

Behavioral Indicators

- Injuries are unexplained or explanations are implausible (they do not "fit" with the injuries observed)
- Family members provide different explanations of how injuries were sustained
- A history of similar injuries, and/or numerous or suspicious hospitalizations
- Victims are brought to different medical facilities for treatment to prevent medical practitioners from observing a pattern of abuse
- Delay between onset of injury and seeking medical care

Statistics

- One in five adolescent girls will experience a form of sexual or physical violence in her lifetime.
- The PBI estimates that four million women are abused every year.
- Approximately 50% of homeless women and children are fleeing from domestic violence.
- In a 36 month study of 147 children, aged 11 to 17, from homes where wife beating was a major problem, all sons over the age of 14 attempted to protect their mothers. 62% were injured in the process.
- 63% of young men between the ages of 11 and 20 who are serving time for homicide have killed their mother's abuser.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is different from an occasional argument – it is a pattern of abusive behavior that one person uses to control another person. Anger and arguments are normal parts of healthy relationships. However, anger that leads to threats or violence, such as hitting or hurting, is not normal or healthy. Physical abuse is not acceptable in any relationship.

Domestic violence is very damaging, both physically and emotionally. The violent behavior often begins with verbal threats or relatively minor incidents, but over time it can involve physical harm.

Both men and women experience domestic violence. It is a common form of violent behavior and it is a major problem in Canada. A national survey reported that 8% of women and 7% of men experienced some type of violence from their intimate partner.



Physical Abuse



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Physical Abuse

Physical abuse, which is 19% of all substantiated cases of child abuse, is the most visible form of abuse and may be defined as any act which results in a non-accidental trauma or physical injury. Inflicted physical injury most often represents unreasonable, severe corporal punishment or unjustifiable punishment. This usually happens when a frustrated or angry parent strikes, shakes or throws a child. Physical abuse injuries result from punching, beating, kicking, biting, burning or otherwise harming a child. While any of these injuries can occur accidentally when a child is at play, physical abuse should be suspected if the explanations do not fit the injury or if a pattern of frequency is apparent. The longer the abuse continues, the more serious the injuries to the child and the more difficult it is to eliminate the abusive behavior.

Who are the perpetrators?

Perpetrators may be acquaintances, sons, daughters, grandchildren or others. Physical abuse is perpetrated by spouses or intimate partners in order to gain power and control over the victim. Perpetrators are likely to be unmarried, live with their victims and are unemployed. Some perpetrators have alcohol or substance abuse problems. Some are caregivers for those they abuse.

What are the indicators?

Indicators are signs or clues that abuse has occurred. Physical indicators may include injuries or bruises, while behavioral indicators are ways victims and abusers act or interact with each other. Many of the indicators listed below can be explained by other causes (e.g. a bruise may be the result of an accidental fall) and no single indicator can be taken as conclusive proof. Rather, one should look for patterns or clusters of indicators that suggest a problem.

Physical indicators

- Sprains, dislocations, fractures or broken bones
- Burns from cigarettes, appliances or hot water
- Abrasions on arms, legs or torso that resemble rope or strap marks
- Internal injuries evidenced by pain, difficulty with normal functioning of organs and bleeding from body orifices
- Bruises. The following types of bruises are rarely accidental:
 - Bilateral bruising to the arms (may indicate that the person has been shaken, grabbed, or restrained)
 - Bilateral bruising of the inner thighs (may indicate sexual abuse)
 - "Wrap around" bruises that encircle an older person's arms, legs, or torso (may indicate that the person has been physically restrained)
 - Multicolored bruises (indicating that they were sustained over time)
 - Injuries healing through "secondary intention" (indicating that they did not receive appropriate care)
- Signs of traumatic hair and tooth loss