

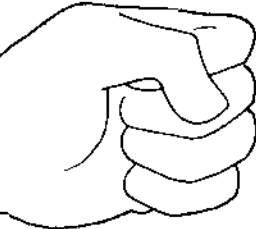
**ABOUT
CHILD ABUSE**

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

It's any mistreatment or neglect of a child that results in harm or injury. Child abuse can include:

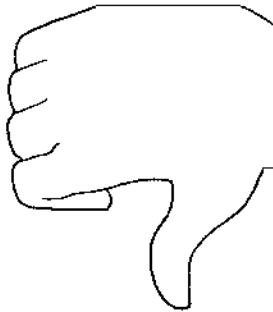
PHYSICAL ABUSE

– for example, purposely injuring a child by hitting, biting, shaking, kicking, burning or throwing objects



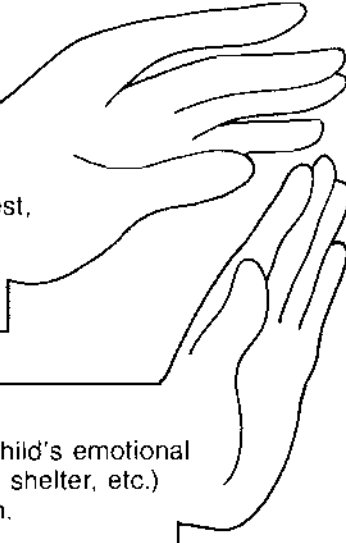
EMOTIONAL ABUSE

– for example, crushing a child's spirit with verbal attacks, threats or humiliation



SEXUAL ABUSE

– for example, sexual contact with a child (incest, inappropriate touching, etc.); using a child for sexual films, pictures or prostitution; obscene language; or exposure not involving contact



NEGLECT

– for example, willfully failing to provide for a child's emotional (love, attention, etc.) or physical (food, clothing, shelter, etc.) needs; failing to offer guidance and supervision.

Nearly 2 million children suffer from child abuse each year.



WHY SHOULD I LEARN ABOUT IT?

Because child abuse hurts children -- and everyone else, too.

CHILDREN SUFFER

physical and emotional harm that can last a lifetime.



OUR SOCIETY SUFFERS, TOO

– the cost in ruined lives and broken families can't be measured.

BUT, THERE'S A LOT YOU CAN DO

to help prevent child abuse, and to limit the damage suffered by children and families

Learn more...

UNDERSTANDING PEOPLE WHO ABUSE CHILDREN

is important to understanding child abuse.

THERE IS NO "TYPICAL" CHILD ABUSER

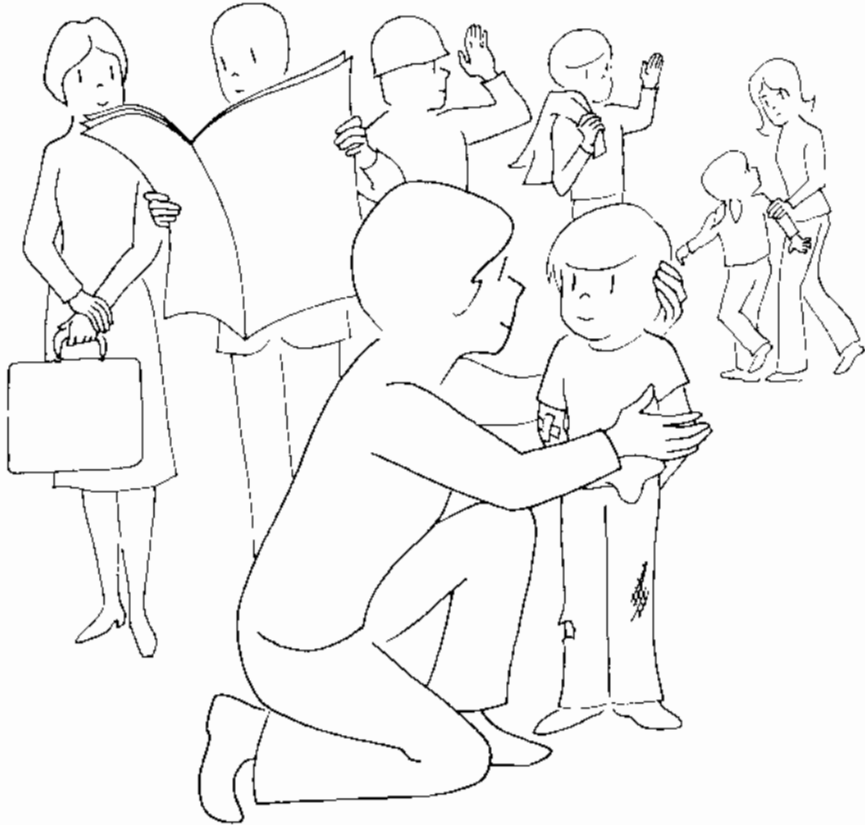
They come from all economic, ethnic and social groups.

MOST ARE "ORDINARY" PEOPLE

— like your neighbors or co-workers — who are having serious personal problems. Very few child abusers are mentally ill.

MOST KNOW -- EVEN LOVE -- THE CHILDREN

they abuse. Often, children are abused by a parent, another relative or a family friend. It's less common for children to be abused by a stranger.



CERTAIN TRAITS ARE COMMON among people who abuse children:

LOW SELF-ESTEEM

Many child abusers don't think very highly of themselves. Their feelings of failure and frustration may surface as child abuse.



POOR CONTROL OVER EMOTIONS

Many abusers are easily overwhelmed by their feelings.



A HISTORY OF BEING ABUSED

In many cases, child abusers were abused themselves earlier in life. They may have grown up thinking abusive behavior is "normal."



There is hope for people who abuse children, or fear they might. With help, they can overcome the problems that lead to child abuse.

STRESS IS A MAJOR FACTOR IN CHILD ABUSE



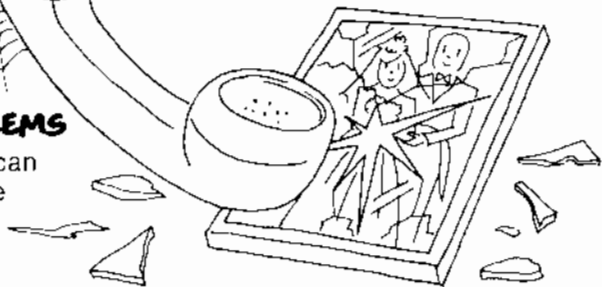
FINANCIAL TROUBLES

Limited financial resources can put great pressure on a family. A parent may see a child's needs as a reminder of his or her "failure."



SOCIAL ISOLATION

Without a support network of friends or relatives, the pressures of day-to-day living can pile up without relief.

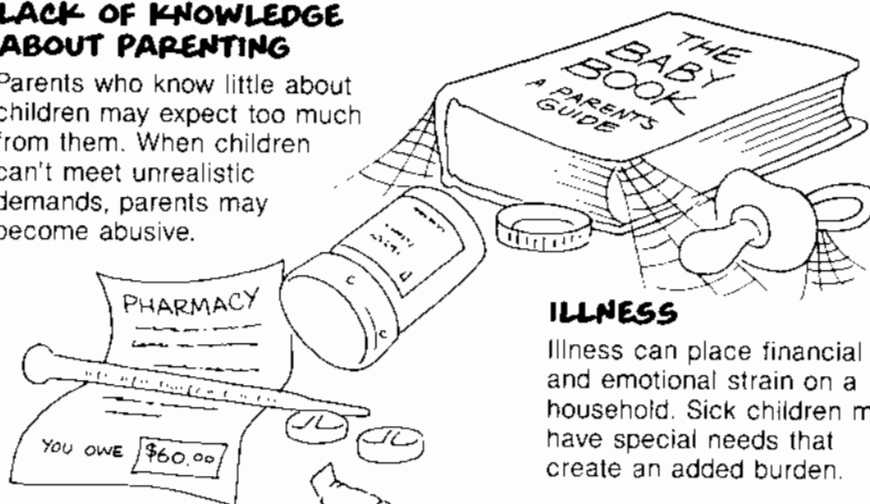


MARITAL PROBLEMS

A strained marriage can erupt into child abuse

LACK OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT PARENTING

Parents who know little about children may expect too much from them. When children can't meet unrealistic demands, parents may become abusive.

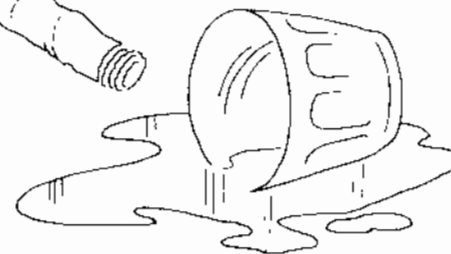


ILLNESS

Illness can place financial and emotional strain on a household. Sick children may have special needs that create an added burden.

ABUSE OF ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

Drugs cripple a person's emotional control. In addition, drugs can lead to legal and financial troubles that cause more strain



STRESS IS ALWAYS A DANGER.



ABUSE TAKES A TRAGIC TOLL ON CHILDREN

CHILDREN SUFFER PHYSICALLY

Abuse and neglect can lead to painful injuries and serious medical problems. In severe cases, the damage can lead to permanent disability, mental retardation, even death.



CHILDREN SUFFER EMOTIONALLY, TOO

Children depend on adults for security, acceptance and guidance. When adults harm or neglect them, their world becomes uncertain and frightening.



THE EMOTIONAL EFFECTS OF ABUSE CAN LAST A LIFETIME

Results can include:

LOW SELF-ESTEEM

Children naturally think that adults are always correct. So, abused children may grow up believing they are bad and deserving of abuse



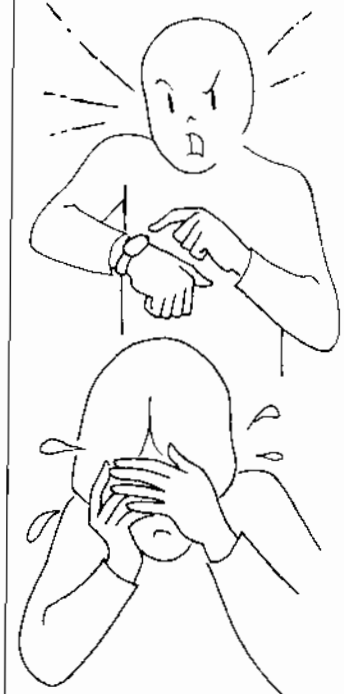
PROBLEMS WITH FEELINGS

Emotional damage from abuse can stunt a child's emotional growth. Later in life, the child may be unable to show his or her feelings -- or to understand others' feelings.



PROBLEMS WITH RELATIONSHIPS

Poor emotional development and lack of trust can make meaningful relationships difficult.



Victims of child abuse should seek help -- no matter how long ago the abuse occurred.

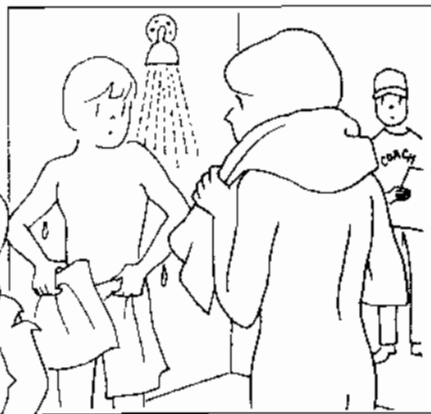
WARNING SIGNS OF CHILD ABUSE

PHYSICAL SIGNS

Note any unusual pattern or location (sometimes hidden by clothing) of injuries, such as:

- bruises, welts or broken bones
- cuts or scrapes
- burns
- missing hair
- injuries or redness around the genitals
- injuries at different stages of healing
- injury or medical condition that hasn't been properly treated.

The child or parent may explain these injuries as "accidents."



CHILD'S APPEARANCE

A neglected or abused child may be very dirty and poorly groomed. Clothing may be in poor condition, or not suited to the weather.

CHILD'S BEHAVIOR

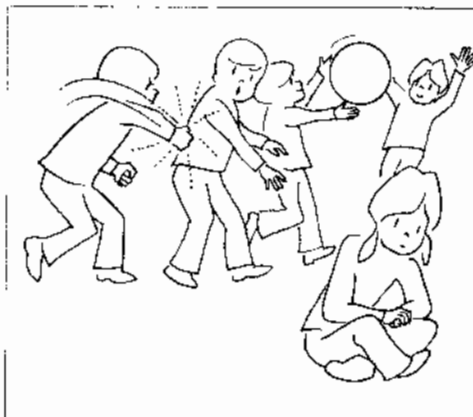
Abuse can lead to dramatic changes in behavior, such as

- aggressive or withdrawn behavior
- unusual fears (of certain people, of going home, etc.)
- craving for attention
- fatigue
- lack of concentration
- hunger, begging for food, stealing
- frequent tardiness or absence from school
- unusual knowledge of sex.

ADULT'S BEHAVIOR

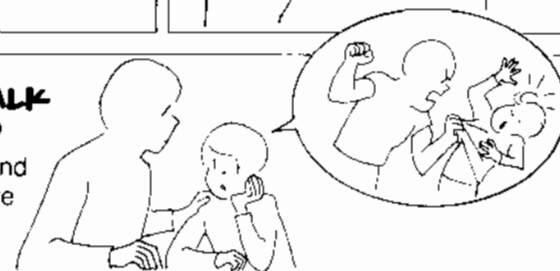
An adult who is abusing a child may:

- harshly punish the child in public
- refer to the child as "difficult," "different" or "bad"
- seem unconcerned about the child
- give conflicting stories about injuries
- become defensive when asked about the child's health.



CHILDREN MAY TALK OF BEING ABUSED

Take what they say – and any suspicions you have – seriously.



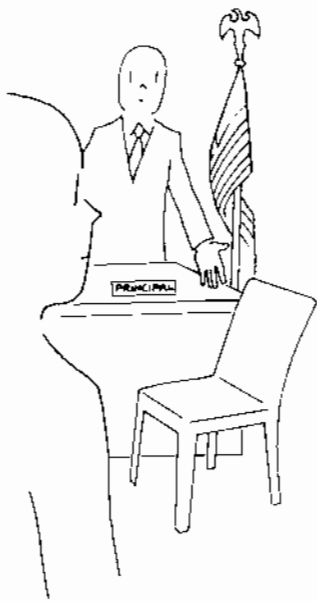
Signs like these don't always mean abuse. But it's best to find out for sure. Act now if you suspect or know of abuse (see pp. 13 & 14).

CAN CHILD ABUSE BE PREVENTED?

Yes! Child abuse can often be prevented, or stopped, through the efforts of:

SCHOOLS

Schools have a responsibility to report child abuse. They also have resources to help troubled individuals and families.



NEIGHBORS AND FAMILIES OF TROUBLED INDIVIDUALS

Friends and family members should reach out to those in need. Just offering to help with errands, baby-sitting, etc., can help relieve dangerous tension.



COMMUNITIES

Special programs can provide:

- education in parenting skills
- day-care services
- home-health visitors
- counseling and support
- many other programs.

Why not volunteer for a program in your community?



You can help prevent child abuse!

ABOUT REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

Many people fear that reporting or admitting abuse will destroy a family.

THE TRUTH IS, GETTING HELP CAN:

- PROTECT CHILDREN from further harm
- HELP THE FAMILY face its problems and return to healthy functioning.



IN SEVERE CASES,

children may be removed from a home for their immediate safety. However, proper treatment can help children and families return to healthier lives.

TAKE ACTION!*

Child abuse must be reported and addressed!

If you are abusing a child, or know of someone who is, it's your responsibility to act. (Remember, it's better to be safe than sorry!)

Turn the page for information on where to get help.



*In some states, everyone is required to report known or suspected cases of abuse. Know the laws and reporting procedures in your state

WHERE TO GET HELP AND INFORMATION

If you have questions, want to report a case of abuse or need help yourself, call:

HOTLINES,

These offer emergency help, referral to area services, information about reporting, and more. Look in the front of your phone book under "Community Service Numbers." Or, call the National Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-422-4453

FAMILY SERVICE AGENCIES,

These may offer child care, emergency shelter, and other family support services.

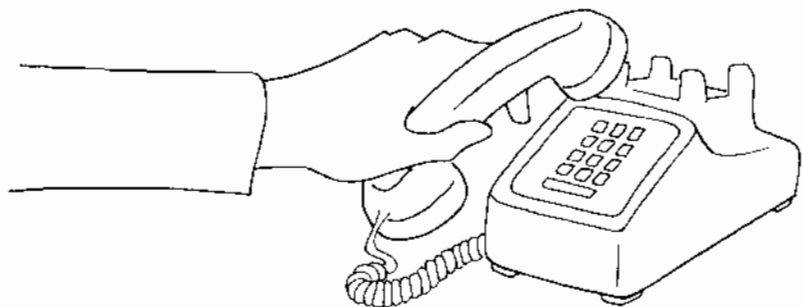
Look in the Yellow and White Pages under "Family Services" and "Social Services."

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

This is the state agency that handles child abuse reports, and protects children. Call a hotline, or look in the White Pages under your state's government listings.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Parents Anonymous, Parents Without Partners and other groups offer support to parents under stress. Other groups help victims of child abuse of all ages. Your phone book and hotlines can provide referrals.

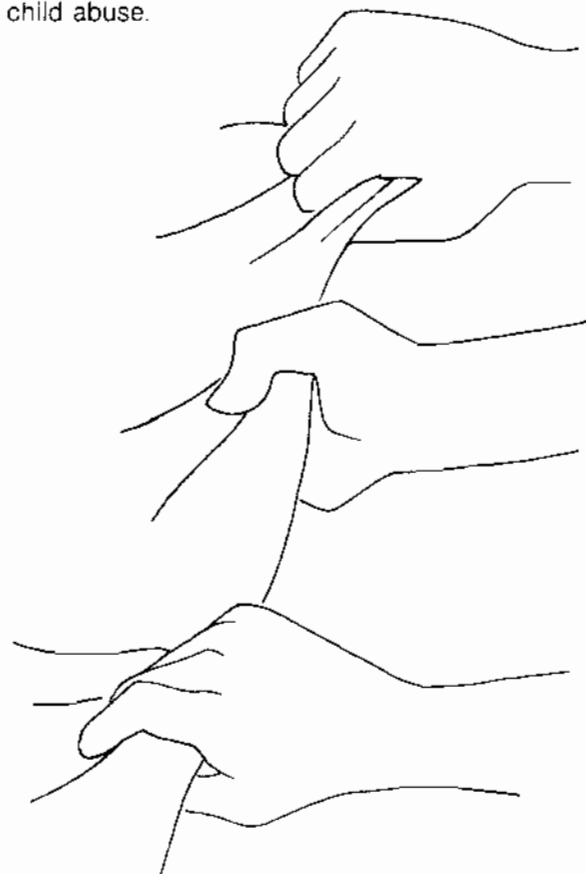


Remember -- getting help is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Soo--

CHILD ABUSE IS A PROBLEM THAT CONCERNS US ALL!

- ✓ **UNDERSTAND THE CAUSES AND EFFECTS** of child abuse.
- ✓ **LEARN TO IDENTIFY THE WARNING SIGNS** that can indicate child abuse.
- ✓ **REPORT ANY KNOWN OR SUSPECTED CASE** of child abuse.



Help prevent the tragedy of child abuse.