

CONSEQUENCES OF UNADDRESSED SIGNS OF CHILD ABUSE IN ECE

CRITICAL TO STOPPING A LIFETIME OF TRAUMA

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

- Introduction
- The Making of an Advocate
- Obvious Signs of Child Abuse
- Observe, Listen, and Document
- Awareness of Relationships and Experiences
- School Based Examples
- Adults Reveal the Signs They Felt They Showed as Children
- All Child Abuse Victims Age
- Guardianship Review Program (GRP) - Superior Court
- How GRP Relates to Child Abuse
- Case Examples
- Questions

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The Making of an Advocate

My Journey

Chicago was my playground as a child. What you see on the news was happening around me, but that was not my experience. My brother, sister, cousins, and I, played in the streets, walked home from school together, and we knew every colorful character in our neighborhood. I was devastated when my parents said we were moving to California.

At 8 years old we moved to the Coachella Valley and it was a culture shock. But I made friends quickly, yet there was something different about them. I didn't understand why they wanted to play, eat, and stay the night at my house. If you came to my house, you had to help with chores, eat home cooked meals at the dinner table, and other things kids thought made their parents mean. I wanted to be at my friend's houses where there were snacks, a pool, and their parents weren't home.

It didn't take long to realize how many of my new friends were being abused. I remember their experiences and see how they still carry the trauma with them. What I remember the most, is the details of the abuse. They were not mentally, physically, and sexually abused. They were literally kicked through a screen door, given cocaine at 11 years old, punch in the head so hard they lost their hearing, and having their parents take nude polaroid pictures of them.

I learned that the details of abuse are crucial to understanding, treating, and healing.

OBVIOUS SIGNS OF CHILD ABUSE

Physical - Bruises, bite marks, welts...

Mental - How they role play with friends, anxiety...

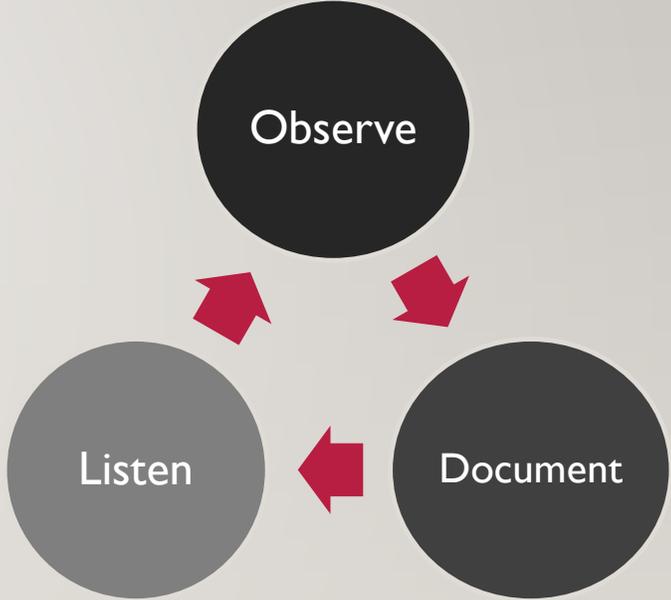
Sexual - Hyper-sexualized behaviors...

Neglect - Lack of emotions, overattachment, poor hygiene...

Third Party - Information relayed from children, parents, friends...



YOU MUST



CHILDREN & PARENTS

What Has Happened in a Child's Life?

Be Aware of Relationships and Experiences



Christmas Car Accident – A car runs a red light and hits the family's car. The driver is ejected onto their windshield and dies as the children watch.



On the Move – Mom and child flee their home state from an abusive husband and father, who was imprisoned for the abuse. He escapes from prison and is on the run.



Wicked Stepmother – Unbeknownst to dad, his new wife has serious mental health issues. Separation leads to false child abuse allegations, physical assaults, and stalking.



The Act – The child has a serious food allergy. Extreme conditions are met to ensure inclusion at lunch and all events. Time reveals the child does not have the allergy and may never had it.

Example 1

Friendship or Domestic Violence

What Was Seen:

Two 5 year old girls were best friends and inseparable at school. Over time you could see that they had a love-hate relationship. When they would have an argument, one would go play with a new friend while the other watched with intense jealousy. Or one would make friends with someone else and flaunt their new friendship while excluding the other for several days. There were “or else” threats and even ones of violence. When all the children in the class were gathered together, they would quietly harm each other by pinching and scratching. The marks were in inconspicuous areas and significant enough to be visible that night by their parents or by school the next day. There was retribution if one of them told about the threats or the injuries.

What Could Have Been Assumed:

- This is common behavior seen at this age
- Encourage them to make friends with others
- ?



Reality Was (Child A):

- For years, mom was raped by stepdad as a child. Grandma knew about the abuse and ignored it
 - During this time, mom realized her daughter is the same age she was when the rape began. Now mom refuses to let her daughter visit at grandma's house
 - Mom does not know if her daughter was abused by grandpa and became extremely protective of her daughter
 - It was my discretion to ban the grandparents from school grounds and all school events
-

Reality Was (Child B):

- Mom was at a point in her life where her childhood memories were resurfacing
- Mom began decided she will not tolerate any drinking in her home due to her childhood with an alcoholic father
- This new stipulation caused tension between the parents, as dad was a beer-a-night type person
- Grandma lived with them and took care of the child. Grandma was older and later revealed she didn't have the patience to take care of the child all day. Often, the days would end with yelling and spanking
- Mom and grandma lived in a physically and mentally abusive environment for years. Each had PTSD type behaviors from it
- I discussed projecting trauma with both families and the impact it has on their children

Example 2

There Is a Bear in My Closet

What Was Seen:

A 6 year old boy was found in class, near a book shelf, laying on top of a female classmate. The teacher reported that the boy was laying directing on top of the child, face-to-face, and making sex-like motions. The child was brought to my office after the incident. We discussed what happened in class and how he felt about it. The discussion led to him telling me that he sees a bear in his closet at night. Bear would come out the closet and touch him and make him do things.

What Could Have Been Assumed:

- He was dreaming or having a nightmare
- He might have seen his parents have sex
- ?



Reality Was:

- The child was Native American
- His uncle had recently moved in with his family
- His uncle's nickname was Bear
- The parents did not know that Bear was abusing their son
- The parents acted on the same day that they learned of what their son had reported to me
- As a mandated reporter, I ensured the parents contacted the proper authorities

Example 3

Emotionally Unavailable

What Was Seen:

A 5 year old boy and 8 year old girl (siblings) were often taken care of by their “grandma”. Grandma let me know she would be having a surgery and would not be picking up the children for awhile. Both mom and dad began dropping off and picking up the children. I began seeing less of dad and more of mom and eventually dad stopped coming. There were times when I would see mom and she looked disassociated. During parent-teacher conferences, mom had a meltdown that caused me to get involved. When we talked about the incident, there was no meaningful conversation and she looked and acted hollow. It came to a point where I had to tell mom she could not pick the children up in this state and they are welcome to stay in aftercare until someone else could.

What Could Have Been Assumed:

- Mom was on drugs
- Mom had mental health issues
- The parents are no longer together
- ?



Reality Was:

- Grandma was a neighbor who knew the children from birth and became their caregiver
- Mom was diagnosed as having Manic Depression and was heavily medicated
- Due to mom's mental state, she lost her executive job
- Dad had to work in another city to make more money and also chose to be away from mom
- Over the summer mom received Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT)
- When mom returned in the fall, it was obvious that her mental health had deteriorated
- Grandma returned to caring for the children ahead of schedule due to mom's decline
- Manic Depression was prominent in mom's family and resulted in at least 2 suicides
- It was revealed that the daughter was emotionally neglected as a child and had been caring for her little brother since he was born

Example 4

A House Full of Boys

What Was Seen:

A 7 year old boy was having increasingly challenging behaviors in class. He would have good days and then he would have days filled with intense emotions and actions. This includes hitting other students, spitting at them, deliberately destroying their work, and the classroom. He would yell, hit, and consciously defy any instructions from his teacher. Children would flinch around him and even blame him for things when he was absent that day. Parents and staff had voiced he should be removed from the school. Mom and dad were involved parents and continuously collaborated with the school to determine solutions.

What Could Have Been Assumed:

- He has behavioral issues
- He needs a different school environment
- His parents were not following through at home
- ?

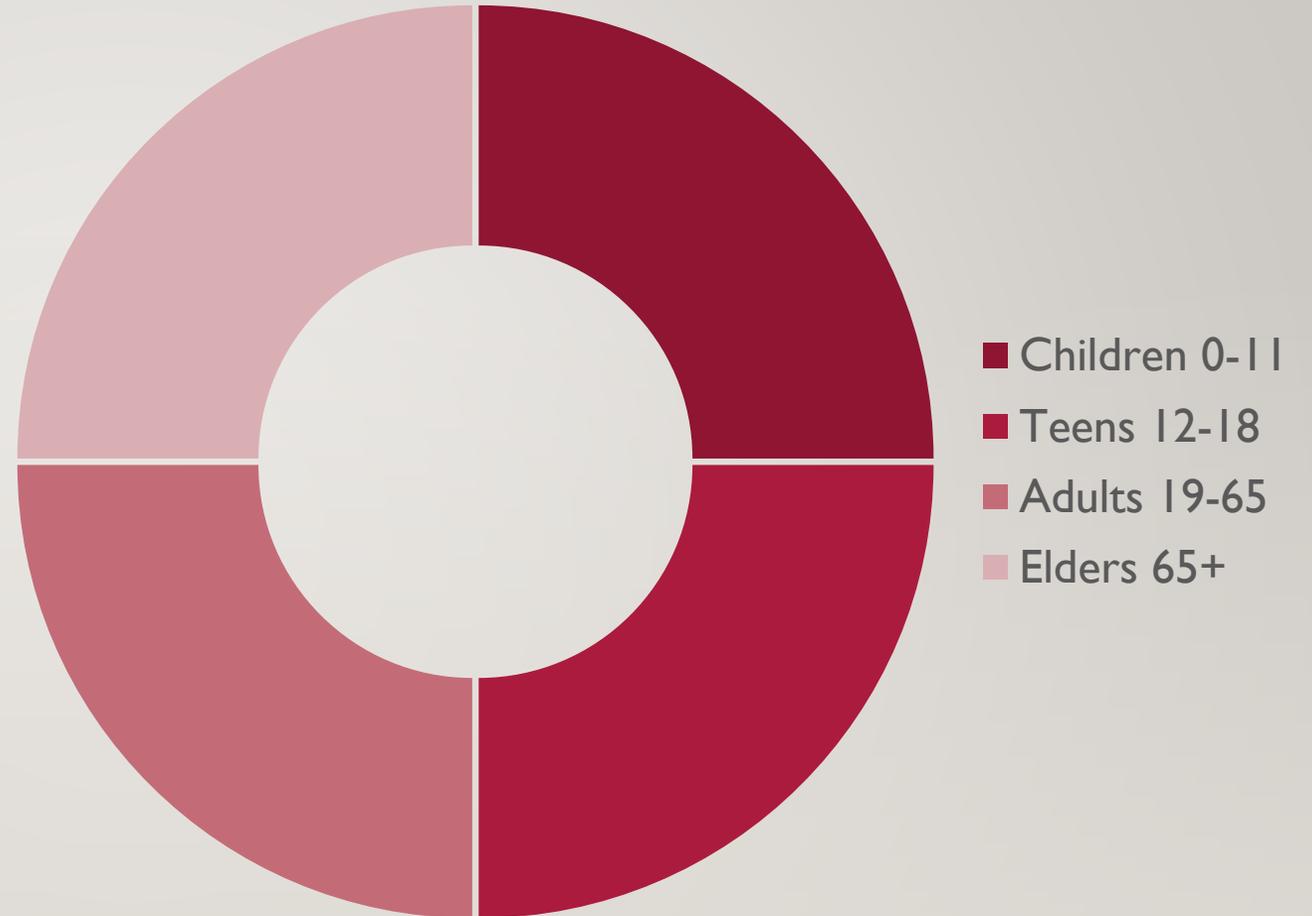


Reality Was:

- The child was 1 of 4 boys and he was the youngest by 10 years
- The 3 oldest boys were from mom's previous marriage
- The older boys were going through normal teenage dilemmas
- However, it was recently revealed that the 2 oldest boys had been sexually assaulted by a family member
- The parents were busy dealing with the older boy's issues and behaviors which were increasing
 - Ex.) Sneaking out of the house at night, smoking weed, girlfriends, and the stress of school and sports
- These typical teenage stressors were coupled with unknown sexual trauma.
- One brother, acted out with anger and aggression which he took out on his mom, his little brother, and dog
- Dad was ready to take "his" son from the house in order to protect him from the physical abuse by the older brother

ALL CHILD ABUSE VICTIMS AGE

WHAT HAPPENS TO THOSE
CHILDREN WHOSE SIGNS
WENT UNADDRESSED?



ADULTS REVEAL WHAT SIGNS THEY SHOWED AS CHILDREN

When I was 5 years old my older brother began raping me. I wouldn't shower and I gained weight thinking it would make it stop. By the time I was in high school, I was 5'2" and 250lbs.

At 8 years old I was living by myself. My dad was in prison for drugs and my mom was a prostitute who rarely came home. I stayed in the house as long as I could. I knew staying in the background meant no questions.

I tried to please the adults who abused me, but I intentionally fought with those who loved me. Since high school, I provoked nice boyfriends to abuse me. I also dated men who were violent and controlling because that was love.

I know now that my dad was a narcissist. He lied about any and everything to make him seem like he was somebody. Since I was 14, he put me in positions to be noticed by men that were older and wealthy.

My parents used to fight all the time. My mom was the worst and used to beat us. I had kids with a man that beat me. Now I fight anyone for the smallest disrespect. It has gotten me fired, arrested, and uninvited to many things.

Guardianship Review Program

The Superior Court of Maricopa County



In Maricopa County, the Probate Court is charged with the responsibility of appointing guardians and conservators for vulnerable adults who, due to serious physical or mental disabilities, require assistance in making decisions about their daily lives. While Guardians are appointed with the task of “guarding” the Ward, the ultimate responsibility of “guarding” the Guardian falls to the Court, ensuring that the Guardian is adequately caring for the health and well-being of the Ward.

- My direct role is to manage the Guardianship Program which consists of reviewing cases of those who are under Guardianship (over 9,600 people). I then assign the wards to be visited by Court Visitors (you) and write a case report. I have a variable case load but cases I visit specifically are comprised of :

- Sexually Violent Persons (SVP) with a civil commitment to a psychiatric facility
- Guilty except Insane
- High profile and sealed case
- Extreme violence and trauma

How does this program relate to unaddressed signs of child abuse?

Tony's Story

- Dad murdered mom in front of him and his siblings at 10yrs old
- They went to live with dad's family for 3 years
- Grandpa and uncle physically and sexually abused them
- Records indicate CPS was alerted but no charges or arrests
- Went to live with mom's family at 13yrs old
- Juvenile program at 14yrs old for sexually assaulting 7yr old cousin
- Reports indicate he assaulted other child family members
- Juvenile program at 16yrs old for sexually assaulting 11yr old cousin
- After each release, mom's family advocated for him, blamed it on dad's family, and continued to have him live amongst cousins
- Climbs through window at 19yrs and sexually assaults 10yr old



- **Prison**
- **Sexually Violent Predator**
- **Psychiatric Hospital**
- **Schizophrenia (AH)**
- **Anti-social Personality Disorder**
- **Aggression**
- **Selective Mutism**
- **No meaningful communication**
- **At least 6 children sexually assaulted in Tony's story**

Oliver's Story

- History of childhood trauma and abuse
- Was found at 23yrs old tied to a crib, wearing a dog collar and covered in feces
- Aggression towards animals
- Digestion of inedible objects
 - Dirt, rocks, grass, raw meat, and food wrapped in plastic
- Self-injurious behaviors
 - Harshly bites and scratches his own body, removing large chunks of flesh
 - Skin grafts
 - Severe difficulty sleeping
 - Mittens to detour biting of the fingers
 - Lacks sensation of pain



- **Autistic**
- **Severe Intellectual Disability**
- **Functioning of a 2 year old**
- **Nonverbal**
- **Bipolar Disorder**
- **Psychosis**
- **Depression**
- **Intermittent Explosive Disorder**
- **Pica**

Jim's Story

- First 5 years of life spent living in deplorable conditions
- Parents have a history of mental illness and drug addiction
- Him and his 3 siblings were removed and lived with grandma
- Children were sexual with each other
- Preyed on the other children at family events
- Grandma gave him and one sister up to CPS due to sexual issues
- He was never adopted and spent time in multiple foster homes
- Hears voice of mother telling him to kill himself
 - Mother deceased - hit and run over by vehicle
 - Father in prison



- **Psychiatric Hospital**
- **Schizoaffective Disorder (AH)**
 - **Bipolar Type**
 - **Religious preoccupation**
- **Aggression**
- **Suicidal**
 - **Jumped in traffic**
 - **Stabbed himself in kidney**
 - **Coaxed of bridge by police**
- **Drug addiction**
- **Wears makeup smeared on face**
- **Lacks hygiene**

What did you learn of value that will aid in your work with children?

THANK YOU!

CONTACT ME FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING THIS PRESENTATION
AND THE GUARDIANSHIP REVIEW PROGRAM.