

Effects of Abuse

There are many emotional, physical, and social difficulties that stem from abuse. Common effects of abuse on a person include:

Emotional Symptoms

- Self blame and guilt
- Shame
- Low self-esteem and lack of confidence
- Anger
- Fear
- Isolation
- Lack of trust
- Shyness
- Alcohol and/or substance abuse

Physical Symptoms

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Tension and body pain
- Insomnia
- Changes in appetite
- High stress levels
- Frequent illness

Did You Know?

Children who witness family violence **suffer the same consequences** as those who are directly abused. Children see or hear 40% to 80% of domestic violence incidents in their home.

Other Effects of Abuse on Children:

- Inability to concentrate
- Behavioural and learning problems
- Extreme shyness
- Clinging behaviour
- Feelings of guilt, helplessness and loneliness
- Confusion or conflicting feelings towards parents
- Fear of physical harm and abandonment
- Nightmares
- Truancy or running away
- Early use of alcohol or drugs
- Criminal offending
- Weight problems
- Speech disorders
- Constant stomachaches, headaches, ulcers, rashes, diarrhea, or bedwetting
- No connection to their own feelings
- Difficulty eating
- Aggression



Children and The Impacts of Abuse

Abused infants often exhibit a state of “frozen watchfulness” – remaining passive and immobile, but intently observant of the environment. This appears to be a protective strategy in response to a fear of attack.

The nature of abusive experiences adversely influences children’s brain development, resulting in devastating impacts on neurodevelopment.