

As a Matter of *fact*

Adverse Childhood Experiences and Prevention

To effectively prevent the victimization of children, professionals must have knowledge of the impact of adverse childhood experiences, and the associated risk factors.

1 Since the degree and cumulative impact of adverse childhood experiences were first documented in a retrospective study of 9,420 adults, there has been more attention focused on the impact of each experience, as well as increasing attention to the reality that many children experience multiple types of victimizations (Felitti, et al, 1998).

2 Exposure to, and the number of adverse childhood experiences was found to be associated with an increased risk of depressive disorders up to decades after occurrence (Chapman 2004).

3 In a study of 554 young adults, ages 18-22, parental verbal aggression emerged as a particularly potent form of maltreatment resulting in moderate to large effects on depression, limeric, irritability, anger-hostility responses, and dissociation (Teicher, et al 2006).

4 A national phone survey of 4,549 children, ages 2-17, or their caretakers found 60.6% either witnessed or directly experienced one victimization in the prior year. More than one-third (38.7%) had been exposed to two or more victimizations, 10.9% five or more, and 2.4% ten or more (Finkelhor, et al 2009).

5 In a longitudinal study, children who suffered four or more types of victimization in a year showed a high risk of it continuing. This may be a generalized condition of vulnerability associated with victimization. The study proposes that poly-victimization may not be unusual but common (Finkelhor, et al 2007).

6 A study of 193 juveniles who committed sex offenses showed that early childhood sexual abuse during ages 3-7 is associated with hypersexuality, sexual preoccupation, and sexual compulsivity (Gabel & Knight, 2009).

7 One study showed suicide was twice as likely among both male and female victims of child sexual abuse. Victims also had a 40% increased risk of marrying an alcoholic along with an increased risk of substance abuse, mental illness, or family problems during adulthood (Dube, et al 2005).

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