



Society of St Vincent de Paul



CHILD PROTECTION

Awareness
Programme

SESSION 1



CHILD SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTION AWARENESS PROGRAMME AIM

By the end of this programme you will have:

- An increased awareness of the key issues in relation to Child Safeguarding and Protection when working with young people



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SESSION 1: OBJECTIVES

By the end of SESSION 1 you will:

- Have an understanding of the relevance of child safeguarding and protection to your work;
- Be aware of the broader context for this work;
- Have explored a range of attitudes in relation to this issue;
- Be aware of the definitions of child abuse;
- Be aware of how workers might become aware of/have concerns about abuse

BEFORE WE START

- Welcome to volunteering with SVP children's services everyone – we are delighted you can attend today.
- Introductions
- Housekeeping
- Group agreement



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WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING?

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and young people and protect them from harm.

Child protection is part of the safeguarding process. It focuses on protecting individual children/young people identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. This includes child protection procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a child.

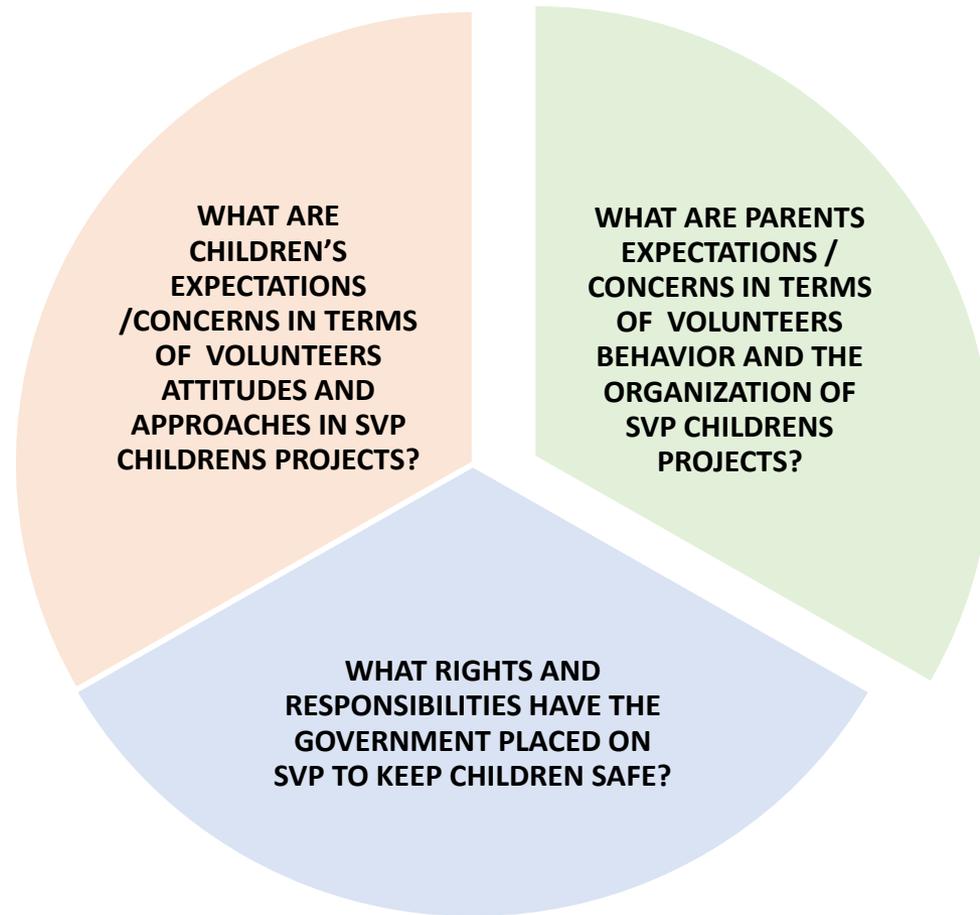
SVP SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is committed to creating a safe, healthy and inclusive environment for all, particularly, the children, young people and vulnerable adults whom we assist. We are committed at all times to ensuring their safety and welfare through upholding children's rights specifically and human rights generally.



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EXERCISE 1 EXPLORING THE LINKS BETWEEN CHILD SAFEGUARDING, PROTECTION AND VOLUNTEERING



KEY THINGS SVP HAS IN PLACE TO ADDRESS THESE NEEDS

- Child Safeguarding Statements for all relevant children's services
- Procedures for recruitment and selection, including vetting
- Procedures for reporting - DLP
- Procedures for dealing with allegations against staff/volunteers
- Codes of conduct
- Appropriate training
- Support and supervision



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LEGISLATION

- Child Care Act 1991
- Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998
- Criminal Justice Act (reckless endangerment) 2006
- Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences Against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012
- National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 – 2016
- Children First Act 2015- Fully Commenced 2017
- Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017

CHILDREN FIRST ACT 2015

New requirements arising for organisations:

- Each organisation needs to develop a Child Safeguarding Statement which is informed by a risk assessment
- The introduction of mandatory reporting of child protection and welfare concerns by key professionals
- Provision for a register of non compliance by TUSLA

STATUTORY OBLIGATIONS OF RELEVANT SERVICES INCLUDE:

Keep children **safe from *harm*** while they are using your service

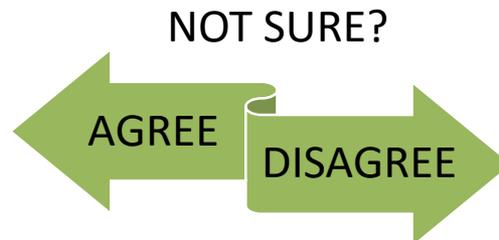
- Carry out a **risk assessment** to identify whether a child or young person could be harmed while receiving your services
- Develop a **Child Safeguarding Statement** that outlines the policies and procedures which are in place to manage the risks that have been identified
- Appoint a **relevant person** to be the first point of contact in respect of the organisation's Child Safeguarding Statement

Harm means, in relation to a child:

- (a) assault, ill-treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child's health, development or welfare, or
- (b) sexual abuse of the child

EXERCISE 2 MOVING DEBATE

- Abuse is a term which is often misunderstood
- If in doubt report
- Children have a right to a say in matters that affect them
- All adults who work with children have their best interests at heart
- Its okay to shout at children
- There is no such thing now as keeping a secret for a child
- Child protection has gone to far



DEFINITION OF 'CHILD'

In Ireland the Child Care Act 1991 defines a child as:

- any person under the age of 18 years, excluding a person who is or who has been married.

A WELFARE CONCERN

A problem experienced directly by a child, or by the family of a child, that is seen to impact negatively on the child's welfare or development, which warrants assessment and support.

Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook, 2011

DEFINITION AND FEATURES OF CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse is generally categorised as:

- Neglect
- Emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse

A child may be subject to more than one form of abuse at any given time.

NEGLECT

Neglect occurs when a child does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the child is harmed physically or developmentally. It is generally defined in terms of an omission of care, where a child's health, development or welfare is impaired by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, medical care, intellectual stimulation or supervision and safety. Emotional neglect may lead to the child having attachment issues.

FEATURES OF NEGLECT

- Being left alone without adequate care and supervision
- Malnourishment, lacking food, unsuitable food or erratic feeding
- Non-organic failure to thrive
- Failure to provide adequate care for a child's medical and developmental needs, including intellectual stimulation
- Inadequate living conditions
- Lack of adequate clothing
- Inattention to basic hygiene
- Lack of protection and exposure to danger, including moral danger or lack of supervision appropriate to the child's age
- Persistent failure to attend school
- Abandonment or desertion

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a caregiver and a child... Abuse occurs when a child's basic need for attention, affection, approval, consistency and security are not met, due to incapacity or indifference from their parent or caregiver. It can also occur when adults responsible for taking care of children are unaware of and unable (for a range of reasons) to meet their children's emotional and developmental needs.

FEATURES OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE INCLUDE:

- Rejection
- Lack of comfort and love
- Lack of attachment
- Lack of proper stimulation (e.g. fun and play)
- Lack of continuity of care (e.g. frequent moves, particularly unplanned)
- Continuous lack of praise and encouragement
- Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming of the child
- Bullying
- Conditional parenting in which care or affection of a child depends on his or her behaviours or actions
- Extreme overprotectiveness
- Inappropriate non-physical punishment (e.g. locking child in bedroom)
- Ongoing family conflicts and family violence
- Seriously inappropriate expectations of a child relative to his/her age and stage of development

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of incidents. A reasonable concern exists where the child's health and/or development is, may be, or has been damaged as a result of suspected physical abuse. It can include:

- Physical punishment
- Beating, slapping, hitting or kicking
- Pushing, shaking or throwing
- Pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling
- Use of excessive force in handling
- Deliberate poisoning
- Suffocation
- Fabricated/induced illness
- Female genital mutilation

*Abolition of the defence of reasonable chastisement

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his/her gratification or arousal, or for that of others. It includes the child being involved in sexual acts (masturbation, fondling, oral or penetrative sex) or exposing the child to sexual activity directly or through pornography.

EXAMPLES OF SEXUAL ABUSE

- Any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child
- An invitation to sexual touching or intentional touching or molesting of a child's body whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification
- Masturbation in the presence of a child or the involvement of a child in an act of masturbation
- Sexual intercourse with a child, whether oral, vaginal or anal

EXAMPLES OF SEXUAL ABUSE *(continued)*

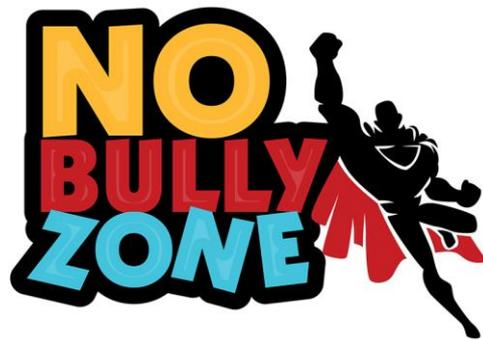
- Sexual exploitation of a child
- Exposing a child to inappropriate or abusive material through information and communication technology
- Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person....In relation to child sexual abuse, it should be noted that in criminal law the age of consent to sexual intercourse is 17 years for both boys and girls. Any sexual relationship where one or both parties are under the age of 17 is illegal. However, it may not necessarily be regarded as child sexual abuse.

CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH MAY MAKE CHILDREN MORE VULNERABLE TO HARM

Some children may be more vulnerable to abuse than others. Also, there may be particular times or circumstances when a child may be more vulnerable to abuse in their lives. In particular, children with disabilities, children with communication difficulties, children in care or living away from home, or children with a parent or parents with problems in their own lives may be more susceptible to harm.

BULLYING

Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression-whether it is verbal, psychological, physical-that is conducted by an individual or group against others.



PEER ABUSE

In a situation where child abuse is alleged to have been carried out by another child, you should consider it a child welfare and protection issue for both children and you should follow child protection procedures for both the victim and the alleged abuser, with the needs of the victim being paramount.

REASONABLE GROUNDS FOR CONCERN INCLUDE

- Evidence, for example an injury or behaviour, that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way
- Any concern about possible sexual abuse
- Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect
- A child saying or indicating by other means that he/she has been abused
- Admission or indication by an adult or a child of an alleged abuse they committed
- An account from a person who saw the child being abused

Some Key Findings

- More than half of the child welfare and protection referrals to Tusla relate to welfare concerns
- Approximately one in every ten primary school children misses 20 days or more in the school year.
- In Ireland, approximately 11% of children experience consistent poverty
- Childline expect to answer over 1000 calls from children on Christmas Day
- Over 80% of sex offenders are known to the child
- Research shows that teenagers perpetrate a considerable proportion of child sexual abuse
- Over 90% of children in care are placed in foster care

SHORT BREAK

END OF SESSION 1



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SESSION 2



SESSION 2: OBJECTIVES

By the end of Session 2 you will have an understanding of:

- Possible responses to dealing with disclosures/concerns/suspensions;
- Reporting procedures;
- How to work safely with young people (code of behaviour-including the key elements)

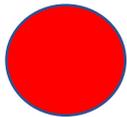


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EXERCISE 4 DEALING WITH DISCLOSURE/ CONCERN /SUSPICION

Please read the scenario you have been given. Spend a couple of minutes discussing your reaction to it.

In your group discuss and agree the actions you might take in the following categories.



RED LIGHT

Actions you should definitely not take



AMBER LIGHT

Actions you might take depending on the circumstances



GREEN LIGHT

Actions you should definitely take



DEALING WITH A DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE FROM A YOUNG PERSON

- React calmly
- Listen carefully and attentively
- Take the child seriously
- Reassure the child that they have taken the right action in talking to you
- Do not promise to keep anything secret
- Ask questions for clarification only. Do not ask leading questions

DEALING WITH A DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE FROM A YOUNG PERSON *(continued)*

- Check back with the child that what you have heard is correct and understood.
- Do not express any opinions about the alleged abuser
- Ensure that the child understands the procedures that will follow
- Make a written record of the conversation as soon as possible, in as much detail as possible.
- Report to the Safeguarding Officer / Designated Liaison Person
- Treat the information confidentially, subject to the requirements of Children First Guidance and legislation.

RETROSPECTIVE DISCLOSURES BY ADULTS

The term retrospective abuse refers to abuse that an adult discloses that took place during their childhood.

In cases of retrospective abuse, a report needs to be made where there is a current or potential future risk to children from the person against whom there is an allegation.

REPORTING PROCEDURES FOR SVP CHILDRENS SERVICES



Volunteers report reasonable grounds
to



Designated Liaison Person reports to



Tusla and/or **An Garda Siochana**

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is about managing sensitive information that arises in a trusting relationship and doing so in a manner that is respectful, professional and purposeful.

All information regarding concern or assessment of child abuse should be shared only on a 'need to know' basis.

EXERCISE 5 CODE OF CONDUCT

This is the SVP Code of Conduct.....

The code is essential for keeping children and volunteers safe.....

In your small group please read the code and discuss under the following headings.....



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WHAT GUIDANCE IS PROVIDED IN YOUR CODE OF CONDUCT RE:

- Ratios
- One to one working
- Appropriate physical contact
- Recording and sharing information
- Safe use of social media
- Transporting young people
- Planning a day trip or residential
- Responding to challenging behaviour
- Working with children with a disability
- Communicating with parents/guardians
- Working with other organisations

KEY MESSAGES

- The welfare of the child is of paramount importance
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- If in doubt seek advice



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RESOURCES

www.tusla.ie

www.dcyu.ie

www.childprotection.ie

www.barnardos.ie

www.youth.ie/nyci/Websafety-Youthwork

www.webwise.ie



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**Thank you for
your attention
and participation**

END OF SESSION 2

