

Chapter 5

Perpetrators: Those Who Abuse and Neglect Children

Who Abuses Children?

- 83.4% of child victims were maltreated by parents acting alone or with another adult
- Other relatives accounted for 5% of abuse cases
- Of parents committing child maltreatment, 4.3% of them were stepparents
- Children are at the greatest risk of child abuse from the people they love the most

Abuse by Nonfamily

- Most nonfamily abuse is sexual abuse.
- The unmarried partner of the parent (6.2%)
- A friend or neighbor (4.9%)
- Other perpetrators who are not family (23.8%)
- Much abuse occurs when children are left with friends, neighbors, or adolescent babysitters.

Institutional Abuse

- Professionals who work in schools, religious settings, scouting and sports programs
- People who have the trust of children and parents
- Boys are abused more than girls by these professionals
- Jobs are taken partly because of their interest in sexually abusing a child
- Usually their interest in young children began in their teens and the first episode occurred in their teens or early twenties

Educators and Child Care Workers

- Additional measures are being taken to scrutinize educators and child care workers
- Full background checks that include checking child abuse and sex offender registries, fingerprints, and criminal history are done in only two states and the District of Columbia
- Only 29 states do a fingerprint check
- Only seven states require a sexual abuse registry check for child care employees

(NACCRRA, 2007)

Emotional Abuse

- Shouting, humiliating, labeling, frightening, scolding, and the absence of supportive and nurturing environments for pupils has been common in many teaching environments
- When does reprimanding or pushing children to change behavior or do well become emotional abuse?
- Think about those children in the classroom who never seem to do anything right.
- Can you name some examples?

Parenting Issues

- Low self-esteem, stress, lack of external support systems, and fewer coping skills
- An adult abused as a child
- The type of parenting skills they have
- The temperament and difficulty level of the child

Intergenerational Transmission of Abuse

- Parents who were abused are at higher risk of abusing their own children
- Children who are abused are at higher risk of abusing their future children
- Parents who may not feel parental satisfaction

Parenting Styles

- **Authoritarian parents:** require absolute obedience from their child. They have unrealistic expectations of children. There are high demands on children, but a low response to a child's needs
- **Authoritative parents:** involves guiding the child through setting rules and standards. There is discussion and choices between parent and child. Demand and response to children and parents is equally interactive and satisfying

Parenting Styles

- Permissive or Indulgent parents: allow the children to do what they want as long as safety is not a factor. They indulge and accept any behavior from their children. Low demand of children and a high response to the needs of children.
- Uninvolved or Neglectful parents: are involved in their own lives. Children receive little support from parents and little control is exerted by parents.

Spanking

- Defined as using the hand to hit a child on the buttocks, hand, or leg with the purpose of correcting behavior
- Some states define physical abuse by excluding spanking as a cause of abuse unless it causes the death of a child
- In 2003, 43% of parents used some form of hitting or spanking with their child, while 73% of parents felt there were times when spanking was appropriate
- How do you feel about the issue of spanking?

Temperament

- Defined as the innate traits of a person that form a basis for behavior and personality
- Difficult temperament
- Slow to Warm Up temperament
- Easy temperament
- The ability of the parent and child to adapt their different temperaments to meet one another's needs is referred to as “**goodness of fit**”
- Differing temperaments trigger aggressive behavior in frustrated parents who cannot understand their child

Situational Factors

- Teen parents
- Unemployment, lower socioeconomic status, and lower educational levels
- Divorce, Marital Satisfaction, and Single Parenting
- Culture: how a family raises their children
- Drug, alcohol, and domestic abuse
- Sibling abuse