

Child Maltreatment

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This was a very hard paper to do. Reading these papers and that news article really grounds you on how much evil there is in the world. I agree with that woman in the article, "Who does this to a little child?" Having worked at an exotic parrot rescue for three years I have seen abuse first hand. From reading these articles that describe the effects of abuse on children they are similarly affected. Since most exotic parrots have the mental capacity of a three and four-year-old the long-term effects are very similar. I would see parrots come in that were physically abused, and when I would try and work with them they were very untrusting. They were very aggressive, very reclusive, and many would struggle with triggers of their abuse. One bird that I worked with was afraid of hands, when he would start screaming and climb down to the bottom of his cage if you approached him with your hands forward, you had to hid them behind your back. We found out later that his owner would smack him, or grab him and throw him anytime he made any inkling of a noise. It took months of consistent work with this bird to even clean his cage without him being terrified. Most times we would move him to a separate room.

What would cause a person to do this to an animal, let alone a child. A lot of abuse comes from frustration, new parents cannot quiet an infant with results to desperation and shaking of the child to calm it down. Children misbehaving and the only way that a caregiver seems fit to discipline that child is corporal punishment. The CDC contributes family size to abuse as well, with families who, in Chile, had four or more children were three times more likely to face abuse. There could be many reasons why there is all types of abuse, some abuse

Child Maltreatment

happens for no reason at all, only that the child was in the wrong place at the wrong time. For my Grandpa, he was the only child home when his dad came home drunk and wanted something to smack around.

Being abused at a young age can have great consequences in later life. Increased antisocial behaviors can begin. The child may become reclusive, internalizing their feelings, or the child may become increasingly aggressive towards others with the intention to cause harm. Other children may have consequences that continue into their youth, with many abused adolescences struggling with, delinquency, truancy, or even pregnancy. Many are even at a higher risk for rape, since many neglected or abused children engage in risky sexual practices. This increased their chances for contracting a Sexually Transmitted Disease. High risk behaviors such as Alcohol, smoking and substance abuse have been shown as consequences. There are many cognitive consequences that may appear from abuse, some children may have severe developmental problems, suffer from PTSD, and have poor academic standing, showing low academic achievement and having to repeat grades.

What I found shocking was the direct cost in due to maltreatment and related fatalities totals \$124 billion for a year. This is astounding that abuse can have effects to a dollar amount. Just looking at the indirect costs, which are the costs of long term consequences of the increased use of our health-care system, increased criminal activity, substance abuse, mental illness and domestic violence, cost the taxpayers millions a year. Having abuse prevention programs can save around \$104 billion each year. Which solidifies why there is a need to prevent all types of abuse.

Child Maltreatment

When a child is abused we can help by providing safe spaces, emotional and physical support, and by helping them understand that it is not their fault. While there are many programs to assist after abuse happens, prevention needs to be the focus. Prevention is the first step in ending child abuse, because if we can prevent it, or catch it in the beginning we can avoid consequences later. There are many ways that abuse can be prevented. Educating parents on how children develop and ways to approach their child when problems surface. Life and development classes for middle school and high school children that teach skills and methods on parenting. Lending support to those families already affected by abuse and stopping any further abuse.

Many healthcare professionals are trained to watch for abuse or neglect in the children they treat. I remember when I was hired at my job we had our social service representative come and give us an education on what to look for when a child is abused or neglected. This also included looking for signs of domestic abuse or partners. It was very informative.

I think to prevent as much abuse as possible, I don't believe it can ever end unfortunately, we all need to be vigilant. Reacting when we see abuse could save a life. Instead of turning a blind eye to physical or emotional abuse we could confront it, by providing support for the child, and the caregiver. This could include giving them phone numbers to a social service counselor. Or when necessary involve the law when conditions get to critical. We as communities need to act, and learn the signs of abuse before there is irreversible damage. If we all open our eyes, ears, and heart we can do a lot of good that could have a generational impact. For those who are being abused knowing that they are loved and having support may be the best thing for them, and sometimes that is all we can offer.