

CHILD DISCIPLINE VS. CHILD ABUSE

As a parent or a caregiver, it is important for you to guide your children. You may, without meaning to, react to their misbehaviours and cause them harm. Discipline is teaching children in a responsible and loving way. Abuse causes unnecessary pain and suffering to a CYP.



DISCIPLINING A CHILD THE RIGHT WAY

- Discipline is different from punishment. Punishment uses pain, fear or shame to deter a child from repeating a behaviour. Discipline is about coaching your child towards good behaviour. It builds understanding and a positive relationship between you and your child.
- Always be bigger, stronger, wiser and kind. Your child learns that he can rely on you for tenderness, comfort, firm guidance and protection. Separate the behaviour (i.e. what the child did) from the person (i.e. who the child is). Love your child, correct his behaviour.
- Understand how your child is developing. Know what behaviour is normal or expected in a given situation for a particular age. Set age-appropriate expectations.
- Take notice of and affirm your child's good behaviour to encourage more of the same.
- Do not respond to temper tantrums and whining. Your child learns that he cannot get undue attention from such behaviour. Distraction also works well for younger children.
- Consider the age of your children when setting rules and enforcing boundaries. Give short, simple and direct instructions.
- Tell them what will happen if they do not listen. Set consequences that are logically related to what your child does. That way, your child can learn responsibility for his behaviour. Do not use emotional or physical intimidation or threats that affects a child's sense of self-worth and self-esteem. Avoid making threats (e.g. withdrawal of privileges) that are difficult to keep.
- Use 'time-out' to teach your child (and yourself) to take time to calm down. This needs to happen before a child can think more clearly and act more thoughtfully. Younger children find it difficult to manage their feelings on their own. You need to stay with them to teach them.
- Use 'time-in' to talk to your child. Listen to your child's feelings and thoughts. You can both learn about each other's cues and avoid similar situations in future.

Parenting is a fulfilling role that can be challenging. Seek the support of your loved ones.

To report possible child abuse of your child or any other child, call Child Protective Service at 1800-777-0000 or the police.

DO SEEK HELP EARLY

HELP LINES

ComCare Call 1800 222 0000

Family Violence Specialist Centres

PAVE

6555 0390

<http://www.pave.org.sg/>

TRANS SAFE Centre

6449 9088

<http://www.transfamilyservices.org.sg/services-safe.html>

Care Corner Project StART

6476 1482

<http://www.carecorner.org.sg/start.html>

Child Protection Specialist Centres

Big Love

6445 0400

<http://www.biglove.org.sg/contact@biglove.org.sg>

HEART@Fei Yue

6819 9170

<http://www.fycs.org/index.cfm?GPID=260>
heartadmin@fycs.org

You can also find more information at
<http://www.stopfamilyviolence.sg> and
<http://app.msf.gov.sg/dfcs/familyservice/default.aspx>



FAMILY VIOLENCE DESTROYS LIVES

SEEK HELP EARLY



Stop Child Abuse

If you are, or someone you know is experiencing family violence, call ComCare Call at 1800 222 0000

Visit www.stopfamilyviolence.sg

STOP CHILD ABUSE



Family violence is any violent, threatening or controlling behaviour that occurs within the family causing a person to live in fear.

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

Child abuse is the commission or omission of any act by a parent or caregiver which would harm a child or young person's (CYP) physical, emotional and/or psychological well-being, and is judged by community values and professionals as abusive.

THERE ARE VARIOUS FORMS OF CHILD ABUSE

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse is any deliberate, non-accidental act that causes physical injury to a CYP. It includes causing bruises, burns, cuts, broken bones by a range of acts such as beating, shaking and excessive discipline.

EMOTIONAL & PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

Emotional and psychological abuse refers to any act that harms a CYP emotionally or psychologically. The acts can be repeated or be an isolated extreme incident. These acts or behaviours may include hostile rejection, terrorising, actively isolating, discriminating, encouraging inappropriate (self-destructive, antisocial, criminal, deviant) behaviour, and/or denying emotional responsiveness.

NEGLECT

Neglect occurs when a CYP is harmed because a parent or caregiver fails to provide adequate supervision, food, medical care, and/or clothing appropriate to the CYP's age and level of development. It may include situations when the parent or caregiver exposes the CYP to unsafe and/or unhygienic living conditions.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse refers to any act where a CYP is used for sexual pleasure, or is taken advantage of sexually. It also includes exposing a CYP to sexual acts or pornography. Sexual abuse can happen to girls and boys of all ages. The abuser may be a member of the CYP's family or someone trusted by the CYP. The abuser may be male or female.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE

The following signs and symptoms could reflect deeper concerns and should not be ignored. They may indicate that a CYP is experiencing abuse or difficulties coping, due to strained family relationships or the death of a loved one. Parents, caregivers and professionals should encourage CYPs to share any problems they are facing and to reassure them of their support.



PHYSICAL

Signs could include, but are not limited to:

- Cuts/abrasions/welts
- Burn marks
- Bruising
- Fractures
- Head injuries
- Multiple injuries on the CYP at various stages of healing
- Injuries that appear to be in the shape of an object, hand or 'human bite', including cane marks
- CYP looking unusually quiet, withdrawn, anxious or becoming excessively aggressive

EMOTIONAL & PSYCHOLOGICAL

Signs could include, but are not limited to:

- Self-harming (i.e. cutting oneself)
- Talking about, or previously attempting suicide
- Showing or expressing extreme fear of returning home (i.e. hysterical crying or defiance)
- Showing or expressing extreme anxiety toward parent/carer
- Bed wetting
- Displaying excessive attention-seeking behaviour

NEGLECT

Signs could include, but are not limited to:

- CYP left unattended for extended periods of time, inappropriate to the age and needs of the CYP
- Unsafe home conditions such as sharp objects within reach of CYP and hence posing danger, unhygienic environment
- Malnourishment, or delayed growth
- CYP often appearing dirty and unkempt
- CYP not receiving necessary medical attention

SEXUAL

Signs could include, but are not limited to:

- Involvement in sexual activity with inappropriate touching (e.g. private parts, breasts, groin, anus, buttocks) by parent/carer or household member
- Pain or itching in genital area
- Bruises or bleeding in the private areas
- Sexually transmitted diseases or pregnancies
- Inappropriate interest in or knowledge of sexual matters, unsuitable to the age of the CYP
- Exposure to sexual acts or materials (e.g. pornography) by parent/carer