



Identifying Physical Child Abuse and the Role of the MDT.©

Presented by

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**Commanding Officer
(Retired)
Child Exploitation Unit
Chicago, IL USA**

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The Origins of Child Abuse Investigations

- Dr. C Henry Kempe – “Battered Child Syndrome”
- Child abuse.... Is frequently something more than a one time event, it repeats itself over and over again
- Child abuse – progression of events that escalate

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Identification of Terms



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The Caretaker

Generally can be the....

- Mother
- Father
- Boyfriend or Girlfriend
- Grandparent
- Aunt
- Babysitter

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**– The Investigation –
CPS – DCFS (IL)
LAW ENFORCEMENT**

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CPS – Child Protective Services

Federal Law

- Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)
- Every state must have a CPS agency
- Every state must have statutes that define child maltreatment
- Every state must articulate how CPS will take reports & respond to child maltreatment allegations

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Traditional Multi-Disciplinary Child Abuse Team

MDT Core members

- Law Enforcement
- Child Protective Services (CPS – DCFS)
- Medical Community
- Prosecutor
- Mental Health – Therapy
- Child Advocacy Center (CAC)

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Two Investigations – Two Goals

CPS Responsibility –

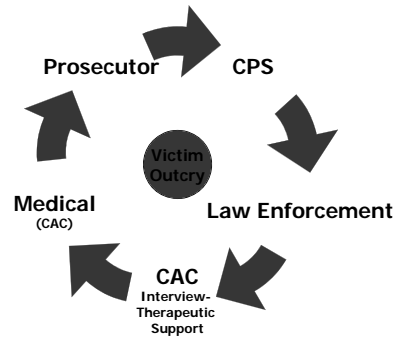
- What happened in the past?
- Who did it?
- What's likely to happen in the future?

Law Enforcement Responsibility –

- What happened in the past?
- Who did it?
- Was it a crime?

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MDT Response



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Physical Child Abuse Dynamics

- Causation factors
- Triggering mechanism
- Target children
- Over discipline

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Suspected Abusive Caretaker Assessment

- Poor parenting skills
- Provide some advice
- Referral to CPS – Mandated Reporter
- Referral to Family / Divorce Court
- Referral to Juvenile Court – CPS
- Referral to Criminal Court – Intent ?

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Injury Assessment

Caretaker Question – “How did the accident happen?”

Investigation – Systematic Elimination

- Natural or Normal.....
- Accidental
- Nonaccidental

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Injury Assessment

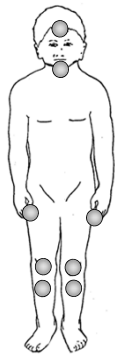
Systematic Elimination

- Natural or normal
- Accidental....
- Nonaccidental

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**Accidental
Injuries**

– Bony Prominences –



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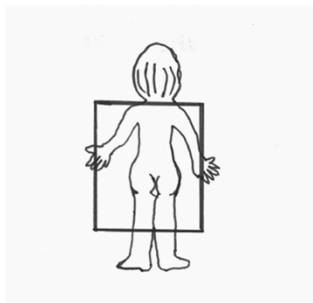
Injury Assessment

Systematic Elimination

- Natural or normal
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Primary Target Zone



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Physical Child Abuse Injury Weapon Identification

- Weapon of opportunity
- Favorite family weapon

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Some of the Investigative Issues in Physical Abuse Cases


- May occur in front of a witness
- In the majority of the physical abuse cases the medical provider won't provide an answer for the investigator....
- In most situations the victim will not want the offender punished
- BUT, evidence of multiple events can be used as corroboration of a crime

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Resources

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NCJRS
800-851-3420 or www.ncjrs.gov



Portable Guides to Investigating Child Abuse

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's Portable Guides series provides practical information on investigating child abuse and neglect. Police officers and detectives will find the most timely format of the guides available for quick on-the-job reference. The guides are also useful for social workers, physicians, nurses, emergency medical technicians, investigators, psychologists, attorneys, judges – anyone on the frontlines of reporting, investigating, and prosecuting crimes against children.

Written by nationally recognized experts, the Portable Guides are designed to be both substantive and handy to consult. Each one addresses a specific topic. The series currently includes 15 titles:

- *Abused Child Syndrome: Investigating Physical Abuse and Molests*
- *Abuse Victims in Child Abuse*
- *Child Neglect and Molesters: Speeches by Proxy*
- *Criminal Investigation of Child Sexual Abuse*
- *Diagnostic Imaging of Child Abuse*
- *Emergency Multidisciplinary Teams to Investigate Child Abuse*
- *Interviewing Child Witnesses and Victims of Sexual Abuse*
- *Investigating Child Fatalities*
- *Law Enforcement Response to Child Abuse*
- *Photodocumentation in the Investigation of Child Abuse*
- *Recognizing When a Child's Injury or Illness is Caused by Abuse*
- *Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Child Sexual Abuse*
- *Use of Computers in the Sexual Exploitation of Children*

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Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention



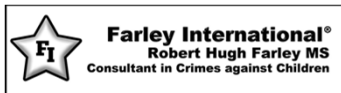
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Recognizing When a
Child's Injury or Illness
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PORTABLE GUIDE TO INVESTIGATING CHILD ABUSE

OJJDP

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Thank you !

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