

STOP THE VIOLENCE!

Warning signs a child is being abused

No one wants to imagine the idea of a child being abused, but child abuse is a significant issue across the globe. A 2016 review of population-based surveys on the prevalence of past-year violence against children published in the journal Pediatrics concluded that as many as one billion children between the ages of two and 17 experienced physical, sexual or emotional violence in the past year. Though that analysis was conducted years ago and it would be unfounded to suggest the prevalence of child abuse has remained that high, the findings reflect a global issue that demands attention.

As the 2016 analysis illustrates, child abuse is an umbrella term that encompasses various forms of maltreatment. The Mayo Clinic notes that the many forms of child abuse include physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, medical abuse, and neglect. Though there are certain red flags that indicate abuse but not necessarily a particular form of abuse, the Mayo Clinic indicates each type of abuse can produce its own specific signs and symptoms.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse refers to any instance when a child is intentionally physically injured or put at risk of harm by another person. Unexplained injuries like bruises, broken bones or burns are some manifestations of physical abuse of a child. The Mayo Clinic notes that a sign of child abuse is an injury that does not match up with the given explanation or one that is not compatible with the child's developmental ability.

Sexual abuse

The Mayo Clinic notes that any sexual activity with a child qualifies as sexual abuse. Sexual contact with a child and noncontact sexual abuse, such as exposing a child to sexual activity or pornography, are some additional examples of sexual abuse.

Signs of child sexual abuse include sexual behavior or knowledge that's inappropriate for a child's age; pregnancy or a sexually transmitted infection; genital or anal pain, bleeding or injury; and inappropriate sexual behavior with other children. Statements by a child indicating the child was sexually abused also indicate sexual abuse and should be taken seriously.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse includes actions that injure a child's self-esteem and emotional well-being. Verbal assault, which the Mayo Clinic notes can include repeated belittling or berating of a child, is considered emotional abuse. Isolating, ignoring or rejecting a child also falls under the umbrella of emotional child abuse.

Signs a child is a victim of emotional abuse include delayed or inappropriate emotional development; loss of self-confidence or self-esteem; social withdrawal or a loss of interest or enthusiasm; depression; avoidance of certain situations, such as refusing to go to school or ride the school bus; desperate attempts to garner atten-



tion; loss of interest in school or decrease in academic performance; and a loss of previously acquired developmental skills.

Neglect Neglect occurs when a child is not provided with adequate food, clothing, shelter, clean living conditions, affection, supervision, education, or medical care.

Poor growth; poor personal cleanliness; lack of clothing or supplies to meet physical needs; hoarding or stealing food; poor record of school attendance; and a lack of appropriate medical concerns, including psychological problems, are some signs of neglect.

Child abuse takes place in every corner of the globe. Learning to spot signs of child abuse can help protect children in your community. More information about child abuse and its effects can be found at mayoclinic.org. TF234880



Ripley County Sheriff's Office

We Love Our Children!



We support National Child Abuse Prevention and Sexual Assault Awareness Month.



5 mental health issues that affect kids

Many mental health conditions begin during childhood. Parents and caregivers may be unsure if the behaviors children are experiencing are related to a potential mental health issue or are just a stage in youngsters' development that they will soon outgrow. For example, children can be irritable, aggressive or anxious and may find it challenging to sit still and pay attention at some point in their lives. Determining if these symptoms are manifestations of a mental illness or a normal part of a child's development may require a careful evaluation from a mental health professional.

The Mayo Clinic says mental health conditions diagnosed in childhood are most often delays or changes in thinking, behaviors, social skills, or control over emotions. Mental health disorders can disrupt well-being and create barriers at home or school or in other settings. The National Institute of Mental Health says a comprehensive evaluation of a child's mental health usually involves a parent interview to discuss a child's health history and relationships; information gathering from the child's school; and an interview with the child for behavioral observations and testing, if necessary.

Certain mental health conditions are more common among children than other issues, and here's a look at some kids may develop.

1. Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD): Meridian Healthcare says ADHD is a very common mental health disorder found in children, affecting about 9 percent of kids under age 17. Hallmarks of ADHD include constantly moving, disorganization, inability to pay attention, and struggling to be patient.

2. Anxiety disorders: Anxiety disorders also are quite common among children. Such issues are characterized by outsized fears or worries that are hard to control. The National Institute of Mental Health says approximately 15 to 20 percent of children and adolescents experience anxiety disorders. The prevalence of anxiety depends on a child's age, with ages 12 to 17 having the highest incidences. Girls are more at risk than boys.

3. Depression: The Cleveland Clinic says 3 percent of children experience depression. Age also is a factor in relation to depression, as 13.3 percent of adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17 are diagnosed with depression. Symptoms include feeling worthless or hopeless, low self-esteem, loss of in-



terest in activities, and changes in appetite. These indicators must persist for two weeks or longer to meet the criteria for clinical depression.

4. Eating disorders: Eating disorders are defined as abnormal eating behaviors that can include eating too much or too little. Anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and binge-eating disorder can compromise kids' ability to function socially and emotionally. Disrupting healthy eating patterns can take a physical toll on the body as well.

5. Addiction: Children are not immune to addiction. Youngsters can become addicted to alcohol, drugs, social media, gambling, and other things.

Many children are diagnosed with mental health disorders every year. Although some behaviors may be growing pains that go away as children age, others might be signs of a mental health condition. TF253682

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