

# Understanding, Identifying, and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

Presented by:

**Tawana Williams, MS, LAC**

Therapist/Awareness Advocate

**Doug Cherry, BA**

Forensic Interviewer/Awareness Advocate



*Percy & Donna Malone*  
**CHILD SAFETY CENTER**

Resources and documentation for this training can be found at: [www.pdmcsc.org/trainingmaterials](http://www.pdmcsc.org/trainingmaterials)

# Services Provided by the Percy & Donna Malone Child Safety Center

- ▶ **Forensic Interviews** - An interview of an alleged child abuse victim designed to give the child a safe space for disclosure.
- ▶ **Child & Family Advocacy** - Connecting the child and family to need specific assistance and resources.
- ▶ **SANE Exams** - To document physical and/or sexual trauma and collect any evidence of sexual assault or rape.
- ▶ **Therapy** - Trauma informed mental health therapy for victims of child abuse.
- ▶ **Awareness** - Abuse prevention education for children, educators, parents, etc.



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# Discussion: Why do you do what you do?

- ▶ The love of teaching.
- ▶ The value of education.
- ▶ Investing into young lives.
- ▶ The well-being of children.
- ▶ The hope of a happy and healthy childhood, adolescence, and adulthood for your students.



# Discussion: Why should we concern ourselves with Child Abuse and Neglect?

- ▶ Child abuse and neglect may affect a victim's **physical and mental health** throughout childhood, adolescence, and well into adulthood.<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ Child abuse and neglect are forms of **trauma**. 1/3 of all child abuse and neglect victims will develop Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ Child abuse and neglect increases the likelihood of **self harm behaviors** in abuse victims such as drug use, alcoholism, smoking, missed days of school/work, and decreased physical activity.<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ Child abuse and neglect increases the likelihood of **physical and mental health issues** in abuse victims such as depression, suicide attempts, STDs, cancer, diabetes, severe obesity, heart disease, and more.<sup>1</sup>
  - ▶ Source: <sup>1</sup>cdc.gov, <sup>2</sup>arbest.uams.edu



## Overview of Topics

# Defining Child Abuse and Neglect

- ▶ “Child maltreatment is the abuse and/or neglect that occurs to children under 18 years of age. It **includes all types of physical and/or emotional maltreatment, sexual abuse, neglect, negligence, and commercial or other exploitation**, which results 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.” - As defined by the World Health Organization
- ▶ “Any act or series of **acts of commission or omission** by a parent or other caregiver that **results in harm**, potential for harm, or threat of harm to a child.” - As defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- ▶ The full legal definition of child maltreatment in the state of Arkansas can be seen in 2019 Arkansas Code Title 12, Subtitle 2, Chapter 18. The summary of which can be viewed at: <https://armatus2.praesidiuminc.com/tools/365/Arkansas.pdf>
- ▶ “Child Abuse & Neglect”, “Child Abuse”, and “Child Maltreatment” are often synonymous and inclusive over-arching terms.

# True or False?

- ▶ 7.15% of children have experienced some form of child abuse or neglect within the last year?

# False

- ▶ ~~7.15% of children have experienced some form of child abuse or neglect within the last year?~~



# True

- ▶ According to the CDC, about 1 in 7 children (or 14.3%) have experienced some form of child abuse or neglect within the last year.

# True or False?

- ▶ Neglect is the most common form of child maltreatment?

# False

▶ ~~Neglect is the most common form of child maltreatment?~~

# True

- ▶ While neglect is the most *confirmed* type of maltreatment, **psychological maltreatment** is the most common form of maltreatment. This is because all other types of maltreatment also include an aspect of psychological maltreatment.

# True or False?

- ▶ 25% of girls are sexually abused before the age of 18?

# True

- ▶ According to the CDC, approximately 1 in 4 girls (25%) will experience some form of sexual abuse before the age of 18.

# True or False?

- ▶ 7.7% of boys are sexually abused before the age of 18?

# True

- ▶ According to the CDC, approximately 1 in 13 boys (7.7%) will experience some form of sexual abuse before the age of 18.



# Prevalence of Child Abuse and Neglect

## (part 1)

- ▶ Approximately **1 in 7** (or **10.4 million**) children experienced child abuse or neglect in the last year. This number is an estimate of all occurrences, reported and unreported.<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ Nearly **700,000** children are confirmed as abused or neglected in the U.S. each year. This number represents only substantiated unique incidents and does not include unreported and unsubstantiated cases of maltreatment.<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ **5 children die** every day from maltreatment in the U.S. (1,840 in 2019).<sup>3</sup>
- ▶ Rates of abuse and neglect are 5 times higher for children living in **poverty**.<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ The estimated lifetime economic burden associated with child abuse and neglect is **\$535 billion**.<sup>1</sup>
  - ▶ Sources: <sup>1</sup>[cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov), <sup>2</sup>[nationalchildrensalliance.org](https://www.nationalchildrensalliance.org), <sup>3</sup>[nationalchildabusecoalition.org](https://www.nationalchildabusecoalition.org)

# Prevalence of Child Abuse & Neglect

## (part 2)

- ▶ The most common forms of substantiated child maltreatment are **neglect** at 75%, followed by **physical** abuse 18%, **sexual** abuse 9%, **psychological** maltreatment 6%, medical neglect 2%, and other maltreatment 7%.<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ However, Child Advocacy Centers in the U.S. (like the Percy and Donna Malone Child Safety Center) partnered in the investigation of 243,039 cases involving sexual abuse allegations in 2019. This number indicates that child sexual abuse in the U.S. is **far more significant** than the number of substantiated cases.<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ Research estimates that **1 in 4 girls**, and **1 in 13 boys** will be sexually abused before they turn 18 years old.<sup>3</sup>
- ▶ 93% of sexual abuse offenders are **known to the victim**.<sup>4</sup>
  - ▶ Sources: <sup>1</sup>childwelfare.gov, <sup>2</sup>nationalchildrensalliance.org, <sup>3</sup>cdc.gov, <sup>4</sup>rainn.org

# Other facts about Child Abuse and Neglect

- ▶ Child abuse and neglect are usually **not one time or isolated events**, but a pattern of ongoing behaviors by the abuser.
- ▶ Child abuse and neglect rarely stops without external **intervention**.
- ▶ Child abuse and neglect is usually committed by a **caregiver, or a trusted individual** known to and in proximity to the child. Child abuse by strangers occurs but is relatively rare.
- ▶ Many child abuse and neglect victims experience **two or more** forms of maltreatment.
- ▶ Factors of **increased risk** for child abuse and neglect include poverty, limited support systems, family crisis, poor parenting skills, limited caregiver understanding of child development, a family history of maltreatment, domestic violence, and substance abuse.

Q&A:

# The Types and Prevalence of Child Abuse and Neglect

# Signs of Neglect

## Physical

- ▶ Deficient growth rate
- ▶ Underweight
- ▶ Poor hygiene
- ▶ Lack of weather appropriate clothing
- ▶ Wearing of the same clothing for multiple days in a row
- ▶ Lack of supplies/resources
- ▶ Lack of medical care

## Behavioral

- ▶ Often hungry
- ▶ Takes food or money without permission
- ▶ Hiding food
- ▶ Arrives early and leaves late
- ▶ Poor record of school attendance
- ▶ Often tired or listless

# Signs of Physical Abuse

## Physical

- ▶ Unexplained injuries, such as bruises, fractures, or burns
- ▶ Injuries that don't match the given explanation
- ▶ Injuries in unusual places or in unusual patterns
- ▶ Bruising or injury in various stages of healing

## Behavioral

- ▶ Fear of certain people or places
- ▶ Avoids any kind of touch or physical contact
- ▶ Seem to often be on “high alert”
- ▶ Wears clothing the does not match the weather to cover injuries
- ▶ Withdrawal from friends and activities

# Signs of Sexual Abuse

## Physical

- ▶ Bloody, torn, or stained underwear
- ▶ Bruising, bleeding, or discharge from or around the genitals
- ▶ Pain or itching around the genitals which may cause difficulty in walking or sitting
- ▶ Pain during urination
- ▶ Pregnancy or Sexually Transmitted Infection
- ▶ Most sexual abuse victims do not exhibit physical signs of abuse

## Behavioral

- ▶ Sexual behavior/knowledge that's inappropriate for the child's age
- ▶ Avoidance of a certain person
- ▶ Inappropriate sexual contact with other children
- ▶ Exhibits self harm behaviors
- ▶ Socially withdrawn
- ▶ Running away from home
- ▶ Acts younger than actual age

# Signs of Psychological Maltreatment

## Behavioral

- ▶ Constant worry about doing something wrong
- ▶ Delayed or inappropriate emotional development
- ▶ Depression
- ▶ Low self-confidence or self-esteem
- ▶ Decrease in school performance or loss of interest in school
- ▶ Extreme behavior, such as being way too obedient or way too demanding
- ▶ Headaches and stomachaches with no clear cause
- ▶ Child does not seem close to a parent or caregiver
- ▶ Social withdrawal or a loss of interest or enthusiasm
- ▶ Delays in learning or speech
- ▶ Desperately seeks affection
- ▶ Loss of previously acquired developmental skills



# Signs of an abusive or neglectful parent or caregiver

## Behavioral

- ▶ Shows little concern for the child
- ▶ Appears unable to recognize physical or emotional distress in the child
- ▶ Blames the child for the problems
- ▶ Severely limits the child's contact with others
- ▶ Consistently belittles or berates the child, and describes the child with negative terms, such as "worthless", "stupid", or "evil".
- ▶ Expects the child to provide him or her with attention and care and seems jealous of other family members getting attention from the child
- ▶ Uses harsh physical discipline
- ▶ Demands an inappropriate level of physical or academic performance
- ▶ Offers conflicting or unconvincing explanations for a child's injuries or no explanation at all

Q&A:  
The Physical and Behavioral  
Signs of Child Abuse and Neglect

# True or False?

- ▶ According to the Arkansas Child Maltreatment Act, only teachers, medical professionals, and law enforcement personnel are mandated reporters?

# False

- ▶ ~~According to the Arkansas Child Maltreatment Act, only teachers, medical professionals, and law enforcement personnel are mandated reporters?~~

# True

- ▶ The Arkansas Child Maltreatment Act designates the following professionals as Mandated Reporters:
  - ▶ Teachers
  - ▶ Medical professionals
  - ▶ Law enforcement
  - ▶ Childcare workers
  - ▶ Social services workers
  - ▶ State agencies working with children and families
  - ▶ Clergy
  - ▶ Coroners

# True or False?

- ▶ The Arkansas Child Maltreatment Act provides Mandated Reporters with protections for “good faith” reporting, and penalties for failure to report.

# True

- ▶ The Arkansas Child Maltreatment Act provides Mandated Reporters with protections for “good faith” reporting, and penalties for failure to report.

# True or False?

- ▶ Reporting suspected child abuse or neglect to the school counselor or the school principal satisfies the reporting requirement of the Mandated Reporter, as defined in the Arkansas Child Maltreatment Act.



# False

- ▶ ~~Reporting suspected child abuse or neglect to the school counselor or the school principal satisfies the reporting requirement of the Mandated Reporter, as defined in the Arkansas Child Maltreatment Act.~~

# True

- ▶ It is the legal obligation of all Mandated Reporters to report suspected abuse or neglect directly to the Child Abuse Hotline. Reporting suspected maltreatment only to the school counselor and/or principal does not satisfy your requirement to report.

# The Arkansas Child Maltreatment Act: Mandated Reporters

- ▶ The Child Maltreatment Act defines certain professions and people who work with children as **Mandated Reports**.
- ▶ Mandated Reporters are **required by law to report any suspected Child abuse or neglect**.
- ▶ **Mandated Reporters include:** school teachers, school counselors, school officials, school nurses, child care workers, law enforcement personnel, medical professionals, social workers, mental health professionals, employees of state agencies dealing with children, coroners, and members of the clergy.

# The Arkansas Child Maltreatment Act: Protections & Penalties

- ▶ The Act establishes **protections** for Mandated Reporters. Those who report in good faith are protected from criminal and civil liabilities.
- ▶ The Act establishes **penalties** for Mandated Reporters. Those who fail to report may be subject to criminal and civil penalties including jail time, fines, the loss of professional licensure, and monetary judgments.

# The Arkansas Child Maltreatment Act: Duties of the Mandated Reporter

- ▶ Mandated Reporters **shall immediately report suspected child maltreatment** to the Child Abuse Hotline when they have a reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected.
- ▶ Telling the school counselor, principal, or other supervisor **DOES NOT meet your legal requirement** to report to the Child Abuse Hotline.

# The Arkansas Child Maltreatment Act: Requirements for Schools

- ▶ No school, Head Start program, or day care facility **shall prohibit, require permission, or require notification** of any person before any employee or volunteer directly reports child abuse or neglect to the Hotline.
- ▶ Investigators have the right to **enter the school campus** to interview students for child abuse and neglect investigations.
- ▶ Investigators have the right to **prohibit schools from notifying parents** if a student is interviewed at school as part of an investigation if the parent or guardian is listed as an alleged offender.

Q&A:

# The Arkansas Child Maltreatment Act and Mandated Reporters



**BREAK**



## Discussion:

How can you be an advocate for children in the Classroom?

- ▶ Develop **appropriate and healthy relationships** with your students.
- ▶ **Get to know** the children in your class, and value them as individuals.
- ▶ Be an **approachable and trustworthy** adult in the view of the child.
- ▶ Speak and teach in a way that **honors and builds up** the child.
- ▶ Show them you **care about their well-being** in addition to their academics.
- ▶ When possible, **listen** to child shared stories and affirm the child's value.
- ▶ **A safe classroom** context can increase learning and academic performance.

# True or False?

- ▶ Before reporting to the Child Abuse Hotline I need to gather evidence of the alleged child abuse or neglect.

# False

- ▶ ~~Before reporting to the Child Abuse Hotline I need to gather evidence of the alleged child abuse or neglect.~~

# True

- ▶ Before reporting to the Child Abuse Hotline, I need only suspicion of child abuse or neglect. There is no burden of proof on the Mandated Reporter.

# True or False?

- ▶ If I report child abuse or neglect to the Child Abuse Hotline, my name will only be known to the hotline and the designated investigator.

# True

- ▶ If I report child abuse or neglect to the Child Abuse Hotline, my name will only be known to the hotline and the designated investigator.

# How to Report Child Abuse or Neglect: Key Criteria

- ▶ When making a report you should have an allegation that if true would meet the Arkansas legal **definition of child maltreatment**. (Arkansas Code Title 12, Subtitle 2, Chapter 18, <https://armatus2.praesidiuminc.com/tools/365/Arkansas.pdf>)
- ▶ The specific incident or specific set of circumstances **raises suspicion** that a child has been abused or neglected.
- ▶ The child **was harmed or is at substantial risk of being harmed**.
- ▶ The alleged victim is **under the age of 18**. If the alleged victim is over age 18, yet the suspected maltreatment occurred when the alleged victim was under 18, then the alleged victim is required to call the Child Abuse Hotline.
- ▶ The incident happened **in the state of Arkansas**, or the alleged offender lives in the state of Arkansas. If the suspected maltreatment occurred outside of Arkansas, please contact the Child Abuse Hotline in the state where the suspected maltreatment occurred.

# How to Report Child Abuse or Neglect: Making the Call

- ▶ Before making a report you should gather enough information to **locate the child and/or the child's family**. Where the child attends school is adequate. But, if possible, report the name, age, address, and phone number of both the alleged victim/victim's family, and the alleged offender.
- ▶ Your report will **remain confidential**, and you will only be contact if additional identifying information is needed.
- ▶ **To report child abuse or neglect, call 1-844-SAVE-A-CHILD  
(1-844-728-3224)**
- ▶ Mandated Reporters may also utilize the **Suspected Child Abuse Report Form** of the Arkansas State Police. This form can be found at [www.dps.arkansas.gov](http://www.dps.arkansas.gov) and faxed to 501-618-8952.



# What Happens When You Report Child Abuse or Neglect? - Part 1

- ▶ The Child Abuse **Hotline** is operated by the **Arkansas State Police Crimes against Children Division (CACD)**.
- ▶ The Hotline **operator receives and evaluates the report** based on a specific criteria, and the report is either accepted or rejected.
- ▶ If accepted, **a case will be opened and classified** based on the allegation severity and urgency. The report will then move to one of two investigating agencies.
- ▶ If the suspected abuse or neglect is classified as **Priority 1** (more severe forms of maltreatment and/or urgent response required), then the case is given to an investigator within the **Crimes Against Children Division**.
- ▶ If the suspected abuse or neglect is classified as **Priority 2** (other forms of maltreatment), then the case is given to an investigator within the **Department of Child and Family Services**.
- ▶ In cases where the child is in immediate danger, the case may also be forwarded to **local law enforcement** so that protective actions can be carried out.

# What Happens When You Report Child Abuse or Neglect? - Part 2

- ▶ After the investigator receives the case they will work with the local **Child Advocacy Center (CAC)**. In our area that is the Percy & Donna Malone Child Safety Center.
- ▶ At the Child Advocacy Center the alleged victim (and their family) has access to a variety of services including **Forensic Interviews, Child & Family Advocacy, SANE Exams, and Trauma Informed Therapy**.
- ▶ Allegations of child maltreatment are investigated and determined to be **“Substantiated” or “Unsubstantiated”**.
- ▶ Cases are reviewed and staffed by a **multidisciplinary team** made up of investigators, forensic interviewers, child & family advocates, therapists, law enforcement officers, and prosecutors.

# Q&A: Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

# Managing Disclosure: The Dynamics of Disclosure

- ▶ A victim's disclosure of abuse or neglect may be a **progressive process** more than a single event.
- ▶ Victims of child abuse or neglect can often **feel helpless, isolated, and shamed**.
- ▶ Disclosure can be very difficult for a child victim. **A trustworthy adult, a safe context, and the hope of protective actions** can help a victim in disclosure.
- ▶ Approximately **50% of children will initially deny allegations**, even with supporting evidence.
- ▶ **Stages of disclosure** may include 1) Denial, 2) Tentative Disclosure, 3) Active Disclosure, 4) Retraction, and 5) Reaffirmation.

# Managing Disclosure: The FIRST Response

- ▶ The **FIRST Response** was developed to help individuals who may receive a disclosure of child abuse or neglect from an alleged victim.
- ▶ An **initial disclosure may be the only disclosure**, or the most definitive disclosure. Therefore, it's helpful to know how to appropriately respond.
- ▶ It is critical to respond in a way that **does not retraumatize** the child or **interfere** with a CACD/DCFS investigation of child maltreatment.
- ▶ It is necessary to **consider ahead of time how you will respond** to a child's disclosure of abuse or neglect.

# How to Manage a Disclosure: The FIRST Response

- ▶ **F**ind a Safe Location
- ▶ **I**dentify your Concerns
- ▶ **R**apport with the Child
- ▶ **S**eek Details
- ▶ **T**ell the Hotline



# How to Manage a Disclosure: The FIRST Response

## ▶ **F**ind a Safe Location

## ▶ **I**dentify your Concerns

## ▶ **R**apport with the Child

## ▶ **S**eek Details

## ▶ **T**ell the Hotline

- ▶ Choose a location where the child is safe and feels free to share.
- ▶ Choose an appropriate time, not when the child is engaged in an activity.
- ▶ Connect one-on-one with the child, yet not in isolation.
- ▶ Be discreet in how you invite the child into the conversation.

# How to Manage a Disclosure: The FIRST Response

▶ **F**ind a Safe Location

▶ **I**dentify your Concerns

▶ **R**apport with the Child

▶ **S**eek Details

▶ **T**ell the Hotline

- ▶ Express your care for the child.
- ▶ Share your specific concern.
- ▶ Ask open-ended questions.
- ▶ Listen carefully and ask appropriate follow up questions.
- ▶ Never make assumptions, suggestions, allegations, or denials.



# How to Manage a Disclosure: The FIRST Response

- ▶ **F**ind a Safe Location
  - ▶ **I**dentify your Concerns
  - ▶ **R**apport with the Child
  - ▶ **S**eek Details
  - ▶ **T**ell the Hotline
- ▶ Be mindful of your body language.
  - ▶ Get on the child's level to speak and listen eye to eye.
  - ▶ Use an appropriate tone of voice.
  - ▶ Consider your phrasing and language.
  - ▶ Foster trust and understanding.
  - ▶ Do not overreact or underreact.

# How to Manage a Disclosure: The FIRST Response

- ▶ **F**ind a Safe Location
  - ▶ **I**dentify your Concerns
  - ▶ **R**apport with the Child
  - ▶ **S**eek Details
  - ▶ **T**ell the Hotline
- ▶ Listen carefully.
  - ▶ Avoid leading questions.
  - ▶ Say: “Tell me more about that?” when clarity is needed.
  - ▶ Listen for the “Who”, “What”, “When”, “Where”.
  - ▶ Do not try to conduct an investigation.
  - ▶ Do not attempt to contact the alleged offender.

# How to Manage a Disclosure: The FIRST Response

- ▶ **F**ind a Safe Location
  - ▶ **I**dentify your Concerns
  - ▶ **R**apport with the Child
  - ▶ **S**eek Details
  - ▶ **T**ell the Hotline
- ▶ Thank the child for sharing.
  - ▶ Organize information for reporting.
  - ▶ Document the actual wording of the child.
  - ▶ Provide a way to locate the child and the child's family.
  - ▶ Do not share this information with others.
  - ▶ Make the call!
  - ▶ **1-844-SAVE-A-CHILD**  
(1-844-728-3224)

Q&A:  
Managing Disclosure and The  
FIRST Response

# Contact Information

- ▶ **Tawana Williams** - Therapist/Awareness Advocate
  - ▶ [tawana.williams@pdmcsc.org](mailto:tawana.williams@pdmcsc.org)
- ▶ **Doug Cherry** - Forensic Interviewer/Awareness Advocate
  - ▶ [doug.cherry@pdmcsc.org](mailto:doug.cherry@pdmcsc.org)
- ▶ **Percy & Donna Malone Child Safety Center**
  - ▶ [www.pdmcsc.org](http://www.pdmcsc.org)
  - ▶ 870-403-6879



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Resources and documentation for this training can  
be found at: [www.pdmcsc.org/trainingmaterials](http://www.pdmcsc.org/trainingmaterials)