Breaking the Cycle

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The History of Childhood

“The history of childhood is a nightmare from which we have only recently begun to awake. The further back in history one goes, the lower the level of child care and the more likely children are to be killed, abandoned, beaten, terrorized and abused.”

Lloyd DeMause, 1974
History of Child Abuse

• Infanticide
• Slavery
• Religious beliefs
• Child labor
• Mary Ellen Wilson – ASPCA
• Secrecy
• Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (1974)

McCoy & Keen, 2009
The Cycle of Child Abuse

- Higher likelihood: Depression, Suicide, Substance abuse, Unintended pregnancy
- Higher likelihood: Abuse children, Traumatic injury, Unintended pregnancy

Higher likelihood:
- Repeat cycle
- Hopelessness

Enabling Society
- Do not talk

Parental child abuse
- Substance abuse
- Societal beliefs
- Support systems

Do not talk
Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACE)

- Exposure to childhood abuse, neglect and other trauma are at increased risk for:
  - Alcoholism and alcohol abuse
  - Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
  - Depression
  - Illicit drug use
  - Adolescent pregnancy
  - Suicide attempts
  - Intimate partner violence
  - Early initiation of smoking and sexual activity
  - Heart disease
  - Sexually transmitted diseases

CDC, 2013
The Role of Communities in Child Abuse Prevention

CDC, 2012; McCoy & Keen, 2009
Factors

• Individual – History of child abuse; substance abuse; mental illness

• Family – Marital stability; parenting skills

• Community – Social/economic inequities; stable neighborhoods; support systems

• Societal – Legal protections for children; enabling environment

CDC, 2012; McCoy & Keen, 2009
Risk, Protective and Predictive Factors

**Predictive Factor**: A factor that when present, highly increases the likelihood that child abuse or maltreatment will occur.

**Risk Factors**: Factors that increase the likelihood that abuse or maltreatment will occur.

**Protective Factors**: Factors that buffer children from the likelihood of being abused or neglected.

McCoy & Keen, 2009
Risk Factors

- Age of parent
- Poverty
- Parent abused as a child
- Lack of support
- Large family size
- Marital stability

McCoy & Keen, 2009
Predictive Factor

History of or current substance abuse

McCoy & Keen, 2009
Protective Factors

- **Family Functioning/Resiliency:** “Having adaptive skills and strategies to persevere in times of crisis, family’s ability to openly share positive and negative experiences and mobilize to accept, solve and manage problems.”

- **Social emotional Support:** “Perceived informal support (from family, friends, and neighbors) that helps provide for emotional needs.”

- **Concrete Support:** “Perceived access to tangible goods and services to help families cope with stress, particularly in times of crisis or intensified need.”

- **Child Development/Knowledge of Parenting:** “Understanding and utilizing effective child management techniques and having age-appropriate expectations for children’s abilities.”

- **Nurturing and Attachment:** “The emotional tie along with a pattern of positive interaction between the parent and child that develops over time.”
References


• United States Census Bureau, 2010.