

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE



What is emotional abuse?

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

It may involve conveying to a child that they are **worthless or unloved, inadequate**, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately **silencing** them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

It may feature age or developmentally **inappropriate expectations** being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.

It may involve **seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another**.

It may involve **serious bullying** (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

(HM Government, Working Together to Safeguard Children, London, Stationery Office, 2023)



Types of emotional abuse:



- parents who are emotionally unavailable to their children
- parents who see their children negatively and deserving of maltreatment
- parents who expect more of their children than they are can achieve developmentally
- children being exposed to domestic abuse
- adults not recognising a child's individuality
- adults grooming a child through persuasion, coercion and deceit for the adult's own ends e.g. sexual abuse
- bullying

Possible indicators of emotional abuse in children and young people: >>

- behaviour extremes: children may be overactive or withdrawn
- lacking in confidence or self-worth
- lack of concentration
- physical symptoms without an apparent cause
- difficulty in trusting adults or very anxious to please adults
- reluctance to go home
- fear of parents being contacted
- running away
- socially isolated
- self-harming behaviour
- substance misuse
- sleep and/or eating disorders
- school non-attendance
- behaviour that expresses anxiety, e.g. rocking, hair-twisting or thumb-sucking



Your Parish Safeguarding Officer is: