

A Child's Mindset After Abuse

Expectations After Neglect

- When I have a physical or emotional need, I can ignore it, get it myself, or scream really loud.
- No one acts as though I am special, so I must not be.
- I have to take care of my younger siblings. If I don't, no one else will.
- Other kids are competitors for the good stuff in life.
- Good stuff is scarce. I always need to look out for it -- it's more important than playing.
- I have so little, don't let anybody take anything from me.
- I yearn to be loved, but love is too painful to feel so I get rid of it.

Expectations after Physical Abuse

- Grown-ups will hit me again.
- I might be able to avoid being hit if I watch close enough.
- I was hit because I was a bad kid. I can't change my badness, so I have to hide it.
- I'm confused because I'm scared of the person I want to go to for safety.
- Sometimes the scary person acts loving and safe. I yearn for that, but can I trust it?
- I yearn to feel relaxed and safe. It's stupid and dangerous to yearn for that, so I must stop.
- I don't want to feel powerless. I want to be powerful, so I will hit

Expectations after Sexual Abuse

- When I'm being touched is when I'm most special to the other person.
- When touching is happening, I don't exist.
- I have to keep a basic part of me hidden from others.
- The touching felt good and bad and confusing.
- My body is more important than my inside qualities.
- Grown-ups can do whatever they want to me.
- When I grow up, I can do the touching and it will feel somehow right. I want that happen soon, because that is love.

Expectations after Maltreatment

- No grown-up really wants to know my thoughts or feelings.
- Feelings are painful, and they never get better so I stay away from them.
- I am bad. I need to hide it and have others feel it instead.
- I hate powerlessness and feeling less than. I want to be like the most powerful person I know.
- If I do nothing in response to bad stuff, then I don't exist.
- I have to keep myself safe because no one else will.
- This has happened or I have expected it to happen every day of my life. My life will always be this way.