

## What is the Difference Between Abuse and a Lower Level Concern?

### **Abuse**

Abuse is where there is a reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer **Significant Harm**.

As we have discussed many times the four main categories of abuse are:

- **Neglect**
- **Physical Abuse**
- **Emotional Abuse**
- **Sexual Abuse.**

All of these forms of abuse can happen either within or outside of the Coerver Coaching environment.

Within the Coerver Coaching environment we need to be vigilant and look out for behaviour that indicates that an adult who works with children has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child; and/or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; and/or
- Behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children; and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

This could include anything that might be deemed as repeated or serious poor practice.

### **Lower Level Concern**

A lower level concern is **any concern - no matter how small**, and even if no more than a 'nagging doubt' that an adult may have acted in a way that:

- Is inconsistent with Coerver Coaching's policies and procedures and codes of conduct, including any inappropriate conduct outside of Coerver Coaching activities.
- Does not meet the threshold for referral to statutory agencies.

Lower level concerns may include:

- **Inadvertent or thoughtless** behaviour.
- Behaviour that might be **considered inappropriate** depending on the circumstances
- Behaviour which **breaches Coerver Coaching's Code of Conduct** but does not meet the threshold for a statutory referral, such as:
  - Showing favouritism
  - Shouting aggressively
  - Swearing in front of children
  - Turning up for work smelling of alcohol
  - Not paying due care and attention to all of the participants in your care
  - Failing to maintain professional boundaries.