



Helping Traumatized Children

A Brief Overview for Caregivers



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This booklet is one in a series developed by the ChildTrauma Academy to assist parents, caregivers, teachers and various professionals working with maltreated and traumatized children.

CAREGIVER EDUCATION SERIES

Edited by B. D. Perry

Adapted in part from: "*Maltreated Children: Experience, Brain Development and the Next Generation*" (W.W. Norton & Company, New York, in preparation)

INTRODUCTION

Each year in the United States approximately five million children experience some form of traumatic experience. More than two million of these are victims of physical or sexual abuse. Millions more are living in the terrorizing atmosphere of domestic violence. Natural disasters, car accidents, life-threatening medical conditions, painful procedures, exposure to community violence - all can have traumatic impact on the child. By the time a child reaches the age of eighteen, the probability that any child will have been touched directly by interpersonal or community violence is approximately one in four. Traumatic experiences can have a devastating impact on the child, altering their physical, emotional, cognitive and social development. In turn, the impact on the child has profound implications for their family, community and, ultimately, us all.

Traumatic events in childhood increase risk for a host of social (e.g., teenage pregnancy, adolescent drug abuse, school failure, victimization, anti-social behavior), neuropsychiatric (e.g., post-traumatic stress disorder, dissociative disorders, conduct disorders) and physical health problems (e.g., heart disease, asthma). The deterioration of public education, urban violence and the alarming social disintegration seen in some of our communities can be linked to the escalating cycles of abuse and neglect of our children.

For most children, thankfully, a traumatic event is a new experience. And like all new experiences, the unknown will add to the confusing and frightening circumstances surrounding this overwhelming experience. The trauma may significantly challenge the child's sense of the world. A flood, tornado, car accident, shooting or abuse by a caregiver - all challenge the child's beliefs about the stability and safety of their world. Very young children may not understand what happened and will be confused or even frightened by the reactions of their siblings or caregivers.

The acute post-traumatic period is characterized by an attempt by the child to reorganize, reevaluate and restore their pre-traumatic world. Many of the emotional, behavioral and cognitive signs and symptoms of the acute post-traumatic period are due to these efforts. Unfortunately, children often do not have the same capacity to understand or explaining most traumatic experiences. Young children may make many false assumptions about the event - "the tornado came because God was mad."

As with most situations, children seek answers and comfort from adults around them, yet we often feel helpless in this role. Indeed, most traumatic experiences challenge the most mature and experienced adult. While adults do not have all the answers, they can help children better understand the traumatic event and the ways we respond following trauma.

This booklet addresses some of the key issues related to the child's complex set of reactions that often follow traumatic events. While focused on caregivers, this information may be helpful to caseworkers, teachers, other family and other adults working and living with traumatized children.

This simple guide is intended to inform and provide general principles -- it is not intended to be comprehensive or to exclude other observations or approaches to helping traumatized children. The more we understand these children and the impact of traumatic experiences, the more compassionate and wise we can be as we try to help these children.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Should I talk about the traumatic event?

Do not be afraid to talk about the traumatic event. Children do not benefit from 'not thinking about it' or 'putting it out of their minds.' If a child senses that her caregivers are upset about the event, she will not bring it up. In the long run, this only makes the child's recovery more difficult. A good rule of thumb is to let the child guide when you talk about it. If the child doesn't ask about or mention it, don't bring it up on your own, but when the child brings it up or seems to be thinking about it (see below), don't avoid discussion.

Listen to the child, answer questions, and provide comfort and support. We often have no adequate explanations about senseless death or traumatic events. It is just fine to tell children that you do not know why something happened or that you get confused and upset by it, too. In the end, listening and comforting a child without avoiding or over-reacting will have long-lasting positive effects on the child's ability to cope with trauma.

2. How should I talk about the event?

Use age-appropriate language and explanations. The timing and language used are important. Immediately following the trauma, the child will not be very capable of processing complex or abstract information (see Table). As the child gets further away from the event, she will be able to focus longer, digest more and make more sense of what has happened. Sometimes young children act as if they have not 'heard' anything you have said. It takes many individual many moments of sad clarity or the reality of the trauma to actually sink in for young children. Between these moments of harsh reality, children use a variety of coping techniques - some of which can be confusing or upsetting for adults.

During this long process, the child continues to 're-experience' the traumatic event. In play, drawing and words, the child may repeat, re-enact and re-live some elements of the traumatic loss. Surviving adults will hear children ask the same questions again and again. They may be asked to describe 'what happened' again and again. The child may develop profound 'empathic' concerns for others experiencing trauma, including cartoon characters and animals. "Is Mickey Mouse scared?" Or as they put their stuffed animals under the bed, they may explain "They have to go hide because the bad guy is coming with a gun."

The child will experience and process the very same material differently at different times following the trauma. In the long run, the opportunity to process and re-process many times will facilitate healthy coping. This re-processing may take place throughout the development of a given child. Even years after the original trauma, a child may 'revisit' the loss and struggle to understand it from their current developmental perspective. An intensity of emotional feelings will often be seen on various anniversary dates following the trauma (e.g., one week, one month and one year). Children may develop unusual fears of specific days - "Bad things happen on Fridays."

One of the most important elements in this process is that children of different ages have different styles of adapting and different abilities to understand abstract concepts often associated with trauma such as death, hate or the randomness of a tornado's path or a drunk driver hitting *their* car.

3. Should I talk to others about the traumatic event?

Yes. Inform adults and children in the child's world what has happened. Let teachers, counselors, parents of the child's friends and, if appropriate, the child's peers know some of the pain that this child is living with. Sometimes this can allow the people in the child's life to give them the small amount of tolerance, understanding or nurturing that will smooth the way. People can often be intolerant or insensitive when dealing with the traumatized child "*Isn't it about time they got over this?*" When you see that this is occurring don't be shy about taking this person aside and educating them about the long-lasting effects of traumatic events and the long process of recovery.

4. How long do these reactions last?

An acute post-traumatic change in feeling, thinking and behaving is normal - persistence or extreme symptoms are not. Many clinicians working with traumatized have noted that the persistence of symptoms beyond three months is associated with increased risk for problems. If symptoms of re-experiencing, avoidance, fearfulness, sleep problems, nightmares, sadness or poor school or social functioning persist beyond three months, they need to be addressed. If they persist for six months or if the symptoms interfere with any aspect of functioning, you should have the child see a professional. If the child is in therapy, communicate this with the therapist. Find out if school performance has been affected. Watch for changes in patterns of play and loss of interest in activities. Be observant. Be patient. Be tolerant. Be sympathetic. These children have been terrified and hurt.

In many cases, some form of post-traumatic symptom can last for many years. Indeed, more than thirty percent of children living through traumatic stress develop some form of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This is a chronic disorder requiring the attention of mental health professionals.

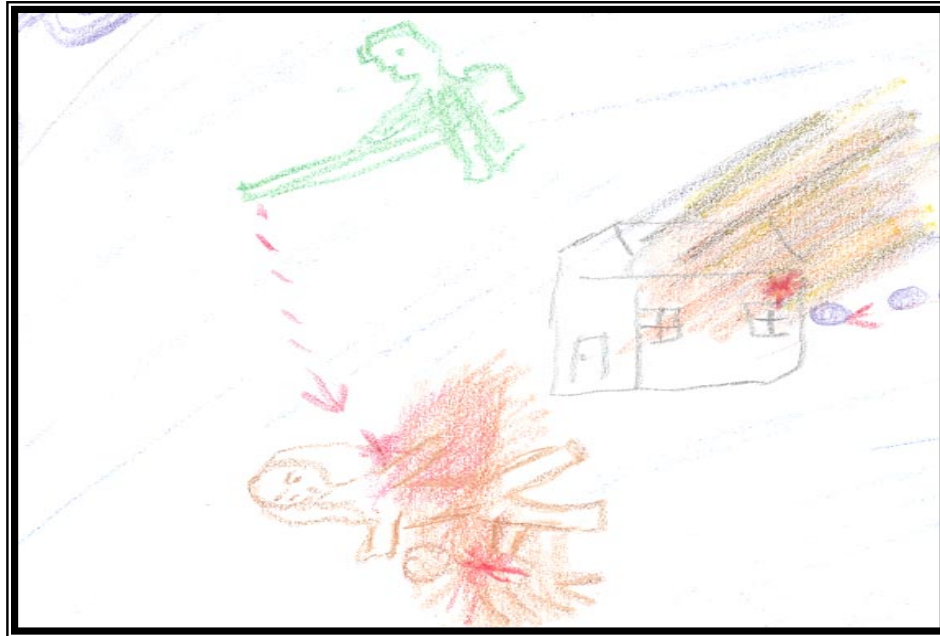
5. Do children understand events accurately?

Young children often make false assumptions about the causes of major events. Unfortunately these assumptions may include some sense that they were at fault for the event -- including the death of a loved one. Adults often assume that causality is clear -- dying in a car accident, being shot in a drive-by shooting, dying in a fire. The child may very easily distort an event and make the wrong conclusions about causality. *Mom died in the car accident because she was coming to get me at school. The other driver was mad at her. My brother is dead because he was helping me with my homework. The person that shot my brother was shooting at me and hit my brother because he was in my room. The tornado was God's way of punishing my family.* In many of these distorted explanations, children assume some degree of responsibility for the traumatic event. This can lead to very destructive and inappropriate feelings of guilt.

Be clear. Explore the child's evolving sense of causality. Correct and clarify as you see false reasoning develop. Over time, the ability of the child to cope is related to the ability of the child to understand. While some elements of trauma seem beyond understanding, this can be explained to a child -- some things we don't know. Don't let the child develop a sense that there is a secret about the event -- this can be very destructive. Let the child know that adults can not and will not understand some things either.

6. Do all children have problems after traumatic events?

The majority of children experiencing trauma will have some change in their behaviors and their emotional functioning. In addition to the symptoms listed above, these children will often be more irritable, tired and regressed. Fortunately, however, for the majority of these children these symptoms are short-lived. Some children may exhibit no easily observable changes in their thinking, feeling or behaving. In general, the more threatened a child felt, the closer they were to injury or death, the more the event disrupted or traumatized their family or community, the more likely there will be symptoms. In some cases, children's symptoms do not show up for many weeks or even months after the traumatic event, confusing many caregivers. Indeed, in these cases, caregivers or teachers may not even make a connection between the symptoms and the traumatic event.



HOW CAN I HELP ?

1. **Don't be afraid to talk about the traumatic event.** Children do not benefit from 'not thinking about it' or 'putting it out of their minds'. If a child senses that his/her caretakers are upset about the event, they will not bring it up. In the long run, this only makes the child's recovery more difficult. Don't bring it up on your own, but when the child brings it up, don't avoid discussion, listen to the child, answer questions, and provide comfort and support. We often have no good verbal explanations, but listening and not avoiding or over-reacting to the subject and then comforting the child will have a critical and long-lasting positive effect.

2. **Provide a consistent, predictable pattern for the day.** Make sure the child has a structure to the day and knows the pattern. Try to have consistent times for meals, school, homework, quiet time, playtime, dinner and chores. When the day includes new or different activities, tell the child beforehand and explain why this day's pattern is different. Don't underestimate how important it is for children to know that their caretakers are 'in control.' It is frightening for traumatized children (who are sensitive to control) to sense that the people caring for them are, themselves, disorganized, confused and anxious. There is no expectation of perfection; caretakers themselves have often been affected by the trauma and may be overwhelmed, irritable or anxious. If you find yourself being this way, simply help the child understand why, and that these reactions are normal and will pass.

3. **Be nurturing, comforting and affectionate, but be sure that this is in an appropriate 'context.'** For children traumatized by physical or sexual abuse, intimacy is often associated with confusion, pain, fear and abandonment. Providing a hug, a kiss and other physical comfort to a young child can be very reassuring. A good working principle for this is to be physically affectionate when the child seeks it. When the child walks over and touches you, return in kind. The child will want to be held or rocked - feel free. On the other hand, try not to interrupt the child's play or other free activities by grabbing them and holding them. Further, be aware that many children from chronically distressed settings may have what we call attachment problems. They will have unusual and often inappropriate styles of interacting.

Do not tell or command them to 'give me a kiss' or 'give me a hug.' Abused children often take commands very seriously. It reinforces a very malignant association linking intimacy/physical comfort with power (which is inherent in a caregiving adult's command to 'hug me').

4. **Discuss your expectations for behavior and your style of 'discipline' with the child.** Make sure that there are clear 'rules' and consequences for breaking the rules. Make sure that both you and the child understand beforehand the specific consequences for compliant and non-compliant behaviors. Be consistent when applying consequences. Use flexibility in consequences to illustrate reason and understanding. Utilize positive reinforcement and rewards. Avoid physical discipline.

5. **Talk with the child.** Give them age appropriate information. The more the child knows about who, what, where, why and how the adult world works, the easier it is to 'make sense' of it. Unpredictability and the unknown are two things which will make a traumatized child more anxious, fearful, and therefore, more symptomatic. They may be more hyperactive, impulsive, anxious, and aggressive and have more sleep and mood problems. Without factual information, children (and adults) 'speculate' and fill in the empty spaces to make a complete story or explanation. In most cases, the child's fears and fantasies are much more frightening and disturbing than the truth. Tell the child the truth, even when it is emotionally difficult. If you don't know the answer yourself, tell the child. Honesty and openness will help the child develop trust.

6. **Watch closely for signs of re-enactment (e.g., in play, drawing, behaviors), avoidance (e.g., being withdrawn, daydreaming, avoiding other children) and physiological hyper-reactivity (e.g., anxiety, sleep problems, behavioral impulsivity).** All traumatized children exhibit some combination of these symptoms in the acute post-traumatic period. Many exhibit these symptoms for years after the traumatic event. When you see these symptoms, it is likely that the child has had some reminder of the event, either through thoughts or experiences. Try to comfort

and be tolerant of the child's emotional and behavioral problems. These symptoms will wax and wane - sometimes for no apparent reason. The best thing you can do is to keep some record of the behaviors and emotions you observe (keep a diary) and try to observe patterns in the behavior.

7. Protect the child. Do not hesitate to cut short or stop activities that are upsetting or re-traumatizing for the child. If you observe increased symptoms in a child that occur in a certain situation or following exposure to certain movies, activities and so forth, avoid these activities. Try to restructure or limit activities that cause escalation of symptoms in the traumatized child.

8. Give the child 'choices' and some sense of control. When a child, particularly a traumatized child, feels that they do not have control of a situation, they will predictably get more symptomatic. If a child is given some choice or some element of control in an activity or in an interaction with an adult, they will feel safer, comfortable and will be able to feel, think and act in a more 'mature' fashion. When a child is having difficulty with compliance, frame the 'consequence' as a choice for them - "You have a choice- you can choose to do what I have asked or you can choose....." Again, this simple framing of the interaction with the child gives them some sense of control and can help defuse situations where the child feels out of control and therefore, anxious.

9. If you have questions, ask for help. These brief guidelines can only give you a broad framework for working with a traumatized child. Knowledge is power; the more informed you are, the more you understand the child, the better you can provide them with the support, nurturing and guidance they need. Take advantage of resources in your community. Each community has agencies, organizations and individuals coping with the same issues. They often have the support you may need to help you with

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR TRAUMATIZED INFANTS

1. Can infants recall a traumatic experience later in life? The key word in this question is "recall." Unfortunately, for most, the concept of memory is limited to the storage and recall of cognitive, narrative memory. In this conceptualization, a pre-verbal infant would not be capable of "remembering" and "recalling" any event. Furthermore, we are all familiar with the developmental amnesia that occurs at approximately age three. In this normal developmental phase, there appears to be a reorganization of cognitive and memory functions such that narrative memory for events prior to age three or four are difficult to access later in life. These two points have led to the pervasive, inaccurate and destructive view that infants do not recall

traumatic experience, including sexual abuse. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The human brain has multiple ways to "recall" experience. Indeed, the brain is designed to store and recall information of all sorts - motor, vestibular, emotional, social and cognitive. When you walk, play the piano, feel your heart race in an empty parking lot at night, feel calmed by the touch of a loved one or create a "first impression" after meeting someone for first time, you are using memory. All incoming sensory information creates neuronal patterns of activity that are compared against previously experienced and stored patterns. New patterns can create new memories. Yet the majority of these stored memory templates are based upon experiences that took place in early childhood - the time in life when these patterns of neuronal activity were first experienced and stored. And the majority of our 'memories' are non-cognitive and pre-verbal. It is the experiences of early childhood that create the foundational organization of neural systems that will be used for a lifetime.

This is why, contrary to popular perception, infants and young children are more vulnerable to traumatic stress - including sexual abuse. If the original experiences of the infant with primary caregiving adults involve fear, unpredictability, pain and abnormal genital sensations, neural organization in many key areas will be altered. For example, abnormal associations may be created between genital touch and fear, thereby laying the foundation for future problems in psychosexual development. Depending upon the specific nature of the abuse, the duration, the frequency and the time during development, a host of problems can result. In many ways, the long-term adverse effects of sexual abuse in infancy are the result of memories - physiological state memories, motor-vestibular memories and emotional memories, which in later years can be triggered by a host of cues that are pervasive. Incestuous abuse in infancy is most destructive in this regard. It will result in the association of fear, pain and unpredictability into the very core of future human functioning - the primary relational templates. If these original 'templates' for all future relationships are corrupted by sexual exploitation and abuse, the child will have a lifetime of difficulties with intimacy, trust, touch and bonding - indeed the core elements of healthy development and functioning throughout the lifecycle will be altered.

Furthermore, if the child is maltreated or abused during early childhood, they may not have any cognitive "memory" and be completely unaware that the source of their fears, difficulties with intimacy and relationships has its roots in this betrayal in infancy. This can lead to problems with self-esteem and, will make any therapeutic efforts more difficult.

2. Can trauma during infancy arrest cognitive, emotional or behavioral development? The abuse of an infant is often accompanied by extreme disruptions of normal caregiving behaviors and by extreme and prolonged stress responses. Altered

caregiving and a prolonged stress response will alter the development of the infant. The major mediators of emotional, cognitive and social environment and, therefore, learning during infancy are the primary caregivers. Development in all domains can be disrupted if these primary relationships are compromised. As mentioned above, it is almost inevitable that emotional, behavioral and cognitive development will be arrested by early traumatic experience.

3. Are there physiological changes in the brain resulting from a traumatic event?

As mentioned above, the brain is designed to change in response to experience. Indeed, all experience changes the brain. With traumatic experiences, the changes are in those parts of the brain involved in the stress and fear responses. Many studies with adults and, now with children, have demonstrated a host of neurophysiological changes that are related to traumatic stress. While many more well-controlled studies are needed, it is likely that certain brainstem catecholamine systems (e.g., locus coeruleus noradrenergic), limbic areas (e.g., amygdala), neuroendocrine (e.g., hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis) and cortical systems involved in regulating stress and arousal may all be altered in traumatized children.

4. Do infants display problems similar to older children who are traumatized or abused?

The long-term problems that result from maltreatment will vary as a function of several key factors: what is the nature of the abuse, the duration, frequency, intensity, time during development and the presence of attenuating factors such as other caring, attentive caregivers in the child's life. In general, however, with all traumatic experiences, the earlier in life, the less "specific" and more pervasive the resulting problems appear to be. For example, when traumatized as an adult, there is a specific increase in sympathetic nervous system reactivity when exposed to cues associated with the traumatic event. With young children, following traumatic stress, there appears to be a generalized increase in autonomic nervous system reactivity in addition to the cue-specific reactivity. Due to the sequential and functionally interdependent nature of development, traumatic disruption of the organization and functioning of neural systems can result in a cascade of related disrupted development and dysfunction. Examples of this include the motor and language delays in traumatized children under age six. The "causes" of these delays are likely due to the primary, trauma-induced alterations in other domains (e.g., the stress response systems, thereby influencing physiological reactivity, hypervigilance, concentration), which, in turn, impair the young child's willingness to explore, capacity to process new information and ability to focus long enough on new information to learn.

KEY POINTS: *HELPING TRAUMATIZED INFANTS*

- Anything that can decrease the intensity and duration of the acute fear response (alarm or dissociative) will decrease the probability of that the infant or young child will have long term emotional, behavioral, social or cognitive problems. The longer an infant stays in a fear state, the more likely it will be that she will have problems.
- In general, structure, predictability and nurturing are key elements to a successful early intervention with a traumatized infant.
- The primary source of these key elements is the primary caregiver. Therefore, it is critical to help the caregivers understand as much about post-traumatic responses as possible. Further it is crucial to be sensitive to the needs of the caregiver.
- If the primary caregivers are impacted by the same trauma, it is imperative that they get treatment that compliments the work with the child. Indeed, the best intervention for infants and young children is treating the primary caregiving adults. As they become less anxious, fearful and impaired, the more available they are to the infant and toddler.
- Early assessment and intervention can be prophylactic -- helping prevent a prolonged acute neurophysiologic, neuroendocrine and neuropsychological trauma response. If an infant or young child has been in a traumatic event, or if the primary caregiver of young children has been traumatized, early aggressive intervention can be crucial.
- Contrary to popular belief, even infants and very young children experiencing traumatic events can be affected. Indeed, there is increasing evidence to suggest that the younger a child, the more pervasive are the post-traumatic problems. These are a few simple points to keep in mind. The infant's world is defined by his or her caregivers. If the caregivers are pre-occupied, depressed, anxious, exhausted or absent due to post-traumatic symptoms, this will adversely impact the infant and toddler.

About the drawings:

The Weeping Sun: from a drawing by a 12 yo Kosovar girl living in an Albanian refugee camp following displacement in 1999.*

The Firing Squad: from a drawing by an 11 yo Kosovar boy after witnessing the murders of members of his village in 1999.*

Mother and Child: from a drawing of the experiences of a 10 yo Kosovar boy.*

*Drawings from the collection of Dr. Shoaib (A trainee at the ChildTrauma program in 1998) obtained during clinical work at Kosovar refugee camps in Albania in 1999.

THE TRAUMATIZED CHILD and THREAT

<i>Adaptive Response</i>	REST (Adult Male)	VIGILANCE	FREEZE	FLIGHT	FIGHT
<i>Hyperarousal Continuum</i>	REST (Male Child)	VIGILANCE	RESISTANCE <i>Crying</i>	DEFIANCE <i>Tantrums</i>	AGGRESSION
<i>Dissociative Continuum</i>	REST (Female Child)	AVOIDANCE	COMPLIANCE <i>Robotic/detached</i>	DISSOCIATION <i>Fetal Rocking</i>	FAINTING
<i>Regulating Brain Region</i>	NEOCORTEX Cortex	CORTEX Limbic	LIMBIC Midbrain	MIDBRAIN Brainstem	BRAINSTEM Autonomic
<i>Cognition</i>	ABSTRACT	CONCRETE	EMOTIONAL	REACTIVE	REFLEXIVE
AROUSAL Continuum	CALM	AROUSAL	ALARM	FEAR	TERROR

When we are under threat, our minds and bodies will respond in an adaptive fashion, making changes in our state of arousal (mental state), our style of thinking (cognition) and in our body's physiology (e.g., increase heart rate, muscle tone, rate of respiration). To understand how we respond to threat it is important to appreciate that as we move along the arousal continuum - from calm to arousal to alarm, fear and terror - different areas of our brain control and orchestrate our mental and physical functioning. The more threatened we become, the more 'primitive' (or regressed) our style of thinking and behaving becomes. When a traumatized child is in a state of alarm (because they are thinking about the trauma, for example) they will be less capable of concentrating, they will be more anxious and they will pay more attention to 'non-verbal' cues such as tone of voice, body posture and facial expressions. This has important implications for understanding the way the child is processing, learning and reacting in a given situation.

The key to understanding traumatized children is to remember that they will often, at baseline, be in a state of low-level fear -- responding by using either a hyperarousal or a dissociative adaptation -- and that their emotional, behavioral and cognitive functioning will reflect this (often regressed) state. The key points outlined in this booklet help a caregiver provide the structure, predictability and sense of safety that can help keep traumatized children from staying in a state of fear too long. And help them understand how the behaviors of the child can regress (move to the right on the Arousal Continuum).

RESOURCES

There are many other places to learn more about helping traumatized children. A few places to start are listed below.

ORGANIZATIONS

The ChildTrauma Academy

The ChildTrauma Academy, a not-for-profit organization based in Houston, TX, is a unique collaborative of individuals and organizations working to improve the lives of high-risk children through direct service, research and education. These efforts are in partnership with the public and private systems that are mandated to protect, heal and educate children. The work of the Academy has been supported, in part, by grants from Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services, the Children's Justice Act, the Court Improvement Act and through innovative partnerships with academic and corporate partners such as Linkletter Films, Powered, Inc., Scholastic, Inc., and Digital Consulting and Software Services.

The ChildTrauma Academy

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Prevent Child Abuse, America

Prevent Child Abuse (formerly the National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse) is nationally recognized as one of the most innovative leaders in child abuse prevention. It has a nationwide network of chapters and their local affiliates in hundreds of communities. Through our media campaigns, people are finding ways they can help prevent abuse. PCA seeks to equip professionals with the latest, proven prevention approaches through training and technical assistance. To find out more about your local affiliate and the national program activities contact:

Prevent Child Abuse America

200 S. Michigan Avenue, 17th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60604-2404
(800) CHILDREN

Tel: (312) 663-3520

Fax: (312) 939-8962

www.preventchildabuse.org

mailbox@preventchildabuse.org

American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC)

APSAC's mission is to ensure that everyone affected by child maltreatment receives the best possible professional response. This organization has many useful scholarly and clinical materials focused primarily at the professional audience. Caregivers working with abused or maltreated children may find this a useful resource, nonetheless. For more information contact::

APSAC
407 South Dearborn Street Suite 1300
Chicago, IL 60605
www.APSAC.org

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES***David Baldwin's Trauma Information Pages***

Dr. Baldwin has done a remarkable job, collecting, sorting and commenting on this information. If you have access to the Web, start here. You won't be disappointed.

These Trauma Pages focus primarily on emotional trauma and traumatic stress, including PTSD (Post-traumatic Stress Disorder), whether following individual traumatic experience(s) or a large-scale disaster. New information is added to this site about once a month. The purpose of this award winning site is to provide information for clinicians and researchers in the traumatic-stress field. Baldwin's interests include both clinical and research aspects of trauma responses and their resolution. For example:

1. What goes on biologically in the brain during traumatic experience and its resolution?
2. Which psychotherapeutic procedures are most effective for which patients with traumatic symptoms, and why?
3. How can we best measure clinical efficacy and treatment outcome for trauma survivor populations?

Supportive resources supplement the more academic or research information of interest to clinicians, researchers, and students.

David Baldwin's Trauma Information Pages
<http://www.trauma-pages.com>

GLOSSARY

Trauma: A psychologically distressing event that is outside the range of usual human experience, often involving a sense of intense fear, terror and helplessness.

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): A neuropsychiatric disorder that may develop following a traumatic event that includes changes in emotional, behavioral and physiological functioning.

These resources will be periodically updated and posted in a special section of the ChildTrauma Academy web site <http://www.ChildTrauma.org>. Visit this site for updates and for other resource materials about traumatic events and children.

About the Author

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Dr. Perry is the Senior Fellow of the ChildTrauma Academy. Dr. Perry served as the Thomas S. Trammell Research Professor of Child Psychiatry at Baylor College of Medicine and Chief of Psychiatry at Texas Children's Hospital in Houston, Texas from 1992 to 2001. In addition he has served as the Director of Provincial Programs in Children's Mental Health for Alberta, Canada, and is the author of more than 200 scientific articles and chapters. He is the recipient of dozens of awards and honors and is an internationally recognized authority in the area of child maltreatment and the impact of trauma and neglect on the developing brain.

THE CHILDTRAUMA ACADEMY

The ChildTrauma Academy, a not-for-profit organization based in Houston, TX, is a unique collaborative of individuals and organizations working to improve the lives of high-risk children through direct service, research and education. These efforts are in partnership with the public and private systems that are mandated to protect, heal and educate children.

The mission of the ChildTrauma Academy is to foster the creation of innovations in practice, programs and policy related to traumatized and maltreated children. To support this mission, the Academy has two main activities; 1) Program development and consultation and 2) Specialized education and training services.

For more information or to direct donations:

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Web Resources:

ChildTrauma Web site
www.ChildTrauma.org



The ChildTrauma Academy and Linkletter Media Products

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#1-02	The Amazing Human Brain	
#1-03	How the Brain Develops: The Importance of Early Childhood	
#1-04	Neglect: How Poverty of Experience Disrupts Development	
#1-05	The Fear Response: The Impact of Childhood Trauma	
#1-06	Living and Working with Traumatized Children	
#1-07	Violence and Childhood	
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UNDERSTANDING TRAUMATIZED AND MALTREATED CHILDREN: THE CORE CONCEPTS

“**Understanding Traumatized and Maltreated Children**” is a seven-part series featuring *Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph.D.* and hosted by *Art Linkletter*. Comprehensive information is presented by Dr. Perry on the primary problems facing maltreated children and dynamic approaches for effective care giving for professionals and lay people alike.

“One of the purposes of this video series is to try and provide some of the baseline information for frontline providers — like teachers, caseworkers, mental health workers, and professionals — so they can better understand these children and really begin to think about how to intervene in different ways. There is presently a real lack of useful and easy to understand information about this. We recognize that and that is what we’re trying to respond to in this series...*We tend to pay more attention to information that reinforces our beliefs, than to information that challenges our beliefs.*” — *Dr. Perry*

#1 Program CHALLENGING OUR BELIEFS (#1-01) In this introductory program to the series, Dr. Perry and Art Linkletter challenge us to evaluate existing childcare systems, and urge us to consider their effectiveness. Opportunities for change include better communication, corporate workplace involvement, community involvement, and increasing a maltreated child’s opportunities for affiliation to promote healing and hope. “Challenging Our Beliefs” is also an excellent stand alone program for both lay people and professionals.

#2 Program THE AMAZING HUMAN BRAIN (#1-02) Dr. Perry covers the basics of brain anatomy and function. An understanding of the hierarchical make-up of the human brain helps caregivers and professionals to better diagnose children’s problems and formulate effective treatment approaches. Adverse affects caused by neglect, fear, trauma, and violence are presented.

#3 Program HOW THE BRAIN DEVELOPS: THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD (#1-03) Dr. Perry stresses the importance of bonding and attachment as the cornerstones of early childhood optimal brain development. Caregivers and professionals learn the various behaviors and problems of children who missed these early opportunities, and presents examples to help in recognition and appropriate treatment paths.

#4 Program NEGLECT: HOW POVERTY OF EXPERIENCE DISRUPTS DEVELOPMENT (#1-04) Severe neglect and even simple missed care giving opportunities cause various degrees of brain effects and behavior problems in maltreated children. An absence of stimulation and chaotic stimulation are both responsible for promoting an absence of experience that contributes to disruptive childhood development. Dr. Perry presents new and dynamic information on this often ignored subject.

#5 Program THE FEAR RESPONSE: THE IMPACT OF CHILDHOOD TRAUMA (#1-05) Caregivers learn to effectively recognize the behaviors and physical reactions of children in the various stages of “the fear response.” This is particularly helpful for caregivers and professionals in assessment, treatment, and intervention to determine the degree of trauma, and Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome, in children.

#6 Program LIVING AND WORKING WITH TRAUMATIZED CHILDREN (#1-06) Dr. Perry presents in-depth information and effective skills for those who are “on the front lines” of care giving for traumatized and maltreated children. Recording a child’s progress, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and respite care for caregivers all help to promote effective and optimal opportunities for a healing environment.

#7 Program VIOLENCE AND CHILDHOOD (#1-07) Children today are bombarded with violence: violence in the media, gang violence, domestic violence, abuse, and school violence. Dr. Perry presents information concerning how insufficient brain Cortex modulation and primitive Brain Stem impulsivity can lead to acts of violence. Dr. Perry concludes: “*It’s a really unique form of heroism that is most often unrecognized. There are a lot more people than you might expect who are walking around that are very heroic just in being ‘good people’ — considering what they’ve gone through.*”

THE SIX CORE STRENGTHS FOR HEALTHY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

#1 Program DEVELOPING POTENTIAL (#2-01) In this introductory tape, Dr. Perry discusses the core strengths that provide a child with the framework for a life rich in family, friends, and personal growth. Teaching children these core strengths gives them a gift they will use throughout their lifetimes. They will learn to live and prosper together with people of all kinds—each bringing different strengths to create a greater whole.

#2 Program ATTACHMENT (#2-02) The template for future relationships Attachment is the capacity to form and maintain healthy emotional bonds with another person. It is first acquired in infancy, as a child interacts with loving, responsive, and attentive parents and caregivers. This core strength is the cornerstone of all the others. Healthy attachments allow a child to love, to become a good friend, and to have a positive and useful model for future relationships. As a child grows, other consistent and nurturing adults such as teachers, family friends, and relatives will shape his ability to develop attachments. The attached child will be a better friend, student, and classmate—which promotes all forms of learning.

#3 Program SELF-REGULATION (#2-03) The capacity to regulate internally Developing and maintaining the ability to notice and control primary urges such as hunger and sleep—as well as feelings of frustration, anger, and fear—is a lifelong process. Its roots begin with the external regulation provided by parents or significant caregivers, and its healthy growth depends on a child’s experience and the maturation of the brain. Pausing a moment between an impulse and an action is a life tool. Developing this strength helps a child physiologically and emotionally. But it’s a strength that must be learned—we are not born with it.

#4 Program AFFILIATION (#2-04) Joining In The capacity to join others and contribute to a group springs from our ability to form attachments. Affiliation is the glue for healthy human functioning. It allows us to form and maintain relationships with others and to create something stronger, more adaptive, and more creative than the individual. Human beings are biologically designed to live, play, grow, and work in groups. The family is a child’s first and most important group. But most other groups that children join are based on circumstance or common interests. It’s in these groups that children will have thousands of brief emotional, social, and cognitive experiences that can help shape their development.

#5 Program ATTUNEMENT (#2-05) Thinking of Others Awareness is the ability to recognize the needs, interests, strengths, and values of others. Infants begin life self-absorbed and slowly develop awareness - the ability to see beyond themselves and to sense and categorize the other people in their world. An aware child learns about the needs and complexities of others by watching, listening, and forming relationships with a variety of children. He becomes part of a group and sees ways in which we are all alike and different. With experience, a child can learn to reject labels used to categorize people, such as skin color or the language they speak.

#6 Program TOLERANCE (#2-06) Accepting Differences Tolerance is the capacity to understand and accept how others are different from you. This core strength builds upon another - awareness (once aware, what do you do with the differences you observe?). It’s natural and human to be afraid of what’s new and different. To become tolerant, a child must first face the fear of differences. This can be a challenge because children tend to affiliate based on similarities—in age, interests, families, or cultures. But they also learn to reach out and be more sensitive to others by watching how the adults in their lives relate to one another. With positive modeling, caregivers can insure and build on children’s tolerance. The tolerant child is more flexible and adaptive in many ways. Most important, when a child learns to accept difference in others, he becomes able to value the things that make each of us special and unique.

#7 Program RESPECT (#2-07) Respecting yourself and others Appreciating your own self-worth and the value of others grows from the foundation of the preceding five strengths. An aware, tolerant child with good affiliation, attachment, and self-regulation strengths gains respect naturally. The development of respect is a lifelong process, yet its roots are in early childhood. Children will belong to many groups, meet many kinds of people, and will need to be able to listen, negotiate, compromise, and cooperate. Having respect enables a child to accept others and to see the value in diversity. He can see that every group needs many styles and many strengths to succeed and he can value each person in the group for her talents. When children respect—and even celebrate—diversity, they find the world to be a more interesting, complex, and safer place.