

sexual

physical

emotional

neglect

EMOTIONAL ABUSE is the most difficult category to define, and unfortunately, the most difficult type of abuse to investigate. Examples include harsh criticism, name-calling or derogatory comments, shaming, threatening, withholding love and affection, and possibly exposing children to domestic violence.

## emotional abuse can include:

- Rejecting or ignoring: telling a child he or she is unwanted or unloved, showing little interest in child, not initiating or returning affection, not listening to the child, not validating the child's feelings, breaking promises, cutting child off in conversation
- Shaming or humiliating: calling a child names, criticizing, belittling, demeaning, berating, mocking, using language or taking action that takes aim at child's feelings of self-worth
- Terrorizing: accusing, blaming, insulting, punishing with or threatening abandonment, harm or death, setting a child up for failure, manipulating, taking advantage of a child's weakness or reliance on adults, slandering, screaming, yelling
- Isolating: keeping child from peers and positive activities, confining child to small area, forbidding play or other stimulating experiences
- Corrupting: engaging child in criminal acts, telling lies to justify actions or ideas, encouraging misbehavior

## signs

### physical:

- Delays in development
- Wetting bed, pants
- Speech disorders
- Health problems like ulcers, skin disorders
- Obesity and weight fluctuation

### behavioral:

- Habits like sucking, biting, rocking
- Learning disabilities and developmental delays
- Overly compliant or defensive
- Extreme emotions, aggression, withdrawal
- Anxieties, phobias, sleep disorders
- Destructive or anti-social behaviors (violence, cruelty, vandalism, stealing, cheating, lying)
- Behavior that is inappropriate for age (too adult, too infantile)
- Suicidal thoughts and behaviors