

# Violence Abuse Neglect and Exploitation Fact Sheet

Impactful Solutions

## Child Safety Commitment



Children and young people have the right to feel safe, to be listened to, and to be protected.

Impactful Solutions takes all concerns about child safety seriously and will act to protect children from harm.

## What is abuse?

Abuse occurs when someone's human rights are violated by another person. This includes harm to adults, children, and young people, even if the harm was not intended. Abuse can include actions that make a child feel unsafe, scared, controlled, or confused.

### Child safety and young people

Impactful Solutions is committed to keeping children and young people safe.

Children and young people with disability are at a higher risk of abuse and harm. We take all concerns seriously, even if no injury has occurred.

Harm to a child can include:

- Being hurt
- Being frightened or distressed
- Being exposed to violence or unsafe behaviour
- Inappropriate behaviour or boundaries from adults or workers

All adults have a responsibility to prevent harm, listen, and act quickly if they are worried about a child's safety

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### What do we know about abuse?

- People living with disability are twice as likely to experience abuse as people without a disability. In Australia that is has the potential to impact approximately 4.3 million people.
- A person's gender, age, disability type or cultural background can increase their risk of abuse.
- There are different types of abuse
- Women with disability are more at risk of sexual abuse and violence
- Children and young people with disability experience significantly higher rates of abuse, including neglect, emotional harm, sexual abuse, and exposure to violence.
- Abuse of children often occurs in places that should feel safe, such as homes, schools, services, or online environments.
- People with disability find it hard to report abuse, they often do not know where or how to report and some people simply do not believe them if they do speak up.

### Neglect

Neglect is the failure to provide for a person's basic needs including food, drink, shelter, clothing and medical needs.

Signs that might indicate a person is suffering from neglect may include:

- Often hungry or unwashed
- Only in contact with people who support them
- Bored, lonely and have no variation in their routine
- Losing skills, including communication skills
- Frustrated, agitated or aggressive towards others
- Trying to leave or escape
- Not meeting their goals
- Not supported with up to date and consistently followed support plans.

### Physical abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a person uses, or threatens to use physical force against a person with disability to hurt or harm them.

Signs that might indicate a person is suffering from physical abuse may include:

- Fearful of a particular person
- Irritable or easily upset

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- Anxious or aggressive
- Depressed or overly drowsy
- Showing changes in sleeping or eating habits
- Maintaining a rigid posture and avoiding eye contact
- Showing changes in their behaviour

## Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse happens when someone uses words or actions to upset, intimidate, threaten or harass a person with disability.

Signs that might indicate a person is suffering from emotional abuse may include:

- Agitated, anxious, quiet or withdrawn
- Manipulative, aggressive, scared or confused
- Crying or unable to sleep
- Self-harming
- Avoiding specific places
- Avoiding or clinging to specific people
- Not wanting to talk about specific places or people
- Eating more or less than usual

## Abuse of children and young people

Children and young people with disability can experience abuse in different ways to adults.

This may include:

- Grooming (when someone slowly builds trust to harm or exploit a child)
- Crossing professional boundaries (for example, sharing secrets, private messages, or special favours)
- Exposure to violence or frightening behaviour
- Inappropriate conversations, images, or online contact
- Being forced to do things they do not understand or agree to

Signs a child or young person may be unsafe can include:

- Sudden changes in behaviour or mood
- Regression in skills (for example toileting, communication, sleep)
- Increased fear, clinginess, or withdrawal

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- Avoiding specific people or places
- Sexualised behaviour that is not age-appropriate

## Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is when someone involves a person living with disability in any sexual activity without their informed consent.

Signs that might indicate a person is suffering from sexual abuse may include:

- Bruising, bleeding or pain in the genital areas, thighs, breasts or upper arms
- Pregnancy
- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Anxiety, depression, poor sleep or concentration
- Withdrawal from relationships
- Fear of people helping with dressing, bathing etc
- Going to bed fully dressed
- Reluctance to be left alone with a particular person
- Sexual abuse can also include grooming, where a person slowly builds trust with a child or young person to exploit or harm them.

## Financial abuse

Financial abuse involves the improper or illegal use of money, property or possessions belonging to a person with disability.

Signs that might indicate a person is suffering from financial abuse may include:

- They do not have access to personal funds
- An unexplained lack of money
- Unaccounted for changes in spending patterns
- Unexplained withdraws from accounts
- Failure of staff to provide receipts
- Receipts indicating unusual purchases
- The person managing finances does not have the legal authority to do so

## Patterns of abuse

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A behaviour towards a person with disability that may not seem like abuse when it happens once. But when this behaviour happens over and over again it forms a pattern of abuse.

Signs that might indicate a person is suffering from a pattern of abuse may include:

- Fearful of a particular person
- Irritable, anxious or upset
- Showing changes in their behaviour or routine
- Not wanting to talk about specific places or people

## Unauthorised use of Restrictive Practice

Restrictive Practices are used to restrict the rights or movement of a person with disability to manage behaviour that is causing harm. A Restrictive Practice can only be used when it has been approved to protect the safety of a person with disability or others. All other unauthorised Restrictive Practice use is considered abuse.

- Signs that might indicate a person is suffering from restrictive practice abuse may include:
- Fearful of a particular person
- Overly compliant, irritable or easily upset
- Anxious, aggressive or depressed or overly drowsy
- Showing changes in sleeping or eating habits
- Maintaining a rigid posture and avoiding contact
- Showing changes in their behaviour or routine

For children, restrictive practices must always be used as a last resort, in the least restrictive way, and in line with approved plans and child-safe practices.

## What should you do if you're a person who is being abused or suspect someone is being abused?

If a child or young person is involved, concerns must be treated as urgent.

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### Listen

Find a private place to talk and give the person your full attention. Be a listener not an instigator

### Report

If a child or young person is at immediate risk, contact emergency services (000). In Queensland, child safety concerns may also need to be reported to Queensland Police or the Queensland child safety system, in addition to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

Report the incident by phone or email to [admin@impactfulsolutions.com.au](mailto:admin@impactfulsolutions.com.au) and create an event in the Incident Management System

### Check

Check the incident is being managed in a way that meets our duty of care and mandatory reporting requirements.

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