

## **ABUSE**

### **Emotional Abuse**

This is persistent psychological ill treatment or neglect. It can cause adverse effects on the child's development and be profoundly damaging to self esteem. Examples of emotional abuse are: making the child feel worthless, unrealistic expectations, preventing normal social activity, serious bullying, seeing the ill-treatment of another person, making a child often frightened, exploitation of a child or corruption. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of child abuse.

Sometimes it was hard for your birth mummy to think about how things she did would make you feel. She was not very good at imagining what children feel and how sad and frightened grown ups can make them feel. She was too involved in her life to think enough about how it made other people feel. Because she was not feeling very happy about herself it made her feel better to be rude and hurt your feelings. This is not right and was not fair of her as children are all by themselves with their parent a lot of the time and often don't have other grown ups to make them feel better.

### **Neglect**

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs in a way likely to impair the child's health or development seriously. For example: not providing food or shelter, inadequate protection from danger, not enabling adequate medical care and emotional neglect. The majority of children who get looked after have done so because of neglect from their parents.

Neglect can mean many things. These types of neglect will usually be applied to a baby or toddler.

Being left alone in a flat.

Not being washed or bathed.

Not being stimulated e.g. being left in the buggy or cot for long periods, being restrained in this way in front of the television.

Nobody talking to them or playing with them.

Toys not being brought for them.

No sensitivity to the child's needs for affection and attention.

Having no fixed routines so bedtime could be midnight and therefore the child might be grumpy and tired in the day as children need more sleep than adults. This may make the adult annoyed too.

Smoking and alcohol being consumed in excess in front of children.

No regular meal times.

Not being kept safe or protected from people/things that might hurt them.

Your child's neglect will be unique to the child. Sometimes it is good to get the particular examples of it from the Child Permanency Report and then put them in to the language of a child. Poverty can play its part in neglect so it is worth explaining if money features as an issue in their particular history that benefits are not easy to live on and, if appropriate, that drug or alcohol addiction is expensive, leaving little for anything else.

**E.g. Your birth mummy did not have enough money for food as she had spent it on other things so you were sometimes found by neighbours looking in the bins of your flats and picking food up off the pavements that other people had dropped.**

**Sometimes the reasons that parents don't look after their children properly are that they do not know how to and have had nobody to**

teach them how to do it right. Maybe your birth parents had parents who did not look after them very well, as well.

### **Physical Abuse (Non Accidental Injury)**

Involves physical harm to the child such as hitting, shaking, burning, smacking, poisoning or causing suffocation. Includes fabricated illness.

Sometimes your birth mummy/daddy would get very angry. They were not very good at being grown up when they had angry feelings. One day when you were only [age] your birth mummy/daddy hit you very hard. You were very badly hurt. It was very frightening for you and Social Workers got to hear that this had happened. Although your birth mummy/daddy did not mean to hurt you and still loves you very much and feels terrible about what has happened, because you were so badly hurt, no one felt it was safe for you to stay with your birth mummy.

Babies need to be looked after so carefully as they can't look after themselves.

You can ask the child: 'What do babies need to be alright?'

Child may need to be prompted to cover these areas - to be cuddled, to be fed, to have their nappies changed, to be washed, to be put to bed, to be comforted when they cry.

Adult can then say that parents need to be good enough at being a birth mummy/daddy to be able to do all these things and not to get too angry when they are tired.

Adult can talk about all the things that were difficult in the parents life for example 'Birth mummy did not have very many friends or

family around to help her with being a parent' Sometimes birth mummies get very tired and upset as well. Sometimes birth mummies and daddies think that the children are crying or shouting or breaking their toys just to annoy them. Then they get angry when really it can be that the children need their nappies changed, or are hungry or want a cuddle. Some mummies and daddies don't understand children well enough to know why they cry and shout.

## Rape

The child may eventually be going to read or learn that either their father has raped a woman/women or that they themselves have been a product of rape. The child may be a product of rape and if it has not been proven in court then it becomes alleged rape. It is important to note that unfounded allegations are the exception rather than the rule so discrediting the mother's account may not be helpful. There is also a possibility that the child themselves may have been raped by their birth father or another relative or man.

This is a very difficult area and it would be worth talking to your local CAMHS service or an appropriate child care professional about your particular child and your fears/thoughts on how this information is going to affect them.

The issue of not knowing who the birth father is and only that he is alleged to have raped the mother is emotionally very laden for anyone and all involved. Please see section on unknown fathers.

Discussion of rape for a child under ten would need to come in the context of the child's understanding of how babies are made and what sex is. This will differ widely between families

and between children depending on; their interest in the topic, if they are the oldest in the family, their level of understanding and how the school approaches it.

Under the Sexual Assaults Act 2003 the legal definition of rape is that a man has entered his penis into a vagina, anus or mouth of another person with intention and without consent and involves the threat of violence. In law a child who is under 16 can't give consent even if consent has been a fact. Children are judged in law as not being capable of giving consent. People who do not understand what is happening and therefore can't give consent are also included whether this is through drugs or alcohol or for someone suffering from a mental disability.

Usually when a man and a woman have sex with each other they do it because they enjoy it and love each other. Sometimes babies get born because a man and a woman have had sex.

When a man forces a woman to have sex through being mean to her and making her scared it is called rape. The woman has not wanted him to put his penis in her vagina. If a woman or man force their bodies on each other when either of them don't want this then this is called sexual assault. It is something that usually gets done by men against women and it is very wrong and it is against the law which means men can go to prison for it. It makes the woman feel angry and sad and it can hurt her very much.

Men who rape women do so for lots of different reasons to do with being angry with women and wanting to feel more powerful in their lives.

Babies grow and get born from rape just the same as any other baby for they have done nothing wrong.

## Sexual Abuse- context sex and sexual awareness

Sexual abuse is when a child or young person is pressurized, forced or tricked into taking part in any kind of sexual activity with an adult or young person. This can involve rape [penetration of a vagina, anus or mouth by a penis] or any other act without the consent of the other party is termed 'sexual assault' so this could include anal penetration by object, unwanted kissing, fondling, viewing of sex through pornography or in reality.

If sexual abuse occurs within the close family [grandparent/parent to child or sibling to sibling] it is called incest which is also a crime. Incest is sexual contact with between people commonly regarded as too closely related to marry. For a child under 10 this additional term might well be unnecessary to explain or make points about in addition to those below.

Sometimes adults touch children in ways they shouldn't.

It is fine for parents and other grown ups that look after children to give children a hug, help them get their clothes on and, when they are very little, to wash their bodies for them.

It is not all right to touch children's private parts when you are not washing them or changing nappies or putting cream on them if they are sore. Adults who get good feelings from touching children and getting children to touch them are not being fair on the children. They are breaking the law and they can be called paedophiles. If a judge and the police are sure that the adult has done this they may be sent to prison.

The children who have been touched or have touched the adult have done nothing wrong even if they have agreed to it or feel they enjoyed it. Sometimes it can be very scary for children who are touched by adults and they can feel dirty or disgusted about what has happened. Sometimes adults who do this are good at making it feel enjoyable for the children. Sometimes they give children sweets, ice creams and treats for doing what they ask.

However the child feels about it, it is not their fault and the adult has behaved in an unkind way. Adults are there to look after children and not to play with their bodies.

Adults who do this are using the fact they are bigger and more powerful than children to boss them and control them.

These adults often don't understand how to love people and sometimes they think what they are doing is all right. They want it to be kept a secret because they always know that other adults would not think it was all right.

Children do not deserve to be touched by adults in this way and it is very important that they get help to talk about it and to make it stop happening.

What the adults have done is wrong and needs to stop. If it was your mother, father, grandfather, grandmother, brother, or sister who did this to you then it is called incest.

These parents may love their children very much in other ways but it is a very wrong thing they do. Sometimes they get help from talking to a therapist or a doctor about it but for some, putting them in prison is the only way to stop it happening to other children.

It is important to remember that if anyone touches you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable and they are bigger than you that you tell someone you trust about it.

Natalie Salaman 2009

Anxiety Alcoholism Death Domestic Violence Drug Abuse Emotional Abuse Learning Difficulties/Disabilities Manic Depression-Bi Polar Disorder Mental Ill Health Neglect Non Accidental Injury Personality Disorder Rape Schizophrenia Suicide Sexual Abuse-context sex and sexual awareness Unknown Fathers