

## QUICK FACT SHEET

### **Module 2: Identifying child abuse**

#### **Reporting child abuse**

Reporting obligations may arise from any or all of the following:

1. Your duty of care
2. Your state or territory's mandatory reporting scheme
3. Your state's reportable conduct scheme
4. The general obligation to report criminal offences concerning children to the police

#### **The reportable conduct scheme**

The reportable conduct scheme operates in ACT, NSW and Victoria and requires the heads of certain institutions to notify the authorities of any "reportable conduct" involving employees, contractors or volunteers.

#### **Signs that a child is seeking help**

Children often do not seek to report abuse or neglect the first time it happens to them. However, a child may intentionally or accidentally disclose information by:

- Telling you about an incident that has occurred or that he or she fears may occur
- Providing hints by way of drawings, stories or plays
- Asking hypothetical questions about abuse
- Talking about scenarios involving a "friend of mine" in an abusive situation

If a child reaches out, you must take his or her disclosure seriously.

#### **Grooming**

Grooming refers to the way perpetrators manipulate others and their environment to enable and/or conceal child abuse. Grooming can also be facilitated by an organisation's culture or other features.

Grooming is a criminal offence in all Australian states and territories. Severe penalties apply, including imprisonment.

## **Neglect**

Neglect is the failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child with the basics required for proper growth and development, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical and dental care and adequate supervision. It generally falls into one of three categories:

- Physical neglect
- Emotional (or psychological) neglect
- Educational neglect

## **Abuse**

- Emotional abuse occurs when a parent or caregiver damages a child's confidence and self-esteem, resulting in serious emotional disturbance or psychological harm. It can take several forms, including rejection, isolation, terror, corruption and exploitation
- Physical abuse is the non-accidental use of physical force against a child that causes the child harm. A parent or caregiver does not have to intend physical harm to have physically abused the child
- Sexual abuse is when a person uses power or authority over a child to involve the child in a sexual activity. Children are most likely to be abused by someone known to them, including a family member, neighbour or family friend