Red Flags for Abuse or Neglect

ANY KIND

Subtle Signs of Abuse
Marked changes in personality that do not make sense
Constant sadness
Abnormal fears
Often complains of stomach aches, headaches, nausea for no apparent reason

Behavior Seen in Children
Discloses abuse or neglect
Re-enactment of abuse using dolls, drawings, or friends
Frequently criticizes or tries to hurt him/her-self
Bullies others

Behavior Seen in Abusers
Does not show love toward the child
Talks about the child as being bad or “the cause of my problems”

PHYSICAL

Subtle Signs of Abuse
Unusual bruising
• On the ears or neck
• On ankles, chest or back
• In the genital area
• In the shape of an object (hand, belt, utensil)

Unusual injuries
• Bite marks
• Patterned burns (cigarette, iron,)
• Inconsistent with normal play
• Pain moving arms or legs
• Pain with breathing

Wears clothes to cover up injuries

Behavior Seen in Children
The story of what happened does not match the injury
Refuses or is afraid to talk about injuries
Is away a lot, and when s/he comes back has signs of healing injuries
Is frequently afraid of others or being touched

Behavior Seen in Abusers
Has a different account than the child of how the injury occurred
Cannot control anger or frustration
Expects too much from the child
Severely punishes the child
### SEXUAL

**Subtle Signs of Abuse**

- Frequent itching, pain, or foul discharge in the genital or anal region
- Injuries to the breasts or genital area
  - Redness or swelling
  - Bruising or cuts
- Pain when
  - Peeing or pooping
  - Walking or sitting down
- Blood in urine, in stool, or on underwear

**Behavior Seen in Children**

- Details of sex in the child’s drawing
- Sexual actions with others
- Fears or refuses to go to a parent, relative, or friend for no clear reason
- Refuses to undress or shows fear about being undressed

**Behavior Seen in Abusers**

- Touches the child in a sexual way
- Is more invested in spending time with a child than that child’s own parents
- Talks about the child being sexy
- May be jealous of the child’s relationship with others

### NEGLECT

**Subtle Signs of Abuse**

- Always hungry
- The child does not develop as expected, including poor weight gain
- Not dressed properly for weather and/or is severely unkempt
- Lack of attention to medical problems

**Behavior Seen in Children**

- Has little energy, even to cry
- Does not play with toys or notice people
- Does not seem to care for anyone
- Very demanding of affection or attention

**Behavior Seen in Abusers**

- Does not provide for the child’s basic needs
- Does not properly supervise the child (e.g., leaves child home alone, in a dangerous place, or with someone irresponsible)
- Ignores or rejects child’s affection

### MENTAL

**Subtle Signs of Abuse**

- The child does not develop as expected, including poor weight gain
- Self-stimulating habit disorders (e.g., rocking, biting, head banging)

**Behavior Seen in Children**

- Is unhappy, stressed out, withdrawn, aggressive, or angry for long periods of time
- Desperate for affection or attention

**Behavior Seen in Abusers**

- Often insults, criticizes, rejects the child, or talks about them as being the cause of problems
- Keeps the child isolated
- Threatens to hurt or kill the child or someone/something that is special to the child
- Forces the child to watch someone special being hurt (e.g., pet)