

**Module 5: Keeping It Together**  
**Topic 3 Content: Abuse: What is it? Notes**

**Introduction**

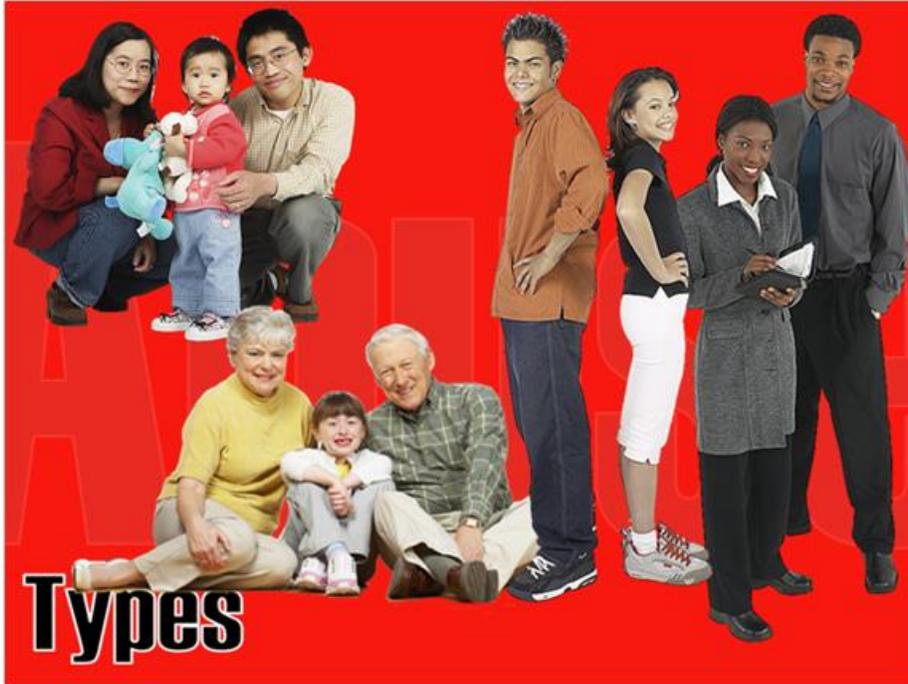


Abuse: What is it?

## Module 5: Keeping It Together

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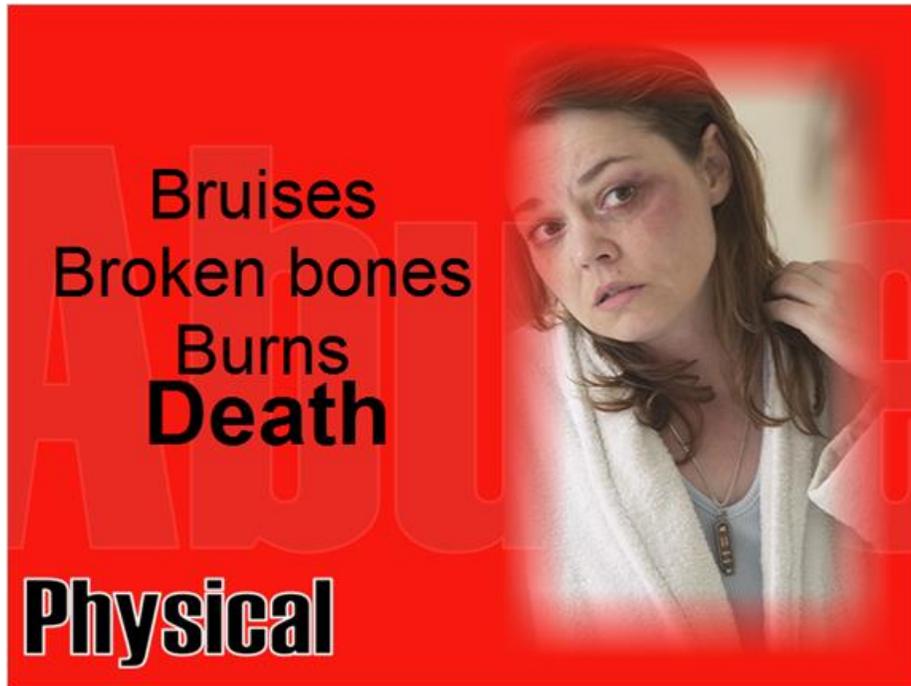
#### Types



Abuse may be physical, emotional, sexual, or neglect, and it can happen anywhere and to anyone -- female or male, younger or older, a girlfriend or a boyfriend, a husband or wife, a brother or a sister, a child or an adult, or a grandmother or a grandfather.

**Module 5: Keeping It Together**  
**Topic 3 Content: Abuse: What is it? Notes**

**Physical Abuse**



The mistreatment of someone that results in bodily injury is physical abuse. Someone who is physically abused may have a number of various injuries, but common ones are bruises, broken bones, and burns. Depending on the severity of the injuries, physical abuse can lead to death.

**Module 5: Keeping It Together**  
**Topic 3 Content: Abuse: What is it? Notes**

**Emotional Abuse**



The use of harmful words to mistreat someone is emotional abuse. Some examples of emotional abuse include insults, teasing, threats, and criticism. This type of abuse can lead to a victim experiencing low self-esteem and a feeling of helplessness.

**Module 5: Keeping It Together**  
**Topic 3 Content: Abuse: What is it? Notes**

**Sexual Abuse**



**Guilty  
Afraid**

**Never the  
victim's  
fault**

**Sexual**

**Forcible sexual contact**

The graphic features a red background. On the left, there is a large, semi-transparent white letter 'A'. To the right of the 'A', there is a photograph of a woman with long brown hair, wearing a white towel or blanket, covering her face with her hands. She appears to be crying or in distress. The text is overlaid on the red background.

When someone forces any form of sexual contact on another, it is called sexual abuse. The abuser is usually a family member or friend. Sexual abuse that happens within the family is called incest. The victim of sexual abuse usually feels guilty and afraid to tell. It is important for the victim to know that it is never his or her fault.

**Module 5: Keeping It Together**  
**Topic 3 Content: Abuse: What is it? Notes**

**Neglect**



Failure to meet the physical and emotional needs of a child is called neglect. Parents or guardians are responsible for meeting a child's basic needs, including food, clothing, and shelter. A child needs to feel safe and secure.

**Module 5: Keeping It Together**  
**Topic 3 Content: Abuse: What is it? Notes**

**Causes of Abuse**



Does your family have problems from time to time? Communication is the key to dealing with all problems. You have to be willing to talk and actively listen. Abusers do not know how to control their emotions.

Factors that a person may become an abuser include:

- Abuse as a child
- Alcohol or drug use
- Unemployment or poverty
- A lack of parenting skills
- A divorce
- Emotional immaturity
- A lack of coping and communication skills

**Module 5: Keeping It Together**  
**Topic 3 Content: Abuse: What is it? Notes**

**Signs of Abuse**

Frequent absences  
Poor grades  
Lack of interest in school  
Dirty/neglected appearance  
Shyness, sadness, fear  
Aggressive behavior  
Inability to communicate

**Signs**  
Key signs someone might be abused

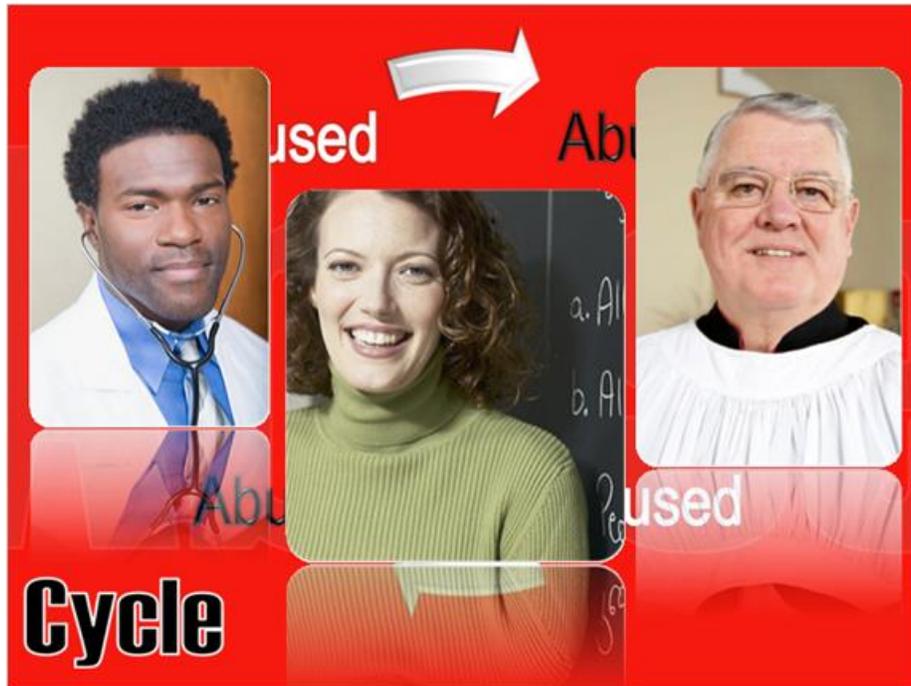
Key signs that someone may be abused include:

- Frequent absences from school
- Poor grades and a lack of interest in school
- A dirty or neglected appearance
- Extreme shyness, sadness, or fear
- Aggressive behavior toward others
- An inability to communicate

## Module 5: Keeping It Together

### Topic 3 Content: Abuse: What is it? Notes

#### Breaking the Abuse Cycle



Abuse is a vicious cycle. Many times, someone who is abused ends up abusing someone in his or her own life. The key to breaking the cycle of abuse is reporting it and talking to someone about the abuse. If someone has been abused, it is important for the victim to tell someone they trust such as a teacher, doctor, minister, etc.

**Module 5: Keeping It Together**  
**Topic 3 Content: Abuse: What is it? Notes**

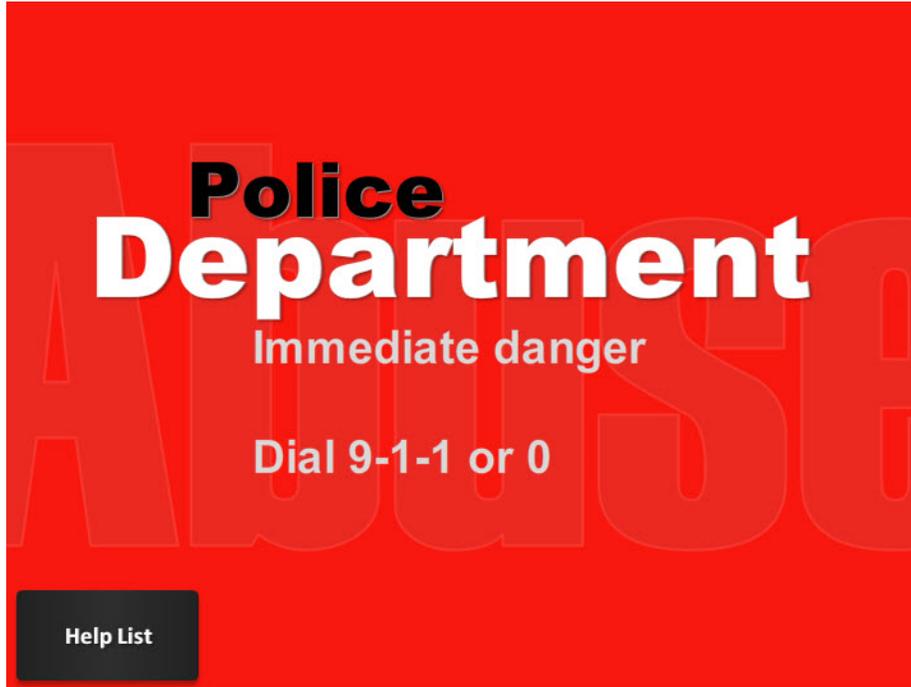
**Where to Get Help**



You can go to these places to get help if you are a victim of abuse or an abuser. Make sure to click on each to learn more, then return to this list by clicking on the Help List button.

**Module 5: Keeping It Together**  
**Topic 3 Content: Abuse: What is it? Notes**

**Police Department**



Call the police department for help if someone is in immediate danger. In many communities, the emergency number for the local police department is 911. Dial zero to call the operator if you are not sure how to reach the police department in your community.

**Module 5: Keeping It Together**  
**Topic 3 Content: Abuse: What is it? Notes**

**Crisis Hotlines**



Crisis hotlines are telephone services that parents and abused children can call to get help. Some people may be reluctant to talk about their problems to strangers. Hotline workers have received special training to help people in trouble. All conversations are kept confidential, and the caller does not have to give his or her name.

**Module 5: Keeping It Together**  
**Topic 3 Content: Abuse: What is it? Notes**

**Local Hospital**



Local hospitals provide emergency medical treatment for people who are injured, hurt, or seriously ill.

**Module 5: Keeping It Together**  
**Topic 3 Content: Abuse: What is it? Notes**

**Family Violence Shelters**



Family violence centers are places where family members in danger of being abused can stay while they get their lives in order. Counselors at the shelters help family members find solutions to their problems.

**Module 5: Keeping It Together**  
**Topic 3 Content: Abuse: What is it? Notes**

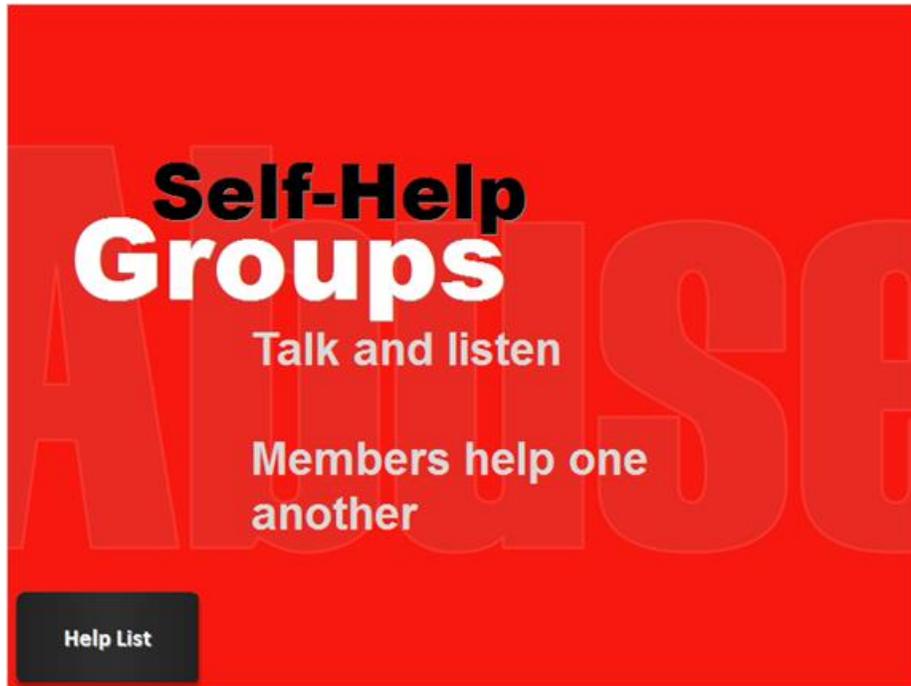
**Family Counseling Programs**



Family counseling programs help family members identify their problems and work together to solve them. School guidance counselors, youth counselors, hospital social workers, and clergy members also provide support to family members on an individual basis or as a group.

**Module 5: Keeping It Together**  
**Topic 3 Content: Abuse: What is it? Notes**

**Self-Help Groups**



In self-help groups, people have a chance to talk with and listen to others with similar problems. Some support groups are for victims of abuse; others are for abusers. For example, Parents Anonymous is for parents who have abused their children or are afraid that they might begin to do so. Members help one another to understand and change their behavior.

**Module 5: Keeping It Together**  
**Topic 3 Content: Abuse: What is it? Notes**

**Home Health Visitors**



Some communities arrange for nurses to visit families to help parents improve their parenting skills. These nurses are home health visitors.