

For leaflet “Child Protection -- We All Have a Duty”

Further information on psychological harm/abuse is as follows.

Psychological Harm/Abuse can be summed up in the following behaviours:

Rejection, Isolation and Contempt

Neglect of the emotional need of the child and being emotionally unavailable in interactions with him/her, depriving the child of a normal social life (e.g. placing unreasonable limitations or restrictions on interactions with family members, peers or others in the community), constantly criticising the child harshly, scolding the child unreasonably, humiliating the child in public, ridiculing the child and being indifferent towards the child, degrading the personal value of the child.

Threats

Threatening the child with words and discipline the child harshly, making the child feel a strong sense of fear and insecurity that his/her safety is under threat constantly (e.g. threatening to abandon/leave the child in dangerous or frightening situations, setting rigid or unrealistic expectations with threat of harm or danger if they are not met). °

Misleading

Developmentally inappropriate interaction with the child (e.g. adultification, parentification, infantilisation), thwarting the child’s socialisation and social development within the child’s context by cultivating improper/deviated ideas and concepts (e.g. coercing the child’s submission to extremely dominant parenting behaviours, manipulating or micromanaging the child’s life that disorients the child’s concept of right and wrong, induces guilt or fosters anxiety).

Possible Indicators of Psychological Harm/Abuse

- Physiologically, the child is underweight or frail, developmentally delayed, suffering from eating disorder, physical discomfort or symptoms resulting from psychological or emotional disturbances (e.g. headache, tummy ache, diarrhea, vomiting, skin allergy, etc.)

- Behaviourally, the child may resist contact with others and the outside world, display anxiety symptoms (e.g. habitual nail-biting, hair-pulling, thumb-sucking, head-banging and body-rocking, etc.), wetting, self-harm tendency

Possible Indicators of Parents/Carers Relating to Psychological Harm/Abuse

- Being detached or indifferent towards the child, often singling a particular child and reject or treat him/her badly, constant scolding or humiliating the child frequently
- Often requiring the child to bear responsibilities of an adult/that is inappropriate for his/her age, forbidding the child to express his/her opinions, feelings and wishes, encouraging deviant or criminal behaviour
- Bizarre punishment, unpredictable behaviour
- Falsification of illness in the child making the child believe he/she is ill and become anxious
- Repeatedly accusing others of harming/maltreating the child without factual evidence, subjecting the child to repeat unnecessary investigating procedures

Safeguarding the Physical and Psychological Safety of a Child

Children need to be loved and valued so that they can grow and develop safely and healthily in physical, psychological and social aspects. At the same time, it is also necessary for children to learn to look after themselves and cope with everyday life. Children should have the chance to express their own views, build up a positive self-image and confidence, have a sense of identity, and develop good interpersonal relationships.

To ensure children's normal development of physical and psychological health, parents or carers should provide sufficient care, encouragement and support to the children. Play, communication and appropriate physical contacts are also important. When children do something wrong, parents should teach and guide them with patience. This is of paramount importance to the children's development of self-confidence, emotional regulation, resilience, and a positive and trusting interpersonal relationship in the future.