

They Are Not the Same.

The old-fashioned, traditional institution of smacking is not violent or abusive. While the anti-smacking lobby regularly misrepresents smacking by saying that it is indistinguishable from hitting / belting / giving a hiding or that it can escalate into over-the-top abuse, smacking is definitely not even on the same continuum; it is not even in the same ball park. This is because their motivations, aims, objectives, methodologies and outcomes are all completely different.

Smacking

Motivation: The parents' love and long-term commitment to training their child in social graces, discipline and self-control over and above their own personal pleasure or convenience.

Aim: To effectively deal with a child's rebellious actions and attitudes as soon as they manifest themselves in any of the four Ds:

- Disobedience,
- Dishonesty,
- Disrespect or
- Destructiveness.

Objectives: To correct a child's rebellious behaviour or attitude from being self-centred; to train the child to do what is right; to discipline the child to show respect for property and legitimate authority.

Methodology: Smacking, spanking, discipline, corporal chastisement or corporal correction is the controlled, measured, purposeful and judicial use of reasonable force. It is done in the wider context of active, authoritative parental involvement plus loving and consistent verbal affirmation, admonition and training.

Outcomes: An ordered, disciplined and peaceful life based on family love; dealing head-on with issues of rebellion as soon as they arise; a restoration of relationships ruptured by rebellious actions and attitudes; a progressive reduction in both the manifestations of rebellion and the need for smacking.

Abuse/Violence

Motivation: Anger, frustration, vengeance or other unresolved issues in the abuser. The abuser is often personally undisciplined and may also be affected by drugs and/or alcohol.

Aim: To vent one's anger and frustration at the child's normal expressions of immaturity (accidents, indiscretions, errors of judgment, irritating hyperactivity or being boisterous and silly), as well as the child's rebellious actions and attitudes.

Objectives: These include vengeance, getting one's own back, punishing, saving face and/or humiliating the child. The child abuser often has no objectives, but just reacts.

Methodology: This is a wild card. It is typically explosive, angry, vindictive or uncontrolled belting, hitting, kicking, beating, etc., dished out arbitrarily with excessive duration and /or force, combined with verbal abuse, any time, any place.

Outcomes: The perpetrator of violence and abuse may assert his control over the child's immediate behaviour, but such irrational violence only breeds more violence and does harm to the parent/child relationship.