

# The Nightmares That Won't Go Away: The Impact of Traumatic Stress in Working with Abused Children

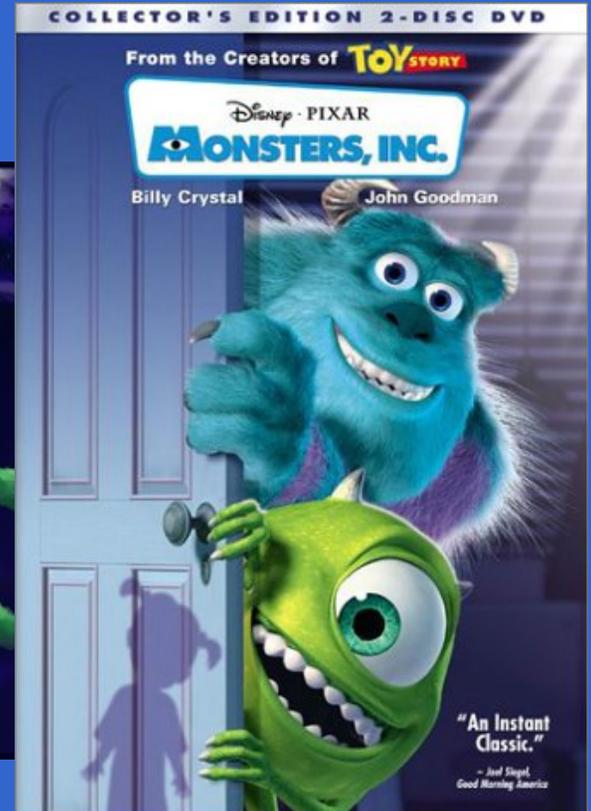
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# Who would hurt a little child?



# Institute for Healthcare Improvement Model

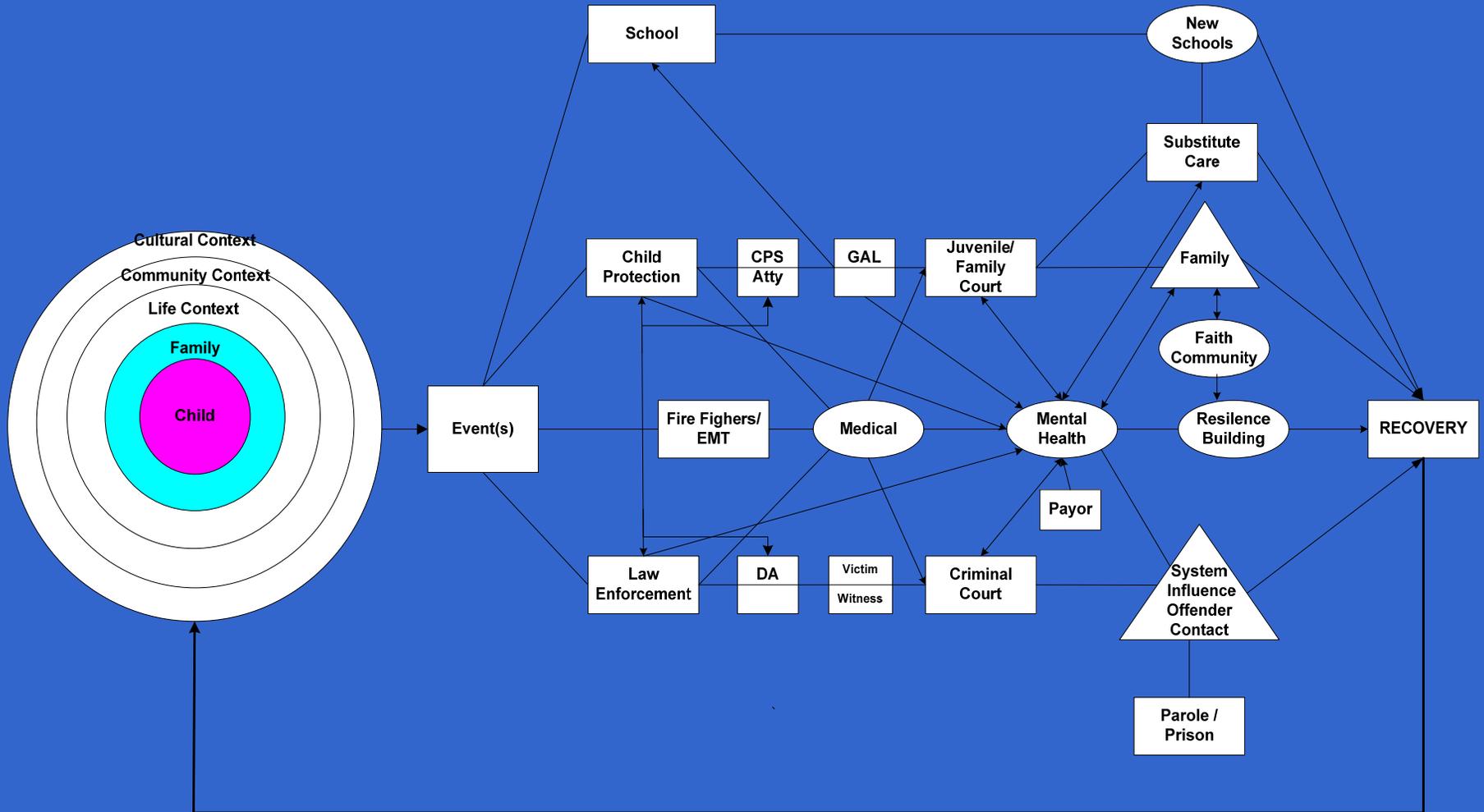


# What is a Trauma Informed Child Serving System?

A Trauma Informed System understands:

- 1) the impact of childhood traumatic stress on the children served by the child serving system
- 2) how the culture of the child and family influences the child's response to trauma
- 3) how the system can either help mitigate the impact of trauma or inadvertently add new traumatic experiences;

# Emotional Chain of Custody

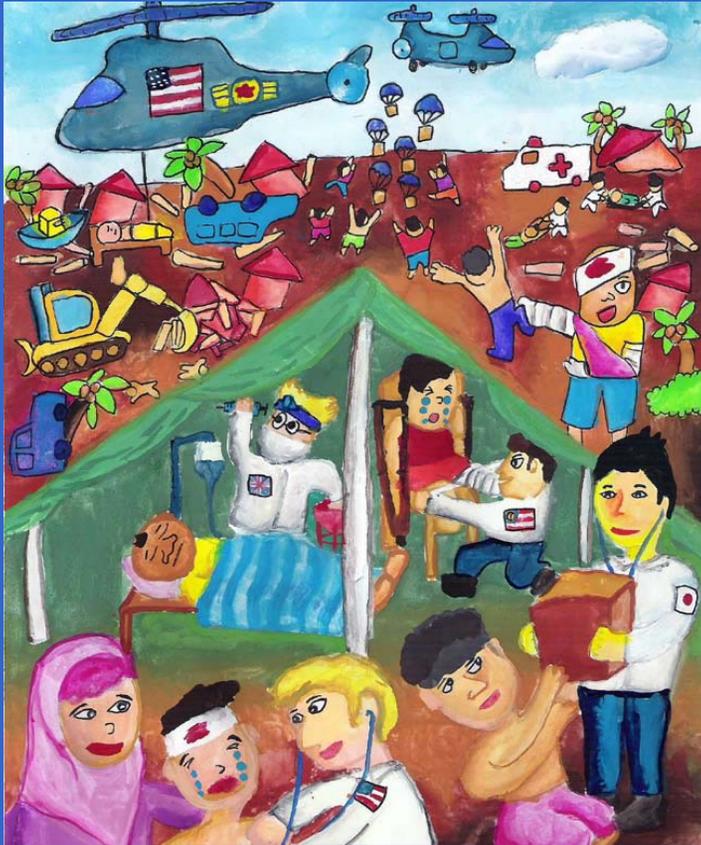


Experience shapes response to future trauma

# What is a Trauma Informed System?

- 4) how to promote factors related to child and family resiliency after trauma;
- 5) the impact of the current and past trauma on the families with whom we interact;
- 6) how adult trauma interferes with adult caregivers' ability to care and support their child;
- 7) the impact of vicarious trauma on the child-serving workforce;
- 8) that exposure to trauma is part of the job of protecting kids
- 9) how and when to apply the right evidence based treatments

# What Is Child Traumatic Stress?



Artwork courtesy of the International Child Art Foundation ([www.icaf.org](http://www.icaf.org))

# What Is Child Traumatic Stress?

- Child traumatic stress refers to the *physical and emotional responses* of a child to events that threaten the life or physical integrity of the child or of someone critically important to the child (such as a parent or sibling).
- Traumatic events overwhelm a child's capacity to cope and elicit feelings of terror, powerlessness, and out-of-control physiological arousal.
- Trauma is experienced as a series of traumatic moments each penetrating deep in the child's psyche.

Trauma Occurs as a Series of Traumatic Moments and Ripples Throughout the Child's Life



# What Is Child Traumatic Stress

- Trauma is cumulative-one insult adds upon the last.
- A child's response to a traumatic event may have a profound effect on his or her perception of self, the world, and the future.
- Traumatic events may affect a child's:
  - Ability to trust others
  - Sense of personal safety
  - Effectiveness in navigating life changes

- Brain Development
- Capacity to Learn
- Educational Performance
- Social Relationships
- Behavior

# Types of Traumatic Stress

- **Acute trauma** is a single traumatic event that is limited in time.
- **Chronic trauma** refers to the experience of multiple traumatic events.
- **Complex trauma** describes both exposure to chronic trauma—usually caused by adults entrusted with the child’s care—and the impact of such exposure on the child.

# Proposed Criteria for Developmental Trauma Disorder DSM5

# Proposed Criteria for Developmental Trauma Disorder

- A. Exposure. The child or adolescent has experienced or witnessed multiple or prolonged adverse events over a period of at least one year beginning in childhood or early adolescence, including:
  - A. 1. Direct experience or witnessing of repeated and severe episodes of interpersonal violence; and
  - A. 2. Significant disruptions of protective caregiving as the result of repeated changes in primary caregiver; repeated separation from the primary caregiver; or exposure to severe and persistent emotional abuse

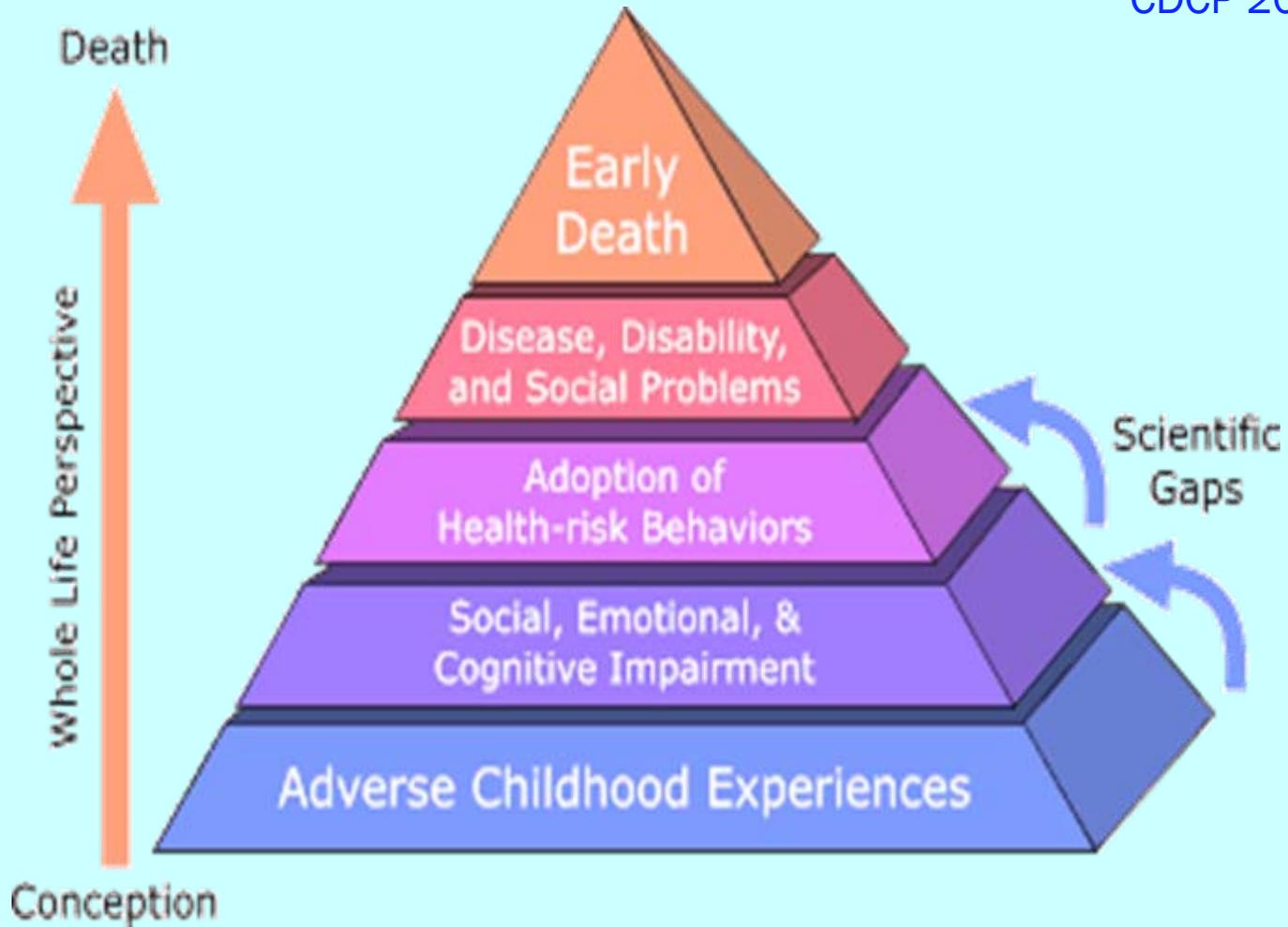
# Proposed Criteria for Developmental Trauma Disorder

- B. Affective and Physiological Dysregulation. The child exhibits impaired normative developmental competencies related to **arousal regulation**, including at least two of the following:
  - B. 1. Inability to modulate, tolerate, or recover from extreme affect states (e.g., fear, anger, shame), including prolonged and extreme tantrums, or immobilization
  - B. 2. Disturbances in regulation in bodily functions (e.g. persistent disturbances in sleeping, eating, and elimination; over-reactivity or under-reactivity to touch and sounds; disorganization during routine transitions)
  - B. 3. Diminished awareness/dissociation of sensations, emotions and bodily states
  - B. 4. Impaired capacity to describe emotions or bodily states

- **D. Self and Relational Dysregulation.** The child exhibits impaired normative developmental competencies in their sense of personal identity and involvement in relationships, including at least three of the following:
  - D. 1. Intense **preoccupation with safety of the caregiver** or other loved ones (including precocious caregiving) or difficulty tolerating reunion with them after separation
  - D. 2. Persistent **negative sense of self**, including self-loathing, helplessness, worthlessness, ineffectiveness, or defectiveness
  - D. 3. Extreme and **persistent distrust, defiance or lack of reciprocal behavior in close relationships** with adults or peers
  - D. 4. Reactive physical or verbal **aggression** toward peers, caregivers, or other adults
  - D. 5. **Inappropriate** (excessive or promiscuous) attempts to get **intimate contact** (including but not limited to sexual or physical intimacy) or excessive reliance on peers or adults for safety and reassurance
  - D. 6. **Impaired capacity to regulate empathic arousal** as evidenced by **lack of empathy** for, or intolerance of, expressions of distress of others, or excessive responsiveness to the distress of others

- E. Posttraumatic Spectrum Symptoms. The child exhibits at least one symptom in at least two of the three PTSD symptom clusters B, C, & D.
- F. Duration of disturbance (symptoms in DTD Criteria B, C, D, and E) at least 6 months.
- G. Functional Impairment. The disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in at least two of the following areas of functioning:
  - • Scholastic
  - • Familial
  - • Peer Group
  - • Legal
  - • Health
  - Vocation

Long Term Impact  
ACE Pyramid  
CDCP 2006



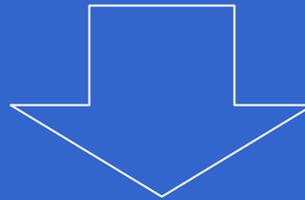
## Adverse Childhood Experiences

- Abuse and Neglect (e.g., psychological, physical, sexual)
- Household Dysfunction (e.g., domestic violence, substance abuse, mental illness)



## Impact on Child Development

- Neurobiologic Effects (e.g., brain abnormalities, stress hormone dysregulation)
- Psychosocial Effects (e.g., poor attachment, poor socialization, poor self-efficacy)
- Health Risk Behaviors (e.g., smoking, obesity, substance abuse, promiscuity)



## Long-Term Consequences

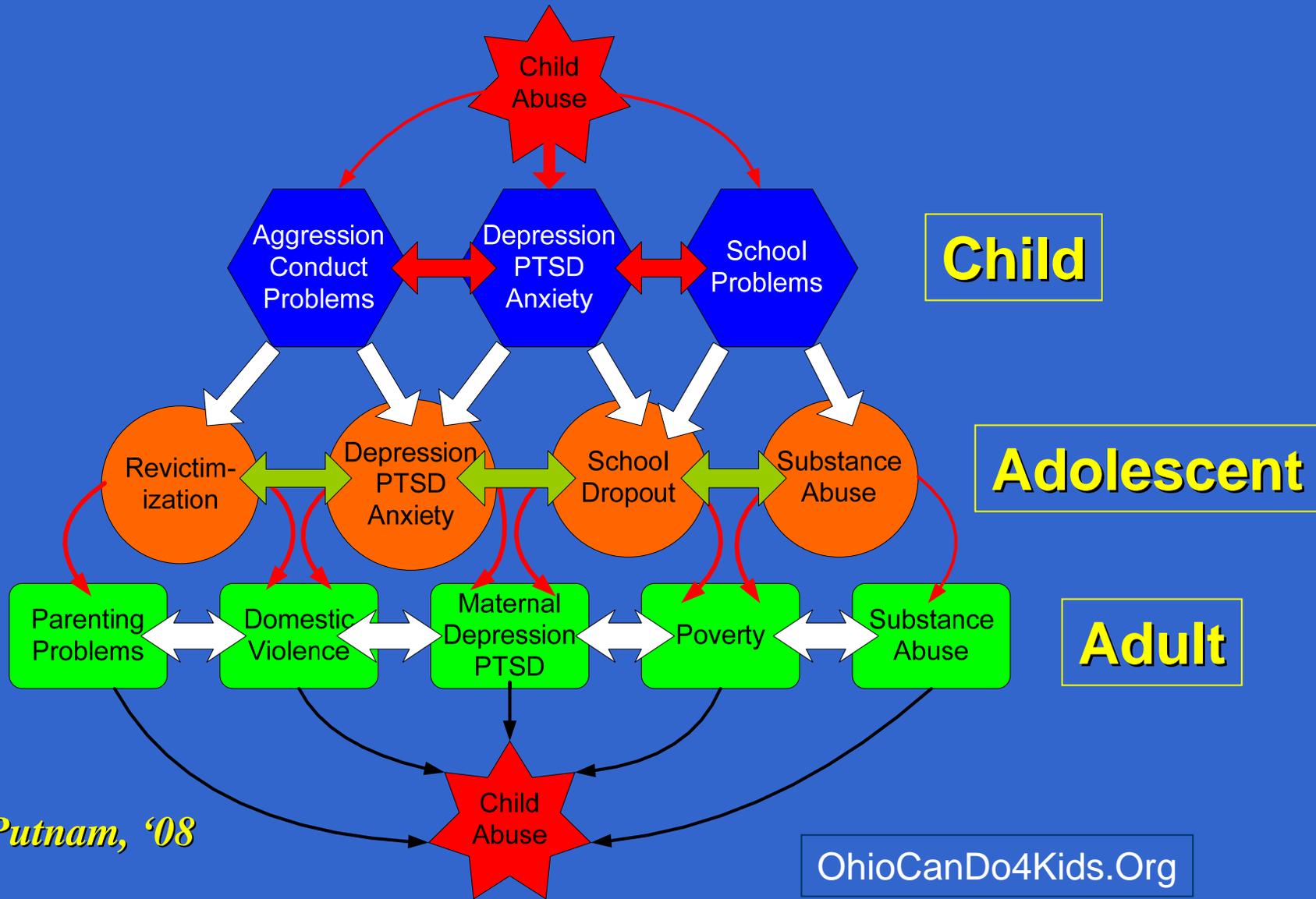
### Disease and Disability

- Major Depression, Suicide, PTSD
- Drug and Alcohol Abuse
- Heart Disease
- Cancer
- Chronic Lung Disease
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases
- Intergenerational transmission of abuse

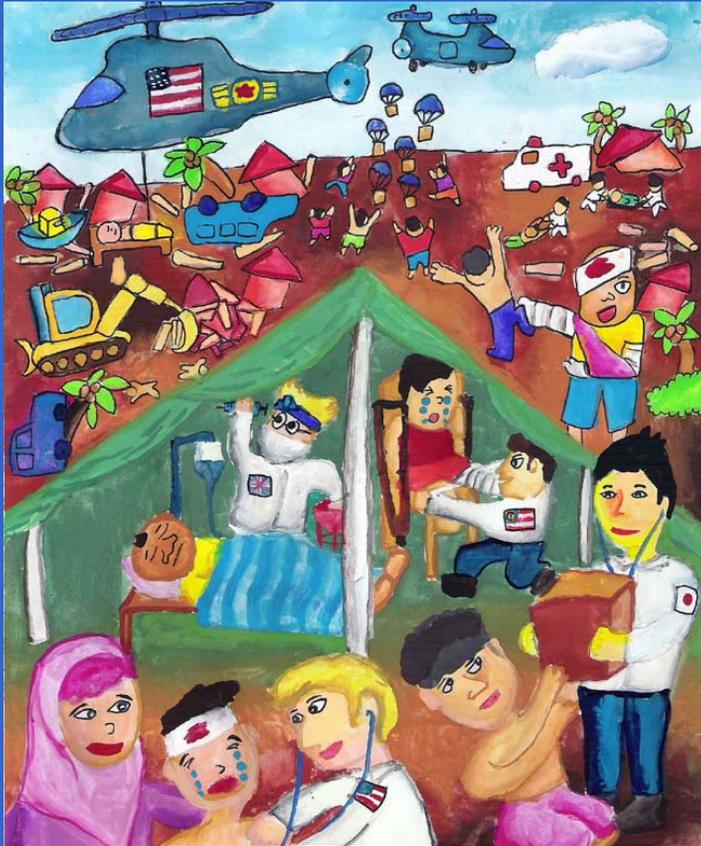
### Social Problems

- Homelessness
- Prostitution
- Criminal Behavior
- Unemployment
- Parenting problems
- Family violence
- High utilization of health and social services

# Developmental Cascade of Transgenerational Child Maltreatment Risk



# Call for Trauma Informed Child Serving Systems



Artwork courtesy of the International Child Art Foundation ([www.icaf.org](http://www.icaf.org))

What realistic and practical actions can be taken at all levels of the system to make meaningful use of that understanding to make it better for the children, families, and workforce.

# Essential Elements of Trauma-Informed Practice

1. Maximize the child's sense of safety.
2. Assist children in reducing overwhelming emotion.
3. Help children make new meaning of their trauma history and current experiences.
4. Address the impact of trauma and subsequent changes in the child's behavior, development, and relationships.
5. Coordinate services with other agencies.

# Essential Elements of Trauma-Informed Practice

6. Utilize comprehensive assessment of the child's trauma experiences and their impact on the child's development and behavior to guide services.
7. Support and promote positive and stable relationships in the life of the child.
8. Provide support and guidance to child's family and caregivers.
9. Recognize many of the adults caregivers you interact with are trauma victims as well-trauma in childhood, trauma last week
10. Manage professional and personal stress.

# Resources

- [www.nctsn.net](http://www.nctsn.net) (National Child Traumatic Stress Network)
- [www.ChadwickCenter.org](http://www.ChadwickCenter.org) (Chadwick)
- [www.musc.edu/cvc/](http://www.musc.edu/cvc/) (TF-CBT on-line and OVC guidelines)
- [www.cachildwelfareclearinghouse.org](http://www.cachildwelfareclearinghouse.org) (Online Evidence Based Practice Resource Designed for Public Child Welfare Professionals- With Support from California Department of Social Services)

# Come Together in 2011

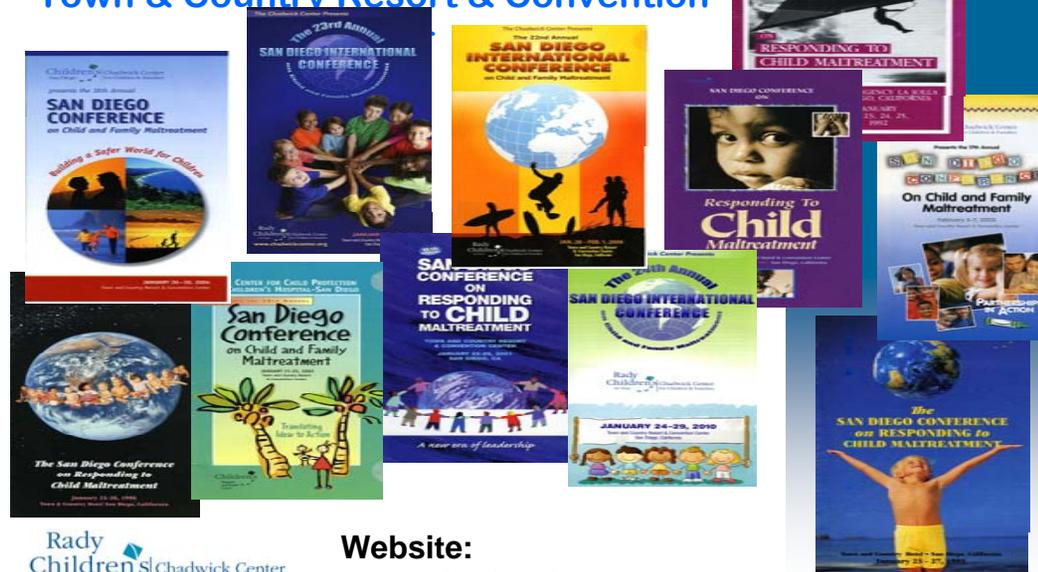
## *San Diego International Conference*

**ON CHILD & FAMILY  
MALTREATMENT**

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