

## Adolescent Neglect

### Defining Adolescent Neglect

The current definition of neglect refers to children and young people up to the age of 18, but the 'neglect of adolescent neglect' contributed to the following as part of a neglect guide aimed at those working with teenagers (Hicks and Stein, 2010). These are points for consideration, but highlight some of the issues around defining and working with adolescent neglect.

<b>Themes from Research Review</b>	<b>Issues for Practitioners</b>
Neglect is usually seen as an act of omission	For adolescents in particular, some acts of commission should be seen as neglect, or contribute to young people being neglected e.g. being abandoned by parents, being forced to leave home, being exposed to others who may exploit the young person
Neglect from different viewpoints	There may be different viewpoints, for example between the views of social workers, other professionals, parents and young people themselves. Awareness of these different viewpoints and what may contribute to them (e.g. culture, own experiences of being parented, beliefs, values and so on) is a starting point for establishing a working consensus
Young people may underestimate neglect	This may be related to young people's acceptance of their parents' behaviour, young people's sense of privacy, or their loyalty to their families
Neglect is often seen as a persistent state	It is necessary to look at patterns of neglect over time and recognise the impact of both acute and chronic neglect
There is a difficulty in making a distinction between emotional abuse and neglect	These are associated, inevitably, especially when neglect is seen as an omission of care. What matters is not the label but the consequences for the young person's health and development
Neglectful behaviour and experience of neglect	Defining neglect should include both maltreating behaviour as well as how the young person experiences neglect i.e. the consequences for them

Thanks to South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership for use of this information from their Neglect Guidance & Toolkit (2022)

**Excerpt from SSP Neglect Framework and Practice Guidance Adolescent Neglect (section 3.1)**

Consider the following questions:

<b>Responding to adolescent neglect</b>
<b>Q.</b> Are the adolescent's needs fully considered with consistent adult care?
<b>Q.</b> Does the carer recognise that the adolescent is still in need of guidance with protection from risky behaviour i.e. an awareness of the adolescent's whereabouts for long periods of time (missing or absent)?
<b>Q.</b> Has the parent/carer reported the episode missing (if relevant)?
<b>Q.</b> Does the carer encourage the child to see education as important, and supports regular attendance at school?
<b>Q.</b> Does the carer either address directly or seek support to address risky and challenging behaviour?
<b>Q.</b> Does the carer have the capacity to be alert to and monitor the adolescent moods for example recognising depression which could lead to self-harm?
<b>Q.</b> Does the carer have the capacity to be alert to and monitor relationships (including online relationships) which may be risky or exploitative?
<b>Q.</b> Is the carer aware of any risks associated to online activities particularly; grooming in relation to sexual and/or criminal exploitation or radicalisation?
<b>Q.</b> Is the carer aware of any risks outside the family particularly; grooming in relation to sexual and/or criminal exploitation or radicalisation?
<b>Q.</b> Does the carer encourage positive peer relationships?
<b>Q.</b> Does the carer take an active interest in the child's day-to-day life and activities?

Below are some examples of practice questions to consider when working with young people

<b>3.2 Practice questions for when working with young people responses: never, hardly ever, sometimes, often, always</b>	
<b>Q.</b> In the last year how often did your parents, or the adults you live with...	
<p><b>...show an interest in what you were doing at school?</b>  <b>...attend parents' evenings at school?</b>  <b>...keep track of how you were doing at school – by doing things like reading reports?</b></p> <p>...take an interest in your hobbies or activities?            ...ask about what you want to do in the future?            ...help you to learn things outside school?</p>	<p>EDUCATIONAL  SUPPORT</p>
<p><b>...help you when you had problems?</b>  <b>...support you if you were upset?</b>  <b>...tell you when they thought you had done something well?</b></p> <p>...praise you?            ...tell you they loved you?            ...help you to do your best?</p>	<p>EMOTIONAL  SUPPORT</p>
<p><b>...make sure you saw a doctor if you needed one?</b>  <b>...take care of you if you felt ill?</b>  <b>...support you to look after your teeth and go to the dentist?</b></p> <p>...make sure you ate healthy food?            ...keep the house clean?            ...make sure you brushed your teeth?            ...make sure you washed or showered regularly?</p>	<p>PHYSICAL  CARE</p>
<p><b>...ask you where you were going when you went out?</b>  <b>...like to know where you were after school?</b>  <b>...expect you to call or text to let them know if you were going to be home late?</b></p> <p>...know where you were going when you went out at night?            ...ask about the plans you had with your friends?            ...leave you at home alone overnight?            ...leave you with adults you don't know very well?            ...make sure you went to school?</p>	<p>SUPERVISION</p>