

ACUTE AND CHRONIC TRAUMA IN CHILDREN

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TRAUMA- A DEEPLY DISTRESSING OR DISTURBING EXPERIENCE

Acute Trauma

Single incident (crime victim, serious accident, natural disaster, a loved one's passing, physical or sexual assault). If left untreated acute trauma can progress into acute stress disorder, PTSD and other mental health illnesses such as depression, anxiety disorders and more.

Chronic Trauma

Repeated, prolonged trauma (domestic violence, abuse, war, multiple traumatic instances). The consequences of chronic trauma are usually more severe, because one traumatic experience brings back old feelings and issues associated with another.

TYPES OF CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

- ◉ Natural disasters
- ◉ Kidnapping
- ◉ School violence
- ◉ Community violence
- ◉ Refugee and war zone
- ◉ Sexual abuse/assault
- ◉ Domestic violence
- ◉ Medical injury illness, procedures
- ◉ Refugee and war zone

- ◉ Victim of crime
- ◉ Physical abuse
- ◉ Homicide
- ◉ Terrorism
- ◉ Accidents
- ◉ Suicide
- ◉ Neglect, deprivation
- ◉ Early childhood trauma
- ◉ Traumatic grief

SYMPTOMS OF TRAUMA

- ◉ Anger
- ◉ Confusion
- ◉ Sadness
- ◉ Anxiety
- ◉ Rage
- ◉ Over-reactions
- ◉ Misperceptions of their environment
- ◉ Impaired memories

CHRONIC

- ◉ Panic
- ◉ Confusion
- ◉ Dissociation
- ◉ Insomnia
- ◉ Suspiciousness
- ◉ A lack of self-care
- ◉ Loss of focus or production at work or school

ACUTE

BEHAVIORS BY AGE GROUP

Preschool

- Regressive behaviors
- Separation fears
- Eating and sleeping disturbances
- Physical aches and pains
- Crying/irritability
- Appearing “frozen” or moving aimlessly
- Fearful avoidance and phobic reactions
- Delay in skill development

Elementary School-Aged

- Sadness
- Behavior/academic problems
- crying
- Irritability
- School avoidance
- Physical complaints
- Regressive behavior
- Attention-seeking behavior
- Withdrawal
- Abuse themes in play/art/conversation

Adolescence

- Feelings of shame/guilt
- Self-destructive behaviors
- Substance abuse
- Withdrawal from peers/family □
- Increased risk-taking behaviors
- Delinquent behaviors
- Change in school performance
- (similar to adult responses to trauma.)

IMPACT OF CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

Adverse Childhood Experiences

- Abuse and Neglect., psychological, physical, sexual)
- Household Dysfunction (e.g., domestic violence, substance abuse, mental illness)

1. Impact on Childhood Development

- Neurobiologic Effects (e.g., brain abnormalities, stress hormone dysregulation)
- Psychosocial Effects (e.g., poor attachment, poor (e.g., poor attachment, poor socialization, poor self-efficacy).
- Health Risk Behaviors (e.g., smoking, obesity, substance abuse, promiscuity).

Long -Term Consequences Disease and Disability/ Social Problem

- Major Depression, Suicide, PTSD
- Drug and Alcohol Abuse
- Heart Disease
- Cancer
- Chronic Lung Disease
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases
- Intergenerational transmission of abuse
- Homelessness
- Criminal
- Parenting problems
- High utilization of health and social services
- Unemployment
- Behavior Criminal Behavior
- Prostitution

TRAUMA STATISTICS

- ◉ **60%** of adults report experiencing abuse or other difficult family circumstances during childhood.
- ◉ **26%** of children in the United States will witness or experience a traumatic event before they turn four.
- ◉ **Four of every 10** children in American say they experienced a physical assault during the past year, with one in 10 receiving an assault-related injury.
- ◉ **2%** of all children experienced sexual assault or sexual abuse during the past year, with the rate at nearly 11% for girls aged 14 to 17.
- ◉ Nearly **14%** of children repeatedly experienced maltreatment by a caregiver, including nearly 4% who experienced physical abuse.
- ◉ **1 in 4** children was the victim of robbery, vandalism or theft during the previous year.
- ◉ More than **13%** of children reported being physically bullied, while more than 1 in 3 said they had been emotionally bullied.

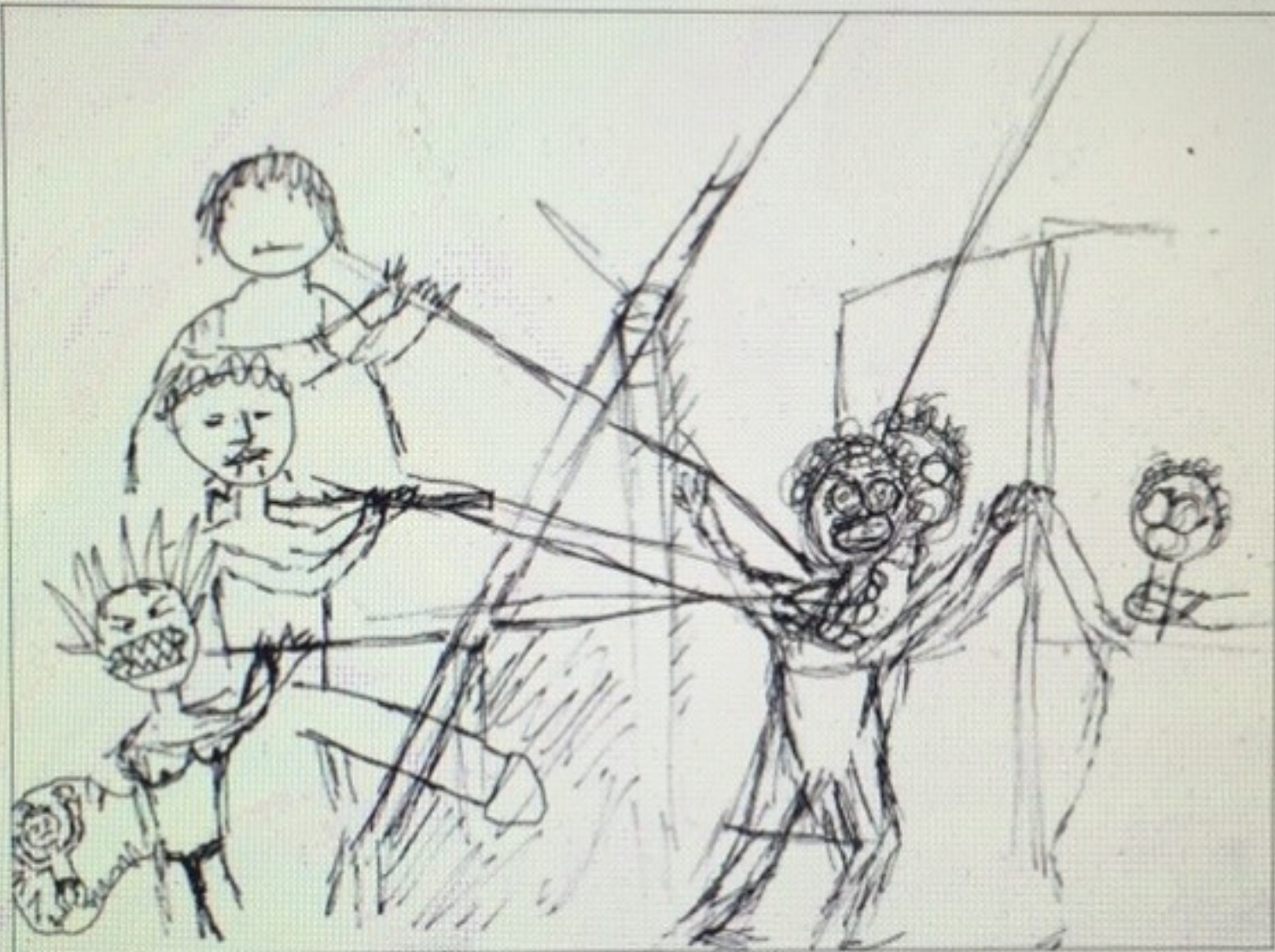
TRAUMA STATISTICS

- ◉ **1 in 5** children witnessed violence in their family or the neighborhood during the previous year.
- ◉ In one year, **39%** of children between the ages of 12 and 17 reported witnessing violence, **17%** reported being a victim of physical assault and **8%** reported being the victim of sexual assault.
- ◉ **More than 60%** of youth age 17 and younger have been exposed to crime, violence and abuse either directly or indirectly.
- ◉ **More than 10%** of youth age 17 and younger reported five or more exposures to violence.
- ◉ **About 10%** of children suffered from child maltreatment, were injured in an assault, or witnessed a family member assault another family member.
- ◉ **About 25%** of youth age 17 and younger were victims of robbery or witnessed a violent act.
- ◉ **Nearly half** of children and adolescents were assaulted at least once in the past year.

CASE STUDY

Marilyn's past shaped her view of every relationship. Michael was the first man she'd taken home in more than five years, they apparently fell asleep together on top of her bed after watching a movie. At around two in the morning, Michael turned over in his sleep. When Marilyn felt his body touch hers, she exploded—pounding him with her fists, scratching and biting, screaming, “You bastard, you bastard!” Michael, startled awake, grabbed his belongings and fled. This was not the first time she'd lost control when a man spent the night with her so she decided to go to therapy. Her therapist asked her about her childhood and she stated she had a happy childhood. So he then asked her to draw a family portrait.

CASE STUDY



CASE STUDY CONTINUED

Marilyn was harboring some terrible memories, but could not allow herself to recognize what her own picture revealed. She had drawn a wild and terrified child, trapped in some kind of cage and threatened not only by three nightmarish figures one with no eyes but also by a huge erect penis protruding into her space and yet she had a “happy” childhood. It was clear that she had a sexual traumatic past so her therapist thought group therapy would help her to find support and acceptance. When other group members shared their traumatic sexual experiences her past resurfaced. Even though she’d drawn a girl who was being sexually molested, she— or at least her cognitive, verbal self had no idea what had actually happened to her.

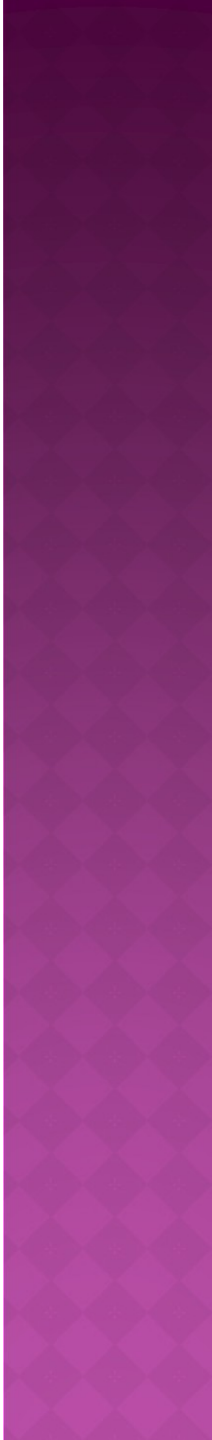
CASE STUDY CONTINUED

Marilyn was raped by her father when she was eight years old. Her molestation scared her so she pushed it out of her memory bank. When her father started to touch her, she made herself disappear; she floated up to the ceiling, looking down on some other little girl in the bed. She was glad that it was not really her— it was some other girl who was being molested. Her experience of dissociation is so common among incest victims. It took Marilyn a long time before she was ready to talk about her abuse: She was not ready to violate her loyalty to her family— deep inside she felt that she still needed them to protect her against her fears. The price of this loyalty is unbearable feelings of loneliness, despair, and the inevitable rage of helplessness. (Van Der Kolk MD, 2014).

CASE STUDY CONTINUED



SEXUAL ABUSE STORY



TREATMENT FOR TRAUMA

For a person suffering from trauma, there are several treatment strategies including the following:

- ◉ Immediate emotional support
- ◉ Assist children in reducing overwhelming emotion
- ◉ Removal from the scene of the trauma
- ◉ Maximize the child's sense of safety
- ◉ Short-term use of medication to relieve grief or anxiety
- ◉ Medicinal or natural strategies to combat insomnia
- ◉ Short-term therapy to return to feeling safe and secure
- ◉ Help children make new meaning of their trauma history and current experiences
- ◉ Address the impact of trauma and subsequent changes in the child's behavior, development, and relationships

STAGES OF RECOVERY

Immediate of Acute
Phase

Outward Adjustment
Phase

Integration/ Relate
Phase