

What Can Happen After Abuse?



The Windsor Essex Child/Youth Advocacy Centre strives to ensure that children who have been victimized only have to tell their story once. However, when abuse has occurred, there are potentially many effects a child/youth may struggle with after the fact. Particularly if help is not sought out after the event. These effects can last a lifetime and can get progressively worse. Here, we outline six areas that can be potentially affected by abuse.

These effects are not certain. However, we must be aware of the effects of abuse in order to fully understand the potential struggles survivors go through. More than that, by being aware of the effects, we as a community can appreciate the importance of seeking help as soon as possible.

Although children/youth are very resilient, we can limit the potential of these effects by seeking help. Even if a child/youth may feel they are fine after the abuse, it is important to seek help to process what is going on in their bodies and in their minds after the fact. By seeking help, children/youth limit the chances of these effects having significant impacts on their lives in the short and long term.

Potential Effects of Abuse

Not every child will develop what is listed on these pages but it is important to recognize possible signs and symptoms in order to access help.

Behavioural Effects:

- Increased risk for substance abuse later in life.
- Increased risk to develop an eating disorder.
- Increased risk of suicidal ideation and behaviours.
- Smoking.
- Difficulty with sleep.
- Struggles with mood regulation (may see increased aggression, anger, impulsivity, etc.)
- Difficulty in peer interactions and may become secluded from peers.

Emotional Effects:

- Increased risk of depression.
- May present as withdrawn, showing less interest in their favourite activities.
- Potential to develop Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Anxiety Disorders.
- May seem socially withdrawn from family and peers.

Social Effects:

- May have troubles forming and maintaining healthy relationships.
- Increased risk of victimization due to risky behaviours and relationship difficulties.
- Increased risk of engaging in criminal/delinquent activities.

Health Effects:

- Weakened immune system due to stress.
- Survivors are potentially more prone to negative perceptions of their own health.

What Can I Expect?

Children/youth process the events of abuse in their own way. Many behaviours and emotions may appear as a result of the abuse (i.e., aggression after physical abuse or hypersexual behaviour after sexual abuse). This is perfectly normal. The goal of treatment is to address these issues after events, and assist youth in developing healthy coping mechanisms and strategies in order to move on after the abusive event(s).

We at Windsor Essex Child/Youth Advocacy Centre provide efficient referral services to ensure children/youth receive the assistance they require. Through our partnerships, we strive to deliver efficient and expedient services after the initial investigation process so children/youth can focus on healing

Help Lines

- Canada Prevention Suicide Prevention HelpLine **(888) 456-4566**
- Community Crisis Centre **(519) 973-4435**
- Kids Help Phone **(800) 668-6868**
- Sexual Assault Crisis Centre **(519) 253-9667**

Walk in Counselling Sessions

Youth Wellness Hub

- (519) 800-8640
- Located at 215 Eugenie St W, Windsor.
- Open: Monday-Friday 1pm-7pm
- Service users are between the ages of 12 and 25 years of age.
- Provides many different services and groups. Provides walk in counselling sessions

Regional Children's Centre

- (519) 257-5437
- Located at 3901 Connaught Ave, Windsor
- Open: Monday-Thursday, 8am-6:30pm and Fridays from 8am-3pm
- Service users are 18 years of age and under.

