

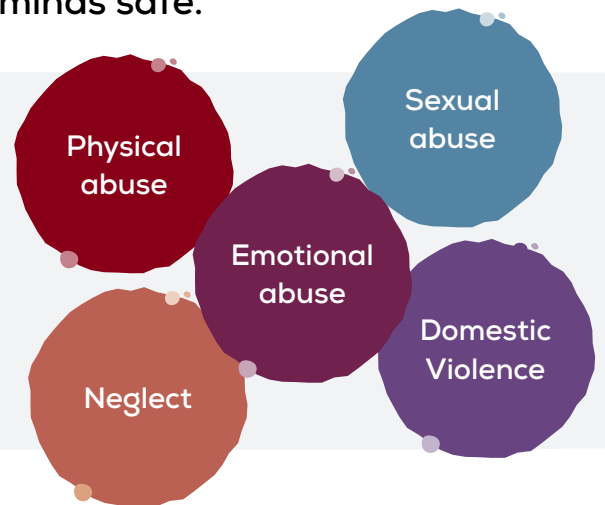
Safe Hearts and Minds



Let's work together to keep kids' hearts and minds safe.

Around 1 in 3 people in Australia aged 16 years and older has experienced emotional abuse. The rate is even higher among young people (16-24 year olds).

It is one of the five recognised forms of child maltreatment.



Emotional abuse is not always obvious. **It might look like:**

Emotional blackmail
Rejection
Yelling
Mood swings
Withholding affection

Humiliation
Bullying
Being possessive
Mistrust
Dismissing feelings

Jealousy
Accusing
Sarcasm
Nitpicking
Criticism

Blaming
Shaming
Guilt trips
Name Calling
Silent treatment

It can have significant effects on self-esteem and mental health.

Emotional abuse can happen in all types of relationships, including between:

Co-Workers

Two adults

Friends

Family Members

Young People

An Adult & Child

If you're worried about your child, here are some things you can do:

Remind your child they have the right to feel safe and be safe.

Encourage your child to talk to trusted adults.

Be a kind voice to your child.

Listen to your child without judgment.

Seek professional support.

If you are concerned about a child, need support or for more information, contact:

Lifeline 13 11 14 ♥ Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800

As adults, we can always work on building better emotional connections with kids in our lives. Here's some ideas:

Young children 0-6

- ♥ **Talk about emotions as early as possible:** The Disney family movie 'Inside Out' is a great resource if you're unsure of where to start.
- ♥ **Teach children the different names of emotions** (e.g. happy, sad, confused, angry). This will help children communicate how they are feeling so you can help them navigate through difficult emotions..
- ♥ **Reflect on your own behaviour:** Children mirror what they see and you are their role model for navigating stress and adversity, so be mindful of your own actions and responses.



Children 6+

- ♥ **Check-in with them daily if possible:** Ask how their day is going and remind them that you're there for them.
- ♥ **Spend quality time with each other:** Dedicate one hour each week to catch up, whether that involves going for a walk or enjoying a shared activity.
- ♥ **Build family rituals:** This can be as simple as gathering at the table for dinner each night or having a regular movie night. Family rituals can be a source of connection, stability, and positivity.
- ♥ **Keep a diary:** Sometimes kids may feel more comfortable writing down how they feel rather than talking about it. Keep a shared diary with your child so they can write down anything they wish to communicate to you.
- ♥ **Help find a positive outlet for their emotions:** This could be any activity they find enjoyable and calming such as painting, listening to music, craft or sports.

Teenagers

- ♥ **Reflect and acknowledge if you have made a mistake:** Because no one is perfect! Even the most well-intentioned parents and caregivers can get it wrong sometimes.
- ♥ **Allow them to be heard:** It is important for teenagers to feel safe to voice their feelings and emotions. Adults may not have all the answers, but they can actively listen.
- ♥ **Encourage** them to speak to another trusted adult or friend if they don't want to talk to you about a specific problem. This could be a GP, mental health professional, teacher, or someone else they look up to.



Learn more at actforkids.com.au

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