

IF YOU'RE A VICTIM OF ABUSE

What Is Abuse?

Abuse is the neglect or mistreatment of others (such as a child, an elderly person, a disabled person, or anyone else) in such a way that causes physical, emotional, or sexual harm. It goes against the teachings of the Savior.

"The Church's position is that abuse cannot be tolerated in any form" (*General Handbook: Serving in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* [2020], 38.6.2). Abuse violates the laws of God and may also be a violation of the laws of society.

Different Types of Abuse

Physical Abuse: Deliberately aggressive or violent behavior by one person toward another that results in bodily injury.

Sexual Abuse: Unwanted sexual activity or contact, with offenders using force, making threats, or taking advantage of victims who are not able to give consent. All sexual activity between an adult and a child is abuse regardless of consent.

Verbal or Emotional Abuse: A pattern of behavior in which one person deliberately and repeatedly attacks someone in nonphysical ways, such as harsh words, intimidation, manipulation, or humiliation. This causes a lowered sense of self-worth and dignity. Though it is not physical, this kind of abuse harms a person's overall mental and emotional well-being.

How to Get Help

The Lord expects us to do all we can to prevent abuse and to protect and help those who have been victims of abuse. No one is expected to endure abusive behavior. Whether it is happening now or happened long ago, you can find resources to help you at abuse.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

GET HELP RIGHT NOW

"If you are currently being abused or have been in the past, find the courage to seek help. . . . Seek the support of someone you can trust. Your bishop or stake president can give you valuable counsel and help you with the civil authorities. . . . Do not fear—for fear is a tool Satan will use to keep you suffering. The Lord will help you, but you must reach out for that help."

Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "To Heal the Shattering Consequences of Abuse," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2008, 42.