

Able Student

English X

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Child Abuse in All Its Forms

All around the world there are children without the basic needs for survival. Some children are beaten, called names and even sold for sexual services. But, in just which one of these situations is a child considered a victim of child abuse? The fact is that all of them are considered child abuse. As said by Tracy, Natasha (2008), contributing author of healthyplace.com, there are four distinct types of child abuse; physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional/psychological abuse and neglect. Although they are all very different types of abuse, each one can result in harm, potential for harm, or threat of harm to a child (Tracy, 2008).

The first type of child abuse is physical abuse, which varies in every case reported. Physical abuse is the practice of physical aggression to a child from an adult that leads to deliberate infliction of physical harm towards the child (Tracy, 2008). There are many forms of physical abuse that are not to be mistaken with child discipline. Physical child abuse results from physical aggression, intended or not intended, such as beating, slapping, or hitting a child (Tracy, 2008). There have been cases where the children are younger than a year of age, such as one with two parents in Dallas, Texas, that were charged with abusing a child as young as six months old (Thompson, 2011). The defenseless child, Isis, was sent to intensive care with little chance of recovery. The doctors and nurses noticed a collection of bruises all around her skin and CT scans revealed blood pouring on her brain. The damage was so intense that vital organs in her body

were shutting down and, in less than 24 hours, the child had died (Thompson, 2011). Perhaps the parents were angry and their uncontrolled disciplinary response towards the child resulted in this harsh punishment. However, no matter what the reason, physical child abuse can cause severe injuries to the child or even result in the child's death.

Just like physical abuse, sexual abuse is a type of child abuse that can result in harm towards a child. Sexual abuse is defined as any sexual act between an adult and a child such as penetration, intercourse, rape or oral sex (Tracy, 2008). Sexual abuse can, not only, cause physical pain towards the child, but it can cause psychological and cognitive torment as well. Mary (2008) tells the story of when she was sexually abused by her neighbor, Frank. "...Frank placed his hand on my breast, moved it around a bit and pushed me back into a pillow. He had a big smile on his face and he said, 'mmmmmmm,' like he was describing a good meal or dessert he was tasting," is what Mary describes the moment she was sexually abused (Mary, 2008). Mary then describes that when she explained to her mother the act Frank had committed, her simply repeated "Frank wouldn't do anything like that." This led to her feeling alone and included emotional distress such as self guilt and self blame (Mary, 2008). In several cases there is a great deal of psychological damage towards the victims along with bruises, cuts and a series of injuries inflicted during the sexual intercourse. Children who suffer from child abuse are caused both mental and physical harm and are left to wonder for years why they were sexually molested and, in severe cases, commit suicide as the guilt and cognitive analysis continues to develop.

Another type of abuse that can cause severe harm to a child is emotional abuse. Emotional abuse is not as easy to spot as physical and sexual abuse but it can be just as harmful. According to Wood, J. (2010), author and editor for the American Humane Association,

emotional abuse consists of a pattern of behavior from an adult towards a child that can cause problems with the child's cognitive, emotional, psychological or social development. Some examples of emotional abuse include ignoring, rejecting, isolating, terrorizing and verbally assaulting a child (Wood, 2010). For example, verbally assaulting consists of constant belittling, shaming, ridiculing or verbally threatening a child. When a child is emotionally abused, the child may feel just as much, if not more, pain than a child who is being physically abused. Emotional abuse can be "more strongly predicative of subsequent impairments in the children's development than the severity of physical abuse," is what Danya Glaser (2002) describes child abuse to be. This cognitive approach of abuse can cause a child to develop low self esteem, destructive behavior and angry acts and can even develop a child who will later abuse a child of his or her own. Emotional abuse, although difficult to detect, leaves scars in the child that will forever affect their emotional, cognitive and social development as it causes a great deal of harm towards the child. The child may begin to believe these accusations are true and will become depressed and feel worthless, thus can eventually lead to suicide or self inflictions.

Child neglect is a very common type of child abuse that, according to the Child Welfare Information Gateway (2001), a more common type of child abuse than physical and sexual abuse combined. Neglecting a child can be physical, educational, and emotional. If an adult fails to provide food, clothing and a safe environment, a parent is neglecting the physical needs of a child (Tracy, 2008). If a parent fails to enroll a child in school and provide them with an education from an excessive amount of absences, the parent is neglecting the educational needs of a child. When a child is provided emotional support, love and affection the child is victim of emotional neglect (Tracy, 2008). All of these types of neglect can cause long-term effects that can appear in childhood, adolescence, or adulthood, affecting physical, cognitive, psychological

and behavioral processes ("U.s. department of," 2008). This type of child abuse can potentially damage a child and can lead to starvation, social problems and self infliction often leading to suicide. Although not as easy to spot, and more commonly practiced, child neglect is a serious type of child abuse that harms children everywhere in a series of sections in their development ("U.s. department of," 2008).

Overall, child abuse is practiced when an adult causes harm, potential harm, or threat of harm towards a child. Child abuse ranges from obvious physical and sexual abuse to oblivious emotional abuse and neglect. All these types of abuses have reportedly been causes of death and series of injuries inflicted on children all over the world. Children are being put at risk of harm through child abuse whether it is physical, sexual, and emotional and cause of neglect and are sometimes abused so severely that they result in death.

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