

Facts on Childhood Trauma

Almost 3 million cases of child abuse and neglect are reported each year and 1 million are sustained.

- At least 1 in 7 children have experienced child abuse and/or neglect in the past year and this is likely an under estimation. In 2019, 1840 children died of abuse and neglect in United States.
- Each day, more than, 1000 youth are treated in emergency departments for physical assault-related injuries.
- **Trauma** is a risk factor for nearly all behavioral health and substance abuse disorders.
- **There is hope. Children can and do recover for traumatic events, and you can play an important role in their recovery.**

A critical part of children's recovery is having a supportive caregiving system. Access to **effective treatments, and service systems that are trauma informed.**

-SAMSHA Understanding Child Trauma

Child Sexual Abuse Data

- 1 IN 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys is a victim of child sexual abuse
- Over the course of their lifetime 28% of U.S. youth ages 14 to 17 had been sexually victimizes.
- Children are most vulnerable to CSA between the ages of 7 and 13.
- The younger the victim the more likely it is that the abuser is a family member. Of those molesting a child under six, 50% were family members.
- In the vast majority of cases where there is credible evidence that a child has been penetrated, only 5 and 15 % of those children will have genital injuries consistent with sexual abuse. Of children who are victims of sexual abuse know their abusers. Less than 10%
- Child sexual abuse is not solely restricted to physical contact. Nonphysical contact includes abuse such as exposure, voyeurism and child pornography
- About 93% of children who are victims of sexual abuse know their abuser. Less than 10% are abused by strangers.

-National Center for Victims of Crime

-YWCA

A quote from a pedophile during interview with a social worker: "Listen girlie, this is how it works...You get them before they can talk or you make sure they won't talk."

Why Do Children Recant

“Abusers can manipulate victims to stay quiet about the sexual abuse using different tactics. They use their position of power the victim to coerce or intimidate the child. They might tell the child that the activity is normal or that they enjoyed it. An abuser may make threats if the child refuses to participate or plans to tell another adult. Child sexual abuse is not only a physical violation, **it is a violation of trust and/or authority.**”

-National Children’s Advocacy Center

U.S Dept of Health and Human Services

“The #1 reason children recant abuse allegations is their primary, non-offending caregiver (which in vast majority of cases is the mother) **DOES NOT BELIEVE THEM.**”

46% of the children recanted their prior disclosure when mothers merely suggested that they should. They are more likely to recant when they are younger abused by a parent figure and who lacked support from the non-offending caregiver. Nearly a quarter of children who make allegations of abuse will ‘take back’ or ‘change their story’ if their moms don’t believe them or suggest they are some way in the wrong or at fault for the abuse.

Studies show that most children who recant are telling the truth when they originally disclose. Recantation is largely a result of familial influences rather than a result of false allegations. Children are more likely to recant when they are younger, abused by a parent figure and who lacked support from the non-offending caregiver.”

-American Society for the Positive Care of Children

In the world of forensic interviewing there is a well-known fact; Disclosure is a process, not a one-time event.

A study by USC suggests that sexually abused children are highly vulnerable to various pressures to deny their abuse. Particularly when those pressures come from people close to them. The researchers did not find any evidence to support the belief that retraction is a sign that the original allegations were false.

-USC News

Treatment of Childhood Trauma

Diagnosis

Identifying abuse or neglect can be difficult. It requires careful evaluation of the situation including checking for physical and behavioral signs.

Factors that may be included in determining child abuse include:

- *Physical exam*
- *Lab tests, x-rays or other tests*
- *Information about the child's medical and developmental history*
- *Description or observation of the child's behavior*
- *Observing interactions between parents or caregiver and the child*
- *Discussion with parents or caregivers*
- *Talking when possible with the child*

Treatment

It can help both children and parents in the abuse situation. Ongoing treatment focuses on preventing future abuse and reducing the long term psychological and physical consequences of abuse.

➤ **Therapy can:**

- Help a child who has been abuse to trust again
- Teach a child about healthy behavior and relationships
- Teach a child conflict management and boost self esteem

-Mayo Clinic 5/2022

Common Problems Suffered by abused and neglected Children

Physical abuse and neglect cause a negative impact on social, emotional, behavioral, academic, and physical health throughout life. Abuse children are more likely to abuse drugs, self-mutilate and act violently than their non-abused peers. They demonstrate language and learning delays. In fact the brain of an abused and or neglected child can, in some cases, be 20% smaller than their non-maltreated peers. Complex processes in the young brain depend heavily on nurturing and supportive interactions with the primary caregiver. When these fail, a number of behavioral, emotional, learning and perception problems can arise throughout life.

- American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy