



Identifying presentations where neglect and or parental behaviours /impairments are negatively impacting on children

Clare Doocey
Susan Miles



Neglect

Neglect is any act or omission that results in impaired physical function, injury and/or development of a child or a young person.



Defining Neglect- consider the following

- What is inadequate care?
- What actions or failures to act constitute neglectful behavior?
- Must this action or inaction be intentional, willful or not?
- Does their need to be adverse outcomes for the child?

Neglect

Neglect may include, but is not restricted to:

- Physical neglect- Failure to sustain the life or health of the child or young person.
- Neglect Supervision -Failure to provide developmentally appropriate and/or legally required supervision of the child or young person, leading to an increased risk of harm.
- Medical neglect, failure to seek, obtain or follow through with medical care for the child or young person resulting in their impaired functioning and/or development.
- Abandonment-Leaving any child or young person in any situation without arranging necessary care of them and with no intention of returning.
- Unwillingness or inability to provide appropriate care or control.



Identification

Isobel is a young women aged 19 years who has brought her son Tom aged 6 months for an appointment at her local medical centre as he has serious dermatitis. Whilst taking a medical history you note that Isobel is vague about when she has applied medications to Tom's skin and what treatment routine she adheres to whilst Tom is in her care. You are concerned that Tom is not being treated as you have instructed.

What has Dr Edwards previously noted that now makes her concerned that Tom is being neglected?

What questions/enquiries might she make to clarify herr concerns?



Identification - Signs of Neglect

- Malnutrition
- Dehydration
- Inadequate Hygiene
- Frequent minor infections
- Frequent ED attendances
- Nappy rash

Developmental Signs

- Global delay
- Motor Delay
- Speech and Language
- Social Delay
- Cognitive Delay



Understanding Neglect

- The developmental experiences of parents influence their personality and psychological resources,
- This in turn influences both their parenting attitudes and behavior and their ability to develop supportive relationships with others.
- Parenting behavior influences the child's personality and behavior.
- This reciprocally influences parents' response to the child.
- The social context of the parent/child relationship, which includes the intimate relationship, social network supports, and work-related factors, is highly influential on parenting.

Belsky and Vondra



Understanding Neglect

- Parental personality is the most influential factor on parenting.
- The personal psychological resources of the individual are also influential in determining the quality of intimate relationship.
- And the amount of social support one receives.

Egeland and colleagues



Other Characteristics

- Depression
- Substance Abuse
- Conflict with partner /other family members
- Family history of neglect

Crittendon

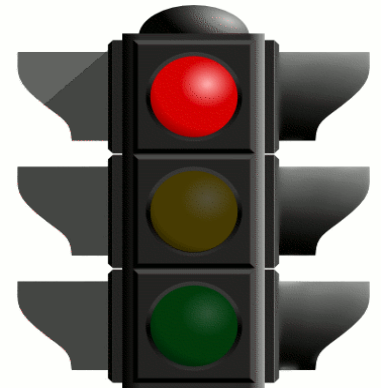


Isobel's story continued

- It is a hot day and Isobel is wearing clothes that reveal her arms. You note that she has a significant sized bruise on the inner aspect of her right arm.
- What questions could you ask Isobel to determine the nature of her bruise?

Asking Questions Safely

- At a time when the client is feeling reasonably at ease, for example, while taking routine history.
- Never ask any question about violence unless the woman is alone.
- Never ever ask if her partner is present.
- Never ask if a child over the age of 2 is present.
- You may ask the partner to leave, so you can ask some personal health issues of the woman/mother of child patient.



Who to Ask

- Ask all women 16 years and over.
- Ask men, on suspicion of abuse.



Fanslow (2002) FVIG p39

Screening Questions

- **We know that family violence is common and affects many women and children's health so we are asking routinely about violence in the home.**
You don't have to answer if you don't want to.
- **What you say will remain confidential to the health service except when you give us information that indicates there are serious concerns for you or your children. However, we would always try to let you know if we have to tell someone else.**

**PARTNER ABUSE
FRAMING QUESTIONS**

The staff of this service are concerned about Family Violence, and the impact it has on women and children. Therefore, we routinely ask all women about violence in their home.

Have you been hit, kicked, punched or hurt in any way by someone in the last year?

Do you feel safe in your current relationship?

Is there a partner from a previous relationship who is making you feel unsafe now?

Within the last year has anyone forced you to have sex in a way you didn't want to?

OR

I am concerned that someone hurting you may have caused all your symptoms.

Fanslow (2002) FVIG p43 (2.1.4)





Urgent CYF Referral

- The child seriously ill or in imminent danger of serious illness or injury?
- Children who are suffering from malnutrition, serious physical illness,
- Children in extremely dangerous, unsafe living situations,
- Children who are abandoned or young children who must depend on mothers addicted to P are at risk of serious, life-threatening injury or illness.
- Children of a parent suffering from an acute mental health (psychosis) where their behaviour may result in serious harm for the child.
- Serious neglect apparent and child is under the age of five and or has a disability.



Consider a CYF referral

- previous referrals for neglect,
- number of previous out-of-home placements,
- caretaker neglected as a child,
- single caretaker in home at time of referral,
- caretaker history of drug/alcohol abuse,
- caretaker has limited intellect
- age of youngest caretaker at time of referral,
- number of children in home,
- caretaker involved in primarily negative social relationships, and
- motivation for change on part of caretaker.

Alaska's Neglect Risk Assessment Model



Neglect

- Pervasive
- Rooted in parental behaviour
- Serious and enduring consequences



Consultation

- Others in the General Practice
- DHB Child Protection Coordinator or Child Protection Service
- DHB Liaison Practice Leader
- CYF Contact Centre Ph 0508FAMILY