

What should I do if I'm being abused or scared that I will be abused?

If you are in immediate danger of being hurt or abused call the police on 000 and if you can, go to a secure place like to a trusted family friend, your school, a police station, or a medical centre.

If you have been hurt you should go to a doctor or hospital, so they can make sure you are OK.

TELL SOMEONE

If you are being abused you should talk to an adult you trust, a close friend, your doctor or teacher.

They may be required by law to report what is happening to the authorities, but the person who hurt you will not be told who reported it. We have provided you with a list of important contacts to call at the end of this fact sheet if you need to talk to someone else.

What to do if you suspect a child is being abused?

If you suspect a young person is at risk of being neglected or physically, sexually or emotionally abused, you should report it to Community Services. You do not have to confirm your suspicions or provide proof before making a report.

Who to call if you are being abused or think a child has been or is being abused.

KIDS HELPLINE

If you need to speak to a counsellor, call **1800 55 1800**, (24/7). If you can't get to a phone, try www.kidshelp.com.au

CHILD PROTECTION HELPLINE

(to report suspected child abuse or neglect)
Phone: **132 111** (24/7).

TTY users phone **1800 212 936**

Youthline **(02) 9633 366** (24/7)

Lifeline **131 114** (24/7)

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION SERVICE

National Telephone Support Line
1800 688 009

9am - 5pm Monday to Friday

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LINE

1800 656 463 (24/7)

Child Abuse

Working Together To Build A Safer Community



NSW Police Force

What is Child Abuse?

The different forms of child abuse are neglect, sexual, physical and emotional abuse.

Neglect

Child neglect is the failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child with the basic things needed for his or her proper growth, development and safety, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical and dental care and proper supervision.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a person uses their authority, either by using force or not, to get a child to participate in activities that are for the sexual gratification of the person in authority. A sibling or older child can also have power over a younger or more dependent child and get them to participate in sexual acts.

Children can be bribed or threatened physically and psychologically to make them take part in sexual activity.

Child sexual abuse involves a wide range of sexual activities, it may include:

- ✦ fondling of the child's backside, breasts, or penis/vagina (or getting the child to fondle the perpetrator's backside, breasts, or penis/vagina);
- ✦ masturbation (with the child watching or participating); oral sex (either fellatio or cunnilingus);
- ✦ vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger, or any other object;

- ✦ voyeurism - watching the child or exhibitionism – showing the child their bodies.
- ✦ sending pornography (dirty pictures) to child by text messages or email or making a child watch pornography (dirty movies)
- ✦ using the child for the purposes of pornography or prostitution.

What are the signs of sexual abuse?

- ✦ moodiness, depression, anxiety and clinginess
- ✦ nightmares and bedwetting
- ✦ loss of interest in friends, school or sport
- ✦ sexual play or talk that is too old for the child
- ✦ sudden fear of an adult that he/she normally feels comfortable with
- ✦ violent behaviour, lying and stealing
- ✦ unexplained bruises, scratches, pain and bleeding in the genital/private area.

Who are the offenders?

- ✦ Most offenders are **people close to the child** like relatives, family friends or other people like a coach or a neighbour. It is hardly ever a stranger.

CHILD ABUSE IS A CRIME.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is a non-accidental injury or patterns of injuries to a child caused by a parent, caregiver or any other person.

It includes injuries that are caused by excessive discipline, severe beatings or shakings, cigarette burns and attempted strangulation. Injuries include bruising, lacerations or welts, burns, fractures or dislocation of joints.

Hitting a child around the head or neck and/or using a stick, belt or other object to discipline or punish a child is a CRIME.

Psychological Abuse or Harm

Serious psychological harm can happen when the behaviour of their parent or caregiver damages the confidence and self esteem of the child or young person, resulting in serious emotional withdrawal or trauma.

Although it is possible for 'one-off' incidents to cause serious harm, in general it is the frequency and duration of the parent's or carer's behaviour that causes the psychological damage to the child.

This can include a range of behaviours such as excessive criticism, withholding affection, **exposure to domestic violence**, intimidation or threatening behaviour.

