

Child Abuse in the CNMI

Ursula Manglona

Northern Marianas College

“We want to bring public awareness on child abuse and neglect issues and its prevalence in our community by highlighting key prevention strategies, programs, and services that are made available not only through DYS, but with other critical social service providers and community partners,” Sablan said. Child Abuse has been a major problem in the CNMI. In the first quarter of fiscal year 2014 alone, from October to December of 2013, there were 46 new cases and from January to March this year, there were 50 new cases according to DYS administrator Vivian Sablan.

There are many different types of Child Abuse which includes, Emotional Abuse, Neglect, Physical Abuse, and Sexual Abuse. Emotional Abuse is also known as a Psychological Abuse or maltreatment. This is the most common form of Child Abuse. From infancy to adulthood, emotionally abused people are often more withdrawn and emotionally disengaged than their peers, and finds it difficult to predict other people’s behaviour. Neglect is any serious act by a person having the care of a child, that fails to provide conditions that are essential for the health and emotional development of a child. Physical Abuse is defined as any intentional act causing injury or trauma to another person. Physical Abuse could not only be a result of intent to hurt a child but a form of discipline, but if it involves unpredictable anger, this would fall under Physical Abuse. Child Sexual Abuse is describe as any adult that engages a minor in a sexual act. This includes oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any object and exposing the child. Sexually Abused children would be more withdrawn, unhappy and the thought of a suicidal, self harm, and eating problems.

Understanding Child Abuse and the different types of abuse along with preventions are further explored in the extent of this research project. The project schedule can be found in the table shown below.

<b>Writing</b>	<b>Research</b>
Project Proposal (October 22)	Research Question (October 10)
Ideas, Drafts and collected data (October 20-24)	Secondary Research Question (October 13)
Record Project Process “Reflection” (October 30-November 1)	Interviews, Surveys (October 22-November 1)
Editing, Revise Drafts (November 5-8)	Collecting and Analyzing Data (November 1-November 3)
Finalizing Drafts (November 10-15)	Analyze Results (November 3-7)

Child Abuse Prevention includes knowing what Child Abuse is. Parents teaching their child to use their voice, to speak up when they know that they think or that they know they’ve been abused. It’s the parents obligation to be aware of changes in their child’s behavior or attitude. Teach your children about their body parts. Pay close attention when someone shows greater than normal interest in your child/children. Be sure that the school that your child/children goes to, will release them only to you or to people whom you trust. Know the signs. Unexplained injuries aren't the only signs of abuse. Depression, fear of a certain adult, difficulty trusting others or making friends, sudden changes in eating or sleeping patterns, inappropriate sexual behavior, poor hygiene, secrecy, and hostility are often signs of family problems and may indicate a child is being neglected or physically, sexually, or emotionally

abused. Report Abuse, If you witness any child being harmed or see evidence, be sure to report it to a police or DYS. Invest in your kids and help others invest in theirs by encouraging the community as a whole to be supportive to children and their family. Protect our children and to improve their lives.

There are programs and organizations that every family should attend or be apart of. The purpose of the programs/organizations is so that parents and their children would learn the different forms of Child Abuse, what Child Abuse is and ways to prevent Child Abuse. Department of Community and Cultural Affair and the Division of Youth Services are organizations that are held responsible to promote the wellbeing of children, youth, families, and the community as a whole. This program has a unit of child protection unit, foster care services, juvenile probation unit, parent education program, family, and the youth enhancement program. Every child is entitled to be loved. Cared for, secured, and protected from verbal, sexual, emotional, physical abuse, exploitation, and neglect. Join the walk to fight against Child Abuse. April is the month of Child Abuse.

In conclusion, we as a whole community should stand up and voice out that every child should be loved, cared, and protected. Help break the silence of child abuse. Get involved, volunteer and support organizations that fight the tragedy of abuse. Educate our children about what Child Abuse is and the different types of Child Abuse. This situation is not only a major problem in the CNMI but all around the world. We should all help fight against it as our children today, will be a leader for tomorrow.