

PROJECT EVIDENCE

PROJECT EVIDENCE for Prevention of Mental Disorders.

[3] Indicated Programs are those for young people who will inevitably develop mental disorders unless there is preventive intervention.

[3 c] Social factors

- i Child victims of abuse
- ii Juvenile Justice clients

[3 c i] Child victims of abuse

The abuse and neglect of children is a major public health problem. In addition to direct risks of injury and death there are immediate threats to mental health (traumatic stress and mood disorders), ongoing threats such as distorted personality development and failure to achieve potential, and long-term consequences of diminished human capital in terms of impaired capacity for relationships and potential for repeating similar patterns in the next generation.

Physical abuse is generally defined as injury occurring to a child by a person responsible for the child's welfare in circumstances where the child's health and welfare is under threat.

Emotional abuse involves habitual patterns of hostile and rejecting treatment including denigrating, threatening, restraining, isolating or morally corrupting minors.

Sexual abuse of children involves sexual intrusion, molestation or exposure to developmentally inappropriate sexual material.

Neglect is an act of omission by caretakers failing to meet their duties of care, nurturance and child developmental support.

Notifications of suspected child abuse to Child Protection authorities should result in appropriate investigation. This is discussed in MHYFVic Project Evidence paper 2c iv "Child Protection and Out-of-Home Care" and related Best Practice and Policy papers. These recommend proper assessment, case planning and treatment where deemed possible, with or without a transitional out-of-home placement during treatment, or early permanency planning where it is deemed not possible to remediate the dysfunction.

Although those recommendations involve assessment and remediation of family dysfunction, in the cases where abuse has resulted in emotional disturbances of children it is necessary to specifically include treatment of the child's emotional disturbance in the management plan.

For a further discussion, see Project Evidence PE2c iv.

[\[To read Best Practice Model BP3c i return to Index and transfer to Best Practice Index\]](#)

[\[To read Policy POL3c i return to Index and transfer to Best Practice Index\]](#)

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