# APPENDIX 1: OBSERVABLE SIGNS OF TRAUMA THAT MAY INDICATE FAMILY VIOLENCE

## Table 1: Signs of trauma in adult victims

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| Form | Signs of trauma that may indicate family violence is occurring for adult victims |
| Physical | * bruising
* fractures
* chronic pain (neck, back)
* fresh scars or minor cuts
* terminations of pregnancy
 | * complications during pregnancy
* gastrointestinal disorders
* sexually transmitted diseases
* strangulation
 |
| Psychological | * depression
* anxiety
* self-harming behaviour
* eating disorders
* phobias
* somatic disorders
 | * sleep problems
* impaired concentration
* harmful alcohol use
* licit and illicit drug use
* physical exhaustion
* suicide attempts
 |
| Emotional | * fear
* shame
* anger
* no support networks
 | * feelings of worthlessness and hopelessness
* feeling disassociated and emotionally numb
 |
| Social/financial | * homelessness
* unemployment
* financial debt
 | * no friends or family support
* isolation
* parenting difficulties
 |
| Demeanour | * unconvincing explanations of any injuries
* describe a partner as controlling or prone to anger
* be accompanied by their partner, who does most of the talking
 | * anxiety in the presence of a partner
* recent separation or divorce
* needing to be back home by a certain time and becoming stressed about this
* reluctance to follow advice
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## Table 2: General signs of trauma in a child or young person

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| General observable signs of trauma for a child or young person that may indicate family violence is occurring  |
| Signs of trauma can manifest as either physical, emotional or behavioural and can include:* Being very passive and compliant
* Showing wariness or distrust of adults
* Demonstrating fear of particular people and places
* Poor sleep patterns and emotional dis-regulation
* Becoming fearful when other children cry or shout
* Developmental regression (i.e. reverting to bed-wetting)
* Bruises, burns, sprains, dislocations, bites, cuts
* Fractured bones, especially in an infant where a fracture is unlikely to have occurred accidentally
* Poisoning
* Internal injuries
* Wearing long-sleeved clothes on hot days in an attempt to hide bruising or other injury
* Being excessively friendly to strangers
* Being excessively clingy to certain adults
* A strong desire to please or receive validation from certain adults
* Excessive washing or bathing
* Unclear boundaries and understanding of relationships between adults and children
* Excessive sexualised behaviour/advanced sexual knowledge
* Violence or sexualised behaviour to other children.
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## Table 3: Signs of trauma for a child (unborn to young child)

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| Observable signs of trauma that may indicate family violence for: |
| an unborn child | a baby (under 18 months) | a toddler |
| * Poor growth and neural development caused by rushes of maternal adrenalin and cortisol
* Injuries sustained via injury to mother or by the perpetrator targeting the unborn child directly (such as inflicting blows to mother’s abdominal area).
 | * Excessive crying
* Excessive passivity
* Underweight for age
* Significant sleep and/or feeding difficulties
* Reactions to loud voices or noises
* Extreme wariness of new people
* No verbal ‘play’ (such as imitating sounds)
* Frequent illness
* Anxiety, overly clingy to primary caregiver
 | As for baby (under 18 months), and also:* Excessive irritability
* Excessive compliance
* Poor language development
* Delayed mobility
* Blood in nappy, underwear
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## Table 4: Age-related signs of trauma that may indicate family violence in a child or young person

Many indicators may be expressions of trauma that may be observed through the presentation, behaviour or circumstances of a child or young person. Some indicators are related to trauma from specific forms of family violence, including sexual abuse (indicated by #) or emotional abuse (indicated by \*), or indicate signs of neglect.

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| Observable signs of trauma that may indicate family violence for: |
| a pre-schooler | a primary school-aged child | an adolescent |
| * Extreme clinginess
* Significant sleep# and/or eating difficulties
* Poor concentration in play
* Inability to empathise with other people
* Frequent illness
* Poor language development and/or significant use of ‘baby talk’
* Displaying maladaptive behaviour such as frequent rocking, sucking and biting#
* Aggression towards others
* Adjustment problems (for example, significant difficulties moving from kindergarten to school)
* Anti-social play or lack of interest in engaging with others
 | * Rebelliousness, defiant behaviour
* Limited tolerance and poor impulse control
* Temper tantrums or irritability, being aggressive or demanding\*
* Physical abuse or cruelty of others, including pets
* Avoidance of conflict
* Showing low self-esteem\*
* Extremely compliant behaviour, being passive, tearful or withdrawn\*
* Excessively oppositional or argumentative behaviour
* Risk-taking behaviours that have severe or life-threatening consequences
* Lack of interest in social activities
* Delayed or poor language skills\*
* Experiencing problems with schoolwork#
* Poor social competence (few or no friends, not getting on well with peers, difficulties relating to adults)\*#
* Acting like a much younger child\*
* Poor school performance
* Poor coping skills
* Sleep issues#
* Bed wetting#
* Excessive washing
* Frequent illness
* Complaining of headaches or stomach pains#
* Self-harm
* Displaying maladaptive behaviour#
* Displaying sexual behaviour or knowledge unusual for the child’s age#
* Telling someone sexual abuse has occurred#
* Complaining of pain going to the toilet
* Enacting sexual behaviour with other children
* Excessive masturbation
 | * As for primary school aged children, and also:
* School refusal/avoidance (absenteeism/disengagement)
* Criminal or antisocial behaviours, including using violence against others
* Eating disorders
* Substance abuse
* Depression
* Suicidal ideation
* Risk-taking behaviours
* Anxiety
* Pregnancy
* Controlling or manipulative behaviour
* Obsessive behaviour
* Homelessness or frequent changes in housing arrangements
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## Table 5: Signs and indicators of neglect

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| Observable signs and indicators of neglect of a child or young person |
| * Being frequently hungry
* Being poorly nourished
* Having poor hygiene
* Wearing inappropriate clothing, for example, wearing summer clothes in winter
* Being unsupervised for long periods
* Not having their medical needs attended to
 | * Being abandoned by their parents
* Stealing food
* Staying at school outside school hours
* Often being tired and/or falling asleep in class
* Abusing alcohol or drugs
* Displaying aggressive behaviour
* Not getting on well with peers.
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