

Abuse prevention and sensitivity training booklet

Edited by: Zsófia Horváth

Published by:

Equal Opportunities of Persons with Disabilities Non-profit Ltd.

2017

Definition and types of abuse

The word abuse means misuse, in broader terms mistreatment. The perpetrator can be an individual, a group or even an organization.

We usually distinguish between physical, sexual, verbal and financial abuse. According to another classification, emotional abuse, mental terror and negligence are also listed in this category.

According to WHO's child maltreatment definition, mistreatment and negligence are distinguished, the latter however is not limited to children: it also concerns people with disabilities as well as elders.

1. Physical abuse 1.1 Negligence

Concerning physical abuse, we must distinguish between its active and passive forms. In its active form, the perpetrator causes its victim physical pain and/or injury. A passive form of abuse, when someone is witnessing an abuse, but does not intervene or does not prevent it, so he/she also becomes a participant.

Negligence can also be a form of passive physical abuse, if the victim's basic physical needs are permanently withheld eg. sleeping, nutrition, personal hygiene, clothing, housing.

Children, elders and people with disabilities are especially exposed to negligence.

Negligence is a form of passive abuse. The passive form of physical abuse mentioned in Section 1. is also included in this category, the passive form of emotional, sexual, material and verbal abuse along with every relevant cases, when the witness does not prevent the abuse.

In the case of negligence, the victim's basic physical and mental needs are permanently withheld.

Negligence may take different forms, including: educational (denial of compulsory education),

medical (prevention of compulsory vaccinations), denial of appropriate clothing, denial of appropriate housing, etc.

The emotional relation with the caretakers plays an undeniable role in a healthy personal development. In this sense, emotional negligence (that is the passive form of emotional abuse) is also included in this category. Negligence can also occur within or outside the family (institutional care). (Herczog, Kovács, 2003; Révész, 2004.)

2. Sexual abuse

We talk about sexual abuse if a relationship of sexual encounter occurs without the other party's consent. The same applies if an individual is also incapable of giving consent in an altered state of mind, under the influence of alcohol or other psychoactive substances. Because of their exploitability, children and people with disabilities are especially exposed to sexual abuse.

Sexual abuse can occur with or without actual contact. Caress, kissing, penetration with genital-, anal-, -oral-, sexual aids can be forms of sexual abuse with actual contact, watching pornographic movies or pictures together, exhibitionism, peeping, making remarks with sexual content are forms of sexual abuse without contact. The role of perpetrator and also victim is regardless of gender.

Besides psychological trauma, the consequences of abuse can range from lenient to serious physical injuries. In addition, the victims are increasingly exposed to sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancy. According to recent statistics, sexual abuse most often occurs within the family, its victims are mainly children, women and people with disabilities.

3. Financial abuse

We talk about financial abuse if the perpetrator decides upon the victim's finances, exploiting the situation, keeping the victim dependent on the perpetrator. Financial abuse most often occurs within the family, its victims are mainly women, adolescents, elders and people with disabilities. Taking away pension from elderly, misusing the social aid of people with disabilities, making the victim constantly accountable, blackmailing can be for example forms of financial abuse. Financial abuse usually implies for verbal and emotional abuse.

4. Verbal abuse

Verbal abuse can be the tool of emotional abuse, mental terror, and is also closely links to them. Verbal abuse occurs in various versions, its lenient forms are so distinctly ingrained in our daily lives that they are difficult to recognize. (Eg: sexual abuse on the street, dirty talk)

It can occur in active forms: negative, disparaging, threatening, aggressive talk. It also often occurs as assault disguised as jokes, Maintaining constant insecurity by secrecy, constant interruption, distraction, obstruction of conversations and questions, pretence of forgetfulness can be passive forms of verbal abuse. „Ageism” (discriminating an individual on the basis of his/her age) or „mansplaining” (man explains something to a woman, assuming she does not understand it, because she is a woman) can be also classified as verbal abuse.

Emotional abuse:

Emotional abuse usually implies at least another form of abuse. We talk about the indirect endurance of emotional abuse when eg. children witness their family members being abused. In this case, it is important to point out that the witness is a relative, who is also threatened, and not in the assisting role mentioned in Section 1. and 1.1.

Even though emotional abuse does not leave any wounds or visible injuries, it can lead to serious consequences: in case of children, it influences their cognitive development, it can cause behavioural disorders, and also lead to self-destructive behaviour. (Révész, 2004.) Emotional abuse can occur verbally (constant insults, shouts, threats, also silence) as well as by unnecessary restrictions (lockup). Mental terror is defined as the constant, long-term series of threats, bringing individuals into dependence situations, and besides emotional abuse, often implies physical and sexual abuse. (Herczog, 2007)

How can abuse be prevented?

Especially in Hungary, but also worldwide there is a massive culture around victim blaming, therefore it is crucial to approach the three steps of abuse prevention by prevention of becoming a perpetrator instead of becoming a victim. This is essential in order to avoid the creation of false sense of security: even if a preventive advertisement, concerning for example clothing, is written with good intention, its compliance does not guarantee us not becoming victims.

According to the three steps of prevention, we distinguish primary, secondary and tertiary preventions. Primary prevention is of an informative nature, for educational purposes. Action - that is addressed to persons not yet involved - may also be taken by parents, not necessarily just by a specialist. This is usually done with educational purposes and once having adopted the appropriate language, can be started without age limit. In case of abuse prevention, it is the best done by the parent or the primary caretaker. This includes naming body parts, familiarizing children with the „underwear rule”, so they learn what counts as a „good” or „bad” touch. The Underwear Rule was published by the European Council (more at: http://underwearrule.org/source/text_en.pdf).

Secondary prevention already concerns the ones involved. In this stage, the involvement of a specialist is already necessary. The goal of secondary prevention and all the specialists involved is to identify the high-risk families, provide them targeted help, prepare other specialist potentially getting in touch with the victims to recognize the signs of abuse and provide right support for the victims of abuse and their relatives.

Tertiary prevention is the process of specialists providing professional help for the victims and their relatives. The difference between secondary and tertiary prevention is, that the aim of tertiary prevention is to help the reintegration of the victim into their environment, the follow-up, and the prevention of becoming a victim again. (Révész, 2004.)

Communications guide

As mentioned above at the types of abuse - in the first section - verbal abuse and the accompanying emotional abuse can lead to serious mental implications. It is important to point out that the knowledge of non-violent communication is not necessary enough for the provision of abuse or the avoidance of a risky situation. Its knowledge and the acquisition of its practical application can be beneficial and if integrated in our daily lives, can help to recognize our and other's needs, to avoid abusive situations and to prevent aggressive communication. Negative, degrading, threatening communication classified as verbal abuse can be replaced by assertive communication, making a step towards the prevention of becoming a perpetrator.

In order to acquire non-violent communication skills, we have to keep in mind two important elements. The first is the transmission of „I-messages” instead of „you-messages”. In the case of I-messages, I have to express my feelings and thoughts, evoked by the other's behavior. With you-messages I am labeling the other, but this does not reveal my feelings. Eg. The following I-message: „When you act like this, I am afraid you don't need me.” While I communicate a you-message by saying: „Don't be so annoying!”

The second important element is to be aware of my own needs: what I want to achieve in a given conflict situation. It is important to be aware that need is not an interest influenced by emotions in a given moment, but a deep, inner need evoking emotions. If we are aware of the original need, it is much easier to word the I-messages. Eg. there is a given situation: a young couple is having an argument. If both were using you-messages: „Why don't you leave me alone, I just want to go out for an hour, don't be so clingy!” and „We are never together, you are so selfish!”. If one of them needs to go out to be alone, to relax, the other needs to spend quality time together, we can rephrase the sentences: „I would like to spend one hour on my own, to organize my thoughts and to refresh myself, because it is easier alone, if I can only concentrate on myself.” and „I would like us to spend more time together, I miss you and I feel lonely.”

Applying the above theory, we can reasonably assume that the number of daily arguments, abusive situations would significantly decrease, however situations can occur when the needs of both participants (or the other participants') remain unsatisfied.

The solution of the conflict can occur in five different ways from the communicational aspect. Assertive or problem-solving communication, using the above mentioned I-messages, aims to achieve that nobody would have to compromise. It is important to emphasize, in the case of daily, small conflicts, that this is an absolute viable path, but there are situations (the role of victim in the context of abuse), when the situation can not be solved without compromising: we should strive to violate the least needs. Participants utilizing assertive communication maximally insist on their needs, but also maximally cooperate.

In the course of compromising communication, the participants give up on some of their needs, but proportionately and carefully, so they don't have to give up on all of them. In communication the usage of „if, then” is quite frequent: taking into account the situation does not slip into negotiations and games. Compromising participants roughly on a fifty-fifty basis insist on the satisfaction of their needs and cooperate with their partners.

The most passive form is avoiding communication: this character avoids conflict, in case he comes into conflict, tries to escape as soon as possible. In this case his needs are by no means prevailed, and the needs of the other participants of the conflict are also not necessarily prevailed, since he does not give them the opportunity to discuss the problem. The avoiding communicator gives up on his needs and does not even cooperate with his partners.

The submissive communicator absolutely gives up on his needs and maximally cooperates with the other participants. He often takes the role of a martyr, although it provides opportunity for games. The submissive party often gets into a dependent position, which however makes him vulnerable.

The aggressive communicator maximally insists on his needs, and does not cooperate at all. He does not even recoil from verbal, emotional, physical abuse in order to impose his will. He often makes threats while communicating.

Even though the scheme of being aware of our needs, communicating our feelings, and so being ready for assertive communication, may seem easy, but practice shows that applying these methods is not easy at all. On one hand, self-awareness

is essential in order to recognize and specify our needs, and on the other hand conscious presence plays a very important role.
Fortunately the all the listed characteristics can be developed and acquired. (Gordon, 1991., Gordon 2010.)

Where can the victim get help?

In any threatening situation, in any case of abuse, the victim can seek assistance from the police. Calling the police, requesting for a police officer does not imply the obligation to file charges, but the victim may stay safe. The police can be reached at 107.

Other, official, right defender, legal assistance services and helplines services can be found below. The list is not complete, however contains the availabilities.

CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES

In Budapest you can get in touch with the Department of Child and Family Services and with the District Department of Child and Family Services throughout Hungary. You can turn to the Department of Child and Family Services in case of divorce and they also provide support in case of abuse of people with disabilities.

EQUAL TREATMENT AUTHORITY

The Equal Treatment Authority is such an autonomous, public, judicial forum that monitors the implementation of the principles of equal treatment. In case of discrimination, you can turn to the authority at 39/B Krisztina krt., Budapest, 1013, or PO Box Pf. 672, Budapest, 1539, telephone number: +36 17952975 and +36 80203939.

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

You can turn to the ombudsman in case your fundamental rights specified by the Fundamental Law get violated. The office can be reached at www.ajbh.hu, in e-mail: panasz@ajbh.hu, telephone number: +36 14757100 Mailing address: Office Of The Commissioner For Fundamental Rights, Pf. 40., Budapest, 1387 and can be found at 22 Nádor u., Budapest district 5.

ESZTER FOUNDATION FOR THE REHABILITATION OF VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

The foundation is well-known for its work supporting victims. Contacts can be found at <http://eszteralapitvany.hu/homepage>.

KERET COALITION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT

The organization provides support for the victims of abuse, its hotline: +36 40630006 on Fridays between 10am and 2pm. Their publications and blog is available at <http://keretkoalicio.blogspot.hu/homepage>.

MUSZÁJ WORKGROUP

The workgroup fights for the rights of the victims of childhood abuse. The workgroup can be contacted through <http://muszajmunkacsoport.hu/> site.

PATENT

PATENT Association provides free legal assistance for its clients. Their legal services is available on Wednesdays between 4pm and 6pm and Thursdays between 10am and 12pm at +36 702525254 or continuously in e-mail: jog@patent.org.hu.

NANE

The goal of NANE Association is to fight violence against women and children. Their hotline is available at +36 80505101 on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursday and Fridays between 6pm and 10pm.

HINTALOVON FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The foundation provides legal assistance, contacts available at <http://www.hintalovon.hu/> website.

HUNGARIAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION

The union provides legal assistance, available at <https://tasz.hu/> website.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES NON-PROFIT LTD.

Equal Opportunities of Persons with Disabilities Non-profit Ltd. promotes equal rights, social integration and the complex rehabilitation of people with disabilities. Available at +36 14503230, +36 14503240 and in e-mail: titkarsag@fszk.hu as well.

HUNGARIAN ASSOCIATION OF THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

The Hungarian Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is not only serving the public interest, but also provides interpretation services as well as legal assistance. Available at: +36 13510434 and e-mail: info@sinosz.hu.

HUNGARIAN ASSOCIATION FOR PERSONS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

The Hungarian Association for Persons with Intellectual Disability can be contacted via www.efoesz.hu website.

HUNGARIAN ASSOCIATION FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM

The Hungarian Association For People With Autism can be contacted via www.aosz.hu website.

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF DISABLED PERSONS' ASSOCIATIONS

The National Federation of Disabled Persons' Associations can be contacted via www.meosz.hu website.

HUNGARIAN FEDERATION OF THE BLIND AND PARTIALLY SIGHTED

The Hungarian Federation of the Blind and Partially Sighted can be contacted via www.mvgyosz.hu website.

HAND IN HAND FOUNDATION

The foundation can be contacted via www.kezenfogva.hu website.

NATIONAL CRISIS TELEPHONE INFORMATION SERVICE

The service can be reached within Hungary via a toll-free number.

The hotline is available at +36 80205520.

S.O.S. CRISIS FOUNDATION TRANSITIONAL HOMES FOR FAMILIES

The home can be contacted via www.soskrisis.hu website.

"OUR FATE AND FUTURE" CHARITY

The charity can be contacted via www.sorsunk-jovonk.hu/csaladok_atmeneti_otthonai.html website.

KÉK VONAL CHILD CRISIS FOUNDATION

The foundation can be contacted via www.kek-vonal.hu/index.php/hu website. The mental health helpline can be reached at 116 111, the missing children hotline at 116 000.

SEXUAL ABUSE AND SURVIVAL FORUM

The forum can be contacted via

mejeroszakoltak.blog.hu/2008/12/20/a_nemi_eroszak_psziches_kovetkezmenyei website.

NEW SEXUAL ASSAULT HELPLINE

The helpline can be contacted through this charged phone number +36 40630006.

Bibliography

- György Révész, Szülői bánásmód-gyermekbántalmazás, Új Mandátum Könyvkiadó, Bp. 2004.
- Mária Herczog, Zsuzsanna Kovács, A gyermekbántalmazás és elhanyagolás megelőzése, kezelése és felismerése, MAVÉ Budapest 2004.
- Dr.Marshall B. Rosenberg, Nonviolent Communication - A Language of Life, Agykontroll Kft Budapest, 2001.
- Thomas Gordon: P.E.T. - Parent Effectiveness Training, Gondolat Publishers, Budapest, 1991.
- Thomas Gordon: T.E.T. - Teacher Effectiveness Training, Gordon Kiadó Magyarország Kft., Budapest, 2010