

Recognizing Emotionally Abusive Behaviours

Emotional abuse is an ongoing attack on a child's self-esteem. It's psychologically destructive behavior by a person in a position of power, authority or trust. Though often traumatic for children, emotional abuse is often inflicted without parents knowing or recognizing that they, or coaches or leaders, are using these behaviours.

Emotionally abusive behaviour includes

- **Ignoring and Isolating:** where a person in a position of power avoids or pushes a young person away. The participant is denied sensitive caregiving or emotionally neglected and kept isolated from interaction with peers.
- **Degrading:** where a person uses their power to criticize or stigmatize a child. The participant is deprived of dignity, humiliated or made to feel inferior
- **Terrorizing:** when a person in power frightens another by threatening them or someone or something they care about.
- **Corrupting:** where a person uses their power to teach a youth to behave in antisocial ways. This can include illegal activities, like providing a participant with alcohol or drugs, including performance enhancing drugs.
- **Exploiting:** where a person in power takes advantage of another. The participant is used to meet the needs of the leader, or the participant is asked to do things that are not age appropriate.