Lecture: Child Abuse

Test Section 3
Core functions of the brain

- Sense
- Process
- Store
- Perceive
- Act

- On information from the external and internal world to promote survival and procreation
In the Beginning ...

- In-Utero
- Brainstem First to Development
- The brain requires *patterns* to effectively organize
- First pattern of Life???
Maternal Heart Rate...

- Major organizing **patterned, repetitive** sensory stimulation
Use it or Lose it

- Postnatal environment
  - Neurons
    - Not made final connections
    - Not organized
  - First 8 months of life, billions of connections created
- Use Dependent Brain
  - If neurons are not used, they will be re-absorbed (Apoptosis)
Brain Development

- Postnatal environment
  - Most crucial part of development
  - At 3 years old the brain is 85% functionally and 95% structurally organized
How the Brain Remembers

- **Experience** is the major mediator
  - Experience creates activity in the brain
  - Activity must be *patterned*
  - Brain must be *activated* to store experience (memory)
Memory

- Consistent patterned Activity
  - leads to internalization of the external.
  - State dependent learning

- Pleasure and memory
  - Pleasure and Repetition are highly related
  - Pleasure essential
Recipe for Love

- Birth to 3 years
  - Window of opportunity
  - Child must experience love in early life
  - Love is nutritional
  - Caregiver must be attentive and responsive
Neglect

- Disruption of the Pattern
  - Abnormal neurodevelopment and profound dysfunction (neglect)

- Two possible types
  - Sensory deprivation
  - Chaotic neglect
Neglect

Healthy Child  Neglected Child

Source: Center for Educational Enhancement and Development

Glaser (2000)
Memory

- No Pattern
  - Brain deterioration starting with most complex
  - Cannot fill a void
- Emptiness and memory
  - Emptiness and Avoidance are highly related
Internal State Regulation

- Stress response
  - Is needed to function in life
  - Learned and practiced from early childhood
- New experiences produce Stress/arousal
Brain Related Responses to Threat

- Brain adapted to threat response
  - Large portions of brain dedicated to threat response
  - Higher arousal: Basic elements of brain respond
  - Highest states of arousal
- Brain stem response
Adaptability

- Individual responses to stress
- Predictable moderate stress
  - Can be Controlled
  - Healthy stress response apparatus
- Threat & trauma response *adaptive*
Brain Responses to Threat

- External stressors elicit internal states
- In Alarm state – cortex shuts off, focus on nonverbal cues
  - Changes in cognitive style in response to threat
  - Changes in Cognition, affect, behavior, & physiology
Domestic Violence is Child Abuse

- Spousal Violence
  - Control of another person
  - Instill fear of death and gratitude being allowed to live

- Destroy sense of autonomy
  - Scrutiny of body and bodily function
    - Eat, sleep, toilet, clothing, make-up
    - Dependent on basic bodily needs, information, sustenance

- No sense of self
  - Demoralize
  - Stalking
  - Eaves Dropping
Domestic Violence is Child Abuse

- Control occurs incrementally
  - Lies to self about making small concessions
  - Marital rape
    - Sexual humiliation
    - Sexual practices that are disgusting or immoral

- Captive develops attitude of passivity
  - Loses will to live
    - Stop caring for self
    - Fantasy of suicide
  - Learned helplessness
    - Every action is watched
    - Will pay for disobedience or failure
    - Total submission is required
Abuser becomes omnipotent

- Abusive spouse is grandiose and omnipotent
  - Develop attachments to abuser (loyalty)
  - Witness abuse and murder of pets and animals
    - Children and spouse attuned to abuser inner states
    - Identifies danger signals
    - Avoid or placate the abuser

- Complete obedience
  - Children try hard to “Be Good”
    - Sense of badness is highlighted by the abuser
    - Shame modulates anger intensity (my soul is black)
    - Children turn rage towards non-offending parent

- Murderous revenge fantasy is common
  - Anger is discharged unfairly
  - Acting out sexually for both males and females
  - View self with contempt— not absolved of blame
• Traumatic events
  – Primary effects
    • Psychological structures of the self
    • Attachment Systems: individual and community

• Experiences:
  – Feel Abandoned
  – Sense of Alienation
  – Disconnection

(Green, 1993)
The Damaged Self

- Sense of connection with people
  - The foundation of personality development

- Destroys the belief that one can be oneself in relation to others

- Shame
  - A response to helplessness
  - Violation of bodily integrity
  - Indignity suffered in the eyes of another person

Guilt

– Attempt to draw some lesson from a disaster
– Regain some sense of power and control
– One could have done better is more tolerable than the reality of helplessness
– Guilt severe when:
  • Witness to suffering or death
Vulnerability and Resilience

• Most powerful determinant of psychological harm

• Direct relationship between Severity of Trauma and Psychological Impact (‘dose-responsive’)
  – 3 of 4 men exposed to heavy Vietnam combat suffered from PTSD

• Immunity With Severe Traumatic Exposure

(Cicchetti & Sheree, 1995)
Individual Differences

• Play Role in Determining the Impact (Disorder)

• Post-Traumatic Symptom Patterns
  – Highly correlated with
    • Individual Childhood History
    • Emotional Conflicts
    • Coping/Adaptive Style.

(Paolucci, Genius, & Violato, 2001, Bowman, 1999)
If Prone to Antisocial Behavior before War
Predominant symptoms of irritability/anger

If High Moral Expectations and Compassion
Predominant Symptoms of Depression
Resilience and Impact

• Impact of trauma dependant somewhat on — ___________ of the Person Affected

• Small minority of people appear to be ____________________________
Resilience and Impact

• Common Resilient Characteristics:
  – ___________Sociable
  – ___________and________________
  – Strong Perception of __________________________
  • INTERNAL________________________

• Preserving social connection and active coping strategies (In the face of extremity):
  – Protect people somewhat against _____ ________________of post-traumatic syndromes
Resilience and Impact

- Resilient People $\rightarrow$ Best Chance of Surviving
- Personal Attributes NOT Sufficient Protection
- Factor Universally cited by survivors is
  - __________ and __________.
• Act of Omission

• A failure to provide a child’s basic needs and proper level of care:
  – __________________
  – __________________
  – ____________
  – ___________
  – ______
  – ________
  – _______________
Long-term effects of Childhood Sexual Abuse

10 Ways to Prevent Child Abuse in Your Community

• Raise Public Awareness during April
  – National Child Abuse Prevention Month

• Volunteer at a local child abuse program

• Report suspected abuse or neglect

• Advocate for services to help families

• Speak up for non-violent TV programming
10 Ways to Prevent Child Abuse in Your Community cont.

• Contribute to Child Abuse Prevention
• Help a Friend, Neighbor, or Relative
• Support Child Abuse Prevention Program
• Promote Awareness Programs in Schools