

## *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 you trust*

If you are being abused you should talk to an adult you trust, a close friend, your doctor or teacher or the police. They may be required by law to report what is happening to other authorities, but the person who hurt you will not be told where the information come from. We have given 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 that a child has been abused and a criminal offence has been committed you should report it to the police as soon as possible.

If you think that a child is being abused; or a criminal offence is happening and a young person is at immediate risk of harm you should contact triple zero 000 immediately.

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

### **NSW Police Force**

Call your local Police Station;

**Crimestoppers on 1800 333000;**

**or in the case of an emergency dial 000**

### **Child Protection Helpline**

(to report suspected child abuse or neglect)

**Phone: 132 111 (24/7) or  
1800 212 936 (TTY)**

### **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](http://www.kidshelp.com.au)**

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

### **Child Abuse Prevention Service (CAPS)NSW**

**Phone: 132111**

### **Domestic Violence Line**

**1800 656 463 (24/7)**



NSW Police Force

# Child Abuse

Working Together to Build  
a Safer Community



## What is Child Abuse?

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

### Neglect

Child neglect is when a parent or caregiver fails to give a child 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

Child sexual assault is any sexual act or sexual threat forced on a child or young person by an adult, adolescent or older child who use their authority or power to involve a child in any sexual activity.

Child sexual abuse involves a wide range of sexual activities, such as:

- fondling the child's backside, breasts, or penis/vagina or getting the child to fondle the offender's backside, breasts, or penis/vagina.
- masturbation (with the child watching or participating).
- oral sex.
- vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger, or any other object.
- sending pornography (dirty pictures) to a child by text messages or email or making a child watch pornography (dirty movies).
- using the child for the purposes of pornography or prostitution.

## Who are the offenders?

Most offenders are people who the child knows and trusts, like relatives, family friends or other people like a coach or a neighbour or elders.

**The abuser is hardly ever a stranger.**

## What are the signs of sexual abuse?

- moodiness, unhappiness, nervousness, sadness, depression, anxiety and clinginess.
- nightmares and bedwetting.
- loss of interest in friends, school, food 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.

## How sexual assault happens

Offenders are very clever at tricking and manipulating children. They use a range of ways including force, threats, bribes and lies to trick children into the sexual abuse and to get the children to remain silent about it. They may also try to gain the trust and friendship of parents or carers to get to children.

**CHILD ABUSE IS A CRIME.**

**Sexual assault is never the child's or young person's fault**

## Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is a deliberate injury or patterns of injuries (e.g. hand print bruise) to a child caused by a parent, caregiver or any other person.

It includes injuries that are caused by extreme discipline, severe beatings or shaking, cigarette burns and attempted strangulation and includes bruising, cuts, wounds 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/mental harm can happen when the actions of their parent or caregiver damages the confidence, self-respect and self-esteem of the child or young person, resulting in serious emotional withdrawal or trauma.

Although it is possible that 'one-off' incidents could cause serious harm, in general it is the regularity and length of the parent's or carer's behaviour that causes the psychological/mental 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.

