



## Agape Manor Home – Child Placing Agency

### Introductions

Who are you, where are you from and how you became interested in wanting to foster. Some people are not comfortable with introducing themselves to a group but this is a good practice for getting in touch with how children feel. After all, imagine what it might feel like for children who are being introduced to new foster parents for the first time.

Since we are going to be together for a couple of days we need to discuss some issues with teamwork.

What is a team:

- Has two or more people
- Shares a common goal
- Has complementary roles
- Has an established way of working together through procedures and common terms

By the time you completed these classes you should have receive knowledge and skills that you be an effective foster parent. You should learn essential roles within a child placing agency.

## Chapter 1 – Foster care and Types of abuse

### Definitions of Foster and Adoption

Foster means to nurture and to help someone grow. Foster care usually takes place in a licensed home. Foster care offers children and their families a chance to heal, grow and develop. The primary goal is to strengthen families so that children can be reunited with families who are able to provide a safe environment and nurturing relationship. Adoption means to take someone as your own. Adoption can only take placed in a home approved for adoption. When you adopt a child you become their primary parent and take on the same responsibilities that exist between the biological parent and the child.

An estimated 1 ½ million children are abused and neglected each year in the US. Abuse and neglect can happen in any type of family, rich, poor, rural or urban and any ethnicity.

### Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

Child abuse is both shocking and commonplace. Child abusers inflict physical, sexual, and emotional trauma on defenseless children every day. The scars can be deep and long-lasting. Unfortunately, the subtler forms of child abuse such as neglect and emotional abuse can be

even more traumatizing than violent physical abuse. Abuse is the non-accidental infliction or threat of infliction of physical injury or emotional or mental damage to a child by a person responsible for the child's health and welfare.

### **What is child abuse?**

Child abuse consists of any act, or failure to act, that endangers a child's physical or emotional health and development. Someone is abusive if he or she fails to nurture the child, physically injures the child, or relates sexually to the child.

### **What are the types of child abuse?**

The four major types of child abuse are:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect

### **What is physical child abuse?**

Physical child abuse is an injury resulting from physical aggression. Even if the injury was not intended, the act is considered physical abuse.

The injury from physical child abuse may be the result of:

- beating, slapping, or hitting
- pushing, shaking, kicking, or throwing
- pinching, biting, choking, or hair-pulling
- burning with cigarettes, scalding water, or other hot objects
- severe physical punishment

### **Is Physical Punishment the Same as Physical Abuse?**

**Physical abuse** is an injury resulting from physical aggression. **Physical punishment** is the use of physical force with the intent of inflicting bodily pain, but not injury, for the purpose of correction or control. As you can see, physical punishment can easily get out of control and become physical abuse.

Some other specific types of physical child abuse are:

- abuse by a sibling, or sibling abuse
- Shaken Baby Syndrome (shaking a baby to try to stop inconsolable crying)
- reporting or inducing medical illness in a child, which can lead to death (can be [Munchausen by Proxy Syndrome](#))
- abusing drugs or alcohol during pregnancy or lactation (including Fetal Alcohol Syndrome)

Hundreds of thousands of children are physically abused each year by someone close to them, and thousands of children die from the injuries. For those who survive, the emotional scars are deeper than the physical scars.

## What is sexual child abuse?

Sexual abuse of a child is any sexual act between an adult and a child. This includes:

- fondling: touching or kissing a child's genitals; or making a child fondle adult's genitals
  - violations of bodily privacy: forcing the child to undress, spying on a child in the bathroom or bedroom
  - child pornography: using a child in the production of pornography, such as a film or magazine
  - exposing children to pornography (movies, magazines, or websites) or enticing children to pornographic sites on the Internet
  - luring a child for sexual liaisons, through the Internet or by any other means
  - exposing children to adult sexuality in any form (showing sex organs to a child, forced observation of sexual acts, telling "dirty" stories, group sex)
  - child prostitution or sexual exploitation (using a child to perform sex with others)
  - sexual acts with a child: penetration, intercourse, incest, rape, oral sex, sodomy
- Regardless of the child's behavior or reactions, it is the responsibility of the adult not to engage in sexual acts with children. **Sexual abuse is never the child's fault.**

Sexual child abusers can be:

- mothers, fathers, siblings, or other relatives
- clergy, teachers, or athletic coaches
- foster parents or host families of foreign-exchange students
- neighbors or friends
- strangers

## What is emotional child abuse?

Emotional child abuse is another person's attitude, behavior, or failure to act that interferes with a child's mental health or social development. Surprisingly, emotional abuse can have more long-lasting negative psychiatric effects than either physical abuse or sexual abuse.

Other names for emotional abuse are:

- verbal abuse
- mental abuse
- psychological maltreatment or psychological abuse

Emotional abuse can range from a simple verbal insult to an extreme form of punishment. The following are examples of emotional child abuse:

- ignoring, withdrawal of attention, or rejection
- lack of physical affection such as hugs
- lack of positive reinforcement, such as praise or saying "I love you"
- yelling or screaming
- threatening or frightening
- negative comparisons to others
- belittling; telling the child he or she is "no good," "worthless," "bad," or "a mistake"

- shaming, humiliating, or name-calling
- habitual blaming
- using extreme forms of punishment, such as confinement to a closet or dark room, tying to a chair for long periods of time, or terrorizing a child
- child exploitation, such as child labor
- witnessing the physical abuse of others
- child kidnapping
- parental child abduction, or child stealing

Emotional abuse is almost always present when another form of abuse is found. (Some overlap exists between the definitions of emotional abuse and emotional neglect.)

Emotional child abuse can come from adults or from other children:

- parents or caregivers
- teachers or athletic coaches
- siblings
- bullies at school or elsewhere
- middle- and high-school girls in social cliques

### **What is neglect?**

Neglect is a very common type of child abuse, yet victims are not often identified, primarily because neglect is a type of child abuse that is an act of omission, of *not* doing something.

Neglect is a pattern of failing to provide for a child's basic needs. A single act of neglect might not be considered child abuse, but repeated neglect is definitely child abuse. The types of neglect are:

- physical neglect,
- educational neglect, and
- emotional neglect.

### **Physical neglect**

Physical neglect is not providing for a child's **physical needs**, which are:

- food
- clothing appropriate for the weather
- supervision
- a home that is hygienic and safe
- medical care, as needed

### **Educational neglect**

Educational neglect is the failure to enroll a school-age child in school or to provide necessary special education. This includes allowing excessive absences from school.

### **Emotional (psychological) neglect**

Emotional neglect is not providing emotional support and love, which is:

- affection
- attending to the child's emotional needs
- psychological care, as needed

(Some overlap exists between the definitions of emotional abuse and emotional neglect.)

### **What are the warning signs and symptoms of child abuse?**

To recognize child abuse, look for clusters of the following physical and behavioral symptoms:

#### **Some signs of physical child abuse**

- burns, bite marks, cuts, bruises, or welts in the shape of an object
- resistance to going home
- fear of adults

#### **Some signs of emotional child abuse**

- apathy, depression
- hostility
- difficulty concentrating

#### **Some signs of sexual child abuse**

- inappropriate interest in or knowledge of sexual acts
- seductiveness
- avoidance of things related to sexuality, or rejection of own genitals or body
- either over compliance or excessive aggression
- fear of a particular person or family member

#### **The following summarizes some warning signs of online sexual child abuse:**

Your child spends large amounts of time online, especially at night.

- You find pornography on your child's computer.
- Your child receives phone calls from men you don't know, or is making calls, sometimes long distance, to numbers you don't recognize.
- Your child receives mail, gifts, or packages from someone you don't know.
- Your child turns the computer monitor off or quickly changes the screen on the monitor when you come into the room.
- Your child becomes withdrawn from the family.
- Your child is using an online account belonging to someone else.

One of every five youths between the ages of ten and seventeen receives a sexual approach or solicitation over the Internet each year; only 25 percent tell a parent

#### **Some signs of neglect of a child**

- clothing unsuited to the weather
- being dirty or unbathed
- extreme hunger
- apparent lack of supervision

## **What are the causes of child abuse?**

Why would someone abuse a defenseless child? What kind of person abuses a child? Not all child abuse is deliberate or intended. Several factors in a person's life may combine to cause them to abuse a child:

No one has been able to predict which of these factors will cause someone to abuse a child. A significant factor is that abuse tends to be intergenerational – those who were abused as children are more likely to repeat the act when they become parents or caretakers.

Abuse and neglect happen for different reasons. If parents were abused when they were younger they may abuse their own children. Some parents have poor parenting skills and they don't understand children's behaviors. They expected the children to behave like adults. Abusers may have too many stressors to handle so they take their stress out on the children. Parents get really stress when in a financial bind or just lost their job. Some parents lack support from their extended family. Some parents are struggling with mental health issues of their own. Other parents struggle with stress, depression, or anxiety; includes the stress of caring for children, or the stress of caring for a child with a disability, special needs, or difficult behaviors. Some child abusers have drug or alcohol problems. Most abusive parents are otherwise, "normal" people. All parents make bad judgments sometimes. When a bad judgment is habitual the parent's behavior becomes abuse. Whatever the reason behind the abuse the child is not to blame. Children are unwilling victims to their parent's rage.

Most child abuse is not from strangers but from parents, step-parents, grandparents or other extended family. Children of abusive parents are usually aware that something is wrong in their family and that their family is different from other families. It is coming for children, even very young children to be very protective of their families. Children may tell others they fell down when they explain their injuries. Abuse may lead to the death of a child. Hundreds of abused children die every year.

In addition, many forms of child abuse arise from ignorance, isolation, or benign neglect. Sometimes a cultural tradition leads to abuse; for example, such beliefs as:

- Children are property.
- Parents (especially males) have the right to control their children in any way they wish.
- Children need to be toughened up to face the hardships of life.
- Girls need to be genitally mutilated to assure virginity and later marriage.

## **What are the results of child abuse?**

Child abuse can have dire consequences, during both childhood and adulthood. Child abuse may result in:

- impaired social behavior, antisocial behavior, and difficulty establishing intimate personal relationships
- alienation and withdrawal
- depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, feelings of worthlessness, self-injury,

- suicidal tendencies
- substance abuse and high levels of medical illness
- eating disorders or drastic changes in appetite
- problems in school or work
- impaired psychological development; personality disorders
- abusive parenting or caregiving
- prostitution (in the case of sexual abuse)
- cognitive disorders
- a distorted view of sex, and difficulty relating to others except on sexual terms (in the case of sexual abuse)
- nightmares and bed wetting
- death of a child; or death of the abuser, if the child eventually fights back

The effects of being abused as a child vary according to the severity of the abuse and the surrounding environment of the child. If the family or school environment is nurturing and supportive, the child will probably have a healthier outcome.

**Watch the Removed video 1 and 2**

**Agency policy on reporting abuse and neglect**

**Policy: REPORTING OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

It is the policy of Agape Manor Home CPA to train all staff and volunteers on how, where, and when to report any suspected abuse and/or neglect of a child. On certain occasions, an employee or provider of AMH may become aware of information concerning the known or possible abuse and/or neglect of a child or an adult. On such occasions, AMH policy holds its providers accountable to fully comply with the Family Code 261.401. Additionally, it is the policy of AMH that all employees, foster parents, and respite care providers sign a statement demonstrating they have been made aware of the reporting requirements and that they agree to uphold these requirements.

**Procedure:**

1. All staff, foster parents and caregivers will receive training on the Texas State Law, which requires them to report any suspected abuse and/or neglect to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services 1(800) 252-5400. Failure to report suspected child abuse is punishable by fines up to \$1,000 and/or confinement up to 180 days.
2. The employee and foster parents shall immediately report the situation to their immediate supervisor or designated staff.

3. When the report concerns a client and allegations against the foster parent(s) caring for that client, the supervisor or the individual on emergency pager will immediately contact the client's CPS worker. The Child-Placing Staff will immediately contact the client's guardian to determine if the client should be placed on emergency respite until the situation has been resolved. Documentation of reports addressing allegations against foster parent(s) must be submitted to the Executive Director within 1 hour.
4. In all cases, the individual making the report must document the date, time, and the name of the person taking the report on the *Documentation of Report to Child/Adult Protective Services*. If TDFPS refuses the report, the individual must document this refusal on this form.
5. Within 24 hrs, this documentation must be submitted to the individual's supervisor and a copy sent to the client's legal guardian.
6. When the nature of the situation meets the criteria for a critical incident, the employee and foster parents shall also complete a *Serious Incident Report* form.
7. Following the report being made a AMH representative will contact the client's legal guardian/CPS worker to notify them of the report and to determine any follow up action.