CHILD ABUSE

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Many people believe that child abuse is solely physical (i.e. bruises, broken bones, etc). Although, there are so many other types of abuse to take into consideration.

- **Physical Abuse**
  - For this type, you are usually able to see the physical harm (i.e. bruises or unexplained broken bones).

- **Emotional Abuse**
  - For this type the child is usually being constantly yelled at, limited physical contact, might hear that they are “no good”, “worthless”, etc.

- **Sexual Abuse**
  - This type of abuse can be caused by inappropriate behavior by a family member. Although, it is not just limited to this; it can be from them being exposed to other sexual situations or even materials.

- **Neglect**
  - This might be the most common type of child abuse.
  - This type is basically a pattern of failing to provide the child of necessary items. Such as, adequate amount of food, clothing, hygiene, etc.
Naturally, child abuse can leave lifelong scars.

- One of these scars might be the constant feeling of being “worthless” or “no good”.
- A second scar might be having a difficult time developing relationships with peers or teachers and even trusting anyone.
- A third scar might be the child having issues with regulating all of their emotions.
WHAT CAN A TEACHER DO?

- As a teacher, we are with them for most of the day for five days a week.
- We have to look out for our students.
- This comes from building those trusting relationships with your students and looking for the warning signs.
WARNINGS SIGNS TO LOOK FOR

- Warnings for Emotional Abuse:
  - Excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong
  - Shows extremes in behavior (extremely compliant or extremely DEMANDING; extremely passive or extremely aggressive)
  - Doesn’t seem to be attached to the parent or caregiver
  - Acts either inappropriately adult (taking care of other children) or inappropriately infantile (rocking, thumb-sucking, throwing tantrums)

- Warnings for Physical Abuse:
  - Frequent injuries or unexplained bruises, welts, or cuts
  - Is ALWAYS watchful and “on alert,” as if waiting for something bad to happen
  - Injuries appear to have a pattern such as marks from a hand or belt
  - Shies away from touch, flinches at sudden movements, or seems afraid to go home
  - Wears inappropriate clothing to cover up injuries, SUCH as long-sleeved shirts on hot days
WARNING SIGNS TO LOOK FOR

- **Warnings for Neglect:**
  - Clothes are ill-fitting, filthy, or inappropriate for the weather
  - Hygiene is consistently bad (unbathed, matted and unwashed hair, noticeable body odor)
  - Untreated illnesses and physical injuries
  - Is frequently unsupervised or left alone or allowed to play in unsafe situations and ENVIRONMENTS
  - Is frequently late or missing from school

- **Warnings for Sexual Abuse:**
  - Trouble walking or sitting
  - Displays knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to his or her age, or EVEN seductive behavior
  - Makes strong efforts to avoid a specific person, without an obvious reason
  - Doesn’t want to change clothes in front of others or participate in PHYSICAL activities
  - An STD or pregnancy, especially UNDER the age of 14
  - Runs away from home
- **Domestic Violence**
  - When children witness this type of abuse and are not rescued, it is possible that they will continue the cycle. They need to know that the only way to really get out and protect you or a loved one is to get out of the situation.

- **Alcohol and Drug Abuse**
  - This can easily lead to abuse or neglect. When children see this and do not know any better, they could possibly continue this cycle as well.

- **Untreated Mental Illness**
  - If the parents suffer from mental illness as depression, bipolar, etc. and it is untreated, it can cause them to withdraw from the child.

- **Lack of parenting skills**
  - Parents who do not realize how much work a new baby really is or parents who were children who suffered child abuse from their parents, may lack the understanding on how to care for a child.

- **Stress and lack of support**
  - Parents who were not prepared to have a child, or have little support from family, community, etc. can have difficulty handling the intensive times of having a child.
TIPS FOR REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

- Reporting a child can be difficult in many ways. It can be emotional and complicated in the sense of, you may wonder if you are doing the right thing, etc.

- Here are a few tips for reporting a case:
  - Be as specific as possible
    - For example, if you say a child is not dressed appropriately, give a specific example on how and how cold.
  - Keep in mind that you may not know the outcome
    - Due to confidentiality
  - If you see any more instances, keep reporting them
    - They will keep records of what is going on in that family and how often
WHAT IS THE POINT OF REPORTING CHILD ABUSE?

- As most of us know, it can be an emotional experience reporting a child abuse case.
- As we have stated before, you can feel like you are getting into personal business that you feel you should stay out of. Although this is simply not the case.
- Child abuse can leave lifelong scars, issues, and even a repetition with the victims children, that can only be resolved by having the child removed from the situation.
- Let us all help stop these cycles.
MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT CHILD ABUSE

- **Myths**
  - It's only abuse if it's violent
  - Only bad people abuse their children
  - Child abuse doesn't happen in “good” families
  - Most child abusers are strangers
  - Abused children always grow up to be abusers

- **Facts**
  - Physical abuse is only one type of child abuse. As we have discussed there is neglect and emotional abuse.
  - While it is natural to assume that, it is not always the case. In some instances, abusers do not understand that they are harming their children as they have been victims of abuse themselves. This may be the only way they know how to parent. Although others may have mental health issues or even have a substance abuse issue.
  - Child abuse reaches all racial, economic, and cultural lines, not just with poor families or bad neighborhoods.
  - This does happen, but most abusers are either family members or people close to the family.
  - While they are more likely to repeat the cycle, many adult survivors are motivated to protect their children and others against abuse.
CHILD ABUSE PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sFRtdotN0
REFERENCES