



The impact of childhood abuse and maltreatment on mental health

Lecture 4



The Myth...



The Biggest Myth about Child Abuse

The biggest myth is that the dangers to children come from strangers. In most cases, the perpetrator is someone the parent or child knows, and is often trusted by the child and family.

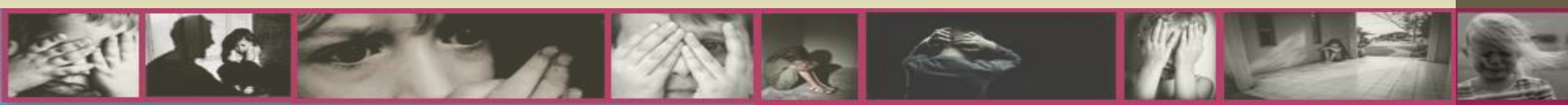


Background

- **Maltreatment prevalence**

- Affects **millions** of children worldwide
- Difficult to estimate **true prevalence**
 - Many cases never come to light
 - Existing estimates vary widely
 - Community studies vs. official reports
- **UK**: up to **1 in 5** experience severe maltreatment

(NSPCC; Radford et al., 2011)



Child maltreatment

Maltreatment	Variants	Percentage
Neglect	Lack of provision Lack of supervision	6-12
Physical abuse (non-accidental injury)	Causing death, injury or visible marks (bruises) Fabricated or induced illness by: • Misreporting of child's symptoms • Interfering with investigations, specimens and treatment • Direct interference with, or harming the child so as to produce symptoms and signs	5-35
Sexual abuse	Penetrative genital or oral contact Non-penetrative genital or genital-oral contact Non-contact sexual exposure and exploitation	25F, 9M 5-10F, 1-5M 13F, 4M
Emotional abuse	Emotional unavailability Hostility and rejection Developmentally inappropriate interactions Exposure to domestic abuse Using the child for the fulfilment of the adult's needs Failing to promote the child's socialization	4-9

Child abuse statistics in UK

- Police recorded over **23,000** sex offences against children aged under 18 years in England and Wales between April 2012 and March 2013 (NSPCC, 2013).
- More than one in three children (34 per cent) who experienced contact sexual abuse **by an adult did not tell anyone** else about it (Radford et al, 2011).
- Four out of five children (82.7 per cent) who experienced contact sexual abuse **from a peer** did not tell anyone else about it.
- In 2012/13, Childline counsellors dealt with 1.4 million contacts from children about various problems including, bullying, sexual abuse, violence and mental health issues (NSPCC, 2013).

Child abuse statistics in UK

On average, every week in the UK at least **one child is killed** at the hands of another person.

Children **under one** are **more at risk** of being killed at the hands of another person than any other age group in England and Wales (ONS, 2013)



In 2012/13 NSPCC helpline advisors responded to nearly 51,000 contacts from adults **concerned about a child**.

More than half of these were **serious** enough to warrant referral to local police or children's services for further investigation.

Child abuse statistics in UK

Neglect is the most common reason for a child to be the subject of a **child protection plan** or on a child protection register in the UK.

Neglect was a factor in 60 per cent of the 139 serious case reviews (where a child died or was seriously injured) published in England between 2009 and 2011 (Brandon et al, 2013).

Between 2010/11 and 2011/12 nearly 26 million **child abuse images** were confiscated by the police (NSPCC, 2013a).

1 in 20 children in the UK have been sexually abused (NSPCC, 2013).



There are 29,837 offenders on the **Sex Offenders Register** for sexual offences against children.

Child maltreatment as a risk factor for other types of violence

Risk factor for involvement in youth violence

Risk factor for intimate partner and sexual violence as victim and perpetrator

Risk factor for committing child maltreatment as a parent



Outcomes for neglected children

Neglect has a wide-ranging impact on children.

- damaging affect on ***all of the developmental needs*** of a child, including physical, socio-emotional, cognitive and behavioural development (Horwath, 2007).

The way in which a child's brain develops depends on care-giving experiences, and there are certain '**sensitive**' periods when parts of the brain will not develop without the correct form of stimulation or environmental conditions (Schore, 2002).



Outcomes for neglected children

In infancy and preschool, neglected children are more likely to show **inadequate growth and failure to thrive**, more extreme mood swings, non-compliance and less positive affect (Howe, 2005).

At primary school age, they are more likely to be **socially isolated**, lack social skills and appear withdrawn (Hildyard and Wolfe, 2002).



Hunger and fatigue

(Berry et al, 2003)

Poor hygiene

Apathy

Achieve less well
educationally

Inadequate clothing





Outcomes for neglected children

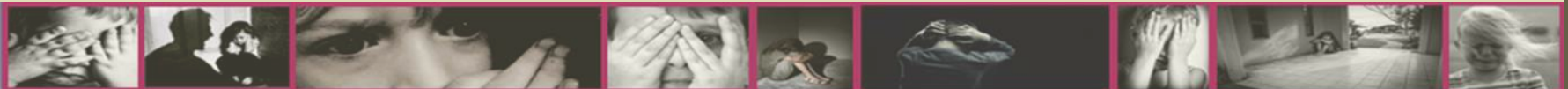
- Neglect interferes with the acquisition of emotional understanding and **emotion regulation**.
- Neglected children may also **crave physical contact** and attention and hence may be prey to sexual abusers (Horwath, 2007).
- By adolescence, neglected children are more likely to have **dropped out of school** and be involved in substance misuse (Eriksson and Egeland, 2002).
- They may continue to be **socially withdrawn**, are more likely to be bullied, and may be likely to **attempt suicide** (Cullingford and Morrison, 1997).
- There is also a higher rate of **antisocial and violent behaviour** among adolescents who have experienced neglect (Smith et al, 2005).

In adulthood...

Relationship difficulties = Social isolation or problematic relationships with frequent crises and breakups
(Horwarth, 2007).



Women are also more than **twice as likely** as other women to experience depression, more frequently have a teenage pregnancy, and are more likely to be in adult relationships characterised by **domestic violence** (Bifulco and Moran, 1989).





Impairment across lifespan

Injury

Affect
regulation

Attachment

Growth

Developmental
delay

Anxiety disorders
including PTSD

Mood disorders

Disruptive
behaviour
disorders (e.g.
ADHD)

Academic failure

Poor peer relations

Conduct disorder

Alcohol abuse

Drug abuse

Other risk-taking
behaviours

Recurrent
victimization

Personality
disorders

Relationship
problems

Employment
problems

Chronic disease
including heart
disease, cancer

Infancy

Childhood

Adolescence

Adulthood

The impact ...

- Functional MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) and PET (positron emission tomography) - identify the **chemical and structural differences between the central nervous systems** of abused and non-abused young people (Anderson et al, 2002; Teicher et al, 2004; Weniger et al, 2008).
- **Many health problems**, including panic or post-traumatic stress disorder, chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, depression, some auto-immune disorders, suicidal tendencies, abnormal fear responses, pre-term labour, chronic pain syndromes, and ovarian dysfunction can be understood, in some cases, as manifestations of childhood maltreatment (Kendall-Tackett, 2000; De Bellis, 2005).



The impact ...

Maltreatment may **inhibit the appropriate development** of certain regions of the brain (Glaser, 2000).

A neglected infant or young child may **not be exposed to stimuli that normally activate important regions** of the brain and strengthen cognitive pathways.

The connections among neurons in these inactivated regions can literally **with er away**, hampering the child's functioning later in life.



As a result, the brain may become 'wired' to experience the world as **hostile and uncaring**. This negative perspective may influence the child's later interactions, prompting the child to become anxious and overly aggressive or emotionally withdrawn.

The impact on well-being

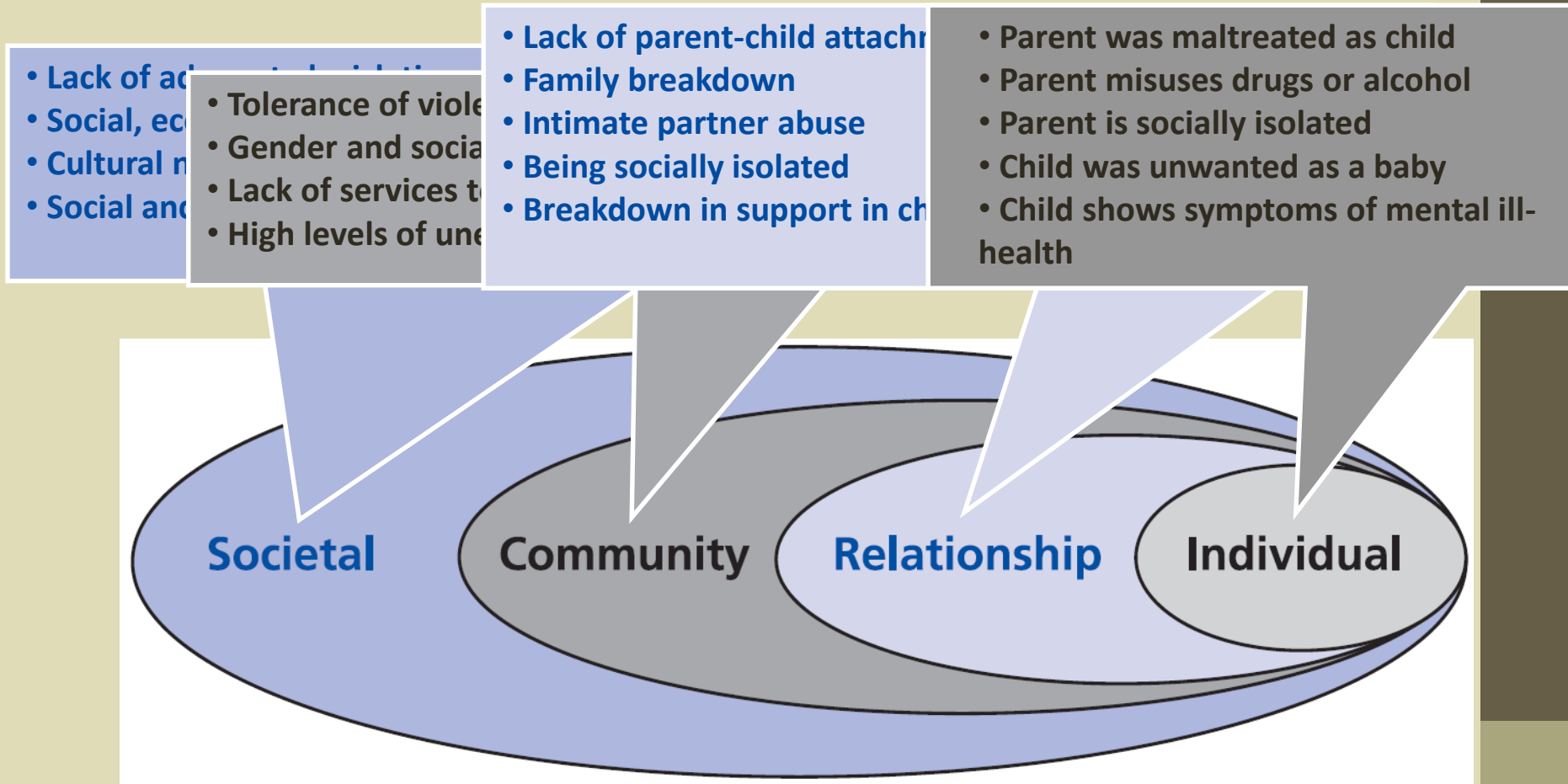
Mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, substance misuse, eating disorders, self-injurious behaviour, anger and aggression, sexual symptoms and age-inappropriate sexual behaviour (Lanktree et al, 2008).



Panic disorder, dissociative disorders, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, and reactive attachment disorder (Teicher, 2000; De Bellis and Thomas, 2003; Springer et al, 2007).

Children who experience rejection or neglect are more likely to develop **antisocial** traits as they grow up and are more associated with borderline personality disorders and violent behaviour (Schoore, 2003).

Risk factors for child maltreatment



Source: *World report on violence and health* edited by Krug, E. et al. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2002.

Impact of maltreatment on Schooling

At a greater risk of **poor school behaviour**, being **bullied** in school, having **special educational needs**, **exclusion** from school, and are increasingly likely to be absent from school.

In addition the young people are more likely to finish education at, or before, the minimum leaving age (Cawson, 2002).

A review of 92 studies conducted between 1967 and 2000 - in 31 out of 34 studies (91%), abuse was **related to poor school achievement**; in 49 out of 65 studies (75%) children who had suffered abuse had **delays in cognitive development** and in 36 out of 42 studies (86%) children had **delays in language development** (Veltman and Brown, 2001).

Turney and Tanner (2005) - link between child neglect, poor performance at school, discipline problems at school, and associated exclusions and repeat years.

Low self-esteem and self-worth leading to a lack of a sense of control over their lives.

Educational risk factors

Children exposed to maltreatment are at increased risk of educational **underachievement**, including lower verbal and math scores.(Boden, Horwood, & Fergusson, 2007)

Neglected children have **poorer academic performance** than physically maltreated children.(Lowenthal, 2000)

Maltreated children have **higher rates of absenteeism** from school than non-maltreated peers (Fantuzzo, Perlman, & Dobbins, 2011).

Maltreated children are at substantially higher risk than non-maltreated children of **repeating a grade** (Daignault & Hébert, 2008).

Maltreated children are at increased risk of **dropping out of school** before high school graduation (Widom, 2000)

Maltreated children are more likely to be referred for **special education services**.(Gilbert, Widom, Browne, Fergusson, Webb & Janson, 2009)

Maltreated children are more likely than their peers to **exhibit poor social skills and classroom behaviour problems**.(Fantuzzo, Perlman, & Dobbins, 2011)

A child's risk of poor academic functioning is substantially **heightened by multiple victimizations**.(Schwartz, Lansford, Dodge, Pettit, & Bates, 2013)

Buckle, Lancaster, Powell Higgins (2005)

Eighty-one adolescent psychiatric inpatients participated in the study (aged 12–18 years)

Examined the relationship between sexual abuse and academic achievement in an adolescent inpatient psychiatric population.

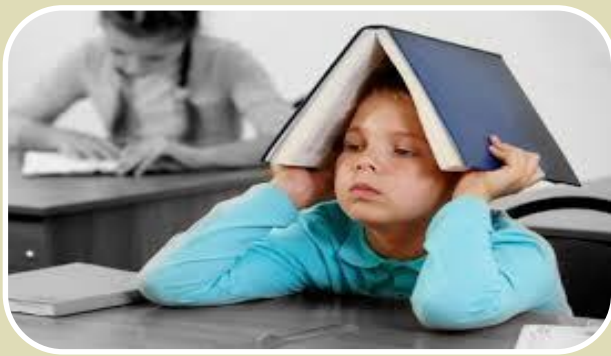
Measures - tests of academic achievement and intelligence, self-report measures - experience of different types of maltreatment, perception of the parenting they received, socio-economic status, substance abuse, and psychopathology.

Results

Intelligence was the main predictor of academic achievement.

Interactions- intelligence, substance abuse, internalizing behaviour problems, externalizing behaviour problems all influenced the relationship between sexual abuse and academic achievement.

Examining the impact of sexual abuse is **complex** because it is typically an experience embedded in a **range of other risk factors**, such as poverty, family dysfunction, and other types of maltreatment.



Cooheya, Rennera, Zhangc, and Whitneyd (2001)

Not all children are negatively affected by maltreatment, and some children seem to succeed academically despite being maltreated.

Looked at a range of potential risk, promotive, and protective factors within children and their environments along with characteristics of the maltreatment to account for variability in test scores.

Results: Chronic maltreatment, poorer daily living skills, and lower intelligence explained a substantial proportion of the variance in maltreated children's **math scores** (39%), whereas type of maltreatment, poorer daily living skills and lower intelligence explained a substantial proportion of the variance in **reading scores** (54%) over time.

Contrary to their prediction, having a behaviour problem seemed to protect chronically maltreated children from poorer performance in math over time.

A national longitudinal probability sample of 702 maltreated school-aged children, ages 6–10, and their caregivers was used to predict reading and math scores among maltreated children over three years.

Protective factors: resilience

Not all children exposed to risk factors will succumb to their effects.

There are a combination of factors that contribute to resilience.

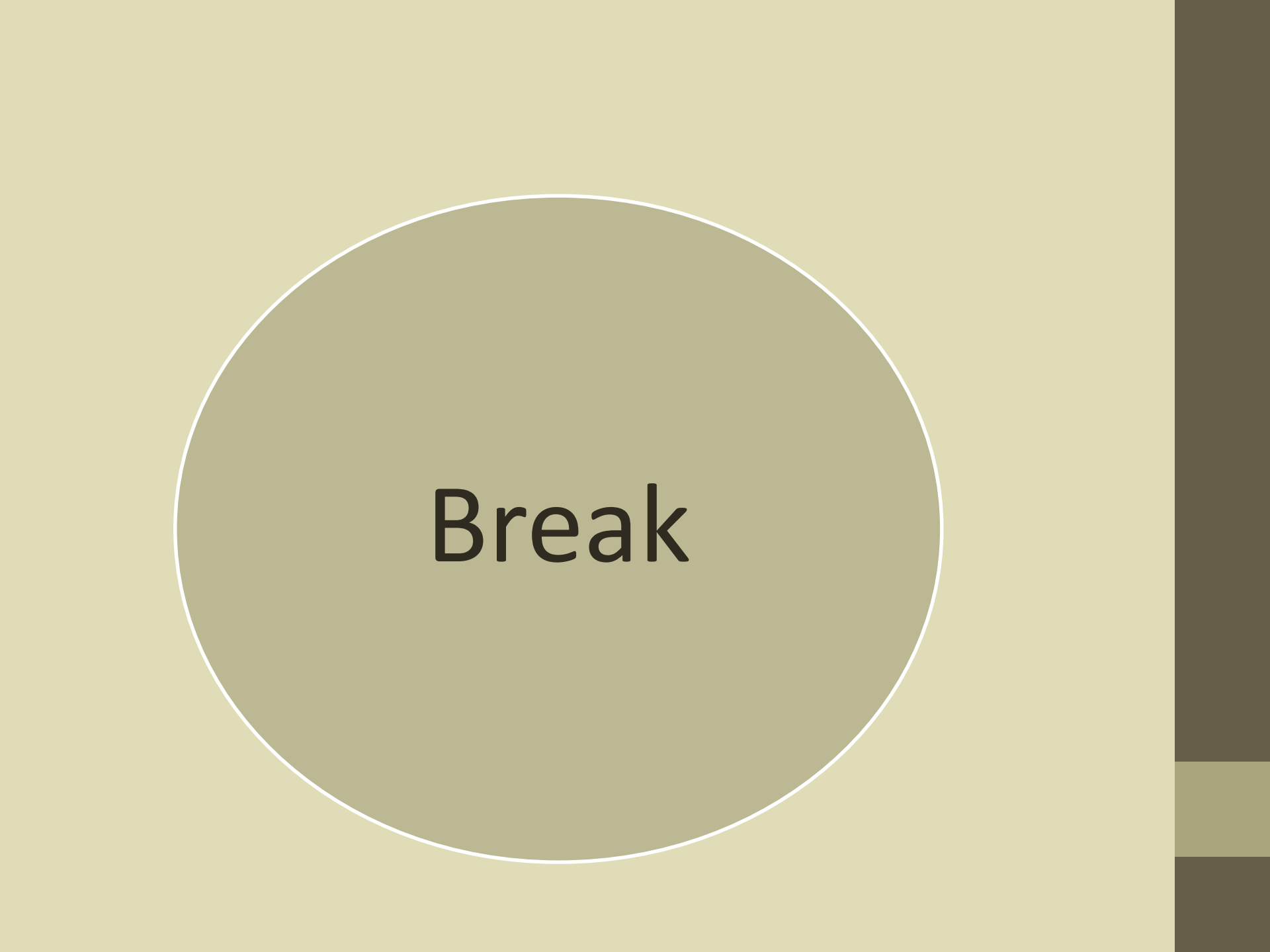
A retrospective study of women's accounts of childhood (Bifulco and Moran, 1998).

Support - bond with a relative, teacher, family friend or a peer who the child could go to in times of crisis, provide a confiding relationship or act as a role model.

Coping strategies - taking the initiative in managing stressful situations, practical problem solving, planning ahead, and developing positive self-esteem, confidence and optimism.

Meaningful and rewarding roles - typically involved competencies that were likely to enhance self-esteem, such as academic or sporting achievement.

Support, coping strategies, and meaningful or rewarding roles.



Break

Safeguarding Legislation

The Children Act 1989

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006.

The Adoption Act 2002

Every Child Matters 2003

The Education Act 2002

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013

The Children Act 2004

Review of recommendations March 2009.

The Sexual Offences Act 2003

The LSCB regulations 2006

Every Child Matters 2006

Social Services and Well-being (Wales)
Act 2014

Children Act 2008

Public law Outline April 2008

Children's Trust Arrangements (CTA)

Children's Trust Arrangements was introduced nationally as a result of the Children Act 2004. The Act makes it clear that organisations cannot continue to work separately in delivering services to children. Instead they must work together to ensure that all children are:

- Staying Safe;
- Enjoying and Achieving;
- Healthy;
- Contributing Positively; and
- Achieving Economic Well Being.

Victoria Climbié

8 years
old



Abused by her aunt and her partner
who were convicted in January 2001

Evidence that
there were 12
missed
opportunities that
might have saved
her life

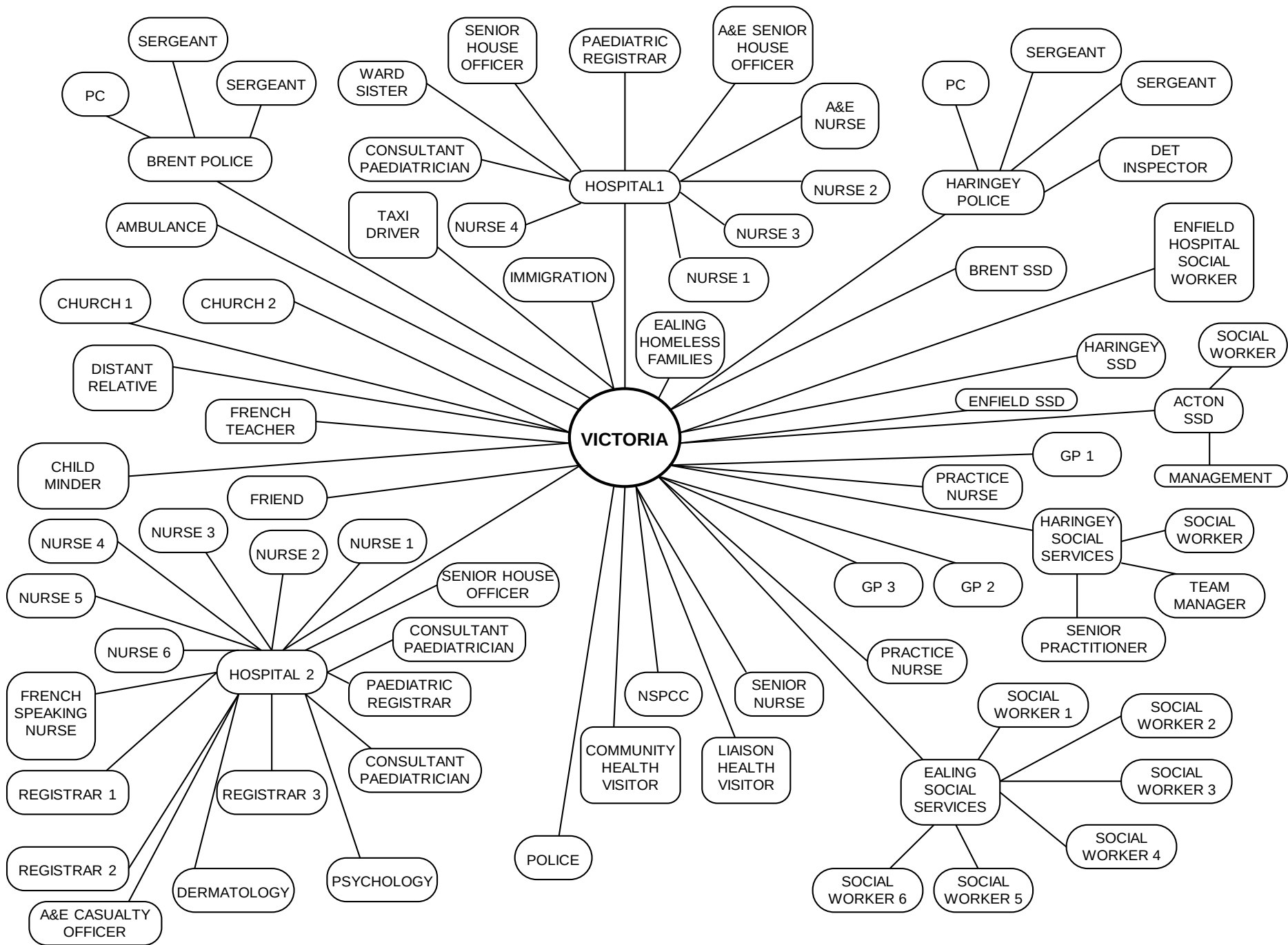
Offered a place
in school which
was not taken
up

Discharged from hospital on two occasions

– the Lord Laming Inquiry

This led to a complex
statutory inquiry into the
lessons to be drawn and the
defects in our existing
system to be highlighted

After her death 128 separate injuries were
found on her body



Key Issues Identified By The Inquiry

A large number of agencies involved failed to protect Victoria



There was a lack of sharing information between agencies



There was a failure to investigate



The child's views were not obtained



Schools failed to notify the EWO when a placement at school was not taken up



Need for wide access to child



Protection training

Peter Connelly



Only after Peter was found dead in his blood-spattered cot, his emaciated body covered with 50 separate injuries, did the full horror of the family's life begin to emerge.

A failure to identify children at risk of immediate harm and to act on evidence.

Agencies working in isolation from each other.

Poor gathering, recording and sharing of information.

Incomplete reporting of the management audit report by senior officials to elected members.

Insufficient oversight of the assistant director of children's services by the director of children's services and chief executive.

Inconsistent quality of frontline practice and insufficient evidence of supervision.

Insufficient challenge by the local safeguarding children board to its members and also to frontline staff.

An over-dependence on performance data, which was not always accurate.

Poor child protection plans.

The Joint Area Review revealed:

Key Issues Identified By The Inquiry

Peter and his three sisters were sharing the four-bedroom house with their mother, her boyfriend Barker, his paedophile brother Owen and his four children, plus Owen's 15-year-old girlfriend.

Three of the children - Peter and two of his siblings - were on Haringey's Child Protection Register because of fears they were being neglected by their mother.

Social workers, health visitors and doctors saw the family 60 times before 17-month-old Peter died from his horrific injuries, which included a snapped spine and eight broken ribs.

The Labour-run council has dismissed five employees including the family's social worker Maria Ward and the former head of children's services, Sharon Shoesmith.

Child Protection legislation

A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

Working Together to Safeguard Children

It replaces..

- Working together to safeguard children (2010)
- Framework for the assessment of children in need and their families (2000)
- Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 (2007).

Working together 2013



Reaffirms that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and for services to be effective - they must adopt a child centred approach and be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children.

child's needs are paramount

use their expert judgement

regular reviewing of outcomes for the child
against specific plans and outcomes

share appropriate information in a timely way

promote a child's welfare

When things go wrong Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) are published and transparent about any mistakes which were made so that lessons can be learnt

Chapters

Chapter 1: Assessing need and providing help

- Early help
- Information sharing
- Assessments under the Children Act 1989
- Focusing on the needs and views of the child
- Commencing child protection proceedings

Chapter 2: Organisational responsibilities

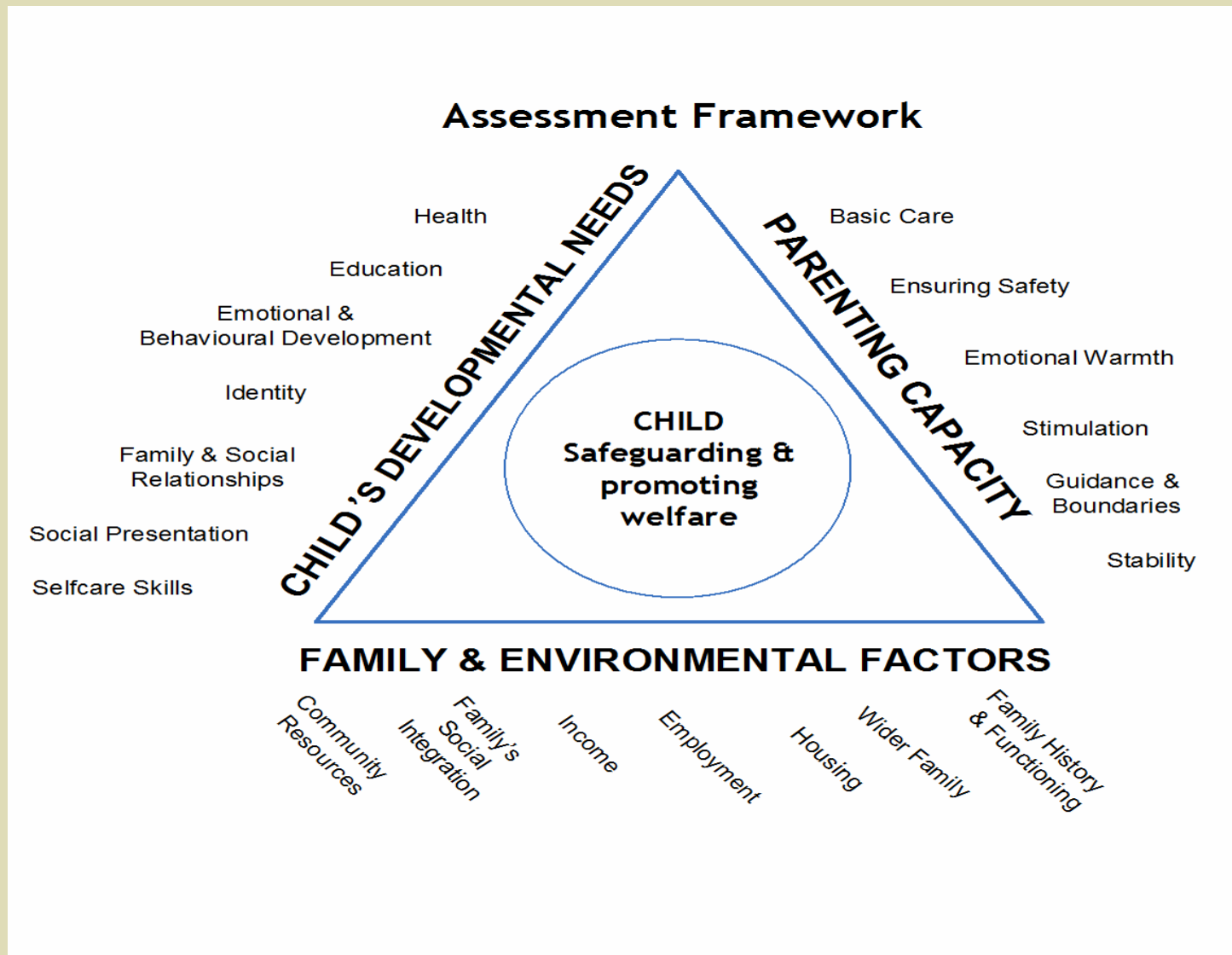
Chapter 3: Local Safeguarding Children Boards

Chapter 4: Learning and improvement framework

- Principles for learning and improvement
- Serious case reviews including requirements around publication
- National panel of independent experts on serious case reviews

Chapter 5: Child death reviews

Assessment methods



Interventions

- **Holistic approach** - Factors located at the personal, family and social levels (DePanfilis, 1999).
- **Child-centred** - Understanding of children's developmental needs. Assess the nature and degree of relationship breakdown (Tanner and Turney, 2000).
- **Culturally sensitive** - In cases where cultural differences play a role in understanding carers' behaviour, the protection of the child should remain paramount (Chand, 2000).
- **Multi-disciplinary** - The need for professionals to work collaboratively with each other across agencies and disciplines (Laming report).
- **Well recorded** - In cases of neglect this is particularly important, given the typically chronic nature of child neglect and the turn-over of staff in child welfare services (Jeyarajah Dent and Cocker, 2005).



Interventions

- **Community-wide initiatives** - Sure Start in 1998 - aimed at preventing the social exclusion of disadvantaged children, from conception to age 14 (and older for those with special education needs).
- **Home visiting** - A professional visits vulnerable families with the aim of enhancing child health and diet, maternal parenting skills, attachment, social support and involvement with services.
 - *US Elmira Prenatal/Early Infancy Project* (Olds et al, 1997) - leads to reduced rates of neglect and abuse, less medical intervention for injury to the child, and home environments that are less hazardous and more stimulating.
 - *Community Mothers Programme* (Dublin) - aims to enhance parenting skills of first-time mothers from economically disadvantaged areas.
- **Parent training** - Project 12 Ways - Results indicate that the programme leads to a reduction in child abuse and neglect (Macdonald, 2001), but its impact may not be sustained long term.

Interventions

- **School-based initiatives** - Rejection by peers : UK - integration of child and family services has involved some social workers now being 'co-located' within schools, and the impact on outcomes for children has yet to be robustly evaluated. But may have positive benefits such as the early detection of cases before they reach statutory child protection thresholds (Moran et al, 2007).
- **Social network interventions** - Social isolation - aim to extend and strengthen social support available (Gaudin, 1993).
- **Therapeutic interventions** - Multi-systemic family therapy (MST)
 - a combination of intervention strategies aimed at addressing risk and protective factors at individual, family and social levels.
- It combines strategic family therapy, structural family therapy and cognitive behaviour therapy, and involves families working intensively with a dedicated therapist.



Interventions

Family functional therapy

This “connects child and adolescent conduct problems to beliefs, behaviour and relationships within the family system” (Utting and Vennard, 2000:30).

The therapy seeks to improve communication and behaviour within the family unit by reinforcing and rewarding positive behaviour.

The intervention has been successful in improving family communication, reducing the amount of youth reoffending, as well as halving the likeliness of younger siblings developing offending behaviours. The ‘Parenting Wisely’ programme has since been developed based on this and was recently piloted by four YOTs across the UK.

The role of the professional



NICE (2009) -
guidance to
encourage
healthcare
professionals to
think holistically
when a child
presents
symptoms

Community paediatrician

Doctors

Midwives

Child-protection services

'good' parenting programmes

Community health services

Social workers

Identification

Effective interventions

Parental mental health or substance misuse

Nurses

Schools

Inter-agency collaboration

Multi-professional response

Child health and development surveys

Tanner and Turney (2005) -shortcomings in the evidence base concerning effective interventions.

Reliance on studies from the US, whose findings may not necessarily transfer to a UK context

Variation in the way that neglect is defined, including the scope of what is included in the definition

A lack of theoretical basis or else theoretical basis not being explicitly stated, aside from the ecological model

The failure to distinguish between neglect and abuse, with interventions tending to be aimed at vulnerable families where either or both neglect and abuse may be occurring

A lack of attention to the way interventions address issues of ethnicity, gender, class and culture

Methodological short-comings such as small sample sizes or differences in outcome measures.

Professional bodies - UK

- Barnardo's - Works with families and children in many ways, including counselling, fostering and adoption, support for young carers, training and disability inclusion.
- ChildLine - Provides a free and confidential service for children. Helpline 0800 1111.
- NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) - Has a number of useful publications. If you are worried about a child, call the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000.
- The Hideout - A website offering support and advice to children whose lives are affected by domestic abuse.
- YoungMinds - provides information and advice on child mental health issues.
- Young Carers - A website offering support, information and advice for children who also act as carers.
- Child Abuse Prevention, Child Abuse and Neglect: BASPCAN

Task

Read the papers in your group and discuss the impact of maltreatment/abuse on academic achievement or well-being/mental health.

Write a summary – if we have time you can read out your summaries.

References

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