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Ch. 8 "Key Issues in Responding to Child Maltreatment"

Topic Establishment

The job of a Child Protection Service Worker



Dr. Johnson

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[Team Report #2 due 8 a.m. EST on 8/1.](#)

Ch. 8 "Key Issues in Responding to Child Maltreatment"

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Topic Establishment

I. The job of a Child Protection Service Worker

[A brief animated representation of the work of a child protection service worker](#)

If only the job and the results were this simple and straight forward....

Lecture Information...

As we go through this information today, please keep in mind a number of facts. Children experiencing physical abuse may not know a) what they are experiencing is abuse, or b) what they did to cause the adult to hurt them.

In fact, many children who experience abuse may think that in some way it is their fault, that they did something wrong, that they need to work harder to please the adult s they do not get angry.

The law is clear on one point, i.e., children are the victims, not the cause of the abuse.

I. Child Protective Services

New Hampshire Dept. of Health & Human Services: [Child Protective Service Worker Realistic Job Preview: Introduction to the Job of a CPS worker](#)

Text based info:

p. 264

Four main responsibilities of CPS:

1. investigate reports of suspected maltreatment
2. provide treatment services
3. coordinate the services offered by other agencies
4. implement preventive services

CPS is frequently criticised for the lack of provision of adequate services and the need for reform, e.g., [situation in AZ](#)

p. 265

25-50% of the reports of suspected cases of child maltreatment to CPS are investigated.

Information from the Child Welfare Information Gateway: [Child Maltreatment 2010 Report, Chapter 2: Reports](#), outlines the "two-stage" process used by CPS to deal with reports of suspected child maltreatment:

Stage 1: Screening (p. 17)

"A referral may be either screened in or screened out. The reasons behind the determination to screen out a referral may include one or more of the following:

allegation did not meet the State's intake standard

- ...allegation did not concern child abuse and neglect
- ...allegation did not contain enough information to enable a CPS response to occur
- ...response by another service agency was deemed more appropriate
- ...children in the referral were the responsibility of another agency or jurisdiction (e.g., military installation or tribe)
- ...alleged victim was older than 18 years

New Hampshire Dept. of Health & Human Services: [Child Protective Service Worker Realistic Job](#)

[Preview: Intake, or Assessment component of the work](#)

A national average rate of 43.8 referrals per 1,000 children was computed based on these data. When applied to the national population of all 52 States, CPS agencies received an estimated 3.3 million referrals during FFY 2010. These referrals were estimated to include 5.9 million children."

Stage 2: CPS Response (p. 18) "Screened-in Referrals"

"The primary purpose of this investigation is twofold: (1) to determine whether the child was maltreated or is at-risk of being maltreated and (2) to determine the child welfare agency's appropriate services response.

Agencies make determinations about the alleged maltreatment, commonly using such terms as substantiated (or founded) or unsubstantiated (unfounded), as described below:

...**Substantiated:** • An investigation disposition that concludes that the allegation of maltreatment or risk of maltreatment was supported or founded by State law or policy.

...**Unsubstantiated:** • An investigation disposition that determines that there was not sufficient evidence under State law to conclude or suspect that the child was maltreated or at-risk of being maltreated."

New Hampshire Dept. of Health & Human Services: [Child Protective Service Worker Realistic Job Preview: Investigative, or Family Service component of the work](#)

The reality is that the investigative process may yield conflicting, or inclusive results, as was the [case in this situation about a two year old boy...](#)

p. 265-267

The difficulties of CPS in meeting its legislated mandates to investigate, provide treatment, coordinate services, and implement preventive services are tied to a number of factors, i.e.,

1. mandatory reporting laws have overwhelmed the system with reports of suspected instances to maltreatment

2. poor pay, heavy and very difficult case loads for CPS workers result in a high rate of turnover
3. insufficient initial and ongoing professional development opt for CPS works (Note: this is especially true in relation to children with disabilities)
4. negative public perspective of many CPS workers and outrage when the system fails to protect a child
5. the lack of services needed to support families and/or protect children, e.g., in-home family education programs, counseling services, and appropriate foster home placement options

Out-of-Home Care

p. 267

Includes placing children in foster homes (48%), with relatives (26%), in residential/group homes (15%), and other types of placements (12%). The more vulnerable the child, e.g., age, presence of a disability, previous experience of maltreatment, the more likely they were to be placed in a "out-of-home" setting.

Most (51%) of children placed in 'out-of-home' settings were reunited with their families, with a few (8%) placed with other relatives, and a significant number (21%) adopted.

On the average, children spent just a little less than two years in 'out-of-home' settings.

[What are the stories of these children?](#)

Legislation Affecting Child Welfare

p. 271

Child Welfare Information Gateway: [Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997](#)

[P.L. 105-89](#) - Key elements:

- a. Reauthorized the Family Preservation and Support Services Program
- b. Ensured safety for abused and neglected children:
- c. Accelerated permanent placement:

- d. Promoted adoptions:
- e. Increased accountability
- f. Clarified "reasonable efforts"
- g. Required shorter time limits for making decisions about permanent placements

The impact of this Act was:

1. made child safety the first concern of CPS, i.e., vs. simply keeping families together
2. insured foster care was as brief as possible, i.e., recognized need to place children in permanent homes ASAP
3. mandated aggressive, long term planning, i.e., provide needed services ASAP
4. mandated accountability, i.e., holding CPS responsible for the adequacy of services provided
5. provided flexibility, i.e., gave CPS the option to try new approaches to address old problems.

A. Legal Systems Response

Once a CPS worker has investigated a report of a suspected case of child maltreatment and found the report to be "substantiated," then "legal system" protocols begin to "click in."

In the majority of instances within the U.S., that protocol will begin with the child being brought to a "[Child Advocacy Center](#)".

The purpose of such centers is to provide a child friendly setting in which all of the necessary information can be gathered concerning the reported abuse. A great deal of this information is gathered via a "[forensic interview](#)."

Such interviews provide the best possible context for gathering evidence. Unfortunately few forensic interviewers have skills in interviewing children with disabilities. This lack of skills serves to increase both the risk for abuse and reduce the likelihood that perpetrators will be prosecuted for their crime, i.e., the children are safer "targets" for maltreatment.

Children in the Legal System

p. 274-276

What would it look like for a child to testify in a court re. the maltreatment they experienced.

[Here is a story that will capture what it "should" look like.](#)

During the course of the past decade, a number of improvements have been made to the court system. Improvements that are designed to enhance both the experience for the child and the effectiveness of the legal system. These improvements include:

- a. changing the direction of the witness chair so that the child does not have to look at the defendant
- b. substituting video recorded vs. in courtroom testimony
- c. allowing children to give testimony in the judges chambers, testimony that is viewed live in the court room

An example of [what a court room DOES look likes with such updates is as follows...](#)

Prosecuting Individuals who Abuse Children

p. 276-277

[Child Maltreatment 2010 Report: Chapter 5: Perpetrators](#)

Who are the individuals who neglect and abuse children?

Age...

"Four-fifths (84.2%) of unique perpetrators were between the ages of 20 and 49 years.

More than two-fifths (45.2%) of perpetrators were men and more than one-half (53.6%) were women; 1.2 percent were of unknown." (p. 75)

Relationship to child..

"Four-fifths (81.2%) of duplicate perpetrators were parents,

6.1 percent were relatives other than parents, and

4.4 percent were unmarried partners of parents.

Perpetrators with an "other" relationship accounted for 3.8 percent and

those with an unknown relationship to their victim accounted for 2.8 percent."

Type of Maltreatment...

Three-fifths (61.3%) of duplicate perpetrators neglected children; 1

0 percent (9.8%) of duplicate perpetrators physically abused children, and

6.2 percent sexually abused children.

Another 15 percent (14.7%) were associated with more than one type of maltreatment." (p. 77)

How did the legal system deal with these individuals?

42% of substantiated cases of sexual abuse were sent for prosecution.

The younger the child, the more likely the perpetrator would be sent for prosecution.

Most cases (66%) were resolved via "plea bargaining" for a reduced sentence.

80% of convicted child molesters were sentenced to probation, usually with a treatment requirement.

"Child abuse is one of the most difficult crimes to detect and prosecute because often there are no witnesses except the victim."

Approximately 10% of child maltreatment cases that proceed to trial...about the same rate as for other crimes.

[**Note:** if the child is very young, or has a significant disability, they are even LESS likely to understand the maltreatment they are experiencing, to know how and who to tell, to be understood/believed, for the case to be accepted for prosecuting, and for support services to be available.]

Issue society, CPS and the legal system constantly battle with is if the emphasis should be upon punishing or treating the offenders

II. Cultural Impact

Cultural & International Issues in Child Maltreatment

p. 277-280

Child maltreatment is a global issue.

The United Nations has recognized the need to address this maltreatment via 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 fro:

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.

[Child Maltreatment 2010 Report: Chapter 5: Perpetrators](#)

Who are the individuals who neglect and abuse children?

Ethnicity...

"During FFY 2010, one-fifth (20.0%) of perpetrators were African-American, one-fifth (19.0%) of perpetrators were Hispanic, and one-half (49.2%) were White." (p. 76)

Cultural Differences & Child Maltreatment

p. 278-279

Most of the existing research concerning child maltreatment has been focused in the developed countries. That research indicates a relative consensus concerning what constitutes acceptable "household cleanliness, appropriate medical and dental care for children, and adequate child supervision vary little across sociodemographic variables." = **there is a LOT of agreement concerning what "OK" for kids looks like regardless of the setting (e.g., rural, suburban, or urban) or culture.**

There MAY be "disproportionality" in relation to the relative scrutiny for some, vs. other families, i.e., families in some settings may be more closely observed and/or more likely to be investigated than other families, e.g., lower vs. higher socioeconomic families

A. Secondary Impacts of Child Abuse

Collateral Effects of Child Maltreatment

p. 280-286

What impact does child maltreatment have upon the CPS individuals and others who investigate and work to assist children that have been maltreated?

There is an emotional toll paid by individuals who work in the area of child maltreatment. The amount of that toll depends upon a number of factors..., e.g., individual's background, coping

mechanism, experiences with parents, and professional development opportunities.

Some examples of the impact upon professionals include:

- a. can not stop thinking about abused children
- b. exp. recurrent dreams concerning abused children
- c. exp. "flashbacks" to trauma they have experienced
- d. exp. negative health ramifications, e.g., sleep and eating disorders, depressions, etc.
- e. exp. a diminished sense of own safety, security and trust and belief in others
- f. demonstrate an over/under involvement in work
- g. exp. isolation. withdrawal and emotional exhaustion.

[Child Protective Service Worker Realistic Job Preview: Summary, or what it takes to be a CPS worker](#)

"Mothers of sexual abused victims were viewed as un-protective, collusive, inadequate, or conspiratorial due to their own psychopathology."

An example of a family where two daughters were sexually abused, first by one brother, then by a second brother, then by the brothers and the father...[the mother's story](#)

Required Activities

- I. [**Team Report #2 due 8 a.m. EST on 8/1.**](#)