

# Child Welfare Policy

## Session 6

# Class Assignments

- Refer to the Syllabi for details on these two assignments
- Assignment #1 Letter to the Editor or Op Ed  
Due **March 26<sup>th</sup>**, please review the topic with me via email
- Assignment #2 will be a three minute "testimony" in class **May 7 & 14**; later in the semester you will sign up for a 3 minute time slot in one class or the other

# Session 6

## Child Safety and Protection

Policies and Practices to Assess Child safety:  
Incidence, Reporting, & Substantiation

- Physical Abuse: Prevention & Treatment
- Sexual Abuse: Prevention & Treatment
- Child Neglect & Psychological Maltreatment:  
Prevention & Treatment
- Risk Assessment in Child Welfare

# Session 6

## Child Safety and Protection

These Policies and Practices to Assess Child Safety are guided by CAPTA - The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 1974.

- How does CAPTA work?
- CAPTA provides grants to states and nonprofit organizations
- CAPTA establishes national definitions of child abuse and neglect
- CAPTA requires states to submit a certification that their child welfare system includes certain components
- CAPTA supports front-end services to prevent system involvement and keep families together

# Session 6

## Child Safety and Protection

### ➤ History

- CAPTA was originally enacted in 1974
- CAPTA has been amended several times
- CAPTA was most recently amended in 2019 by the Victims of Child Abuse Act Reauthorization Act

### ➤ Purpose

- CAPTA's purpose is to support the prevention, assessment, investigation, prosecution, and treatment of child abuse and neglect
- CAPTA's purpose is to strengthen vulnerable families and support strong communities

# Policies and Practices to Assess Child Safety

- Few topics evoke such strong feelings in social workers as the above.
- Recognizing the *possibility* that these things can and do occur in families and communities.
- Your role is to *raise* your concerns about this, not prove that it is happening

# Policies and Practices to Assess Child Safety

- Every state has its own laws about abuse and neglect, and who is required to report.
- You as a BSW Student intern are a mandated reporter.
- What is your agency's protocol around reporting and have you spoken to your supervisor about what to do if you suspect abuse or neglect?

# Policies and Practices to Assess Child Safety

- Making a conscientious and deliberate assessment to gather as much information as possible for consultation with supervisor and experienced colleagues.
- Tools and confidence to act without hesitation to protect the child's safety.

# Policies and Practices to Assess Child Safety

- In order to evaluate risk you need to examine and explore three areas: Physical Symptoms, Behavioral Signs, and Characteristics
- A comprehensive list of risks will help you to avoid jumping to conclusions, especially when you are feeling anxious.

# Assess Children for Neglect, Abuse, and Sexual Abuse

## Defining Neglect

Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs and the most common form of child abuse. A child might be left hungry or dirty, or without proper clothing, shelter, supervision, education, or health care. This can put children and young people in danger.

**Neglect, most often is a result of Poverty**

# Assess Children for Neglect, Abuse, and Sexual Abuse

## Five Types of Neglect

1. Physical neglect;
2. Medical neglect;
3. Inadequate supervision;
4. Environmental, emotional, and educational neglect; and
5. Newborns addicted or exposed to substances.

See:

[https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/neglect\\_ch2.pdf](https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/neglect_ch2.pdf)

# Policies and Practices to Assess Child Safety

## Defining Child Abuse

The Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) (42 U.S.C.A. § 5106g) defines child abuse and neglect as, at minimum:

- "Any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker, which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation"; or
- "An act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm."

# Policies and Practices to Assess Child Safety

## Types of Child Abuse

Most States recognize four major types of maltreatment:

1. Physical abuse,
2. Neglect,
3. Sexual abuse, and
4. Emotional abuse.

# Policies and Practices to Assess Child Safety

There are different types of abuse that perpetrators use against their victims.

Physical abuse is the use of physical force against someone, in a way that injures or endangers that person.

Examples of physical abuse include:

- Punching
- Hitting
- Spitting
- Kicking

# Policies and Practices to Assess Child Safety

Examples of physical abuse include:

- Punching
- Hitting
- Spitting
- Kicking
- Strangling
- Restraining
- Slapping
- Scalding/Burning
- Stabbing
- Head butting
- Biting
- Nipping
- Squeezing

# Policies and Practices to Assess Child Safety

Examples of physical abuse include:

- Shoving
- Suffocating
- Pushing
- Grabbing
- Choking
- Throwing
- Breaking bones
- Using weapons
- Poisoning
- Throwing things
- Force feeding
- Attempts to kill
- Reckless driving
- Pulling hair
- Murder

# Policies and Practices to Assess Child Safety

## Defining Emotional Abuse:

Emotional abuse involves nonphysical behavior that belittles another person and can include insults, put down, verbal threats or other tactics that make the victim feel threatened, inferior, ashamed or degraded.

# Policies and Practices to Assess Child Safety

## Types of Emotional Abuse:

- Humiliating or constantly criticizing a child.
- Threatening, shouting at a child or calling them names.
- Making the child the subject of jokes or using sarcasm to hurt a child.
- Blaming and scapegoating.
- Making a child perform degrading acts.

# Policies and Practices to Assess Child Safety

## Defining Child Sexual Abuse:

Child sexual abuse is any interaction between a child and an adult (or another child) in which the child is used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator or an observer.

Sexual abuse can include both touching and non-touching behaviors. Non-touching behaviors can include voyeurism (trying to look at a child's naked body), exhibitionism, or exposing the child to pornography.

Children of all ages, races, ethnicities, and economic backgrounds may experience sexual abuse. Child sexual abuse affects both girls and boys in all kinds of neighborhoods and communities.

# Policies and Practices to Assess Child Safety

## Types of Child Sexual Abuse:

### Physical behaviors:

- Touching a child's genitals for sexual pleasure or other unnecessary reason
- Forcing a child to touch someone else's genitals
- Putting objects or body parts inside the vulva or vagina, in the mouth or in the anus of a child for sexual pleasure or other unnecessary reason

# Policies and Practices to Assess Child Safety

## Types of Child Sexual Abuse:

### Non-physical behaviors:

- Exposing a child to pornography
- Encouraging a child to perform sexual acts
- Exposing a person's genitals to a child
- Performing sexual acts in a child's presence
- Photographing a child in sexual poses
- Watching a child undress or use the bathroom, often without the child's knowledge
- Using computers, cell phones or social media outlets to make sexual overtures or expose a child

# Policies and Practices to Assess Child Safety

## Stats on Child Sexual Abuse:

The global prevalence of child sexual abuse has been estimated at 19.7% for females and 7.9% for males.

Most sexual abuse offenders are acquainted with their victims; approximately 30% are relatives of the child, most often brothers, fathers, uncles, or cousins;<sup>1</sup> around 60% are other acquaintances, such as "friends" of the family, babysitters, or neighbors; strangers are the offenders in approximately 10% of child sexual abuse cases.

Most child sexual abuse is committed by men; studies on female child molesters show that women commit 14% to 40% of offenses reported against boys and 6% of offenses reported against girls.

# Policies and Practices to Assess Child Safety

## Consequences of Child Sexual Abuse:

- Child sexual abuse can result in both short-term and long-term harm, including psychopathology in later life.
- Indicators and effects include depression, anxiety, eating disorders, poor self-esteem, somatization, sleep disturbances, and dissociative and anxiety disorders including post-traumatic stress disorder.
- While children may exhibit regressive behaviors such as thumb sucking or bedwetting, the strongest indicator of sexual abuse is sexual acting out and inappropriate sexual knowledge and interest.
- Survivors may withdraw from school and social activities<sup>1</sup> and exhibit various learning and behavioral problems including cruelty to animals, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), conduct disorder, and oppositional defiant disorder (ODD).

# Policies and Practices to Assess Child Safety

## Consequences of Child Sexual Abuse:

- Teenage pregnancy and risky sexual behaviors may appear in adolescence.
- Child sexual abuse victims report almost four times as many incidences of self-inflicted harm.
- Sexual assault among teenagers has been shown to lead to an increase in mental health problems, social exclusion and worse school performance.

# Policies and Practices to Assess Child Safety

## Assessment:

- The recent nature of the abuse;
- The age of the child and degree of dependency on an adult for protection;
- The ease of access that the alleged perpetrator has to the child;
- The need the child has for immediate medical attention or evaluation;
- The capacity and reliability of the person who is responsible for protecting the child;
- Any known previous history of abuse or neglect of this or any other child.

# Policies and Practices to Assessing Children for Neglect, Abuse, and Sexual Abuse

## How to Proceed:

- Making a report to child protection;
- Making sure that you have documentation in order;
- Making sure you have fulfilled any task required by law
- Then, you have done everything you needed to do to ensure that the child is safe from harm

# Reporting Neglect, Abuse, and Sexual Abuse

NYS Central Registry

Statewide Toll Free Telephone Number:

1-800-342-3720

If you are deaf or hard of hearing, call TDD/TTY at

1-800-638-5163

Have your Video Relay System provider call

1-800-342-3720

If you believe that a child is in **immediate danger**,  
call 911 or your local police department.

# Resources

## Required Readings:

### Child Maltreatment Overview

<https://www.msmanuals.com/professional/pediatrics/child-maltreatment/overview-of-child-maltreatment>

### Safety & Risk Assessments Guide, NYC/ACS

[https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/child\\_welfare/2018/riskandsafetyguide.pdf](https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/child_welfare/2018/riskandsafetyguide.pdf)

### Child Sexual Abuse

<https://rainn.org/articles/child-sexual-abuse>

### Staying Safe While Conducting a Home Visit

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tMDUALo5v3Q>

# **Next Class Session 7: Overview of Policies Related to Permanency Planning Reunification**

## **Required Reading:**

### **Understanding Permanency**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S5KH1CWhjOo>

### **Reunification: What the Evidence Shows?**

[https://www.mncourts.gov/mncourtsgov/media/scao\\_library/CJI/family\\_reunification.pdf](https://www.mncourts.gov/mncourtsgov/media/scao_library/CJI/family_reunification.pdf)

### **Achieving Timely Reunification**

<https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/31229/TOC-CW-C3?bidId=>

### **Meaningful Parent Engagement in Child Welfare**

<https://www.risemagazine.org/2016/08/partners-in-planning-2/>