



Relias Spotlight Series

April 2021

Hello Providers!

Welcome to the Optum Idaho **April Relias Spotlight Series**—a series devoted to providing you with access to **free, easily accessible and CEU-eligible** online education about topics that are of most importance to behavioral health providers, like you, across the state.

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. This month is dedicated to raising awareness around this important topic so that child abuse can be prevented in Idaho.

What is childhood abuse?

Child abuse is when a parent, caregiver, or another person in a custodial role (e.g., clergy, coach, teacher) whether through action or failing to act, causes injury, death, emotional harm, or risk of serious harm to a child. There are many forms of child maltreatment, including neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, exploitation, and emotional abuse and abandonment.

Did you know?

At least one in seven children have experienced child abuse and /or neglect in the past year and most likely, this is an underestimate. In 2018, nearly 1,770 children died of abuse and neglect in the United States.

Signs of Abuse:

Unexplained changes in a child's body or behavior are red flags that abuse could be occurring.

- **Physical Abuse:** Any injury (bruise, burn, fracture, abdominal or head injury) that cannot be explained
- **Sexual Abuse:** Fearful behavior (nightmares, depression, unusual fears, attempts to run away), abdominal pain, bedwetting, urinary tract infection, genital pain or bleeding, sexually transmitted disease, extreme sexual behavior that seems inappropriate for the child's age
- **Emotional Abuse:** Sudden change in self-confidence, headaches, or stomachaches with no medical cause, abnormal fears, increase nightmares or attempts to run away
- **Neglect:** Failure to gain weight (especially in infants), desperately affectionate behavior, voracious appetite and stealing food



Impact:

In most cases, children who are abused or neglected suffer greater emotional than physical damage. A child who has been abused or otherwise severely mistreated may become depressed or develop suicidal, withdrawn, or violent behavior. An older child may use drugs or alcohol, try to run away, or abuse others. The younger the child is and the closer the child's relationship to the abuser, the more serious the emotional damage will be. As adults, they may develop marital and sexual difficulties, depression, or suicidal behavior. With early intervention and treatment, these outcomes may be avoided.

Source: Child Welfare Information Gateway www.childwelfare.gov

What can be done?

One of the most important, albeit uncomfortable, things to do is to report any suspected abuse or neglect. This may be a difficult step to take, however, you may be just the person who changes the trajectory for a child in a positive way. Your voice matters, especially when you are speaking for those who can't.



Reporting obligations:

Idaho requires mandatory reporting of abuse, abandonment, or neglect. This also includes observing conditions or circumstances which would reasonably result in abuse, abandonment, or neglect of a child. Idaho law requires such conditions or circumstances be reported to law enforcement or The Department of Health and Welfare within 24 hours.

- **9-1-1** in emergency situations
- **Idaho Care Line 2-1-1:** The 2-1-1- Idaho careline is a program of the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. It is a free statewide community information and referral service.
- **FACES of Hope Victim Center** located in Boise, Idaho 208-577-4400. The mission of FACES of Hope is to reduce victimization with a safety net of crisis services. They offer comprehensive services to individuals and families who are affected by domestic violence, sexual violence, child abuse and stalking.

- **Child Help USA 1-800-422-4453:** This is a crisis line for children that offers advice and provides literature for children.

Relias offers free continuing education courses specifically geared for your practice needs. If you would like more information and education around this topic, we encourage you to log into [Relias](#) and search for the following modules:

- Abuse and Neglect: What to Look for and How to Respond REL-HHS-O-AB-V2
- Helping Children and Adolescents Cope with Violence and Disasters REL-HHS-O-HCACVD
- Identifying and Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect REL-ACU-O-SW60231
- Positive Behavior Support for Children REL-HHS-O-PBSC
- Best Practices for Behavioral Health in Child Welfare REL-HHS-O-BPBHCW

Thank you for the work that you do each day with our members so that Idaho can continue to improve access to mental health services in a positive and thoughtful manner. Optum is excited to offer these resources to you.

Sincerely,
The Optum Education and Training Team