Recognition and Reporting of Child Abuse
Child Abuse

Definition

- "Acts of omission or commission that prevent a child from actualizing their potential growth and Development"
- "Infliction of physical, psychological or sexual abuse on a child"
Parental Factors

- Hx of abuse or severe punishment as a child
- Low self esteem, impulse control
- Poor understanding of normal G&D
- Hx of substance abuse, cruelty to animals
- Social isolation/poor support system
Additional Factors

- Child
  - Chronically ill child/child viewed as difficult
  - Illegitimate/unwanted pregnancy
  - Disability, problem pregnancy, prematurity
  - Poor bonding

- Environmental
  - All socioeconomic groups affected
  - Chronic stress
  - Poor living conditions, unemployment
  - Divorce
  - Frequent relocation
Types of Abuse

- Physical
  - Intentional infliction of injury

- Emotional/Psychological
  - Deliberate attempt to decrease self esteem
  - Failure to provide affection, attention and nurture child
Types of Abuse (cont.)

- **Sexual**
  - Sexual contact between an adult and child
  - Fondling, intercourse, pornography - used for the stimulation of the adult

- **Neglect**
  - Failure to meet the child’s physical, emotional and/or educational needs
Red Flags - Indicators for Possible Abuse

- Bruises in different stages of healing, in locations other than bony prominences
- Burns - stocking like even, not splash
- Injury not consistent with developmental level of the child
- History not consistent with injury
- Child fearful of parents, wary of adults
Red Flags (continued)

- Delay in seeking treatment, frequent different ERs, hospitals, MDs
- Dirty, disheveled, unkempt appearance
- Failure to thrive, not meeting developmental milestones
- Abdominal pain, genital d/c, weight loss, eating problems, evidence of trauma
Nursing Responsibilities

- Report all cases of suspected child abuse—healthcare workers have a legal obligation.
- Maintain a non judgmental and non threatening attitude with child and parents.
- Document assessment findings thoroughly and objectively.
- Involve the Multidisciplinary team.
Nursing Responsibilities

- Ensure the safety of the child to prevent further injury
- Provide a positive parent role model, identify support resources, minimize the child’s fear and anxiety
- National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse (NCPCA)
  - [www.childabuse.org](http://www.childabuse.org)
  - 1-877-224-8223