

## HOW TO DOCUMENT INDICATORS OF CHILD ABUSE

When documenting any indicators of child abuse remember to:

- record the information as soon as possible, including dates and times
- document the facts without personal judgements, opinions, conclusions, or medical/emotional diagnosis
- give a clear description of the situation, what was actually seen or heard, and not what you think might be happening
- include what you did or said and why
- record the words used by a child/parent, even if they are "slang" (especially terms for body parts or sexual behavior)
- include anything that someone else has said, that might be important
- describe the size, color and shape of any injury (for example, bruises, marks, burns)
- hand write your own documentation in your own words, using pen
- cross out and initial any mistakes and continue documenting - do not use white-out
- document suspicions of abuse in a separate record
- make sure the entry is complete, then sign and date it
- start a new entry if, at a later date, there is new information or further suspicions of abuse

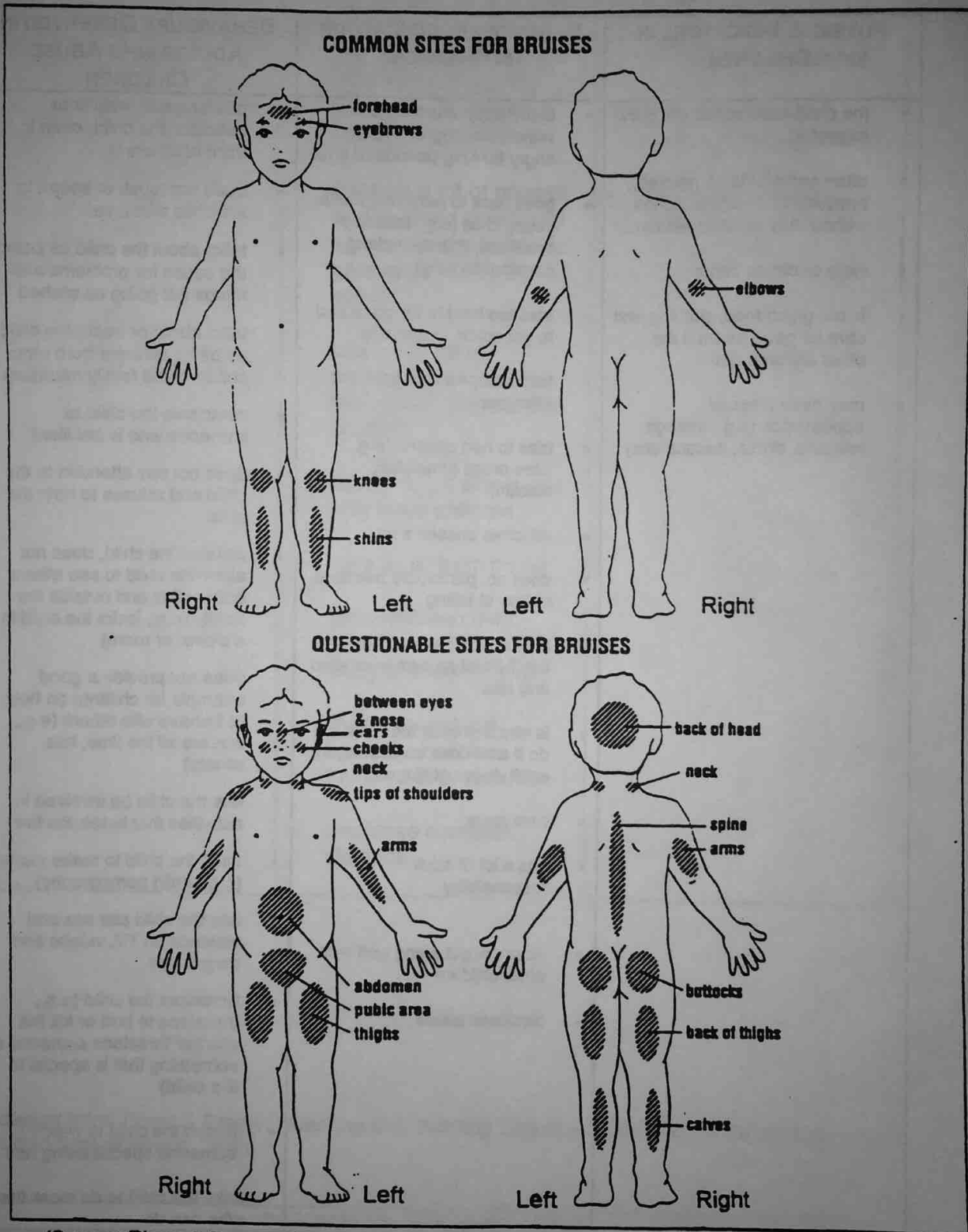
***Your first recording of the facts is your documentation - do not make a rough copy and then write it over in good, and do not go back and change any of your original notes..***

**POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF NEGLECT**

PHYSICAL INDICATORS IN CHILDREN	BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS IN CHILDREN	BEHAVIOURS OBSERVED IN ADULTS WHO NEGLECT CHILDREN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an infant or young child may:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ not be growing as expected</li> <li>■ be losing weight</li> <li>■ have a "wrinkly old face"</li> <li>■ look pale</li> <li>■ not be eating well</li> </ul> </li> <li>• not dressed properly for the weather</li> <li>• dirty or unwashed</li> <li>• bad diaper rash or other skin problems</li> <li>• always hungry</li> <li>• lack of medical and dental care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• does not show skills as expected</li> <li>• appears to have little energy</li> <li>• cries very little</li> <li>• does not play with toys or notice people</li> <li>• does not seem to care for anyone in particular</li> <li>• may be very demanding of affection or attention from others</li> <li>• older children may steal food, drink alcohol or take drugs, break the law)</li> <li>• takes care of a lot of their needs on their own</li> <li>• has a lot of adult responsibility at home</li> <li>• discloses neglect (e.g., says there is no one at home)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• does not provide for the child's basic needs</li> <li>• has a disorganized home life, with few regular routines (e.g., always brings the child very late)</li> <li>• does not supervise the child properly (e.g., leaves the child alone, in a dangerous place, or with someone who cannot look after the child safely)</li> <li>• may indicate that the child is hard to care for, hard to feed, describes the child as demanding</li> <li>• may say that the child was or is unwanted</li> <li>• may ignore the child who is trying to be loving</li> <li>• has difficulty dealing with personal problems and needs</li> <li>• is more concerned with own self than the child</li> <li>• is not very interested in the child's life (e.g., does not do anything about concerns that are discussed)</li> </ul>

POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF CHILD ABUSE AND OF  
WITNESSING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

CHILDREN'S BRUISES



(Source: Rimer & Prager, *Reaching Out: Working Together to Identify and Respond to Child Victims of Abuse*, 1998)

**INFORMATION PACKAGE #4 - POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF CHILD ABUSE AND OF  
WITNESSING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

**POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

<b>PHYSICAL INDICATORS IN CHILDREN</b>	<b>BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS IN CHILDREN</b>	<b>BEHAVIOURS OBSERVED IN ADULTS WHO ABUSE CHILDREN</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the child does not develop as expected</li> <li>• often complains of nausea, headaches, stomach aches without any obvious reason</li> <li>• wets or dirties pants</li> <li>• is not given food, clothing and care as good as what the other children get</li> <li>• may have unusual appearance (e.g., strange haircuts, dress, decorations)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is unhappy, stressed out, withdrawn, aggressive or angry for long periods of time</li> <li>• goes back to behaving like a young child (e.g., toileting problems, thumb-sucking, constant rocking)</li> <li>• tries too hard to be good and to get adults to approve</li> <li>• tries really hard to get attention</li> <li>• tries to hurt oneself (e.g., uses drugs or alcohol, suicide)</li> <li>• criticizes oneself a lot</li> <li>• does not participate because of fear of failing</li> <li>• may expect too much of him/herself so gets frustrated and fails</li> <li>• is afraid of what the adult will do if s/he does something the adult does not like</li> <li>• runs away</li> <li>• has a lot of adult responsibility</li> <li>• does not get along well with other children</li> <li>• discloses abuse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• often rejects, insults or criticizes the child, even in front of others</li> <li>• does not touch or speak to the child with love</li> <li>• talks about the child as being the cause for problems and things not going as wished</li> <li>• talks about or treats the child as being different from other children and family members</li> <li>• compares the child to someone who is not liked</li> <li>• does not pay attention to the child and refuses to help the child</li> <li>• isolates the child, does not allow the child to see others both inside and outside the family (e.g., locks the child in a closet or room)</li> <li>• does not provide a good example for children on how to behave with others (e.g., swears all the time, hits others)</li> <li>• lets the child be involved in activities that break the law</li> <li>• uses the child to make money (e.g., child pornography)</li> <li>• lets the child see sex and violence on TV, videos and magazines</li> <li>• terrorizes the child (e.g., threatens to hurt or kill the child or threatens someone or something that is special to the child)</li> <li>• forces the child to watch someone special being hurt</li> <li>• asks the child to do more than s/he can do</li> </ul>

INFORMATION PACKAGE #4 - POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF CHILD ABUSE AND OF  
WITNESSING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• stays around the house to keep watch, or tries not to spend much time at home</li><li>• problems with school (e.g., trouble paying attention, poor marks, misses school a lot)</li><li>• expects a lot of oneself and is afraid to fail and so works very hard and gets good marks in school</li><li>• takes the job of protecting and helping the mother, sisters and brothers</li><li>• does not get along well with other children</li><li>• runs away from home</li><li>• older children may steal, hurt others, join a gang or break the law</li><li>• child may act out sexually, become involved in prostitution</li><li>• discloses domestic violence</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• holds the belief that men have the power and women have to obey</li><li>• uses drugs or alcohol</li><li>• the abused person seems to be frightened</li><li>• discloses domestic violence</li></ul>
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(Adapted from: Rimer & Prager, *Reaching Out: Working Together to Identify and Respond to Child Victims of Abuse*, 1998)