturity, associated with their learning difficulties, can still stand out as being less mature than their peers or have regressed in comparison to their peers.

- **Social skills**

In a similar way people may have poor social skills for a variety of reasons, one of which might be that they are suffering Emotional Abuse. Once again compare them with their cohort of peers and be especially mindful when a person regresses to a younger stage in their development. Look also at links between different symptoms.

- **Aspects of parenting / caring**

Another way you might identify the person is suffering emotionally might be through aspects of parenting, or the care that given or received. The young parent, who struggles to show appropriate emotional nurturing to their child, may have not experienced a satisfactory level of care themselves. You may also see the response to the person from their parent or carer which suggests that they are not valued or that expectations are unrealistic.

- **Life experiences**

Emotional Abuse can be indicated from the description of what is experienced at home. The child may be caring for younger siblings, or the adult prevented from going out to visit friends. At its extreme this can be emotionally abusive if the person is not allowed to freely associate alongside their peers. Some cultures have different expectations with respect to gender or lifestyle both of which will need to be taken into account before determining whether it is abuse.

The key is to consider the effects upon the person and their view of it. While many people who suffer from emotional abuse may at first consider that their experiences are normal they often retain a feeling or awareness that what they are enduring is unfair.

- **Psychological effects**

People who experience emotional harm for long periods often develop a different way of looking at the world around them. They may have an inability to behave or behave in an 'odd' way because of the messages they have heard throughout their lives. Homophobia, sexism, and racism are just a few of the situations that can lead to serious psychological harm.

- **Behaviour / inappropriate reactions**

Closely associated with the psychological effects is the behavioural impact of abuse. The individual who over-reacts to criticism could be indicating that they are fearful of reactions at home, or when they do not react to praise, they may be doing so because they are not accustomed to it.

21. Cyberbullying and the dangers of IT

One of the most difficult forms of harm to children and adults can stem from the inappropriate use of or access to information technology. The greatest threat is to the person's emotional wellbeing but it can also adversely affect their physical safety at its most extreme. Because it is still a relatively new phenomenon those working with the effects of this form of abuse are often playing catch up to what is being experienced. The perpetrators of this form of abuse may be young people who, while being capable of the use of technology, are often ignorant of its dangers or impact. As technology advances new forms of harm and dangers also emerge to challenge us and pose potential risk to those who might be susceptible to harm. It is our responsibility to be alert to such dangers and to identify those who might be at risk from this type of abuse.

There many benefits arising from the use of new information technology devices and the benefits for those who have a communication difficulty are also well known. The following guidance explores some of the dangers which children and vulnerable adults might experience but in no way suggests that information technology, if used appropriately, cannot have great benefits.

- **Social Networking Sites**

Social networking sites like 'Facebook' and 'Bebo' are often the preferred method for young people to communicate and keep in touch. But it is also fraught with dangers for the young person who is not familiar with its dangers. These type of sites have been linked to the proliferation of child pornography as it solved one of the main difficulties for the pornography industry; how to make a child engaging in sexual activity look like they are enjoying the experience? Photos can be airbrushed onto abusive pictures to make new images and suggesting that the victim is both compliant and enjoying the abuse.

The Child Exploitation Online Protection (CEOP) branch of the National Crime Unit has suggested that professionals working with children should consider carefully whether they have Face Book accounts for their own protection. Organisations who offer this facility also need to be mindful of the reputational risk of having so open a forum for posting the views of others. The other difficulty is that older users often have very poor security settings and are unaware of the dangers of hacking. If security settings are insufficiently tight or rarely checked, images can easily be lifted from social network sites and used for other purposes.

In addition to pornography, social network sites run the dangers of peer pressure and instant bullying. There is considerable pressure for young people to have the same amount of friends as their peers. Where they are struggling to do this, their discernment can often reduce as they accept a quantity of friends as opposed to quality. Those who prey on vulnerable people will often search for those who have few friends and minimal security settings as an indicator of potential victims.

In the UK there have been cases of professionals hounded from their jobs due to the written attacks posted on social network sites. Some of these victims have not had accounts themselves and even those that did, felt that they had little or no right of reply. The global nature of the internet means that the Police often have few powers to investigate offensive posts originating from foreign lands. The consequences of such attacks on one's personality have been considerable including some feeling the only way out was to take their own lives. This is bullying at its most extreme and often the most difficult to counteract as it is done in private.

- **Chat Rooms**

Those who use chat rooms are, more often than not, individuals who have fewer social networks than those who don't use that medium. Chat rooms can provide people with an opportunity to meet others but the danger is in assuming that others involved in the chat are being honest about who they are or what they are saying. Convicted offenders admit to using aliases or providing false information in order to groom potential victims. Children appear to be more susceptible to this form of grooming, possibly because they are less discerning about the truthfulness of others, assuming that others would not lie about who they are or how old they are etc.

Some adults have been known to deliberately pretend to be someone else to see how long they can maintain pretence before being found out. This has significant implications for those who are more vulnerable. There have been well reported instances of individuals being subjected to serious abuse and murder following agreeing to meet up with someone whom they have only met through a chat room.

- **Mobile Phones – messaging and photos**

Most young people have access to mobile phones and would argue that they probably could not live without them. They are vital in enabling fast and effective communications but also have a fashion status and this can lead to additional difficulties. The most common form of theft from young people is now their mobile phone and not having the latest piece of technological kit can be the cause of ridicule and teasing, or worse. Additionally, most phones now have cameras built into them and there have been numerous instances of young people taking still or video footage of physical assaults. This is commonly known as “Happy Slapping”. With internet access available on many phones, parental controls for the access to inappropriate adult sites are less available. There have been incidents of individuals downloading or taking inappropriate images of themselves or others and sharing them with friends without the consent or agreement of the person in the picture.

Phones can also be used to send messages to numerous recipients with little opportunity for redress if the information is factually incorrect.

- **Web Cams**

Web cams and skype provide for conversations across the internet but the images remain in digital format and are therefore storable and distributable if so desired. A number of people have agreed to undress or perform sexual acts in front of a web cam for the entertainment or pleasure of a partner within an established relationship only to find it widely distributed when the relationship ends. There is a naivety and perhaps even an innocence amongst the young that reduces their self-protection measures and safeguards that might normally be in place. The young person thinks that it is safe because what they are doing is often within their own home or in the privacy of their bedroom.

- **Downloading**

Downloading of pornographic images of children is an offence and storing them or sharing them can result in additional more serious offences being committed.

Downloading is one of the most common forms of offending by young people. Pornographic images are categorized into five levels of indecency from level 1 (the least offensive, usually of children in provocative poses), through level 2 (involving nakedness), level 3 (in which the child is participating in sexual acts, excluding penetrative acts), level 4 (involving penetrative acts including full vaginal or anal intercourse), to level 5 (including the most depraved forms of abuse such as bestiality). Many offenders do not see this type of offence with the same seriousness as contact sexual abuse. They often suggested that they have not harmed a child by looking at images, ignoring the fact that a child has been abused in order to produce the image.

Other offenders suggest that by looking they are preventing actual abuse of a child. While there is no causal link between voyeurism and contact abuse, like

other forms of addictive behaviour, when the individual first starts looking, they are rewarded by experiencing satisfaction quickly. As time goes on the response reduces and a greater quantity or level of explicit detail is needed to achieve the same level of satisfaction. It is therefore not surprising that over time the level of images increases or offenders go on to commit contact offences.

The risk that an offender poses needs to be assessed especially where the offender is a child too. For example, the 15yrs old looking at images of similar age children may well be considered less of a risk than the 15yrs old whose interest is with pre-pubescent children or infants.

22. Definition of Discriminatory Abuse of Adults

The definition of discriminatory abuse only applies to vulnerable adults and can include the following; racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

23. Symptoms of Discriminatory Harm to Adults

This includes some forms of harassment, slurs or similar unfair treatment relating to race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation, or religion.

- **Direct Allegations**

One way that you might become aware of discriminatory abuse is through direct disclosure. Individuals may describe comments that they have received or the information may come indirectly via a third party. Discrimination on the grounds of disability may also be contrary to the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 especially if it is determined that the institution, through its procedures, is acting in a discriminatory fashion.

- **Life experiences**

Like other forms of emotional harm discriminatory abuse may manifest itself through observation or recounting of life experiences. The key factor is one of equality of opportunity. People will have a variety of differing life experiences but if an individual is being denied access to those opportunities because of their vulnerability then that could represent an abuse scenario.

- **Psychological effects**

The psychological effects of discriminatory abuse are similar to those of other forms of emotional harm; feeling depressed, having low self-esteem and feelings of low worth. Research suggests that where there is a racist aspect to the abuse the therapeutic interventions have to address the racism in a different way, as the attack is not only against the individual but against their community, culture or traditions too.

24. Definition of Financial or Material Abuse of Adults

This could be someone stealing money or other valuables from you, or it might be someone who is appointed to look after your money on your behalf using the money inappropriately or coercing you into spending it in a way you are not happy with. Internet scams and doorstep crime are also common forms of financial abuse.

The definition of financial or material abuse includes; theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

25. Symptoms of Financial or Material Abuse of Adults

- **Direct Allegations**

One way that you might become aware of financial or material abuse is through direct disclosure. Individuals may allege targeted incidents of theft and incidents of extortion or the information may come indirectly via a third party. This form of abuse is effectively another form of bullying and the victim may have been threatened regarding the consequences if the matter is reported. They may have limited ability and not be aware that money or items are going missing. They may have been lied to in terms of the perpetrator convincing the victim that the money or item was given to them willingly but the victim “must have forgotten”.

- **Poverty**

Like any form of theft, the immediate impact may be the loss of money or property which can create anything from inconvenience to considerable deprivation, depending upon what has been taken. The longer the abuse carries on the greater the likelihood that it will impact upon the individual’s ability to cope financially. Like other forms of extortion, the perpetrators can also become greedy and demand increasing amounts in the value of the items or cash demanded.

- **Psychological**

If the abuse is prolonged the impact can cause the victim to have low self-esteem, anxiety and depression. There have been cases of victims self-harming and even committing suicide. Victims are often helped when they accept they are in no way to blame and that the responsibility lies with the perpetrator.

- **Emotional harm**

Victims of this form of abuse often start out isolated or are made more isolated by the experience of the abuse. This can be self-fulfilling in that they are more likely to be easy targets for further abuse if they have little or no informal support networks around them. Where the vulnerable adult is supported by their peers

the perpetrator is less likely to abuse, especially if they risk detection by a third party.

26. Definition of Modern Slavery

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 includes the abuse of adults and children. Modern Slavery is a term used to encapsulate both offences in the Modern Slavery Act: slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour; and human trafficking, including sexual exploitation.

Slavery and Servitude: Slavery which is the status or condition of a person over whom all or any of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised. Servitude is the obligation to provide services that is imposed by the use of coercion and includes the obligation for a 'serf' to live on another person's property and the impossibility of changing his or her condition.

Forced or compulsory labour: is defined as coercion, either direct threats of violence or more subtle forms of compulsion.

Human Trafficking: An offence of human trafficking requires that a person arranges or facilitates the travel of another person with a view to that person being exploited.

27 Signs and Symptoms of Modern Slavery

- The key element of slavery is the behaviour on the part of the offender as if he/she did own the person, which deprives the victim of their freedom.
- The key elements are that work or service is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the person has not offered him/herself voluntarily.
- Trafficking can be committed even where the victim consents to the travel. This reflects the fact that a victim may be deceived by the promise of a better life or job or may be a child who is influenced to travel by an adult. In addition, the exploitation of the potential victim does not need to have taken place for the offence to be committed. It means that the arranging or facilitating of the movement of the individual was with a view to exploiting them for sexual exploitation or non-sexual exploitation. The trafficking may involve the movement across international, national or County borders but could equally include the movement of people within a town/city or even within a multi-occupancy dwelling.

Further information can be obtained from the following website:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/30/section/3/enacted>

28. Spiritual Abuse

Protecting All God's Children has a helpful, but brief definition of what constitutes Spiritual Abuse. Unlike other forms of abuse there are no specific laws relating to type of harm but there is likely to be an associated Emotional harm and it may be a way of

grooming a potential victim into some other form of abuse, in its use of power. Spiritual abuse includes the misuse of authority of leadership or penitential discipline, oppressive teaching or intrusive healing and deliverance ministries. If you have concerns relating to Spiritual Abuse, you should seek specialist advice from the Diocese before attempting to address it within the parish. Diocese will have an identified person to provide advice and guidance on such concerns.

29. Domestic Abuse

This is typically an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse by someone who is, or has been, an intimate partner or family member. The effects of living in a Domestic Violence household can last for many years after the abuse has come to an end. Some studies have shown that the way abusers relate to their victims is very similar to that experienced in hostage situations. The impact on the victims will depend upon the length and severity of the abuse experienced. The damage to children witnessing or being aware of threats and actual violence to others can be tremendous and action must always be taken to refer situations where you suspect there to be domestic abuse.

30. Non-Recent (Historical) Allegations

The recommendations from the Chichester enquiry has sharpened the focus on needing to respond to non-recent or historic concerns in exactly the same way as one might respond to current abuse allegations. Concerns are sometimes raised about the accuracy of historical but the research shows that attributing false memories to an individual's personal memory is rare and seldom where it relates to a false memory suggesting that it directly relates to them (Elizabeth Bowman 1996). While some scepticism needs to be held in regard of early childhood memories, the work of Daniel Offer in 2000 showed that traumatic events dramatically increase the child's ability to recall an event many years later. There are a number of longitudinal studies into the validity of both child and adult allegations of abuse and overall only 1 in 10 allegations are found to be false. Some allegations are found to be unsubstantiated or a misunderstanding (albeit believed to be of genuine intent). Less than 0.02% of allegations are considered as malicious where the intent in making the allegation is to get the alleged perpetrator into trouble.

Occasionally, allegations are made by a third party and the alleged victim feels under pressure to go along with the suggested claim. In 1991 Green's research amongst custody disputes going through UK courts found that 35% of alleged child abuse cases were considered to be false but they rarely originated from the child. More often it was the parent who made the allegation in order to strengthen their custody claim and out of loyalty to that parent, the child went along with the story.

31. Keeping everyone safe

Where someone is accused of behaviour that is likely to cause a potential risk to others within the church, the risk will need to be managed. The church may draw upon existing assessments of risk or on occasion commission an assessment to be completed. The role of the diocese is to formulate an effective management plan to help manage the identified risk. It is only in working together with parishes that we will be able to achieve effective reduction of this potential risk. Where statutory agencies are involved the church has a legal duty to cooperate with them to ensure that an identified risk is managed and where possible reduced, so that potential victims within our parish communities are as safe as we can make them.

Julian Hodgson
Safeguarding Adviser
Diocese of Derby
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