

What is stopping us from reporting?

Barriers to reporting Child Abuse/Neglect (CA/N)

1. Belief that CA/N is not a common problem.

Reality:

- CA/N is experienced by 09% of children without disabilities **vs.** 31% of children with disabilities (Sullivan & Knutson, 2000).

([Alvarex, Kenny, Donohue, & Carpin, 2004](#); [Bonner, & Hensley, 1997](#); [Kenny, 2001, 2004](#))

Note: for more information concerning the incidence of neglect and abuse as experienced by children with disabilities, “click” [HERE](#)

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2. Belief that CA/N is not sufficiently important to warrant our attention.

Reality /Impact:

- Poor physical health
 - chronic fatigue, altered immune function, hypertension, sexually transmitted diseases, obesity.
- Social difficulties
 - insecure attachments with caregivers, which may lead to difficulties in developing trusting relationships with peers and adults later in life.

Reality/Impact: (cont.)

- Cognitive dysfunctions
 - deficits in attention, abstract reasoning, **language development**, and problem-solving skills, which ultimately affect academic achievement and school performance
- Behavioral problems
 - aggression, juvenile delinquency, adult criminality, abusive or violent behavior
([Wang, Holton, 2007](#))

Note: for more information concerning the impact of neglect and abuse, “click” [HERE](#)

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3. Insufficient knowledge re. the signs and symptoms of CA/N; and uncertainties re. CA/N reporting procedures

Strategy: *Observe the child...

- Shows sudden changes in behavior, or school performance
- Has not received help for physical, or medical problems brought to the parents' attention
- Is always watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen
- Is overly compliant, passive, or withdrawn
- Comes to school or other activities early, stays late, and does not want to go home

[*Child Welfare Information Gateway: Recognizing Child Abuse & Neglect](#)

- **Strategy:** *Observe the parent...
 - Shows little concern for the child
 - Denies the existence of—or blames the child for—the child's problems in school or at home
 - Asks teachers or other caregivers to use harsh physical discipline if the child misbehaves
 - Sees the child as entirely bad, worthless, or burdensome
 - Demands a level of physical or academic performance the child cannot achieve
 - Looks primarily to the child for care, attention, and satisfaction of emotional needs

- **Strategy: Observe Parent/Child Interactions:**
 - Rarely touch or look at each other
 - Consider their relationship entirely negative
 - State that they do not like each other

Note: for more information concerning the reporting of suspected occurrence of neglect and abuse, “click” [HERE](#)

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4. Perceived negative consequences of reporting CA/N, i.e., make things worse for the child and

Reality

In the majority of cases, maltreatment does not increase as a result of reporting and in less than 3% of reported cases result in children being removed from the home ([Alvarex, et al, 2004](#))

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5. fear of disapproval from parents, parental denial, lack of administrative support and legal ramifications for false allegations.

Reality:

- All states provide immunity to those professionals who report CA/N in good faith ([Alvarex, et al, 2004](#))

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6. Insufficient knowledge re. the reporting procedures.

Reality

- Most (58%) instances of CA/N are reported by professionals, with teachers representing the single largest (17%) category of professionals.
- While protocols have been established to guide educator's reporting of CA/N ([Crosson-Tower, 2003](#)), most (87%) educators submit reports to school officials vs. Child Protective Services (CPS), with less than 30% of suspected cases subsequently shared with CPS.

Note: for more information concerning the reporting of suspected occurrence of neglect and abuse, “click” [HERE](#)

Barriers to reporting Child Abuse/Neglect (CA/N)

7. The lack of training, and ongoing support, concerning recognizing, reporting and responding to possible incidences of CA/N.

Reality:

- ...that less than 30% of suspected CA/N cases known to school personnel are formally reported.
- ...teachers need more training re. legal mandates of reporting, how to recognize and how to report suspected instances of CA/N.
- ...training should be ongoing and include experientially exercises and hypothetical situations.
- ...the better the CA/N training, the more cognizant teachers became of the difficulty in recognizing the signs and systems of CA/N

([Kenny, 2001](#); [2004](#))