



Psychological and Emotional Abuse

This leaflet explains what Psychological and Emotional Abuse is and what you can do about it if you are worried that you or someone you know is experiencing it. We have also published other leaflets about adult safeguarding.

Abuse is when someone does or says something which harms someone or makes them upset and scared.

Abuse is always unacceptable. Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. No-one has the right to abuse other people.

Abuse can happen once or can be something that happens over weeks, months or years. It can be accidental or deliberate. Just because there is no injury

that someone can see it does not mean there is no abuse.

Who could carry out Psychological and Emotional Abuse?

Most people will not abuse BUT anyone could abuse. It might be someone the person being abused knows or a stranger. It can be anyone who uses their 'power' over someone else. Anyone can carry out abuse or neglect, including:

- A partner, spouse, child or relative
- A friend or neighbour
- A parent or guardian
- A health or social care worker
- Staff in a residential or nursing home or hospital
- A volunteer worker
- Someone else the person experiencing abuse lives with
- A stranger

It is likely that the person responsible for abuse is known to the person experiencing abuse, and is in a position of trust and/or power.

Psychological and Emotional Abuse is often associated with Domestic Abuse, but can take place in any situation

Psychological abuse is the denial of a person's human and civil rights including choice and opinion, privacy and dignity and being able to follow one's own spiritual and cultural beliefs or sexual orientation.

It includes preventing the adult from using services that would otherwise support them and enhance their lives. It also includes the intentional and/or unintentional withholding of information (for example, information not being available in different formats/languages etc.).

Possible signs and symptoms of Psychological and Emotional Abuse include:

- Use of threats or fear to override a person's wishes
- Lack of privacy or choice
- Denial of dignity
- Deprivation of social contact or deliberate isolation
- Being made to feel worthless

- Threat(s) to withdraw care or support, or contact with friends
- Humiliation, blaming
- Use of coercion, control, harassment, verbal abuse
- Treating an adult as if they were a child
- Cyber bullying
- Refusal to allow person to see others alone or to receive telephone calls / visits on their own
- Removing mobility or communication aids, or intentionally leaving someone unattended when they ask for assistance
- Preventing someone from meeting their religious or cultural needs
- Preventing stimulation or meaningful occupation or activities

Possible indicators of Psychological and Emotional Abuse include:

- Extreme submissiveness or dependency
- Sharp changes in behaviour in the presence of certain people
- Self-abusive behaviours
- Loss of confidence
- Loss of appetite

- Untypical ambivalence, deference, passivity, resignation
- The person appears anxious or withdrawn, especially in the presence of the alleged abuser
- The person exhibits low self-esteem
- Untypical changes in behaviour (for example, continence problems, sleep disturbance)
- The person is not allowed visitors/phone calls
- The person is locked in a room/in their home
- The person is denied access to aids or equipment, (for example, glasses, dentures, hearing aid, crutches)
- The person's access to personal hygiene and toilet is restricted
- The person's movement is restricted by use of furniture or other equipment
- Bullying via social networking internet sites and persistent texting

Who to contact if you are worried about abuse or neglect:

Somerset County Council's Adult Social Care service has the lead for adult safeguarding for all adults with care and support needs in Somerset, and works closely with other organisations including the police and NHS. If a crime has been committed you should always contact the police.

Adult Social Care:

- **Telephone: 0300 123 22 24** (Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.30pm, Saturday and Sunday closed.)
- **Email: adults@somerset.gov.uk**

The phone number for Adults and Mental Health out of hours is **0300 123 23 27**

Police:

101 or in an emergency 999

Further information:

Please use the following link to view other leaflets on our website: bit.ly/SSABLeaflets

