

The background of the slide features a series of stylized, 3D human figures in shades of blue. The figures are simplified, with circular heads and rectangular bodies, and they are all holding hands in a continuous line that recedes into the distance, creating a sense of unity and community. The lighting is soft, casting gentle shadows on the figures.

**Child Abuse Prevention Council of
Contra Costa County**
www.capc-coco.org

Cultural Sensitivity



As a Mandated Reporter, you should gain a better understanding of cultural variations in child rearing patterns. Understanding these variations helps you to establish a unbiased perspective about child abuse or neglect, while avoiding stereotyped judgments of individual families who may be identified within a specific ethnic population.

Culture is defined as a set of beliefs, attitudes, values and behaviors passed down from generation to generation.

- No one culture is normal or correct
- There are different child-rearing practices
- Culture can shape attitudes and ideas about acceptable child behavior and discipline
- Culture shapes perceptions of stress, trauma, abuse and reactions to these

Reasonable Suspicion



- CA state law requires Mandated Reporters to report suspected child abuse and neglect when they have reasonable suspicion or knowledge of its occurrence. (CANRA PC 11164-11174.3)
- Reasonable suspicion is all that is required for mandated reporters to make a report of suspected child abuse. You do not have to be certain.
- You are not to conduct an investigation before reporting.
- Leave the investigation to the trained professionals at Children and Family Services or Law Enforcement.

Reasonable Suspicion Tips



- Start documenting your concerns
- Confide in colleagues especially those with more experience
- Call Children and Family Services and talk to them about your observations (1-877-881-1116)
- Trust your instincts

Investigator versus Detective



While you are not to investigate, nor be certain abuse has occurred to report, I suggest you should think of yourself as a detective gathering clues in order to help yourself come to “reasonable suspicion.”

Where Do We Get Our Child Abuse Clues From?



- A child's physical appearance
- A child's behavior
- Parent/Caretaker/Family risk factor(s)
- Environmental conditions
- A child's verbal disclosure

What Are the 4 Major Kinds of Child Abuse?



- **Physical Abuse**
- **Sexual Abuse**
- **Emotional Abuse**
- **Neglect: General or Severe**

Scenario



Fourteen-year-old Colin has recently been exhibiting a variety of concerning behaviors; recurring fights with other students, abusive language, frequent absences from school, and appearing at times to be under the influence of alcohol.

Now, he's been absent for a few days from your school/program. When he returns, you notice a large bruise on his cheek. When you ask how he got hurt, he tells you that his father hit him for returning home past curfew. Although you have had concerns about Colin in the past, this is the first time you have noticed possible injuries.

Poll 1



Would you report this to a child welfare agency?

1. No, he broke the rules and deserved to be punished.
2. Yes, due to the bruise on his cheek.
3. Yes, because of his change in behavior at school.
4. Yes, due to past concerns.
5. Yes, due to answers 2,3, and 4.

Scenario



You overhear a child telling a friend her Mom spanked her with a belt because she went to a friend's house without permission causing her Mom to worry. The child's behavior seems normal and she is not squirming in her seat. When her mother comes to pick her up, she seems happy to see her mother.

Poll 2



Would you report this to a child welfare agency?

1. Yes, the mother spanked her with a belt.
2. No, the child does not seem to be injured.

Physical Signs of Physical Abuse



- Multiple bruises in various stages of healing
- Location of bruises
- Imprint of objects on body
- Burn or bite marks
- Lacerations
- Ligature marks

Behavioral Signs of Physical Abuse



- Fear of going home with caretaker
- Unexplained or improbable explanation of what happened
- Parental version of injury differs from child's version
- Change in behavior (passive or aggressive)
- Bullying

Scenario



You become concerned because an 8-year-old boy is caught exposing himself to other children and telling them to touch him. You talk with him about this behavior and he informs you that his 17-year-old brother always wants to see his penis and likes to touch it.

Poll 3



How would you handle this situation?

1. I would make a report immediately.
2. I would talk to the child's parents.
3. I would consult Children and Family Services.
4. I would wait for further evidence.

Physical Signs of Sexual Abuse



- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Genital discharge or infection
- Physical trauma to the genital area
- Pain during urination or defecation
- Difficulty sitting or walking

Behavioral Signs of Sexual Abuse



- Seductive with classmates, teachers and other adults
- Refuses to change for gym or to participate in physical activities
- Angry, hostile
- Avoids a specific person
- Regression in toilet training
- Cutting
- Excessive concerns about homosexuality, especially for boys
- Verbal disclosure directly or indirectly

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children



- Refers to sexual exploitation of children under the age of 18
- Sexual conduct “on account of which anything of value is given or received by any person.” This includes food, clothing, shelter, gifts and money.
- Risk Factors include older boyfriend, justice system involvement, previous history of child abuse, gang involvement, drug addiction, tattoos, brandings or markings, withdrawal, homelessness, expensive possessions, truancy, recurring health issues.

Scenario



You notice that a child in your program suddenly appears depressed and withdrawn. When talking about her family, she says that her father often criticizes her behavior and appearance, calling her stupid, lazy and fat. She says she feels worthless. She wonders what she is doing wrong. She wishes her father loved her like he loves her sister.

Poll 4



Would you report this?

1. No, the law says I don't have to report emotional abuse unless severe.
2. Yes, the child's behavior has changed and is emotionally suffering.

Signs of Emotional Abuse



In younger children:

Overly-affectionate towards strangers, unconfident, wary or anxious, doesn't have a close relationship or bond with their parent/caregiver, is aggressive towards other children or animals.

In older children:

Use language you wouldn't expect for their age, act in ways or know things you wouldn't expect them to know for their age, struggle to control their emotions, have extreme outbursts, seem isolated from their parent/caregiver, lack social skills, have few or no friends.

In general:

- Indiscriminate attachment to non-caretakers
- Marked change in behavior
- Repetitive rhythmic movements (self-soothing)
- Substance Abuse

Intimate Partner Violence/Domestic Violence



- Reportable to child welfare agencies.
Why?
 - Increases risk of child abuse
 - Emotional/Psychological abuse
 - Physical Abuse if child is caught in the middle of the fighting

What is Neglect?



General

Negligent failure of a person having the care or custody of a child to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, dental care, and appropriate supervision where no physical injury to the child has occurred. (P.C.11165.2)

Severe

Same as above but injury has already occurred or is about to occur. (i.e. Inorganic failure to thrive)

(The term includes both acts or omissions on the part of the parent or caretaker.)

Scenario



A 6-year-old boy often complains that he is hungry, saying that he does not eat at his house. He frequently asks you for extra food to take home for later. You also notice that his clothing is often inappropriate for the weather, he appears dirty and smells often. He does not spend time with the other kids, and rarely laughs or smiles. You have tried to speak with his mother about your concerns, but she is usually in a hurry and seems to resent your intrusion.

Poll 6



Is this parent being neglectful?

1. Yes, the child is not eating.
2. Yes, the child is not bathing and wearing old clothes.
3. Yes, the boy's mother doesn't seem to care.
4. Maybe, this could be a poverty/lack of resources situation.

Signs of Neglect



- Malnutrition
- Inappropriate dress for the weather
- Dirty, unkempt, offensive body odor
- Unattended medical or dental conditions
- Inadequate supervision

Children with Disabilities



- Children with any disability are 3+ times at greater risk for child abuse than children without them.
- Children with disabilities may not be believed or if non-verbal they are unable to tell.
- Children with disabilities may not realize they are being abused by others.
- They may be unable to consent to sexual activity.

Parent/Caretaker Clues



- Substance Abuse
- Domestic Violence
- Mental illness
- Non-biological boyfriend living in the home
- Cultural isolation
- Cycle of abuse-parent abused as child

Environmental Clues



- Structurally unsafe housing
- Dangerous objects within child's reach
- Severe infestation of insects, mice or rats
- Dangerous persons in the home

What is NOT Abuse?



- Certain cultural practices
- Certain religious practices
- Spanking only if no mark is left on the child
- Subduing children who are a danger to themselves or others
- Poverty (alone)
- Truancy (alone)

If a Child Comes to You for Help...



- Be patient and let the child talk without interruption
- Withhold judgment
- Use simple words
- Reassure the child they have done the right thing by telling you and you will try to get them and their family the help they need

Open-Ended Questions



Questions that cannot be answered with a yes or no answer. They allow the child to tell the whole story without being influenced by the question itself.

- How did that happen?
- How do you feel when that happens?
- Can you tell me more about that?
- What do you mean by that?

Closed-ended questions



Questions that can be answered with a yes or no or with a simple factual response.

- When did this happen?
- Has it happened before? When?
- Where did this happen?
- Does your other parent know about this?

Leading Questions NOT to Ask



Leading questions can influence the child's response.

- Did they do that to you on purpose?
- Did they shove you?
- Does that bruise hurt?

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act



- The Law



- Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act (CANRA)
- PC11164-11174.3
- Requirements

Who is a Mandated Reporter?



- Childcare custodians, including childcare providers and teachers
- Health Practitioners
- Animal Control
- Clergy Members*
- Therapists
- Computer technicians
- Generally, anyone paid to work with children.

When Do I Have to Report Child Abuse?



- Child abuse must be reported when a mandated reporter, “in his or her professional capacity or within the scope of his or her employment, has knowledge of or observes a child whom the mandated reporter knows or reasonably suspects has been the victim of child abuse or neglect.” (P.C. 11166 (a))

Individual Responsibility



- No one should talk you out of making a child abuse report.
- If in a group, one person may report, but all present must make sure that person made the required report.
- If you can't verify if a report has been made, make the report yourself.

Procedures for Reporting



- In Contra Costa County, call Children and Family Services at 877-881-1116, or Law Enforcement at 911, (calling your police department's local direct number is best) immediately or as soon as possible.
- Follow up in writing on the Suspected Child Abuse Report form and send via fax or mail within 36 hours to the agency you called.

Obtaining the Suspected Child Abuse Report Form (BCIA 8572)



The mandated reporter should do the following:
go to: www.oag.ca.gov/childabuse/forms

(Be sure to click on the 2nd blue link: Suspected Child Abuse Report Form BCIA 8572 for mandated reporters.)

Download, fill out, name the file, and save to your computer.

Send as an attachment to CFS with the email address the screener gives you during the verbal report.

There are many people taking those calls so the email will be different almost each time. They do not have a generic email to send it to.

Penalties for Failure to Report to a Child Welfare Services



- Up to \$1,000 fine and/or up to 6 months in a county jail
- Up to \$5000 in fines and/or up to 1 year in county jail if a child suffers great bodily harm or dies
- Loss of legal immunity
- Possible loss of license by licensing agency

Protections for Mandated Reporters



- A Mandated Reporter's identity is confidential.
- You do not have to tell your employer or supervisor you are making a report.
- You cannot be penalized in any way for making a report in good faith.
- Immunity from civil or criminal liability for reporting in good faith.

Privileges for Mandated Reporters



- After an investigation, a Mandated Reporter is entitled to feedback as to the status of the report.
- Photos of injuries may be taken.
- Your report must be taken by Children and Family Services or Law Enforcement.

Obstacles to Reporting



- Denial
- Fear of making a mistake
- Fear of retribution by angry parent
- Fear the child will suffer further as a result of the report

Immigration and Customs Enforcement



Sanctuary State, CA Senate Bill 54, signed in to law on 10/05/17

- Law enforcement can't ask about immigration status
- They can't share any information with ICE that is not available to the general public
- They can't spend money on immigration enforcement
- Allows state and local law enforcement to be more restrictive than the bill provides for.

Contacting Parents



- You **do not** have to tell the parents a child abuse report was made.
- The social worker or law enforcement will notify parents.
- However, if you are comfortable, you may tell the parents.

What Happens After A Report is Made to a Child Welfare Agency.



- If an investigation is to take place it will happen within 24 hours in high risk situations or 10 days for lower risk situations.
- Not all reports are investigated.
- Most reports are not substantiated.
- If abuse is substantiated, abuser's name will go on the Child Abuse Central Index (CACI) list.

Upside to the Negativity



- Child Abuse is 100% preventable
- You could make a difference in a child's life
- You could be helping a family
- Mary Ellen McCormack (1874-1956)

Contact Information



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