Child Sexual Abuse
Assessment, Intervention, & Prevention

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Purpose & Definition

Purpose of Project
- To identify factors associated with
  - Perpetration of child sexual abuse
  - Recovery from child sexual abuse
- To apply these factors to intervention and prevention program

Definition of Child Sexual Abuse
- An abuse of power where older, stronger, and/or more knowledgeable persons take advantage of children for their own sexual and emotional gratification and sometimes for financial gain
- A physical act
- A psychological experience
- Sexual & emotional gratification for abusers
- Fear and confusion for children

Child Sexual Abuse
- CSA affects children's capacities to
  - Trust others
  - Form friendships and intimate relationships.

Recovery
- Requires sensitive responsive care
- Additional adversities complicate recovery

Do Sexually Abused Children Become Abusers?
- Most do not
- Most abusers were not sexually abused in childhood

Personal Factors Associated with Recovery

- Emotional expressiveness
- Positive sense of self
- Prosocial beliefs & practices
- Executive skills
- Personal growth

 CSA Betrays Principles of Healthy Child Development

Perpetrators
- Insensitive and non-responsive
- Abuse the power they have over children.
- Undermine children's autonomy
- Betray children's trust

Child Survivors
- CSA affects children's capacities to
  - Trust others
  - Form friendships and intimate relationships.

Survivors who do not perpetrate have many protective factors
- Emotionally available parents
- Emotional expressiveness
- Confident relationships
- Association with pro-social peers & adults
- Pro-social beliefs & practices
- Desire & resources to emulate pro-social persons
- Competence and pleasure in activities
- Sense of a positive future

There is a shortage of these factors in the lives of persons who abuse

What Children Need to Thrive

- Sensitive, responsive care
- Emotionally available care providers
- Contingent responsiveness
- Soothing
- Mutual regulation
- Attunement to children
- Expectations fit developmental levels

Inner Working Models
- Children internalize how others treated them
- Internalizations become expectations for how others treat them, how they treat others, and what they expect for themselves

Prevention of Perpetration

Broad Principles
- Promote emotional expressiveness
- Provide healthy sex education
- Support sensitive, responsive parenting
- Challenge myths & misunderstandings about child sexual abuse
- Challenge beliefs of entitlement

Social Skills Training

Clear Expectations
- "If you have questions about sex, ask me."
- "Don’t use other people’s stuff without their permission"

Catch Children Doing Something Right
- "I’m glad you asked. I’m happy to talk to you about kissing boys."
- “Good for you. You asked your sister if you can play with her dolls. You didn’t just take them.”

Direct Instruction
- Show children what to do
- Have children practice the new skill
- Give children feedback about their use of new skill
- Give time for discussion

Practice These Behaviors in Everyday Life
- Be a good role model
- Children imitate behaviors they see rewarded