Violence & Disability
Theory & Practice

Dick Sobsey
JP Das Developmental Disabilities Centre
University of Alberta

Three Major Relationships

- Violence causes disability
- Disability increases vulnerability to violence
- Third factors increase risk for disability and violence

Three Major Relationships

- Violence causes disability
  - 6-15% of brain injury in adults
  - estimates of up to 65% of serious brain injury in children under age 1
  - psychogenic effects of violence
    - depression, learned aggression,
    - aggravation/complication of existing disability

Three Major Relationships

- Third factors increase risk for disability and violence
  - Substance abuse
  - Spousal violence

Increased Vulnerability

- More information about children than adults
  - Children with disabilities are 1.7 times as likely to be sexually abused
  - Children with disabilities are 2.1 times as likely to be physically abused
**Increased Vulnerability**

- Risk increases with age
  - Very little increase in risk for infants and young children
  - Risk 3 times as high by adolescence
  - Relative risk probably continues to increase into adulthood
  - Estimates of relative risk for adults is 3-10 times the risk for the general population

**Gender Issues**

- Disability increases risk more for males than for females
- The majority of victims of physical violence with disabilities are male
- The majority of victims of sexual violence are female

**Gender Issues**

- Both males and females are at risk
- The majority of perpetrators of both physical and sexual violence are male

**Perpetrators**

- Paid & Volunteer Caregivers (28%)
- Acquaintances & Neighbors (17%)
- Natural Family (16%)
- Other People with disabilities (9%)
- Foster & Step Family (8%)
- Strangers (7%)
- Dates (3%)

**Convictions**

- 8% of cases that we have studied
  - BUT, 1/3 of cases that get to court
  - BIGGEST PROBLEM
  - Never reported!

**Failure of Dependency - Stress Model**

- Long Accepted explanation
- Disability produces increased dependency
- Dependency increases caregiver stress
- Caregivers abuse as stress-reduction mechanism
- Never supported by research
An Integrated Ecological Model

Counter-Control Theory

- Unbalanced Power provides potential for abuse
- Children are vulnerable
- Disability leads to inherent vulnerabilities
- Social responses increase rather than minimize power imbalances

Social Learning Theory

- When observed aggression is rewarded, the observer increases aggression
- Observer may be victim and become offender
- Institutional abuse
  - Staff orientation to abuse
  - Resident’s model abuse of staff
Labeling and Ambivalence

• Avoid depersonalization
• Respect for individual
• Avoid doing “good” by doing harm

Attachment & Bonding

The single most powerful defense against abuse of an individual with significant disabilities is healthy attachment between that individual and the other people in his or her life!

An Integrated Ecological Model

Ecological Model

Counter-Control Theory
Social Learning Theory
Ambivalence Theory

Inherent Inequities
Social Inequities
Labeling Theory
Attachment Disruption

An Integrated Ecological Model

• An emphasis on families
• An emphasis on communities
• An emphasis on inclusion

An Integrated Ecological Model

Culture
Environment
Relationship
Individual with a Disability

The Importance of Healthy Families

• We’re not perfect
• We’ve had a lot of advantages
• We’ve been lucky

• BUT, we have learned some of things that really support Families
  Louise Correia
  Connie Sobsey
  David Sobsey
  Dick Sobsey
Definition of a Brother
by Connie Sobsey

A boy who is always there for me
Rambunctious, wild, unruly, noisy
and boisterous
Obnoxious on occasion
Team of me and him are winners
Hero - sometimes, he's mine
Emotions - he understands mine
It's refreshing to know he loves me

Supporting Healthy Families

- Parents must be parents first
- Encourage attachment
- Share in joys
- Reinforce, if possible
- Support positive expectations
- Avoid competing roles
- Don't identify child as problem
- Don't Pity
- Don't Catastrophize
Bonnie Carlson

Preliminary Study
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Maltreatment</th>
<th>Percent of children experiencing this form of maltreatment who have DD (Rank)</th>
<th>Estimated Relative risk for children with DD (Rank)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical neglect</td>
<td>3.93% (4)</td>
<td>3.28 (4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical abuse</td>
<td>3.23% (7)</td>
<td>2.69 (7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual abuse</td>
<td>3.64% (6)</td>
<td>3.03 (6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical neglect</td>
<td>5.26% (3)</td>
<td>4.39 (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inadequate supervision</td>
<td>3.66% (5)</td>
<td>3.05 (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional abuse</td>
<td>2.21% (8)</td>
<td>1.84 (8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inadequate nurturance</td>
<td>7.69% (1*)</td>
<td>6.41 (1*)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>1.04% (10)</td>
<td>0.87 (10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expulsion</td>
<td>1.85% (9)</td>
<td>1.54 (9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inattention to special education need</td>
<td>7.69% (1*)</td>
<td>6.41 (1*)</td>
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Difficulty obtaining services
Intellectual impairment had victims with milder disabilities and 32% of 55% of victims with severe disabilities.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Yes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Severe</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>55</td>
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Services Obtaining Difficulty

Percent of Victims

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Yes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Combined</td>
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<tr>
<td>Severe Disabilities</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chronic abuse was associated with greater severity of disability.

No significant differences were found among age groups.

More than 9 episodes of abuse were repeated specific number of times, more than once but unable to determine specific number of times.

Repeated 22 (14.4%),

Once (18.3%),

2-9 Episodes (17.5%),

10 or More (55.8%).
An Integrated Ecological Model

Culture

Relationship

Environment

Individual

Individual with a Disability

Other
A Modified Ecological Model of Abuse

Superior characteristics and capacities
deny the same right to animals with equal or
denumerable life, while simultaneously
humans have a right to life, while simultaneously
it will become very difficult to maintain that these
itself, some human beings will fail to meet it. Then
standard anywhere above the bare possession of life
will not be able to avoid noticing that, if we set the
we have that right. When we do that, however, we
and capacities that an animal must possess in order
to live, then we start looking at the characteristics
must be human in order to have some kind of right
for once we remove the assumption that an animal

DEPERSONALIZATION
Psychological report of Gary Heidnik prior to his worst crimes:

"He also appears to be psychosexually immature. He appears to be easily threatened by women whom he would consider to be equal to him either intellectually or emotionally. His defense cannot tolerate criticism..."

Presentencing report on Gary Heidnik:

"He impresses me as one who sees himself as superior to others, although apparently he must involve himself with those distinctly inferior to himself to reinforce this......a greater danger to others in the community, especially those who he perceives as being weak and dependent.

the same psychological traits that can lead some offenders to direct their sexuality toward children can lead them to direct their sexuality toward people with disabilities.

the same desperate need for total control often leads to particularly violent and destructive manifestations of abuse."