



Why is this important?

Having an awareness of the types and indicators of abuse can help workers identify abuse, intervene at an early stage and prevent further harm.

What should we be doing?

All Archdiocesan workers should be made aware of the main types and possible indicators of abuse.

Put simply, abuse is the mistreatment of another person which causes, or has the potential to cause harm. It can occur as a result of one act, or inaction, and does not have to be repeated to amount to abuse. It does not matter that harm is not caused to a person by the abusive behaviour.

TYPES OF ABUSE

Physical abuse is any intentional aggressive use of force against another person.

Examples: hitting, shaking, slapping, pinching, scalding, forced feeding, excessive use of restraints.

Indicators: bodily injuries, injuries that don't match explanation, concealing injuries, wariness of physical contact.

Sexual abuse is any non-consensual, forced, or illegal act of a sexual nature towards, or with another person. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact or no contact at all.

Examples: sexual assault, sexual touching, exposing genitals, exposure to sexual images, nudity or pornography.

Indicators: age-inappropriate sexual behaviour or knowledge, sexually transmitted infections (particularly in children), genital or anal soreness or trauma, a wariness of physical contact.

Psychological abuse is the persistent emotional mistreatment, or manipulation, of another person.

Examples: persistent ridiculing, menacing, conveying that a person is worthless, emotional rejection, symbolic acts (e.g. threats to abandon).

Indicators: depression, self-harm, low self-esteem, social withdrawal, being especially submissive towards a particular person.

Neglect is the failure of a caregiver to provide basic requirements for the physical and emotional development and sustenance of a person.

Examples: inadequate food, shelter, clothing or medical and dental attention.

Indicators: unhealthy hygiene, untreated medical or dental issues, insufficient growth, significant weight loss, inadequate clothing for conditions, stealing food.

Spiritual abuse is abuse perpetrated by an individual in a position of authority and trust within the Church, supposedly in the name of God.

Examples: invoking God's will to justify improper/abusive behaviour, distorting scripture to manipulate, denying religious rites to punish.

Indicators: a sudden crisis of faith, mistrust of religious figures, separation from the Church.