

Safe Sanctuaries Policy

Appendix I - Types and Indicators of Abuse

Types of Child Abuse

Physical Abuse: A person deliberately and intentionally causes bodily harm to a child.

Emotional Abuse: When a person exposes a child to spoken and/or unspoken violence or emotional cruelty which sends a message to the child of worthlessness, being "bad," or worthlessness, being unloved and undeserving of love and care.

Neglect: Abuse in which a person endangers a child's health, safety or welfare through negligence.

Sexual Abuse: Abuse in which sexual contact between a child and an adult (or another older and more powerful youth) occurs. The child victim is never responsible for causing the abuse and is never to be blamed for the abuse. The child is never truly capable of consenting to or resisting such contact!

Ritual Abuse: Abuse in which physical, sexual or psychological violations of a child are inflicted regularly, intentionally, and in a stylized way by a person or persons. Abusers may appeal to some higher authority or power to justify the abuse.

Indicators of Child Abuse

The following are among those characteristics that may be considered indicators of abuse, although they are not necessarily proof. When indicators are present, consider them warnings and investigate the situation more fully.

Possible Signs of Physical Abuse:

- Hostile, aggressive behavior toward others
- Fearfulness of parents and/or other adults
- Destructive behavior toward self, others and/or property
- Inexplicable fractures or bruises inappropriate for child's developmental stage
- Burns, facial injuries, pattern of repetitious bruises

Possible Signs of Emotional Abuse

- Exhibits severe depression and/or withdrawal
- Exhibits severe lack of self-esteem
- Failure to thrive
- Threatens or attempts suicide

- Speech and/or eating disorders
- Goes to extremes to seek adult approval
- Extreme passive/aggressive behavior patterns

Possible Signs of Neglect:

- Failure to thrive
- Pattern of inappropriate dress for climate
- Beggars or steals food; chronic hunger
- Depression
- Untreated medical conditions
- Untreated medical conditions
- Poor hygiene

Possible Signs of Sexual Abuse

- Unusually advanced sexual knowledge and/or behavior for child's age and developmental stage
- Depression- cries often for no apparent reason
- Promiscuous behavior
- Runs away from home and refuses to return
- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Bruised/bleeding in vaginal or anal areas
- Exhibits frequent headaches, stomachaches, extreme fatigue
- Sexually transmitted diseases

Possible Signs of Ritual Abuse

- Disruptions of memory or consciousness
- Unexplained mistrust and mood swings
- Flashbacks
- Eating disorders
- Fear of the dark, especially at sundown or a full moon
- Agitation or despair that seems to occur in cycles
- Fear of ministers, priests or others wearing robes or uniforms
- Nightmares or sleep disorders
- Any of the symptoms of sexual abuse