Child Abuse
What every nurse needs to know
What is child abuse?

Child maltreatment (abuse) includes any type of abuse and/or neglect of a child under the age of 18 by a parent, caregiver, or anyone a child is in the care of. The 4 most common types of abuse:

- Sexual
- Physical
- Neglect
- Emotional

(Center for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2010)
Sexual Abuse

Involves involving a child in sexual acts such as:

- Fondling
- Rape
- Exposing a child to sexual activities

(CDC, 2010)
Physical Abuse

Involves the use of force including but not limited to:

- Biting
- Kicking
- Hitting
- Pushing
- Burning
- Shaking

(CDC, 2010)
Neglect

Failure to provide a child with basic needs such as:

- Housing
- Food
- Water
- Clothing
- Education
- Access to medical care

(CDC, 2010)
Emotional Abuse

Behavior that may harm a child’s self-worth or emotional well-being such as:

- Name calling
- Withholding love
- Threatening
- Shaming
- Rejection

(CDC, 2010)
Prevalence

Many cases are never reported. In 2008:

• 1,740 children in the US died as a result of abuse or neglect.

• Child Protective Services (CPS) found 772,000 children that were victims of abuse or neglect.

• Neglect was the most common form of abuse

(CDC, 2010; U.S. Department of Health & Human Services [HHS], 2011)
Risk Factors

- Children < 4 years are at the greatest risk
- Stressful family situations
- Drugs and alcohol
- Poverty
- Family history of violence
- No family support system
- Violence in the community

(CDC, 2010)
General signs of an abusive relationship
Signs in the child

- Sudden changes in behavior or school performance
- Lacks adult supervision
- Overly passive, compliant, or withdrawn
- Watchful of everything, and fearful around adults
- Does not want to go home
- Has not received help for conditions brought to parents attention.

(U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [HHS], 2007)
Signs in the adult

- Blames child, for child’s problems at home or school
- Little concern for child
- Views child as worthless, burdensome, or bad
- High expectations the child cannot reach

(HHS, 2007)
Signs in the parent and child interactions

- Rarely touch each other in an appropriate manner
- Rarely look at each other
- Look at their relationship negatively
- Verbalize a dislike for each other.

(HHS, 2007)
BRN requirements

- RN’s must report known, reasonably suspect, or observed instances of abuse to the appropriate authorities.
- Applies to those situations that occur in the RN’s professional capacity or within the scope of employment.
- Failure to report as required is considered unprofessional conduct and can result in disciplinary actions against the RNs license.

(State of California Department of Consumer Affairs, 2010)
What the law requires

Report of injuries Penal Code 11160:

- Report by telephone immediately or as soon as practically possible and a written report shall be prepared on the standard form.
- The completed forms shall be sent to local law enforcement agency within two working days of receiving the information regarding the person.

(State of California Department of Consumer Affairs, 2010)
Child Abuse Reporting
Phone Numbers

Los Angeles County (CA): 800-540-4000 (In-State)
               213-639-4500 (Out of State)

Orange County (CA): 714-940-1000
                  800-207-4464

San Bernardino County (CA): 800-827-8724
                  909-350-4949
               909-422-3266 (nights)

(California Department of Social Services [CDSS], 2007)
References


