

## **Some Signs of Abuse**

### **Physical**

- bruises
- burns
- lacerations and abrasions
- skeletal injuries
- head injuries
- internal injuries from blows to the abdomen

### **Sexual**

- bruises or bleeding in the genital or anal areas
- venereal disease
- pregnancy
- unusual sexual knowledge
- delinquency
- runaway behavior

### **Emotional**

- excessive shyness
- self-defeating behavior
- deep feelings of inadequacy
- misdirected anger or rage

## **How to Help a Victim**

1. Believe the story of abuse. These aren't the kinds of revelations that people generally enjoy making up.
2. Be clear that abuse is never the victim's fault, even if he or she cares for the abuser, enjoys the relationship otherwise or experienced sexual pleasure when abused.
3. Validate the victim's feelings of anger, pain, fear, etc.
4. If the abuse is in the past and the victim is out of danger, encourage professional counseling or a support group of other victims so that the healing process can begin.
5. If the abuse is present and ongoing, refer the matter to your adult supervisor so that the necessary intervention can occur. Trust that the information confided to you is indeed a cry for help.

Emotional abuse is difficult to prove legally, but it is widespread. It occurs when a person is continually "put down" by a parent or family member so that feelings of self-worth deteriorate and the individual becomes insecure and lacks confidence.