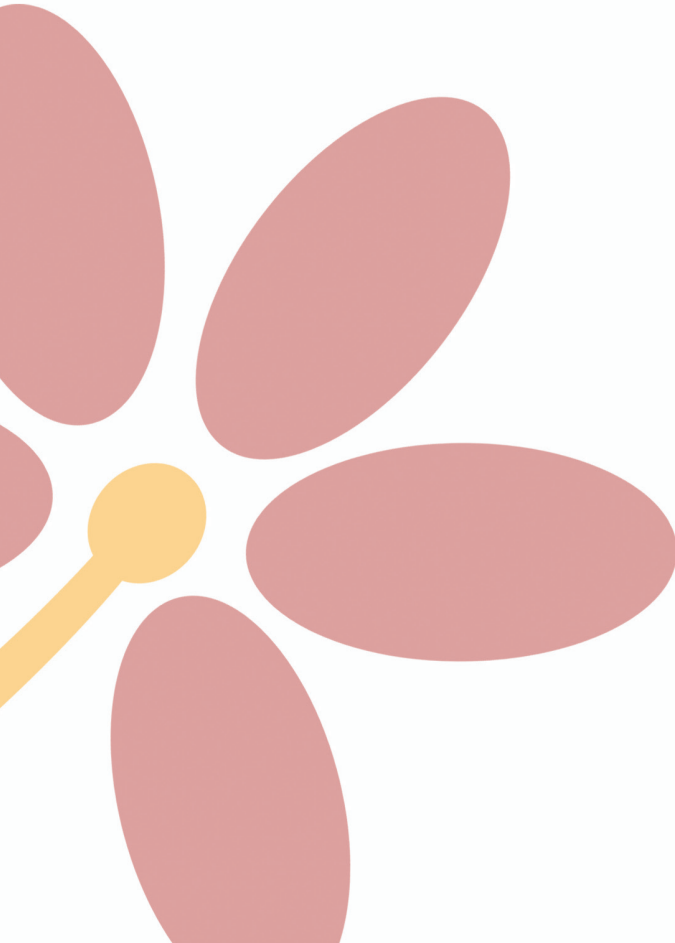


مركز « كن حراً »
«Be-free» Center



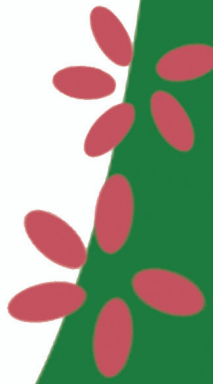
Because you are a Gift from God





Acknowledgement

To every heart that beats with the love of children...
and works for a safer and happier world for children...



Introduction

We are entrusted with our children, our most cherished, as they are part of our sacred mission in life. Life is full of challenges and the choice to convert these challenges into opportunities rest within our hands; it is up to us to accomplish the goals we aspire for through life. This can only be achieved through acquiring further knowledge on the topic of child protection from abuse in its various forms and learning what we can do to help construct their personality and unleash their potentials.



Child Abuse

What is child abuse? What are the different types of child abuse?

Child abuse is any deliberate act that is detrimental to the child's physical or psychological health, both in the short term and in the long term.

There are four types of abuse:

Physical Abuse:

Is any deliberate act that results in physical harm to the child, whether this harm leaves clear marks on the child's body or not.

Sexual Assault:

Is the exploitation of the child in order to satisfy sexual desires of another person whether an adult or an adolescent. This includes exposing the child to sexual behavior such as sexual molestation which could include touching the child or having the child touch the molester, exposure to images and films of pornographic nature or speaking words of sexual nature to the child.



Neglect:

Is the failure to provide proper care that commensurate with the child's age such as clothing, food, education, guidance, medical care and other basic requirements necessary for a healthy development of the child in various aspects; physically, mentally and emotionally.

Emotional Abuse:

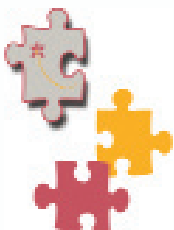
Is any act that would adversely affect the growth of the child's emotional and mental health and compromises his sense of self-esteem and self-worth such as degrading a child, treating him with emotional coldness, demonstration of excessive cruelty, harassment, posing threats, inducing isolation or inconsistent and contradicting practices by the parents in their daily conduct and their reactions towards the child.



I love my kids, is it possible that I may be abusing them?

More than 90% of neglect, physical and emotional abuse is practiced by the people who love the children the most and are most compassionate towards them, their parents. Many factors can play a role in that:

- pressures of life.
- The inability to control anger.
- Parent's lack of knowledge of alternative methods of education.
- Technical and informational gap that is widening between children , adolescents and their parents.




Vulnerable Children

Are my children more vulnerable to abuse than others?

If your child is surrounded by one or more of the following circumstances, he is more vulnerable to abuse than other children:

- Low levels of financial status of the family.
- The inability of the father or the mother to enjoy a sense of motherhood or fatherhood.
- Parents attempt to control the child in strict ways
- The presence of family disintegration and domestic violence.
- Parent's limited experience in alternative methods that can replace violence.
- The child is a result of an unwanted pregnancy.
- The child is challenged by disabilities.

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- The presence of unrealistic expectations by any one of the parents for the child's capabilities and requests a degree of social and psychological maturity that is unattainable by the child or is unfitting for his age.
 - The mother or the father being a victim of child abuse or neglect.

Remember...

- 🌸 You can help your child by being closer to him, listening to him and build bridges of love and tenderness between you and him. All this contributes directly and indirectly, to protect your child from any kind of abuse.

What do children need to be protected?

Mahmood:

Three of my colleagues at school used to beat me with the purpose of taking my money during the break. I once informed my father, but he scolded me and told me that I am a coward and that I had to defend myself, rather than complain. I did not know what I should have done to defend myself at the time as I was only one person while they were three. I still hold feelings of weakness and inferiority because I was regularly humiliated in front of everyone and I was not able to defend myself.

If ... Only



- My father listened to me and understood my fear ...
- He realized my weakness and helped me by giving me alternatives that I can opt for
- He did not scold me or call me a coward ...



Your children like it when you listen to them

- Look at your child while listening to him.
- Think about what he says and not about your analysis of what he says.
- Listen to what is not being said and what is between the lines and give it due weight.
- Do not judge your child by what he says before carefully and fully listening to what he has to say and inquire about any vague parts.
- Encourage the good feelings of longing to talk to you and not feelings of fear or anxiety.
- Thank him because he chose to talk to you, even if you did not like the topic as he could have chose to be silent.
- Listen to him with your heart, your ears and your mind.
- Ask questions to understand and not to investigate.
- Do not make him regret that he spoke with you.

Remember ...

-  There are many people who would like to listen to your child ... Do not make him a prey to them ... Do listen to him ... to protect him and to teach him about life.
-  Television programs can be replayed, but feelings one may experience in certain moments can't be restored ... listen to him with your heart.

Lyla

One of our relatives used to touch me in ways that used to bother me. I told my mother repeatedly "I do not want this person in our house or if he does come, do not make me be in the same place with him". My mother scolded me and told me that I was an impolite girl who was not respectful of family. She told my father, who beat me and said abusive statements to me and threatened that he would punish me further if I was to continue doing so. After one year that person abused me and it lasted for four years during which I did not dare to inform my parents. I am now 34 years old and I am still suffering from the effects of what happened.

If ... Only

- My mother listened to me, without calling me bad names.
- My father asked me what was bothering me.
- My father and my mother made me feel safe in order to explain to them what hurts me.

Yes ... you can protect your child from sexual abuse:



- Talk with your child about your day and encourage him to talk to you about his day.
- Do not force your child to go to places where he is not comfortable, this does not mean that he is being abused or molested there, but it does mean that he has a reason worthy of your attention for not wanting to be there.
- Explain to your child that there are areas in his body called private areas.



- Do not change your child's diaper or his clothes in front of anyone; even if your child was an infant ... help him to be aware of the privacy of his body.
- Explain to your child that nobody is entitled to touch his body in a way that makes him feel uncomfortable and that you will not blame him if he told you that such a thing happened, no matter how close the other person is.
- Teach him that he can say "No" to anyone who asks him to do things that he feels are not good.
- Practice "screaming" with your child and saying words that have meanings when he feels he is in danger and wants to draw attention to himself, such as screaming "help".
- Instill confidence in your child ... Children can be more powerful than adults when using their intelligence and their voice.
- Tell your child words that express your love and happiness for having him as child.




Remember ...


-  Our feeling is a blessing from God to us and it is present at its purest form in children, help your child learn to trust his feeling.
-  If your child was subject to any abuse, it is not his fault, rather it is the abuser's fault.

Nahed:

I have never heard warm or loving words from my mother or my father, ones that indicate that they love me. Our dialogue is often centered on what I should do and what I should not do. My mother did not hug me in a long time; she thinks I am too old for that. I am embarrassed to ask them to embrace me or to express their love for me, but I feel jealous when I see the way my friend Noha's parents treat her. I believe that my parents love me because I know that all parents love their children, but I do not think they like me or see anything unique in me or even anything worthy of their attention.



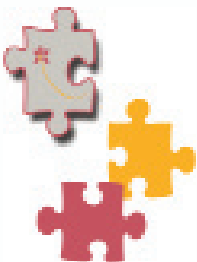
Give your child the sentiments he needs to be protected and face life ...

- Express your love through words, touches and embraces ... No child is too old for that.
 - Focus on the good, bright and creative sides of your child's personality.
 - Criticize the work but do not criticize your child as a person. Make statements like "you did not perform the task well" rather than "You are lazy."
 - Make humanitarian values the bases of dealing with your child.
 - Be honest with your child at all times.
 - Criticize the behavior of your child when you are calm and not angry then brainstorm alternatives with him.
 - Do not ridicule your child under any circumstances, for any reasons and at any place.
 - Help him believe that he can be an active and an influential individual in the society.
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- Share your experiences and ask for his input in appropriate matters.

Remember:

- ✿ If you are not able to give your child the love, the attention and the acceptance he needs, he will receive it from others, who may blackmail him for these emotions later.
- ✿ Help your child be confident, self-assured and certain of your love towards him.



Ahmad:

My father works all day long and buys us lots of toys but I do not think that he genuinely cares for us. He does not play with me, stroll with me or sit with me to watch cartoons. There was this one time where he was watching the news and I showed him a work of art which I have painted in school and was the most beautiful one according to my teacher, I showed it to him and I told him that it was my teacher's favorite, he said, without looking at it "Good Boy"

Even if you provide the basics for your child, he might think that you are neglecting him if you fail to:

- Respond with enthusiasm.
- Sense his fears and share his joy, even in events that seem trivial to you.
- Know the names of his close friends, favorite color and his desires and dreams.
- Fulfill the promises you make to him.
- Talk and spend time with him.

- Know which grade he is in and what subjects he is good at.
- Attend parent's day at school or any other school event.
- Notice any changes in his cloths or appearance even a simple scratch on his hand.
- Remember the date of his birth and some events from his childhood.

Remember:

- ✿ You may spend long hours working for the welfare of your children; nonetheless they may feel neglected by you. Moments allocated to take part in matters important to them can go a long way. Emotional neglect is more jeopardizing to the child's personality than physical neglect.
- ✿ Children are able to sense genuineness, feel the words you say as these feelings will inevitably be communicated to them.





Share the Fun with your Family

Parenthood is a blessing from God. It is one of the things that make us feel that our fingerprints are etched in time and space. Certainly; nurturing and upbringing a child comes with its difficulties and challenges but as there are challenges there are fruits of joy to reap. The peace of mind that we feel when our child's temperature drops following a high fever can never be sensed if we were not there with him. And the joy that can fill our hearts when we see our child's laughter and smile after a fit of crying can never be felt if we were not fully present with our children and interactive with their feelings.

Fathers ... Share enjoyable times with your wives ...
Take your share from them and enjoy parenthood ...
these are the moments that your children will share
with your grandchildren:

- Take part in your child's game.
- Take the initiative to take care of your children's daily needs like changing their clothes and feeding them.

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- Devote two hours each week to spend with each one of your children and enjoy their childhood.
 - Talk about your experiences and share your feelings with your children, each in commensuration with their age.
 - Do something fun and out of ordinary routine with your children.
 - Write a story with your children to deliver certain concepts or values to other children.
 - Prepare a dish with your children; it could be a cake or fruit salad or biscuits.
 - Swap stories and jokes and laugh together.
 - Specify a special time and give it a title similar to “family time” draw or paint together or opt for any other activity that your children like.
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Remember:

- ✿ Being a parent is not a hard work nor a heavy responsibility, rather it is a blessing bestowed upon us to feel the beauty of life.
- ✿ Your participation in their trivial affairs and problems encourages them to share with you their serious affairs and problems.


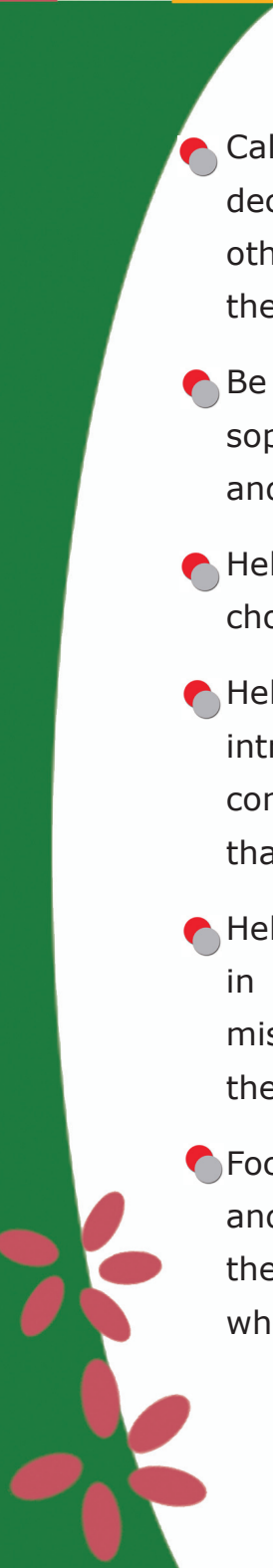



Help your children to reach their higher Potential...

God did not create any two people alike as each has characteristics that distinguish them to be able to assume the role intended for them by God. Your child was brought to this world in order to be an effective element in pushing the wheel of humanity forward, this is what he was created for, and our role as parents is to help our children bring out the best in them, their goodness and brightness, their creativity and their beauty in order to contribute to the development of the humans and humanity.

Your child is an important element in life ... believe in that and emphasize it in your child:

- God has created each person to assume a role in life ... Help your child realize that he has an important role in the evolution of humanity.
- Do not compare him with others but compare him only to himself in order to help him rise and serve himself, his country and the human community.


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- Call him good and sophisticated names such as decent, good, creative, cooperative, moral and other, such conduct encourages him to live up to the names you call him.
 - Be a role model for your child in implementing sophisticated human values. Admit your mistakes and accept his apology if he made a mistake.
 - Help your child to be optimistic about life and make choices that help him become a better person.
 - Help your child realize that even one person can introduce a significant positive change in his community and help him realize that he could be that person.
 - Help him realize that the problem does not lie in making mistakes, but it lies in insisting upon mistakes and refusing to learn life lessons from them in order not to repeat them in the future.
 - Focus on aspects in which your child is creative and proficient at, and encourage him to develop them, rather than reminding him of aspects in which he is not proficient.

- Help your child learn about the treasures he has within him.

Remember:

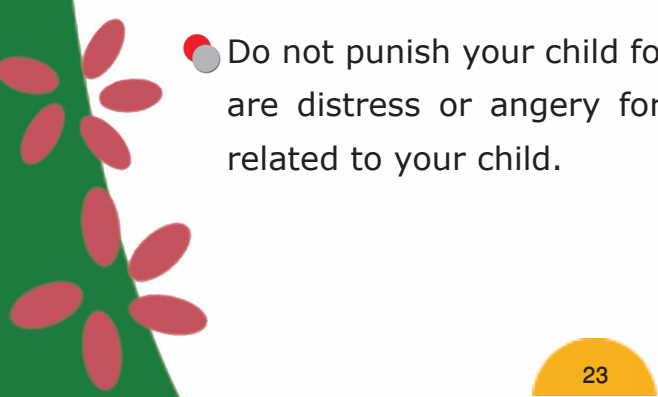
- 🌸 Your child evaluates and estimates himself based on your perception of him and the words that you repeat when talking to or about him so be sure to paint him a good image of himself to be proud of before himself and his peers.
- 🌸 A person who is not ashamed of who he is; is the only one able to reflect the beauty within him to the world.



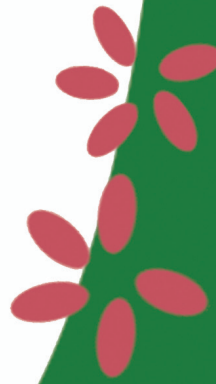


We often talk with our children, advise them and try to instill values and morals within them. We should be aware of the fact that children do not learn through hearing as much as they do through observing and practical practice. Be a role model for your child in all you want to him to learn, all values that you want to instill within him and every beautiful trait you want to him to possess.

Ways to help you stay away from violence with your children and be a role model for them in self-control:




- Bless the prophet Muhammad three times in your heart before attempting to insult or hit your child, you might see it more difficult to move forward with what you wanted to do.
 - Leave the place and tell your child that you feel angry right now and you will talk to him about the matter when you are calmer.
 - Do not punish your child for any reason when you are distress or angry for reasons that are not related to your child.
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- Count backwards from ten to one.
- Alter your position when you are angry, if you were sitting down try to stand up and if you were standing up try to set down.
- Learn to withhold anger and practice self control over trivial matters with others in order to make it easier for you withhold anger and practice self control with your children.
- Help your child to know acceptable alternatives for any wrong behavior he has done away from ideals.
- Do not tell him anything that would lessen or break any part of his personality, as that may be difficult to repair later.
- Refrain from feuding with your children as this widens the gap between you and them.






Remember:

-  Your children rarely have the intention of hurting or provoking you, all they do is because they think they are doing well and that they will be able to achieve what is important for them.
 -  Anger and violence may be a quick fix but, they certainly do not contribute to your children's education about life and do not give them life lessons that could be beneficial to them in the future.
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Teenage

The teenage years is the period through which our children grow from followers to independent individuals. They explore the truth about who they are, their abilities, what they like and what they dislike for their future. In this period they think about their future and their decisions to be implemented in that period, they evaluated them against their surroundings and their environment and through that they shape their beliefs, their identities, their personalities, their ambitions, hopes and dreams. In this period; parents have the opportunity to give their teen advice and support that would ultimately contribute to the formation of their future based on human values. They can help their children understand who they are and what they want, and make mentally and emotionally balanced decisions.





Your teenager ... is not bad ... but confused, his heart is filled with love ... and he wants to explore life:




- Tell your teen that you see him beautiful and loved as he is.
 - Do not criticize your teen's friends but criticize the actions that they take ... as his friends are linked to his identity.
 - Allocate a special time to visit a beautiful place with your teen and discuss various topics with him.
 - Take your teen's input in day to day matters as much as you can to help him learn about life while avoiding lectures.
 - Assign him some responsibilities that you believe he can do, allow him to feel that he has grown up and that you trust him. Look for the positive aspects in his personality which he is not aware of and direct him to capitalize on them.
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- Give him space to take some decisions by himself, tell him that he grew up and some of decisions should be made by him and that he should naturally bear the consequences as well. Also, help him think of different ways to resolve problems.
- Do not lessen expression of sentiments to you teen on the assumption that he has out grown them as in this period; he is in deep need for your love and your attention.
- Discuss social and international matters with your child in order to broaden his horizon.
- Understand the feelings of your teen as it builds a stronger common ground for dialogue and communication between the two of you.





Remember:

-  Teen years are among the most difficult periods of your child's life. Your child is finding his way among many challenges brought to him by life; you can help him by embracing him with love, patience and wisdom.
 -  The temptations that surround your child such as unlimited information on all topics, the internet and friends from different backgrounds are too huge. Help him think about what is best for him and do not think on his behalf.
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The “Be-Free” Centre also published:

- I am a strong, smart and safe child
- In the eyes of children
- Nasser’s courage
- Because you are a gift from God
- Colour your life with your choices series

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