

## HOW TO RECOGNIZE ABUSE

SET 3010-4

*(Signs to look for)*

- **Physical Abuse**

- Unexplained injuries, bruises, burns
- Fears receiving medical help
- Bald spots (sign of hair pulling)
- Abdominal swelling
- Avoids physical contact
- Wears clothing that covers arms and legs, even in hot weather
- Displays anti-social behavior

- **Sexual Abuse**

- Has premature interest in or knowledge of sexual terms or behaviors
- Excessive seductiveness; inappropriate sex play
- Is extremely moody or withdrawn; chronically depressed and/or has attempted suicide (especially adolescents)
- Role reversal; overly concerned for siblings
- Exhibits overly aggressive behavior
- Cries easily; becomes hysterical; has poor emotional control
- High unexplained anxiety
- Receives unexplained gifts or money
- Runs away from home
- Runs away from home often
- Has nightmares or insomnia
- Exhibits regressive behaviors such as bed wetting
- Has itching or pain in genital areas; urinary infections
- Massive weight change not otherwise explained
- Exhibits fantasy or baby-like behaviors
- Drop in academic grades
- References to an “adult friend”
- Fear of a specific person or an intense dislike of being left somewhere or with someone.
- Uncomfortable or unable to sit

- **Emotional Maltreatment**

- Has a pervasively poor self-image
- Is easily upset when he/she makes mistakes
- Is often afraid to go home
- Fears new situations or changes
- Displays either extremely passive or extremely aggressive behavior
- Laughs when feeling hurt or sad
- May suffer from asthma, an ulcer, or severe allergies

- **Physical Neglect**

- Wears clothes that are soiled, the wrong size, or torn
- Has poor hygiene
- Is often tired
- Is often hungry
- Craves attention
- Has infected sores or other skin infections
- Has a nervous habit such as rocking
- Displays destructive behavior
- Is often absent or late

*(More than one indicator is usually present in cases of child abuse. Note also that the presence of any of the above signs does not necessarily mean that abuse has occurred.)*