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Understanding the impact of abuse

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The effects of abuse: Some examples

Short-term effects (while still a child)

- Shock
- Withdrawal
- Clinginess
- Anxiety
- Sleep disturbance/nightmares
- Bedwetting
- Reverting to 'babyish' behaviour
- Genital soreness/infection
- Mood swings
- Aggressive behaviour, especially to other children
- Attention/learning problems
- Marked change in personality/behaviour
- Sexualised behaviour/language
- Knowledge of/interest in sex beyond what is expected at their age

Long-term effects (continuing into adulthood)

- Anti-social behaviour/criminality
- Promiscuity/frigidity
- Risk taking
- Self-harming/suicide
- Substance misuse
- Eating disorders
- Mental health problems (especially anxiety and depression)
- Poor academic achievement
- Low self-esteem
- Relationship difficulties
- Parenting problems
- Lack of boundaries (especially sexual)
- Poor self-care