

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is any intentional act causing injury or trauma to another person or animal by way of bodily contact. In most cases, children are the victims of physical abuse, but adults can also be victims, as in cases of domestic violence or workplace aggression.

Alternative terms sometimes used include physical assault or physical violence, and may also include sexual abuse. Physical abuse may involve more than one abuser, and more than one victim.

Physical abuse can involve any of the following violent acts:

- scratching or biting
- pushing or shoving
- slapping
- kicking
- choking or strangling
- throwing things
- force feeding or denying you food
- using weapons or objects that could hurt you
- physically restraining you (such as pinning you against a wall, floor, bed, etc.)
- reckless driving
- other acts that hurt or threaten you.

Physically abused children are at risk for later interpersonal problems involving aggressive behaviour, and adolescents are at a much greater risk for [substance use disorders](#). In addition, symptoms of depression, emotional distress, and suicidal thoughts are also common features of people who have been physically abused. As many as one-third of children who experience physical abuse are also at risk to become abusive as adults.

Things to remember:

- no matter what the reason, physical abuse is always wrong
- being abused is not your fault
- it might feel like telling someone could make it worse, but getting help can keep you safe
- physical abuse can make you feel powerless. Being hurt is never your fault and our counsellors are always here to help
- if you're in immediate danger, you can call the police on 999 and they will come to help you.

Resources:

Physical Abuse Factsheet

What is Physical Abuse?

NSPCC

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/physical-abuse/>

CHILDLINE

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/abuse-safety/physical-abuse/>