

“Crisis in the Community: Understanding and Responding to the Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children”

ABC University will host its first conference on September 11th, 2009. The Workshop, titled “Crisis in the Community: Understanding and Responding to the Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children”, will focus on this growing epidemic in our community.



Our presenters include Sharon Cooper, MD, a developmental and forensic pediatrician, as well as Detective Cathy De La Paz, a 23 year veteran of

the Dallas Police Department and the lead detective assigned to the High Risk Victims and Trafficking Unit within the Child Exploitation Squad. Disturbingly, “over 2 million children are subjects of the global commercial sex trade.” The state of Georgia however, “is one of the 14 cities ranked as having the highest incidents of sexual exploitation and there are two hundred to three hundred young girls sexually exploited in the state every month, with as many as 129 girls being prostituted on a typical weekend night” (http://www.worldvision.org/worldvision/wvusufso.nsf/stable/globalissues_childprotection_sexexploit). More shocking however, is the fact that “the average age of entry into pornography and prostitution in the U.S. is 12 to 14” (<http://senate-press.com/joint-commission-on-sexual-exploitation-of-minors-announces-legislative-recommendations-for-2009.html>). Many children are being forced into this lifestyle and feel they have nowhere to turn. One of the bigger issues we face is the fact that there are inconsistencies in the laws established

to help protect these children. Although strong criminal laws have been set forth to maximize penalties for exploiting children, there remains a possibility that the minor can be prosecuted for committing illegal sexual acts. Currently, the state does not provide these children with linkage to services without subjecting them to arrest and/or detention (<http://childwelfare.net/activities/legislative2008/CSEC20080131.html>). In other words, these children are viewed as criminal themselves, rather than victims at the hands of adult “traffickers”, “pimps”, or “johns”. As a state, our exploitation ranking is growing at an alarming rate but we are not providing these children and their families with the necessary tools for brighter outcomes.

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Protecting children before as well as after exploitation is a priority. This includes:

- Protecting child victims from criminalization
- Enabling child victims and their families to access legal and social services
- Urging the prosecution of exploiters
- Assessing the physical and emotional condition of children who have been abused and providing adequate medical attention and psychosocial support

● Sensitizing communities for child reintegration and follow-up on children who have been reintegrated

● Providing educational and skills training opportunities

(http://www.worldvision.org/worldvision/wvusufso.nsf/stable/globalissues_childprotection_sexexploit)

Did you know???

*The United States is a party to a number of international agreements which recognize that people under eighteen years of age who are involved in prostitution are victims of exploitation and are in need of services and protection, rather than offenders to be prosecuted (<http://childwelfare.net/activities/legislative2008/CSEC20080131.html>).

*The sexual victimization of children is overwhelming in magnitude yet largely unrecognized and underreported. Research indicates that **1 in 5 girls and 1 in 10 boys** will be sexually victimized before adulthood (D. Finkelhor. “Current Information on the Scope and Nature of Child Sexual Abuse.” *The Future of Children: Sexual Abuse of Children*, 1994, volume 4, page 37).

*Child sexual exploitation includes the following:

1. Possession, Manufacture, and Distribution of Child Pornography .
 2. Enticement of Children for Sexual Acts.
 3. Child Prostitution
 4. Child Sex Tourism
 5. Child Sexual Molestation
- (<http://www.missingkids.com>)

Signs of Sexual Exploitation and Child Abuse:

Has your child’s behavior changed considerably? Has your child’s school approached you about your child skipping classes or having poor attendance? Is your child missing curfew? These are just a few of the many signs that your child may be at risk of or involved in sexually exploitive activities. According to the “Coalition for the Removal of Pimping” (CROP’s), the following are some indicators that your child may be in danger:

• Serious changes in behavior – children once open about friends and activities

are now hostile, secretive, defensive about what they are doing and who they are spending time with.

• Going out in clothes that are ‘too old for them’ or that they have borrowed from older young women.

• Going places that you know they can not afford.

• Coming home with expensive gifts such as mobile phones, jewelry – even drugs – and not being able to explain how they came by them.

• Frequently staying out late, without explaining why.

• Repeated truanting, missing from home regularly or for unusually long periods of time.

• Being found in areas where they have no reason to be or coming home after days or nights away, looking well-cared for even though they have had nowhere to stay.

• Getting into trouble with the police, committing crimes.

• Bruises, marks on the body, sexually-transmitted diseases, pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse or self-harm.

*Cont’d Pg. 2

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“Mental-Minute”

Here’s a puzzle to test your ability to find a pattern and test it against more data. In this table, each row across follows the same pattern of numbers. See if you can discern the pattern and fill in the missing number in the bottom row. For added challenge (or competition), time how long it takes you to complete the puzzle.

Have you solved it yet? If not, here’s a hint: If you read your figures like words in the West, then multiply your efforts and subtract the rest.

Executive functions, like planning, and spatial processing are handled by your frontal lobes.

7	4	8
3	9	7
6	5	10
?	8	4

Child Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse has been reported up to 80,000 times a year, but the number of unreported instances is far greater, because the children are afraid to tell anyone what has happened, and the legal procedure for validating an episode is difficult. The problem should be identified, the abuse stopped, and the child should receive professional help. The long-term emotional and psychological damage of sexual abuse can be devastating to the child. Child sexual abuse can take place within the family, by a parent, step-parent, sibling or other relative; or outside the home, for example, by a friend, neighbor, child care person, teacher, or stranger. When sexual abuse has occurred, a child can develop a variety of distressing feelings, thoughts and behaviors.

No child is psychologically prepared to cope with repeated sexual stimulation. Even a two or three year old, who cannot know the sexual activity is wrong, will develop problems resulting from the inability to cope with the overstimulation.

The child of five or older who knows and cares for the abuser becomes trapped between affection or loyalty for the person, and the sense that the sexual activities are terribly wrong. If the child tries to break away from the sexual relationship, the abuser may threaten the child with violence or loss of love. When sexual abuse occurs within the family, the child may fear the anger, jealousy or shame of other family members, or be afraid the family will break up if the secret is told. A child who is the victim of prolonged sexual abuse usually develops low self-esteem, a feeling of worthlessness and an abnormal or distorted view of sex. The child may become withdrawn and mistrustful of adults, and can become suicidal. Some children who have been sexually abused have difficulty relating to others except on sexual terms. Some sexually abused children become child abusers or prostitutes, or have other serious problems when they reach adulthood.

Often there are no obvious external signs of child sexual abuse. Some signs can only be detected on physical exam by a physician. Child sexual abusers can make the

child extremely fearful of telling, and only when a special effort has helped the child to feel safe, can the child talk freely. If a child says that he or she has been molested, parents should try to remain calm and reassure the child that what happened was not their fault. Parents should seek a medical examination and psychiatric consultation. Parents can prevent or lessen the chance of sexual abuse by:

- Telling children that if someone tries to touch your body and do things that make you feel funny, say NO to that person and tell me right away
- Teaching children that respect does not mean blind obedience to adults and to authority. For example, don't tell children to always do everything the teacher or baby-sitter tells you to do
- Encouraging professional prevention programs in the local school system

Sexually abused children and their families need immediate professional evaluation and treatment. Child and adolescent psychiatrists can help abused children regain a sense of self-esteem, cope with feelings of guilt about the abuse, and begin the process of overcoming the trauma. Such treatment can help reduce the risk that the child will develop serious problems as an adult.
(<http://www.aacap.org>)



Signs of Sexual Exploitation and Child Abuse: Cont'd from p. 1

- Young people getting into cars with unknown adults.
- Associating with other young people known to be victims of sexual exploitation.
- Friends at school express concern for them.
- Agencies expressing concern.
- Young people may try to tell you about their situation but not be able to.

- Acting out inappropriate sexual activity or showing an unusual interest in sexual matters
- A sudden acting out of feelings or aggressive or rebellious behavior
- Regression to infantile behavior; clinging
- School or behavioral problems
- Changes in toilet-training habits
- A fear of certain places, people, or activities
- Bruises, rashes, cuts, limping, multiple or poorly explained injuries
- Pain, itching, bleeding, fluid, or rawness in the private areas
(<http://www.missingkids.com>)

Be advised that the lists above are useful, but should be utilized with caution as to not draw unnecessary concern. The above indicators are more-so significant in instances where several of the behaviors are apparent, but can also be attributed to other changes the child is going through.



(<http://www.teachingexpertise.com/articles/sexual-exploitation-signs-to-look-out-for-1417>).

Additionally, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children has listed the following as common signs that your child is being sexually abused:

- Changes in behavior, extreme mood swings, withdrawal, fearfulness, and excessive crying
- Bed-wetting, nightmares, fear of going to bed, or other sleep disturbances

Recipe Round-up

With the summer coming to an end, how about we plan one more picnic that is healthy and enticing for the whole family! This Oven-Fried Chicken Recipe is sure to please even the pickiest eater.

Ingredients

- 1/2 Cup Buttermilk
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 2 cloves garlic (minced)
- 1 teaspoon hot sauce
- 2 1/2-3 lbs chicken legs and thighs skin removed, trimmed
- 1/2 cup whole wheat flour
- 2 tablespoons sesame seeds
- 1 1/2 teaspoons paprika
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme leaves
- 1 teaspoon baking powder



- 1/8 teaspoon salt and/or black pepper to taste
- Olive oil cooking spray

Directions

Whisk buttermilk, mustard, garlic and hot sauce in a shallow glass dish until well blended. Add chicken and turn to coat. Cover and marinate in the refrigerator for at least 1/2 hour or for up to 8 hours.

Preheat oven to 425°F. Line a baking sheet with foil. Set a wire rack on the baking sheet and coat it with cooking spray.

Whisk flour, sesame seeds, paprika, thyme, baking powder, salt and pepper in a small bowl. Place the flour mixture in a paper bag or large sealable plastic bag. Shaking off excess marinade, place one or two pieces of chicken at a time in the bag and shake to coat. Shake off excess flour and place chicken on the prepared rack. (Discard any leftover flour mixture and marinade.) Spray chicken pieces with cooking spray (<http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/eating-well/picnic-oven-fried-chicken-recipe/index.html>)

**This dish contains 227 Calories, 34g protein, 5g carbohydrates, 7g fat, 2g saturated fat, 130g cholesterol, 263mg sodium, and 223mg potassium.

Mental-Minute Solution

$$(7 \times 4) - 8 = 20$$

$$(3 \times 9) - 7 = 20$$

$$(3 \times 8) - 4 = 20$$

The answer is 3.

Resource Readiness!!!

Here are a few resources related to child abuse and exploitation:

Childhelp USA

Suite B
15757 North 78th Street
Scottsdale, Arizona 85260-1629
Hotline: 1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453)
Telephone: 480-922-8212
Fax: 480-922-7061
Internet: <http://www.childhelp.org>
Staffed 24 hours daily by professional crisis counselors, this confidential Hotline is accessible throughout the U.S., its territories, and Canada. Through interpreters, communication is possible in 140 languages.

National Sexual Violence Research Center (NSVRC)

123 North Enola Drive
Enola, Pennsylvania 17025-2521
Toll-free: 1-877-739-3895
TTY: 717-909-0715
Telephone: 717-909-0710
Fax: 717-909-0714
Internet: <http://www.nsvrc.org>
A National Resource Directory and Handbook Preventing Child Sexual Abuse
Internet: http://www.nsvrc.org/publications/directories/csa_directory/index.html
This resource directory specifically seeks to include and highlight child sexual abuse prevention organizations, programs, initiatives, and resources unique, innovative, and/or available for purchase/to be used as a model for other programs and communities. It primarily includes information about child sexual abuse prevention efforts in the United States. Additional resources from Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia are also included.

U.S. Department of Justice

National Sex Offender Public Registry (NSOPR)

Internet: <http://www.nsopr.gov>
This web site provides public access to and the ability to search participating state web sites for public information regarding the presence or location of offenders who, in most cases, have been convicted of sexually violent offenses committed against adults and children and certain sexual contact and other crimes committed against victims who are minors.

Visit us on the web at: www.mentalhealthgeorgia.com

Staff Star

Let's all celebrate Leritha Lupoe as our star staff member of the month!!! Leritha has been in the behavioral health field for six years, fulfilling positions with 2 major Intensive Family Intervention (IFI) providers prior to joining the ABC/ACT family full time. Leritha has worked with Cassandra Johnson-Landry and Jeffrey Atkinson, the agency's CEO and CFO, since they began their endeavor in this field. Leritha spoke highly of the co-owners and remembered their beginnings saying "I saw them come from a small agency with only half of a team (smiling) to an entity with a client base of over 700 consumers. They have always been hard workers and to see them achieve so much since then has really inspired me."



Leritha reports that she has come to appreciate behavioral health and understand how much of an impact we make in people's lives; "you don't think you're selfish until you see how some people live and you become grateful for your blessings. A part of my job is to keep everyone working as a team so that we can help these families." When asked what keeps her

grounded in such a demanding environment, Leritha stated that "prayers keep me grounded and God helps me realize that nothing I do here is about me, he is doing something bigger because many of these children don't have choices and it is our job to help them help themselves."

Some comments made by staff members regarding Leritha's presence were "she does a wonderful job and tries to help and keep others together", "she is a team player and leads by example", "she works hard and goes beyond her job duties", and "she is always smiling, positive, and an inspiration". Leritha says, "you never know what people are going through so I find ways to keep them inspired...even if it's just a hug".

As challenging as her "job" may be, Leritha enjoys being a part of the ABC/ACT family and sees the agency moving in a positive direction where "we will grow to a whole new level and we will shine so bright that we will lead by example and other agencies will follow in our footsteps to provide the best possible services to those in need!"

Clinical Corner *Sexual Abuse and Depression: Breaking the Pattern*

What's the link between child sexual abuse and depression?

Psychiatrists have reported that adults being treated for depression or eating disorders -- particularly women -- often have a history of being sexually abused as children. As many as a third of children who were sexually abused suffer from mental health problems later in life, primarily depression and anxiety, according to researchers in the United States and Europe. Some researchers also believe that the depth of depression is also related to how severely children were abused, including how often they were assaulted and whether the abuser was a family member. Incest is particularly damaging to a child. Because the abuse was perpetrated by a family member and it may have lasted for several years, abused children learn to distrust people who are close to them. Lack of trust becomes a problem later on when they establish relationships with other people. As adults, some abuse victims shun intimacy and touch because it reminds them of the abuse.

Are there ways to prevent a history of abuse from causing depression?

Although depression is common, there are also many who escape an abusive childhood without feeling suicidal or depressed. What happens to these children that makes such a difference? One study found that long-term problems were significantly lower in abused children who had supportive and confiding relationships with their mothers and in those who, as adolescents, experienced some success at school or with peers. In other words, getting good grades, excelling at sports, or being popular and socially active seems to strengthen abused children's self-esteem in a way that prevents problems from developing later. Having a successful relationship or close friendships can also make a big difference, experts say, since isolation is often a factor in depression. As we gain knowledge about the long-term effects of sexual abuse, many experts are calling for better early intervention programs to help children who have been sexually abused work through the trauma as soon as possible. The idea is that if abused children can come to believe the abuse was not their fault and feel protected from its recurrence, they can relearn how to trust themselves and others and perhaps avoid the long-term consequences of abuse.

(<http://www.ahealthyme.com/topic/depabuse#s22>)

Mental Health Georgia is a multi-faceted community mental health agency serving the residents of Georgia. We provide an extensive array of mental health services for both children and adults. "Our mission is to provide high-quality, easily accessible services for Georgians, focused on promoting mental and emotional well-being through personal and professional development, family preservation, resource coordination, and individualized treatment.

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We're on the Web!

www.mentalhealthgeorgia.com

**Serving the Mental
Health Needs of the
Residents of Georgia.**



Self Care Corner

Healthy Food on a Budget

Most of us are trying to save money any way we can right now. As living on a budget becomes more important, it is helpful to look at how to stretch your food dollars and still eat a healthy diet. Fortunately, there are many creative ways to do this. It takes a little knowledge, time, and planning, but it is possible to enjoy healthy food on any budget. Overall, the more you focus on purchasing local, unprocessed food and preparing meals at home, the healthier it is and the more money you will save.

You can save money and still eat healthy, delicious food

Making smart choices saves money. Evaluate how you spend your money on food. What unnecessary items do you purchase? Do you eat out often? The first way to save money on food is to limit or cut out unnecessary food spending. Some specific ways to do this:

- Cut the junk:** Evaluate how much money you are spending on items such as soda (regular or diet), juice, packages of cookies, crackers, pre-packaged meals, processed foods, etc. Limit or cut out completely these unhealthy foods. Your wallet and your body will thank you.
- Eat out less:** Even just reducing your meals out by 1 or 2 times per week can save you about \$15 - \$25 per week. This is an easy way to save money and even have some extra to spend on higher quality foods.
- Stick to your grocery list:** The more prepared you are when you get to the store the less impulse purchases you will make. So write out a grocery list and stick to it!
- Shop the perimeter of the store first:** This way you will fill your cart with healthy whole foods like fresh produce and meat, leaving less room for the "junk food fillers" and thus saving money.
- Cook large portions ahead:** It saves time to cook once and eat multiple times. One idea is to make a big pot of soup at the beginning of the week or whenever you go food shopping. When you don't feel like cooking, help yourself to a hearty bowlful along with a green salad. This makes a nutritious lunch or dinner anytime.

Upcoming Events

***Crisis in the Community: Understanding and Responding to the Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children.** This workshop, provided by ABC University, will be held on September 11, 2009 at the Doubletree Hotel. The cost is \$175/individual, \$150/person in groups of 4 or more, and \$100 for students (with valid student identification). CEU hours are available! Please contact nafiya@mentalhealthgeorgia.com or call 678-406-9707 ext. 209 for more information.

***A Day of New Beginnings: Preserving the Family, Igniting the Community!!!** This annual event held by ANUDAY, LLC, will be located at AR "Gus" Barksdale Boys & Girls Club of America located at 1015 O'Kelly Street Conyers, GA 30012 on 9/12/2009. It will be a day filled with family fun and activities. The event is free and runs from 12pm-6pm.

Call (770) 922-7402 for more details.

***Atlanta BBQ Festival.** This festival will be held on September 12th, 2009 from 10:00am-6:00pm. There will be vendors and games, live music, a kids area, and prizes and activities for all! This is a free event at Turner Field. For more information, visit the website www.atlantabbqfestival.com

***Project Dance.** The third annual event for Project Dance Atlanta will be at Centennial Olympic Park (265 Park Ave West N.W. Atlanta, GA 30313 (404) 222-7275) on September 26th from 10am-7pm.

This is a free concert focused on a movement of dancers seeking to positively impact culture through artistic integrity.

***Kids Preparedness Workshop with Ready Georgia & Home Depot.** September is National Preparedness Month and the Home Depot has teamed up with Ready Georgia to help Georgia's youth learn about emergency preparedness. The free Kids Workshop at The Home Depot (2525 Piedmont Rd. NE Atlanta, GA 30324 (404) 841-5608) will feature valuable information and every child who attends will make a bean bag toss game and receive a Ready Kids activity book, a kid-sized orange apron and an achievement pin.

