



# Honor Thy Children

Archdiocese of Louisville continuing education for the awareness and prevention of child abuse

## CHILDHOOD EMOTIONAL ABUSE JUST AS HARMFUL

Prevention starts with understanding

WASHINGTON — Children who are emotionally abused and neglected face similar and sometimes worse mental health problems as children who are physically or sexually abused, yet psychological abuse is rarely addressed in prevention programs or in treating victims, according to a new study published by the American Psychological Association.

"Given the prevalence of childhood psychological abuse and the severity of harm to young victims, it should be at the forefront of mental health and social service training," said study lead author Joseph Spinazzola, PhD, of The Trauma Center at Justice Resource Institute, Brookline, Massachusetts. The article will appear in a special issue of the APA journal *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*. Researchers used the Na-

tional Child Traumatic Stress Network Core Data Set to analyze data from 5,616 youths with lifetime histories of one or more of three types of abuse: psychological maltreatment (emotional abuse or emo-



tional neglect), physical abuse and sexual abuse. The majority (62 percent) had a history of psychological maltreatment, and nearly a quarter (24 percent) of all the cases were exclusively psychological maltreatment, which the study defined as caregiver-inflicted bullying, terrorizing, coercive control, severe insults, debasement, threats, overwhelming demands, shunning and/or isolation.

Children who had been psychologically abused suffered from anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, symptoms of post-traumatic stress and suicidality at the same rate and, in some cases, at a

greater rate than children who were physically or sexually abused. Among the three types of abuse,

psychological maltreatment was most strongly associated with depression, general anxiety disorder, social anxiety disorder, attachment problems and substance abuse. Psychological maltreatment that occurred alongside physical or sexual abuse was associated with significantly more severe and far-ranging negative outcomes than when children were sexually and

Cont...(emotional) page 2

## Archdiocese of Louisville

Volume VII Issue I

March 2017

### If you need support or someone to talk to:

- ☉ Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky or Indiana: 800.CHILDREN/800.422.4453 [www.pcaky.org](http://www.pcaky.org) [www.pcaain.org](http://www.pcaain.org)
- ☉ Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline 800.4.A.CHILD 800.422.4453 [www.childhelp.org](http://www.childhelp.org)

### Signs of Possible Sexual Abuse

- Unexplained pain, itching, redness or bleeding in the genital area
- Increased nightmares or bedwetting
- Withdrawn behavior
- Angry outbursts/mood swings
- Loss of appetite or difficulty swallowing
- Sudden/unexplained avoidance of certain people or places
- Sexual knowledge, language or behavior that is unusual for the child's age.

# HONOR THY CHILDREN TRAINING

Those employed or volunteering with youth must undergo a background check every 5 years as well as attend the "Honor Thy Children Training" that addresses child abuse, how to recognize it and how to report it. See your parish/school Safe Environment Coordinator if you have not sat-

isfied either of these requirements. The "Honor Thy Children" training is a one time requirement and is normally completed within 30 days of beginning service. Each training session lasts 2 hours. The background check MUST be completed BEFORE any service/employment begins.

## EMOTIONAL (CONT.)

physically abused and not psychologically abused, the study found. Moreover, sexual and physical abuse had to occur at the same time to have the same effect as psychological abuse alone on behavioral issues at school, attachment problems and self-injurious behaviors, the research found.

"Child protective service case workers may have a harder time recognizing and substantiating emotional neglect and abuse because there are no physical wounds," said Spinazzola. "Also, psychological abuse isn't considered a serious social taboo like physical and sexual child abuse. We need public awareness initiatives to help people understand just how harmful psychological maltreatment is for children and adolescents."

Nearly 3 million U.S. children experience some form of maltreatment annually, predominantly by a parent, family member or other adult caregiver, according to the U.S. Children's Bureau. The American Academy of Pediatrics in 2012 identified psychological maltreatment as "the most challenging and prevalent form of child abuse and neglect."

For the current study, the sample was 42 percent boys and was 38 percent white; 21 percent African-American; 30 percent Hispanic; 7 percent other; and 4 percent unknown. The data were collected between 2004 and 2010 with the average age

of the children at the beginning of the collection between 10 and 12 years. Clinicians interviewed the children, who also answered questionnaires to determine behavioral health symptoms and the traumatic events they had experienced. In addition, caregivers responded to a questionnaire with 113 items pertaining to the child's behavior. Various sources, including clinicians' reports, provided each child's trauma history involving psychological maltreatment, physical abuse or sexual abuse.

## SEXUAL HARRASMENT (BY KIDS?)

**CREDIT MSUTODAY.MSU.EDU**

It's not just strangers who target children online. Kids' own friends are sexually harassing them over the Internet, finds new research led by a Michigan State University cybercrime expert.

About 1 in 4 children said they were pressured by their friends online to talk



about sex when they didn't want to, according to the study of 439 middle- and high-school students aged 12 to 16.

"This is not to downplay the danger of pedophiles acting online, but it does

**UPCOMING TRAININGS**  
A current list of trainings is always available at [www.archlou.org/safe](http://www.archlou.org/safe)  
All trainings are at 6:30p unless otherwise indicated.

**4.17.17**  
*St. Athanasius*

**4.19.17 (9:30 am)**  
*Holy Trinity - Louisville*

**4.20.17**  
*St. Joseph (Bardstown)*

**4.24.17**  
*Our Lady of Lourdes*

*Be sure to check [archlou.org/safe](http://archlou.org/safe) for a complete list. Dates are subject to change and of course weather delays also effect training dates*

draw attention to the potential threat of child sexual victimization by the people our kids are closest to, the people they spend the greatest amount of time with online," said Thomas J. Holt, MSU associate professor

of criminal justice. The study, which appears online in the Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice, is one of the first to examine the factors of online child sexual victimization.

Girls, and kids with low self-control, were more likely to be sexually har-

*Cont...(harassment) page 3*

# CHILD ABUSE ON THE FIELD

Child abuse comes in many forms and is sometimes overlooked when it comes to sports. Research from Child abuse advocates ChildHelp indicate 40% to 50% of athletes have experienced anything from mild harassment to severe abuse while sexual abuse in sports impacts between 2% to 8% of all athletes.

Of those victims 90% know the perpetrator in some way.

Here are some examples of what could be considered child abuse in a sports setting:

**Neglect** in sport could

include a coach or supervisor repeatedly failing to ensure children are safe, exposing them to undue cold, heat or extreme weather conditions without ensuring adequate clothing or hydration; exposing them to unnecessary risk of injury e.g. by ignoring safe practice guidelines, failing to ensure the use of safety equipment, or by requiring young people to participate when injured or unwell.



**Physical abuse** in sport may be when the nature and intensity of training or competition exceeds the capacity of the child's immature and growing body; if athletes are required to participate when injured.

Coaching techniques which involve physical contact with children can

create situations where sexual abuse can be disguised and may therefore go unnoticed. The power and authority of, or dependence on, the coach if misused, may also lead to abusive situa-

tions developing.

**Emotional abuse** in sport may occur if children are subjected to constant criticism, name-calling, sarcasm, bullying, racism or pressure to perform to unrealistically high expectations; or when their value or worth is dependent on sporting success or achievement.

Indicators of possible abuse in sports include (but are not limited to): miss-

## MONTHLY SAFE ENVIRONMENT TIP

*Remember to first ask new volunteers or staff if they've previously attended an SET training or had a background check. If they are unsure or can't remember feel free to contact Scott Fitzgerald, Coordinator of Safe Environment Services who will check for you.*

502.471.2132

[www.archlou.org/safe](http://www.archlou.org/safe)

ing practices, illness, loss of interest, withdrawal and a child performing significantly below his/her abilities.

Other red flag indicators are

- Spending one-on-one time with children such as in private practice sessions.
  - Singling youth out for special attention or gift giving.
  - Touching children in ways not related to training for the sport.
  - Telling youth sexual or inappropriate jokes and stories.
  - Commenting on children's appearances when not related to the sport.
- Should you suspect any form of abuse on or off the field it is mandatory you report it immediately.

## HARRASMENT (CONT.)

assed online. But the biggest surprise was the finding that 24 percent of study participants were sexually harassed over the Internet.

Parental-filtering software or keeping the computer in an open space such as the family living room did not seem to reduce the problem.

"So it seems like this is not something that can be technologically solved, at least for the moment," Holt said.

"Instead, it has to be something that's resolved through engaged conversation between parent and child." Such conversations can be difficult, particularly when they deal with sex. "But parents need to have that talk with their kids about what they are doing online and what people are asking them to do online," Holt said.

"That kind of open dialogue is one of the best things they can do to mini-

mize the risk."

Bystanders play an important role in stopping bullying and sexual harassment. Talk to your children and let them know, if you see someone who is being harassed, take action. If it feels safe and natural to speak up, say, "Come on, let's get out of here" to the person you see getting bullied or bothered.

## Archdiocese of Louisville Office of Safe Environment

Martine Bacci Siegel, MSN, RN, CNS  
Maloney Center  
1200 South Shelby Street  
Louisville, KY 40220

Phone: 502.636.1044

Fax: 502.634.3381

E-mail: [msiegel@archlou.org](mailto:msiegel@archlou.org)

No child or adult should ever experience abuse by anyone, especially a church minister. We all have the right to be treated with dignity and to expect our church to reflect the goodness of God in all of its dealings.

We hope that this information is helpful to all in our communities who are working to prevent and respond to childhood sexual abuse. Please let us know if you need further assistance or information by calling or emailing our victim assistance coordinator, Ms. Martine Siegel, at 502/636-1044; [victimassistance@archlou.org](mailto:victimassistance@archlou.org) or the Chancery at 502/585-3291.

We must heed God's call to care for the most vulnerable among us and to continue our efforts toward wholeness and health in dealing with sexual abuse.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Elder abuse most often takes place in the home where the senior lives.

- It is estimated that more than 1 in 10 older adults experience some form of abuse.

- Most victims are dependent on their abuser for basic needs.

- The most common form of abuse is financial exploitation, with physical abuse, neglect and emotional abuse following.

- Seniors who have been abused have a 300% higher risk of death in the next 3 years compared to those who weren't.

- In almost 90% of elder abuse and neglect incidents, the perpetrator is a family member. 2/3 of perpetrators are adult children or spouses.



- For every reported incident of elder abuse, 5 others go unreported.

- During State Fiscal Year 2015, the Kentucky Department for Community Based Services received 30,037 calls for reports concerning adults 60 years

and older. Those calls were screened and 12,618 met acceptance criteria for an adult protective services investigation

- Passive neglect is a form of abuse in which a caregiver neglects to provide the victim with basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, or medical care.

- Legislatures in all 50 states have passed some type of elder abuse law.

- **Kentucky is a mandatory reporting state.** (Reference KRS 209.030)

If you suspect elder abuse, you are legally required to report it. You can report abuse at the 24 hour toll free hotlines at **1-877-597-2331** or **1-800-752-6200**. Calls can be made anonymously.