

AGENDA

Solano Children's Alliance Meeting

March 1, 2017

12:00pm-2:00pm

Please Note: Brandman University

4820 Business Center Drive, Ste.100

Fairfield CA 94533

Members

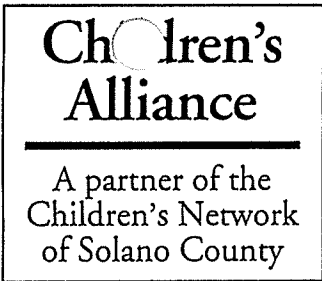
Gale Bowen
Aaron Crutison
Juan Cisneros
Candy Pierce
Gloria Díaz
Pamela Dixon
Lisette Estrella-
Henderson
Zoe Bartholomew
Maurilio Leon
Pam Posehn
Tyffany Wanberg
Adrienne Carson
Stacey Burke
Sharon henry
Maria Vicondoa
Jane Johnson
JoLyn McMillan
Guadalupe Lopez
Monica Brown

**Top Four priority areas: Child and Youth Safety, Quality Early Care and Education,
Homeless Youth and Mental and Behavioral Health`**

- | | | | |
|--------------|---|----------------------|--------------|
| I. | Introductions, Public Comment | | 12:00 |
| II. | Approval of March Agenda | (Action Item) | 12:05 |
| III. | Approval of February 1,2017 minutes | (Action Item) | 12:10 |
| V. | Special Presentation: Advocates Against Domestic Violence in The African American Community- Carlton E. & Rosalyn M. Spradley, Executive Directors | | 12:15 |
| VI. | Children's Trust Fund Allocation | (Action Item) | 1:00 |
| VII. | Alliance President Report: | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome• Membership Update• Executive Committee Report• FNG Next Steps | | |
| XI. | Alliance Staff Report | | 1:10 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• CAPC Update• 4th Annual Policy Forum- March 11, 2017• Legislative Update | | |
| XII. | Workgroups and Report Out | | 1:20 |
| XIII. | Adjournment | | 2:00 |

Next Alliance Meeting: April 5, 2017

Materials given to members less than 72 hours prior to a regular meeting can be obtained at 827 Missouri Street, Suite 5 Fairfield, CA 94533, or by contacting staff at 707-421-7229.



SOLANO CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE

General Meeting Minutes

February 1, 2017

12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Brandman University

4320 Business Center Drive, Ste100

Fairfield, CA 94533

- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Juan Cisneros, Lisette Estrella-Henderson, Pamela Dixon, Zoe Bartholomew, Maurillo Leon, Sonja New (for Jane Johnson), Guadalupe Lopez, Pam Posehn, and Stacy Burke
- MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:** Aaron Crutison, Sharon Henry, Gloria Diaz, Tyffany Wanberg, Adrienne Carson, Candy Pierce, Annie Gutierrez, Maria Vicondoa, JoLyn McMillian, Supervisor Monica Brown and Gale Bowen
- GUESTS ATTENDING:** Stephen Hallett, Kelly Dwyer, Gene Ibe, Lorraine Fernandez, Lisa Eckhoff, Debbie Vaughn, Amalia Chamorro, Kathy Lago
- STAFF:** Alan Kerzin, Susan Ferdinandi
- MINUTES:** Allissa Smith

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION ITEMS
Call to Order	The meeting was called to order at 12:10 pm	
I. Introductions, Announcements, and Public Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction 	
II. Approval of (February Agenda) (Action Item)	There was no quorum to approve the February 1, 2017 agenda. The motion for a vote will be moved to the March Alliance meeting.	
III. Approval of (January 4th minutes) (Action Item)	There was no quorum to approve the January 4, 2017 minutes. The motion for a vote will be moved to the March Alliance meeting.	

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION ITEMS
<p>V. Alliance President Report</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome- Juan welcomed everyone to the Alliance. • Membership Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Juan reviewed the current updated roster with the Alliance members. There is one new opening under community based organizations providing services to families and children. If you know of any organization interested in joining the Alliance, please let Alan or any SCA executive member know. ○ Members mentioned, Safequest or Partnership Health. Alan and the Executive committee will discuss and reach out to those organizations. ○ If you have not already, please send your updated alternate name to Allissa and Alan for approval. In the event that you can't make a meeting, your alternate will be able to vote in your place. ○ Allissa will then update our current roster. • Executive Committee Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Future meetings. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ March- presentation on domestic violence in the African American community ✓ April- Child Abuse Council presentation and Children's Trust fund discussion ✓ May- Northbay Regional <p>If you know of any possible future presentations, please let Alan or any executive committee member know.</p>	
<p>VI. Alliance Staff Report</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4th Annual Policy Forum- March 11,2017- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Alan asked that everyone help spread the word. • SFN <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Oneal is working closely with our partners on getting the word out and getting more father referrals. ○ If you know if any fathers that would be a good fit please refer then to Oneal Young at the Children's Network. • Legislative Update- Advocacy and legislation workgroup worked with the Local Child Planning Council to write a proposal to Assemblyman Frazier that would create a county wide child care subsidy pilot that will maximize allocated funding 	

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION ITEMS
	<p>and efficiently use child care subsidy funds to meet local conditions, providing children and families access to quality child care. This type of pilot has been rolled out in San Francisco, Alameda, San Mateo, and Santa Clara Counties. Additionally, Fresno County is looking at a similar measure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Alan will keep the Alliance members posted. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CAPC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ San Francisco child abuse prevention council worked closely with Berkeley to create a full report of how child abuse affects us all. Susan shared the infographic with the members and briefly went over it. ○ Please refer to the infographic for additional information. 	
VIII. Special Presentation- Chris Hoene, California Budget Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chris Hoene from the California Budget project, went over the proposed Governors 2017-2018 budget with the members. ● For more information, please refer to the California Budget and Policy Center fact sheet handed out in your packet. 	
X. Adjournment	Meeting adjourned at 2:00pm	

Children's Alliance Membership Roster

<u>Category of Membership</u>	<u>Member/Alternate</u>	<u>Term Expires</u>
Solano County H&SS	Aaron Crutison Alternate: Debbie Powell	November 26, 2017
Solano County H&SS	Pamela Dixon Alternate: Nazlin Huerta	November 26, 2017
Solano County Juvenile Probation Department	Adrienne Carson Alternate: Lisa Wamble	March 7, 2019
Local Child Serving Public Agency	Pamela Posehn Alternate: Rachel Rico	November 26, 2017
Presiding Judge of Juvenile Court or Representative of Juvenile Justice Services	Candy Pierce Alternate: Cynthia Wojan	March 8, 2018
Solano County Superintendent of Schools Or Designee	Lisette Estrella-Henderson Alternate: Nicola Parr	November 26, 2017
Local School District or Designee	Stacy Burke Alternate: Cheryl Jones	March 7, 2019
Solano County District Attorney's Office	Sharon S. Henry Alternate: Jason Aguirre	October 6, 2017
Community Based Organization that Provides Services to Families and Youth	Jane Johnson Alternate: Sonja New	October 31, 2018
Community Based Organization that Provides Services to Families and Youth	JoLyn McMillan Alternate: Deena Lemley	October 31, 2018
Community Based Organization that Provides Services to Families and Youth	Maria Vicondoa Alternate: Andrea Vela	November 26, 2017
Community Based Organization that Provides Services to Families and Youth	Juan Cisneros Alternate: Debbie Peralez	September 9, 2018
Community Based Organization that Provides Services to Families and Youth	Vacant	
Member at Large - Parents, Grandparents and Consumers	Tyffany Wanberg	November 26, 2017
Member at Large – Parents, Grandparents and Consumers	Gale Bowen Alternate: Jewel Fink	November 26, 2017

Member of the County Board of Supervisors or Designee	Monica Brown	March 7, 2019
Local Law Enforcement	Gloria Diaz Alternate: Ana Isabel Montano	November 26, 2017
Regional Center	Guadalupe Lopez Alternate: Rafael Hernandez-Perez	September 9, 2018
Child Care R&R or Child Care Planning Council	Zoe Bartholomew Alternate: Alternate: Kathy Lago	March 8, 2018
Community Based Organization that ties to an Ethnic Community	Maurilio Leon Alternate: Angie Lopez 2	September 9, 2018

Solano Children's Alliance

Proposed Allocation for the Children's Trust Fund for 2017-2018

Alliance staff has reviewed revenue projections for the coming year and expects revenues for 2017-2018 to support an allocation of \$90,000, while maintaining a reserve of more than 25%. With this information, the Solano Children's Alliance Executive committee met to discuss options and agreed to recommend the continuation of support to the Family Resource Center Network and Child Abuse Prevention Council to the Solano Children's Alliance.

Children's Trust Fund Distribution		
	FY 16-17	FY 17-18
Children's Network		
Administration	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 4,500.00
Child Abuse Prev. Council	7,472.00	7,472.00
FRC Network Coord.	39,871.00	39,871.00
Subtotal	\$ 51,843.00	\$ 51,843.00
Family Resource Centers		
Non Profit FRC's	\$ 38,157.00	\$ 38,157.00
Non Profit Agencies		
Governmental FRC's		
Subtotal	\$ 38,157.00	\$ 38,157.00
Totals	\$ 90,000.00	\$ 90,000.00

Should the Solano Children's Alliance agree with this recommendation, draft language for a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors is as follows:

The Solano Children's Alliance recommends that \$90,000 in Children's Trust Fund be allocated to the Family Resource Center Network, Child Abuse Prevention Activities and CTF Administration, and that the planned general fund allocation to Family Resource Center Network agencies for 2017-2018 be distributed so all agencies receive additional funds to perform child abuse prevention activities and to coordinate sustainability and training activities.

Funding for 2017-2018*			
	Redistributed General Fund	Children's Trust Fund	Total
FRC Network			
Benicia	38,759.00	-	38,759.00
Dixon	24,543.00	12,719.00	37,262.00
Fairfield-Suisun	113,323.00	-	113,323.00
Rio Vista	24,183.00	12,719.00	36,902.00
Vacaville	57,446.00	-	57,446.00
Vallejo	111,144.00	12,719.00	123,863.00
Children's Network	65,911.00	39,871.00	105,782.00
	435,309.00	78,028.00	513,337.00
SCA Child Abuse Prevention		7,472.00	7,472.00
SCA Children's Trust Fund Admin		4,500.00	4,500.00
Total		90,000.00	525,309.00

*Funding for 2017-2018 is identical to revised contracts for 2016-2017.

CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND

	Beginning Balance	Deposits	Expenditures	Ending Balance
FY 02/03	220,522.67	144,609.99	158,682.87	206,449.79
FY 03/04	206,449.79	137,371.89	64,535.89	279,285.79
FY 04/05	279,285.79	119,142.10	146,410.00	252,017.89
FY 05/06	252,017.89	124,592.54	189,647.18	186,963.25
FY 06/07	186,963.25	149,345.94	98,551.88	237,757.31
FY 07/08	237,757.31	140,637.56	139,201.67	239,193.20
FY 08/09	239,193.20	130,124.06	123,436.58	245,880.68
FY 09/10	245,880.68	113,688.76	170,935.73	188,633.71
FY 10/11	188,633.71	114,160.27	170,366.36	132,427.62
FY 11/12	132,427.62	101,209.73	109,875.56	123,761.79
FY 12/13	123,761.79	108,405.06	139,049.08	93,117.77
FY 13/14	93,117.77	125,337.21	161,522.00	56,932.98
FY 14/15	56,932.98	96,044.83	116,767.09	36,210.72
FY 15/16	36,210.72	94,275.36	87,729.18	42,756.90
FY 16/17 Projected*	42,756.90	94,275.36	90,000.00	47,032.26
FY 17/18 Projected*	47,032.26	94,275.36	90,000.00	51,307.62

*Projections based on FY 15/16 Deposits and current year (FY 16-17) contract amounts.



February 21, 2017

The Honorable Toni Atkins
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 4072
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support SB 2

Dear Senator Atkins,

Community Housing Opportunities Corporation (CHOC) is writing to voice our support of SB 2, the Building Homes and Jobs Act, which takes a significant step toward creating a permanent source of funding for affordable housing development.

CHOC is a nonprofit affordable housing organization that improves and strengthens communities by providing quality housing, inclusive of comprehensive services for individuals, families and seniors in a tri-county service area. As a community housing development organization (CHDO), CHOC serves over 1,400 families that are low and moderate income and provides services that focus on building strong communities, enhancing community involvement, while connecting residents with community partners and resources.

Californians are facing a harder time finding a place to live than at any point in our history. California's broken and backward housing policies have contributed to the worsening crisis:

- A decade of disinvestment has starved local communities of the seed dollars they need to bring affordable homes to their neighborhoods. A new report from the state's own Department of Housing and Community Development finds "unstable funding for affordable-home development is impeding our ability to meet California's housing needs, particularly for lower-income households."
- California spends \$300 million in tax dollars every year to subsidize purchases of second homes for some Californians when millions more struggle to have a roof over their head at all.
- Existing laws that require local governments to plan to accommodate jobs and growth haven't resulted in the promised affordable development.

SB 2 creates an ongoing funding source that helps the state live within its means. By imposing a modest \$75 document recording fee on real estate transactions, excluding property sales and capped at \$225, SB 2 would increase California's supply of affordable homes, create jobs, and spur economic growth *without incurring additional debt*.

The Building Homes and Jobs Act will:

- ✓ Generate hundreds of millions of dollars in state investment and leverage significant additional funding in federal, local, and private investment.

5030 Business Center Drive | Suite 260 | Fairfield CA | 94534
T 707 759 6043
F 707 759 6053
www.chochousing.org



- ✓ Create an estimated 29,000 jobs annually for every \$500 million spent on affordable housing, primarily in the beleaguered construction sector.
- ✓ Deploy these dollars throughout California using a successful private/public partnership model, generating revenue for local governments.
- ✓ Build safe and affordable apartments and single-family homes for Californians in need, including families, seniors, veterans, people with disabilities, and people experiencing homelessness.
- ✓ Help businesses attract and retain the talent that fuels California's economy.

This bill comes at a crucial time for California, when state investment in housing has plummeted by 69% in the last decade, worsening the unprecedented housing affordability crisis in our state. Today, more than 1.7 million Californians are paying more than half their income in rent – leaving too few dollars for nutrition, medicine, transportation and other fundamentals.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Maurilio Leon
Chief Operating Officer

Cc: Tyrone Buckley, Policy Director, Housing California (tbuckley@housingca.org)
Marina Wiant, Policy Director, California Housing Consortium (mwiant@calhsng.org)

SOLANO FAMILY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

421 Executive Court North -Fairfield, CA 94534-4019

Tele: (707) 863-3950 - Fax: (707) 863-3975 - Toll Free: 1-888-861-1594 - E-mail: info@solanofamily.org

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

Job #63

Position Title:	Resource & Referral Specialist II – Trainer		Rate of Pay:	\$21.23 Hourly	
Bilingual:	Spanish - Required	Management:	No	Department:	Resource & Referral
Reports to:	Resource & Referral Program Manager			Open Until:	Filled
Hours:	<input type="checkbox"/> FT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PT	25 hours per week		Release Date:	February 22, 2017

General Purpose of the Job: Create and provide CA. State Department of Education approved Preventative Health and Safety Practices training to child care providers in Solano, Napa, and Marin Counties. Assist management in developing, implementing and applying policies and procedures related to Preventive Health and Safety Practice regulations. Other duties as required.

Minimum Requirements: At least one year training and development experience preferred; experience creating, organizing and preparing training materials preferred; two years experience in a position involving community, social services, or working with child care providers; AA degree in Liberal Arts, English or Training Certificate preferred; OR equivalent combination of education and experience. Bilingual Spanish required.

Knowledge, Skills & Abilities

Strong Communication (verbal and written); organization, customer service, and critical thinking skills. Knowledge of and ability to use Microsoft Word, Publisher and Excel; knowledge of adult learning styles and presentations skills; knowledge of child care and development services requirements; ability to travel for trainings, meetings, workshops and seminars as needed.

Work Schedule: Part-Time flexible schedule including evenings and weekends – 25 hours per week.

Benefits: Flexible Spending Accounts, Retirement, Holiday and Sick leave.

Application Information: An agency application form and resume must be completed and submitted to:

Solano Family & Children's Services - Attn:Human Resources-421 Executive Court North – Fairfield, CA 94534 or emailed to kparkham@solanofamily.org

To Receive an application, you may:

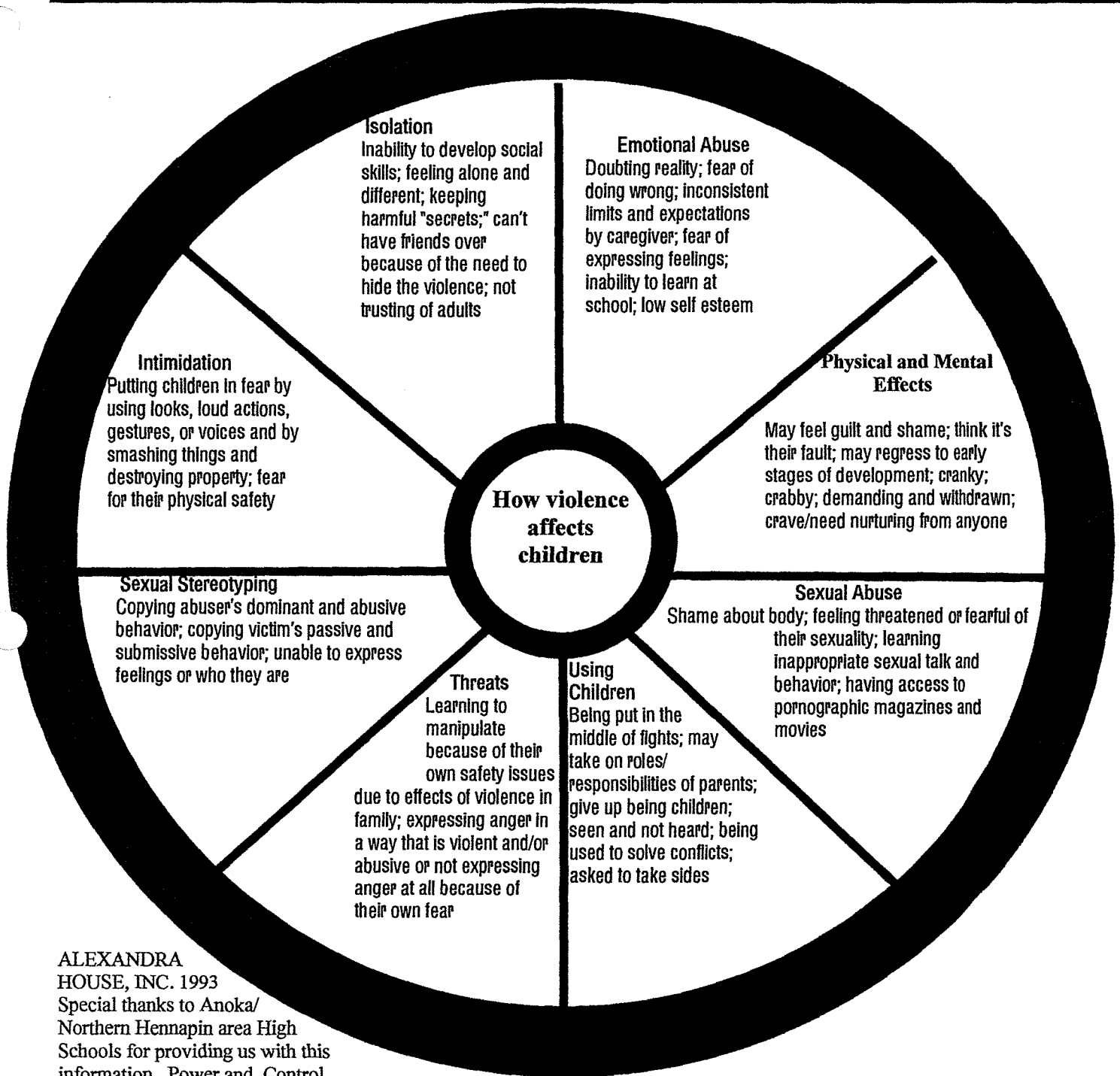
- Visit our website at www.solanofamily.org
- Request via email at kparkham@solanofamily.org
- Call the Job Hotline at (707) 863-3950 Opt. 7
- Visit our office

Additional Information:

- Only the most qualified candidates who meet the job requirements will be invited to test and interview.
- Employment is conditional pending satisfactory results of all requirements.
- The position requires a pre-employment (post-job-offer) agency-paid drug screen, TB clearance and criminal background check.
- CA Driver License and dependable auto with appropriate insurance coverage.
- SFCS is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer M/F/D/V.



Children's Domestic Violence Wheel



ALEXANDRA
HOUSE, INC. 1993
Special thanks to Anoka/
Northern Hennepin area High
Schools for providing us with this
information. Power and Control
Wheel design adapted from Domestic
Abuse Project.



rape and abuse
crisis center
advocacy, counseling, education.

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01/09

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F: Education/Revised Handouts/Children's DV Wheel

AFFECTS OF ABUSE ON CHILDREN'S BRAIN BY BEING EXPOSED TO A BATTERER AND ABUSE

Children who are exposed to a batterer and live in an abusive environment are at risk emotionally, psychologically, and physically. The National Council of Judges state it is not in the best interest of a child to be placed in the custody of an abuser. California Penal Code 243.4, 273.5 and 1170.76 states that a child who witnesses domestic violence either by marriage, blood relative, natural parent, stepparent, or foster parent, is also a victim of child abuse.

Research shows that when a child is in utero and who are in abusive environments due to mother being victimized, have lower birth weights, may have placenta damage or premature rupture of membranes (Newberger) and their rates of miscarriage are higher. 40%-70% of children in shelters report being abused directly.

When a child is born the experience of that child in an abusive environment have brain trauma. Some of the effects to the brain are:

Prefrontal cortex (seat of our thinking) is decreased

Prefrontal lobe (problem solving and learning) activity is decreased

Limbic System (sensitivity, emotions and fright/flight response) activity is increased creating hyper arousal. Since children living in abusive environment are "LIVING UNDER CONSTANT THREAT" they also have PTSD from that alone.

Corpus Collosum (connects both hemispheres of brains) is underdeveloped (smaller)

Declarative Memory is altered due to brain underdevelopment stated above

Left brain hemisphere is underdeveloped

Neuro-endocrine system is altered

Thyroid, cortisol altered and impacted

Gene expression in developing children is altered

Along with the brain alterations there are other effects as well:

Witnessing abuse causes Traumatic Stress Types I and II which impacts a child's functioning. Witnessing threats and experiencing threats cause psychological and emotional harm to children (Berlin and Vondra).

Cognitive Dissonance, trauma bonding, betrayal bonding, love confusion, dissociations, hallucinations, nightmare and night terror, psychophysiological disturbances, fear of reoccurrence, numbing, withdrawal, fears life and people, models after the abuser, changed view of their world, physical ailments that doctors can't find a source for why, physical ticks and twitches, panic, hypervigilance, PTSD, withdrawal, reactive attachment disorders, inuresis, encopresis, etc.

Because batterers blame others they also place blame on the child. This creates a "responsibility" which the child accepts for a batterer's bad conduct. Also to leave a child in the presence of an abuser causes a risk because of the batterer's rigid authoritarian type of parenting, continued threats of violence creates psychological changes and manipulation alone has been shown to be a psychological risk to

children (Korin and Vandenbos, 1981).

If the victim parent divorces or leaves the abusive parent, the child is at risk of exposure of new violence with a new significant other to the abuser.

By having a child exposed to a batterer there is continued difficulties for a child as abuse doesn't stop or decrease. It increases unless the abuser WANTS to change and gets help. There are continued difficulties which include acceptance of violence as a normal way to cope with interpersonal conflict, pervasive sadness, fear, hyper-vigilance, powerlessness and helplessness along with coping problems. Pre-school children appear to be particularly vulnerable to the effects of abuse showing more behavior problems, significantly lower self-esteem, development delays and conduct problems (Fantuzzo).

Verbal conflict alone was associated with a moderate level of conduct problems. Verbal abuse with physical abuse was associated with clinical levels of conduct problems and moderate levels of emotional problems moving into high levels if the contact with abuse continued (National Academy of Sciences).

CHILD ABUSE HAS LONG TERM EFFECTS ON BRAIN IF NOT TREATED

In the first major study of child abuse and neglect in 20 years, researchers with the National Academy of Sciences reported Thursday that the damaging consequences of abuse can not only reshape a child's brain but also last a lifetime. There are changes in the pre-frontal cortex and changes in the stress response system of children.

Untreated, the effects of child abuse and neglect, the researchers found, can profoundly influence victims' physical and mental health, their ability to control emotions and impulses, their achievement in school, and the relationships they form as children and as adults.

Impact on the cortex and limbic system

Research shows that children and adults with histories of child abuse often respond excessively to minor triggers. Traumatized children (and adult survivors) become increasingly responsive to relatively minor stimuli as a result of decreased frontal lobe functioning (learning and problem solving) and increased limbic system (amygdala) sensitivity (impulsiveness) (Streeck-Fischer & van der Kolk, 2000).

Decreased cortex activity

The cortex or the more rational, outer-layer of the brain is the seat of our thinking capacity. The cool, rational cortex is in constant communication with the amygdala and the hippocampus (the limbic system). The frontal lobes are situated in the cortex and are responsible for learning and problem solving. The capacity to learn from experience requires events to be registered in the prefrontal cortex, compared with other experiences and evaluated for an appropriate response (Streeck-Fischer & van der Kolk, 2000).

When children are under threat, the fast tracts of the limbic system are likely to be activated before the slower prefrontal cortex has a chance to evaluate the stimulus (Streeck-Fischer & van der Kolk, 2000). Only a state of non hyper-arousal allows activation of the prefrontal cortex needed for learning and problem solving.

Increased limbic system sensitivity

The limbic system is sometimes called 'the emotional brain'. It controls many of

the most fundamental emotions and drives for survival (McLean Hospital, 2000). The limbic system initiates the fight, flight or freeze responses to threat. The amygdala and the hippocampus are part of the limbic system. A study by Teicher et al. (1993) found a 38% increased rate of limbic abnormalities ('emotional brain') following physical abuse, 49% after sexual abuse, and 113% following abuse of more than one type combined (cited in Streeck-Fischer & van der Kolk, 2000).

The amygdala processes emotions before the cortex gets the message that something has happened. For example, the sound of a loved one's voice is communicated to the amygdala, and the amygdala generates an emotional response to that information (for example, pleasure) by releasing hormones. When someone is threatened, the amygdala perceives danger and sets in motion a series of hormone releases that lead to the defensive responses of fight, flight or freeze. Because the amygdala is immune to the effects of stress hormones it may continue to sound an alarm inappropriately, as is the core of PTSD (Rothschild, 2004).

The amygdala's role in the encoding, storage and retrieval of emotionally-arousing material (and corresponding hormonal changes) primes animals to remember emotionally charged or threatening events better than every-day events (Howe, Cicchetti and Toth, 2006).

Decreased hippocampal volume

The hippocampus helps to process information and lends time and spatial context to memories and events. The hippocampus assists the transfer of initial information to the cortex which works to make sense of the information. However the hippocampus is vulnerable to stress hormones, in particular the hormones released by the amygdala's alarm. When those hormones reach a high level, they suppress the activity of the hippocampus and it loses its ability to function. Information that would make it possible to differentiate between a real and imagined threat never reaches the cortex and a rational evaluation of the information isn't possible (Rothschild, 2004).

If a particular stimulus is misinterpreted as a threat, this leads to immediate fight/flight/freeze responses (to non-threatening stimuli). This causes this system to respond to minor irritations in a totalistic manner (Streeck-Fischer & van der Kolk, 2000).

Research shows that environments of extreme stress lead to increased cortisol levels (Murray-Close, Han, Cicchetti, Crick, & Rogosch, 2008) which can lead to decreased hippocampal volume. Decreased hippocampal volume has been associated with poorer declarative memory which places adults at greater risk of developing PTSD-like symptoms, and is closely correlated with experiences of depression and physical inflammations (Danese, Pariante, Caspi, Taylor & Poulton, 2006).

Impact on the left and right hemisphere

Underdevelopment of left brain

A study by McLean Hospital (2000) found that children with histories of abuse were twice as likely as non-abused children to have abnormal electroencephalograms (EEGs). EEG is a medical test used to measure the electrical activity of the brain, via electrodes applied to your scalp. Research shows evidence of deficient development of the left brain hemisphere in abused patients

(which controls language), suggesting that the right hemisphere may be more active than in healthy individuals.

A smaller corpus callosum

The corpus callosum is a major information pathway connecting the two hemispheres of the brain (McLean Hospital, 2000). A number of studies have found that the corpus callosum is smaller in abused children than in healthy children (De Bellis et al., 1999; McLean Hospital, 2000; Teicher, Ito, Glod, & Andersen, 1997). Furthermore, McLean Hospital (2000) found that abused patients shifted the degree of activity between the two hemispheres to a much greater extent than normal. They theorised that a smaller corpus callosum leads to less integration of the hemispheres. This can lead to dramatic shifts in mood or personality.

Neuro-endocrine alterations

Brain development is affected by stress early in development. Extensive research has been carried about the neuro-biology of stress. The link between a history of childhood abuse and neglect and neuro-endocrine impacts is well established. Research tells us that the bodies of children who are being abused react and adapt to the unpredictable dangerous environments to which they are exposed. Stress can set off a ripple of hormonal changes that permanently wire a child's brain to cope with a malevolent world (Teicher, 2002). Through this chain of events, violence and abuse pass from generation to generation (Teicher, 2002).

The neuro-endocrine system refers to the system of interaction between our brain/nervous system and the hormones in our bodies. This system helps regulate our moods, our stress response, our immune system, and our digestion, amongst other things. Any disruption to the neuro-endocrine system affects a range of basic psychological and physiological functions.

Research suggests that many of the long-term impacts of child abuse experienced by adult survivors result from the chronic neuro-endocrine dysregulation caused by prolonged exposure to abuse and violence (Kendall-Tackett, 2001).

Impact on stress hormones (including impact on cortisol production)

A number of studies have identified alterations in cortisol production in both children and adults who experienced childhood abuse (Carpenter et al., 2007; Joyce et al., 2007; Linares et al., 2008; McLean Hospital, 2000). Alteration in cortisol levels, either an increase or decrease, can cause a number of long-term physical and psychological health concerns.

Even in utero fetuses experience stress (Cozolino, 2002). Tests have found that fetuses express a biological response indicative of a stress response well before birth (Gunnar, 1998).

The nervous systems of children who are abused run on a constant high because they are constantly anticipating further danger. Their bodies are flooded with fight-or-flight hormones (Cozolino, 2002). A study by Linares et al. (2008) shows alterations in cortisol production in children with histories of abuse and neglect. This state of chronic 'hyper-arousal' persists for many survivors throughout their adult years as well. Even when the abuse and violence has ceased and the environment is 'safe', many adult trauma survivors still perceive the threat to be present; their fear is maintained and becomes pathological (Giarratano, 2004b). A

study by Joyce et al. (2007) found that experiences of childhood abuse were associated with high cortisol levels in depressed adult survivors.

Impact on Thyroid production

Studies conducted by McLean Hospital (2000) have found that neglect can also decrease production of thyroid hormone. This can lead to a number of health concerns as the thyroid gland secretes hormones which modulate metabolism.

Trauma is biologically encoded in the brain in a variety of ways. Changes in structures like the hippocampus, and the coordination and integration of neural network functioning have been identified. These changes are reflected in the victim's physiological, psychological and interpersonal experiences (Cozolino, 2002). Deficit in psychological and interpersonal functioning then create additional stress which further compromises neurobiological structures. In this way, adaptation to trauma, especially early in life, becomes a "state of mind, brain, and body" around which subsequent experience organises (Cozolino, 2002).

Impact on gene expression

A research study, led by Michael Meaney from Douglas Mental Health University Institute in Montreal examined samples from the hippocampus region of the brain, which is associated with memory function, and is known to develop differently in abused children. (Meaney, 2009) They found a gene - NR3CI, which influences the brain's susceptibility to stress hormones - was less likely to be activated in people who have been abused. This study was the first to demonstrate that a genetic process appears to underlie such changes. Those who have been abused had lower levels of expression of the gene for the glucocorticoid (cortisol) receptor, which is critical for the stress response pathway. Children who are abused early are flooded with stress hormones like adrenaline and cortisol, impacting on how the brain develops and the stress regulation method. This in turn impacts on the hippocampus, the area which controls feelings, meaning that adult survivors will be more likely to be highly stressed, have difficulties with anger and emotions, and be prone to self-harm, anxiety, suicide and depression.

Press

Glendale **News-Press**

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October is Domestic Violence Awareness month, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't be aware of abuse every month of the year.

California NOW recognizes that there is a crisis in the family courts. It has had hundreds of complaints from mothers whose divorce, custody and child support cases denied them their right to due process and failed to consider the best interests of the child. As an advocate for domestic violence victims, I have heard story after story, from mostly women victims (some men also) in what is called the Sociopathic Style Relationship (www.sociopathicstyle.com), where their partner's sole purpose is to "win" at all costs.

Unfortunately, for the victims of abuse, during custody and divorce, some family court judges, who buy into a pseudo-scientific psychological theory called Parental Alienation Syndrome, collude with the perpetrator and harm the children by giving custody and visitation to the perpetrator. Family courts are to safeguard the victim but fail in many cases.

Consider the tragedy for the children when courts award custody to the wrong person — the abuser!

A conservative estimate stated that more than 58,000 children in

the U.S. per year are ordered by family courts into unsupervised contact with one of these perpetrator parents who have physically and/or sexually abused the children.

Kathleen Russell (Center for Judicial Excellence) wrote in the Christian Science Monitor, October 2009: "The fact that this type of scandal is taking place in the American justice system defies the imagination. . . . American family courts routinely award custody to the parent with an established record of domestic violence restraining orders, child abuse, neglect, alcoholism, addiction, dangerous mental illness, or a combination.

"Meanwhile, the child's other parent, commonly referred to as the 'protective parent,' is typically demonized by court professionals as an 'alienator' for bringing evidence of child abuse to the court's attention. This happens because the reigning paradigm in family courts across the country is an unscientific, discredited theory known as 'Parental Alienation Syndrome,' or PAS.

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