The Impact of Multiple Adversities

University of Edinburgh, October 2013. Keeping Youth Away from Crime

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African ‘Big 5’
HEALTH WARNING

The contents of this exhibition may cause shock, vomiting, confusion, panic, euphoria, and anxiety. If you suffer from high blood pressure, a nervous disorder, or palpitations, you should consult your doctor before viewing this exhibition.
World Health Organization

- Child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power (Butchart 2006)
Child Protection Research
The reasons why cruelty to children exists are varied and complex but in all cases of abuse three factors are almost always present:

1. Organisations who work with children fail to prevent abuse.
2. Individuals who are aware of or suspect abuse fail to act.
3. The child doesn’t recognise that (s)he is being abused or fails to ask for help.
The Scale of the Problem
World Perspectives on abuse (ISPCAN)

• Countries that do not yet have an official count: Belarus, Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Moldova, Switzerland

• Child death reviews only in Ireland, Russia, UK
UK ‘Big 5’
UNICEF 2010 – Lebanon Report

- Child labour
- Politicization of children and young people
- Cluster munitions
Multiple Adversities

• Abuse and neglect often co-exist alongside a range of family problems and adversities
• Frequently compounded by issues such as poverty, house moves and eviction
• Cumulative harm
• A ‘wicked problem’
• Reconceptualisation?

Bunting and Toner (2012); Devaney and Spratt (2009)
Risk Factors

- Domestic abuse
- Parental mental ill health
- Substance misuse

‘Toxic Trio’

Multiples matter (Spratt 2011)

Teenage parents
Disability
Parental history of abuse
POVERTY FACTORS
The ACE Study (Adverse Childhood Experiences)

• Adverse Childhood Experiences and their relationship to Adult Health and Well-Being

• Child abuse and neglect

• Growing up with domestic violence, substance abuse, mental illness, crime

• 18,000 participants

• 10 years

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study: www.acestudy.org
Some findings so far…

- Increased risk of lung cancer
- More autoimmune disease
- Increased prescription drug use
- Increased COAD
- Poorer health related QoL
The long-term health consequences of child physical abuse, emotional abuse and neglect: Systematic review and meta-analysis (Norman et al 2012 PLOS Med)

- Sexually transmitted infections and risky sexual behaviour
- Chronic disease
- Lifestyle risk factors and other physical health outcomes
- Depressive disorders
- Anxiety disorders
- Eating disorders
- Childhood conduct disorders
- Suicidal ideation/Attempts
- Drug use
Coventry Safeguarding
Children Board

**Serious Case Review**

*Re Daniel Pelka*

*Born 15th July 2007*

*Died 3rd March 2012*

**Overview Report**

Independent Serious Case Review Panel Chair – Dr Neil Fraser
Independent Overview Report Author – Ron Lock

September 2013 – Final Publication Copy
Pelka SCR - summary

• 26 police incidents for DA.
  – Intoxicated.
  – Three different men
  – Safe and well checks ‘children none the wiser’
• School – ‘obsession’ with food
• Facial injuries at school
• Missed health appointments
• Sister
• Language difficulties
Daniel Pelka – age 4

Source: West Midlands Police
More typically however…

- **Kylie**
  - Father beats mother
  - Jail visits
  - Strange men…unwanted touching
  - Bullied at school
  - Drugs, drink, expelled 16
  - Prostitution
  - Unwanted pregnancies, terminations, STDs
  - Suicide age 19

- **Steven**
  - Severely neglected
  - Age 2-12 17 placements
  - Increasingly disruptive
  - Harmful sexual behaviour
  - 13> residential school
  - 16 young offenders institute
  - 18 rapes an 8 year old girl
  - Prison
  - Sex offenders register on release
  - Repeat behaviours…
Most typically, variations on a theme...

- Seeking love indiscriminately
- Violent and abusive relationships
- Psychotherapy
- Mental health problems
- PTSD
- Physical health problems
- Attachment problems
- Prescriptions
- Substances
  - Or few problems at all...
Intergenerational Cycles of Violence and Abuse

- Early trauma and abuse
- Sequelae
- Environment and parenting
- Risk taking behaviours
- Stress responses
Thank you for listening...
Worried about a child? Don’t wait until you’re certain. NSPCC Adult advice and helpline

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