

TYPES OF ABUSE

DEFINITION OF ABUSE: The dictionary defines abuse in the following way - to use wrongly; to mistreat; to insult; or to revile.

The reality is that abuse occurs whenever someone does something to someone else that causes them to be upset, belittled, put down, insulted, hurt (in any way) or made to feel unworthy. It must also be seen that there is a very fine line between abuse and other applications. These will be shown as examples where it is believed applicable.

In the following list, we have endeavoured to bring together a list of the varieties of abuse, many of which have become acceptable in modern society. We do not see this list as complete so we ask that, if you know of any other form of abuse, please let us know what the abuse is and a brief description of that form of abuse and we will add it in to the list. We are trying to make people aware of the vast range of actions that can be deemed as abusive.

There is often a crossover of types of abuse so that one type of abuse may be found as a part of another type of abuse (example: verbal abuse can be a type of child abuse).

1. Child Abuse: This is the excessive application of punishment, force or discipline upon a child. Such abuse can be physical or it can be applied in other types of abuse such as emotional, mental, financial, social or verbal, just to name some. Child abuse should never be equated to discipline (unless it is excessive) as is, sadly, done by some governments and so called child care “specialists”. The Bible is very clear that if we spare the rod, we spoil the child. This is clearly seen in western society where there is a rise in lawlessness that is clearly connected back to a lack of discipline. Discipline becomes abuse when it is excessive.

2. Child Sexual Abuse: Any sexual act, either direct or by other application, that is performed with or on a child is abuse. No child should be subject to such acts for any reason or purpose. A child who is forced to watch sexual activities is, in fact, being sexually abused. This must also apply to presenting pornographic material for children to participate in (by watching or listening).

3. Partner Abuse: This is the abuse of a partner (wife/husband, etc.) where one partner applies some type of abuse to the other. The most common ones here are physical and sexual. However, it can also include social, mental, emotional, spatial, financial and neglect, as well as others. It is often used to force the partner into some level of submission or as a type of “pay back” for something said or done.

4. Sexual Abuse: Any sexual action with another that is without consent, by force, through unacceptable behaviour, or brings about a situation that is unacceptable, is deemed to be sexual abuse. Whilst rape, pack rape and other forms of legally covered acts are well known, it also includes acts performed by one person upon another (even if the two are partners) where the one partner finds the method of the act totally or partially unacceptable and should be deemed as sexual abuse. Date rape (where a person takes sexual advantage of another when together) is a common form of abuse and becomes worse when, the victim is, unknowingly (or sometimes forced) placed under the influence of some type of drug (including alcohol) in order to make them submit to sexual acts of any nature. Just because a person has agreed to social interaction with another does not mean sexual consent has been given. Sexual abuse among teenagers can often lead to unwanted pregnancies and this can create many problems, especially for the younger teenagers involved.

5. Workplace Abuse: A very common and often ignored type of abuse. This can occur in a number of ways:

a) Employer and employee abuse: where one party (usually the employer, though not always) forces the other into a submissive situation (and this can include sexual but is not limited to that) where the second party is forced to do things that are against their will or conscience that are not a part of the job description. Often this can be accompanied by implied threats of “losing their job” if they do not do as they are asked.

b) Staff to staff abuse: where more senior (though not always) staff force others, through some type of coercion, to do things they should not do or are against their will or conscience.

c) Workplace Initiation: While very similar to the previous one, it is a widespread practice in many large companies to “introduce” a new employee to “the ways of the company”. These can range from harmless, though sometimes very embarrassing, pranks through to what could be deemed as actually dangerous in some way or another.

6. Bullying: A common practice, especially in the school situation or among children and teenagers in general. This is where a person, or persons (male or female) endeavour to exert some type of physical authority over others. That can be just for the pleasure that it supposedly gives the bully or it can be more sinister, demanding some type of payment in order to ensure that the physical threat is not applied. These tactics, however, can extend beyond the children and is actually a practice of gangs and the like in the adult world, being applied, often but not exclusively, to protection rackets affecting individuals or business.

7. Financial Abuse: This is the withholding of finances in order to make some gain. It is common place in relationships where one partner will withhold the money (for a variety of reasons) from the other partner in order to gain control over them or to “punish” then for something deemed to be done or not done. It is also seen in the area of child abuse where children are deprived of essential finances in order to inflict punishment. However, it is not to be seen as only on a person to person basis. It is very common in business where finances are withheld that are due in order to force another into some type of submission. One such area is the aspect of foreclosure on debts when a person is in financial troubles (often through no fault of their own) and, while this is legal, it is still a type of abuse. Sadly, it is also seen at a government level where funds are legally withheld from someone to apply some type of punishment, that may or may not be the fault of the recipient. This is especially seen where social security systems are in place and an individual bureaucrat has the authority and power to withhold essential finances for deemed breaches, without having to prove that breach. This is a particularly bad abuse when children are involved.

8. Church Abuse: A sad reflection on the churches of today. People who hold positions in churches are deemed as being trustworthy and honest, yet they sometimes use this position of trust for their own personal gain. While sexual abuse is a commonly known one, there are others that include social, financial, emotional, mental and physical (to name some) abuse that can be applied by the said person. The abuse is probably more common with males being the perpetrators, but it is certainly not limited to just males. It is made all the worse in that these people are supposed to be representatives of Christ and this makes the action far worse as it brings genuine Christians into disrepute. It needs to be stated that this type of abuse is not something that is exclusive to Christianity but is found, just as much, in other religions as well.

9. Dating Abuse: When two people are spending time together in a relationship that has moved beyond just friendship, pressure is often brought by one person on the other, to do things that the other one either may not believe in or may not be yet ready to do. Most commonly this would be sexual abuse but emotional, financial, spatial and physical abuse may also play a part, as well as others.

10. Mental Abuse: This is where a person's mental capacity is restricted through applied forces. For example, refusing to allow a person who is qualified to do a task because it does not suit the perpetrator's plans. This is often seen in business (and also in the education system) where restrictions are placed on an individual to prevent them using their mental capabilities or their acquired skills.

11. Emotional Abuse: Not to be confused with mental abuse (which it often is), this is where a person or persons will play on the emotions of another in order to make them feel unwanted and even hated. It is commonplace in personal relationships where one partner will deprive or withhold emotions from the other in order to apply pressure to that person. The failure to give love to a partner is deemed as emotional abuse.

12. Spiritual Abuse: Deprivation of matters that pertain to a person's spiritual welfare and belief. This can be at a personal level (where a person refuses to allow another to attend church - this is often a partner refusing to allow the other partner or their children to attend church) or it can be at a cultural or political level where local authorities refuse to allow a person the right to practice, openly and freely, their spiritual beliefs. Spiritual abuse is also found in many cults and organisation where a dictatorial person or group, lays down the rules about what members can believe or do or what they must do - for example there are cults that insist that the leaders of the cult must have sexual relations with every woman or man within the cult before they are allowed to mix with others (this is just one example).

13. Social Abuse: This is probably one of the most subtle types of abuse that there is. It is where a person is deprived of social interaction to some level. It is a common place in partner abuse where the one partner will limit (sometimes completely) the social activities the other person may participate in unless the perpetrator is present (or a representative of the perpetrator). In extreme cases, the victim becomes a total prisoner within their own home, never being allowed to leave the home for any reason. This can also apply to children being made virtual prisoners or having their social life removed. Deprivation of a child's participation in sport or social groups is a common application of this abuse. It does go beyond this into special communities (or communes) and even into wider applications that are either cultural and/or political.

14. Physical Abuse: This is relatively easy to describe. Anything that involves excessive physical contact would be deemed as physical abuse. Unwanted physical contact can also be abuse if the recipient has refused the contact (this does not include the discipline of children) for personal or other reasons. Generally, though, it is the excessive contact or contact that has physical force attached to the action. Physical abuse generally leaves marks, though the perpetrator of such action may often make sure that the marks are placed where they may not normally be seen or where they can compel the victim to cover up without drawing too much attention to themselves. Physical abuse also includes the application of external physical activity. A very common one is the use of something hot (such as a lighted cigarette or a red hot poker) that is used to inflict both pain and physical damage to the person. This is an area that we could probably spend a lot of time going through but it is also one that most people are aware of as well.

15. Abuse of Neglect: This is particularly prevalent with children, especially those under 5 years of age where one or even both parents literally neglect a child and do not feed them properly, wash them, provide a clean environment for them or neglect matters of health. Sadly, this type of neglect can often end in death. While children are the prime targets of this type of abuse, the elderly are also targets and not only in the family situation but, in many cases, when they are in care.

16. Political Abuse: This is a very sensitive area of abuse. While it can certainly involve many of the other areas discussed, it is in one specific area that it causes great concern. That is the drafting and passing of legislation that govern the people. So often politicians draft laws into being without looking at the possible consequences of their actions. Thus we see laws put in place to protect certain groups of people (usually minorities but not always) that then severely disadvantage others or even penalise them. Countries that allow retrospective legislation (that is laws can be backdated to cover event years or even decades earlier) show a serious type of abuse, because it means that things done legally at the time and with all good faith, suddenly become illegal and can attract severe penalties. Another area of political abuse is legislation designed to protect certain groups of people, but the legislation then allows others to legally abuse people or the system (or both) because of the loopholes provided. Because they are politicians, they are protected from being charged with abuse. In most western countries, politicians and government as a whole, are not answerable in any way. They argue that there are elections, but that is little comfort because both sides of the system are usually just as bad.

17. Bureaucratic Abuse: Primarily this applies in the area of enforcing the law. Whilst most bureaucrats are responsible people, too often there are those who become obsessed with the power that their position gives them and they enforce law without thought to the suffering and pain (and sometimes death) that their action can lead to. It is believed that as much as 25% of suicide in western countries can be attributed directly back to the actions of government departments or staff in one way or another. Like politicians, because they are generally not answerable for their actions, they can do as they like.

18. Verbal Abuse: This covers many facets. However it is summarised into two main categories:

a) Volume Abuse - that is the constant shouting of abuses at another or between two people (or two or more groups of people). Just the sheer volume of the abuse is very wearing on the victim. But there are innocent victims to such abuse. The first of these are the children whose parents are constantly abusing each other (or one partner abusing the other). The children become frightened and even terrified (especially if the verbal abuse is accompanied by or leads to physical abuse) and this can cause many side effects that sadly include suicide. The second victims of volume verbal abuse are neighbours. They have nothing to do with the reasons for the abuse but must listen to the constant volume of language that emanates from the source.

b) Bad Language Abuse: This is where one or more of the parties is constantly bombarding listeners with bad or foul language. Many adults (and some children) have a constant flow of such language without realising they are doing it. Where this one has a really detrimental affect is when parents (one or both) constantly use such language and then reprimand their children for doing the same. This “double standard” is definitely a type of abuse.

19. Spatial Abuse: This is another area that is difficult to define. Each person has their own personal space that they like to keep to themselves. For some the space is very small while for others it can be quite large. This is the area around a person that they like to keep for themselves. Too often people will deliberately and intentionally invade that space with the express purpose of upsetting the victim. Constantly touching them, crowding them and possibly even hurting them in some way (like a “friendly” pinch). The accidental invasion is usually overlooked but the deliberate ones are hard. Such abuse can lead to withdrawal and, in extreme cases, suicide.

20. Audio Abuse: Modern society is being constantly bombarded with noise. Some of it is totally unavoidable due to the location of the victim (where they live, where they work, etc..) and we generally learn to accept those even if we detest them. However, many aspects of audio abuse are avoidable and are created by selfish, self centred people who think only of themselves and could not care less about the discomfort their noise levels create for others. Young people (though not exclusively) are major offenders and it is not only in the home but it is also in the sound systems they fit to their vehicles which are often louder outside the vehicle (for those forced to listen) than it is within.

21. Parent Abuse: This is a very sensitive area of abuse as it is one that most parents experience but very few will actually talk about. Primarily, this is the area where teenagers are constantly abusing their parents because they want to do their thing in their time. Whilst for many, the level of abuse here is generally mild, it sadly breaks out into other types of abuse, including severe physical abuse. It is certainly not gender specific as it is probably about equal between male and female.

An aside to this is where elderly parents are concerned and their children (and possibly even grandchildren) are just “too busy” to be interested in looking after their needs. This is not saying they should remove the independence of the elderly, but sometimes they need family support for something and the family could not be bothered with them. Children who ignore the needs of their elderly parents are, in fact committing a type of abuse.

22. Sibling Abuse: While some would argue that this is just a type of bullying (and, in part, they are correct) it is family specific. The perpetrator in this case would never dream of doing what they do to any outside person but it is a different story within the family. While generally it is the older sibling (not necessarily oldest) that will be the perpetrator in this situation, it is not exclusively this way as sometimes it can be a younger one (especially where there are a number of children) who is trying to make their presence felt. It is usually physical abuse but it can be other types as well. This type of abuse is not specific to childhood as it can carry on right through life.

23. Deprivation Abuse: This can take many attributes and is usually person specific. The perpetrator will control or even forbid the victim from having things they like. This can be money, sex, friends, interests, shopping, transport and a list that could go on forever. By depriving their victim, they control them and make them do the things the perpetrator wants. This type of abuse can lead into other types, especially sexual abuse.

24. Use Abuse: This is when a person uses another for their own gain. Often the situation here is that they will pretend to give love, affection and even some sex in return for things they want. They have no intention of love or care. It is a very popular type of abuse used by women (probably because they are better equipped to use bargaining tools than men are). Promises of sex by a woman to a man can get much from the man. Having emphasised that aspect, it has to be added that men are not above using women for their own gains and, sadly, women will surrender their bodies to a man thinking he is giving them love, when all he wants is free sex. So it can work both ways. Sex and money are usually the key players in this type of abuse.

25. Habitual Abuse: This type of abuse can be any of the above. It comes into being because of the perpetrators own history as a victim of abuse (or witnessing such in growing up). A male child that grows up in a male abusive environment (that is where the father is a perpetrator of abuse) will most probably become a perpetrator himself. Girls who grow up where Mum is a victim (or they themselves were victims) will often end up as victims in a relationship. Statistically speaking, women who end an abusive relationship will, with around a 95% rate, end up in another abusive relationship. All of this happens because abuse becomes habitual and they, while hating the abuse, feel more comfortable with it than they do in a relationship where they are allowed to be free. With the males, that is the way they saw their father treat their mother (and maybe their sisters) and so their habits are also formed for the future. The cycle just keeps going around.

26. Racial Abuse: This is an area of abuse that is on the increase, especially in the western world. Part of the reason is probably the widespread growth in multicultural and multi-racial populations. There is an old saying that says “birds of a feather flock together” (that is like attracts) and so you end up with large racial groups. If one group feels threatened, in some way, by another, or there is some historical background of race hatred between groups, this can flair up in the best of societies and the end result is racial tensions which can lead to racial abuse. This can be particularly noticeable in a workplace environment when one such group is a minority in a workplace. This abuse is often not much more than verbal but it can get physical and, in recent years, there has even been an element of sexual abuse that is racially motivated. Racial abuse is on the increase.

27. Cultural Abuse: Some cultures have had an abuse element that dates back for many centuries and these will continue, probably until the end of time, because it is a part of the culture and no amount of legislation, teaching and guidance is likely to bring about any form of change to this. At the one extreme are the cultures where they treat women as not even as important as livestock. While this is definitely a type of abuse, it is unlikely to ever change.

28. Celebrity Abuse: This is an area of abuse that comes about because a person chooses to use their perceived/real celebrity status to gain power over others. Dominant in this area are males who will obtain the free sexual services of women because the women want to be with them. Such events start out innocently, in many cases, but often end up with some type of negative outcome (such as an unwanted pregnancy or a pack rape). The abuse is ultimately there, regardless of who may appear to have been to blame in the first instance. It is a very well known type of abuse with male sports stars and in the pop music culture. It must also be pointed out that it is not a “male only” domain.

29. Peer Abuse: This is often likened to animal packs where one animal in the pack is trying to become the leader of the pack. The human pack is no different but, rather than just fighting for the role, there is often a lot of abuse that goes on as those wanting to climb to the top of the ladder (corporate or other, whatever the situation) will not care less about who they climb over, use or abuse in their quest for reaching their perceived goal. Using and abusing those who are your peers is a quick way to the top.

30. Alcohol Abuse: Now, predominantly, this is mostly viewed as personal abuse, but, in reality, it is often actually about the abuse of others. People who are constantly (and even occasionally) under the extreme influence of alcohol will, inevitably, abuse those around them, especially family. They may be normally a model citizen but when alcohol takes control, they can change, and sometimes quite drastically. One aspect found is where it results in the person who is under the influence, leaving themselves wide open for abuse, particularly sexual (be it as is, or the resultant drugging that can follow to guarantee they are submissive). Those under the influence of alcohol are never fully in control.

31. Drug/Substance Abuse: Certainly this is very similar to that of alcohol abuse but it opens a few other aspects that might be deemed different. People who might be able to resist approaches of abuse while under the influence of alcohol, may not be in any position of control when under the influence of drugs or other substances of abuse. Such abuse can lead not just to sexual but other types of abuse including extreme physical and ritual abuse.

32. Ritual Abuse: A growing type of abuse that has its roots in cultural and/or religious circumstances. Ritual abuse can range from the seemingly harmless group sex/naked cavorting that is often glorified on TV and film, right through to the literal human sacrifice of an unknowing victim - a person who thinks it is all a fun game who suddenly has their life taken from them as a part of the ritual. A fairly common aspect of this abuse is discovering/finding a woman in the group who is at the time suitable to conceive, who is then ritually raped by every male present in order to make her pregnant. Such pregnancies are sometimes "desired" by the woman who actually believes she is being "honoured" by getting pregnant in this way while others are drugged so that they are not aware of what is being done to them.

33. Institutional Abuse: There are two basic sub-sections in this category.

a) Training and Development Institutions: This is a very loose description as it encompasses a whole range of places including boarding schools and military establishments (just to name two). Whilst governments in most western countries would like to tell you that this form of abuse is a thing of the past, the reality is that it is still very much present, just disguised a lot more than in, say, the sixties. In this area there is two types of basic hierarchy. The first is related to the length of time an individual has been in the establishment (or the higher the grade in schools) - the longer you have been there, the higher up the ladder you are "found". Within each level of hierarchy is a "pecking order" that adjusts itself according to the individuals. The higher up the scale you are, the greater "power" you can wield over those below, especially those right at the bottom of the ladder. This is not strong in all areas but where the culture exists, it has been known to be the cause of mental anguish, mental breakdowns and even suicide.

b) Residential Institutions: While the predominant area found in this group are residences for the elderly, it is common in other institutions including orphanages and prisons. The general aspect here is the abuse by staff against the occupants. The forms of abuse can vary from place to place where such behaviour does occur. In most western countries, there are laws which, reportedly, apply punishment to those involved in such abuse. However, this abuse still occurs. The aspect of prisons is probably more rightly classified as being a combination of both groups.

34. Business/Professional Abuse: This is a very grey area of abuse as there are so many loopholes in places where legislation actually exists. This form of abuse occurs primarily to the families of a deceased person. Despite notification, the business or professional person continues to send mail or information to the deceased person, causing no end of anxiety to family members. Very little can be done about this as it is so very easy for the offender to say that they did not know or that it takes a period of time before the computer recognises that they are deceased.

35. Harassment Abuse: Where, despite frequent requests, a business or individual continues to make contact with people through the form of unwanted advertising, undesired Emails, undesired text messages on a mobile phone, unwanted phone calls, and so the list could go on. The sad part about this form of abuse is that in many countries, such as Australia, this form of abuse is actually legal unless the individual takes legal steps to stop it and, even then, communication from certain categories of people/organisations is still allowed to continue.

36. Personal Abuse: While some will say this probably has no place in this project, personal abuse can sometimes be a signal of other abuse that the individual can be involved in or, it can lead to the person becoming a perpetrator in the future (a lot of factors come into this aspect). Personal abuse takes a myriad of faces and, whilst most can be seen as not a major issue, some can cause a lot of personal harm and even injury to the person. This, in turn, can lead to things like emotional and social abuse of others because of what they do. Ultimate aspect of personal abuse is suicide and the social consequences there are horrendous

37. Educator Abuse: Whilst this can take many forms, the common factor is where a person, who is an educator, abuses their position of trust to take advantage of their victim(s). Most commonly, the victims of this type of abuse are children and teenagers, but it is not restricted to these groups. Not only is their act, in itself, criminal, it is the breach of trust and betrayal of their profession that are additional issues in this type. They bring a degree of disgrace upon the teaching profession, especially to the institution where they were employed.

38. Step-Parent Abuse: This can contain many of the other types of abuse but it is placed in a specific category because of this common factor - that one partner is not the parent of the children who are the victims. Most common abuser in this situation appears to be the male (step father) but this may be the case because most mothers have custody of children rather than fathers. The sad aspect of this form of abuse is that the parent, in order that they do not upset their new partner, will believe the partner in preference to the children if a child reports the abuse.

39. Non-discipline Abuse: This is a controversial area of abuse. However, here is the principal behind why this is, in reality, a form of abuse.

- Without discipline there can be no self-discipline due to the fact that there are no rules to guide the person;
- Without self-discipline there can be no self respect, for there is no reason for it;
- Without self respect there can be no respect for others;
- Without respect for others there is no law and order; and
- Without law and order we have chaos and mass civil disobedience.

40. Technological Abuse: Certainly a rising form of abuse as we advance into this rapidly changing technological world. It is where the use of technology treats people with indifference (and even abusively). It is really difficult to describe the multiple ways that technology can abuse people (because it can also help people as well) but one major area is the way it is used. Especially when it comes from government and business areas where information is required for one reason or another and the only option available to people is to go online to do the necessary task. This is alright for those that have such access but even in western countries, less than 60% of people have genuine personal Internet access, so 40+% are actually being abused by not being able to do the required actions. Government is becoming notorious for this but not very far behind them is the financial world (especially banks) who are more and more expecting people to use the technology to do the essential things in life.

41. Abuse Of Trust: This form of abuse can take any of the other forms on board as its tool of operation (more than one is common). What makes this a different category is that it is where the trust that one person has placed in another (or group, organisation, or whatever) is betrayed to make gains of a personal or professional nature. Included in this are where a company places trust in an employee and gives that person certain rights (including access to premises) which is then used for gain by that person through theft or malicious damage. It also includes the aspect where trust is placed in a professional (such as a doctor, lawyer, investor, accountant and the like) only to have that professional use that trust for their own gain. Sexual gain and monetary gain are the two best known breaches of such trust but are certainly not the only ones. The victims not only suffer the obvious way but there is a mental, social and emotional suffering as well because of this abuse of trust that they had placed in the perpetrator. Many victims retain a mistrust in that area for life. Depending upon the actual method of abuse used to breach that trust as to whether or not the actual abuse is illegal or not.

42. Cyber Abuse: Cyber abuse is where people use technology to apply some form of abuse to another or to a group of people. This can be the use of computers, mobile phones, digital cameras and other forms of technology. In the case of computers it can be in the form of abusive statements on public access web sites or through Emails to people. Mobile phones, especially the more modern ones, allow us to send messages, photos and video that can be destructive or insulting in some way. One common method is the transmission of undesirable images of a person to other people in order to embarrass, insult or damage a person. Nude (or partially nude) photos of people are sometimes used to blackmail people by threatening to send these to others unless the person does or pays something to prevent it happening. It is a very sinister type of abuse because of the vast audience it can reach in a minimal amount of time.