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).


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– Is overly compliant, passive, or withdrawn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](#)
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
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)