

Child Maltreatment & Policing in the 21st Century

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Workshop (1 hour 40 mins)

- Defining maltreatment (5 mins)
- Series of activities
 - ◆ Exploding myths (15 mins)
 - ◆ The extent of the problem (15 mins)
 - ◆ Mandatory reporting requirements (10 mins)
 - ◆ Signs of maltreatment (20 mins)
 - ◆ Child maltreatment in an online environment (25 mins)
- Discussing role of police (5 mins)
- Role of NCPC (5 mins)



What is Child Maltreatment?

Umbrella term for various forms of ill-treatment of children (usually by parents)

- Four main types
 - ◆ Sexual abuse
 - ◆ Physical abuse
 - ◆ Neglect
 - ◆ Emotional maltreatment
- Additional type being recognised
 - ◆ Witnessing family violence



Sexual Abuse

- ◆ Sexual abuse can be defined as the use of a minor - female and male - for sexual gratification by an adult or by an older child or adolescent
- ◆ Is most commonly perpetrated by someone known to the child - parents, siblings and other family members
- ◆ Includes a wide range of sexual activities: fondling genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal and/or anal penetration, penetration by a finger, penis or other object, voyeurism and exhibitionism, and exploitation through pornography or prostitution



Physical Abuse

- ◆ Physically abusive behaviour refers to any non-accidental physically aggressive act towards a child
- ◆ May be intentional or may be the inadvertent result of physical punishment
- ◆ Physically abusive behaviours include; shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning, and kicking



Physical Neglect

- ◆ Failure (usually by a parent) to provide a level of care that meets a child's needs
- ◆ Physical neglectful behaviours include failure to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing, supervision, hygiene or medical attention



Emotional Maltreatment

- ◆ A *pattern* of abuse, it is not a single incident
- ◆ Emotionally abusive or neglectful behaviour refers to inappropriate verbal or symbolic acts and a failure to provide adequate non-physical nurture or emotional availability
- ◆ Also known as emotional abuse or psychological maltreatment
- ◆ We use 'maltreatment' because it comprises acts of omission and commission (i.e., abuse and neglect)
- ◆ Includes rejecting, ignoring, isolating, terrorising, corrupting, verbal abuse and belittlement



Witnessing Family Violence

- ◆ Previously included in psychological maltreatment, however there is growing support for it being treated as a separate type of maltreatment
- ◆ Witnessing Family Violence refers to a child
 - being present (hearing or seeing) while a parent or sibling is subjected to physical abuse, sexual abuse or psychological maltreatment, or
 - is visually exposed to the damage caused to persons or property by a family member's violent behaviour
- ◆ Most commonly associated with witnessing domestic violence between parents - an event that falls within mandatory reporting requirements in some Australian jurisdictions



Activity 1: Exploding myths

- Complete myths and realities survey (*handout*)
- First instinct - do not spend too much time thinking about each item
- For each item select either:
“myth”, “reality”, or “not sure”

Source: www.stopchildabuse.com.au

2 mins



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Exploding Myths

- Longer version of Myths & Realities Survey conducted with a community sample of 250 Tasmanian adults
- Highlight some of the findings from this survey
- Then, go over correct answers to Myths & Realities Survey completed by group

Source: Tucci, Goddard & Mitchell (2004)

www.childhood.org.au



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Myths about perpetrators

- Most believed that children were most often abused by someone they know and trust
 - ◆ 4 in 5 correctly believed that children were most often abused by someone they know and trust
 - ◆ However, 1 in 5 (18%) believed that parents would not deliberately hurt their children



Myths about disclosure

- A significant proportion of adults may not believe children's stories of abuse
 - ◆ 33% of respondents endorsed the item: “children make up stories about being abused”
- There is an expectation that children would alert adults if they are being abused or neglected
 - ◆ 1/4 of respondents believed children would tell someone
 - ◆ 1/3 of respondents believed that children would tell their parents



Myths about the nature of abuse

- A substantial proportion of respondents did not believe that domestic violence was a form of child abuse
 - ◆ 1 in 5 respondents did not believe or were unsure whether domestic violence was abusive
- Many adults do not understand how to define child sexual abuse
 - ◆ 1 in 5 did not believe or were unsure whether sex between an adult and a 14 year old girl was sexual abuse
 - ◆ 1 in 6 did not believe or were uncertain whether boys could be victims of sexual abuse



Myths about blame

- A substantial proportion of respondents believe that children can be to blame for their abuse
 - ◆ 30% of respondents believed that teenagers are sometimes to blame for the abuse they experience
 - ◆ 1 in 10 respondents believed that children are sometimes to blame for the abuse they experience



Myths & Realities Survey

1. Children are more likely to be abused by people they know than strangers **REALITY**
2. The number of children being abused and neglected is increasing **REALITY**
3. If children don't witness domestic violence they are not affected by it **MYTH**
4. Child abuse can lead to depression, drug abuse and homelessness in later life **REALITY**



Myths & Realities Survey

5. Boys are rarely victims of sexual abuse **MYTH**
6. Disabled children are more likely to become victims of abuse than non-disabled children **REALITY**
7. Teenagers are sometimes to blame for their abuse **MYTH**
8. Consensual sex between a 14 year old girl and an adult is not abuse **MYTH**
9. Children make up stories about abuse **MYTH**
10. Children who disclose about their abuse and later retract their stories were lying about the abuse **MYTH**



Myths & Realities Survey

11. Reporting to the state child protection authorities can cause more harm than the abuse itself **MYTH**
12. If a child is reported to the state child protection authorities they will always be taken away from their family **MYTH**
13. It is not always obvious that a child is being abused **REALITY**
14. If abuse happened once it is likely to happen again **REALITY**
15. Child abuse doesn't happen in well educated families **MYTH**



Who are the offenders? Substantiation data

Biological	75%
Stepparent or de facto	10%
Other relative or sibling	6%
Friend/neighbour	4%
Foster parent	1%
Other	3%
Total	100%



Responding to a child's disclosure

Do

- Remain calm and be supportive
- Listen carefully
- Believe the child
- Tell them they are not responsible
- Tell them that you will make a report to the appropriate authorities

Don't

- Make promises you can't keep
- Promise secrecy
- Push the child into giving details
- Indiscriminately discuss the circumstances of the child with others.
- This includes parents of child if safety is a concern



Activity 2: The extent of the problem

- In groups discuss
 - ◆ What is the most frequent form of maltreatment?
 - ◆ What do you think the community perceives as the most frequent form of maltreatment?
 - ◆ If you could wipe out one type of maltreatment, which type would it be and why?

5 mins



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A National Snapshot

Child Protection Services Activity

- ◆ 219 384 national reports in 2003/04 (up approx 20,000)
- ◆ 29,927 substantiations (excluding NSW for which there were 16,765 in previous reporting year)
- ◆ 22 130 children on care and protection orders
- ◆ These figures are an inaccurate reflection of the true extent of child maltreatment



Substantiated abuse types

Emotional	34%
Neglect	28%
Physical	28%
Sexual	10%
Total	100%

Source: AIHW 2004

QLD, WA, SA & TAS neglect most common

VIC, ACT emotional most common

NT physical most common



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Source: 2005 (excludes NSW)

Prevalence of maltreatment types, US 1996

- Any maltreatment 23.1 per 1000
- Physical* 5.7 per 1000
- Neglect 5.0 per 1000
- Sexual 3.2 per 1000
- Emotional abuse+ 3.0 per 1000
- Emotional neglect+ 3.2 per 1000

* Physical abuse dependent upon whether include physical discipline

+ Psychological maltreatment most or least prevalent dependent upon how defined

Source: US NIS III (1996)



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Problems with maltreatment data

- Child protection activity data – not maltreatment incidence
- No Australian prevalence or incidence data
- Chronic and multi-type maltreatment



Learning check

- Sexual abuse maltreatment type least frequently requiring state intervention to protect children
- Parents (in particular mothers because they spend the largest amount of time with children) are most likely to be the perpetrator
- Children are likely to experience a pattern of maltreatment and may experience more than one maltreatment type
- Most maltreatment is low-moderate in severity and can be linked to poor parenting rather than a malicious intent to harm the child
- This makes identifying maltreatment difficult as there may be little difference between families in which children are experiencing maltreatment and those in which they are not being maltreated



Activity 3: Mandatory reporting

Large group discussion:

- Is everything reported to child protection?
 - ◆ Sibling abuse?
 - ◆ Abuse in families versus organisations?
- For each state represented, do you know the mandatory reporting requirements in your state?

5-10 mins



ACT Mandatory Reporting

Who is mandated to notify	What is to be notified
Doctors, dentists, nurses, teachers, police, school counselors, child-care providers, public servants providing services relating to the health or well being of children, young people or families, the community advocate, or the official visitor	A reasonable suspicion that a child or young person has suffered or is suffering <i>sexual</i> abuse or non-accidental <i>physical</i> injury



NSW Mandatory Reporting

Who is mandated to notify	What is to be notified
Persons who deliver health care, welfare, education, children's services, residential services or law enforcement to children	Current concerns that a child <i>aged under 16</i> is at risk of <i>harm</i>



NT Mandatory Reporting

Who is mandated to notify	What is to be notified
Police; all other people with reasonable grounds	Reasonable grounds to believe that a child has suffered or is suffering <i>maltreatment</i>



QLD Mandatory Reporting

Who is mandated to notify	What is to be notified
a) Doctors; nurses b) Officers employed to implement the Act 1999; all staff of residential care services c) Educational staff (teaching & non-teaching staff in government and non-government schools)	a) aware of or reasonably suspects a child has, is, or is likely to suffer <i>harm</i> ; b) reasonable suspicion of <i>abuse or neglect to a child in residential care</i> ; c) aware of or reasonably suspects sexual abuse of a child under 18 by an employee of the school



SA Mandatory Reporting

Who is mandated to notify	What is to be notified
Doctors, pharmacists, nurses, dentists, psychologists, police, community corrections officers, social workers, teachers, family day care providers, employees/volunteers in a Government department, agency or instrumentality, or a local government or non-government agency that provides health, welfare, education, child care or residential services wholly or partly for children	Reasonable grounds that a child has been or is being <i>abused or neglected</i>



TAS Mandatory Reporting

Who is mandated to notify	What is to be notified
<p>Professionals working with children and employees or volunteers working in government or government-funded organisations;</p> <p>Any adult</p>	<p>Suspicion or knowledge of abuse or neglect and domestic violence</p> <p>Reasonable grounds to believe or suspect that a child is suffering, has suffered or is likely to suffer abuse or neglect</p>



VIC Mandatory Reporting

Who is mandated to notify	What is to be notified
Police, doctors, nurses and teachers	Reasonable grounds that physical or sexual abuse is occurring



WA Mandatory Reporting

Who is mandated to notify	What is to be notified
Court personnel, counsellors and mediators	Allegations or suspicions of child abuse in Family Court cases
Licensed providers of child care or outside school hours care services	Allegations or suspicions of child abuse in a childcare service



Activity 4 – Signs of maltreatment

- You are on a visit to a school to talk about road safety
- While walking you out the classroom teacher raises concerns she has for a child in her class ...
- Handout vignettes
- Discuss in small groups
 - ◆ Do you think there is reason to believe the child may be being maltreated?
 - ◆ What would you advise the teacher?

5 mins



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Risk factors for familial maltreatment

In large group brainstorm:

- What are the family based factors that are associated with maltreatment?



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Risk factors for familial maltreatment

- Community poverty
- Low socio-economic status, number of children in the family
- Parental age (youth), history of maltreatment, substance abuse
- Parental (particularly mothers) behavioural and psychological characteristics:
 - ◆ negative affect (eg depression), stress, coping (protective factor), emotional reactivity, high risk parenting (eg harsh discipline, yelling), negative attributions, parent-child interactions
- Children's behaviour problems



Understanding risk & indicators

- What is a risk factor?
- What is a maltreatment indicator?
 - ◆ Risk does not necessarily mean will occur
 - ◆ Indicator does not necessarily mean maltreatment has occurred
- Role of protective factors



Indicators of maltreatment

- Police in dedicated child abuse units (eg SOCA in Victoria), paediatricians who conduct forensic exams and child protection practitioners taught to identify the indicators of maltreatment
- Indicators in the
 - ◆ Behaviour of parents (eg delay in attending for medical treatment)
 - ◆ Behaviour of children (eg unwilling to talk about injury)
 - ◆ Physical indicators in children (will discuss examples of these in more detail)



Physical indicators of physical abuse

- Multiple injuries, old and new
- Injuries that are present on both sides of the body should arouse suspicion since bumps and falls usually produce accidents on only one side
- Bruises, lacerations, welts and scars, burns and/or scalds in unusual configurations may show shape of the object used (eg fingerprint, buckle, cigarette butt)
- The location of bruising may help to determine if bruising is normal childhood bruising
 - ◆ eg, the cheek is protected by a bony margin of the cheekbone and the jaw and in normal injuries these become bruised rather than the soft tissue of the cheek



Signs of maltreatment

2 different vignettes

- ◆ Vignette A - Non-intentional injury
- ◆ Vignette B - Intentional injury

In large group discuss:

- What were the differences?
- What were the similarities?
- In both vignettes there was sufficient information to prompt a report



Signs of maltreatment

- Point of this activity is not to teach you how to identify maltreatment
- This is the role of specialists and is not something that can be learned in an afternoon
- Point of the activity is to
 - ◆ Alert you to some of the warning signs
 - ◆ Illustrate the complexity of identifying maltreatment in families
 - ◆ If in doubt, make a report



Learning check

- Very little difference between the accidental and non-accidental injury vignettes
- Difficult to determine if maltreatment is occurring without an investigation
- If you are unsure, make a report



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Activity 5: Child maltreatment online

- In this activity will discuss internet more broadly, but with a focus on child pornography
 - ◆ Internet and child exploitation
 - ◆ Child pornography offenders
 - ◆ Victims of child pornography
 - ◆ Legal framework
 - ◆ Online safety



Internet and child exploitation



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Sexual images of children



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Taxonomy of different kinds of child pornography

- Indicative Normal settings
- Nudist Nude in normal setting
- Erotica Surreptitiously taken
- Posing Posed nude or semi-naked
- Erotic posing Provocatively posed
- Explicit erotic posing Emphasis on genitalia
- Explicit sexual activity Sexual activity no adult
- Assault Child sexual abuse by adult: digital touching
- Gross assault Child sexual abuse by adult: penetrative sex
- Sadistic/bestiality S&M or animal involved



What type of Internet content in relation to minors is prohibited?

- Child pornography
- Specifically in relation to the depiction of minors, the RC classification applies to materials that
 - ◆ describe or depict in a way that is likely to cause offence to a reasonable adult, a person who is, *or appears to be*, a child under 18 (whether the person is engaged in sexual activity or not)



What types of Internet content are prohibited?

- Content which is (or would be) classified X by the Classification Board
 - ◆ real depictions of actual sexual activity.
- Content hosted in Australia which is classified R and not subject to a restricted access system which complies with criteria determined by ACMA. Content classified R is not considered suitable for minors.
 - ◆ material containing excessive and/or strong violence or sexual violence;
 - ◆ material containing implied or simulated sexual activity;
 - ◆ material that deals with issues or contains depictions which require an adult perspective.



Functions of internet for people with a sexual interest in children

- View, swap and collect child pornography
- Meet and engage in discussion with others who share a sexual interest in children
- Share sexual fantasies
- Meet children
- Groom children



Functions of child pornography

- Sexual arousal: To fulfill fantasies about
 - ◆ a specific child (may seek images of children with similar features)
 - ◆ a particular activity (seek specific scenarios)
- Collectibles
 - ◆ trade, share, catalogue and index material
- Commercial profit (production and/or trade)



Unique problems arising from child pornography on the internet

- Lack of borders/mobility
- Differences in international law
- Anonymity
- Accessibility
- Quantity
- Satiation and subsequent increasing thresholds for content
- Normalise deviant sexual interest
- Desire to replicate scenarios viewed on the internet
- New function - currency to develop trust



Child pornography offenders



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Types of child pornography offenders

- *Situational Offender (dabbler)*
 - ◆ Discovered unlimited access to pornography and sexual opportunities
- *Sexually Indiscriminate Preferential Offender*
 - ◆ Sexually indiscriminate with a broad interest in sexually deviant material
- *'Paedophile' Preferential Offender*
 - ◆ Has a definite preference for children and will collect mainly child-focused material



Common justifications

- Content thresholds
 - ◆ never child rape
 - ◆ only happy children
 - ◆ never very young children
- Addiction
- in lieu of contact offence
- Doing no harm
 - ◆ only pictures
 - ◆ not abusing children



Do people who view child pornography go on to offend against children?

- Link between viewing and offending not known: significant knowledge gap
- Some, but not all who view also involved in contact offences
- Not clear what comes first:
 - ◆ interest in contact offences, followed by interest in internet
 - ◆ interest in internet, followed by interest in contact offences



Do people who view child pornography go on to offend against children?

- Do not know if those who do use internet then go on to offend would have offended anyway
- Child pornography
 - ◆ causal
 - ◆ correlational
- Much of rationale underpinning criminalisation of viewing child pornography is related to belief that it may be a causal factor in some contact offences



Discussion point #1

- Some viewers of child pornography claim to view child pornography as a means of release and claim that they engage with child pornography instead of committing a contact offence
- Discuss
 - ◆ Could there be preventive elements to viewing of child pornography?
 - ◆ If so, are there any means to enable the safe use of child pornography for this purpose?



Types of child pornography offences

- View
- View + collect child pornography
- View, collect + distribute child pornography
- View, collect and distribute child pornography + commit contact offences
- View, collect and distribute child pornography, commit contact offences + produce child pornography



Child pornography and contact offences

- Limited evidence
- Interviews with convicted offenders suggest that process is a key element
- Cannot tell who will proceed to contact offences
- Process inherent in interviews - suggests some will progress to contact offence
- From perspective of contact offences and with knowledge available not safe to allow any viewing of child pornography



Summary

- Adult sexual interest in children on the internet may be both legal and illegal
- Internet for sexual purposes extends beyond child pornography
- Need further research to investigate the relationship between viewing and offending
- Progression appears to be a key element



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Victims of child pornography



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Types of victimisation

- Exploitation/abuse of children in creating child pornography
- Ongoing exploitation of victims by circulation of images
- Use of internet for grooming



Internet & Grooming

- Meet children through
 - ◆ Obtaining information about and targeting vulnerable children
 - ◆ Posing as a child in children's chat rooms
- Convince child to send photographs (appropriate, erotic, or pornographic)
- Involve children in sexualised discussion that may be increasingly explicit
- Expose child to pornography as a means of introducing and normalising sex
 - ◆ Pornography or sexual discussion may or may not involve children
- Arrange meetings in real life with the intent of abusing the child



Pseudo-photographs

- Child pornography in photographs and magazines - limited access
- Internet and scanners - increased accessibility
- Digital photography - no need for processing, open access
- Digital imaging software - child pornography may not represent a real child or actual abuse
 - ◆ Called a “pseudo-photograph” or “pseudo-image”



Discussion point #3

- With the development of digital imaging software home users now have the opportunity to create child pornography using pseudo images
- Discuss
 - ◆ Is this a victimless form of child pornography?
 - ◆ Should virtual child pornography be illegal?
 - ◆ Why / Why not?



Response



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Agencies with key responsibility

- NetAlert
 - ◆ Community education
- Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA, formerly ABA)
 - ◆ Content
- Australian Federal Police Online Child Sex Exploitation Team
 - ◆ Suspicious behaviour



Policing in the 21st Century

Conclusion



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Maltreatment and the role of police

- Protecting victims
- Investigating allegations (including interviewing children)
- Charging offenders
- Assisting with prevention (eg, screening)
- Raising community awareness



National Child Protection Clearinghouse

- A specialist information, advisory and research unit focused on the prevention of child abuse and neglect.
 - ◆ Operating at the Australian Institute of Family Studies since 1995
 - ◆ Funded by the Australian Government's Department of Family and Community Services
 - ◆ All services provided by the Clearinghouse are free



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Role of the Clearinghouse

- **Undertake contracted research and specialist analyses**
 - ◆ Includes primary and secondary research projects
 - ◆ Provide a report to funding body - if possible also publicly release report
- **Publications**
 - ◆ Newsletters
 - ◆ Issues papers
 - ◆ Resource sheets/practitioners update
 - ◆ Submissions



Role of the Clearinghouse

- **Specialist advisory functions**
 - ◆ Research advice
 - ◆ Conference presentations
 - ◆ Workshops & invited addresses (cost recovery basis)
 - ◆ Facilitate network links
- **Information provision**
 - ◆ childprotect email discussion group
 - ◆ Library
 - ◆ Web www.aifs.gov.au/nch/



For presentation copies visit our website

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Activity 2: The extent of the problem

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Activity 3: Mandatory reporting

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Activity 4: Indicators of maltreatment

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Activity 5: Child maltreatment online

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