

SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE



Emotional abuse and/or neglect is conduct by a child's parent or caregiver toward the child which contributes to, causes, allows or permits:

- Significant and/or persistent emotional pain, harm or impairment; and/or
- Significant vulnerability to or risk of such pain, harm or impairment; and/or
- Significant exacerbation of a child's existing emotional pain or impairment.

Emotional Abuse is often difficult to prove. Conduct by a parent or caregiver may include acts, omissions or patterns of acts/omissions. These may be immediately harmful or cumulatively harmful.

There must be injury to the intellectual, emotional or psychological development of a child as evidenced by observable and substantial impairment in the child's ability to function within a normal range of performance and behavior, with due regard to his or her culture.

Observable indicators (with a suggestion to be aware of *sudden* changes in behavior):

- Suicidal threats or gestures
- Running away episode(s)
- Behavior extremes: aggressive, demanding, fearful
- Significant sadness, self-denial, depression, low self-esteem, withdrawal
- Inability to form trusting relationships
- Habit disorders (sucking, biting, rocking, etc.)
- Phobias, obsessions, compulsions,
- Conduct disorders (antisocial, defiant, destructive, sociopathic, etc.)
- Neurotic traits (sleep disorders, speech disorders, inhibition of play)
- Inappropriately adult or infant-like
- Compliant/passive/regression

However, these may be attributable to organic disorders, or other mental health and psychiatric disorders.