

A large, soft-edged circular watercolor wash in the colors of a rainbow (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple) serves as a background for the text.

Child Abuse Prevention Training

What is CANRA?

A set of laws passed in 1980 to provide definitions and procedures for mandated reporting of child abuse. Over the years, numerous amendments have expanded the definition of child abuse and the persons required to report.

CANRA stands for the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act, and can be found in sections 11164-11174.3 of the California Penal Code.

Reasonable Suspicion

It is reasonable for a person to be suspicious, based upon facts that could cause a reasonable person in a like position, drawing from his/her training and experience, to suspect child abuse and neglect

You DO NOT need evidence or proof before reporting child abuse. All you need is reasonable suspicion.

Ages for Child Abuse


Victim: a child is anyone under the age of 18 years old

Perpetrator: a perpetrator can be any age, including children

EXAMPLE: A child can abuse another child. This must be reported if it is beyond accidents, arguments, and fights. For example: bullying is physical abuse. Cyber or online bullying is emotional abuse.

Types of Abuse

1. Physical
2. Sexual (assault & exploitation)
3. Emotional
4. Neglect



You only need
REASONABLE SUSPICION
to report abuse.

CHILD ABUSE IS UNIVERSAL

Child abuse can occur in any family, regardless of socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, religion, education, ethnic background, or any other factor.

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

Cultural beliefs or stereotypes can affect our perceptions of abuse.

What is culture?

1. Set of beliefs, attitudes, values, and behavior
2. Passed down from generation to generation
3. Shaped by many factors like race, religion, ethnicity
4. Shapes attitudes and ideas about acceptable child behavior and discipline
5. Affects perceptions of stress, trauma, and abuse
6. Affects reactions to stress, trauma, and abuse

How does culture affect the evaluation of child abuse?


It's natural to see your own culture as the normal or correct culture, but no culture is more normal or correct than another. Be aware of your values, beliefs, and biases, and how they influence your expectations of other people

Different child-rearing practices from other cultures may be seen as strange or dangerous, when they are not. Certain practices seen as abusive in the US may be acceptable in other cultures.

It is also important to remember that some accepted practices really are abusive even if the culture's traditions (or even laws) say they are not.

WHICH IS WHY WE HAVE LAWS

Laws regarding child abuse help put everyone on the same page since we have different cultures represented in the US.



**Be aware of
your biases.**

A culture may accept certain behaviors, but that does not mean it is **LEGAL** locally or federally. While we respect people's cultures, we also abide by the local and federal laws to help protect children from abuse.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

What is Physical Abuse?

It is the intentional or willful harming or injuring of a child resulting in injury or traumatic condition. It is not accidental.

Examples of physical injury: bruises, burns, broken bones

Possible sources of physical injury: punching, beating, kicking, biting, burning, etc

TAKE NOTE: Although an injury is not an accident, the parent/caregiver may not have intended to hurt the child. The injury may have resulted from over-discipline, inappropriate physical punishment, or from a parent/caregiver preventing the child from an injury (ie: pulling the child away from incoming traffic may result in a bruised arm where the parent/caregiver grabbed the child)

QUESTION: Do you report it?

Answer: Yes.

When you see signs of physical abuse, it is CAUSE FOR REASONABLE SUSPICION and ENOUGH to report. INTENTION is not your responsibility to determine. DO NOT investigate.

Single or Repeated Episodes of Abuse

Abuse can happen once or be repeated (in a cycle). It is wrong to assume that a child was not abused because it happened only once. It is also wrong to accept, "It's just how we discipline our children" as a reason for a child's injury.

The Severity of Abuse Varies

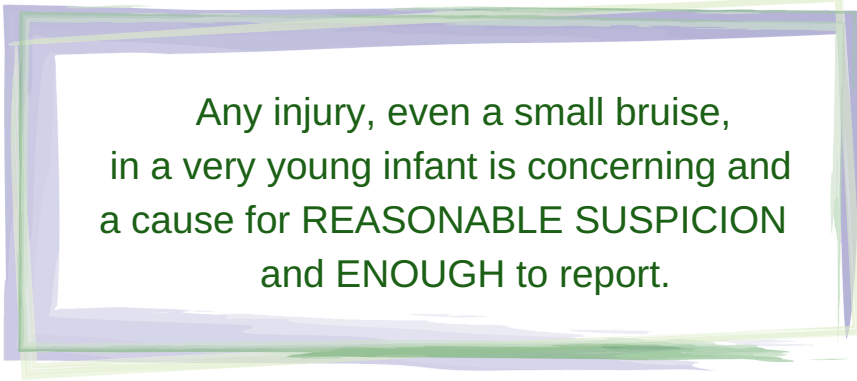
The severity of an injury from abuse varies from minor bruises to death.

Any injury resulting from physical punishment that requires MEDICAL TREATMENT is considered OUTSIDE the realm of normal disciplinary measures. For example: burns, broken bones, welts. These types of injury raises reasonable suspicion and should be reported.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Child Abuse Does NOT Include:

1. Mutual affray between minors (when children fight. Bullying is not “mutual”).
2. Reasonable and necessary force by peace officers.
3. Reasonable and necessary force by person in public school to quell/stop disturbance threatening physical injury to person or damage to property, for purposes of self-defense, or to obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects within the control of the student.
4. Child receiving treatment by spiritual means or not receiving specified medical treatment for religious reasons shall not for that reason alone be considered a neglected child. An informed and appropriate medical decision made by a parent/guardian after consultation with a physician/s who have examined the minor does not constitute neglect.



Any injury, even a small bruise,
in a very young infant is concerning and
a cause for REASONABLE SUSPICION
and ENOUGH to report.

Why?

Young infants are not mobile and couldn't hurt themselves.

Young infants are completely dependent on parents/caregivers.

Developmental abilities of a child should be considered when evaluating injuries. If a child is unable to roll over or crawl, they are unlikely to have sustained an injury on their own. Once children are toddlers and capable of crawling or walking, bruises are very common.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Typical Development of Major Motor Milestones in Infancy

Age	Milestones
2 months	Lifts head
4 months	Rolls over front to back
6 months	Rolls over both directions and sits up
9 months	Crawls, cruises
12 months	Walks
18 months	Runs
24 Months	Walks upstairs

Scenario: If a parent/caregiver claims a 2-month-old child was injured by rolling off the bed, that is **SUSPICIOUS** because 2-month-old children have not reached the developmental stage of rolling.

Being aware of a child's developmental milestones can help you be aware of any abuse that the child may be going through.

Location and pattern of the injury needs to be considered.

Common locations for accidental bruises in toddlers and children include bony areas such as shins, elbows, knees, forehead, and chin, among others

Common locations of abusive injuries include the back, buttocks, ears, face (particularly the soft tissues of the cheek), neck, and genitalia.

These types of bruising pertain **ONLY** to **AMBULATORY/MOBILE** children. Bruising of **ANY** kind are **UNCOMMON** in infants and should raise suspicion.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical Abuse Indicators:

1. Patterns that reflect belts or other objects
2. Bruises in various stages of healing. This indicates prolonged abuse
3. Bruises, bites, burns (cigarette, scalding water, iron), or fractures (or broken bones)
4. Location of injury such as padded areas, the back of legs, between neck and above the knees
5. Any concerning injury or delay in seeking treatment with no explanation or with improbably explanation.

Not as concerning are injuries on bony areas where kids normally fall (knees, shins, foreheads).

Abusive bruises and burns MAY be patterned or have a distinct outline (these should raise concern), BUT NOT ALWAYS. They can look similar to accidental injuries.



SEXUAL ABUSE

Two Types of Child Sexual Abuse

- 1. Assault:** sex acts with children, molestation, and intentional masturbation in the presence of children
- 2. Exploitation:** preparing, selling, or distributing pornographic materials involving children; performances involving obscene sexual conduct; child prostitution

Assault Includes:

1. Intentional fondling of genitals for sexual arousal or gratification
2. Masturbating in the presence of a child
3. Forcible rape
4. Oral sex
5. Sodomy
6. Incest: sexual contact between family members where an adult seeks/gains sexual gratification, oral manipulation, intercourse. It includes adoptive and step relations.
7. Lewd Acts with a child (indecent acts). Generally the law distinguishes between children under the age of 14. Lewd acts may include touching of the child by the perpetrator, but it's not limited to touching. It may include to a perpetrator displaying him/herself or others or having the child participate in touching himself/herself or others. It is done with the specific intent to arouse the sexual desire of the perpetrator OR the child.
8. Sexually Annoying or Molesting. It is an activity directed at a child under the age of 18 which disturbs or irritates the child. The perpetrator's acts are driven by an abnormal sexual interest in a child.
9. Statutory rape. It is sexual intercourse with a person under the age of 18. The punishment may vary depending on many factors. CONSENT of the parties is NOT A FACTOR. The common type of statutory rape is adult sex with a minor. The law considers the difference in the ages of the parties involved, especially to determine if the victim is able to give consent.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Exploitation

According to the law, a child who is sexually trafficked, or who receives food or shelter in exchange for, or who is paid to perform sexual acts, and whose parent/guardian failed to or was unable to protect the child, shall be known as commercially sexually exploited children.

According to CANRA, sexual exploitation refers to any of the following:

1. Preparing, selling, or distributing pornographic materials involving children
2. Performances involving obscene sexual conduct
3. Employment of a minor to perform obscene acts
4. Depicting a minor engaged in obscene acts

Any person who knowingly promotes, assists, employs, uses, persuades, induces, or coerces a child to engage in prostitution or a live performance involving obscene sexual conduct, or to either pose or model in child pornographic material is committing sexual exploitation.

Any person who depicts a child in, or who knowingly develops, duplicates, prints, or exchanges, any film, photograph, video tape, negative, or slide involving child pornography is committing sexual exploitation.

REMEMBER: a child is anyone under the age of 18 years old.

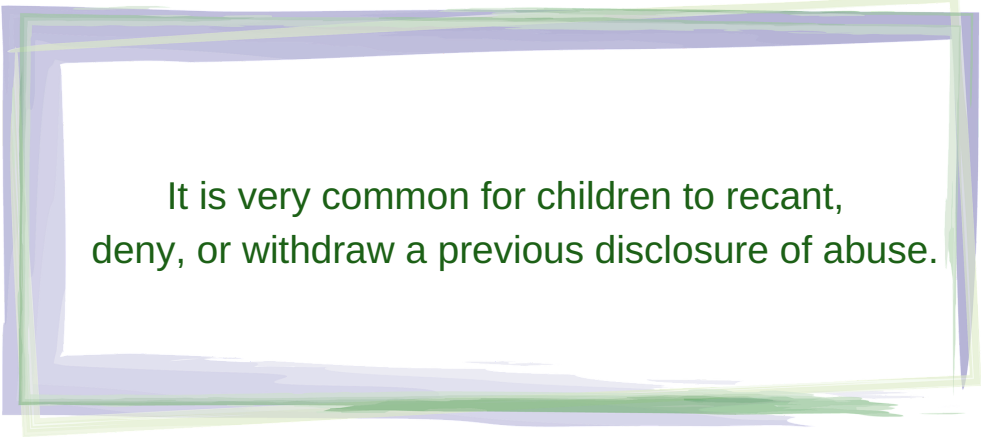
Therefore, SEXTING, NAKED SELFIES, NUDE PICS between high school friends can be construed as CHILD PORNOGRAPHY and punishable by the law.

If you forward that text, email, picture, or video, it can be considered as DISTRIBUTION of child pornography and punishable by law.

SEXUAL ABUSE DISCLOSURE

Most victims report the crime months or years after the occurrence.

Many victims NEVER report the crime.



It is very common for children to recant, deny, or withdraw a previous disclosure of abuse.

Reasons children may recant, deny, or withdraw disclosure of abuse:

1. Fear
2. Guilt
3. Shame
4. Embarrassment
5. Desire not to hurt the perpetrator or family unit (if the family breaks apart because of the abuse)

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

What is Emotional Abuse?

Emotional Abuse is the

1. Willful cruelty or unjustified punishment.

For example extreme/bizarre forms of punishment like: torture, locked in dark closet, or forced to go without dinner

2. Inflicting or permitting physical pain or mental suffering

For example: scapegoating, belittling, using cruel words

3. Permitting the endangerment of the child's person or health through:

- Acts or omissions by parents/caregivers that have caused or could cause serious behavioral, cognitive, emotional, or mental disorders

- In some cases, the parental act alone warrants reporting even if there is NO harm evident in the child's behavior or condition

Emotional Abuse is the most difficult form of abuse to identify because:

1. The effects of emotional abuse (lags in physical development, learning problems, speech disorders) are also evident in children who have never been emotionally abused.

2. The effects of emotional abuse may only become evident in later developmental stages of the child's life.

3. The behaviors of emotionally abused and emotionally disturbed children are often similar. The difference is the latter involves psychological problems that doesn't come from abuse. Parents of an emotionally disturbed child usually knows of the problem and seeks help for the child (not so for parents of emotionally abused).

For example: A five year old child has trouble communicating and the parent brushes it off as the child "being slow" and refuses help. That is a RED FLAG.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

More often, emotional abuse is seen in combination with other forms of abuse. It is almost always present when other forms of abuse are identified.

Since Emotional Abuse is sometimes hard to identify, it may take more than one report to be made for action to be taken by Child Welfare Services (CWS).

Psychological abuse is as harmful as other child maltreatment so suggests a study published in *Pediatrics*.

Children who are routinely yelled at, belittled, ignored, or threatened by their parents/caregivers can develop lifelong emotional wounds as damaging as those caused by physical or sexual abuse.

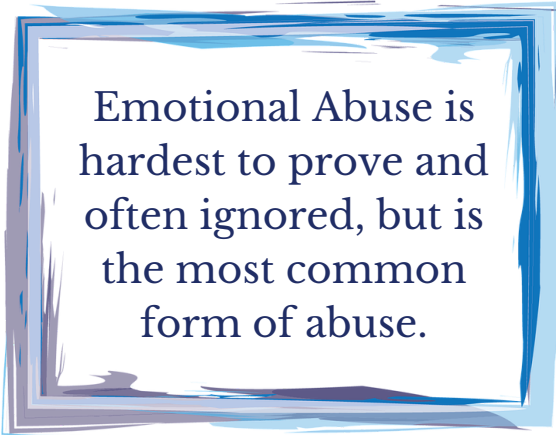
Psychological maltreatment is harder to spot than other types of abuse, and it's hugely underreported, the researchers said.

There's no one definition of what constitutes this type of abuse, but it ranges from chronically humiliating or ridiculing a child, to leaving an infant alone in a crib all day.

Psychological abuse is so insidious, and is not as easily recognized by the victim or other family members.

For less severe acts, such as belittling or cruel words, it can be more difficult to determine what constitutes emotional abuse.

It may be seen as a lesser form of abuse, but in reality it is one of the more serious and pervasive forms of abuse to children. It can go on and on, and nobody stops it.



Emotional Abuse is
hardest to prove and
often ignored, but is
the most common
form of abuse.

NEGLECT

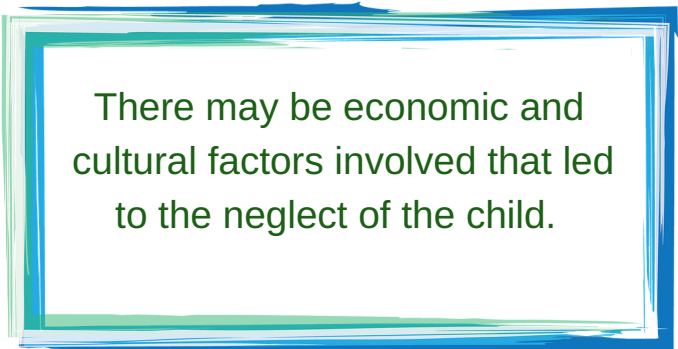
What is Neglect? It is the negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child by his/her parent/caregiver that results in harm or could be harmful (threat of harm). It includes acts (locking toddler in hot car) and omissions (not providing food) on the part of the responsible person.

There are TWO KINDS of Neglect: General and Severe

GENERAL NEGLECT: No physical injury; It is the failure of a parent/caregiver to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision of the child

Examples of General Neglect:

1. Dirty home (animal/human feces, garbage, cigarette butts around), lack of plumbing/heating, fire hazards around
2. Medical neglect: not providing appropriate medical care, dental care, or immunizations
3. Emotional neglect: not interacting with infant or child
4. Educational neglect: not enrolling child in school or provide child with proper home-schooling



There may be economic and cultural factors involved that led to the neglect of the child.

For example: The parent lost his/her job and is unable to provide for the child. Reporting neglect can mean the parent getting help from the government to provide for the child.

SEVERE NEGLECT:

1. The intentional failure of a parent/caregiver to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care
2. Willfully causes/permits the child or child's health to be endangered
3. Failing to seek medical treatment resulting in permanent damage or death

NEGLECT: RELIGIOUS CONSIDERATION

Refusing medical care for religious reasons is a hotly debated topic when children are involved.

Per CANRA, a child receiving treatment by spiritual means or not receiving specified medical treatment for religious reasons, shall not for that reason alone be considered a neglected child.

An informed and appropriate medical decision made by a parent/caregiver after consultation with a physician does not constitute neglect.

THIS IS A CONTROVERSIAL TOPIC, but all you need is REASONABLE SUSPICION of neglect to report. Leave it to the proper authorities to determine if there is actual neglect or if it falls in the category of religious consideration.

What is your church and/or denomination's stance or belief regarding divine healing and modern medicine? (write it below)

It is important to know your church/denominations stance on this issue and even have it in writing so you are able to explain it to parents/caregivers who may approach you about it or use your church and religious consideration to explain away neglect to the authorities.

PARENT/CAREGIVER RED FLAGS

Red Flags in a parent/caregiver's life warn us to be more observant than usual. It is important to remember that just because a Red Flag exists in a does not mean a child is being abused. It does mean the probability of abuse is higher, which is why we need to be able to see the Red Flags and act accordingly if needed.

Red Flags to be considered when other concerns are present

1. Substance abuse
2. History of childhood abuse or exposure to domestic violence
3. Depression, anger issues, or mental illness
4. Lack of social support
5. Unemployment or poverty

Parental Behavior Red Flags

1. Unexplained injuries - parent unable to explain a reason for injury, discrepancies in explanation, blame is placed on third party like a sibling, explanations are inconsistent with medical findings, improbable
2. Delayed medical care for child's injury - good rule of thumb is if a reasonable person would have sought medical care in the same circumstances

Red Flags for Physical or Emotional Abuse

1. Parent is unduly harsh and rigid about child-rearing
2. Parent tells you of use of objects (belts, whips, clothes hanger) to discipline the child
3. Parent berates, humiliates, or belittles child
4. Parent is indifferent to child (ignores child who is upset or crying)
5. Parent has unrealistic expectation of child (toilet-training a 6-month-old)
6. Parent singles out one child as "bad", "evil", or "beyond control".
7. Parent misinterprets child's normal behavior (a parent interprets an infant's crying as evidence that child hates the parent)

CHILD RED FLAGS

Red Flags also exist in a child's life and clue us in to possible abuse.

Red Flags for Sexual Abuse

1. Inappropriate sexual knowledge for the child's age
2. Demonstrating sexual acts on other children or toys
3. Molesting other children
4. Post-traumatic stress disorder
5. Emotional and behavioral problems like: sexual reactivity, withdrawal, crying, sleep problems
6. Sexually transmitted diseases or infections

Other Red Flags

1. A statement made by the child that the injury was caused by abuse
2. Injuries unusual for the child's age
3. A history of previous or recurrent injuries, even if they appear accidental
4. Wearing clothing inappropriate for the weather (BE AWARE of cultural issues regarding clothing)

Red Flags for Physical or Emotional Abuse

1. Hostile, aggressive, or verbally abusive toward others
2. Fearful or withdrawn behavior, low self-esteem
3. Anxiety or aggression or social maladjustment such as: delinquency, use of alcohol or drugs, substance abuse, academic/behavioral problems in school, poor peer relationships
4. Self-destructive (self-mutilates, bangs head, etc.)
5. Destructive (breaks windows, sets fires, etc.)
6. Frightened of going home, frightened of parents/caregivers
7. Attempts to hide injuries
8. Frequent absence from school
9. Clingy, forms indiscriminate attachments to unrelated adults
10. Developmental delay

CHILD RED FLAGS

CONSIDER THIS: Children are very curious about their bodies and genitals at this age (before puberty) and may often touch themselves or another person in those areas, which is a normal part of child development.

However, demonstrating knowledge of sexual actions by imitating or drawing is NOT normal, and suggests that a child has likely been exposed to sexual activity in some way.

It would be ACCEPTABLE to discuss the behavior with the child's parents, BUT THE LAW DOES NOT ADDRESS THIS SPECIFICALLY. Mandated reporters are not required to investigate, but they are required to report reasonable suspicion.

Avoid interviewing young children about possible sexual abuse unless you are trained to do so. This training at church is not training to conduct such interviews.

RISK FACTORS for child sexual abuse includes but not limited to:

1. Being female
2. Living in a single parent household
3. Having a mother who is unavailable
4. Perceiving family life as unhappy
5. Having psychological or mental delays

Sexual abuse often occurs in the ABSENCE of any risk factors. It often occurs WITHOUT OBVIOUS SIGNS or red flags.

Red Flags for Neglect

1. Dirty clothes, poor hygiene
2. Severe dental cavities
3. Developmental delay
4. Self-abusive behaviors
5. Socially withdrawn
6. Behavioral problems such as anxiety or aggression
7. Failure to thrive, or a malnourished child

HOME RED FLAGS

Red Flags exist in the home. These red flags can point to different types of abuse and can be observed during a home visit, like courtesy visits or home Bible studies. It is important to note that refusal to allow entry inside the home may also be a Red Flag in and of itself, but should be considered when there are other concerns.

Red Flags for the Home:

1. Dirty house (more than the usual mess of life)

Usual: mess from having a newborn, children's scattered toys, laundry in the corner, aftermath mess from a party

Red Flags: piles of dirt, accumulated junk (hoarding), thick dust, overflowing garbage, human/animal feces, broken things lying around

2. Harmful things out in the open, like chemicals, tools, nails, etc.

3. Lack of food or large amount of expired food (not to be confused with poverty, but note that poverty can lead to the neglect of a child)

4. Locked pantries or cabinets (lack of access to food)

5. Locked, secretive rooms

6. Other unusual possessions: Do they have pet food but no pets? Animal cages but no animals?

MANDATED REPORTERS

Who are Mandated Reporters?

Typically, people with regular contact with children (like teachers and caregivers), plus healthcare professionals and peace officers (cops, firefighters). They are Mandated Reporters whether or not they are in their place of work, for as long as they hold that job.

In a church setting, who is a Mandated Reporter (according to the law)?

1. Clergy members like priest, minister, pastor, rabbi, etc.

If you are licensed or ordained, you are a Mandated Reporter.

2. Custodian of records for the clergy member

Anyone working in administrative positions for the church

What is Penitential Communication?

It is communication intending to be in confidence including, but not limited to a sacramental confession made to a clergy - in the course of discipline or practice of his/her church, denomination, organization - who is authorized or accustomed to hear those communications and - under the disciplines, tenets, customs, or practices of his/her church, denomination, or organization - has a duty to keep those communications secret.

When acquired during Penitential Communication, the Mandated Reporter (clergy) is NOT REQUIRED to report reasonable suspicions or disclosures of abuse.

HOWEVER, the clergy-penitent privilege is typically interpreted narrowly by the courts in the context of child maltreatment.

CONSIDER THIS: No matter how strict faith tradition protects confidentiality, pastoral resources should be utilized to help protect children because the behavior of offenders often escalates if not stopped.

NON-MANDATED REPORTERS

Who are Non-Mandated Reporters?

Anyone who does not fall into the category of Mandated Reporters according to the law.

According to the law, ministry volunteers are Non-Mandated Reporters even if they work with children within the church if they are also Non-Mandated Reporters in their occupation. For example: An engineer who is also a Children's Ministry volunteer teaching elementary children is, according to the law, a Non-Mandated Reporter. Meanwhile, a nurse who is also a Children's Ministry volunteer teaching elementary children is, according to the law, a Mandated Reporter because nurses are Mandated Reporters.

Can Non-Mandated Reporters report abuse?

YES!!! Non-Mandated Reporters are not “mandated” or required by the law to report, but they can still report abuse. If they FAIL to report, they are NOT punishable by law, but they can still face civil lawsuit. For example, they can be sued for knowing or suspecting an abuse, but did not do anything about it. Non-Mandated Reporters can also report anonymously.

If Mandated Reporters FAIL to report:

1. They are criminally liable, misdemeanor
2. They can face 6 months in jail and/or \$1000 fine
3. In a civil lawsuit, they are liable for damages especially if the victim or another child is further victimized because of their failure to report

TAKE NOTE! No supervisor or administrator may impeded or inhibit a report or subject a reporting person to any sanction. Doing so is punishable by imprisonment, fine, or both. It is ILLEGAL for someone to stop a mandated reporter from making a report.

Create a policy for your church/ministry regarding Non-Mandated Reporters serving in ministries that interact with children. Consider making them honorary Mandated Reporters within your ministry to best protect the children in your church or those who may come to your church through outreach events.

MAKING A REPORT

When do you report?

IMMEDIATELY when you have reasonable suspicion of abuse.

You do not need proof of abuse to make a report. Do not wait until you know more. Do not investigate yourself.

Who makes the report?

It is the RESPONSIBILITY of the Mandated Reporter to make a report.

It is ACCEPTABLE for a Non-Mandated Reporter to make a report.

The law allows Mandated Reporters to use information reliably obtained from others to have reasonable suspicion. They don't need to have obtained the information or disclosure of abuse themselves.

Do not try to interview children unless you are trained to do so. You may tell your supervisor, but it does not satisfy your obligation to report.

Scenario: If you are a Mandated Reporter and have reasonable suspicion of an abuse, and you tell your pastor who is also a Mandated Reporter, you have NOT satisfied your lawful obligation to report. If your pastor fails to make a report, you are both criminally liable for failing to report.

Document Everything!

Document all contacts made, information obtained, and information released.

Keep accurate records.

Can you follow up on reported cases of abuse?

You may follow up with the child protection agency to determine the status of an investigation and/or to facilitate coordination of services when appropriate. Let the child protection agency take the lead as they are trained to handle these cases.

MAKING A REPORT

Steps to Make a Report (phone and written report are MUSTS)

BY PHONE: report immediately or as soon as practically possible

California Santa Clara County Emergency Response for Child Abuse Telephone Numbers: 650-493-1186 (North) ; 408-683-0601 (South); 408-299-2071 (Central)

FAX/EMAIL: a new provision of the law permits making initial report via fax or email, IF REASONABLE EFFORTS to report by phone were unsuccessful

WRITTEN REPORT: Within 36 hours of making the phone call, a written report MUST be submitted on Dept of Justice Form SS 8572 (DOJ SS 8572) aka Suspected Child Abuse Report Form (SCAR)

1. This form can be requested from local child protective agencies or downloaded online at http://ag.ca.gov/childabuse/pdf/ss_8572.pdf
2. Must be submitted to Child Welfare Services (CWS), Police/Sheriff or Probation Dept (Other law enforcement persons like school security are NOT authorized to received reports)
3. May be faxed or submitted electronically (depends on the county)

Research your local Emergency Response contact information to report child abuse. Write the information below:

Phone:

Fax/Email:

Written Report:

CONFIDENTIALITY & IMMUNITY

Confidentiality

Reports are confidential and may only be disclosed to official agencies and professionals involved in the investigation, treatment, prosecution, or record keeping of these cases.

Note: Even though the families of victims will not be told who made the report, they can at times determine who it was based on the specifics of the report

Non-mandated reporters can report anonymously.

Mandated reporters cannot, but the identity of mandated reporters is kept confidential.

The law guarantees confidentiality in order to encourage reporting of abuse/neglect. CWS takes the confidentiality of mandated reporters very seriously. CWS workers are adept at handling questions and reactions from families who want to know who made the report.

NOTE THIS: In some cases, mandated reporters may be asked to provide a court testimony (and so receive a subpoena).

Immunity

Mandated reporters are immune from criminal and civil liability. \$50,000 is available from the state (CA) for the reimbursement of attorneys' fees if a Mandated Reporter is sued for making a mandated report and the case is dismissed or the reporter prevails in court.

The mandated report has to have been made in GOOD FAITH, and not in anger or retaliation towards the parent/caregiver, or other bad faith reasons.

What is your state's laws regarding the confidentiality and immunity of Mandated Reporters? Find out!

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A REPORT IS MADE

Report Findings

The report is deemed either:

1. Unfounded - the report is determined to be false, inherently improbable, involves an accidental injury, or does not constitute child abuse
2. Substantiated - the report is determined to constitute child abuse or neglect
3. Inconclusive - the report is determined not to be unfounded, but the findings are inconclusive and there is insufficient evidence to determine whether child abuse or neglect has occurred.

CONSIDER THIS: In some cases, it may take several reports for abuse to become substantiated. If you have reported the abuse of a child, and suspect the abuse continues, REPORT IT AGAIN.

Response Time of CWS: It depends on the seriousness of events reported, age of child, situation the child faces, and any known history that may influence the decision. If the child is DANGER, response will be immediate & Law Enforcement may arrive before or with CWS. If there is less risk, it may be 3-10 days before action is taken by CWS. Back-logged CWS may also affect response time.

Consider This

1. The primary intent of reporting laws is to protect the child
2. Protecting the identified/reported child may protect other children in the home
3. The report of abuse maybe a catalyst for change in the home environment, which may help lower the risk of abuse in the home
4. Reporting may provide additional assistance or resources to parents/caregivers
5. Mandated reporters (and anyone working with children) play a crucial role in identifying and reporting concerns of abuse or neglect of children that may otherwise go unseen
6. If you need help determining "reasonable suspicion," call CWS
7. If you aren't certain, REPORT
8. If the story seems confusing or implausible, REPORT
9. Never investigate, REPORT

HOW TO REACT

How should you react when facing reasonable suspicion or disclosure of abuse? Your reaction is important!

1. Control your emotional response. Remain calm. Do not express shock, disapproval, or disgust regarding the child, parent/caregiver, or the disclosure.
2. Consider other observations you have made. Have there been other clues that something is wrong? Has there been a pattern of abuse? Sometimes we are blind until someone or something opens our eyes. Hindsight is 20/20.
3. If the practice falls within the legal definitions of child abuse it must be reported
4. If you are unsure whether what you have seen/heard is abuse, call a child protective agency for advice.

Talking With Children

If you become aware of a possible abuse based on physical evidence, the child's behavior, or the child's verbal disclosure:

Use open-ended questions

Ask: How did you get hurt?

Not: Did your father do that?

Not: Who hit you? (children may be reluctant to point fingers, especially at family members, in fear of punishment or retaliation from the person who hurt them)

Ask the child in private

If it's a behavioral concern, ask privately if there's anything going on that is making the child angry or unhappy

Verbal disclosure

Among younger school-age children, verbal disclosures sometimes happen by accident. The child may tell another child who tells an adult. If it's disclosed, report it. It's common for children to recant the disclosure or deny the abuse out of fear of getting in trouble or breaking up the family

HOW TO REACT

Talking with children (continued)

Sit next to the child instead of behind a table or desk Sit at the child's level.

Use language the child understands

Allow the child to tell you in his/her own words what happened.

Don't ask leading or suggestive questions.

Reassure the child

1. He or she is not to blame for the abuse
2. He or she deserves praise for having the courage to reveal the abuse
3. He or she is helping the family by seeking outside help
4. Explain what you will do as a result of the disclosure, who you will tell and why

Remember, you are not investigating!

You are gathering as much information as you can about the abuse without interrogating the child so you can relay the information you gathered to the appropriate authorities.

HELPING CHILDREN & FAMILIES

When abuse is disclosed and a report is made, it can be a very stressful time for the family of the abused. Here are things you can do.

1. Continue to reassure the child he/she did the right thing.
2. Advise parents/caregivers of their critical role in child's recovery. Children are strongly influenced by parents/caregivers' attitudes and reactions. Catastrophic displays of emotion will likely heighten a child's distress.
3. Give parents/caregivers opportunities to express their strong and understandable feelings about their child's abuse in appropriate ways that support a child's recovery and in appropriate times and places.
4. Encourage families to seek professional counseling or psychotherapy.
5. Be familiar and aware of the feelings parents/caregivers may experience during this crisis period.

Anger & outrage

1. Toward the perpetrator. Give them a place to vent (when the child is not present because it could cause the child to be reluctant to talk about the abuse since it evokes strong and frightening responses from parents/caregivers)
2. Toward the child for not resisting the perpetrator or for not disclosing abuse sooner. It is IMPORTANT to reinforce that the child is NEVER to blame.
3. Toward God for "letting this happen," for not protecting the child, and for all sorts of other reasons.

Divided Loyalty

There may be divided loyalty in cases of intra-family abuse. The loss of a partner may mean a loss in economic support, social status, or emotional support. There may also be a fear of retribution/revenge from the offending partner. It is common for parents/caregivers to collapse and abandon responsibility, avoid decision-making, or withdraw from others.

HELPING CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Feelings parents/caregivers may experience (continued):

Guilt

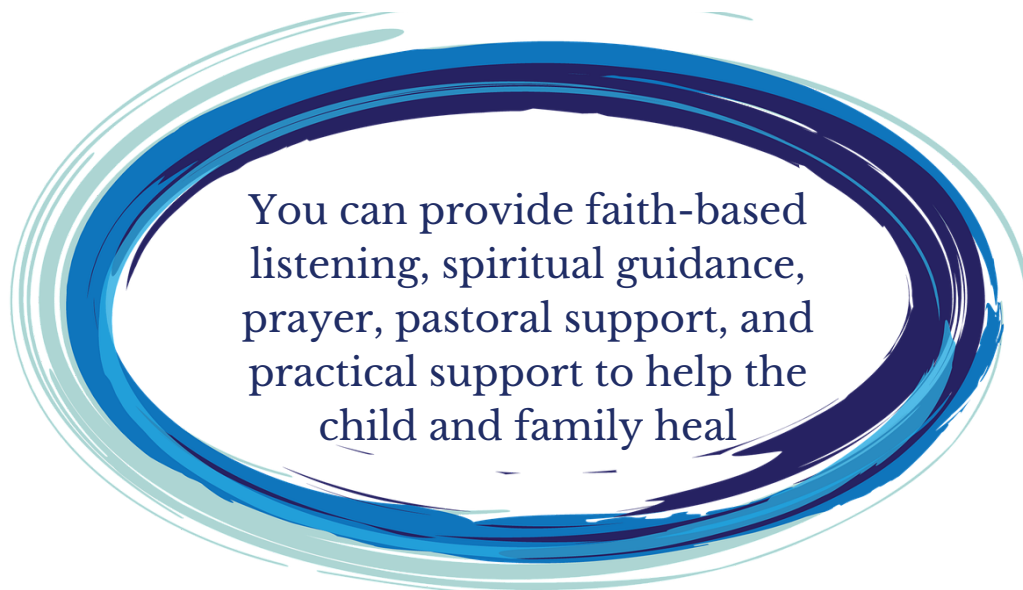
1. Inadequacy from failing to protect the child
2. Denial that abuse happened
3. Overprotective and severe restriction on the child's activities
4. More permission with the child's activities to allay guilt
5. Guilt from reporting the abuse, especially if the perpetrator is a family member or if the report destroys a family (their own or someone else's)

Anxiety

1. From the consequences of involving the legal systems like CWS and courts
2. From the child's physical health. They need clear, direct information, prognosis, steps to move forward.
3. From the child's mental health. Reassure parents they can do a lot to help their child recover and move forward positively.

Denial

1. Because the perpetrator is someone they love, trust, or depend upon to meet psychological and/or physical needs
2. Denial protects parents from feelings of remorse, guilt, and inadequacy
3. Denying the child's victimization may be a way of denying their own victimization and unresolved feelings



PRACTICE SCENARIOS

CASE 1: COLIN

Colin, a student in your Sunday School class, has recently become withdrawn and appears depressed. Although he used to participate actively in discussions and activities, you notice that he no longer volunteers or contributes. You talk with him privately about the changes you have noticed, and ask him whether there is anything that is making him angry or unhappy. He tells you that since his stepfather lost his job, he is always irritable, yelling at Colin and hitting him for no apparent reason. He shows you a bruise on his back that he says was caused by his stepfather hitting him with a belt.

Based on this information, you are mandated to report suspected child abuse as Colin has both made a verbal disclosure of abuse and has a visible injury. In this example, Colin has an observable injury. However, it is not necessary to observe injuries to report.

CASE 2: SARA

After church one Sunday, 8-year-old Sara's Sunday-school teacher tells you that Sara was caught exposing herself to other children on the playground and telling them to touch her. The teacher says that she talked with Sara about this behavior, and that Sara told her that her 14-year-old brother always wants to see her "pee pee" and likes to touch it.

What should you do?

- A. Contact Sara's parents to tell them what she said and gather more information about the situation.
- B. Nothing. You're told that Sara did not seem upset and you do not want to over-react.
- C. Make a child abuse report for possible sexual abuse.
- D. Meet with Sara, her brother and her parents to discuss the allegations and decide what should be done.

PRACTICE SCENARIOS

C is the correct answer. Sara has made a disclosure of possible sexual abuse; you must report. Although it may be tempting to tell Sara's parents in order to gather more information or discuss your concerns, such action could interfere with the initial CPS investigation. In addition, children react differently to being abused, and many abused children do not exhibit obvious trauma symptoms. Finally, in cases of sexual abuse, professional counseling for the victim, perpetrator, and parents is usually necessary.

CASE 3: NANCY

You have noticed that a member of your youth group, 14-year-old Nancy, appears depressed and withdrawn. When talking about her family, she says that her father often criticizes her behavior and appearance, calling her stupid, lazy and fat. She also comments that, although she likes attending the youth program, she worries about being away from her mother because her father has started drinking again and is sometimes violent when he is drunk.

What would you do?

- A. You would make a suspected child abuse report based on this information.
- B. You would not report suspected abuse based on this information.
- C. You would like to obtain more information before reporting.

A is the correct answer. It is appropriate to make a report. Nancy's affect and verbal description fall into the category of emotional abuse that may be reported. In addition, there may be more to the situation than what a child initially discloses, and ethical and moral obligations to protect children should supersede the letter of the law.

REPORTING ABUSE OR REASONABLE SUSPICION
OF ABUSE MAY BE A HARD STEP TO TAKE, BUT IT'S AN
IMPORTANT STEP IN PROTECTING THE CHILDREN
GOD SENDS TO YOUR CHURCH/MINISTRY.