

Appendix 16: Categories of Abuse in Adults

Physical abuse

The non-accidental infliction of physical force which results in pain, injury or impairment. This may include hitting, assault, slapping, pushing, pinching, kicking, hair-pulling, punching, forcing someone, inappropriate restraint, physical sanction, incorrect moving or handling technique which cause distress, isolation, confinement, avoidable deterioration of health, misuse of prescribed medication.

Sexual abuse

The involvement of an adult with care and support needs in sexual activities or relationships without informed or valid consent. This may involve offensive or inappropriate language sexual innuendo and sexual teasing), inappropriate looking, inflicting pornography on an individual, inappropriate touching, masturbation in public, indecent exposure, coercion into an activity, rape or sexual assault, photography, online and social media abuse.

Psychological/emotional abuse

Behaviour that has a harmful effect on an adult's emotional health or development. This can include scolding or treating like a child, making a person feel ashamed of involuntary behaviour, blaming someone for attitudes or actions or events beyond their control, use of silence, humiliation, bullying, harassment, verbal abuse intimidation, controlling behaviour or efforts to create over-dependence, lack of privacy or dignity, deprivation of social contact, threats to withdraw help and support, denial of cultural and spiritual needs, denial of choice or failing to respond to emotional needs.

Financial/material abuse

The denial of access of the individual to money, property, possessions, valuables or inheritance, or improper use of funds by omission, exploitation or extortion through threats. Although financial abuse can occur in isolation, where other forms of abuse occur, financial abuse is also likely. Care and Support Statutory Guidance, Issued under the Care Act 2014 (Department of Health). This includes misuse, embezzlement or theft, or misappropriation of a person's money, property, possessions or benefits. Also, refusing a person access to their own money, property or possessions, failing to account properly for money, property or possessions or applying pressure in connection to wills, property and inheritance, or applying duress to a person in order to secure a loan.

Neglect and acts of omission

The repeated withholding of adequate care which results in the adult's basic needs not being met. It can be intentional or unintentional and includes acts of omission.

This may include denial of educational, social, religious, cultural or recreational needs, lack of adequate heating, lighting, food or fluids. Also the inappropriate use of medication, lack of attention to hygiene, toe and fingernails or teeth.

Self-neglect

This has to be balanced with an individual's wish to make decisions for themselves.

Discriminatory abuse

This exists when values, beliefs or culture result in the misuse of power that denies opportunities to some individuals or groups. Equalities Act 2010

Institutional abuse

This includes neglect and poor practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, or in relation to care provided in one's home. This may range from one-off incidents to ongoing ill treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice or a result of the structure, policies, processes

and practices within an organisation.

Care and Support Statutory Guidance, Issued under the Care Act 2014 (Department of Health)

Spiritual abuse (Emotional abuse in a religious context)

Coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context. The target experiences spiritual abuse as a deeply personal attack. This abuse may include manipulation and exploitation, enforced accountability, censorship of decision-making, requirements for secrecy and silence, pressure to conform, misuse of Scripture or the pulpit to control behaviour, requirement of obedience to the abuser, the suggestion that the abuser has a 'divine' position, isolation from others, especially those external to the abusive context'.

Domestic abuse

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

Cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse (Updated 2018)

Controlling behaviour

A range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour. Cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse (Updated 2018)

Human trafficking

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Trafficking is broken down into three elements:

- the act (what is done)
- the means (how it is done)
- the purpose (why it is done). The Palermo Protocol – Article 3

Modern slavery

The process of coercing labour or other services from a captive individual through any means, including exploitation of bodies or body parts.

Siddharth Kara, Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery

A social and economic relationship in which a person is controlled through violence or the threat of violence, is paid nothing and is economically exploited.

Kevin Bales, Slavery Today 2008

Abuse using social media and/or mobile phones

Includes communications that seek to intimidate, control, manipulate, put down, falsely discredit or humiliate the recipient. It may also include threatening a person's earnings, employment, reputation or safety, and sexting.

Possible Indicators of Abuse in Adults

As with children, this is not a definitive list of indicators but rather some examples of what may be observed. Some indicators occur across the categories and not all categories are covered here.

In some of the examples below the action is a clear form of abuse:

Physical

- a history of unexplained falls, minor injuries or malnutrition
- unexplained bruises or untreated injuries in various stages of healing
- injuries to the head, face or scalp
- poor skin condition or poor skin hygiene
- dehydration and/or malnutrition without illness-related cause
- broken spectacles/frames
- physical indicators of being subjected to punishment or of having been restrained
- loss of weight
- a vulnerable person telling you they have been hit, slapped, kicked or mistreated
- varicose ulcers or pressure sores
- injuries reflecting the shape of an object
- unexplained burns, rope burns or cigarette burns.

Emotional

- adult being scolded or treated like a child (infantilisation)
- making a person feel ashamed of involuntary behaviour
- blaming someone for attitudes or actions beyond their control
- use of silence
- humiliation
- bullying/harassment
- verbal abuse
- intimidation
- controlling or over-dependence
- lack of privacy and dignity.
- deprivation of social contact
- threats to withdraw help and support
- denying of cultural and spiritual needs
- denying of choice
- failing to respond adequately to emotional needs

Neglect

- poor hygiene and cleanliness
- clothing which is inadequate or in poor condition
- dirt, faecal or urine smell, or other health and safety hazards in the vulnerable person's living environment
- persistent hunger
- dehydration.
- weight loss
- an untreated medical condition
- poor physical condition rashes, sores, varicose ulcers, pressure sores
- evidence of failure to seek medical advice or summon assistance
- evidence of failure to access appropriate health or educational services or social care.

Sexual abuse

- unexplained changes in behaviour
- a significant change in sexual behaviour or sexually implicit/explicit behaviour
- pregnancy in a woman unable to consent to sexual intercourse

- bruises around the vagina or genital area
- unusual difficulty in walking or sitting.
- torn, stained or bloody underwear • unexplained infections or sexually transmitted diseases
- hints about sexual abuse
- sleep disturbances
- self-harming
- a vulnerable person telling you they have been sexually assaulted or raped.

Self-neglect

- dehydration, malnutrition (or obesity), untreated medical conditions, poor personal hygiene
- hazardous living conditions e.g., improper wiring, no indoor plumbing, no heat, no running water
- unsanitary living quarters e.g., animal/insect infestation, no functioning toilet,
- inappropriate and/or inadequate clothing, lack of the necessary medical aids e.g., glasses, hearing aids, dentures
- grossly inadequate housing or homelessness.

Institutional abuse

- lack of flexibility or choice for people using the service
- inadequate staffing levels
- inappropriate or poor care
- no opportunity for snacks or drinks
- failure to promote or support a person's spiritual or cultural beliefs.
- a culture of treating everyone 'the same' as opposed to treating everyone 'equally'
- dehumanising language
- absence of individual care.

Spiritual abuse

Those who have been spiritually abused may experience:

- a sense of betrayal leading to distrust and self-isolation
- silencing by their abuser
- a changed and damaged view of the church.
- feeling misunderstood
- long-term distress
- loss of church as safe space • powerlessness.

Domestic abuse

- unexplained bruises or injuries
- unusually quiet or withdrawn
- panic attacks away
- frequent absences from work or other commitments
- wears clothes that conceal bruises even on warm days.
- stops talking about partner
- anxious about being out or rushes away
- always accompanied by partner
- isolated, withdrawing from friends and family.

Abuse using social media and/or mobile phones

See above sections for both children and adults.

Human trafficking/modern slavery

- trauma
- complex medical, emotional, mental and practical needs
- potential for financial, legal and physical impact of experience to affect
- long-term recovery

- anger and post-traumatic altruism
- apparent high resilience masking
- trauma
- appears to be in a dependency situation
- travel, identity, financial documents are held by someone else
- Unsure of home/work address
- may be living and working at the same address
- may appear unfamiliar with their neighbourhood
- may be isolated, with limited social contact or time off and limited contact with family
- seems to be bonded by a debt
- experiences threats against themselves or family members unable to negotiate working conditions or leave their employment
- on low pay or have excessive deductions made for food, accommodation, transport
- may look malnourished or unkempt, lacking access to medical care, hygiene facilities and education
- may wear same clothes day in and day out
- expressions of anxiety, fear or mistrust
- Previous history of having been trafficked
- Untreated injuries or medical conditions
- Reluctant to seek help or to trust others