How Are The Babies Doing?

Alicia F. Lieberman, PhD
Child Trauma Research Program
University of California, San Francisco
San Francisco General Hospital
Our Babies Urgently Need Help

- More children die from abuse in their first year of life than at any other time
- Half of child abuse victims are under age 7
- 85% of abuse fatalities are under age 6
- U.S. ranks THIRD among 27 industrialized countries in child maltreatment deaths

(Gentry, 2004; UNICEF, 2003; Children’s Bureau, 2003)
Children’s Exposure to Violence

- War
- Community Violence
- Domestic Violence
- Child Abuse
Sources of Violence Overlap

• Children exposed to domestic violence
  – 15 times more likely to be abused than the national average
  – 30-70% overlap with child abuse
  – At serious risk of sexual abuse

• Battered women statistically more likely to abuse their children than comparison groups as the result of traumatic stress

(Osofsky, 2003; Edleson, 1999; Margolin & Gordis, 2000; McCloskey, 1995)

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Traumatic Expectations and Sense of Self

- Shattering of developmental expectations
- Protector is helpless to protect or actually hurts
- “Unresolvable fear”: Nowhere to turn for help
- Contradictory feelings toward each parent
- Aggression as a form of self-protection:
  - “I am strong, I do what you do”
Young Children Only Do Well When They Have Safe, Caring Relationships
Posttraumatic Stress In Infants and Young Children

- Re-experiencing trauma: excessive crying, unprovoked aggression

- Avoidance: attachment disorder, social withdrawal, fear of exploring

- Increased arousal: attention problems, hypervigilance, restlessness, recklessness

- New Symptoms
  - Aggression
  - Sexualized behavior
  - New fears
  - Loss of developmental milestones (Regression)
The Forgotten Mental Health Needs of Children in Child Welfare

- About half of these children have a diagnosed mental health need.
- 75% of diagnosed children did not receive mental health treatment within 12 months of a child abuse or neglect investigation.
- Children of color are disproportionally affected.

Pre-publication Copy: Improving the Quality of Health Care for Mental and Substance-Use Conditions, Institute of Medicine, 2006)
Removing Children Should be the Last Resort

- Funding for foster care: $7 billion/year
- Funding for prevention and support: $900 million
- Funding streams should prioritize keeping parents and children together:
  - Removing the batterer, not the child
  - Substance abuse/mental health treatment
  - Safe and stable housing
  - Job training and placement
  - Parent-child intervention and treatment
Parent as Protective Shield
Overarching Intervention Goals

• RESTORE DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRESS
  - Affect Regulation
  - Trust in Human Relationships
  - Joy in Exploration and Learning
Relationship-Based Therapeutic Strategies

- Joint play-centered parent-child sessions
- Translate for the parent the meaning of the child’s behavior
- Reframe perceptions to promote empathy
- Empathy as a tool to tolerate ambivalence
- Use play and words to narrate the trauma
Child-Parent Psychotherapy: Child PTSD Before/After Treatment

(Lieberman, Van Horn, & Ghosh Ippen, 2005)
Child-Parent Psychotherapy: Maternal PTSD Before/After Treatment

(Liebeman, Van Horn, & Ghosh Ippen, 2005)
Where Are The Fathers?

• Among children under age 6:
  – 68% live with married parents
  – 23% live with a single parent
  – 9% live with a divorced, separated, or widowed parent

• Across the age range:
  – One in three children live in a father-absent home

(U. S. Census Bureau, 2009, 2010)
Children have higher rates of:
- High school drop-out
- Low academic achievement
- Early sex, teen pregnancy
- Illegal substance use
- Contact with the police
- Psychological problems
- Lower adult competencies
The Promise of Economic Interventions

- MN Family Investment Program
- Milwaukee New Hope Anti-Poverty Program
  - Increases in marriage rates
  - Increases in family income
  - Decreases in domestic violence
    (McLanahan & Beck, 2010)
A Continuum of Services: Giving Mothers and Fathers a Place

Normative Stress  Costly Stress  Traumatic Stress

Prevention  Intervention  Treatment