

**OVERCOMING CHILDHOOD
TRAUMA: LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF
EARLY MALTREATMENT**

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WHAT IS CHILD MALTREATMENT?

An act, generally deliberate, by a parent or caregiver that results in harm or death to a child.

The failure of a parent or caregiver to meet the minimal physical and psychological needs of a child.

60%

6%

26%

70%

62%

LONG-TERM EFFECTS

Poor academic performance

Mental health problems

Physical health problems

Aggression, crime and violence

Suicidal behavior

Decreased quality of life

THE RESEARCH:

CTQ: Childhood Trauma Questionnaire

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

- Greger, Myhre, Lydersen & Jozefiak (2016): *Child Maltreatment and Quality of Life: A Study of Adolescents in Residential Care*
- “How much the individual likes school and finds it interesting; how much they worry about grades or the future; how well they feel they manage schoolwork”
- Impairments in academic achievement, lower GPA, frequent absences and higher involvement in special education interventions

MENTAL HEALTH

- Collin-Vézina, Coleman, Milne, Sell & Daigneault (2011): *Trauma experiences, maltreatment-related impairments, and resilience among child welfare youth in residential care*
- PTSD, dissociation, depression, anger and low self-esteem
- Sexual abuse was the number one indicator of mental disorders

PHYSICAL HEALTH

- Jackson, Cushing, Gabrielli, Fleming, O'Connor & Huffhines (2016): *Child Maltreatment, Trauma, and Physical Health Outcomes: The Role of Abuse Type and Placement Moves on Health Conditions and Service Use for Youth in Foster Care*
- Different types of CM are associated with different physical health outcomes
- Higher rates of health care utilization
- Prolonged maltreatment and stress are indicators of poor physical health

AGGRESSION, CRIME, AND VIOLENCE

- Hagan, Roubinov, Mistler, & Luecken (2014): *Mental health outcomes in emerging adults exposed to childhood maltreatment: The moderating role of stress reactivity*
- Cortisol levels contribute to information processing and emotional regulation
- Early traumatic experiences can alter cortisol levels
- Low cortisol leads to aggression and crime

SUICIDAL BEHAVIOR

- Torchalla, Strehlau, Li, Schuetz & Krausz (2012): *The association between childhood maltreatment subtypes and current suicide risk among homeless men and women*
- Sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, and emotional neglect all correlate with suicide risk
- Due to mental illness, low self-esteem, recurring memories, and substance abuse
- Physical neglect not associated with suicide risk

DECREASED QUALITY OF LIFE

- Rikhye, Tyrka, Kelly, Gagne Jr., Mello, Mello, Price & Carpenter (2007): *Interplay between childhood maltreatment, parental bonding, and gender effects: Impact on quality of life*
- Lower quality of life for victims of maltreatment
- Strongly linked to parental bonds
 - Quality of paternal figure is associated to quality of adult life

RESILIENCE

“Being able to recover easily from difficult circumstances; the ability to bounce back and persevere; being able to adjust to misfortune” – McCoy & Keen (2014)

1/3 of adult survivors are extremely resilient

Protective factors

Individual, familial, and community

Biological factors

Cortisol levels may determine resiliency

CREATING RESILIENCY

- External Protective Factors
- Diet, exercise, meditation, and therapy
- Rodin & Stewart (2012): *Resilience in elderly survivors of child maltreatment*
 - Six broad themes:
 - Social support
 - Psychological attributes
 - Financial security
 - Spirituality
 - Engagement
 - Determination

DISCUSSION

- CM can have detrimental effects on one's life if they aren't resilient
- Ability to overcome trauma increases quality of life
- Potential policy implications

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