



DEFINITIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse refers to acts in which a person with power or authority over a child (female or male) uses the child for sexual gratification. Acts of sexual abuse may be perpetrated by an adult, an adolescent or an older child.

Sexual abuse spans a range of contact and non-contact behaviours.

Non-contact behaviours include:

- Making sexual comments directly, in letters, by telephone, text messages or email
- Voyeurism
- Exposing a child to pornography
- The perpetrator exposing parts of their body, or the child's body
- Exploiting a child through prostitution or pornography.

Contact behaviours include a wide range of sexual activities including:

- Fondling a child's genitals, or getting a child to fondle the perpetrator's genitals
- Masturbation
- Oral sex
- Vaginal and/or anal penetration by a penis, finger or other object
- Rubbing the perpetrator's genitals against the child's body
- Intimate kissing
- Fondling of breasts.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse refers to a situation in which a child's caregiver or parent repeatedly rejects or threatens the child. It is also referred to as psychological abuse.

This may involve name-calling, putdowns, and inappropriate symbolic acts or continual coldness from the caregiver or parent, to the extent that is significantly damages the child's physical, intellectual or emotional well being and development.

It is a pattern of abuse, not a single incident.

It includes rejecting, ignoring, humiliating, terrorising, corrupting, verbal abuse and belittlement.

Witnessing family violence is also a form of emotional/psychological abuse. In some states and territories it is defined by legislation as a category of abuse in its own right.



Physical abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a child or young person is subjected to any non accidental physically aggressive act.

The injury may be inflicted intentionally or may be the inadvertent result of physical punishment, or the aggressive treatment of a child.

Physically abusive behaviours include: shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning and kicking.

Neglect

Neglect refers to a situation in which a child's parent or caregiver fails to provide the child with the basic necessities of life.

It includes the failure to provide:

- adequate food
- clothing
- shelter
- medical attention or supervision

to the extent that the child's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed.