

# NISD Child Abuse Awareness and Recognition

Please access live links for complete training on recognizing and reporting child abuse.

# It Should Not Hurt To Be A Child

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# NISD Training Objectives

Northwest ISD is dedicated to the prevention of child abuse in the Northwest ISD community through awareness, education, and reporting.

- To educate Northwest ISD employees on Texas child abuse and neglect laws.
- To educate Northwest ISD employees on how to recognize the signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect.
- To provide Northwest ISD employees with the tools to report suspected child abuse and neglect.

# TX Child Abuse & Neglect Laws

- **The Texas *Family Code 261.101(a)*** states:  
Any person who has cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect by any person shall immediately make a report as required by law.
- Any professional who has cause to believe that a child has been or may be abused or neglected shall make a report as required by law. **The report must be made within 48 hours after the professional first suspects abuse or neglect..**
- The complete statute can be found at  
<http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us>

# TX Child Abuse & Neglect Laws

- This means **anyone/everyone** who thinks a child may be abused or neglected is required by law to report it to the **Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)**
- Call the Child Abuse Hotline **800-252-5400**  
toll-free 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, nationwide. OR
- Make your report through a secure web site and you will receive a response within 24 hours **[www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org) (E-Report Tutorial)**
- **Emergencies—If this is a life threatening or emergency situation, call your local law enforcement agency or 911 immediately**
- E-mail reports of suspected abuse or neglect are not acceptable.
- You do not have to have proof— only a suspicion that a child is being abused or neglected.
- You can call to make an anonymous/confidential report.

# Reporting Abuse...Making the Call / Submitting Suspicions

## Training Videos for Making the Call

- <http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Training/Reporting/reporting.asp>  
(Run Time: 17.5 minutes)

## Training Video for Submitting Suspicions

- <http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Training/Reporting/reporting.asp>  
(Run Time: 5.5 minutes)

## Reporting Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a Child in Texas: Reporting Basics

### **What if a reporter is unsure whether a situation or condition is a potential "warning sign"?**

While it would be ideal to have a clear-cut guide that would determine whether any given situation constitutes abuse or neglect, there are many factors that determine whether a situation warrants an investigation. When in doubt, you should always err on the side of the child's safety by making a phone or Internet report.

# Reporting to Child Protective Services

## Two Ways to Report Abuse

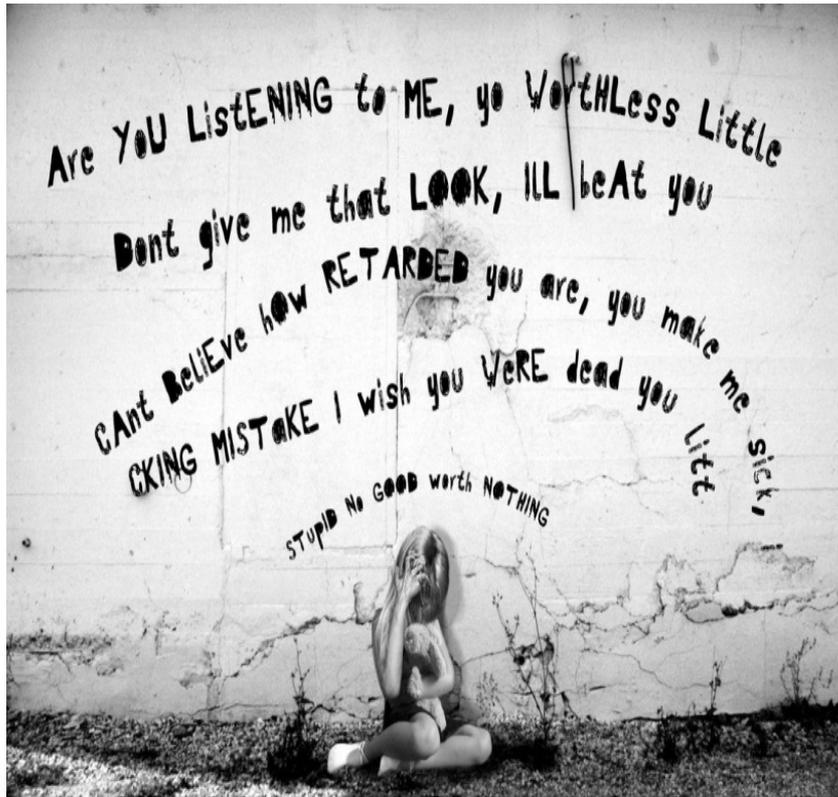
- **1-800-252-5400**  
Call our Abuse Hotline toll-free 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, nationwide.
- [www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org)  
Make your report through our secure website and you will receive a response within 24 hours.
- [Common Concerns](#)
- [Q & A for Reporting Types of Abuse](#)

*We cannot accept e-mail reports of suspected abuse or neglect.*

# Types of Child Abuse



# Emotional Abuse



A pattern of behavior that impairs a child's emotional development or sense of self worth

Emotional abuse is almost always there when other forms of abuse are present

# Child Neglect/Abandonment



The failure of a parent, guardian, or other caregiver to provide for a child's basic needs

Sometimes cultural values, the standards of care in the community, and poverty may be contributing factors, indicating the family is in need of information or assistance. Many states also provide exception to the definition of neglect for parents who choose not to seek medical care for their children due to religious beliefs that may prohibit medical intervention

# Types of Neglect

## Physical

- Failure to provide necessary food or shelter, or lack of appropriate supervision

## Medical

- Failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatment

## Educational

- Failure to educate a child or attend to special education needs

## Emotional

- Inattention to a child's emotional needs, failure to provide psychological care, or permitting the child to use alcohol or other drugs

## Environmental

- Safety problems such as exposed wiring, unsafe heating units, broken glass, fire hazards, rats, other vermin/pests, unsafe sleeping area, housekeeping practices that expose the child to possible disease, infections, or injuries.
- Parents engage in behaviors that endanger a child; child is put at risk of sexual abuse, physical abuse, or neglect by a caregiver's relationship with another person.

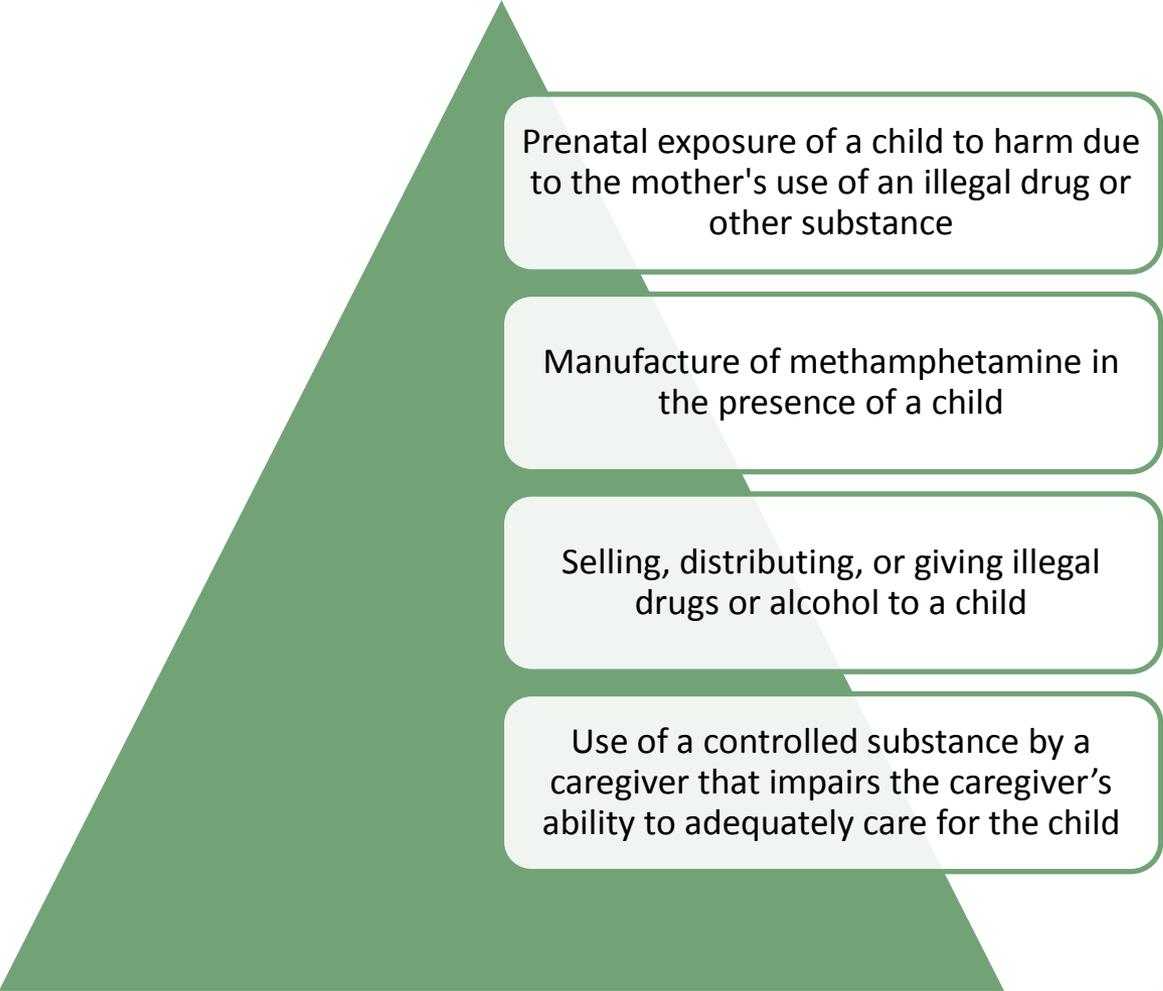
# Child Abuse: Abandonment

When the parent's identity or whereabouts are unknown, the child has been left alone in circumstances where the child suffers serious harm, or the parent has failed to maintain contact with the child or provide reasonable support or a specified period of time

Children must be supervised based on their maturity and ability to be safe.

The [National SAFEKIDS Campaign](#) recommends that no child under the age of 12 be left home alone.

# Child Neglect: Substance Abuse



Prenatal exposure of a child to harm due to the mother's use of an illegal drug or other substance

Manufacture of methamphetamine in the presence of a child

Selling, distributing, or giving illegal drugs or alcohol to a child

Use of a controlled substance by a caregiver that impairs the caregiver's ability to adequately care for the child

# Physical Abuse



Non-accidental physical injury (ranging from minor bruises to severe fractures or death) as a result of:

- Punching
- Beating
- Kicking
- Biting
- Shaking
- Throwing
- Stabbing
- Choking
- Hitting (with a hand, stick, strap, or other object)
- Burning
- Otherwise harming a child

that is inflicted by a parent, caregiver or other person who has responsibility for the child

# Physical Abuse Cont....

Such injuries are considered abuse regardless of whether the caregiver intended to hurt the child

Physical discipline, such as spanking or paddling, is not considered abuse as long as it is reasonable and causes no bodily injury to the child

# Physical Abuse vs. Discipline

- Physical abuse includes elements of:
  - **Unpredictability.** The child never knows what is going to set the parent off. There are no clear boundaries or rules. The child is constantly walking on eggshells, never sure what behavior will trigger a physical assault.
  - **Lashing out in anger.** Physically abusive parents act out of anger and the desire to assert control, not the motivation to lovingly teach the child. The angrier the parent, the more intense the abuse.
  - **Using fear to control behavior.** Parents who are physically abusive may believe that their children need to fear them in order to behave, so they use physical abuse to “keep their child in line.” However, what children are really learning is how to avoid being hit, not how to behave or grow as individuals.

# Sexual Abuse



- Includes activities by a parent or caregiver such as:
  - Fondling a child's genitals
  - Penetration
  - Incest
  - Rape
  - Sodomy
  - Indecent exposure
  - Exploitation through prostitution or the production of pornographic materials

# Myths and Facts about Child Abuse and Neglect

## MYTH #1: It's only abuse if it's violent.

- **Fact:** Physical abuse is just one type of child abuse. Neglect and emotional abuse can be just as damaging, and since they are more subtle, others are less likely to intervene.

## MYTH #2: Only bad people abuse their children.

- **Fact:** While it's easy to say that only "bad people" abuse their children, it's not always so black and white. Not all abusers are intentionally harming their children. Many have been victims of abuse themselves, and don't know any other way to parent. Others may be struggling with mental health issues or a substance abuse problem.

## MYTH #3: Child abuse doesn't happen in "good" families.

- **Fact:** Child abuse doesn't only happen in poor families or bad neighborhoods. It crosses all racial, economic, and cultural lines. Sometimes, families who seem to have it all from the outside are hiding a different story behind closed doors.

## MYTH #4: Most child abusers are strangers.

- **Fact:** While abuse by strangers does happen, most abusers are family members or others close to the family.

## MYTH #5: Abused children always grow up to be abusers.

- **Fact:** It is true that abused children are more likely to repeat the cycle as adults, unconsciously repeating what they experienced as children. On the other hand, many adult survivors of child abuse have a strong motivation to protect their children against what they went through and become excellent parents.

# Child Abuse Statistics

- A report of child abuse is made every 10 seconds
- More than 5 children die every day as a result of child abuse
- 80% of children who die from abuse are under the age of 4
- 30% of abused and neglected children will later abuse their own children
- The estimated annual cost of child abuse and neglect in the US for 2008 is \$124 billion
- More than 90% of sexual abuse victims know their perpetrator in some way
- 80% of 21 years olds that were abused as children met criteria for at least one psychological disorder
- They are 25% more likely to experience teen pregnancy
- Abused teens are less likely to practice safe sex

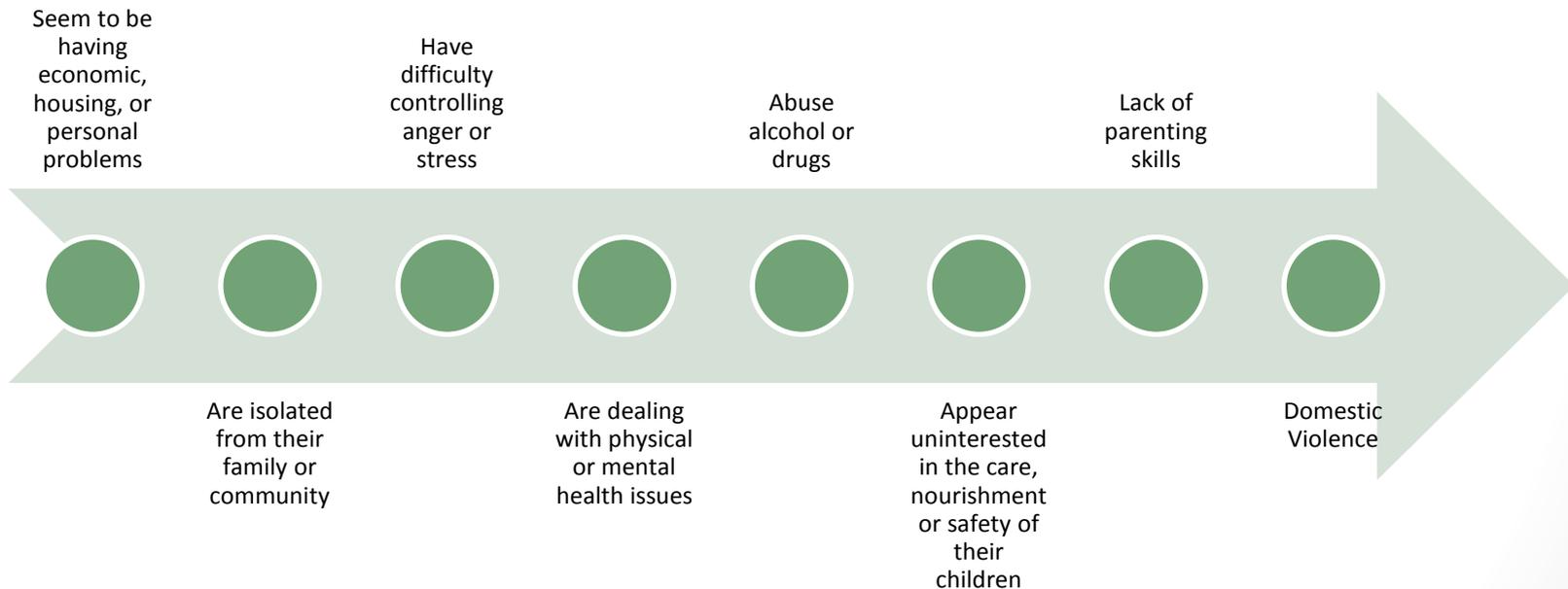
# Child Abuse and Criminal Behavior

14% of all men in prison in the USA were abused as children

36% of all women in prison were abused as children

Children who experience child abuse and neglect are 59% more likely to be arrested as a juvenile, 28% more likely to be arrested as an adult, and 30% more likely to commit violent crimes

# Family Risk Factors



# Signs of Child Abuse

## The Child

- Shows sudden changes in behavior or school performance
- Has not received help for the physical or medical problems brought to the parents' attention
- Is always watchful
- Lacks adult supervision
- Is overly compliant, an overachiever, or too responsible
- Comes to school early, stays late, and does not want to go home

## The Parent

- Shows little concern for the child (rarely responding to the school's requests for information, conferences, or home visits)
- Denies the existence of or blames the child for the child's problems in school or at home
- Asks the classroom teacher to use harsh physical discipline if the child misbehaves
- Sees the child entirely bad, worthless, or burdensome
- Demands perfection or a level of physical or academic performance the child cannot achieve

# Signs of Emotional Abuse

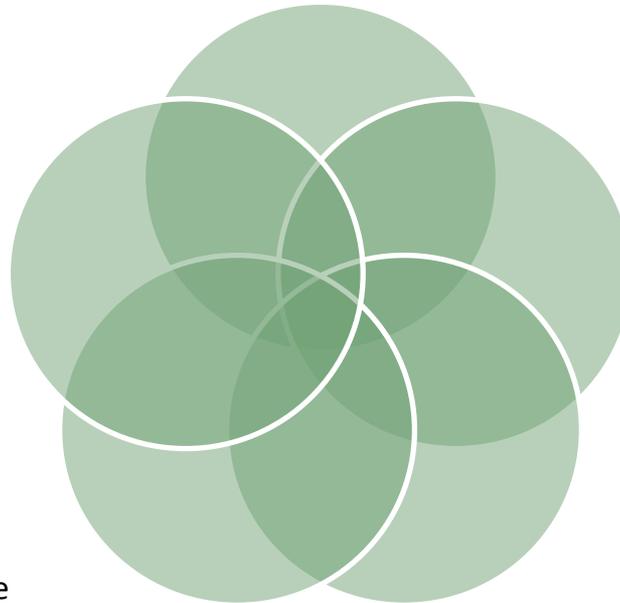
Shows extremes in behavior,  
such as overly compliant or  
demanding behavior,  
extreme passivity or  
aggression

Reports a lack of  
attachment to the parent

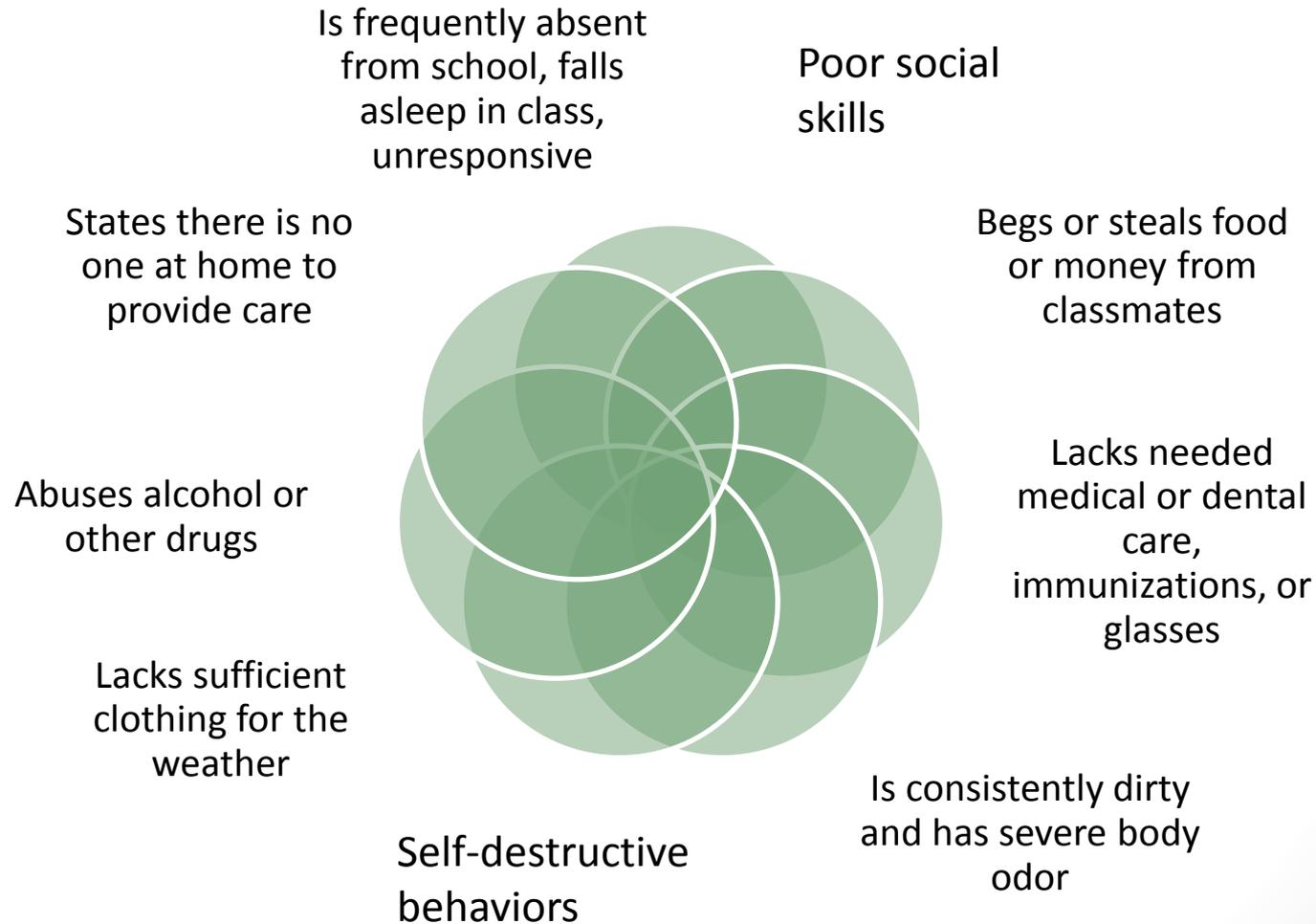
Is either acting  
inappropriately adult (i.e.  
parenting other children)  
or inappropriately  
infantile (i.e. frequently  
rocking or head banging)

Has attempted suicide

Is delayed in physical or  
emotional development



# Signs of Neglect



# Signs of Physical Abuse

Expresses little or no emotion when hurt

has unexplained burns, bites, bruises, broken bones, or black eyes

Nervous, hyperactive, aggressive, disruptive and destructive behaviors

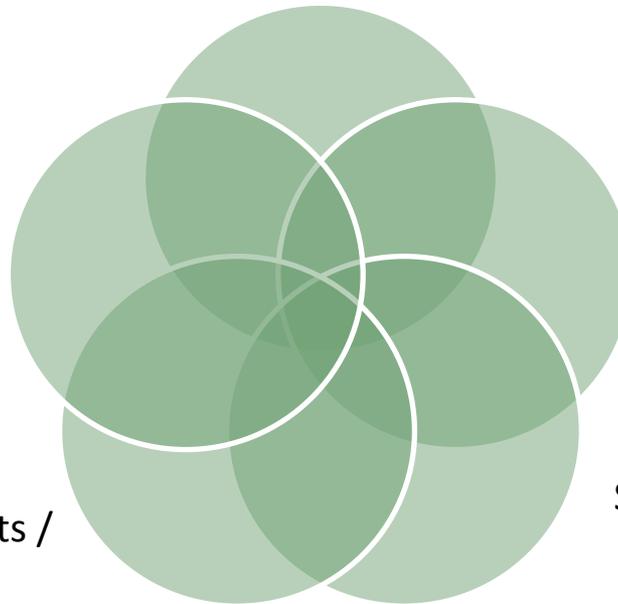
Reports injury by a parent or another adult caregiver

Has fading bruises or other marks noticeable after an absence from school

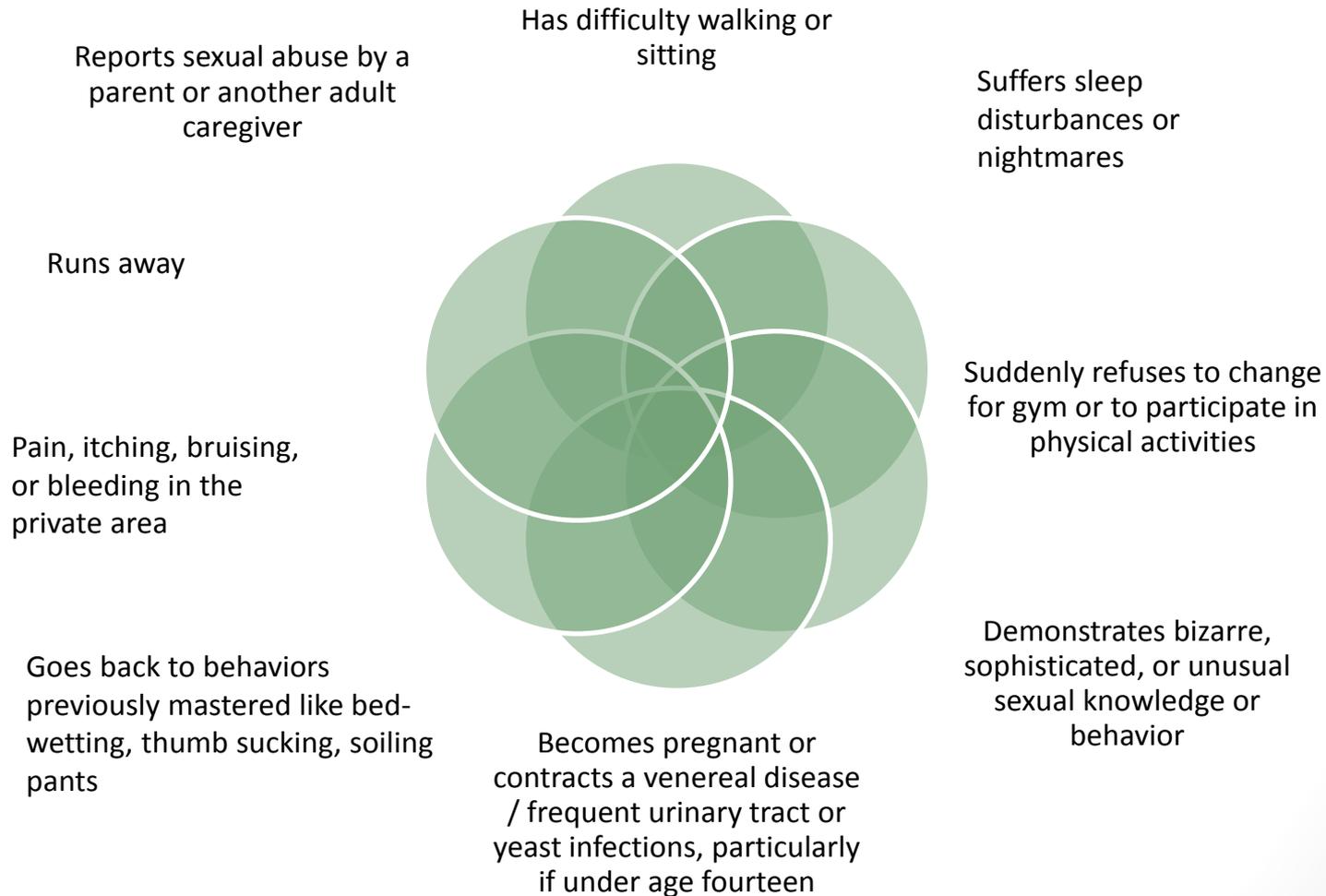
Self-destructive behaviors

Shrinks at the approach of adults / Unusually shy, withdrawn, or passive

Seems frightened of the parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home from school



# Signs of Sexual Abuse

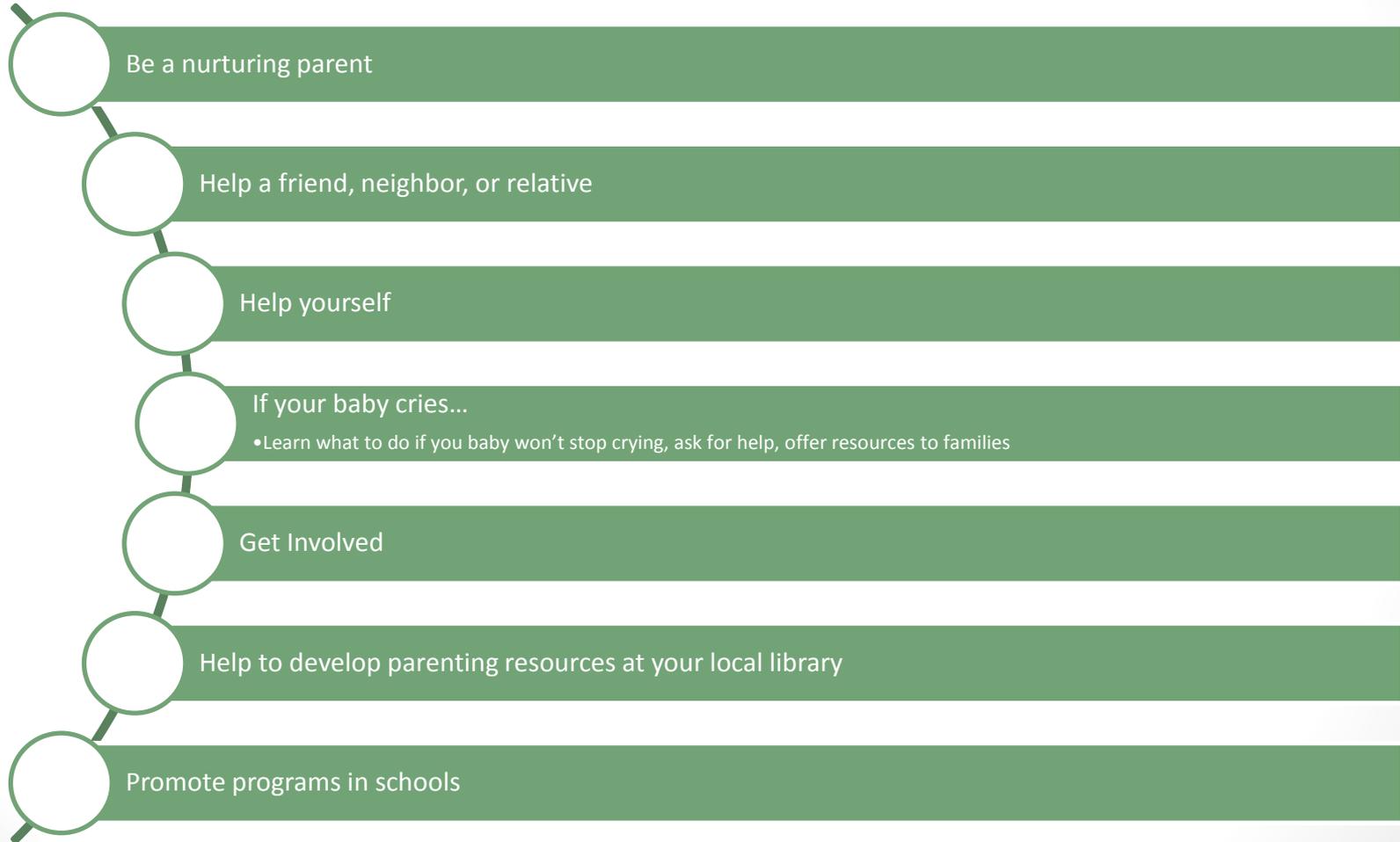


# Prevention

Anything done to support kids and parents can help reduce the stress that often leads to abuse and neglect

- Be a friend to a parent you know
- Be a friend to a child you know
- Remember their names, smile when you talk with them, ask about their day
- Talk to your neighbors about looking out for one another's children
- Give your used clothing, furniture and toys for use by another family. This can help relieve the stress of financial burdens that parents sometimes take out on their kids.
- Educate kids to recognize inappropriate behaviors and report possible abuse at it's earliest stages to their parents or family
- Identify tendencies to be abusive in loved ones or friends.

# Ways to Prevent Child Abuse



# Tendencies/Feelings of Abusers

They can't stop the anger

When swats get harder, yelling gets louder, shaking gets more aggressive

Feeling emotionally disconnected from a child

Not wanting anything to do with your child, wanting your child to leave you alone and be quiet

Meeting the daily needs of a child seems impossible

Other people have expressed concern

Denial is not an uncommon reaction

Is it coming from someone you normally respect or trust?

# Talking to an Abused Child

## Avoid denial and remain calm

- A common reaction to child abuse is denial. If you display denial to a child or show shock/disgust at what they are saying, the child may be afraid to continue and will shut down



## Don't Interrogate

- Let the child explain to you in his or her own words. Don't use leading questions.



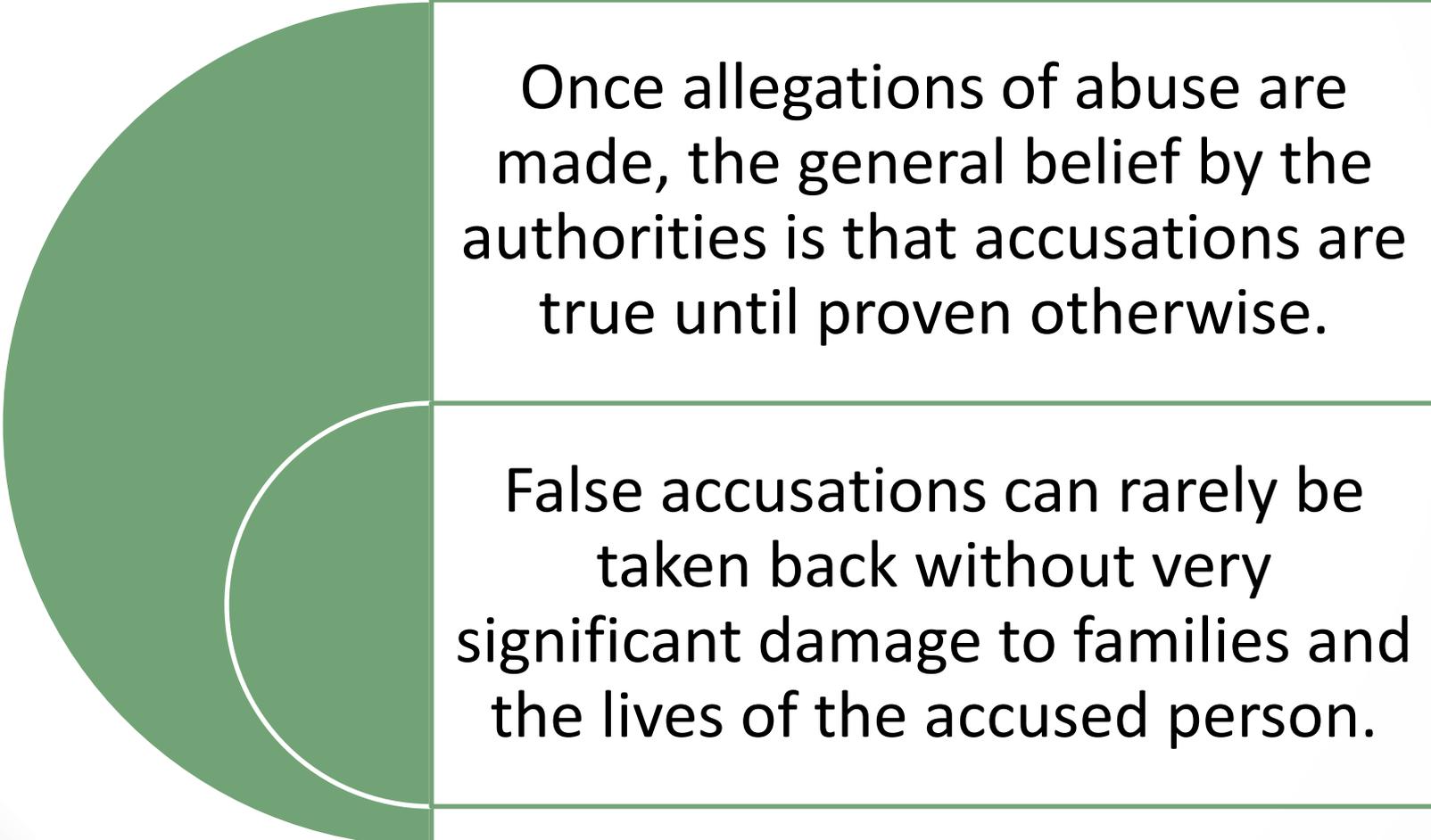
Reassure the child that they did nothing wrong



## Safety comes first

- If you feel that your safety or the safety of the child would be threatened if you try to intervene, leave it to the professionals

# Reporting Child Abuse



Once allegations of abuse are made, the general belief by the authorities is that accusations are true until proven otherwise.

False accusations can rarely be taken back without very significant damage to families and the lives of the accused person.

# False Allegations

False allegations can arise from family members, enemies, or from unhappy or disturbed children. Children can be manipulated by adults to make false accusations. The younger the child, the more susceptible the child is to manipulation.

False allegations of abuse occur in a small number (3-5%) of all abuse reports.

In divorce and custody disputes, in which allegations of abuse are raised, the percentage of false allegations has been reported to be as high as 22%.

Misinterpretation of medical findings or the observations of abnormal behaviors by authorities at school, daycare, and in medical facilities have been responsible for many false allegations of abuse. Sexualized behaviors, depression, or poor school performance can be interpreted or misinterpreted as being the result of child abuse.

# Reporting Child Abuse

- Teachers
- Police
- Doctors
- Mental Health Professionals

Mandated  
Reporters

- Texas law says anyone who thinks a child is being abused, neglected, or exploited must report it to DFPS. A person who reports abuse in good faith is immune from civil or criminal liability. DFPS keeps the name of the person making the report confidential. Anyone who does not report suspected abuse can be held liable for a misdemeanor or felony. Time frames for investigating reports are based on severity of allegations. Reporting suspected child abuse makes it possible for a family to get help.

Texas Law

# Negative Feelings/Beliefs People Have About Reporting Child Abuse

I don't want to interfere in someone else's family.

- The effects of child abuse are lifelong, affecting future relationships, self-esteem, and sadly putting even more children at risk of abuse as the cycle continues.

What if I break up someone's home?

- The priority of CPS is keeping children in the home. A child abuse report does not mean a child is automatically removed from the home-unless the child is clearly in danger. Support such as parenting classes, anger management or other resources may be offered first to parents if safe for the child.

They will know it was me who called.

- Reporting is anonymous.

It won't make a difference what I have to say.

- It is better to be safe than sorry. A pattern can help identify child abuse that might have otherwise slipped through the cracks.

# Resources for Families and Professionals

[Childabuse.org](http://Childabuse.org)

Childhelp USA National Child Abuse Hotline

- 800 4-A-Child
- Offers crisis intervention, information, literature, and referrals

Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America

- Help support families under stress and single parents by working with children in need of additional attention and friendship

[Preventchildabuse.org](http://Preventchildabuse.org)

# Resources

Prevent Child Abuse America

[www.preventchildabuse.org](http://www.preventchildabuse.org)

[Helpguide.org](http://Helpguide.org)

[emedicinehealth](http://emedicinehealth)

Child Welfare Information Gateway

[www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov)

Child Welfare League of America

[www.cwla.org](http://www.cwla.org)

Prevent Child Abuse Texas

[www.preventchildabusetexas.org](http://www.preventchildabusetexas.org)

Keep Kids Healthy

[www.keepkidshealthy.com](http://www.keepkidshealthy.com)

Texas Attorney General Office

[http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG\\_Publications/txts/child\\_abuse.shtml](http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG_Publications/txts/child_abuse.shtml)

Texas Council on Family Violence

<http://www.tcfv.org>

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

[www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Protection](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection)

# Northwest ISD District Contact

Northwest ISD Contact

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