

Appendix 5: Definitions, Signs, Indicators of Abuse & How To Respond

1. Physical Abuse
2. Emotional Abuse
3. Sexual Abuse
4. Neglect

1. Physical Abuse

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

Some of the possible indicators could include: *Children with frequent injuries, injury such as bruising, bite marks, burns and scalds, fractures but also by aggressive behaviour. It may also be an indicator of concern where a parent or carer gives an explanation inconsistent with the injury or gives several different explanations for the injury.*

2. Emotional Abuse

The persistent emotional maltreatment of an individual such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the individual's emotional development. It may involve conveying to someone 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 individual 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 a child or adult's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the individual participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing an individual frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of an individual. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of an individual, although it may occur alone.

Some of the possible indicators could include: *Developmental delay, attachment issues, aggressive behaviour, appeasing behaviour, watchfulness or stillness, low self-esteem, withdrawn or loner behaviour, or having difficulty in forming relationships. Emotional abuse may be difficult to recognise as signs are usually behavioural rather than physical. Signs of emotional abuse may be associated or similar to other forms of abuse so presence of emotional abuse may indicate other abuse is prevalent as well.*

Sexual Abuse

Involves forcing or enticing someone of any age 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 also 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.

Some of the possible indicators could include: *Inappropriate sexualised conduct, age inappropriate sexualised play or conversation, sexually harmful behaviour – contact or non-contact, self-harm, eating disorders, inappropriate or excessive masturbation, anxiousness or unwillingness to remove clothes – sports/ PE etc., pain or itching in genital area, blood on underclothes, bruising in genital region and/or inner thighs etc.*

Neglect

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. 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, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Some of the possible indicators could include: Being constantly hungry; constantly tired; have a poor state of clothing; be emaciated; have untreated medical problems; be frequently late or have poor or non-attendance at school; have low self-esteem; display neurotic behaviour and/or have poor social relationships, have poor personal hygiene. A neglected child may also be apathetic, fail to thrive, or be left with or in the care of adults under the influence of alcohol or drug misuse.

Specific Instances of Abuse

Child on Child Instances of Abuse

All our staff have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Child on Child abuse is the highest incidence of abuse amongst children. This can manifest itself as:

- bullying (including cyberbullying);
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- sexual violence and sexual harassment;
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery)
- initiation, hazing-type violence and rituals
- child on child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment (KCSIE 2025 Part Five)

All our staff will **always act in the 'best interest of the child'**. In an instance of child on child abuse, support will be given to both the victim and the perpetrator, including external specialist support where required. All incidents will be reported in accordance with CMFOT's policies and procedures.

Other Instances of Abuse

Safeguarding intervention can also be required in a range of potential issues such as:

- Prejudice based bullying: Racism, Disabilities, Sexual Orientation, and Gender Identity
- Extremist behaviour and or radicalisation (Prevent)
- Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking
- Substance Misuse
- Issues which may be specific to a local area or population, for example gang activity and youth violence
- Particular issues affecting children including domestic violence, female genital mutilation and honour based violence and forced marriage.