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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOUR FOR CHILD ABUSE

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#### Abstract

Children are full human beings in their own right. Child maltreatment is the abuse and neglect that occurs to children under 18 years of age. It includes all types of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, negligence and commercial or other exploitation, which results in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power. Exposure to intimate partner violence is also sometimes included as a form of child maltreatment. Assertive behaviour in contrast to the other possibilities of aggressive or submissive/passive behaviour. The aim of assertive behaviour is to communicate productively with another person, achieving what is often described as a win/win outcome.

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#### Introduction:-

Child maltreatment has enormous immediate and long-term repercussions. Beyond death, physical injury and disability, violence can lead to stress that impairs brain development and damages the nervous and immune systems. This in turn is associated with delayed cognitive development, poor school performance and dropout, mental health problems, suicide attempts, increased health-risk behaviours, revictimization and the perpetration of violence. The good news is that child maltreatment can be prevented through interventions that support parents and caregivers, promote non-violent norms and values, provide education and life skills training, strengthen families' income and economic security, offer high quality response and support services, create and sustain safe environments for children, and implement and enforce laws against child maltreatment. Most children are capable of responding to positive communication, and of developing to their full potential. Regardless of the type of abuse, the result is serious emotional harm. But there is help available. If a child is suffering from abuse or neglect, it's important to speak out. By catching the problem as early as possible, the child can get the help. Assertive behaviour promotes equality in human relationships, enabling us to act in our own best interests, to stand up for ourselves without undue anxiety, to express honest feelings comfortably, to exercise personal rights without denying the rights of others.

#### Prevalence:

1. WHO reports that over 40 million children around the world suffer from abuse and maltreatment
2. A report of child abuse is made in every 10 seconds
3. More than 4 children die every day as a result of child abuse.
4. More than 90% of juvenile sexual abuse victims know their perpetrator in some way
5. 19.7% females and 7.9% males are abused sexually in global wise.

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**Types:****Physical Abuse:**

Any non-accidental injury to child by deliberate application of force to any part of the child body. **Examples;** Hitting, kicking, slapping, shaking, burning, pinching, hair pulling, biting, choking, throwing, shoving, whipping, paddling, breaking a child's arms or legs.

**Sexual Abuse:**

Sexual abuse is any sexual act between an adult or older adolescent and child. When the child is being used for sexual stimulation of the perpetrator or another person, he is in a position of power or control over the victim.

**Types:**

1. INCEST- any sexual activity between the family members
2. MOLESTATION- it includes indecent liberties such as touching, folding, kissing etc.
3. EXHIBITIONISM- it is usually exposure of the genitals by an adult male to children or female adult.
4. CHILD PORNOGRAPHY- sexual acts involving children alone or with adults or animals regardless of consent by the child legal guardian.
5. CHILD PROSTITUTION- sexual acts involving child for the profit .
6. PEDOPHILIA- it is a sexual attraction towards the child not a type of sexual activity.

**Emotional Abuse:**

Emotional abuse is defined as the production of psychological and social defects in the growth of a child as a result of behavior such as loud yelling, rude attitude, inattention, and harsh criticism of the child's personality. **Examples;** Yelling, Screaming, Name calling, Shaming, Negative comparison to others, Ignoring, Lack of praise and positive reinforcement, Isolating, Rejecting, Cruelty.

**Effects of Child Abuse:**

Child abuse can result in immediate adverse physical effects but it is also strongly associated with developmental problem and with many chronic physical and psychological effects, including subsequent ill-health, including higher rates of chronic conditions, high-risk health behaviours and shortened lifespan. Maltreated children may grow up to be maltreating adults.

Adverse childhood experiences pyramid showing how adverse childhood experiences are related to risk factors for disease, health, and social well-being. The lifespan is represented as an arrow ascending past the layers of a pyramid, beginning at Adverse Childhood Experiences and moving through Social, Emotional, and Cognitive Impairment; Adoption of Health-risk Behaviors; Disease, Disability, and Social Problems; and finally Early Death. Smaller arrows depict gaps in scientific knowledge about the links between Adverse Childhood Experiences and later risk factors.



All types of abuse and neglect leave lasting scars. Some of these scars might be physical, but emotional scarring has long lasting effects throughout life, damaging a child's sense of self, their future relationships, and ability to function at home, work and school.

**Warning Signs Of Child Abuse And Neglect:**

**Warning signs of emotional abuse:**

1. Excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong
2. Shows extremes in behaviour (extremely compliant, demanding, passive, aggressive)
3. Doesn't seem to be attached to the parent or caregiver
4. Acts either inappropriately adult (taking care of other children) or inappropriately infantile (thumb-sucking, throwing tantrums)

**Warning signs of physical abuse:**

1. Frequent injuries or unexplained bruises, welts, or cuts
2. Is always watchful and "on alert," as if waiting for something bad to happen
3. Injuries appear to have a pattern such as marks from a hand or belt
4. Shies away from touch, flinches at sudden movements, or seems afraid to go home
5. Wears inappropriate clothing to cover up injuries, such as long-sleeved shirts on hot days

**Warning signs of child neglect:**

1. Clothes are ill-fitting, filthy, or inappropriate for the weather
2. Hygiene is consistently bad (unbathed, matted and unwashed hair, noticeable body odor)
3. Untreated illnesses and physical injuries
4. Is frequently unsupervised or left alone or allowed to play in unsafe situations
5. Is frequently late or missing from school

**Warning signs of sexual abuse in children:**

1. Trouble walking or sitting
2. Displays knowledge of sexual acts inappropriate for their age, or even seductive behavior
3. Makes strong efforts to avoid a specific person, without an obvious reason
4. Doesn't want to change clothes in front of others or participate in physical activities
5. An STD or pregnancy, especially under the age of 14
6. Runs away from home

**Assertiveness Skills:**

1. Demonstrate assertive behavior (e.g., saying "No" to another child's unacceptable demands) and contrast aggressive or submissive responses through demonstrations. Let children role-play with puppets or dolls.
2. Intervene when interactions seem headed for trouble and suggest ways for children to compromise, or to express their feelings in a productive way.
3. Teach children to seek help when confronted by the abuse of power (physical abuse, sexual abuse, or other) by other children or adults.
4. Remind children to ignore routine teasing by turning their heads or walking away. Not all provocative behavior must be acknowledged.
5. Teach children to ask for things directly and respond directly to each other. Friendly suggestions are taken more readily than bossy demands. Teach children to ask nicely, and to respond appropriately to polite requests.
6. After a conflict between children, ask those involved to replay the scene. Show children how to resolve problems firmly and fairly.
7. Show children how to tell bullies to stop hurtful acts and to stand up for themselves when they are being treated unfairly.
8. Encourage children not to give up objects or territory to bullies (e.g., say, "I'm using this toy now"). Preventing bullies from getting what they want will discourage aggressive behavior.
9. Identify acts of aggression, bossiness, or discrimination for children and teach them not to accept them (e.g., say, "Girls are allowed to play that, too").

**Assertive Behaviour For Child Abuse:**

1. Decide if the situation is safe- children should not try to handle situations that are not safe. Unsafe situations are isolated place with no other children or adults around, when the teasers are too big or older, when teasing involves pushing and threats and teasing occurs over and over. In these cases children need to get help and report what is happening to them to an adult as soon as possible.

2. Stay calm- it is important that teaser should not see that the child is upset and scared. Control of emotions should be there.
3. Relaxation—deep breathing or counting backwards is main relaxation techniques. Practice the techniques daily to use easily in needed situations.
4. Body language- stands tall, looking directly at the other person, tightening the jaw and arms, relaxing the rest of the body.
5. Avoid the teaser- go in a different way, stay near other children or adults
6. Shrug – a quick technique is to shrug your shoulders and walk away.
7. Ignore the teasing- anger and tears exacerbate the abuse. Child should not react to the teaser and should have control over emotions.
8. Self-talk- Silent pep talk like; I don't like this, but I can handle this. I have a lot of strengths.
9. Positive thinking- children have the power inside themselves to react when someone comes to abuse them. The children should decide whether the person should win by seeing the child upset. Think that the abuser has no power over them.
10. Leave assertively- say like 'I am leaving', 'I have more important things to do', 'go pick on someone else' and walk away.
11. One assertive statement- you can't talk to me like that, I don't have to listen to this, quit bugging me.
12. Ask for help- if the teasing is out of control and tell an adult as soon as possible.
13. Sharing – if any type of abuse occurs don't try to hide them. First thing is to explain to the parents or to any well-known person whom you can believe.

#### Preventing Abuses:

1. Teach the child to Ask his/her parents especially mother about the doubts regarding body parts.
2. No one else should touch your private parts. If someone tries to do that it is wrong and inform to mother. No one else should touch your private parts. If someone tries to do that it is wrong and inform to mother.
3. No need to see any unwanted pictures and videos in magazines and phones shown by others.
4. Say 'no' to others who try to touch your body unnecessarily and inform to responsible person.
5. Tell them to obey the older people for good things, otherwise reject them.
6. Should not get any favour from strangers, e.g.: sweets, dresses, books, letters
7. Don't get feared if somebody threatened you by telling I will kill your parents, siblings etc. if you inform to anybody what happened. Keep silence if not able to react and inform to responsible one when you are alone.
8. should have your own privacy in bathing and dressing.
9. If you are not able to explain to your mother about what had happened just write it in a paper and give it to them.

#### Conclusion:-

Children are included in the most vulnerable group, but their rights throughout the world are target ignored often resulting into target outcomes. It is because of the vulnerability rendered to the children from infancy to childhood. Adults are the responsible persons to safe guard the children from all maltreatments. But it is very dangerous that the children are suffering most of the misbehaviours from the adult personalities including parents, relatives, neighbours, friends, teachers and strangers. Child abuse is a common crisis that occurs all over the world in every religion and social classes. It includes physical, emotional and sexual abuses. To prevent this type of maltreatment assertiveness is the main weapon for the children.

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