

What is the definition of abuse?

Abuse is a general term for the use or treatment of something (person, thing, idea, etc.) that causes some kind of harm (to the abused person or thing, to the abusers themselves, or to someone else) or is unlawful or wrongful.

Physical Abuse - hitting; choking; slapping; burning; shoving; using a weapon; physically restraining; intentional interference with basic needs (e.g. food, medicine, sleep)

Categories of physical abuse are:

- punching
- pushing, pulling
- slapping
- whipping
- striking with an object
- locking in out of a room or place/false imprisonment
- pinching
- kicking
- having someone fall
- kneeing
- strangling
- head butting
- drowning
- sleep deprivation
- exposure to cold, freezing
- exposure to heat or radiation, burning
- exposure to electric shock
- placing in "stress positions" (tied or otherwise forced)
- cutting or otherwise exposing somebody to something sharp
- exposure to a dangerous animal
- throwing or shooting a projectile
- exposure to a toxic substance
- infecting with a disease
- withholding food or medication
- spanking is subject to controversy as to whether it qualifies as physical abuse.
- assault
- bodily harm
- humiliation
- torture
- blinding a person/causing vision impairment (e.g. throwing acid into eyes/face, having eyes gouged out)
- negligence
- biting

Sexual Abuse/Harassment: Forcing sex or specific acts, pressuring into unwanted sexual behavior, criticizing performance, the improper use of another person for sexual purposes, generally without their consent or under physical or psychological pressure (also, child sexual abuse, whether abused by parents, those in loco parentis or strangers).

Verbal abuse: When a person uses profanity, demeaning talk, or threatening statements.

Emotional abuse or psychological abuse: Coercion, humiliation, intimidation, relational aggression, parental alienation or covert incest: Where one person uses emotional or psychological coercion to compel another to do something they do not want, or is not in their best interests; or when one person manipulates another's emotional or psychological state for their own ends (see battered person syndrome), or commits psychological aggression using ostensibly non-violent methods to inflict mental or emotional violence or pain on another. Constantly criticizing, ridiculing (self, family, friends, past); trying to humiliate or degrade; lying; undermining self-esteem; misleading someone about the norms and values of the gay/lesbian communities in order to control or exploit them.

Isolation–Restricting Freedom: Controlling contacts with friends and family, access to information and participation in groups or organizations; locking up in a room / restricting mobility; monitoring telephone calls

Stalking / Harassing Behavior: Following; turning up at workplace or house; parking outside; repeated phone calls or mail to victim and/or family, friends, colleagues

Threats & Intimidation: Threatening to harm partner, self or others (children, family, friends, and pets); threatening to make reports to authorities that jeopardize child custody, immigration or legal status; threatening to disclose HIV status, threatening to reveal sexual orientation to family, friends, neighbors, and/or employers

Economic Abuse: Controlling or stealing money; fostering dependency; making financial decisions without asking or telling partner

Property Destruction: Destroying mementos, breaking furniture or windows, throwing or smashing objects, trashing clothes or other possessions

Drug abuse: The misuse of drugs, alcohol or other substances, usually a form of addiction. Law enforcement officials, among others, often define drug abuse as "any" use of illegal drugs, whether or not use is actually harmful to the user or to anyone else.

Child abuse: Abuse, usually physical, emotional or sexual, directed at a child.

Spousal abuse (or domestic violence): Abuse, usually physical, or psychological abuse, directed at one's domestic partner.

Elder abuse: Abuse, most often physical or in the form of psychological threats, directed at the elderly, especially in nursing homes and similar institutions.

Human rights abuse: Violation of human rights.

Animal abuse: Abuse or cruelty directed at animals.

Legal abuse: Vexatious litigation or malicious prosecution to retaliate, coerce, or emotionally/financially harm a person.

Internet abuse: Includes a wide range of inappropriate online behavior, such as unsolicited promotional email, intrusion attempts, and phishing.

Spiritual abuse: Abusive or aberrational practices identified in the behavior and teachings of some churches, spiritual and religious organizations and groups.

Abuse in Same-Sex Relationships: Is the same as everything listed above.

Children can experience domestic violence as:

- Witnesses to domestic violence. This includes seeing or hearing abuse, seeing physical signs after the violence or witnessing the effects of domestic violence on the abused person.
- Weapons of abuse. An abusive partner can use access to their children as a form of abuse and control. They may try to turn children against the other partner or undermine the other partner's parenting role.
- Victims of abuse. Children may be physically or emotionally abused by the abusive partner (or even in some cases by the abused partner).

Children, who experience domestic violence, whether in same sex or heterosexual relationships, can suffer from a wide range of negative effects from short term physical injuries to long term emotional or psychological trauma. All children who experience domestic violence are affected by it in some way.