



Welcome to the second National Child Protection Clearinghouse Newsletter for 2003. In this edition we are pleased to feature an article by *Carolyn Cousins*, from the New South Wales Central Coast Child Protection PANOC Service, which highlights some of the difficulties encountered in working with Serious Injuries with Discrepant Explanation cases.

We would like to remind readers that the Clearinghouse welcomes contributions for publication. Authors can send articles that describe current initiatives or policies, discuss aspects of child abuse and neglect, or highlight issues in responding to, or preventing, child abuse and neglect.

New “good practice” database

The Clearinghouse has recently launched a Good Practice Prevention Programs database. We have always had a searchable prevention programs database, but the current database (developed for the National Audit of Prevention Programs undertaken by the Clearinghouse in 1999–2000) is now out of date and in need of replacement.

To that end we are aiming to collect information on current Australian child abuse prevention programs that in some way reflect “good practice”. If you are running a program you think stands out from the crowd, please see page 3 of this Newsletter and consider sending us details of your program. We hope this new programs database will provide an important source of information for policy makers and service providers planning to develop or refine child abuse prevention programs.

Clearinghouse publications online

As readers are aware, all Clearinghouse publications are available for downloading on our website at www.aifs.gov.au/nch/nch_menu.html.

In recognition of the growth in membership of the Clearinghouse (we now have more than 7,800 members!), and the greater use of information technology by readers, the Clearinghouse is now offering subscribers to our free mailing list the opportunity of specifying whether they wish to receive future publications in electronic rather than hard copy versions.

If you are happy with the existing service, you do not need to do anything. However, if you would prefer *not* to receive hard copies of Clearinghouse papers but to have the papers emailed to you instead, or if you wish to receive both hard copies *and* emailed versions, then please let us know. You can contact *Katie Kovacs* at the Clearinghouse on (03) 9214 7888, or email ncpc@aifs.gov.au

Our thinking is that cutting back on printed copies is not only being more environmentally friendly, but also enables us to devote funds to other activities.

Future directions

Finally, a reminder that the Clearinghouse is always interested in hearing from subscribers or readers as to how we can improve our service. In the next six months we will be reviewing our service delivery in order to ensure we remain able to meet the needs of our subscribers. If you would like to provide us with your views as to how we’ve been doing, and services you would like to see, please contact us at the Clearinghouse on (03) 9214 7888 or email to ncpc@aifs.gov.au

Adam Tomison ■



Australian Government

Australian Institute
of Family Studies
National Child
Protection Clearinghouse



CHOOSE WITH CARE GOES NATIONAL

Child Wise is a not for profit organisation committed to ending the sexual abuse and exploitation of children in Australia and overseas. Child Wise was recently awarded the winner of the biennial National Child Protection Award.

Child Wise, ECPAT in Australia, is pleased to announce that thanks to funding from the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services, one of its most innovative programs *Choose With Care* will be coming to every state and territory in Australia.

Choose With Care is an information and training program designed to assist organisations build and maintain safe environments for the children and young people who use them. Using a systemic approach, the program reduces the risk of child abuse occurring in organisations that employ the following strategies with staff, volunteers, children, young people and parents:

- Education and awareness of child abuse and potential risks
- Development and implementation of child protection policies and codes of conduct
- Preventative screening, recruitment and selection practices
- Ongoing support and supervision of staff
- Legal responsibilities and managing complaints/allegations
- Empowerment programs for children and young people
- Ongoing maintenance of a child safe/aware culture

The national training program involves:

- *National workshops*: from January to June 2004, *Choose With Care* training will be available across Australia. Child Wise staff will work in partnership with key national personnel to develop and deliver two training events in each state and territory. The training sessions are specifically relevant to any organisation or voluntary group working with children or young people. Interested groups should contact Karen Flanagan, Program Manager at email choosewithcare@ecpat.org or telephone 03 9645 8911.
- *Handbook*: the *Choose With Care* handbook and video kit is also available and can be purchased for \$88 all inclusive from the Child Wise office (03 9645 8911) or via the website www.childwise.net
- *Information, support and advice*: staff at Child Wise are highly experienced in assisting organisations to identify risk and to manage the risks of child abuse occurring. This can be in the form of training sessions specifically designed for the organisation requirements, as well as advice or technical support in developing child protection policies or procedures.

To register your interest in the national training or any of the services provided, please contact Karen Flanagan at Child Wise. Phone: 03 9645 8911 or 0408 008 853. Email: choosewithcare@ecpat.org.au

The National Child Protection Clearinghouse has operated from the Australian Institute of Family Studies since 1995. The Clearinghouse is funded by the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services as part of the Australian Government's response to the problem of child abuse and neglect. The Clearinghouse collects, produces and distributes information and resources, conducts research, and offers specialist advice on the latest developments in child abuse prevention, child protection, and associated family violence.

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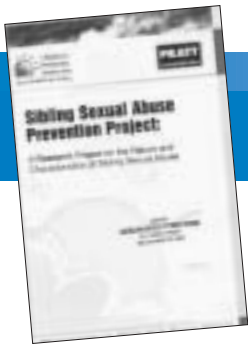
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L A U N C H E D

New report on sibling sexual abuse

In National Child Protection Week in September 2003, the Children's Protection Society launched a new report of a research project that explored the much neglected issue of sibling sexual abuse.

The research, funded by the Pratt Foundation, was prompted by a growing concern about the significant increase in sexual abuse cases perpetrated by a child's siblings that were being referred to the Children's Protection Society, a realisation of the serious and extensive impacts of this abuse on families as well as an acknowledgement of the paucity of research being conducted in this area.

This research analysed the case files of 20 victims of sibling sexual abuse, 20 young people who had sexually abused a sibling, and 20 young people who had sexually abused a non-sibling.

The study found that both sibling and non-sibling sexual abusers had engaged in a range of sexually abusive behaviour that was often intrusive with a degree of coercion typically used as part of the abuse. Many abusers had sexually abused multiple victims over the period of offending.

It was also found that sibling sexual abusers had typically engaged in a greater number and variety of sexually abusive behaviours than non-sibling abusers and had abused their sibling for a longer period. Yet sibling sexual abuse cases were also found to be less likely to proceed to court.

For both types of sexual abusers, victim selection appeared to be largely related to access and opportunity with both groups targeting younger, pre-pubertal children in the network of individuals whom they associated with regularly. Seventy per cent of the sibling abusers who participated in the project had also abused another victim outside their immediate family.

Parental separations, frequent changes to the structure and composition of families, loss of contact with fathers, separations from both biological parents, reports of child abuse perpetrated by at least one parental figure, and problematic and abusive

interactions with family members were commonly identified in both groups. However, these events were more prevalent in the life histories of young people who had sexually abused a sibling.

The majority of sibling and non-sibling abusers had a history of at least one problem behaviour, peer relationship difficulties, and/or at least one other noteworthy issue documented in their case files. For many, these problems had emerged in early childhood. Approximately one-third of sibling and non-sibling abusers had a history of sexualised behaviours prior to the age of ten years. Compared with non-sibling abusers, a greater number of sibling abusers had problem behaviours and problematic peer relationships documented in their case files.

The report offers a number of recommendations which arise from the research findings, including the fact that early identification of risk factors or indicators could assist in early intervention in sibling sexual abuse cases. It was also noted that greater education about risk indicators needs to be made available to professionals working in this area.

It was recommended that greater attention be placed on child sexual abuse prevention measures such as protective behaviour strategies, and the development of Safe Placement Practice Guidelines between statutory and therapeutic agencies.

It is also recommended that practice standards for police child protection and therapeutic program staff who work with sibling sexual abusers and their families be developed alongside alternative models of intervention for the abusive young people.

Finally, in light of the findings that no sibling sexual abuse cases in the study had proceeded to court, the report recommended that further research be conducted into alternative interventions for sibling sexual abuse.

Sibling Sexual Abuse Prevention Project: A Research Project on the Nature and Characteristics of Sibling Sexual Abuse. Copies of the full report can be ordered from the Children's Protection Society Inc. at the cost \$27.50 plus \$1.65 postage (within Australia). Phone (03) 9458 3566. Fax: (03) 9457 6057. Email: cps@cps.org.au

"Good Practice" database

The Clearinghouse would like to hear about *your* child abuse prevention program

The National Child Protection Clearinghouse has a new on-line database – The "Good Practice" database. Take five minutes of your time to register your program which incorporates good practice principles. Go to our website at www.aifs.gov.au/nch/programs.html

The database will provide information about the types of child abuse and neglect prevention programs in operation in Australia.

The inclusion of your program will enable others to share your experiences of the good aspects of your program, as well as the difficulties you have faced. It is hoped this central register will also provide a contact point for facilitating direct contact and discussion amongst those in the field.



Where the explanation doesn't fit the *injury*

Child protection and infant harm

Increasing attention has been paid in recent times to “unexplained” incidents of child abuse, where a perpetrator has not been identified. These situations raise difficult and unanswered questions for both statutory and therapeutic child protection agencies. CAROLYN COUSINS discusses this issue from a practitioner’s viewpoint.

The modern “discovery” of child abuse is generally taken to be prompted by the work of American paediatrician Dr Henry Kempe and colleagues (1962), with the publication of what they termed the “battered child syndrome” (Goddard 1996). “Battered child syndrome” is effectively a medical interpretation of what is now commonly thought of as physical abuse, where physical injuries, particularly fractured or broken bones, had resulted from non-accidental injury. Despite a general perception within the broader community that such abuse is a rare phenomenon that happens in families with “problems”, child protection statistics tell us that unfortunately this is not the case.

While the majority of children are nurtured and protected by loving and attentive carers, there is now a large body of research that highlights the risk of harm faced by children, and in particular, the vulnerability of babies (Harran 2002). For example, a United States study of 215 children presenting at the Yale-New Haven Hospital with a total of 253 fractures (Leventhal, Thomas, Rosenfield and Markowitz 1993) found disturbingly high levels of abuse, particularly in young children under 12 months. The results of their survey, undertaken over six years, indicated that child abuse was a common cause of fracture in young children. They found that abuse accounted for 24 per cent of fractures in children under three years, and 39 per cent of all fractures in children under 12 months.

When looking at child abuse at its most severe, it has been found that children in the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States are more likely to be killed in their own home by members of their family than anywhere else (Browne and Lynch 1995, cited in Harran 2002).

The NSW Child Death Review Team's assessment of child deaths for 2001–2002 noted that in nearly all cases where children were abused and died as result of that violence (fatal child abuse), the violence was intra-familial and the children were killed in the context of caregiving relationships (2002: 103). A range of factors is likely to be at work here. They include the physical frailty and limited ability of children under 12 months to communicate. They also point to a lack of understanding of children's development and vulnerability by caregivers, child-rearing skill deficits, and a lack of external support for families struggling to raise young children.

Dale, Green and Fellows (2002a) highlight a particularly problematic group of child physical abuse cases involving young children, which they define as *Serious Injuries with Discrepant Explanations (SIDE)*.

These cases concern infants aged 0–24 months who have been subject to one or more of the following: head or brain injuries, fractures, burns, severe bruising, bite marks (adult size), poisoning or suffocation. The cases also involve discrepant explanations as to the cause of the injuries by parents or carers, who offer (singly or jointly): no explanation; or explanations that are inconsistent, conflicted (that is, the carers' explanations do not match); or explanations that are not compatible with expert medical opinion. Such cases present significant challenges to child protection systems and courts.

Serious Injuries with Discrepant Explanations (SIDE) refers to an inconsistency, improbability or absence of explanation by parents or carers for the serious physical abuse of infants aged 0–24 months.

In this paper, five cases that presented to the NSW Central Coast PANOC Service are briefly outlined to highlight the difficulties that workers face when dealing with SIDE. Some of the challenges of managing such cases will be discussed, highlighting some of the key issues for child protection and therapeutic case management. Please note that any information that might enable the identification of a child or family has been altered or excluded from these case studies in order to ensure anonymity.

Service context

The NSW Child Protection PANOC (Physical, Abuse and Neglect of Children) Services are counselling services developed to take referrals solely from the statutory agency, the New South Wales Department of Community Services (DoCS). They are designed to focus on the therapeutic support of families where serious abuse has been substantiated. Such services have been described by Scott and O'Neill (1996: 24) as delivering support "at the edge of the cliff or at the bottom after the fall" – that is, when families are in crisis (and maltreatment has occurred), rather than as an early intervention or preventative initiative.

It is to these services that families, in which neither parent has taken responsibility for non-accidental injuries to young infants, are being referred increasingly for counselling. Such referrals are intended to provide ongoing risk assessment and monitoring, in addition to the support and counselling role stated to encourage participation of parents or caregivers.

These cases create significant concern in professional networks. All of the referrals to PANOC come from Joint Investigation Teams, comprised of New South Wales police and DoCS child protection workers, set up to investigate child abuse matters where a criminal offence is likely to have occurred. In each case, caregivers had been interviewed prior to the referral, and medical opinion of non-accidental injury confirmed. Many of the clients are, at best, semi-voluntary when they walk through the door, having been told that if they do not attend they may lose custody of their children. Other families are ordered to attend by the courts.

Over the past 12 months, the Central Coast Child Protection PANOC Service has reported an increasing

A Practitioner's Perspective

The National Child Protection Clearinghouse Newsletter provides a forum for discussions and information sharing among those in the field. We welcome contributions from practitioners working in the area of child abuse prevention or child protection. If you are a practitioner and would like to contribute to this Newsletter please contact the Clearinghouse by phoning (03) 9214 7888 or emailing ncpc@aifs.gov.au.

number of referrals of families in which a child under two years has been injured without adequate explanation while in the care of a parent or carer (see the Child Protection PANOC Service Annual Reports 2001–2002; 2002–2003).

SIDE and “normal” families

In reviewing the cases referred to the PANOC service, it was apparent that a number of referrals concerned “middle class” families who, unlike the majority of families the service worked with, exhibited none of the familiar child abuse indicators of poverty, mental health, drug and alcohol or relationship issues. Indeed, some of the families had no previous history of involvement with statutory child protection services.

A similar pattern was identified in the UK research of Dale et al. (2002b: 4), where it was noted that: “In the absence of such characteristics, the ‘normal’ appearance of parents . . . can impede professional recognition of other factors which may constitute continuing risk of further serious violence to babies and infants.”

Further, these researchers reported that the professional responses to these mostly middle class, articulate and resourceful families were problematic. Seriously injured babies were returned home on the basis of recorded beliefs that abuse did not happen in “loving middle class families” (Dale et al. 2002a: 306). Alternatively, where child protection measures were taken, these cases were prone to being deadlocked for long periods prior to extended and highly contentious court hearings.

The cases

At the point of referral to PANOC, the parents in a number of the cases were initially charged with causing the harm, but subsequently the charges did not proceed because it was deemed impossible to gain a conviction without a clear admission of responsibility by the caregiver(s).

In each of these referred cases, the initial child protection system intervention was effective in temporarily keeping the child safe from the adults who were thought to have caused the injuries. This occurred through the temporary removal of the child (and in some cases their siblings) via action taken in the Children’s Court, either to extended family or to foster care, while the statutory agency further assessed the situation.

However, it was found that after the initial removal and assessment, child protection intervention was less consistent in assessing and managing the risk of further abuse. The referring statutory agency stated that they did not expect the parents or caregivers would admit to the abuse during the sessions, but they hoped it might happen. Overall, each of these cases was considered to be at the more serious end of the child abuse continuum, and the cases were among the most serious abuse referrals received by the PANOC service.

Some issues in dealing with SIDE cases

The five cases can be used to highlight a range of concerns that impact on attempts to protect children from harm (particularly in the long term) and to work effectively with families. For example, the cases are clearly complex, involving complex personalities and family dynamics that can culminate in serious injuries to babies and infants (Dale et al. 2002b). They challenge professionals to “distinguish parents who present risks borne principally of contextual pressures [the majority] from a smaller group where high risk stems from more inherent, concealed and ominously explosive violent personalities” (Dale et al. 2002b: 56). Paradoxically, the former group often score higher on traditional risk indicators than the latter (SIDE) cases.

Interagency collaboration

Such cases have implications for interagency collaboration. For example, with a number of the case studies it appeared that DoCS and the police service were unable to persist with statutory child protection intervention or prosecution, either through a lack of resources or options for action. Similarly, Dale and colleagues (2002b) found that sometimes incomprehensible case management decisions appeared to be made because of the inability to act effectively. More specifically, where the case concerned a middle class family, it often appeared that the child protection and legal systems became paralysed.

Case Study 1

A 21-month-old boy was taken to hospital by his father during weekend access. The child had lifting toe and finger nails, and bruising to his eyelid and scrotum. It was established that the injuries occurred while he was in the care of his mother and her boyfriend prior to the father's access visit.

The mother had failed to seek medical advice, and the explanation that the boy's new sandals were too tight did not fit the medical evidence. (Delay in seeking help was a common theme identified by Dale, Green and Fellows 2002b.) The child was removed and placed in the father's care. The mother and her boyfriend were then interviewed by the police and DoCS. No explanation for the injury was forthcoming, although it was agreed that no other person had prior access to the child. There had been no previous involvement with DoCS.

The police deemed there was insufficient evidence to charge either caregiver, and the child was returned to the mother by the Children's Court on the condition that she attend counselling, place the child in day care one day a week, and not reside with anyone else unless notifying DoCS. No action was taken against her boyfriend.

In this case it was assumed that the boyfriend posed a greater risk to the child than the mother, in spite of no charges being laid against him. The mother became pregnant to her boyfriend during her period of counselling, and saw him regularly, but denied being in a relationship. It was of concern that the boyfriend did not attend counselling, and no assessment was undertaken as to the role he would play in the boy's life.

The counsellor worked with the mother on parenting skills and empathy. The mother demonstrated that she was able to meet the child's physical, developmental and emotional needs, as well as predict unsafe and hazard environments for the child. No adequate explanation was ever given for the abuse.

Case Study 2

A ten-week-old girl presented to hospital with bruising to the thigh, chest and lower abdomen. There was evidence of older bruising to her chest and abdomen. The same child, when seven weeks old, had unexplained bruising to her feet and chin. She was discharged from hospital by her parents against medical advice.

A skeletal survey revealed healing fractures to ten ribs. Doctors concluded this was from non-accidental compression. The child was in the care of her biological parents when the injuries occurred. Neither parent admitted knowledge of how the injuries occurred, but suggested that she may have been "hugged too tight". Over the following weeks, a range of explanations was offered by both parents, but none of these were deemed medically to fit the injuries. (The lack of adequate explanation was consistent with findings by Dale, Green and Fellows 2002a.)

It was deemed that there was insufficient evidence to prosecute either parent, and no charges were laid. The child was placed with her maternal grandparents while the matter went to the Children's Court, and her parents also moved in with them. The parents were referred to counselling as part of a court-ordered six-month restoration plan. This period stretched out to 12 months due to court delays, and there were phases when the parents did not remain committed to counselling.

Shortly before restoration was to occur, the maternal grandfather contacted the counselling service to express his concerns regarding his daughter's quick temper, a fact also observed in therapy. Despite written concerns of little progress in therapy, the court-planned restoration went ahead. It was felt by the counsellor and child protection service that the extended family and statutory agency had developed an overly optimistic view of the child's parents given the severity of injury. The mother continued to present as immature and focused on her own needs. Despite such concerns, it was deemed by the statutory authority that there were insufficient legal grounds to apply for a delay in the restoration program.

Case Study 3

A two-year-old girl presented to hospital with bruising and broken ribs, injuries deemed to be the result of a non-accidental assault. No explanations were forthcoming initially; later the mother was charged following her admission of physical assault. The child and her younger sister (eight months) were placed in foster care, and the parents referred to counselling with a restoration plan in place.

After four months, the mother disclosed it was the child's father who had caused the injuries. She stated that, although they had both used physical discipline within the timeframe, she had not hit "that hard". When re-interviewed, the parents said they would both take responsibility for the abuse, but would not give details. It became clear there was verbal domestic violence and intimidation tactics from the father, and the charges against the mother were dropped. The family was not required to continue the counselling, and after some 12 months, a restoration plan was implemented.

Case Study 4

A five-week-old girl presented to hospital with a non-accidental break to her left tibia and bruising to her left arm. The injuries were considered to be three days old. The parents removed the child from the hospital against medical advice. DoCS assumed care of the girl and returned her to hospital. They also placed her 18-month-old sister in foster care. Despite the relatively young age of the parents, (both in their early twenties), they could be described as a well-resourced middle-class family.

Both children were placed for several weeks in the care of a maternal aunt and uncle, and returned to their parents under a 12-month supervision order with the requirement that they attend counselling. There was no previous history of involvement with child protection services and professionals noted good parenting skills from the first interactions.

The parents offered no explanation for the injuries and stated they were willing to receive counselling. However, once the children had been returned they wrote to their local member of parliament outlining the effects attendance would have on their financial situation if counselling was during work hours. They then attempted to bargain attendance for the mother only. The statutory agency insisted that both parents were seen by the counselling service out of hours. The parents were cooperative in counselling, but consistently minimised the seriousness of the incident. They stated they got a lot out of counselling and were surprised by this. However, no explanation was offered for the injury that fitted medical opinion. The family had sought significant legal advice, and it was not expected that any admission would be made.

The parents attended the minimum number of sessions. (According to MacKinnon 1998, this is a common occurrence with such cases.) They were observed to meet the children's physical, developmental and emotional needs. They also discussed at length the type of parents they wished to be, and they showed a strong child focus. The statutory agency deemed they had met the follow-up requirements and no further counselling was pursued.

As discussed with the parents, the counsellor was ultimately left with three scenarios: it was deliberate abuse, for which it was hoped that the intervention was sufficient deterrent; it was a quasi-accident, where the parents knew what had occurred but were not prepared to disclose it; or a third party was responsible for the injury, in which case it was hoped that the parents would be more aware in the future of the need for appropriate supervision and immediate medical intervention.

Case Study 5

A two-year-old girl presented to hospital with a swollen leg and black eye. An x-ray revealed a fractured femur with callous formation, which indicated the injury was at least two or three weeks old. The delay in seeking medical attention resulted in deformity to the leg length. The explanation given by the parents was that the child had been playing unsupervised with other children a few weeks earlier, and had fallen down some stairs. The mother stated she had only noticed the swelling and limping on the day they presented to hospital.

Medical opinion was that significant force and a direct blow would have been required to cause the break, and that the child would have been in significant pain. The mother stated she was unaware of the break until told by the radiographer, and that she was in "complete shock". A skeletal survey revealed also a fractured rib, an injury only a few days old.

A further explanation given by the parents was that the child's older brother must have sat on her, an explanation doctors felt could not explain the injury.

(Dale, Green and Fellows 2002a found that a lack of initial explanation, followed by the emergence of a sequence of different accounts, was common in one-third of their cases, as criminal and child protection investigations continued. Explanations sometimes developed as, depending on interpretation, parents either attempted to identify the unknown cause of the injuries or endeavoured to concoct a plausible explanation that the child protection system would accept without implicating themselves criminally.)

The parents had separated six to eight weeks prior to the child's presentation at the hospital, although the father occasionally visited the home. There were two older brothers, aged five and three years. The five-year-old was described as having behavioural problems. The mother and five-year-old were referred to counselling on the basis of the child's behavioural issues. The child protection service would not take the case on without agreement to work on the risk issues and injuries caused to the daughter. The mother refused this counselling, and it was deemed there was insufficient evidence to charge her. Ongoing monitoring was recommended, but with no requirement for counselling.

Further, although the PANOC service was involved with the families for anywhere between eight weeks and twelve months, the main factor that influenced involvement – the degree to which the DoCS caseworker enforced or required the parents' participation in interventions – was outside the PANOC worker's control. The agency's lack of control over the extent to which a client would attend could cause friction between different agencies as attempts were made to protect the child and work with the family.

Semi-voluntary clients and leverage

As Goddard and Carew (1993) argue, the exercise of authority reaches right to the heart of a long-standing area of contention in social work (especially child protection work), and that is the balance between care and control (authority). From a service perspective, it can be a struggle to provide appropriate therapeutic interventions for families with children at risk of abuse. It is possible for counsellors, if not the service, to fall dangerously to either side of the care/control distinction by either colluding with parents or failing to invoke adequate controls. This fine line requires constant vigilance. While too much control can alienate parents, insufficient control can place children in a situation of further risk.

With all of the case studies, referral to PANOC was court-ordered, or the family was currently before the Children's Court because of the perceived risk to the child – hardly the recipe for voluntary participation in therapy. A key question with such cases is therefore: how to work with someone who is not motivated to change, or who does not recognise existent problems? Further, how can clients be assisted in a way that acknowledges the authority over them (as a means of ensuring a child's safety), while gathering information that may be used against them?

MacKinnon (1998), a therapist whose focus is on the use of authority through the creation of therapeutic leverage, acknowledges that in any referral where children are at some level of risk, therapy must not avoid the uncomfortable or confronting issue that abuse has occurred. Understandably, this is not an area most caregivers wish to explore, yet the counsellor often needs to insist on the importance of exploring the abuse and the power dynamics that led to it.

According to MacKinnon, those who are forced into therapy are more likely to stay if there are consequences for not doing so. The main source of consequence, and therefore leverage, is the possibility that a child may be removed permanently. Thus, where there is enough of a commitment by all parties to continue with the therapeutic intervention, a process occurs whereby clients are informed of the requirements, and the consequences, if they do not comply. In contrast, when clients fail to attend or follow through on strategies, any ongoing participation in the process can become reliant on the leverage DoCS is able to provide, and whether the family dynamic has been assessed as critical to change. In such cases where compliance is not mandatory, then a service has no way of forcing a family to remain involved, and therefore of ensuring the safety of the child.

Once this initial leverage is obtained, it can be enough to ensure the parents' physical presence in the room. However, the transition from physical presence to open and active involvement in therapy is difficult and may not occur. As MacKinnon argues, without the ability to define the problem in their own terms, clients preserve integrity through resistance.

Once again, the issue becomes one of leverage – a distinction being drawn between participation and attendance. This is achieved, if necessary, through the involvement of the statutory agency. It is acknowledged that these strategies each involve deliberate political choices in the use of power and leverage in the therapeutic relationship. This exemplifies the paradox of using authority and control to attempt to change the way someone else abuses their control and responsibility for their children.

Trotter (1999: 86) offers a practical seven-step, non-linear, problem-solving framework that has levels of involuntariness presented as a continuum. Within this model, the initial steps are developing a problem survey, followed by problem ranking and problem exploration. This is followed by setting goals and developing a contract with the client, developing strategies and tasks, and ongoing monitoring and review. However, Trotter suggests that for involuntary clients this may not be a linear process; workers may find themselves moving back and forth through the various stages in order to develop and maintain participation. ➤



A key question with such cases is therefore: how do you work with someone who is not motivated to change, or who does not recognise existent problems?

A focus on responsibility

Some theorists focus strongly on the need for acceptance of responsibility for abuse. Proponents such as Jenkins (1990) and Morrison (1995) allude to the tension between making clients accept responsibility for their actions while trying to engage with them positively. From a service perspective, it is the adults who are responsible for change and, therefore, those upon whom the primary therapy must be focused. In the process of engaging with parents, there is often an invitation to accept their view of the world and their child. It is sometimes easy to empathise with the parents' life experience or history of victimisation, to accept their explanation for what may have occurred and to avoid further confrontation. Furlong (2001) aptly calls this "colluding or colliding".

In his article on professional "dangerousness", Morrison (1995) explores the way in which practitioners sometimes collude with parents and the system through reframing the social control role into a care and support function. He notes the danger of watching, but not intervening in, a dynamic which may put a child at risk, citing numerous child deaths in which social workers failed to be sufficiently "suspicious of the manipulative acts of abusing parents" (1995: 11). He also questions the notion of the client being the whole family, when the child is the most vulnerable member, arguing that this is, at best, conflict avoidance behaviour, and at worst a minimisation of the child's experience and needs (1995: 11). He writes, "the shared fantasy is the illusion of change, when in reality, a dangerous equilibrium is being maintained that satisfies the covert needs of both the professionals and the family" (Morrison 1995: 25).

One further dilemma is the failure to hold all possible parties accountable when engaging with families. There has been a history of the mother or female caregiver (generally the primary caregiver) being held responsible for the abuse, and being the target of any interventions – perceived as a form of "mother blaming" by some (Magen 1999) – while the person not held responsible is usually the male father figure. In these cases, the child protection system focuses on the mother in what Burke (1999: 260) refers to as the "invisible man syndrome", leaving a caregiver who may have either contributed to, or perpetrated the physical abuse outright, never assessed, never questioned, and not incorporated in any case plan to prevent the recurrence of abuse.

A focus on strengths

In contrast to the use of authority to ensure change, the increasing popularity and appeal of a strengths-based approach is hard to resist when working with vulnerable families. The approach offers much by respecting clients as authorities within their own lives, and capable of finding their own solutions. The approach is client-owned and client-directed. Fundamental principles include empowerment, hope, resilience and self-determination.

Elliot, Mulrone and O'Neil (2000) promote the strengths-based approach and an optimistic therapeutic approach, arguing that change *is* possible, and lies in the strengths and capacities of family members. However, they do acknowledge that misplaced optimism is dangerous and can end in tragedy where vulnerable children are involved (2000: 12).



In contrast to the use of authority to ensure change, the increasing popularity and appeal of a strengths-based approach is hard to resist when working with vulnerable families.

Dingwall, Eekelaar and Murray (1983) highlighted the role of individual workers' attitudes, experiences, and biases in decision making. They developed the "*rule of optimism*" to explain how health and social workers reduced, minimised, or removed concerns for a child's welfare or safety, achieved through taking an overly positive interpretation of the family.

A major component of the *rule of optimism* was labelled as "*natural love*". Dingwall et al. suggested that there was a general assumption in society that parents love their children. Faced with this norm, workers were seen to interpret all evidence of child abuse under the assumption of *natural love*, a positive assumption about the nature of the parent-child relationship of such power that the worker's task of finding incontrovertible proof of child maltreatment becomes extremely difficult. These researchers suggested that the *rule of optimism* was only

discounted when parents refused to cooperate with workers and rejected help, or when there was a “failure of containment” where a number of workers became involved with the case and the pressure for statutory action became too great.

The operation of such biases was supported by Munro’s (1999) assessment of errors of reasoning in child protection work. Munro reported that professionals were slow to revise their judgements of families, even in the face of contradictory evidence. They also tended to rely too much on the family’s outward appearance and circumstances to determine risk of harm to the child. Thus, outwardly “respectable” parents appeared able to resist statutory intervention, despite the risk to the child of significant harm, because they didn’t seem like “abusers”.

Thus, in adopting a strengths-based approach there is some potential to create a therapeutic environment where a desire to engage with clients over-rides evidence that a child is at risk of harm. The danger is in focusing too much on ensuring that parents remain cooperative, looking for strengths too early (and failing to work on family “risks”), or in over-emphasising strengths that may have little to do with parenting capacity at the expense of addressing the underlying causes or deficits that led to child abuse. Furlong (1989: 215) states that there are good reasons for being positive, and while this is preferable most of the time, such an approach can become an obstacle: “[Our] preferred language can encourage habits that de-emphasise or even disqualify gritty and often unpleasant practicalities . . . thus making it impossible to be explicit about the breach of major social norms.”

As noted above, the idea of individual responsibility for actions is one that child protection workers have generally subscribed to for some time. Put simply, the premise is that in order for change to occur, responsibility must be taken for abusive behaviour (see, for example, Jenkins 1990). In contrast, Scott and O’Neil (1996: 11) state that the strengths-based approach is not necessarily about owning responsibility for past actions, but owning responsibility for solutions. This presents a dilemma for those wanting to adopt a primarily strengths-based approach. An invitation to accept responsibility involves looking at what has led to the abusive incident, and holds that one cannot move forward until this has occurred.

It would appear that there is a potential danger of “therapising” or even ignoring what could be criminal acts when using a strengths-based approach, if an exploration of past behaviours is not incorporated. Overall, it is contended that for SIDE-type cases, while some of the strengths-based tools may be of use, the approach could be dangerous if used in isolation, too early in intervention, and without ensuring the protection of the child remains paramount.

Parenting education

Bavolek (1990, as cited in Smith 1997) identified a set of parenting “building blocks” or skills that parents should acquire: bonding and attachment (establishing unconditional positive regard and an acceptance of the child); empathy; self-awareness; touch; discipline (setting clear limits for children); unconditional love, honesty and respect; and developmental knowledge (knowing what to expect of a child at the various stages of growth and development).

The PANOC service is often asked to assist parents who have abused their children primarily because of a lack of appropriate skills or knowledge. Such parents may be unaware of the different stages of child development, appropriate options for disciplining a young child, the means of building and strengthening their relationship with their child, or how to access social and professional supports for advice or assistance. These parents are generally easier to work with, as there is usually no intent or maliciousness in their actions. In such cases, there is a place for teaching practical parenting skills, educating parents on children’s development, and ensuring their access to external support to reduce stress and to ease social isolation.

It is somewhat harder to work with parents who have practical parenting skills and adequate supports, but lack warmth or empathy for their children. That is, there is a failure to recognise and comprehend the emotions and feelings of the child, sometimes also referred to as a lack of parental sensitivity or “responsivity”. Newberger (1980) noted that in especially difficult parent–child relationships, parents are often unable to see their children as having needs and rights of their own. Parent–child attachment literature (for example, Crittenden 1993) outlines how abusive mothers, in particular, are not able to read the signs and cues from their children, while also holding unrealistic expectations of their behaviour and/or development. ➤

Conversely, there is some suggestion that an increase in empathy can lead to a possible decrease in the risk of harm (for example, Kilpatrick 2002). In building parental empathy and attachment, there is an attempt to build both an understanding of child development and recognition of the child's individual needs and emotions. Part of the process is the attempt to correct the perception that a young child's behaviour is intentional or malicious. For example, challenging the notion that a baby deliberately cries at a certain time to annoy or "get at" the parent.

In developing parental empathy the focus is on shifting the parent from a self-centred to a child-centred thought process, so that misattribution of behaviour (and the potential for abuse) is less likely. Perry (1993: 66) refers to this as "an understanding at some depth of the inner reality of the relationship and the individual (or) emotional identification". Developing the parental capacity to listen, observe, interpret, and then to consider before reacting, can be challenging work for parents if they have not themselves been the recipients of such empathy as children.

While this approach may not prevent all further abuse, it is hoped that it will improve the quality of the relationship, thus creating a "step" in the process of reducing the risk of further harm to the child. As Kilpatrick (2002: 27) states: "Although it is more likely to be relatively isolated incidences of extreme abuse or neglect that bring parents to the notice of authorities . . . it is the pervasiveness of unresponsive or unemphatic parenting behaviours that is likely to be the true discriminator of abusive versus good-enough parents."

Conclusion

The protection of children where non-accidental injury has occurred is complex and the risks are high. Errors that occur in either direction – inappropriate permanent separation of the child, or re-injury following premature restoration – may have terrible consequences for children and their families. SIDE cases present some unique challenges for practitioners to which there are no easy solutions. It is difficult work, for which practitioners need support, encouragement and, critically, good supervision. It is work that needs to be thought about, written about and debated, so that, ultimately, children at risk get the best service possible.

■ Carolyn Cousins has been practising as a social worker in the field of child protection for over ten years. She has broad experience in the area of child protection, having worked for the NSW Department of Community Services in investigation, management and specialist roles, including a stint as the manager of a Child Protection PANOC (Physical Abuse and Neglect of Children) Service. Currently, she manages the Violence, Abuse and Neglect Service with Central Coast Health. The service she currently manages provides therapeutic support for children and families where there have been child abuse and child protection concerns, sexual assault, domestic violence and violence prevention.

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YOUNG MEDIA AUSTRALIA

Young Media Australia is a unique national community organisation whose members share a strong commitment to the promotion of the healthy development of Australian children. Their particular interest and expertise is in the role that media experiences play in that development.

Young Media Australia:

- collects and reviews research and information related to children and the media;
- provides information and advice on the impact of print, electronic and screen based media on children and young people;
- advocates for the needs and interests of children in relation to the media; and
- conducts and acts as a catalyst for relevant research.

Recently Young Media Australia was funded to provide a 24 hour a day, seven day a week national freecall service for parents and caregivers to discuss media issues in respect of children. All of the Helpline operators come from a strong child development and parenting perspective and can provide callers with research based information about the media.

To access this freecall service
phone 1800 700 357

For more information
about *Young Media Australia*
access their website at
www.youngmedia.org.au



Barnardos launches new training video on adoption

Barnardos Australia is one of Australia's leading children's charities and operates across New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. Barnardos provides services which help prevent and reverse the effects of child abuse, neglect and homelessness on children and young people. In order to achieve this aim, Barnardos operates a range of services including children's family centres, permanency programs for out-of-home care and adolescent services.

Tn July 2003, Barnardos Australia launched a powerful and moving new training video which examines the adoption of older-age children after a lifetime of abuse. The video, *Jumping at Opportunities*, was produced in partnership with State Street and the Ian Potter Foundation.

In the film, six young adults explore the long-term effects of their early years, the impact of abuse, rejection and separation from their birth families, and their feelings about their adoptions, which had been arranged by Barnardos' Find-a-Family program. They tell their stories with honesty, courage and dignity.

In launching the video, the New South Wales Minister for Community Services, Ms Tebbutt said: "Stability is critical in a child's life, and adopting an older child in need of a stable and secure home can provide the first step in helping them overcome a legacy of neglect, abuse and rejection."

She said: "I congratulate all the children and families in this video for telling their stories. The Department of Community Services provides funding for services to Find-a-Family children, but we are glad for corporate support for initiatives such as this video."

The Barnardos Find-a-Family program was established in 1984 to provide specialist adoption and long-term fostering options to severely abused children within the substitute care system. Since then, Find-

a-Family has cared for 274 children, over 31 per cent of whom have been adopted. Barnardos holds an incredible 90 per cent success rate in arranging and supporting adoptions of children aged, on average, between six and twelve years.

Barnardos attributes this success to the careful recruitment and matching of caring families to their adopted children, along with strong subsequent support. However, the agency identified a lack of effective resources and suitable training materials on adoption, both here and overseas. Using the useful medium of video, *Jumping at Opportunities* aims to promote the adoption of older-age children "under the parental



Damian Fitzpatrick and his adoptive mum, Debra Tipper.

responsibility of the Minister” (as state wards are now known). It will also be used to prepare potential caring families for the realities of adopting children who may have severely challenging behaviours and emotional problems.

These children have been identified as “at risk” and removed from their birth families by the Court because of severe forms of abuse and neglect. Tragically, further trauma often awaits these children in the form of multiple foster placements, often perceived by a child as rejection, and this can cause immense damage to their ability to form attachments. Overwhelming international evidence shows conclusively that adoption offers the best chance of providing long-term stability for children in out-of-home care.

Barnardos’ “permanency planning” model was devised to give security and continuity to these bewildered and wounded children. Barnardos’ approach is simple: find a family who is able to provide a permanent, stable, nurturing environment for a child – a “Forever Family”.

“At Barnardos we believe that every child deserves a caring family,” says Lynne Moggach, Principle Adoption Officer and Deputy Senior Manager of Barnardos’ Find-a-Family. “One of the worst things you could do to a confused and traumatised child is to allow them to drift within the care system. They desperately need routine, security and a long-term committed relationship with the caring family if they are to have productive and fulfilled adult lives.” She said that the average age of adoption in Barnardos’ program is nine years and these are children who typically have challenging behaviours.

Ms Moggach admits that it is a long, difficult and costly process to locate such families, who must undergo intensive interviews, criminal checks, and preparation and training, along with placement monitoring and support. Barnardos is constantly seeking suitable families who feel they could offer a permanent adoptive home to an abused child. “With carers the emphasis is on patience and not having too many expectations,” said Ms Moggach. “These children are all individuals and they all start to heal in their own way and in their own time.”

In talking about their experiences of abuse and rejection, the six children in *Jumping at Opportunities* reveal the painful emotional scars that are only partially healed by time. But there is no doubt that even though it is no magical cure, adoptions for them have proved “life-changing” by providing the security they craved. “You realise that you are in a family forever – they are always going to be there even when I’m in trouble,” states Zoe simply, while Sharon marvels that “just a bit of paper” could make a child feel safe.

Other adoption and permanent care agencies have also expressed considerable interest in *Jumping at Opportunities* and the documentary will be available to them and to government departments as a training medium, both on DVD and video.

State Street and the Ian Potter Foundation provided financial support for the project. State Street Global Advisor’s Managing Director, Bernard Reilly stated: “State Street is delighted to support such a groundbreaking initiative as Barnardos’ documentary and training video for older-age adoption. These initiatives have a positive impact on the whole community through relieving and preventing child abuse and neglect, now and for the future.”



Left to right: Louise Voigt, CEO, Barnardos Australia; Angela Crammond, Chair, Barnardos Australia, the Hon. Carmel Tebbutt MLC, NSW Minister for Community Services; Matt Lever, Senior Associate, State Street, and the Hon. John Ryan, Shadow Minister for Community Services.

To enquire about obtaining copies of *Jumping at Opportunities*, or becoming a Forever Family, phone Barnardos Find-a-Family on (02) 9281 5510.



Empowering children through the arts

Alison Ingram in conversation with *Janet Stanley*

The enhancement of protective factors or “strengths” has become a key facet of prevention strategies. This approach is better described as a health promotion or “wellness” approach that, as in the program described here, aims to promote resiliency and develop the positive strengths of children.

Schools are increasingly being seen as able to make an important contribution towards this end, drawing on their linkages to family members, employment, peer relationships and local communities. Thus, programs offering personal fulfilment and community connectiveness provide developmental growth opportunities for children.

Alison Ingram is the Program Director of the Bell Shakespeare’s *Shakespeare In Action* program. Janet Stanley, Acting Research Fellow with the National Child Protection Clearinghouse, asks the questions and learns about the program.

Alison, what is the Shakespeare In Action program?

Shakespeare In Action is one of a range of education programs offered by The Bell Shakespeare Company across Australia (see inset). It is based on work that I developed with Alternative High Schools in New York, for “at risk” students engaged in “drop out” retrieval programs. The students participated in Shakespeare workshops, classroom video projects and community performances, which provided opportunities for personal growth through development of greater self-esteem.

Bell Shakespeare believes that sustained programs in the arts empower students and assist them to re-engage in school. By participating in the program students have the opportunity to experience: working as part of a team; working within defined boundaries; a fun and challenging project; and the enjoyment of success.

Through the series of in-school performance activities students gain a sense of appreciation of achievement through hard work as well as an understanding of Shakespeare’s language and characters. The students recognise Shakespeare’s themes and issues, which are relevant to, and resonate in, their lives today.

It is hoped that students’ experiences during *Shakespeare In Action* will stay with them in the longer term, and that they will draw on the knowledge they gain about their own abilities when they have future challenges.

The program was successfully piloted in 2002 with five schools in Sydney and then two schools in Melbourne took it up this year. The Melbourne schools worked with teaching artist, Kerreen Ely-Harper, whom Bell Shakespeare has engaged to deliver the program model in Victoria. The participating schools

were chosen by the Department of Education in each state, based on identification of students who would particularly benefit from such a program, and on the schools' participation in disadvantaged schools program.

What do the students actually do?

A whole class of about 16 to 25 students attend sessions with their teacher as an alternative to scheduled English or Drama classes. The program is adaptable to age groups Years 8–12. Usually classes are held twice a week for each group.

First, the students see a film version of the chosen Shakespearean play. They then participate in a range of theatre and acting activities, such as theatre games, acting technique exercises, and discussion of the content and events of the play. Each student is then cast, usually by self-selection. Scenes are rehearsed, one character (for example, Romeo, or Juliet) often having multiple players in the various scenes throughout the play. We are able to use Bell Shakespeare costumes to elevate the students' experience. Students' performances are taped and a video is produced using a professional film editor. Then the students view their "movie".

Students participating in the program are also invited to see a main-stage Bell Shakespeare performance, such as the recent production of *As You Like It* at the Arts Centre in Melbourne. Each school is also visited by our in-schools touring program, *Actors At Work*, enabling many more students at each school to experience a live Shakespeare performance.

Can you explain how such an intensive program is funded?

The program is funded by The Bell Shakespeare Company's philanthropic funds. Many Foundations, and corporate and individual donors give funds specifically for this program.

Are you beginning to get a feel about the success of the program?

Observation and feedback from participating schools and their teachers suggests that the program is of considerable value to students. Ninety per cent of students say they would do the program again if it were offered. In Sydney, where the program has now been running for two years, we have been able to track the progress of students and will continue with those students in 2004. By the end of 2004 we will be able to formally gauge the full impact of the program, particularly through evaluation of the students whom we have been able to track. We are extremely happy with the results we have witnessed so far.

The program sounds very exciting as it is currently running, but do you have future plans?

We intend to continue in Sydney in the same schools and, in addition, develop an after-school program. In Melbourne, we will continue to expand *Shakespeare In Action* and by 2005 we hope also to offer an after-school program.

In the near future Bell Shakespeare will be seeking broader community support to sustain the program. We are developing relationships in order to secure funding, enabling expansion of staff and the number of young people who can be offered *Shakespeare In Action*.

BELL SHAKESPEARE – 2004 EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

ACTORS AT WORK

Touring to every state and territory in Australia
February – August 2004

STUDENT WORKSHOPS

Touring to every state and territory in Australia
February – September 2004

TEACHER WORKSHOPS

Touring to New South Wales, Victoria, Australian Capital Territory, Tasmania, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, and Singapore.
February – September 2004

SHAKESPEARE IN ACTION

Sydney and Melbourne in 2004

FURTHER INFORMATION: Alison Ingram, Program Director, Shakespeare In Action, The Bell Shakespeare Company, PO Box 10, Millers Point NSW 2000. Phone: (02) 9241 2722.

Violence in the media and its effects on children

The Clearinghouse's
KATIE KOVACS reports
on a recent seminar

On 11 September 2003, a seminar was held in Melbourne to explore the issue of violence in the media and its effects on children. The seminar was jointly hosted by the Victorian Parenting Centre and Young Media Australia, and attracted an audience of mainly of child health, education and welfare professionals.

The seminar was attended by the Hon. Sheryl Garbutt, MP, Victorian Minister for Community Services. The guest speaker was Professor Craig Anderson of Iowa State University, and an expert panel discussion was facilitated by well-known ABC presenter Jon Faine.

Professor Anderson has an interest in social, personality and cognitive psychology and he is considered an expert on the effects of violence in computer games on children. His presentation gave a thorough overview of the available research in the area of the impact of media violence on children, as well as outlining his own research findings, which have looked specifically at the impact of violent video games on children and some of the controversies surrounding this area.

The key message of the presentation was that media violence increases the likelihood of aggressive and violent behaviour both in the short and long term, and that parents/caregivers should keep three facts in mind when determining what their children view. These are that children learn from what they view, that the content of what children view matters, and that allowing children to vent their anger through violent media will not reduce their aggression.

Professor Anderson outlined his reasons for his belief that violent video games might be more harmful to children than violent television or movies. He suggests that the fact that in many games the child becomes the aggressor and *actively* participates in the violence, that violence is often directly rewarded in video games, and the high rates of violence in some games, are factors contributing to increasing aggression in children.

He was keen to debunk the "myth" that research in the area of violent media and its effects on children is inconclusive. He noted the large body of conclusive research, which has shown that there is a causal link between viewing violent video games and increased aggressive behaviour in children.

To highlight the seriousness of the problem and the strength of the link between children viewing violent video games and becoming aggressive, Professor Anderson made an interesting comparison between violent video game exposure for children and subsequent aggression with the effects of a range of other relationships. He showed that in comparison with the relationships between asbestos exposure and cancer, calcium intake and bone mass and second hand smoke to cancer, the effects of violent video games are significantly greater than these other relationships which society views as very serious.



Professor Anderson left the audience with a list of “take-home messages” from his presentation:

- Media violence increases the likelihood of aggressive and violent behaviour in the immediate situation and over time;
- research evidence is consistent, clear and conclusive;
- negative effects of media violence are large enough to warrant serious concern by society;
- most parents seriously underestimate the long-term impact of media violence;
- violent video games are likely to be even more harmful than violent movies or television;
- self-imposed regulation is not working; and
- non-violent video games can teach positive lessons.

An interesting discussion, led by a panel of experts from the media, psychology, child health and education sectors, followed the keynote address. The audience was generally supportive of the research findings presented by Professor Anderson, and a lively discussion centred around practical ways of minimising the impacts of violence on children and young people.

For more information about the work of Professor Anderson or to download articles he has written, see www.psychology.iastate.edu/faculty/caa/recpub.html1995

Further reading

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Media and Families - A Practical Approach

The Victorian Parenting Centre has recently developed a series of information sheets that present a balanced and practical approach to the issue of media and families. The series aims to give parents access to contemporary research and thinking in an easily understood way, thus assisting parents to make informed decisions in dealing with the issues in their own family. The information sheets cover the topics of: television, the internet, electronic games, mobile phones and trauma and the media.

Copies of these information sheets can be downloaded free of charge from the Victorian Parenting Centre website at: www.vicparenting.com.au/vp/base/ausparenting.php

CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

COMPILED BY BELINDA SNIDER, AIFS DATABASE LIBRARIAN. If you wish to have forthcoming conferences or events listed in the National Child Protection Clearinghouse Newsletter, and the Institute of Family Studies web pages, please send details to Belinda Snider, Australian Institute of Family Studies, 300 Queen St, Melbourne 3000, Victoria, Australia. Phone: (03) 9214 7864. Fax: (03) 9214 7839. Email: email.belinda.snider@aifs.gov.au.

Children's Rights Ghent, Belgium

11–18 December 2003

The International Interdisciplinary Course on Children's Rights is a specialised course, based on empirical, practical and academic knowledge accumulated in this field. It provides extensive basic information and in-depth knowledge on the origins, motives and legitimisation, strategies and main trends in the field of children's rights. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and its implementation are featured in the program.

Further information: Dr Arabella Weyts, Children's Rights Centre, University of Ghent Henri Dunantlaan 2, B - 9000 Ghent. Phone: Kathy Arabella: + 32 9 264 9100. Fax: + 32 264 64 93. Email: Arabella.Weyts@Ugent.be2004

Infant Mental Health Melbourne, Vic

14–17 January 2004

The Local Organising Committee from the Australian Association for Infant Mental Health invites you to attend the 9th World Congress of the World Association for Infant Mental Health. The theme of the conference is "The baby's place in the world".

Further information: www.waimh.org/World_Congress.htm

Child and Family Maltreatment San Diego, California

26–30 January 2004

The 18th Annual Winter San Diego Conference on Child and Family Maltreatment addresses the prevention, investigation, diagnosis, treatment and prosecution of child and family maltreatment.

Further information: Chadwick Center, Children's Hospital, San Diego. Email: sdsconference@chsd.org. Web: www.charityadvantage.com/chadwickcenter/2004Conference.asp

Australian Police Summit Melbourne, Vic

18–19 February 2004

The Australian Police Summit, produced in association with the Australian Federal Police Association, will focus on all aspects of policing and law enforcement issues, while the expo offers the chance to view all the latest advancements in equipment and security.

Further information: Robbie Williams, Project Manager. Phone: (02) 9439 4566. Fax: (02) 9439 4599. Email: Robbie.Williams@kmimail.com

Home, Workplace and Community Auckland, NZ

19–21 February 2004

The theme of the Helping Families Change Conference is "Home, Workplace and Community". Broad topic interest areas at this conference will include: Policy and population level intervention; Recent developments in family intervention research; Interventions with families in transition: separation and divorce; Interventions with families with special needs; Family intervention and employee assistance: reciprocal benefits for families and workplaces; and Cultural issues and parenting.

Further information: Steven Hayns, Scientific Programme Chair, Triple P Centre, PO Box 74025 Market Rd, Remuera, Auckland NZ. Phone: +64 9 520 7164. Fax: +64 9 520 0698. Email: triplep@extra.co.nz For registration enquiries email: triplep@extra.co.nz Web: www.triplep.net

Child Abuse and Neglect in Africa Enugu, Nigeria

23–27 March 2004

The theme of the 4th African Regional Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect in Africa is "Child trafficking and child sexual abuse in Africa". The conference is sponsored by the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN) and the African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN) Nigeria Chapter, in collaboration with ANPPCAN Regional Office.

Further information: 4th African Regional Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect, PO Box 15515, University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus. Phone: 234-42-257923. Telefax: 234-42-450112, 557566. Email: childabuse@infoweb.abs.net / or peterebigbo@infoweb.abs.net.

Intensive Family Services Practice Sydney, NSW

31 March – 2 April 2004

Intensive Family Services are designed to work intensively with a family in the family's own home or community with the objective of improving that family's functioning and preventing the unnecessary placement of children into care. At this 5th National Practice Symposium, "In partnership with Families: Stepping off the Roundabout", hosted by The Spastic Centre of New South Wales and UnitingCare Burnside, streamed sessions will include practical applications of the Intensive Family Based Services Model – special areas such as disability, drug and alcohol, child protection, with families from non-English-speaking backgrounds, and with Aboriginal families.

Further information: Sharyn Low, Symposium Secretariat, Matrix On Board, PO Box 4023, Pitt Town NSW 2756. Phone: (02) 4572 3079. Fax: (02) 4572 3972. Email: sharyn@mob.com.au. Web: www.mob.com.au/ifs2004

Sexual Abuse and Sexual Offending Auckland, NZ

15–17 April 2004

This educational symposium to promote understanding and collaboration in the successful treatment and prevention of sexual abuse is being organised by ANZATSA, SAFE Network, Doctors for Sexual Abuse Care (DSAC), with sponsorship of Child, Youth and Family, and Department of Corrections. Two pre-conference workshops will be run on 14 April: Applying Restorative Justice; and Therapist Processes and Treatment Procedures with Sexual Offenders.

Further information: Email: barbara.burt@xtra.co.nz. Web: www.anzatsa.org

International Conference on the Family London, UK

17–18 June 2004

Jointly organised by the National Family and Parenting Institute, the Parenting Education and Support Forum, One Parent Families, the Open University, Trust for the Study of Adolescence and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), the 2004 International Conference on the Family, "Parent Child 2004", celebrates the 10th anniversary of the International Year of the Family. It will address a range of research,

policy and practice issues relating to the current and future state of the family in the United Kingdom and across the world.

Further information: Parent Child 2004, Neil Stewart Associates, PO Box 39976, 2nd Floor, 1 Benjamin Street, London EC1M 5YT. Phone: 020 7324 4330. Fax: 020 7490 8830. Web: www.neilstewartassociates.com/ja120

Early Childhood International Links Melbourne, Vic

21–24 July 2004

This XXIV World Congress of the World Organisation for Early Childhood Education will be a unique opportunity to highlight its concern for early childhood development across the world. The overall theme of the Congress is "One World: Many Childhoods". The program will provide opportunities to explore issues such as children in difficult circumstances, innovation in service delivery, indigenous children's needs and services, and children's health and social services. Participants will be challenged to think carefully about the types of programs delivered to young children.

Further information: The Meeting Planners, 91-97 Islington Street, Collingwood, Vic 3066. Phone: (03) 9417 0888. Fax: (03) 9417 0899. Email: omep@meetingsplanners.com.au. Web: www.omepaustralia.com.au/

Infant, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Gold Coast, Qld

September 2004

The Australian Infant, Child, Adolescent and Family Mental Health Association has announced that the 5th National Conference will be held in conjunction with the 2004 The MHS Conference. The conference theme is "Harvesting hope: Across the lifespan".

Further information: Web: www.aicafmha.net.au/conferences/goldcoast2004/index.html

Child Abuse and Neglect Brisbane, Qld

19–22 September 2004

The National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) is hosting the 15th International Congress on Child Abuse and Neglect in partnership with ISPCAN (International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect). Abstract submissions close on 31 January 2004.

Further information: NAPCAN, PO Box K241, Haymarket NSW 1240. Phone: (02) 9211 0224. Fax: +61 (0)2 9211 5676. Email: napcanaus@aol.com. Web: www.congress2004.com

LITERATURE HIGHLIGHTS

The following selections from new additions to the Clearinghouse collection over the last six months may be borrowed from the Australian Institute of Family Studies library, via the interlibrary loan system. COMPILED BY JOAN KELLEHER.

Adolescent mothers

Adolescent childbearers in later life: maltreatment of their school-age children, by E.M. Kinard, *Journal of Family Issues*, Vol.24, no.5, July 2003, pp. 687-710.

This study compared young adolescent, older adolescent and young adult mothers on a range of risk factors for child maltreatment. It then compared maltreating and nonmaltreating adolescent mothers for the same risk factors. Findings indicated that sociodemographic risk factors persist into later life for adolescent mothers and if not overcome place them at greater risk of child maltreatment.

Adolescent sex offenders

Healing the wounds..., *Children in Scotland*, Jul. 2003, pp. 8-10.

Councils in Scotland are developing sex offender treatment programs for adolescent offenders. Models of treatment designed for adult offenders are not appropriate for children and adolescents.

Managing sexually abused and / or abusing children in substitute care, by E. Farmer & S. Pollock, *Child & Family Social Work*, Vol.8, Iss.2, May 2003, pp. 101-112.

Research on how to deal with children in substitute care who have been sexually abused or are abusing others is examined in this article. The need for adequate sex education and counselling that addresses their underlying needs is stressed.

Understanding, assessing, and rehabilitating juvenile sexual offenders, by P. Rich, Hoboken, N.J., John Wiley & Sons, 2003.

This book is aimed at therapists and program managers working with child and adolescent sexual offenders. It describes and discusses assessment, risk assessment and treatment models and theory, and presents an overview of sexual development and sexual offending.

Bullying

Technology and bullying: technology is morally neutral, by A. Mellor, *Children in Scotland*, Feb. 2003, pp. 6-7.

This article describes a service called the Anti-Bullying website. The use of mobile phones and e-mail are new ways that bullies can torment their victims. The Anti-Bullying website aims to assist young people who are being bullied. It provides advice, information and a place to share experiences.

Child abuse prevention

Emerging practices in the prevention of child abuse and neglect, [Washington D.C.?], Caliber Associates, [2003,].

Current programs for the prevention of child abuse and neglect were evaluated, and a literature review was conducted. The results are reported, and the limits of existing knowledge about the effectiveness of prevention and prevention programs are discussed.

Protecting children: a practical guide, by J. Kay, London, Continuum, 2003.

This book, aimed at childcare workers in England, provides a basic understanding of child abuse, including types of abuse, indicators, responding to suspected abuse, child protection, UK law, and working with abused children. Each chapter features case studies and questions and answers for reflection or self-assessment.

Child deaths

Annual report of inquiries into child deaths: child protection 2003, Melbourne, Vic, Victorian Child Death Review Committee, Department of Human Services, 2003.

The Victorian Child Death Review Committee (VCDRC) reviews investigative reports of all deaths of children who have died while they were current clients, or within three months of case closure, of Child Protection Services. The Committee provides advice to the Minister on measures that will minimise the risk of child deaths and contribute to a more broadly targeted strategy aimed at reducing the unacceptably high rates of abuse and neglect in the community. This report provides information on: deaths of children known to Child Protection in 2002; Child Death Inquiry reports; themes and issues arising from Child Death Inquiries; and the work of

the Victorian Child Death Review Committee. This year highlights a number of difficulties associated with the way in which the system has evolved to cope with the exceptionally high demand on the Child Protection Service's Intake phase, which assesses notifications made regarding children who may be in need of protection.

Care, responsibility and cumulative error: coronial review of deaths of children under State care in Victoria, by P.A Swain & M. Roberts, *Australian Journal of Family Law*, Vol.17, no.1, Apr 2003, pp. 62-75.

This paper reports the outcomes of research into Victorian coronial records of investigations into deaths of children subject to State custody or guardianship orders, over the period 1999-2000. It arose from the recognition that often the only independent, external review of such deaths is that undertaken through coroner's offices. The research found that there were often extensive periods of time before coronial investigations were completed and that, contrary to what might have been anticipated, in no completed coronial investigations included in this research were any child protection policy or practice recommendations made in coronial findings. It further appeared that the child death review system did not necessarily examine all the child deaths which warranted coronial investigation. Indeed the processes of coronial investigation and departmental review of child deaths appear to occur in isolation from each other. This research is expected to contribute to an Australia-wide research project examining such coronial investigations, in turn highlighting areas where child welfare practice requires re-definition. (Journal abstract)

The Victoria Climbié inquiry: report of an inquiry, by H. Laming, Norwich, UK, The Stationery Office, 2003.

A British independent statutory inquiry was convened to investigate the death of a young girl, Victoria Climbié, a victim of child abuse. This report examines the failure of the social services system in this case and makes recommendations on how such cases may be prevented in future.

Child protection services

How accessible are child abuse prevention services for families? by K. Kovacs, *Family Matters* no.64, Autumn 2003, pp. 48-51.

There is currently little documented information available about how families locate, gain access to and use, child abuse prevention services. In order to start to redress this knowledge gap, the Commonwealth

Department of Family and Community Services requested the National Child Protection Clearinghouse at the Australian Institute of Family Studies to undertake a small exploratory research project. The aim of the research was to investigate issues impacting on accessibility of services designed to prevent maltreatment, and how families with a child at risk of being maltreated avail themselves of such services.

Putting children's services in their place: a call for universal children's services to prevent child abuse and neglect in Australia, by G. Winkworth, *Children Australia*, Vol.28, no.1, 2003, pp. 11-16.



This paper discusses the need for a national early childhood intervention policy in Australia, including a universal approach to children's services as a platform for the prevention of child abuse and neglect, supporting families and enriching the lives of all children. It considers the literature on early intervention, including the theoretical and research base of successful programs and the link between early intervention and the prevention of child abuse and neglect. It examines the way the child welfare and children's services sectors have grown and the imperative at the beginning of the 21st century for a closer alignment of services. The United Kingdom's 'Sure Start' early intervention strategy is considered in so far as it attempts to develop a more comprehensive approach to child welfare by developing programs which are based on the research. Finally the paper asserts that recent strategies introduced by Federal and State Governments to promote childhood health and wellbeing are positive first steps, but need to go further to seriously address increasing numbers of children reported as suffering harm through abuse and/or neglect. (Journal abstract)

Review of child protection in SA, by R. Layton, *Law Society of South Australia Bulletin*, Vol.25, no.4, May 2003, pp. 24-25.

In March 2002 the South Australian government appointed the author to undertake the Review of Child Protection in SA. In this article she summarises the major recommendations made in the report resulting from the review, which was tabled in March 2003. Among the recommendations are: structural reform, including the establishment of a state child protection board, a commissioner for children and young people, a state guardian for children in detention or foster care, and a child death and serious injury review; changes to the practices of the South Australian Department of Family and Youth Services; a review of aspects of the criminal justice system and amendments to legislation, including that relating to child witnesses and the evidence of children.

Child protection workers

Defining quality care for looked after children: frontline workers' perspectives on standards and all that?, by D. Watson, *Child & Family Social Work*, Vol.8, no.1. Feb. 2003, pp. 67-77.

The perspectives of residential childcare workers in the UK on quality services and performance measurements are examined. Workers' definitions of quality services are noted. This approach is very different to the government's emphasis on process rather than outcomes. This paper explores how these two approaches can be combined to provide quality services.

Elements of satisfying organisational climates in child welfare agencies, by S.G Bednar, *Families in Society*, Vol.84, no.1, Jan. - Mar. 2003, pp. 7-12.

Burnout and job dissatisfaction among child welfare workers can lead to rapid staff turnover and impaired performance. There is plenty of information about how to create more satisfying work environments. But will creating a satisfying work environment result in an increase in worker retention rates and client outcome levels in the longer term?

Child sexual abuse

Is child sexual abuse declining? Evidence from a population-based survey of men and women in Australia, by M. Dunne ...[et al], *Child Abuse & Neglect*, Vol.27, no.2, Feb 2003, pp. 141-152.

The incidence of reported child sexual abuse in the United States has declined over the past ten years. In this study the authors examine age cohort differences in self reported child sexual abuse cases to see if the same rate of decline is reflected in the general population in Australia. Methodology involved a cross-sectional, telephone based survey of a randomly selected national sample of men and women (876

males, 908 females). Although they warn that a simple interpretation of the statistics of reported abuse may obscure the prevalence of unreported cases, the authors do believe that a decline in child sexual abuse in the general population in Australia is occurring.

Rethinking our knowledge about child sexual abuse, by J. Southwell, *Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre Newsletter*, no.2, Winter 2003, pp. 3-7.

Surveying the historical changes and developments in our knowledge and understanding of child sexual abuse (CSA), the author points out that there is no single unanimous view of what constitutes CSA, what is wrong with it and what should be done about it. She describes our awareness of CSA as having grown from almost complete ignorance 30 years ago, to an understanding governed largely by psychological and feminist constructions of child abuse as a social problem. The author discusses various frameworks that inform the social policy agenda for CSA - political, social, moral and legal - and reviews the scope of the Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre's forthcoming Discussion Paper, due for release in August 2003.

Understanding and assessing child sexual maltreatment, by K.C. Faller, Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, c2003.

This book reviews the skills and knowledge needed for child protection workers and related professionals in America. Topics include definitions and signs of abuse, collaboration with other services and professionals, assessment of suspected abuse, including interview techniques, evaluation, and issues of child memory, and considerations of allegations in foster care, divorce, and day care situations. Brief case studies are used to highlight issues.

Data collection

The national out-of-home care data collection: where to from here? by H. Johnstone, *Children Australia*, Vol.28, no.2, 2003, pp. 45-47.

This paper outlines the parameters of the national out-of-home care data collection managed by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. The paper discusses the need for national data, what is included in the national data collection and the current data collection process. In addition, possible developments to the national collection are outlined, in particular the proposal to collect the data electronically in unit record format. The benefits of this would include greater flexibility of the data and the ability to analyse how children move through the child protection and out-of-home care systems. (Journal abstract)

Domestic violence

Child protection social work and men's abuse of women: an Irish study, by S. Holt, *Child & Family Social Work*, Vol.8, no.1, Feb. 2003, pp. 53-65.

This paper reveals the problems faced by Irish child protection workers when there is also domestic violence in the home. A lack of agency practice guidelines, no agreed definition of intimate violence and an absence of a team policy all highlight the difficulties and dilemmas faced by the child protection workers. The research identified the need for a clear policy and best practice guidelines for workers in this area.

Good practice guidelines: domestic violence and child protection, by J. Irwin, F. Waugh & M. Wilkinson, *Developing Practice: The Child, Youth and Family Work Journal*, no.6, Autumn 2003, pp. 38-39.

With a view to improving understanding of domestic violence and child protection, Barnados Australia and the University of Sydney undertook a research project to examine practitioners' knowledge and understanding of domestic violence and child protection, to review the child protection strategies utilised by practitioners, and to identify effective strategies which could be used in responding to women and children. A key outcome of the project was to develop a template of good practice guidelines to assist practitioners. This article outlines the knowledge, skills and values needed by individual practitioners, agency responsibilities and roles for interagency collaboration and the community.

Effects

Children with reported histories of sexual abuse: utilizing multiple perspectives to understand clinical and psychosocial profiles, by C. Walrath ...[et al], *Child Abuse & Neglect*, Vol.27, no.5, May 2003, pp. 509-524.

A large sample of children, aged from 5 - 17.5 years, who were referred to Community Mental Health services were assessed on a range of variables. Children with a history of child sexual abuse presented with higher rates of depression and anxiety disorders than children who had not been sexually abused. They were also more likely to be female Caucasian with a complex history of life challenges. The complex history of these children is best understood from multiple perspectives. Using child, caregiver and clinician rated information provides a comprehensive profile that can be used to tailor service plans for the individual child.

Wounded innocents and fallen angels: child abuse and child aggression, by G.K. Gregory, Westport, Conn., Praeger, 2003.

This book discusses the causes and contexts of violence both against and by children, including the role of child neglect and resilience in children, and the cycle of violence in parents abused themselves as children, and is illustrated with clinical and legal case studies.

Fathers

Fathers and child abuse allegations in the context of parental separation and divorce, by T. Brown, *Family Court Review*, Vol.41, no.3, Jul 2003, pp. 367-380.

Issues surrounding stereotyping of fathers in families where child abuse allegations have been made has been increasing. In this article the author examines the reality of the role that fathers play in relation to child abuse allegations in the context of parental separation and divorce, as projected against current research.

Female sex offenders

Adolescent females who have sexually offended: comparisons with delinquent adolescent female offenders and adolescent males who sexually offend, by E.K. Kubik, J.E. Hecker & S. Righthand, *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, Vol.11, no.3, 2003, pp. 63-83.

Adolescent female sex offenders are a little studied group. This article compared this group with (Study 1) a group of adolescent non-sexual offenders and (Study 2) a group of adolescent male sex offenders. Findings for Study 1 found that sexually offending females had less anti-social problems than the non-sexually offending group. Study 2 found few differences between the two sexually offending groups.

Feminist theory

New feminist stories of child sexual abuse: sexual scripts and dangerous dialogues, edited by P. Reavey & S. Warner, London, New York, Routledge, 2003.

This book contributes to the understanding of child sexual abuse, as a Western cultural, political, and language construction. Academic, activist, and clinical writers explore theories of gender, childhood, abuse, and defining harm, mindful of feminist post-structuralism and improving interventions for women survivors.

Gender of child sex offenders

Child sexual abuse and the male monopoly: an empirical exploration of gender and a sexual interest in children, by M. Freel, *British Journal of Social Work*, Vol.33, no.4, Jun. 2003, pp. 481-498.

This study confirms previous research on gender differences in regard to a sexual interest in children. Significantly more males than females expressed a sexual interest in children. Childhood sexual abuse was not found to be a predictive factor of a sexual interest in children.

Home visiting services

Multi-level determinants of mother's engagement in home visitation services, by W.M McGuigan, A.P. Katzev & C.C Pratt, *Family Relations*, Vol.52, no.3, Jul. 2003, pp. 271-278.

This study investigated factors that influenced the non-participation of first time mothers in home visiting services. Poor community health services or social and family isolation contributed in a significant way to a reduction in the use of home visiting services.



Multi-level determinants of retention in a home-visiting child abuse prevention program, by W.M McGuigan, A.P. Katzev & C.C Pratt, *Child Abuse & Neglect*, Vol.27, no.4, Apr. 2003, pp. 363-380.

Research on home visiting programs has tended to concentrate on the characteristics of the families or the home visitor in order to ascertain which families remain in the program and which families leave. This research adds another level of analysis - the community. Families in violent communities, young mothers and white non-Hispanic mothers were more likely to leave the program. Home visitors who received more hours of direct supervision had better retention rates than those with less direct supervision. In order to increase retention rates all of these issues need to be addressed and the programs adapted to meet the needs of families in different community environments.

Reducing program attrition in home visiting: what do we need to know?, by D. Olds, *Child Abuse & Neglect*, Vol.27, no.4, Apr. 2003, pp. 359-361.

This is an invited commentary on the research by McGuigan, Katzev and Pratt on retention rates in home visiting programs.

Interagency collaboration

A developmental framework for collaboration in child-serving agencies, by S. Hodges, M. Hernandez & T. Nesman, *Journal of Child & Family Studies*, Vol.12, no.3, Sept. 2003, pp. 291-305.

This article provides a framework which will help identify, define and develop the stages involved in building local collaborative services. Strong interagency collaboration and family participation were identified as two processes that need to be fully developed and woven together for true collaboration to be achieved.

Internet & child abuse

Child pornography: an internet crime, M. Taylor & E. Quayle, Hove, East Sussex, New York, NY, Brunner-Routledge, 2003.

"The availability of child pornography on the Internet has become a cause of huge social concern in recent years. This book considers the reality behind the often hysterical media coverage of the topic. Drawing on extensive new research findings, it: examines how child pornography is used on the Internet, identifies the social context in which such use occurs, [and] develops a model of offending behaviour to help better understand and deal with the processes of offending" [from cover].

'Downtime' for children on the Internet: recognising a new form of child abuse, by J. Stanley, *Family Matters*, no.65, Winter 2003, pp.22-27.

The author argues that the community has a responsibility to protect children from abusive experiences through the Internet, especially those children whose parents are unable or unwilling to protect them. Internet risks to children are discussed, as are types of children likely to be at risk, and the importance of recognising and responding to Internet abuse is highlighted. What is required is more research, and comprehensive prevention and intervention strategies to protect all children who use the Internet, and particularly those who may be most vulnerable to experiencing this form of abuse.

Home Office task force on child protection on the internet: good practice models and guidance for the internet industry on: chat services, instant messaging (IM), web based services, London, Home Office Communication Directorate, 2003.

Voluntary guidelines for chat, instant messaging and web based services designed to make the Internet safer for children. The guidelines were developed in response to concerns about paedophiles contacting children through online communications.

The protection of children from offensive material on the Internet, by J. Stanley, *Small Screen*, no.184, Mar 2003, pp.1-2.

The past decade has seen rapid development and growth in the use of electronic, computer based communication and information sharing via the Internet. There is growing evidence that the Internet is a new medium through which sexual abuse of children may occur. The author outlines some of the dangers for children associated with Internet use, and the need for research to investigate the impact of exposure of offensive material on children. The author also argues for legislation aimed at providing more effective protection for children, such as central, large scale filtering.

Legal proceedings

The experiences of child complainants of sexual abuse in the criminal justice system, by C. Eastwood, Canberra, ACT, Australian Institute of Criminology, 2003.

The aim of the research reported in this paper was to investigate from the perspective of child complainants of sexual abuse, significant processes and consequences of involvement in the criminal justice system. The key finding was that when they were asked if they would ever report sexual abuse again following their experiences in the criminal justice system, only 44 percent of children in Queensland, 33 percent in New South Wales and 64 percent in Western Australia indicated they would. Comments from the children indicated a widespread belief that the process was not worth the trauma suffered. The paper suggests that legislative and procedural reform and a more child centred policy focus are required.

Family law and child protection, by M.J. Osborne, *Family Matters*, no.65, Winter 2003, pp. 73-75.

At the request of the Attorney-General, the Family Law Council has considered options for reform relating to the efficient and effective integrated delivery of child and family law services in relation to the care

and protection of children. This summary of the Council's final report, Family Law and Child Protection (2002) sets out its background and main recommendations.

Safeguarding children's interests in welfare proceedings: the Scottish experience, by M. Hill ...[et al], *Journal of Social Welfare & Family Law*, Vol.25, no.1, 2003, pp. 1-21.

In Scotland 'safeguarders' are appointed to represent a child's best interests in children's hearings. The recruitment, training, monitoring and support of safeguarders is examined. Aspects of the service which may lead to questions about its consistency and independence are discussed.

Male victims

Young men living through and with child sexual abuse, by A. Durham, *British Journal of Social Work*, Vol.33, no.3, Apr. 2003, pp. 309-323.

This paper examines the experience and impact of child sexual abuse on young men. It details how the young men were targeted by the perpetrators and how they were made feel responsible for the abuse. This sense of guilt about the abuse made disclosure extremely difficult. Compulsory heterosexism and homophobia further complicated and exacerbated the experiences of the young men.

Young men surviving child sexual abuse: research stories and lessons for therapeutic practice, by A. Durham, Chichester, UK, Wiley, c2003,.

This book presents interviews with 7 English youths on their experiences of child sexual abuse and the impact this has had on their lives so far. Drawing on this research, the author develops a therapeutic model and explores issues in practice and theory.

Parent education

Implementing parent management training in the context of poverty, by M. Eamon Keegan & M. Venkataraman, *American Journal of Family Therapy*, Vol.31, no.4, Jul.-Sept. 2003, pp. 281-293.

Parent Management Training (PMT) is an effective and preferred treatment for children exhibiting externalizing behaviours. This paper proposes that children from poor families are less likely to benefit from PMT. This is because the same factors that explain why poor children are more likely to exhibit behaviour problems interfere with successful PMT. Also, such interventions are not acceptable to poor parents and are less likely to be adopted.

Parental risk factors

Child-related cognitions and affective functioning of physically abusive and comparison parents, by M.E. Haskett ...[et al.], *Child Abuse & Neglect*, Vol.27, no.6, Jun. 2003, pp. 663-686.

This research uses the cognitive behavioral model of abusive parenting as tool to examine risk factors for child abuse. A selection of risk factors were identified and examined. A combination of social cognitive and affective variables were found to be predictive of child abuse.

Defining and classifying supervisory neglect, by C. Coohy, *Child Maltreatment*, Vol.8, no.2, May 2003, pp. 145-156.

This study aims to develop and test a classification system that will define different types of parental supervisory problems that constitute neglect. The system's interrater reliability was tested against 602 reported cases of abuse and neglect and found to be excellent for most supervisory problems. The most common supervisory problems were not watching a child closely enough and leaving a child alone or with an unsuitable carer.

Drug use by parents: a challenge for family reunification practice, by A.N. Maluccio & F. Ainsworth, *Children & Youth Services Review*, Vol.25, no.7, 2003, pp. 511-533.

This article argues that the present family reunification system needs to be re-assessed because many more children are entering out-of-home care due to parental drug use. Recent family reunification research is reviewed and the importance of family reunification is confirmed. The authors propose a new, enhanced three-stage model of family reunification for families where there is parental drug use.

Parental drug use: the bigger picture: a review of the literature, by N. Patton, St Kilda South, Vic, Mirabel Foundation, 2003.

This report collates the current literature on children and families who have experienced parental illicit drug use. The author discusses the effects of prenatal exposure to illicit drug use on physical development, cognitive development and psychosocial development, and the effects of environmental factors at the same stages of development. She discusses child protection intervention, family preservation and the rights of the child. She also examines the commonalities between children affected by parental illicit drug use and other minority groups of children in the community, such as those whose parents have a disability or mental health issues.

Prevention programs

Child sexual abuse: prevention or promotion?, by R. Bolen, *Social Work*, Vol.48, no.2, Apr. 2003, pp.174-185.

Child sexual abuse prevention programs have not reduced the prevalence of abuse. This article argues that a school-based healthy relationships program may be more effective. This approach is compared to the victim-based approach.

Research

Strategies for obtaining parental consent to participate in research, by A.C. Fletcher & A.G. Hunter, *Family Relations*, Vol.52, no.3, Jul. 2003, pp. 216-221.

This article describes procedures that resulted in a 95% return rate of consent forms from parents allowing their children to participate in research. These procedures worked in schools across a variety of racial and socioeconomic compositions.

Resilience

Family resilience and good child outcomes: an overview of the research literature, by R. Mackay, *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand*, no.20, Jun 2003, pp. 98-118.

A review of the international research literature on family resilience shows that processes that operate at the family level - including strong emotional bonds, effective patterns of communication, the use of coping strategies and family belief systems, especially those based on spiritual or religious values - are important means by which families manage to cope with adversity. Positive parenting is a key influence on children's development, especially in adverse financial circumstances. Wider family involvement can also assist families to cope with stress. In particular, non-resident fathers and other father figures have an important role to play in promoting the development of children in lone-mother families, while the burden of teenage parenthood can be eased by multi-generational co-residence. On the question of whether it is possible to inculcate resilience in families, evidence from a range of recent evaluations of selected intervention programmes shows that approaches that work best are those that involve early intervention, that are sensitive to families' cultures and values and that assist in relieving families' ecological stresses. (Journal abstract)

Family resilience and good child outcomes: a review of the literature, by A. Kalil, Wellington, NZ, Centre for Social Research and Evaluation, Ministry of Social Development, 2003.

This report focuses on the issue of family resilience. The central question is why is it that some families manage to cope well when facing stress or confronted with a crisis, while other families in similar circumstances fail to do so. The report draws on a wide range of literature to examine how the concept of family resilience has been defined and applied by scholars in this field and to document the research findings about how family resilience manifests itself. The following conclusions were reached: early intervention is key to obtaining positive results; different programs are needed for different types of family environments; and it is necessary to build the factors that protect families and to reduce the ecological risks that threaten family functioning.

Hardiness as a moderator of shame associated with childhood sexual abuse, by L. Feinauer, H.G. Hilton, & E. H. Callaghan, *American Journal of Family Therapy*, Vol.31, no.2, Mar.-Apr. 2003, pp. 65-78.

Adult female survivors of childhood sexual abuse were surveyed about their reactions to their childhood trauma. The negative impact of childhood sexual abuse was found to be moderated by hardiness (a protective or transformational style of coping with trauma).

Risk factors

Child maltreatment in the “children of the nineties”: the role of the child, by P. Sidebotham, J. Heron & H. Grigg Baxter, *Child Abuse & Neglect*, Vol.27, no.3, Mar. 2003, pp. 337-352.

This study examined whether child characteristics may lead to abuse or maltreatment. Low birth weight, unintended pregnancies, poor health and development in infancy often resulted in maltreatment. Negative attributes in infancy, feeding and crying problems and temper tantrums were not associated with maltreatment. So whilst child factors are important they are only one part of a complex situation.

Sex offenders

Predators: pedophiles, rapists, and other sex offenders: who they are, how they operate, and how we can protect ourselves and our children, by A.C. Salter, New York, Basic Books, c2003.

“World-renowned psychologist Anna Salter has been studying sexual offenders and their victims for more than twenty years. Now, for the first time, she uses her expertise to dispel the myths surrounding sexual offenders - how they think, how they deceive their victims, and how they elude the law [...] Why is sexual abuse so common, and how do predators cover their tracks? [...] Anna Salter argues that it is our miscon-

ceptions about predators that make us so vulnerable to them. Drawing on the stories of abusers, told in their own words, Salter heds light on the surprising motives behind sexual abuse.”—Book jacket.

Sibling incest

But she didn't say no: an exploration of sibling sexual abuse, by M.J. McVeigh, *Australian Social Work*, Vol.56, no.2, Jun 2003, pp. 116-126.

Sibling sexual abuse often causes polarities of view in professional and client groups alike. These views range from seeing it as benign to damaging. For professionals new to the field this paper gives an overview of the discussion that sibling sexual abuse is as traumatic as parental sexual abuse, and has lasting impact on its victims. Recognising the particular dynamics of sibling sexual abuse and effect on victims raises the challenge of case management in families where it occurs. This paper explores this challenge within the New South Wales context. (Journal abstract)

Statistics

Child maltreatment 2001: 12 years of reporting, Washington, DC, Children's Bureau, 2003.

Statistical data relating to child maltreatment in the U.S. for the calendar year 2001. Where available case level data was used, otherwise aggregate data was used. Maltreatment includes neglect, medical neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse and emotional or psychological abuse. A brief state by state commentary is included.

Child protection Australia 2001-02, Canberra, ACT, Australian Institute of Health & Welfare, 2003.

This report provides comprehensive information on child protection services provided by State and Territory community service departments. The report contains data for 2001 - 2002, as well as trend data on child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations, children on care and protection orders and children in out-of-home care. Detailed information on the characteristics of children in the child protection system is presented, specifically data on their age, sex and Indigenous status. In addition for child protection substantiations, data on the family type, the relationship of the person believed responsible and the source of notification are also included. For children on care and protection orders there are data on types of orders and living arrangements, and for children in out-of-home care there are data on types of placements and length of time in out-of-home care.

New books

The Clearinghouse Library has recently added two new books to its collection addressing the sexual abuse of boys.



Young Men Surviving Child Sexual Abuse: Research Stories and Lessons for Therapeutic Practice, by Andrew Durham, Wiley, 2003. Price \$68.

In this book, Andrew Durham, a consultant social work practitioner, describes his original research undertaken with young men close to or in the adolescent years. The book features extensive narrative, as the life-story approach taken allows the young men to theorise their own experience and to understand how and why child sexual abuse has had a harmful and long-lasting impact on their day-to-day lives.

Alongside the research stories the author presents a theoretical framework for understanding male sexual abuse, as well as a wide range of accessible practice materials. This book will be valuable for those working with children and young people who are recovering from child sexual abuse.



Don't Tell: The Sexual Abuse of Boys, by Michel Dorais, translated by Isabel Denholm Meyer, McGill-Queens' University Press, 2002. Price \$35.

The author, Michael Dorais, suggests that nearly one male in six has been the victim of sexual abuse during childhood or adolescence – and yet this abuse remains a taboo subject, even among victims. In *Don't Tell*, Dorais gives the victims a voice, providing a sensitive analysis of their traumas and self-questioning, and offering strategies for coping.

Don't Tell examines the effects of sexual abuse on the emotional and sexual life of men, including their sense of self and their personal relationships. Using the first-hand accounts of victims Dorais shows that certain reactions are specific to male victims of abuse as they attempt to preserve a sense of physical integrity and masculinity. He also provides innovative strategies for both prevention and treatment that will be of use to those who have suffered abuse as well as to their families and all those who are trying to help them – spouses, friends, social workers, and therapists.



Clearinghouse services

The National Child Protection Clearinghouse is located at the Australian Institute of Family Studies and provides stakeholders with a variety of services, most of which are provided free of charge.

The Clearinghouse collects, produces and distributes information and resources, conducts research and offers advice on the latest developments in child abuse prevention, child protection and associated family violence.

Resources

Research, literature and other information resources in the area of child abuse prevention and child protection are collected by the Clearinghouse Library.

Materials can be borrowed from the Clearinghouse, by contacting your local or departmental library and arranging an interlibrary loan.

Small non-government organisations may contact the Clearinghouse directly for loans under the special non-government organisations membership scheme. Phone (03) 9214 7888 and ask for the librarian on duty.

Publications

The Clearinghouse produces Issues Papers, Newsletters and other publications which are mailed free of charge to members of the mailing list. Clearinghouse staff also regularly produce papers for a range of other journals and newsletters.

Good practice database

The Clearinghouse maintains and develops a “good practice” programs/research database to document child abuse prevention projects and activities.

Advisory service

This free advisory service offers answers queries and conducts literature searches, while the Clearinghouse research staff are available to help with more specialised questions. Phone (03) 9214 7888. Fax (03) 9214 7839. Email: fic@aifs.gov.au

Email discussion list

Professionals working in the field are invited to join the *childprotect* email discussion group on research, practice and policy issues relating to child abuse prevention and child protection.

Research

The Clearinghouse research staff undertake primary and secondary research projects. These may be commissioned by the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services or by other government or non-government agencies.

Policy advice

The Clearinghouse offers policy advice to the Australian Government and other government agencies on all matters relating to child abuse and child abuse prevention.

Presentations

Clearinghouse staff present at conferences and conduct workshops and seminars for government agencies and community groups across Australia.

Become part of the child abuse prevention network!

The National Child Protection Clearinghouse at the Australian Institute of Family Studies serves as an interchange point for information, research and initiatives in the child abuse prevention field. It collects and distributes information, and aims for a two-way involvement with the community concerned with child protection. To participate in the work of the Clearinghouse:

- send us your materials relevant to child abuse prevention;
- complete a questionnaire on good practice program activities relevant to child protection with which you are involved;
- join the National Clearinghouse mailing list – you will receive two newsletters and two issues papers free of charge each year;
- join the *childprotect* discussion list.

Please fill in details overleaf ►



Clearinghouse publications

The National Child Protection Clearinghouse produces three types of Discussion Papers and Newsletters – which are available free of charge via the Clearinghouse website (www.aifs.gov.au/nch/) or by contacting the Australian Institute of Family Studies. Phone: (03) 9214 7888. Email: ncpc@aifs.gov.au/

Child Abuse Prevention Issues Papers

- No 1. *Child abuse and neglect: incidence and prevention*, by Marianne James, 1994.
- No 2. *Domestic violence as a form of child abuse: identification and prevention*, by Marianne James, 1994.
- No 3. *Child abuse prevention: a perspective on parent enhancement programs from the United States*, by Marianne James, 1994.
- No 4. *Spotlight on child neglect*, by Adam M. Tomison, Autumn 1995.
- No 5. *Update on child sexual abuse*, by Adam M. Tomison, Spring 1995.
- No 6. *The intergenerational transmission of child maltreatment*, by Adam M. Tomison, Autumn 1996.
- No 7. *Child maltreatment and disability*, by Adam M. Tomison, Spring 1996.
- No 8. *Emotional abuse: the hidden form of maltreatment*, by Adam M. Tomison and Joe Tucci, Spring 1997.
- No 9. *Long-term effects of child sexual abuse*, by Paul E. Mullen and Jillian Fleming, Autumn 1998.
- No 10. *Valuing parent education: a cornerstone of child abuse prevention*, by Adam M. Tomison, Spring 1998.
- No 11. *Community-based approaches in preventing child maltreatment*, by Adam M. Tomison and Sarah Wise, Autumn 1999.
- No 12. *Evaluating child abuse prevention programs*, by Adam M. Tomison, Autumn 2000.
- No 13. *Exploring family violence: links between child maltreatment and domestic violence*, by Adam M. Tomison, Winter 2000.

- No 14. *Child abuse and the media*, by Chris Goddard and Bernadette J. Saunders, Winter 2001.
- No 15. *Child abuse and the internet*, by Janet Stanley, Summer 2001.
- No 16. *The role of mass media in facilitating community education and child abuse prevention strategies*, by Bernadette J. Saunders and Chris Goddard, Winter 2002.
- No 17. *Preventing child abuse: Changes to family support in the 21st century*, by Adam M. Tomison, Summer 2002.
- No 18. *Accessibility Issues in child abuse prevention services*, by Janet Stanley and Katie Kovacs, Spring 2003.
- No 19. *Child abuse and neglect in Indigenous Australian communities*, Janet Stanley, Adam M. Tomison and Julian Pocock, Spring 2003.

Child Abuse Prevention Discussion Papers

- No 1. *Child maltreatment and family structure*, by Adam M. Tomison, 1996.
- No 2. *Child maltreatment and substance abuse*, by Adam M. Tomison, 1996.
- No 3. *Child maltreatment and mental disorder*, by Adam M. Tomison, 1996.

Child Abuse Prevention Newsletters

The National Child Protection Clearinghouse Newsletter, *Child Abuse Prevention*, is produced twice yearly to keep members up-to-date with new information and provide a forum for ideas.

← For details see overleaf

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