

Section F

Safeguarding Children - an Introduction to Child Protection

Four Categories of Abuse

Physical Abuse -

- Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.
- Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Neglect -

- Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child basic physical a/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.
- Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment.
- Failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-givers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to , a child's basic emotional needs.

Emotional Abuse -

- Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent 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 include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or "making fun" of what they say or how they communicate.
- It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.
- It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another.
- It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.
- Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

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 (e.g. rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative act such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing.

- They may also 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, 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.

What we already know

- Child abuse can take place in the home, at school or in any setting where children spend their time.
- Children can be abused regardless of their age, gender, culture, disability, racial origin or sexual identity.
- Children with special needs are especially vulnerable and more likely to be abused.
- In almost all cases the abuser is someone known and often trusted by the child.
- 1 or 2 children die each week as a result of abuse and neglect. (*1)
- At least half of the abuse goes undisclosed at the time it occurs - sometimes over lengthy periods of time.
- 2 - 3% of children have one or both parents with a a serious drug problem. (*2)
- 1 in 11 children has a parent who drinks too much. (*3)
- In 90% of domestic violence incidents children are in the same room. (*4)
- Most of the abuse children now suffer is preventable.

(Sources of information *1-NSPCC, *2-Hidden Harm 2003, *3-Bottling it Up 2006, *4-Home Office Stats.)

Instructors' responsibilities in child protection.

“Keeping children safe is everyone’s responsibility” Ed Balls May 2009

The Association must:

- Provide a safe environment for children and young people in their care.
- Be able to identify those who are suffering, or likely to suffer, abuse or neglect.
- Take appropriate action to make sure those children and young people are safe.
- Refer concerns and play their part in multi-agency work to protect them.

If you have any concerns about a student who may be being abused you must record your concern and pass it on to the designated person for child protection without delay. It is always better to say something than say nothing at all.

What to do if a child tells you they are a victim of abuse.

- It is important that you listen and appear to have time.
- Stay calm and show that you are taking this seriously
- You do not have to make any decision as to whether or not the child is telling the truth.
- You should reassure the child and tell him/her that she/he has done the right thing in telling you, that it is not his/her fault and that it has happened to other children.
- Never ask leading or closed questions.
- Never judge or condemn the alleged abuser.
- Explain the information will have to be passed on.
- Do not promise to keep the abuse secret or make any other promise you cannot keep.
- If a child says that they will only tell you if you promise not to pass the information on explain that this is not possible, even if this means they refuse to say anything more.

Safer working practices

Basic Principles

- Welfare of the child is paramount.
- All instructors are responsible for their own actions and behaviour.
- Avoid conduct which could lead to questions being asked about motivation and intention.
- Work, and be seen to work in an open and transparent way.
- Discuss and/or take advice promptly about concerns.
- All Instructors have a duty to keep children safe and protect them from physical and emotional harm.
- All staff need to accept that their role involves responsibility and trust.
- Safeguard young people and reduce the risk of false allegations.
- Instructors should ensure there is a safe training environment for their students.