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Article on psychological trauma and the effect of childhood sexual abuse

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Abstract

Psychological trauma refers the emotional and psychological response to an event or a series of events that are distressing or harmful. Psychological trauma is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that encompasses a range of emotional and psychological responses to distressing events. There are various aspects of psychological trauma that affect a person's mental health. In this article importance of support systems and professional help in coping with trauma are also include to enhance the quality of mental health. Childhood sexual abuse is also a traumatic experience where an individual, typically a minor, is subjected to non-consensual sexual activities by someone. This form of abuse can have profound and long-lasting effects on the victim's mental and emotional health. Here we describe various form of Childhood sexual abuse and their impact on health.

Keywords: Psychological trauma, mental health, child sexual abuse, good touch and bad touch

Introduction

Trauma is any type of distressing event or experience that can have an impact on a person's ability to cope and function. Trauma can result in emotional, physical, and psychological harm. Many people will experience some kind of traumatic event - from the unexpected death of a loved one to a motor vehicle accident - at some point in their lifetime.

Psychological trauma

Psychological trauma refers the emotional and psychological response to an event or a series of events that are distressing or harmful. These events overwhelm an individual's ability to cope, leaving a lasting impact on their mental and emotional well-being.

Psychological trauma is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that encompasses a range of emotional and psychological responses to distressing events. These events overwhelm an individual's capacity to cope, leading to profound and lasting effects on their mental and emotional well-being. Understanding psychological trauma involves exploring its various dimensions, causes, manifestations, and the pathways to recovery.

Acute Trauma

This results from a single incident, like an accident, natural disaster, or assault.

Chronic Trauma

Ongoing, prolonged stressors, such as living in an abusive environment, can lead to chronic trauma

Complex Trauma

This is typically associated with exposure to multiple traumatic events, often of an interpersonal nature, especially during childhood.

Developmental Trauma

Trauma experienced during crucial developmental stages can have lasting effects on a person's emotional and psychological growth.

Secondary Trauma: Professionals who work with trauma survivors may experience secondary trauma due to indirect exposure to their clients' traumatic experiences.

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Impact of psychological trauma on mental health

Psychological trauma can have profound and lasting impacts on individuals, influencing various aspects of their well-being

Emotional Distress: Trauma often leads to intense emotional reactions, including anxiety, depression, guilt, and profound sadness.

Cognitive Effects: Trauma can disrupt cognitive functions, resulting in difficulties with concentration, memory, and decision-making.

Physical Manifestations: The stress of trauma may manifest physically, causing sleep disturbances, headaches, and other psychosomatic symptoms.

Disrupted Relationships: Trauma can strain interpersonal relationships, contributing to difficulties in trust, communication, and forming connections.

Behavioral Changes: Impact Individuals may exhibit changes in behavior, such as withdrawal, self-isolation, or engaging in risky activities as a coping mechanism.

Daily Functioning: Trauma can affect one's ability to function in daily life, influencing work performance, relationships, and overall quality of life.

Flashbacks and Triggers: Experiencing flashbacks and being triggered by reminders can be distressing, leading to heightened emotional and physical responses.

Barriers to Seeking Help: Stigma, fear, or a sense of isolation may create barriers to seeking professional help, prolonging the effects of trauma.

Importance of support systems and professional help in coping with trauma

Emotional Validation: Support systems offer a crucial outlet for individuals to express their emotions, providing validation and understanding.

Reducing Isolation: Connecting with others helps combat the isolation often associated with trauma, fostering a sense of belonging and community.

Building Trust: Supportive relationships contribute to rebuilding trust, a key element often eroded by traumatic experiences.

Professional Expertise: Mental health professionals bring specialized knowledge and skills, offering tailored interventions for coping with trauma.

Structured Guidance: Professional help provides structured guidance, helping individuals navigate the complexities of trauma and its aftermath.

Learning Coping Strategies: Therapists can teach coping mechanisms that empower individuals to manage stress, triggers, and emotional challenges effectively.

Safe Environment: Supportive friends, family, and therapists create safe spaces where individuals feel comfortable sharing their experiences without judgment.

Holistic Approach: Combining informal support systems with professional help allows for a holistic approach addressing emotional, cognitive, and behavioral aspects of trauma.

Encouraging Resilience: Support systems, coupled with professional assistance, contribute to fostering resilience, enabling individuals to overcome challenges and move towards recovery.

Childhood sexual abuse

Childhood sexual abuse is also a traumatic experience where an individual, typically a minor, is subjected to non-consensual sexual activities by someone in a position of power or authority over them. This form of abuse can have profound and long-lasting effects on the victim's mental and emotional well-being. If you or someone you know is experiencing this, it's crucial to seek help and support from professionals or helplines. Examples of child sexual abuse include contact for sexual purposes, molestation, statutory rape, trafficking, sexually explicit images, exposure, incest, or other sexually exploitive activities. Child sexual abuse occurs in all populations—it affects child in all socioeconomic levels, across all racial, ethnic, and cultural groups, and in both rural and urban areas.

Childhood sexual abuse can manifest in various forms

Contact Abuse: Involves physical contact between the perpetrator and the child. This can include inappropriate touching, fondling, penetration, or other forms of direct physical contact.

Non-Contact Abuse: Doesn't involve direct physical contact but includes exposing a child to sexual content, making them engage in sexual activities, or encouraging them to watch sexual acts.

Exploitation: Involves using a child for the sexual gratification of others, such as through prostitution, child pornography, or other forms of sexual exploitation.

Grooming: Perpetrators may build a relationship with a child to gain their trust and gradually introduce sexual elements. This process is known as grooming.

Preventive Management

Preventing child sexual abuse requires a multifaceted approach involving education, awareness, and action at various levels of society. Here are some strategies and tips for prevention:

1. Education and Awareness

- Teach children about their bodies, boundaries, and consent from an early age. Make sure they understand what appropriate and inappropriate behaviour is.
- Educate adults, including parents, caregivers, teachers, and community members, about the signs of child sexual abuse and how to respond appropriately.

- Promote open communication between children and trusted adults so that children feel comfortable

reporting any incidents of abuse.

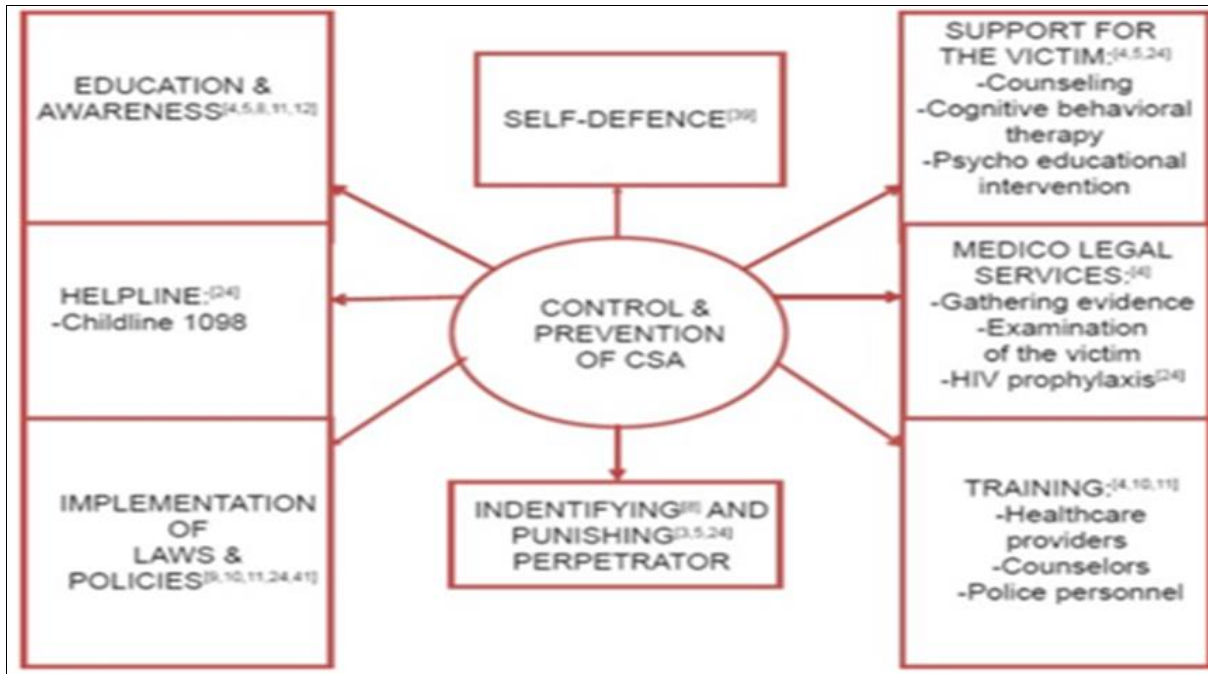


Fig 1: Control and prevention of child sexual abuse (CSA)

2. Healthy Relationships and Boundaries

- Teach children about healthy relationships, respect, and boundaries. Encourage them to speak up if they feel uncomfortable in any situation.
- Model appropriate behaviour in relationships and interactions with children. Show them what healthy boundaries look like.

3. Screening and Supervision

- Screen individuals who work with children, such as teachers, coaches, and childcare providers, through background checks and reference checks.
- Implement proper supervision protocols in settings where children gather, such as schools, sports clubs, and religious institutions.

4. Recognizing and Reporting Signs of Abuse

Educate adults on the signs of child sexual abuse, which may include unexplained injuries, changes in behaviour, reluctance to be alone with certain individuals, or inappropriate sexual knowledge or behaviour. Encourage reporting of suspected abuse to the appropriate authorities, such as child protective services or law enforcement.

5. Internet Safety

Monitor children's online activities and educate them about internet safety, including the risks of online predators and the importance of not sharing personal information online. Use parental controls and filters to limit children's exposure to inappropriate content.

6. Support for Victims and Survivors

- Provide support services for victims and survivors of child sexual abuse, including counselling, therapy, and legal assistance.

- Create safe spaces where survivors can share their experiences and access resources without fear of judgment or stigma.

7. Community Involvement

- Engage communities in prevention efforts through awareness campaigns, workshops, and collaboration with local organizations and agencies.
- Foster a culture of responsibility and accountability where everyone plays a role in protecting children from abuse.
- Preventing child sexual abuse requires a collective effort involving individuals, families, communities, and institutions. By promoting awareness, education, and proactive measures, we can work towards creating safer environments for children.

Good Touch and Bad Touch

It seems like you meant to say "good touch and bad touch." This terminology is often used when teaching children about personal safety and boundaries. Here's an explanation:

Good Touch: Good touch refers to physical contact that is appropriate, wanted, and feels comfortable. Examples of good touch include hugs from trusted family members, high fives with friends, and gentle pats on the back. Good touch promotes feelings of safety, comfort, and affection.

Bad Touch: Bad touch, sometimes referred to as inappropriate touch, refers to physical contact that feels uncomfortable, unwanted, or unsafe. Examples of bad touch include someone touching a child's private parts without permission, touching in a way that hurts or scares the child, or touching that makes the child feel confused or uneasy. Bad touch violates personal boundaries and can be harmful to a child's emotional and physical well-being.

Teaching children about good touch and bad touch is essential for helping them understand their rights, set boundaries, and recognize when something is wrong. It's important to empower children to speak up if they experience bad touch and to know that they will be supported and believed. Parents, caregivers, and educators play a crucial role in providing age-appropriate education about personal safety, consent, and healthy boundaries.

Conclusion

Psychological trauma is a deeply distressing or disturbing experience that overwhelms an individual's ability to cope, leaving lasting emotional scars. Childhood sexual abuse inflicts profound psychological trauma on its victims, leaving lasting scars that reverberate throughout their lives. However, with understanding, compassion, and appropriate support, survivors can embark on a journey of healing and reclaim control over their destinies. By raising awareness, advocating for prevention, and providing comprehensive services for survivors, society can work towards breaking the cycle of abuse and fostering a future where all children can grow up free from harm. Good touch refers to physical contact that is appropriate, wanted, and feels comfortable. Bad touch, sometimes referred to as inappropriate touch, refers to physical contact that feels uncomfortable, unwanted, or unsafe.

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