



## ***Social Issues***

### ***Physical Abuse***



#### **Definition:**

Physical abuse is the physical maltreatment of a person.

#### **Examples:**

- Beating or whipping
- Slapping or punching
- Burning someone with a cigarette, iron or other implement
- Sexual abuse

#### **Why the situation occurs?**

Abusing someone physically is a way of exerting power over them to make the abuser feel better about them self. They may be compensating for something that has happened in their past, but they have no right to take this out on others.

Physical abuse is a crime, however circumstances may make it difficult for the victim to act. The victims may have visible scars and be afraid to leave the house. They may feel ashamed because of what has happened to them and may have been made to believe that they deserve the abuse. They may not wish to act, especially if the abuser is known to them. They may fear total rejection more than the abuse they suffer. This abuse may even have become a way of life if the person has grown up being abused.

Some forms of physical abuse are more difficult to identify as the scars may not necessarily be visible or may be hidden by clothing. Physical abuse is often accompanied by mental abuse. Serious consequences of abuse can include self-harm, aggressiveness, seclusion, mental illness and even suicide. It is really important that the victim gets help. The abuser must also be helped - they must not be able to be in a position to hurt someone again.

See the information sheets on bullying and mental abuse, which are related to this subject.

### **How you can make a difference:**

Tackle the issue - learn about the issue and learn how to recognise the signs. Why do people abuse and why do others 'accept' this. What support exists for both sides? What are the laws regarding abuse in your country? What should you do if you think that someone is being abused? How can you help people who have been abused? How can they rebuild confidence in others and in themselves?

Use the materials and tools provided to follow the process of:

1. Identifying the problem
2. Developing Awareness and Empathy
3. Taking action
4. Measuring the change

### **Resources and Links:**

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:

<http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm>

Information on this subject is available on the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) website (English, French and Spanish): <http://www.unicef.org>

World Scout Conference Resolution 16/90 on the Convention of the Rights of the Child

[worldbureau@world.scout.org](mailto:worldbureau@world.scout.org)

World Scout Conference Resolution 7/02 - Keeping Scouts safe from harm

[worldbureau@world.scout.org](mailto:worldbureau@world.scout.org)