THE IMPACT OF ABUSE:
assessing the damage

Self-Esteem:

- feeling that there is something basically wrong with you.
- lack of a sense of personal control.
- feeling self-destructive or suicidal.
- afraid to succeed or perfectionistic.

Feelings:

- can't recognize or differentiate feelings.
- can't express or communicate feelings.
- can't express or communicate certain kinds of feelings.

Physical Health/the Body:

- feeling of being numbed out or disconnected
- persistent or chronic illness related to abuse
- usage of food, beverages, or drugs in unhealthy ways (e.g. eating disorders)
- lack of a full range of feelings in one's body or specific body areas
- basic awareness of body needs but inability to respond appropriately

- experience emotional flashbacks during sexual activity related to previous abuse
- engage in sexual activity as a result of your partner's needs and not your own
- feel that sex is disgusting or that you are disgusting if you enjoy it
- have a need to control everything about sex in order to feel safe during sexual relations
- have been sexually abusive yourself

Parenting:

- often feel uncomfortable, frightened, or enraged around children.
- have been abusive with children or are fearful that you might be.
- find it very difficult to set clear and appropriate boundaries with children
- difficulty feeling close to children or are uncomfortable being affectionate with them
- experience difficulties protecting children under your care.
- tend to be overanxious and overprotective around children.

Relationships/Intimacy:

- inability to trust and lack of close friends.
- difficulty in nurturing or being affectionate
- have no clear sense of what an appropriate or healthy relationship is
- repetitive pattern of being involved with individuals who are inappropriate
- sabotaging healthy relationships
- allows others to take advantage of oneself
- difficulties committing to relationships
- expect others to leave you
- clinging to those who care about you

Sexuality:

- may 'numb out' or experience 'panic' during sexual relationships
- often uses sex to meet needs that aren't sexual
- often either avoiding sex or engaging in sexual relationships that aren't really wanted
- sexual relationships with others who are physically, emotionally, or sexually abusive.
- feel one's self-worth is primarily related to one's sexual desirability
- inability to experience sexual desire