


# What is child abuse?



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**What are the issues we face?**


*'Child abuse is any action by another person – adult or child – that causes significant harm to a child.*

*It can be physical, sexual or emotional, but can just as often be about a lack of love, care and attention.*


*We know that neglect, whatever form it takes, can be just as damaging to a child as physical abuse.'*

NSPCC

# How is neglect defined?



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**Neglect**


*'Persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, and is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development'*

**Can you think of some examples of neglect we might come across when instructing?**

# How is physical abuse defined?



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**Physical abuse**

*'Physical harm or injury or if the nature and intensity of training and competition exceeds the capacity of a child's immature and growing body.'*

13,880 children and young people contacted ChildLine about physical abuse in 2014.

**Can you think of some examples of physical abuse we might come across when instructing?**

# How is sexual abuse defined?



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**Sexual abuse**

*'When adults or other young people (both male/female) use children to meet their own sexual needs.'*

This does not have to be physical contact, and it can happen online.

Sometimes the child will not understand that what is happening is abuse and may not even understand that it is wrong.

**Can you think of some possible problems we may face as instructors?**

# How is emotional abuse defined?



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**Emotional abuse**  
*'The emotional ill treatment of a child, resulting in severe and persistent adverse effects on his or her emotional health and development.'*


Children who are emotionally abused are usually suffering another type of abuse or neglect at the same time – *but this is not always the case.*

**Can you think of some examples of emotional abuse we might come across when instructing?**

# How is bullying defined?



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**Bullying**  
*'Deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.'*

Remember: **Several**  
**Times**  
**On**  
**Purpose**

Can you think of some examples of bullying we might come across when instructing?

# What are possible indicators of abuse?



The image is a screenshot of a presentation slide from the Royal Yachting Association (RYA). The slide features a cartoon character of a woman in a red jacket and blue skirt pointing to a white box containing text. The text lists typical indicators of abuse and advises not to jump to conclusions.

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**RYA**

Typical indicators of any abuse:

- Unexplained bruising or injuries
- Sexually explicit language or actions
- Sudden changes in behaviour
- Something a child has said
- A change, observed over a long period of time

Don't jump to conclusions,  
rely on facts

www.rya.org.uk Protecting your Rights, Promoting your Interests

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# How should you respond to a disclosure? What sort of language should you use?



**When someone tells you something...**

You have a responsibility to tell people what you are told so the situation can be resolved. You need to make the child aware of this process.

**How should you respond when a child starts telling you something worrying?**

- Stay calm
- Let the child talk freely at their own pace rather than trying to lead them down a certain path of questioning
- Reassure the child
- Only ask questions to determine whether there is cause for concern so you can refer the matter
- Record what they have said as accurately as possible, as soon as possible, and tell them what will happen next



**What sort of language should you use?**

Use reassuring language that encourages the child to tell you in their own words what has happened, such as:

*"This is so important that I need to speak to someone who can do something about what is happening."*

*"What you are saying is important and I will respect this."*

*"Take as much time as you need to talk to me."*

*"It's not your fault."*


*"It's good that you've told me what's worrying you."*

*"I can understand why you're upset."*

*"I will help you as best I can."*

Avoid leading questions such as "Who hit you?" Instead ask "What happened?"

Do not make assumptions or try to guess or suggest who has harmed the child.



**Handling an allegation**

Never:

- Rush into actions that may be inappropriate
- Make promises you cannot keep (eg. you will not tell anyone)
- Ask more questions than are necessary for you to be sure that you need to act
- Take sole responsibility – consult someone else



# Situation 1



## Situation 1

An injury is sustained by a child in your care and you are accused of physically abusing them.

Could this accusation be true?

How do you deal with it?

# Situation 2



## Situation 2

You take a group of young sailors away to a residential centre for the weekend where the staff and sailors will be sharing dormitories – the male instructor will share with the boys, and the female instructor will share with the girls.

One of the boys becomes distressed when he realises what the sleeping arrangements are and says he wants to go home. He later tells you that when he was at boarding school two years ago he was sexually abused by a member of staff.

How would you deal with this?

# Situation 3



## Situation 3

Think back to the scenario in the course about Abby and Uma where Abby noticed that Uma was in pain. Eventually Uma reluctantly explained that she hurt her arm while horseriding but did not want to tell her parents in case they stopped her riding.

Abby has now seen some linear bruising on Uma's back which looked like it might have been caused by a belt. Uma has not said anything, but Abby is already concerned following the earlier injury and thinks that Uma might be being abused.

What should Abby do?

# Situation 4



## Situation 4

14 year old Alex has been in the racing squad for four years but is struggling to compete with his peers. He is upset about his performance and says he wants to give up but his parents will not let him.

He says he is struggling to keep up with his school work and is never allowed to see his school friends socially because he spends every weekend sailing. He's thinking of running away. You've seen for yourself that his parents are very pushy and verbally aggressive towards him.

Now Alex has spoken to you, what should you do?

# Situation 5



## Situation 5

Think back to the scenario in the course about having to decide how to accommodate sailors and staff among a limited number of tents. You saw how tricky that can be and how important it is to consider these arrangements beforehand so you are not put in an awkward situation. Your organisation's own operating procedures should help you manage this situation.

However, what would happen if Finn (the adult instructor) had been called away on an emergency, leaving Paolo (the 17 year old coach) in charge of the children?

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# Minimising risk



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**RYA**



Dave

**RYA**

## Minimising risk

What measures are we going to take to protect our students and ensure they have a fun and safe time with us?

The advertisement banner at the top features a collage of sailing-related images: a boat on a trailer, a sailboat on the water, a person with a Union Jack flag, a motorboat, a person in a life jacket, and a close-up of a boat's interior. The RYA logo is prominently displayed on the right side of the banner.