

# PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN OUR SERVICE



# HOW CAN I HELP SOMEONE COPE WITH A TERMINAL ILLNESS?

Let them know that you're willing to listen to his or her concerns — and never underestimate the value of your presence. Even if it feels as if you're not doing anything, your presence sends an important message. However, don't try to be a counselor.

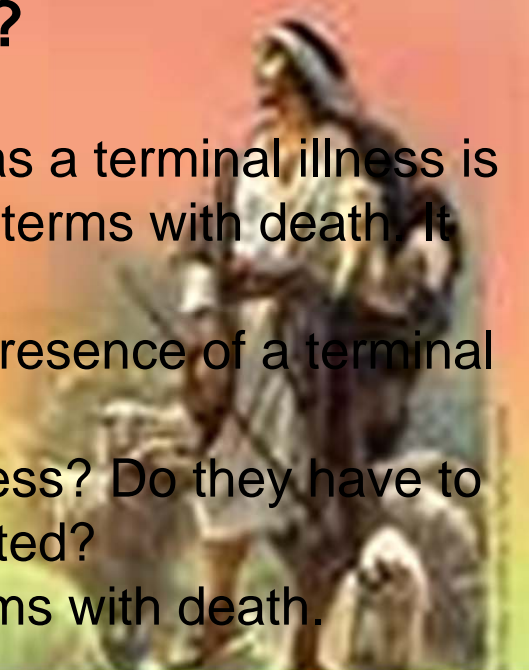
## **Is there a typical emotional process that a person who has terminal illness experiences?**

Dying isn't a science. Don't assume that a person who has a terminal illness is going to go through a methodical process of coming to terms with death. It might not happen that way.

Learning to live as fully as possible while accepting the presence of a terminal illness is very important.

But do they have to accept that they have a terminal illness? Do they have to accept that they'll die before they expected?

No. There's no right or wrong way to come to terms with death.



# How do you help someone who's in denial about his or her impending death?

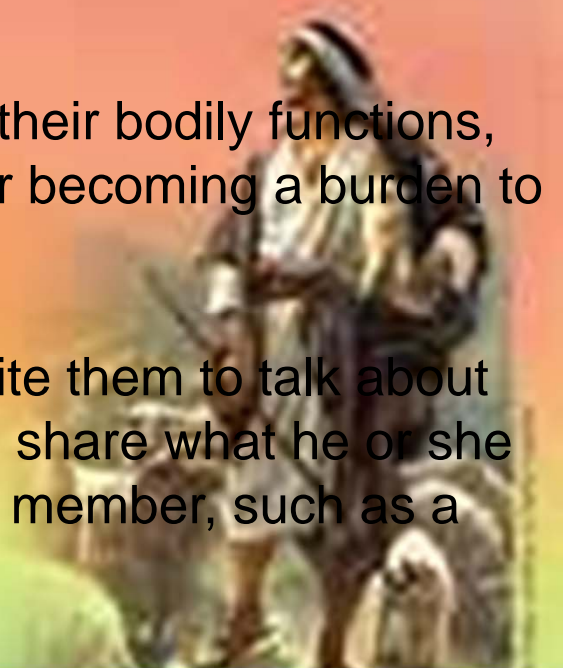
Denial is an important coping mechanism. They might be in denial because reality is too frightening, too overwhelming, or too much of a threat to their sense of control.

Denial is a form of natural protection that can allow them to let reality in bit by bit and continue living as he or she contemplates death.

As long as denial isn't causing them significant harm — such as causing them to seek out painful treatments of no therapeutic value — then denial isn't necessarily bad.

They might be afraid of pain, afraid of losing control of their bodily functions, mind or autonomy, or they might also fear failing family or becoming a burden to others.

To provide emotional and spiritual support to them, invite them to talk about their fears. A lot of times it's easier for a dying person to share what he or she fears and explore it with someone other than a family member, such as a servant or a priest.



# **What else can I do for a terminally ill individual?**

**Is it important to keep a vigil by someone when he or she is near death?**

Keeping a vigil by a person before his or her death is a sacred experience. Being by their side — even if you feel helpless or powerless — can give the sick person and their family both strength and comfort.



# WHAT ADVICE CAN WE GIVE TO PEOPLE WHO ARE GRIEVING?

Grief is a natural response to loving and feeling loss that often comes in waves. Emotions can sometimes feel overwhelming, making even simple tasks difficult. This is normal. It doesn't mean that you won't be able to function for the rest of your life. Right now you need to grieve. Keep in mind that grief doesn't necessarily begin when a loved one dies. The grieving process can begin as a loved one's illness progresses or normal roles change.

If someone is unable to stop grieving and it's affecting their ability to function, then they may need professional help.





# What do you tell people who are struggling with guilt?

After a loved one dies, people might question whether they did enough or said the right things. Guilt is a normal part of grieving. Often, we come to peace and guilt gradually fades.

If they're having trouble dealing with guilt, let them consider talking to a father of confession. Sometimes people would express their innermost feelings only to someone they are comfortable with.



# Loss of a parent

Grief is an inner sense of loss, sadness and emptiness. Mourning is how you express those feelings. You might plan a funeral or memorial service, wear black, and carry a somber demeanor. Both grief and mourning are natural and necessary parts of the healing process after a loss.

Acknowledge your pain. If you don't face your grief, your wounds might never quite go away. Accept that the pain you're feeling is part of dealing with grief and moving toward a state of healing and acceptance.

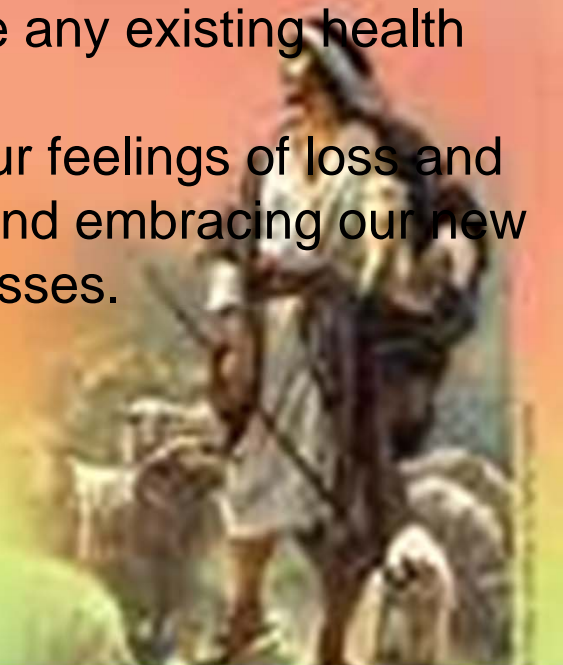
Look to loved ones and others for support. Spending some time alone is fine, but isolation isn't a healthy way to deal with grief. A friend, a confidant, a spiritual leader — all can help you along the journey of healing. Allow loved ones and other close contacts to share in your sorrow or simply be there when you cry.



**Don't make major decisions while grieving.** Grief clouds the ability to make sound decisions. If possible, postpone big decisions — such as moving, taking a new job or making major financial changes. If we must make decisions right away, we should seek the input or guidance of trusted loved ones or other close contacts.

**Grief consumes a significant amount of energy.** Our will to live and ability to follow normal routines might quickly fade away. To combat these problems, we should try to get adequate sleep, eat a healthy diet and include physical activity in our daily routine. Consider a medical checkup to make sure our grief isn't adversely affecting our health — especially if we have any existing health conditions.

**Remember that time helps, but it might not cure.** Our feelings of loss and emptiness might never completely go away. Accepting and embracing our new "normal" might help us reconcile our losses.



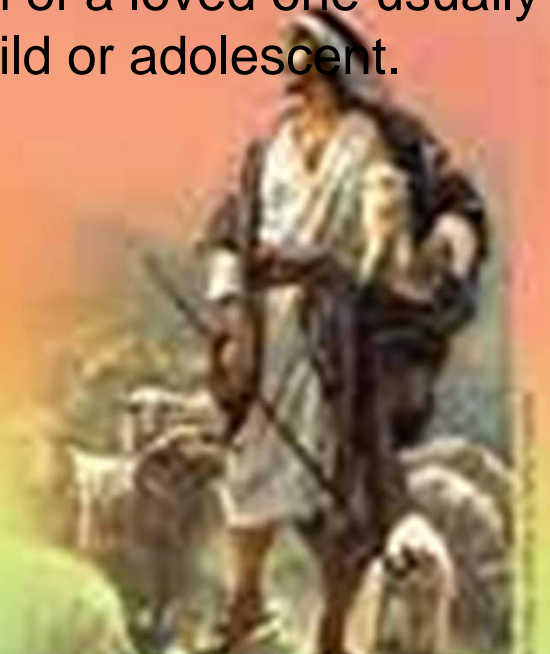


# Seven emotional stages of grief

**Shock or Disbelief, Denial, Bargaining, Guilt, Anger, Depression, and Acceptance/Hope.**

**Symptoms of grief can be:** emotional, physical, social, or religious in nature.

For children and adolescents, their reactions to the death of a loved one usually reflect the particular developmental stage of the child or adolescent.



# DEALING WITH CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

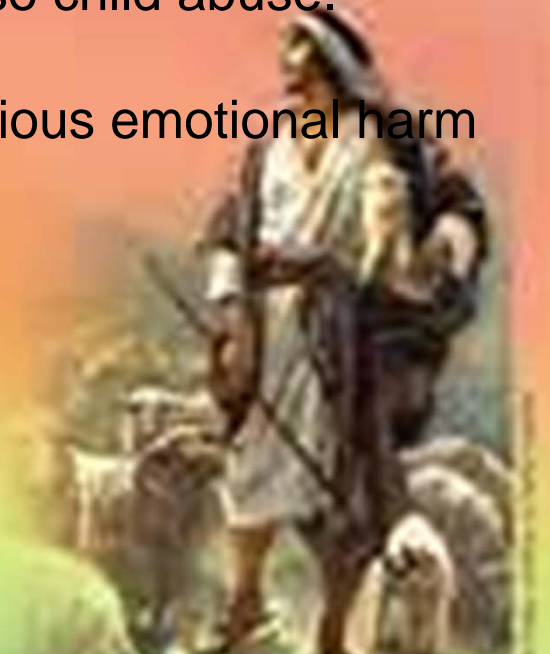
## What is child abuse

Child abuse is more than bruises or broken bones.

While physical abuse is shocking due to the scars it leaves, not all child abuse is as obvious.

Ignoring children's needs, putting them in unsupervised, dangerous situations, or making a child feel worthless or stupid are also child abuse.

Regardless of the type of child abuse, the result is serious emotional harm



# Myths and facts about child abuse and neglect

## MYTH # 1

**It's only abuse if it's violent.**

### Fact

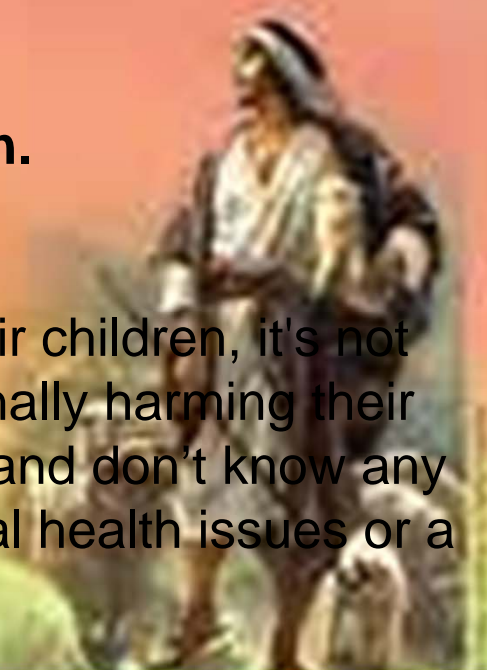
Physical abuse is just one type of child abuse. Neglect and emotional abuse can be just as damaging, and since they are more subtle, others are less likely to intervene.

## MYTH # 2

**Only bad people abuse their children.**

### Fact

While it's easy to say that only "bad people" abuse their children, it's not always so black and white. Not all abusers are intentionally harming their children. Many have been victims of abuse themselves, and don't know any other way to parent. Others may be struggling with mental health issues or a substance abuse problem.



### **MYTH # 3**

Child abuse doesn't happen in “good” families.

### **Fact**

Child abuse doesn't only happen in poor families or bad neighborhoods. It crosses all racial, economical, and cultural lines. Sometimes, families who seem to have it all from the outside are hiding a different story behind closed doors.

### **MYTH # 4**

Most child abusers are strangers.

### **Fact**

While abuse by strangers does happen, most abusers are family members or others close to the family.



## **MYTH # 5**

Abused children always grow up to be abusers.

## **Fact**

It is true that abused children are more likely to repeat the cycle as adults, unconsciously repeating what they experienced as children. On the other hand, many adult survivors of child abuse have a strong motivation to protect their children against what they went through and become excellent parents.



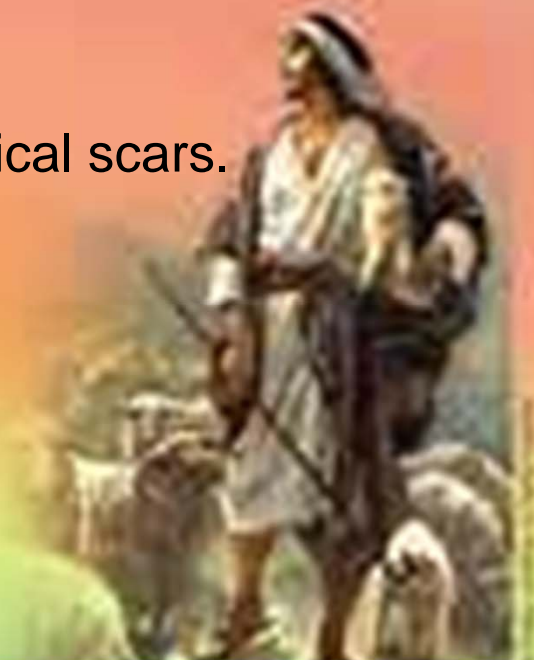


# Emotional child abuse

Emotional abuse can severely damage a child's mental health

And

social development, leaving lifelong psychological scars.



# Examples of emotional

Constant belittling, shaming, and humiliating a child.

Calling names and making negative comparisons to others.

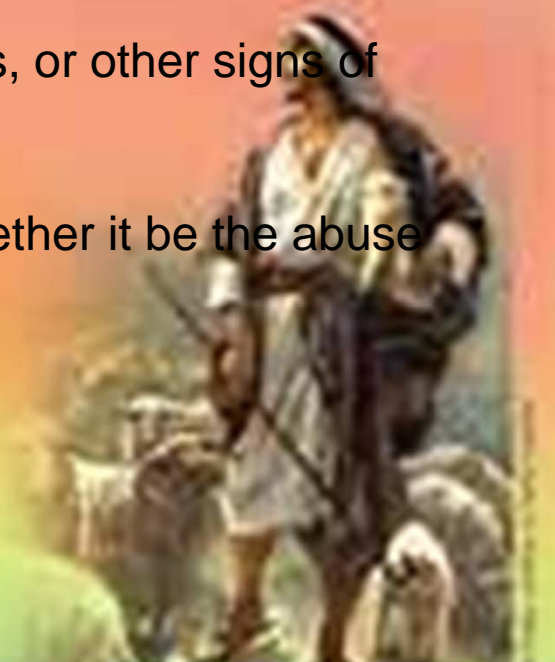
Telling a child he or she is "no good," "worthless," "bad," or "a mistake."

Frequent yelling, threatening, or bullying.

Ignoring or rejecting a child as punishment, giving him or her the silent treatment.

Limited physical contact with the child—no hugs, kisses, or other signs of affection.

Exposing the child to violence or the abuse of others, whether it be the abuse of a parent, a sibling, or even a pet .



# Physical child abuse

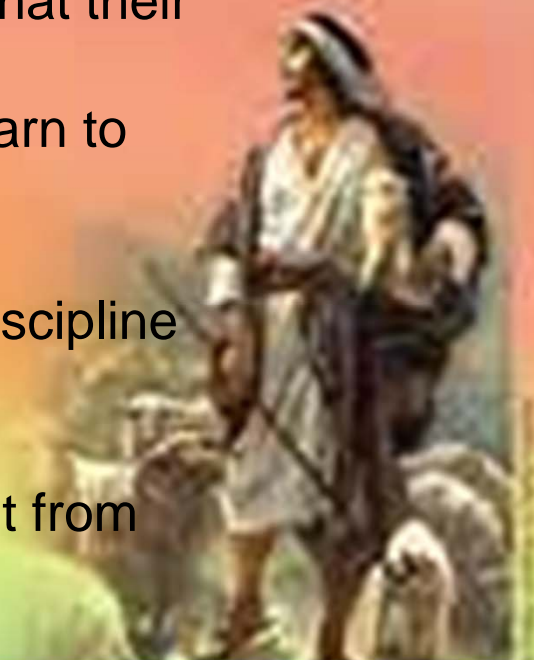
Physical abuse involves physical harm or injury to the child.

It may be the result of a deliberate attempt to hurt the child, but not always. It can also result from severe discipline, such as using a belt on a child, or physical punishment that is inappropriate to the child's age or physical condition.

Many physically abusive parents and caregivers insist that their actions are simply forms of discipline—ways to make children learn to behave.

But there is a big difference between using physical punishment to discipline and physical abuse.

The point of disciplining children is to teach them right from wrong, not to make them live in fear.



# Physical abuse vs. Discipline

In physical abuse, unlike physical forms of discipline, the following elements are present:

**1)Unpredictability:** The child never knows what is going to set the parent off.

There are no clear boundaries or rules. The child is never sure what behavior will trigger a physical assault.



## Physical abuse vs. Discipline (cont)

**2)Lashing out in anger:** Physically abusive parents act out of anger and the desire to assert control, not the motivation to lovingly teach the child.  
The angrier the parent, the more intense the abuse.

**3)Using fear to control behavior.** Parents who are physically abusive may believe that their children need to fear them in order to behave, so they use physical abuse to “keep their child in line.” However, what children are really learning is how to avoid being hit, not how to behave or grow as individuals.





# Child sexual abuse

## **A hidden type of abuse**

Child sexual abuse is an especially complicated form of abuse because of its layers of guilt and shame.

It's important to recognize that sexual abuse doesn't always involve body contact.

Exposing a child to sexual situations or material is sexually abusive, whether or not touching is involved.



# Child sexual abuse (cont)

The problem of shame and guilt in child sexual abuse, aside from the physical damage that sexual abuse can cause, the emotional component is powerful and far-reaching.

Sexually abused children are tormented by shame and guilt. They may feel that they are responsible for the abuse or somehow brought it upon themselves.

This can lead to self-loathing and sexual problems as they grow older—often either excessive promiscuity or an inability to have intimate relations.



# Child sexual abuse (cont)

While news stories of sexual predators are scary, what is even more frightening is that sexual abuse usually occurs at the hands of someone the child knows and should be able to trust—most often close relatives.

And contrary to what many believe, it's not just girls who are at risk. Boys and girls both suffer from sexual abuse.

In fact, sexual abuse of boys may be underreported due to shame and stigma.



# Child sexual abuse (cont)

The shame of sexual abuse makes it very difficult for children to come forward.

They may worry that others won't believe them, will be angry at them, or that it will split their family apart.

Because of these difficulties, false accusations of sexual abuse are not common, so if a child confides in you, take him or her seriously. Don't turn a blind eye!



# Warning signs of emotional abuse in children

Excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong.

Shows extremes in behavior (extremely compliant or extremely demanding; extremely passive or extremely aggressive).

Doesn't seem to be attached to the parent or caregiver.





# Warning signs of physical abuse in children

Frequent injuries or unexplained bruises or cuts.

Is always watchful and “on alert,” as if waiting for something bad to happen.

Injuries appear to have a pattern such as marks from a hand or belt.

Shies away from touch, flinches at sudden movements, or seems afraid to go home.

Wears inappropriate clothing to cover up injuries, such as long-sleeved shirts on hot days.



# Warning signs of sexual abuse in children

Trouble walking or sitting.

Displays knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to his or her age,  
or even seductive behavior.

Makes strong efforts to avoid a specific person, without an obvious reason.

Doesn't want to change clothes in front of others or participate in physical activities.

An STD or pregnancy, especially under the age of 14.

Runs away from home.



# DEALING WITH ABUSIVE PARENTS

1) Encourage them to talk!

It's harder to fight this battle alone.

Let them know they need to have the courage to reach out to someone for help - a teacher, a relative, a friend's parent, or anyone that they know they can trust.

Even if it's just a friend who can't do anything to help change the situation, it's important to let someone know that they're being abused.

They'll need moral support, help get away from their parents, and a witness if their parents deny that they ever abused them.



## Dealing with abusive parents (cont)

2) Let them try to do whatever they can to prevent/avoid the abuse, or at least some of the biggest attacks.

Help them recognize the 'triggers' (things said or done) that really set their parents off. If they recognize them it will be easier to avoid doing them to somewhat lessen the frequency of the abuse.

Also, help them find safe places in their house.

They should try to avoid the areas where they are abused the most.



## Dealing with abusive parents (cont)

### 3) They should try to bite their tongue

When they are stuck being bombarded with the abuse they shouldn't harass or 'talk back' to their parents no matter how much they want to get up in their faces and give them a taste of their own medicine.

Trying to talk and reason with their parents might work, but being mean back will not help and will most likely make it worse.





## Dealing with abusive parents (cont)

4) Help them tell their parents how they feel.

They can try to go to their parents at an appropriate time; when they're not busy and they're in a good mood.

They should talk to them in neutral/public setting such as a restaurant. They can calmly tell them how sad it makes them when they put them down constantly.

It will make the conversation more grown-up because they have stated their problem clearly and calmly.

Keep in mind that this may also provoke the parent if they are not at a point where they can reason and talk things out to make the family situation better.



## Dealing with abusive parents (cont)

5) Direct them to move in a positive way.

If they are able to have a good conversation with their parents, and they listen to their concerns, in the future they'll hopefully feel relieved and know that they have accomplished something good and move forward with their lives.

If they aren't able to have a good conversation or move forward with their parents, at least they tried. They made an effort and gave their parents a chance to work with them.



## Dealing with abusive parents (cont)

6) Direct and help them get some help from a school guidance counselor, therapist, or a priest.

The earlier they seek counseling the better.

Over time, the emotional abuse will only get worse as they grow older and their parents start to lose control over them.

This can change who they are as an adult and how they view others. The fact that they feel they've done nothing wrong can make even the strongest person, over time, feel unloved and as though they are at fault.



## Dealing with abusive parents (cont)

7) Help them get away from the abuse.

The sad reality is that most abusive parents stay abusive.

There's nothing you can do to stop their behavior. If this is the case, and they are not willing to work on changing, they'll have to hard about ways to get out of the situation and away from the abuse.

If they can get away from their parents and stay with a sympathetic relative, help them DO IT.



## Dealing with abusive parents (cont)

8) They have to accept that while some families are functional, theirs is clearly not, and may never be.

Abusers destroy break our will to the point that we feel guilty about thinking for ourselves.

The worst abusers will make everything about us subject to their approval.

They see our individuality as a threat, and will undermine it, if not destroy it, every chance they get.



## Dealing with abusive parents (cont)

9) Let them know that crying may never make their parents stop.

Some abusive parents actually aim to make their kids cry and when they do, they'll think they've won and will continue to attack their kids in that same soft spot.

Like parasites and cowards, they feed on our weaknesses and exasperations.

If they have siblings who they know can comfort them and back them up, they can share their feelings with them. Sometimes it's only one child that the parent(s) are aggressive towards (scapegoat)





# Tips for talking to an abused child

Avoid denial and remain calm. A common reaction to news as unpleasant and shocking as child abuse is denial.

However, if you display denial to a child, or show shock or disgust at what they are saying, the child may be afraid to continue and will shut down.

As hard as it may be, remain as calm and reassuring as you can.



# Don't interrogate

Let the child explain to you in his or her own words what happened, but don't interrogate the child or ask leading questions.

This may confuse and aggravate the child and make it harder for them to continue their story.



# REASSURANCE AND SAFETY

Reassure the child that they did nothing wrong. It takes a lot for a child to come forward about abuse. Reassure him or her that you take what is said seriously, and that it's not the child's fault.

Safety comes first. If you feel that your safety or the safety of the child would be threatened if you try to intervene, leave it to the professionals. You may be able to provide more support later after the initial professional intervention.



# QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

