

# ABUSIVE MINDS THINK ALIKE

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# Agenda

- **The Impact of ACEs**
  
- **Characteristics of Child Abuse vs. Domestic Violence**
  - The Crime
  - The Victim's Experience
  - Offender Typology
  - The Process of Disclosure
  - The Grooming Process
  - Compliant Victim
  
- **Call to Action**
  - Where do we need to be and how do we get there

# The Impact of ACEs

# Proof that the stakes are really high...



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Children's  
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## The ACE (Adverse Childhood Experience) Study

Conducted by the US Center for Disease Control & Kaiser Permanente

**17,000 PARTICIPANTS SURVEYED**

### Female Participants:

13% emotional abuse

27% physical abuse

24.7% sexual abuse

### Male Participants:

7.6% emotional abuse

29.9% physical abuse

16% sexual abuse



## The ACE Study Findings

suggest that certain experiences are major risk factors for the leading causes of illness and death as well as poor quality of life in the United States.

It is critical to understand how some of the worst health and social problems in our nation can arise as a consequence of adverse childhood experiences.

Realizing these connections is likely to improve efforts towards prevention and recovery.



# Summary of ACES Findings

- ACEs are very common
- They are strong predictors of later health risks and disease: they determine the ten most common causes of death in the US
- This combination makes them the leading determinant of health and social well-being of our nation.

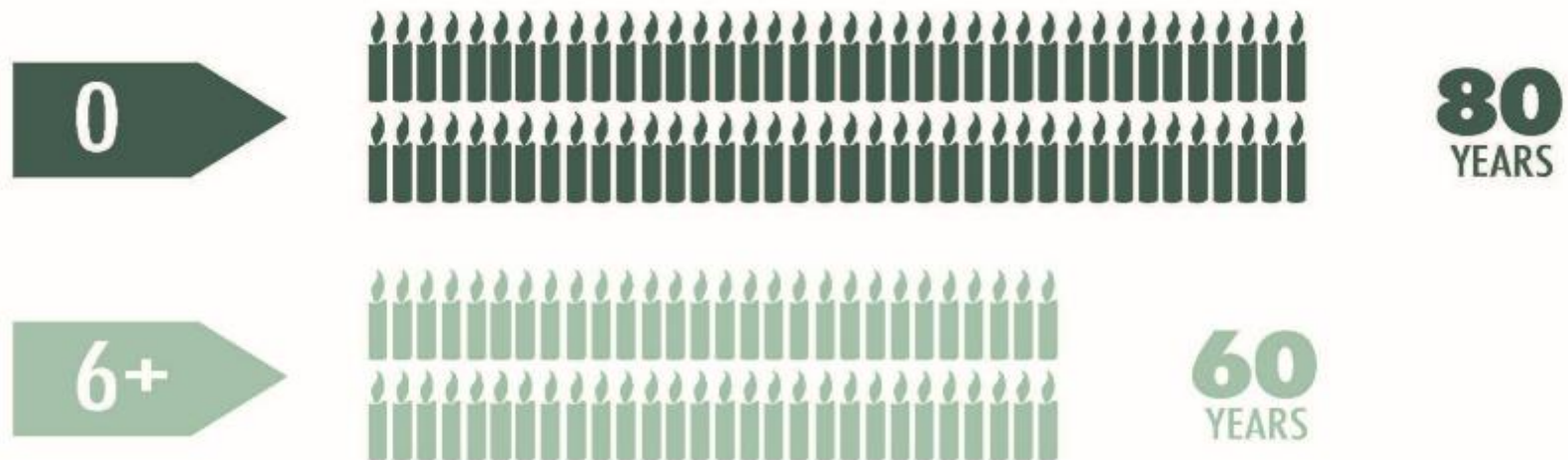
# What made up those ACE categories?

- Childhood abuse and neglect
  - Childhood sexual abuse (*often associated with some of the worst outcomes of any of these categories*).
  
- Growing up with domestic violence, substance abuse, or mental illness in the home
  
- Parental loss
  
- Crime

# HOW *do* **ACES** AFFECT OUR SOCIETY?

## LIFE EXPECTANCY

People with six or more ACEs died nearly **20 years earlier on average** than those without ACEs.





**'Adverse Childhood Experiences are the  
single greatest unaddressed public  
health crisis facing our nation today.'**

*Dr. Robert W. Block  
Former President, American Academy of Pediatrics*



What is it about ACEs that makes them so powerful?

Overwhelm a child's ability to cope

# Child Abuse

vs.

# Domestic Violence

# A Pediatric Issue

- Co-occurrence of child abuse and DV: 30-60% of families where one is occurring, the other will be found
- DV often precedes child maltreatment—so intervention at the time DV is identified may prevent future child abuse
- Less than 1/3 of CACs are asking about DV—and they are the **MOST** likely of most health care providers to ask

# Characteristics of the Crime

## □ Child Sexual Abuse

- Crime of isolation
- Extensive amount of manipulation
- Extremely premediated
- Vulnerable victim pool
- Rarely is there physical evidence
- Rarely is there a witness

## □ Domestic Violence

- Crime of isolation
- Extensive amount of manipulation
- Vulnerable victim pool
- Sometimes there is physical evidence
- Sometimes there is a witness

# The Victim's Experience

# Characteristics of the Crime

## □ Child Sexual Abuse

- **S**ecrecy
- **H**elplessness
- **E**ntrapment
- **D**elayed, conflicted  
and sometimes  
unconvincing disclosure
- **R**etraction

*(The Sexual Abuse Accommodation  
Syndrome by Roland Summit, 1983)*

## □ Domestic Violence

- **S**ecrecy
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# Offender Typology

# Characteristics of the Crime

## □ Child Sexual Abuse

- Extremely manipulative
- Have mastered the art of grooming their victims AND the people who grant them access to victims
- Lack of empathy
- Sense of entitlement
- Minimizing behaviors

## □ Domestic Violence

- Extremely manipulative
- Have mastered the art of grooming their victims AND the people who grant them access to victims
- Lack of empathy
- Sense of entitlement
- Minimizing behaviors



# The Process of Disclosure

Disclosure is a **process**  
not an event

Leaving an abusive  
relationship is a **process**  
not an event



# Types of Disclosure

There are two ways child sexual abuse and DV is discovered:

- Purposeful Disclosures
- Accidental Discovery Disclosures

# The Process of Disclosure

## □ Child Sexual Abuse

- Denial
- Tentative Disclosure
- Active Disclosure
- Recantation
- Reaffirmation

## □ Domestic Violence

- Denial
- Tentative Disclosure
- Active Disclosure
- Recantation
- Reaffirmation



# Transtheoretical Model of Change

- Precontemplative (no clue)
- Contemplative (aware but stuck—light at the end of the tunnel is the only option—not fear tactics)
- Preparation (thinking, planning, but not acting)
- Action (acting—even if goes back, learning from mistakes)
- Maintenance (able to stay gone even though HIS behavior does NOT change)

- *James Prochaska, University of Rhode Island. The Transtheoretical Approach: Crossing Traditional Boundaries of Psychotherapy.*

# Consider it a marathon...


- And leaving is Mile 5
- Is your role to help her get ready to run?
  - Is it to help her run that first mile
  - Is it to coach her to push past mile 5
  - Or are you her distance coach?

 Preschool Gems and 3 others follow



**REDBOOK** @redbookmag · Sep 22

"As any battered woman can tell you, the leaving can feel harder than the abuse." #WhyIStayed [redbk.co/6012oUV4](http://redbk.co/6012oUV4)

 REDBOOK



# STAYING AWAY MEANS SHE MUST LEARN TO CONTROL HERSELF—NOT PREDICT HIS BEHAVIOR:

She's got to know he'll try multiple tactics to get his way.  
She's got to figure out what her "hook" is.



**The Smut Slut** @KaraAllison · 17h

**#WhyIStayed** if I only loved him more, cleaned better, was nicer to him, did more for him eventually he would love me again..wouldn't he?

# Child Sexual Abuse and DV

- HE has a good 'gig'
- He wants it BACK.
- Don't underestimate HIS desire to be back in that home.

HIS BEING NICE IS THE MOST BASIC THING  
FOR HER TO BE PREPARED FOR.

She thinks he hates her, that he will be happier  
without her around.



# She should prepare for tactics like:

- Him being a victim
- Anger
- Sadness
- Promises of change
- Threats
- Persistence

# The Grooming Process

# “Exploring Sex Offender Grooming”

Jim Tanner, Ph.D.

KBSolutions, Inc.

[www.kbsolutions.com](http://www.kbsolutions.com)

Stephen Brake, Ph.D.

Stephen Brake Associates

[www.stephenbrakeassociates.com](http://www.stephenbrakeassociates.com)

# What is Grooming?

*Patterned behavior designed to increase opportunity,  
minimize victim resistance or withdrawal, reduce  
disclosure or belief*

# Types of Grooming

- The Grooming Process for both Child Abusers and those that commit Domestic Violence is essentially the same:
  - Environmental Grooming
  - Victim Grooming



# B.R.A.T. / Bond

## Child Abuse

- They form special bonds by:
  - ▣ Treating them like adults
  - ▣ Keeping secrets
  - ▣ Lures

## DV

- They form special bonds by:
  - ▣ Treating them like a princess – Rescuing them
  - ▣ Intoxicating, romanticizing behavior
  - ▣ Lures



## B.R.A.T. / Reliance

- Push and Pull
- Becoming primary emotional support
- Begins to emotionally isolate child/victim from others
  - Example: *“No one understands you like I do...”*
  - Example: *“I love you so much I want you all to myself...”*

# B.R.A.T. / Attenuates Resistances

- **Step by step progression of**
  - Isolation
  - Sexual Activity / Violence (DV relationships have far more sexual assault than most people realize)
  
- **Explanations**
  - Justification
  - Rationalization
  - Normalization

# B.R.A.T. / Trap

- Prevents escape or disclosure by
  - Special friendship / treatment
  - Rewards
  - Threats
    - Direct
    - Implied

*Compliance teaches and reinforces further compliance,  
perpetuating a cycle of compliance and capitulation  
(Example: Getting robbed at the ATM / getting robbed daily)*

# Compliant Victim



# What does “compliant” mean?

- **Compliant means:**
  - The word used to describe those who “cooperate” with or “comply” to their victimization; don’t run and tell immediately
  - “Compliant” used for lack of a better word
  - Those that don’t leave an abusive relationship immediately
  
- **Compliant DOES NOT mean:**
  - That the child/adult is NOT a victim
  
- **Compliant DOES NOT mean:**
  - Legal consent was given, or that the victim wanted it

# The Effects on Disclosures

- Failure to disclose or deny victimization when directly asked
- Incomplete, inaccurate, distorted disclosures
- Lifetime of embarrassment, shame and guilt
- Offenders being able to have numerous victims over time
- Ineffective prevention programs

# The Effects on Disclosures

- Victims may “fabricate” elements to make their disclosure more accepting to society
- Victims may maximize offender’s role while minimizing their role
- Victims may protect the offender so as to protect themselves
- Victims may have “real” feelings for the offender



# QUESTIONS???

# Bridging the Gap

# Call to Action

We need a  
**Team Approach**  
to  
Protecting Children  
**AND**  
Families

We have cracked the code on responding to child sexual abuse...which has some of the worst outcomes and longest lasting impacts of any of the ACEs

# Domestic violence is a pediatric issue

*~ American Academy of Pediatrics*



## Children who grow up in violent homes:

- Are 6 times more likely to commit suicide
- 24 times more likely to commit sexual assault crimes
- 74 times more likely to commit crimes against people
- 50 times more likely to abuse drugs or alcohol

# The correlation....

- Children are 1500% more likely to be abused in homes where domestic violence occurs
- 70% of men who batter their wives, also batter their children
- The number one predictor of child abuse is woman abuse
- One in three teens will be physically abused in a dating relationship

But domestic violence?

**WE HAVE OUR  
WORK CUT OUT  
FOR US.**



# The crimes are not in Silos

They happen in the same family by the same perpetrator. And the family is coached in guarding the Family Secret.

# Specifically, in child sexual abuse:

- **We know the perpetrator is manipulative**
  - We understand that they might use a 'masked/minimizing' word (*"argument", "game", "daddy's mad"*)
  - We know they sometimes define themselves as being provoked (*a child came on to me*)
  - We never buy the argument that the abuse is "mutual"
  - Counter by isolating victim and asking alone
  - Ask multiple people to corroborate
  - Believe the people who are asked

# In child sexual abuse.....

- We recognize the child may not be afraid of the perpetrator
- Or do not want him punished....they just want the bad things to end
- Or they might be terrified of 'outing' the abuse
- We appreciate the complexity of the cases...and work to eliminate the 'stuck points'

## In child sexual abuse.....

- We don't blame the victims (*even when they are compliant*)
- We believe the grooming process is very powerful
- We know 'the little mistakes' are code for much bigger problems (*boob swipe = grooming*)

# In child sexual abuse.....

- We are all in it together
  - We are all saying it's not okay (*lots of voices*)
  - We are moving forward aligned (*saying same thing*)
  - Awareness is raised faster about the problem, about the severity of the problem, and about our decision to not tolerate it

## In DV we often.....

- We buy the manipulation
- We believe the 'reasons' for abuse
- We don't ask her alone when she's safe
- We don't corroborate the story
- We don't ask the kids: what if we did FI on these cases?
- We attribute a lot of value to the kid's display of affection toward dad
- We isolate ourselves and don't bring in the team

# Going forward

- **We recommend:**
  - Screening for DV in ALL FIs
  - Reciprocal screening processes between DV and Child Abuse
  - Look at past DV history and assess the pressures this might create when a child has been victimized
    - 7yo Natanael
  - Immediate support services
  - Consider having children who witness DV forensically interviewed
    - Choking
    - Weapons
    - Multiple allegations
    - Severe or chronic incident

# Family Advocates as Your Partner

- Family advocates can be in more Family Meetings to help identify challenges and solutions
- Story of Nathan



**QUESTIONS???**