



Ch. 10 "What You Can Do to Help"

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Dr. Johnson

Topic Establishment

- I. [It looks so simply...why is it so hard?](#)

Lecture Information

- I. **Cultural Violence**

Before we examine the information in the text, let's examine the literature re. the factors that place a child at risk for maltreatment.

Factors for Neglect: (DePanfilis, 2006)

Environmental Factors

...Poverty

...Community access to health care, social services, and affordable child care

...Acceptance of violence and neglect in the community

Social Support Factors

- ...Social isolation
- ...Lack of positive emotional support
- ...Distrust of available social support systems

Family Factors

- ...Marital problems
- ...Domestic violence
- ...Single parenthood
- ...Unemployment
- ...Financial stress
- ...Difficulty in interacting and communicating in a positive manner, e.g., more chaotic, few positive statements, less empathy and openness.
- ...Substance abuse
- ...Poor problem solving skills
- ...Lack of knowledge re. child development
- ...Engaging in criminal behavior

What are the factors that place a child at risk for abuse? (Goldman, Salus, Wolcott, & Kennedy (2003)

Caregiver Factors:

Personality Characteristics: Individuals with:

- ...low-self esteem
- ...external locus of control
- ...poor impulse control
- ...depression
- ...anxiety
- ...antisocial behavior
- ...severe mental disorders

History of Maltreatment: Individuals who:

- ...had poor parental role models
- ...did not have their needs met as a child
- ...experienced maltreatment as a child

Substance Abuse: Individuals who:

- ...use alcohol and drugs that impair their mental functioning,
- ...judgment, inhibitions, protective capacity
- ...spend money on alcohol and drugs vs. household expenses
- ...are involved in criminal activities that jeopardize children's health or safety.
- ...use of alcohol and drugs during pregnancy

Attitudes & Knowledge: Individuals who:

- ...have inaccurate knowledge re. child development
- ...have unrealistic and unmet expectations for child behavior
- ...use of inappropriate punishment
- ...lack of knowledge re. appropriate child behavior management strategies

Age: Individuals who:

- ...are so young as to lack social, economic, and maturity needed to understand and effectively take care of their children

Family Factors: Families in which:

- ...there is consistent marital conflict
- ...there is domestic violence
- ...a single parent must meet all of the family needs
- ...unemployment has caused financial stress
- ...social isolation is the norm
- ...there are frequent changes in the member adults and children

Child Factors that increase their vulnerability

Age

...The younger the child (i.e., birth to three yrs.), the more dependent they are upon caregivers and the greater their social isolation, thus the increased risk for maltreatment, e.g., neglect and physical abuse

...The older the child,...the more likely they are to experience sexual and emotional abuse.

Disability: Children who:

- ...have chronic illness, physical, cognitive, emotional and/or behavioral disabilities that overwhelm their parents
- ...do not understand what constitutes maltreatment
- ...have limited communication skills to tell others that they have been abused
- ...are physically dependent upon others to meet their essential needs
- ...are considered to be unresponsive, or over responsive, to affection
- ...are separated from their caregivers for extensive periods of time
- ...interact with a significant number of adults in a variety of contexts
- ...do not understand their own sexuality
- ...do not know how to recognize or protect themselves in a “risky situation”
- ...are socially isolated
- ...are not recognized to be at higher risk for maltreatment
- ...display physical marks and/or patterns of behavior that are difficult to attribute to abuse vs. their disability
- ...would be difficult and time consuming to investigate due a lack of professional training, inconsistent definitions, and limited/different patterns of communication
- ...would prove to be a unconvincing witness in a court of law
- ...would be difficult to place in a foster home
- ...are not a “valued” member of a community

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The Media and Violence

This topic, while often cited in the popular press, has not yet been empirically established as a cause for child neglect, or abuse.

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Cultural Accepted Violence Within the Family

There is clear evidence that many parents would benefit from learning and using child management strategies that did not include violence. There is NOT cultural agreement concerning parents rights to use a "range" of physical disciplinary strategies, e.g., a "swat on the rear." There IS cultural agreement that parents should not intentional harm or endanger the health and well being of their children. The

difficulty comes in trying to define what is and is not acceptable.

There is agreement that parents and children should not use violence to resolve problems.

This is also a growing consensus that parent education, home visitation, respite care, health care, and the provision of basic family needs for housing, food, clothes, etc. do serve to prevent child maltreatment.

The question becomes, how can such a complex problem as child maltreatment be effectively addressed?

References:

DePanfilis, D. (2006). Child neglect: A guide for prevention, assessment, and intervention. Retrieved on February 8, 2008 from:
<http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/neglect/index.cfm>

Goldman, J., Wolcott, D., & Kennedy, K.Y. (2003). A coordinated response to child abuse and neglect: The foundation for practice. Retrieved from:
<http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/foundation/index.cfm>

A. Public Policy

What is the "state" of public policies concerning the prevention of child abuse?

[Richard Krugman, MD](#)

["Some Random ... and Not-So-Random Thoughts on the Children's Bureau and Battered Child Syndrome Anniversaries: What Can We Learn?"](#)

[18th National Conference on Child Abuse & Neglect](#)

4/2012

Washington DC

"Dr. Richard Krugman reviewed some of the highlights as well as low points in the Children's

Bureau's 100-year history. He focused particularly on efforts to address child maltreatment in his self-described "highly opinionated" presentation."

Lessons Learned from the presentation concerning existing policy...

...the system is badly broken

...the system is not likely to be able to fix itself

...the focus upon reporting and investigating misses the critical need for prevention, in particularly in relation to sexually abused boys

...existing, data based program that work are in place, simply not enough

...the probability that the Federal government will address, fund, or fix the problems is very low

...need to community funded and based programs that work to inform, support, and when necessary intervene to both support families and protect children

The need for effective policies and programs is not unique to the United States. The text refers to the [Convention on the Rights of the Child treaty](#). A treaty the treaty took effect in 1990, **the U.S. Congress has yet to be a signature.**

[\[Brief video concerning the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child\]](#)

Key components of the UN document:

The Convention establishes in international law that States Parties must ensure that all children—without discrimination in any form—benefit from:

1. special protection measures and assistance;
2. have access to services such as education and health care;
3. can develop their personalities, abilities and talents to the fullest potential;
4. grow up in an environment of happiness, love and understanding; and
5. are informed about and participate in, achieving their rights in an accessible and active manner.

Unfortunately, most countries in the world do not collect data re. the incidence of child maltreatment.

The lack of effective policies, or likely Federal action, serves to further complicate the question of how can child maltreatment be prevented?

II. Prevention Strategies

Committing to Primary Prevention

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"...it is far easier for some to get action from the system by reporting a neighbor for child abuse than by requesting help to prevent abuse in his or her own home."

= The "system" is designed to respond to vs. avoid a problem.

Imagine the situation in relation to car safety, e.g., we only require a seat belt to be put into and used AFTER an accident has occurred and an individual has been injured.

"Fundamentally, a system that seldom results in delivery of services other than investigation - if indeed that can be described as a service - cannot be expected to improve victims' well-being."

Note: as inadequate as the system is, it is even worse if the maltreated individual has a disability.

Prevention Ideas Presented within the Text:

Become...

1. a volunteer for a local agency, or organization that works to prevent child abuse.
2. a [court-appointed special advocate](#) (CASA) to represent the interests of the child within court.
3. a [foster parent](#)

4. an adopting parent

These strategies while significant, will be difficult for most individuals to accomplish.

A. Personal Commitment

I will use this final section of the final chapter of the text to share with you a few simply, yet powerful strategies that you can use to help prevent child maltreatment. The strategies are based on my own efforts to prevent child maltreatment as experienced by children with disabilities.

First, a conceptual road map

The text does not provide individuals with many realistic strategies to prevent child maltreatment.

I will use this final section of the final chapter to accomplish this goal.

First, my conceptual model...[Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard](#) by Heath & Heath

Steps to success:

1. Grab the EMOTION! ([Elephant](#))
2. Convey essential knowledge ([Rider](#))
3. Present a very short and very doable "to do list" ([Path](#))
4. Recognize, Understand, Share & Build on Who is doing it RIGHT! ("[Bright Spots](#)")

Second, my suggestion re. how YOU implement this model to prevent child maltreatment.

1. [Elephant](#): Ask a peer, a parent, a teacher, etc. to watch the [11th Commandment by Collin Ray](#) with you.

2. [Rider](#): Share with the individual just [a few basic facts re. child maltreatment](#).

3. [Path](#): Ask the individual to: a) share the 11th Commandment video and facts with one other individual; and b) call [1-800-4-A-CHILD](#) if they are ever concerned with the well being and safety of a child

4. Bright Spots: Search for individuals within your community who are known and valued locally for their effectiveness in addressing the issue of child maltreatment. Meet the individual, thank them, learn more about their work, share the name and work with your peers, parents, teachers, etc. Some my Bright Spots are...

Every conversation that we have, every piece of information we share, each time we call 1-800-4-A-CHILD, and every Bright Spot we find, thank and share, we make it just a bit safer for a child.

Third, for those of you who would like to know more, to do more, to help protect more children, I would suggest the following:

A. Go to Kidpower Teenpower Fullpower International Web site to see how you can get involved to prevent child maltreatment by empowering children to have the knowledge and skills required to be both confident and safe. I would also encourage you to read and share the "The kidpower book for caring adults: Personal safety, self-protection, confidence, and advocacy for young people." Irene van der Zande is Kidpower's CoFounder & Executive Director.

b. Share information concerning the "Six Protective Factors" to prevent child maltreatment with individuals who are interested in the topic of child maltreatment. These factors represent our best understanding of how to effectively support families and their children. The factors can and should be incorporated into early intervention and early childhood programs for ALL children.

c. Share information concerning the new Childhelp "Speak Up Be Safe" curriculum with educators who are interested in preventing child maltreatment. This curriculum "...offers a 21st century approach to the prevention of abuse by utilizing web-based tools, curriculum on Internet safety skills and cyber-bullying and a redirected focus on adult responsibility and skill building in keeping our children safe."

d. Join the "O.U.R. Children Project" coalition of parents and professionals who are collaborating to raise awareness, share resources, and find "Bright Spots" to prevent, recognize, report, and respond to maltreatment experienced by children with disabilities.

Each of us can make a difference...if we try.

Required Work

- I. Final Project Paper due 8 a.m. EST on 8/13**