Child Abuse—Signs and Symptoms

The following are signs and symptoms of child abuse. It is imperative to note, **any one of these by itself does not mean abuse**. There are several factors to consider when determining if a child is in a situation of abuse.

### Physical Abuse:
- Unexplained bruises, welts, burns, fractures, lacerations, abrasions
- Inappropriate dress or refusal to change clothes
- Wary of adult contact, apprehensive
- Behavioral extremes
- Afraid to go home
- Runs away from home
- Substance abuse

### Emotional Abuse:
- Speech disorders
- Developmental delays
- Failure-to-thrive
- Low self-esteem
- Habit disorders
- Conduct disorders
- Behavioral extremes
- Clingy/Dependent
- Overly adaptive
- Psychological disorders

### Neglect:
- Consistent hunger
- Inappropriate dress
- Lack of supervision
- Unattended physical problems/medical needs
- Poor hygiene
- Unsanitary/hazardous living conditions
- Begging/stealing food or clothing
- Fatigue, listlessness, falling asleep in class
- Substance abuse
- Delinquency
- Role reversal (parentified child)

### Sexual Abuse:
- Difficulty walking/sitting
- Torn, stained, bloody underwear
- Pain/itching in genital area
- Bruises/bleeding in genital or anal area
- Pregnancy
- Venereal disease
- Repeated urinary tract infections
- Toileting accidents
- Bedwetting
- Sophisticated sexual knowledge/behavior
- Sleep difficulties
- Excessive fear

### Reporting Child Abuse

To report on suspected child abuse, contact your state hotline number or the national hotline number. Hotlines are open 24 hours a day and are staffed with masters level certified crisis counselors.

1-800-4-A-CHILD

www.guardfamily.org