

Module 6 Children



Children

- The special needs of children
- Child protection
- Children's reactions to stress, abuse and grief
- How to help

Why are children generally more vulnerable?

Work in pairs:

- Discuss why children are more vulnerable for five minutes and write down 3 to 5 suggestions.



Why are children more vulnerable than adults in crisis situations?

- A high level of stress in the environment which may affect families
- Increased presence of strangers which increases the risk of abuse and exploitation of children



Why are children more vulnerable than adults in crisis situations?



- Lack of protective and social structures for children
- Lack of livelihood and employment which leads to despair and frustration in families

Why are children more vulnerable than adults in crisis situations?

- Continued increased risk of sexual abuse and exploitation, for example if children are pushed into trying to obtain resources
- Rejection, degradation and terrorization of children is more common in post-disaster settings



Different reactions at different ages (1)

- **0-2 years** – irritable, crying, showing clinging or passive behaviour
- **2-6 years** – often feel helpless and powerless, fear of separation, play activities may involve aspects of the event, denial and withdrawal, become mute and avoid playmates and adults

Different reactions at different ages (2)

- **6-10 years** – guilt, feelings of failure, anger, fantasies of playing rescuer, intensely preoccupied with details of the event
- **11-18 years** – responses resemble adult reactions, irritation, rejection of rules and aggressive behaviour, fear, depression, risk-taking behaviour, may attempt suicide

Different ways of coping

Work in groups of three to four

- Discuss the scenario:

Both Amina and Fatima, aged 10, lost their fathers in the Pakistani earthquake in 2005. They were both very distressed. They did not want to go to school or meet anyone. After two years Amina is still very distressed. Her school performance is poor, she is depressed and is unable to make friends. Fatima on the other hand is back in school, doing well having many friends.

- Why have the two girls, faced with the same problem, coped so differently?

Different coping mechanisms

- Emotion-focused
changing of belief
- Problem-focused
seeking help



Important factors for coping

Individual characteristics that can influence how a child copes:

- Family environment
- School
- Leisure time
- Friends



Normal reactions to abnormal situations

- Aggressive behaviour
- Separation anxiety
- Withdrawal
- Denial

How to help



- Observe the child
- Communicate in a supportive way
- Provide extra care
- Maintain daily routines
- Refer if necessary



Helping a child to cope (1)

Work in pairs of two:

- How could Amina (from the previous example) have been assisted to cope more successfully?

Helping a child to cope (2)

Work in groups of three:

Read the case story

- How can we help Amir?



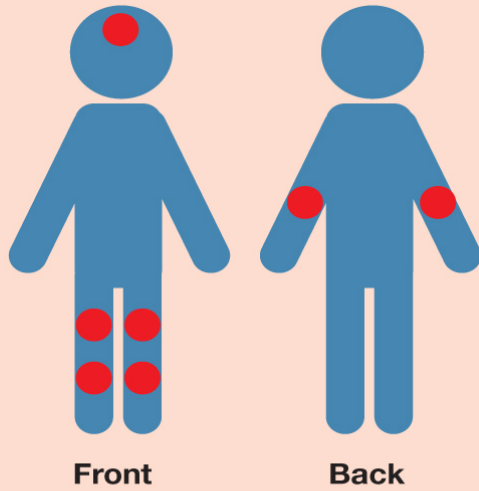
Child abuse

Article 19: Convention of the Rights of the Child

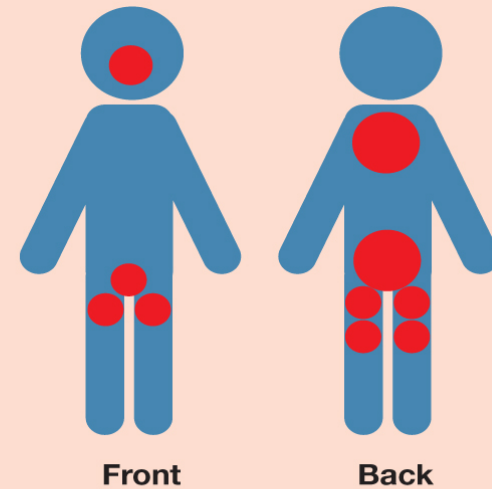
- Children must be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

Recognizing child abuse

NORMAL BRUISES



SUSPICIOUS BRUISES



Canadian Red Cross: RespectED

All abused children suffer...

- But they react differently depending on their age, gender and cultural background
- They often try to keep it a secret. They may deny the abuse and become very frightened



How to react to child abuse?

- How should adults respond to violence and abuse?
- What actions should be taken?
- In which ways can an abused child be supported?
- How can abuse be prevented?

Protecting children's best interest

- General child protection measures
- Specific action if child abuse is suspected



General child protection measures

- Register and document children
- Approve all workers
- Be aware of adults interacting with children
- Report any concerns to supervisor
- Ensure accommodation for unaccompanied children
- Prioritize family reunification
- Believe children if they say they feel unsafe
- Support children who are bereaved

Specific action if child abuse is suspected

- A** Acknowledge the child's situation and feelings
Access support and help: report
- C** Carefully listen to what the child says
Comfort the child; ensure the child is safe
- T** Take notes: document what the child says and what is observed



Recap

- On your own, summarize key points of the session and note them down
- Divide into groups of 4 - 5 and agree on the three most important messages of the module
- Present messages in plenary