



Fact Sheet 7

May, 2007

Risk factors and indicators for emotional abuse

This fact sheet contains information that may assist in the formation of a reasonable suspicion of child abuse/harm and neglect.

(Source: NSW Health Child Protection and Procedures Manual, 1997)

Indicators in children of emotional abuse may include:

- Feelings of worthlessness about life and themselves
- Inability to value others
- Lack of trust in people
- Lack of interpersonal skills necessary for adequate functioning
- Extreme attention seeking behaviours
- Other behavioural disorders (eg disruptiveness, aggressiveness, bullying)

(*This framework is a guide for practice and is not considered to be comprehensive of all harm, behaviours or presentations that may give rise to concern or suspicion of abuse/harm or neglect. Each indicator needs to be considered in the context of the child/young person's circumstances. Further harm/abuse and neglect can occur in the absence of a demonstrable 'risk factor'.)

Risk factors and indicators of emotional abuse in parents/carers may include:

- Constant criticism, belittling, teasing of a child, or ignoring or withholding praise and affection
- Excessive or unreasonable demands
- Persistent hostility and severe verbal abuse, rejection and scape-goating
- Belief that a particular child is bad or 'evil'
- Using inappropriate physical or social isolation as punishment
- Situations where an adult's behaviour harms a child's wellbeing
- Exposure to domestic violence

Further information:

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