



Honor Thy Children

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

MENTAL EFFECTS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

Prevention starts with understanding

Sexual abuse teaches victims that their bodies are not really their own. Victims often report feelings such as shame, terror, depression, and guilt, and many blame themselves for the assault. Some of the mental health challenges survivors of sexual abuse face include:

Depression: The loss of bodily autonomy is often difficult to cope with. It can create feelings of hopelessness, despondency, and lead to diminishment in one's sense of self-worth. These feelings can lead to depression that may range from mild and fleeting to intense and debilitating.

Anxiety: For many people who struggle with anxiety, the feelings have no clear source. But for sexual abuse survivors, the loss of bodily autonomy, coupled with the fear that the attack could happen again, can cause intense anxiety. Some may develop agoraphobia and become terrified to leave their homes. Others suffer panic attacks, symp-

oms of physical anxiety, or a chronic fear of the type of person who harmed them. Someone who was raped by a tall, fair-haired



man with blue eyes may instinctively dislike, mistrust, or fear all men encountered who match that description. **Posttraumatic stress:** Posttraumatic stress (PTSD) might be described in this case as anxiety, depression, and intense memories of the abuse. Intensely disruptive flashbacks may oc-

cur, and in some cases they might even cause an abuse survivor to lose track of surroundings. A related condition, complex post-traumatic stress (C-PTSD), yields symptoms of traditional PTSD as well as a chronic fear of abandonment. Some people with C-PTSD also experience personality disruptions.

Personality disruptions: Some evidence suggests that personality disruptions such as borderline personality can sometimes be the result of sexual abuse. The behavior associated with these personality disruptions could actually be an adaptation to abuse. For instance, a characteristic of borderline personality is a fear of abandonment. While that fear might not make sense in adulthood, avoiding abandonment might have been what protected someone from childhood abuse.

Attachment disruptions: It

See Mental effects (page 3)

Archdiocese of Louisville

Volume VII Issue I

September 2016

If you need support or someone to talk to:

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

ALREADY HAVE A BACKGROUND CHECK?

As we begin our third year of background checks through selection.com, many members are beginning to move around the Archdiocese of Louisville.

One of the benefits to switching screening services, was the ability to share background checks. In keeping with the spirit of being good

stewards of our funds, please notify your new Safe Environment Coordinator if you have completed a background check **AFTER** August 2014. If you think you have reach out to Scott Fitzgerald Coordinator of Safe Environment Services via email (fitzgerald@archlou.org) or by phone 502.471.2132 who can verify a cur-

rent check. If so he will grant your new parish/school access to your current background check. Thus saving you the time and effort of completing a new check.

If you working in a state licensed child Care" facility, you will have to run your background check through the Kentucky Administrative Office of the Courts. Please see your Safe Environment Coordi-

nator who will run that check for you. After January 1, 2017 BOTH the selection.com AND the Kentucky Administrative Office of the Courts check will be required for licensed child care workers. Again, should you have any questions or concerns please contact Scott Fitzgerald, Coordinator of Safe Environment Services.



MENTAL ABUSE IN SPORTS

BY TYSON HARTNETT as appeared in the Huffington Post. Tyson is a former AAU and professional basketball player

Society's definition of abuse is mainly physical. If we can see a slap or a punch, we can replay it over and over, analyzing every move. We have concrete evidence of who's at fault and who's the victim. When it comes to mental abuse though, there is

rarely evidence.

From my perspective, young athletes are some of the most vulnerable people to work with. They have dreams of college and the future, and they will do anything to get there. They haven't seen life for what it really is and will trust most people.

What happens when a coach dangles the carrot of future success in front of an athlete's face is that the coach feels like he has the liberty to treat

UPCOMING TRAININGS

A current list of trainings is always available at www.archlou.org/safe
All trainings are at 6:30p unless otherwise indicated.

9.19.16

St. Nicholas Academy

9.22.16

Our Lady of the Caves

(Horse Cave, KY)

6:00 p.m. CST

9.26.16

St. Francis Xavier (Mt. Wash)

9.29.16

Holy Family

10.13.16

St. Agnes

10.20.16

St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi

Be sure to check archlou.org/safe for a complete list. Dates are subject to change and of course weather delays also effect training dates

the athlete however he wants. They could mentally and emotionally abuse them, justifying it with, "I'm the only person who can help you get that scholarship."

When coaches tell athletes, "You're being selfish," or "You're making excuses," they are reaching the heart of the player. Instead of critiquing their game, they are going straight for the kids' character. After practice, that kid may doubt himself, which will make him play worse during the next practice. After a few bad practices, a coach may divert his attention to another athlete who he

See SPORTS (page 3)

MENTAL EFFECTS (CONT...)

can be challenging, particularly in children who have been abused, to form healthy attachments with others. Adults who were abused as children may experience insecure attachment patterns, struggle with intimacy, or be too eager to form close attachments.

Addiction: Research suggests that abuse survivors are 26 times more likely to use drugs. Drugs and alcohol can help numb the pain of abuse, but often, substance abuse can lead to the development of different concerns.

Triggers: Triggers are stimuli that remind survivors of the abuse they experienced. A rape victim whose attacker chewed spearmint gum might be triggered into a flashback by the smell of spearmint, for example.

Though triggers vary widely, violence, subsequent abuse, and intense discussions of abuse are among the most common triggers.

Sexual abuse does not only leave psychological scars. It can also have long-lasting health consequences. A person who is assaulted may sustain bruises and cuts or more severe injuries such as knife wounds, sprained or broken bones, and torn or damaged genitals. Some victims develop sexually transmitted infections. Others may become pregnant as the result of an attack. Survivors may also experience health concerns such as chronic pain, sexual dysfunction, fertility problems, and decreased immunity, as well as other unexplained aches, pains, or illnesses.

SPORTS (CONT.)

says, "has the passion and drive." In reality, the coach initiated it all along. I've seen this scenario play out in the workplace, too. A manager or boss will subtly manipulate the employee into thinking he is wrong and a bad person. When that employee's confidence slips, that's when the manager blames the employee for not "being positive and hard-working." This is happening all across the world right now to thousands of athletes, but they don't know exactly what's going on. They know something is wrong, but they can't put their finger on it.

If you look around sports, you will see coaches getting fired from different schools for "mentally abusing their players." On the outside, one may think, "Oh, that's not real. The athletes need to suck it up." But in reality, it's more real than being punched in the face. A bruise or slap will heal. A young athlete hearing that he is "selfish and not good enough" will last

much longer. I can still hear the terrible things my high school coach told me, and I've been out of high school for years. Honestly, I'd rather he punched me... the pain would only last for a minute.

The problem with mental abuse is how subtle it is. I had an AAU coach growing up who would curse at us every practice, but he did it in a productive, improving way. We would deal with the curses because we knew, deep down, he wanted the best for us with no ulterior motive. He was getting us into shape and we appreciated it.

My high school coach was the opposite. He was thought of as a legend in his little town from his history of success, and nobody would challenge his authority. This gave him free reign to act however he wanted. If he didn't like a certain player, he would not play them, and that player would be forced to attend another school to

MONTHLY SAFE ENVIRONMENT TIP

Planning on coaching in the upcoming winter sports season? How about helping on that field trip either now or in the spring? Now is the best time to attend a Safe Environment Training and get your background check complete if you haven't already.

While every effort is made to make trainings as accessible as possible, if you wait until the last minute a training may not be available prior to your service.

A complete list of trainings is always available at www.archlou.org/safe. Be sure to check back often (even if you've already checked) as trainings are subject to change (i.e. inclement weather, etc.)

get playing time. The parents who sucked up to him were shown the most attention, and their child would get the most minutes. In the end though, many players hated playing for him, and plenty have said he destroyed their passion for basketball. Young athletes are scared to talk about mental abuse, and parents have no idea how to handle it. There's no physical evidence, and phrases can be altered to mean something completely different than initially intended. There are no official laws against it unless it's taken to an extreme. A coach will get fired for punching a player in the face, but nothing will happen when they subtly abuse their hard-working, trusting athletes for years.

Once we start to address this issue, that's when change is able to occur.

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

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 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.

VERBAL ABUSE - WHAT CAN I DO?

Verbal abuse is a leading form of child abuse. In moments of stress and anger, try to refrain from saying anything mean or sarcastic to your child. Remember, you're his main and most important role model. If you tend to fall apart, lose your cool, and act abusively at challenging times, you'll likely raise a child who does the same.

Here are some ways you can calm yourself down:

Take a "time-out." This method works as well for adults as it does for kids. If your child can be left alone, go to another room. If he's too young for



that, try walking to the other end of the room. Then take a few slow, deep breaths, seeking to let go of the situation emotionally. Wait five minutes (or more if you need it) before talking

to your child.

Try to deal only with the present rather than letting all the stressful incidents that have "piled up" overcome your emotions.

Share your feelings of resentment or anger with your spouse or a friend. Be sure to do this in private, where your

child won't hear you and feel wounded by your words.

In addition, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends using what it calls the RETHINK method to bring your feelings under control. RETHINK stands for:

Recognize your feelings.

Empathize with your child.

Think of the situation differently. (Try using humor.)

Hear what your child is saying.

Integrate your love with your angry thoughts.

Notice your body's reactions to feeling anger and to calming down.

Keep your attention on the present problem.