

## Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of an individual causing severe and persistent effects on the person's emotional and psychological wellbeing and for children impacting negatively on emotional development. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in most types of abuse although emotional abuse may occur alone.

Abusive Action	Signs & Symptoms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Threats and verbal abuse</li> <li>• Humiliation</li> <li>• Blaming</li> <li>• Controlling</li> <li>• Pressurising and coercion</li> <li>• Intimidation and causing fear</li> <li>• Ignoring the person</li> <li>• Not giving the person a chance to express their views</li> <li>• Lack of love or affection</li> <li>• Making someone feel worthless</li> <li>• Lack of privacy or choice</li> <li>• Causing/forcing isolation/ withdrawal from family/friends and support networks</li>   <li>• For children: Imposing developmentally inappropriate expectations e.g. interactions beyond the child's developmental capability, overprotection, limitation of exploration and learning, preventing the child from participation in normal social interaction.</li> <li>• Causing children to feel frightened or in danger e.g. witnessing domestic abuse, seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• feelings of helplessness;</li> <li>• hesitation in talking openly;</li> <li>• implausible stories;</li> <li>• confusion or disorientation;</li> <li>• anger without an apparent cause;</li> <li>• sudden changes in behaviour;</li> <li>• the person becoming emotionally upset or agitated;</li> <li>• unusual behaviour (sucking, biting or rocking);</li> <li>• unexplained fear;</li> <li>• denial of a situation;</li> <li>• the person becoming extremely withdrawn and non-communicative or nonresponsive; telling you they are being verbally or emotionally abused.</li>   <li>Changes in a child's behaviour which can indicate emotional abuse include:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being unable to play;</li> <li>• fear of making mistakes;</li> <li>• sudden speech disorders;</li> <li>• self-harm;</li> <li>• fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour;</li> <li>• developmental delay in terms of emotional progress.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**NOTE:** The following lists under each category of abuse contain examples of possible indicators. The presence of one or more of these signs or symptoms does not necessarily confirm abuse. Remember if you are ever uncertain you can contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team for advice, guidance and support.