
Child Abuse And Its Effects On Society

Introduction

Being a survivor of child abuse I know it's a problem, it's affected me in so many ways, I am still suffering from it today. However, I am curious to know how child abuse affects society. One of the reasons I am so interested in this topic is because I am going into Criminal Psychology, and a huge part of that job is examining and determining why a criminal does what they do. Ted Bundy is one of America's most famous serial killers, through the years of him being in prison he was examined by a psychologist. It had come out at some point that Bundy was abused as a child, and some people believe that is why he became a rapist and a murderer. That is why this topic is interesting to me. I am curious to see if child abuse really does affect a person like that and if so how it shapes that person, and how child abuse affects its victims as they go out into the world.

A. Not all abused children become serial killers or criminals for that matter. However, there are a lot of connections between childhood abuse and criminal activity that can't be dismissed as a coincidence. According to Davies (2018) "traumatic experience that happens during childhood can have a negative impact in that child's adult life. It can significantly shape individual's personality and life choices." Which is why a lot of research has been done in the connections between childhood abuse and criminal behaviors. "The extent of childhood abuse reported among serial killers has raised a huge controversial question. Are serial killers born or made?" (Davies, 2018 p.1)

Childhood abuse has been linked to criminal behaviors

According to Criminologist Raine (2008) "both biological and social factors contribute to the making of a murder." Through reading Dr. Raine's research I believe a little differently than he does, he states that genetics play into a person's criminal behavior. His exact words are "genetics and the environment work together to encourage violent behaviors. For example, those who have enzyme monoamine- oxidase – A gene are more susceptible to violent behavior if they were exposed to an abusive upbringing."

I don't know much about genetics, so I am going to naturally disagree with him. However, I do believe that a person's upbringing and environment can shape a person and introduce a child to criminal behaviors. For example, one of the articles I read talked about early childhood exposure to an abusive environment can produce psychopathic behaviors in its victims.

I had mentioned Ted Bundy in my introduction, as a child Bundy was born when his mother was 22 years old. She originally left Ted at an orphanage. She was ashamed, and I believe that feeling followed her for many years even after Ted was old enough to realize. Bundy had claimed that he had a great childhood however, there was evidence that he was exposed to his grandfather's abusive behaviors towards his grandmother, Bundy also found out that his dad was listed as a different man on his birth certificate. A lot of psychology reports find that Bundy had an issue with that.

A lot of serial killers have been linked to have had childhood abuse. Merrywether's (2017 p. 3 and 7) article talks about 15 serial killers that experienced childhood abuse. Ted Bundy isn't on her list that she discusses, and I didn't recognize any of the other on her list except number 15 Aileen Wuornos. However, Richard Ramirez also known as "The Night Stalker" from El Paso, TX was found guilty on 13 counts of murder in the cities of San Francisco and Los Angeles, he had a rather disturbing childhood where he was brutally beaten by his father. Ottis Toole and Henry Lee Lucas, famous serial killer duo who were suspected of murdering hundreds were both victims of physical and psychological abuse. They were also forced to dress up like young girls and were then beaten."

Another article I read show a study that was done were out of a group of 2,750 children 53% were reported to have suffered from physical abuse and 28% suffered emotional abuse. That proves that child abuse is an issue in our society just by that study because, of how high the number percentage is, the five serial killers would have been in those number and those are just five I mentioned. In Merryweather's article she talks about 15. That number is a big number and all the 15 she talks about were exposed to childhood abuse, including Ted Bundy, that's 16. Child abuse is named as a health priority in our society according to the American Pediatrics Association.

There are so many types of child abuse, when I originally started my research I thought I was a victim of physical, emotional, and verbal. However, after reading through a lot of my sources I found that I am a victim of a lot more than just those three.

Many of the serial killers I have mention in my paper so far have been exposed to physical, emotional, and psychological abuse. I believe it is these three plus sexual abuses that has the most effect and most damaging outcomes in a child's life. In the following I have definitions of each of the main points and then things that come with each type of child abuse. I have watched a lot of crime shows and have gotten in to the justice system.

Types of Child Abuse

1. Emotional Abuse. Emotional abuse is any kind of abuse that is emotional rather than physical in nature.
2. Verbal Abuse
 - a. Verbal abuse is when a person forcefully criticizes, insults, or denounces someone else.
 - b. Curse words
 - c. Hurtful terms ("it's all your fault")
3. Physical Abuse
 - a. Physical abuse is an act where one person uses their body to inflict intentional harm or injury upon another person.
 - b. Punching

c. Hitting (on anywhere on the body with closed fists)

d. Kicking

e. Biting

f. Pushing

4. Medical Abuse

a. Failure to act causes unreasonable suffering, misery, or harm.

b. Refusal to take child to doctor (broken bones or other serious injuries)

c. Refusal to acknowledge child's sicknesses (sinus infections, strep, pink eye, ear infections, anything serious -contagious or life threatening.)

d. Refusal to give medications to child when doctor ordered it

5. Sexual Abuse

a. Sexual abuse is a molestation, undesired sexual behaviors by one person upon another.

i. Touching body parts (unwanted)

ii. Penetration(unwanted)

iii. Unwanted pornographic pictures

iv. Forceful sex (rape)

6. Psychological Abuse

a. Form of abuse characterized by a person subjecting or exposing another person to behavior that may result in psychological trauma that include the following.

i. Anxiety

ii. Chronic depression

iii. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

According to Davies (2018) sources research Abbie Marone and Ex- FBI profiler Joe Navarro released their study that found different types of child abuse that can be used to profile a serial killer. These types and categories are all tied together, it is crazy to read about these and see that they are all intertwined with each other.

Conclusion

In conclusion from the research I've done, I would have to say that child abuse plays a big part

in crime in our society, at least it does in mine. In my first discussion for this class I talked about how I had a friend whose dad was abusive towards her mother. One night while her and her younger brother were in the house her father began an argument. My friend was able to get out of the house and call 911 there was a stand off and in the end her father shot her mother, and her mother passed away on her way to the hospital. That was only one of the abusive incidents that were broadcasted. However, the point I am trying to make is that no one knew, I believe that if people had known that her mother would still be alive today. I also knew a few people in elementary school who ended up moving because of an abusive situation, another friend in high school moved right after our graduation because of the same thing. And being a survivor myself and the eldest out of six including me, abusive behaviors are still going on. Although my parents are now divorced it is a nasty situation, and is still has abuse on my mothers side, and my fathers side.

Through watching those shows and news reports and reading news reports I have seen that those four are extremely damaging. However, there are those that don't let what happened to them define them, and they go on to do great things. For example, "Crime Watch Daily's" Elizabeth Smart was kidnapped from her house at the age of 14. She was then held captive for 9 months, and in those nine months she was rape repeatedly, drugged, and forced to endure religious rituals. However, she has gone on to do great things, she is now an accomplished activist and author. She has also launched the "Elizabeth Smart Foundation" which is pairing up with law enforcement to have self-defense classes to eliminate crimes against child. Like the one she was forced to endure. I don't believe that those who are abuse have criminal behaviors or are going to turn out "bad". So, to recall that question that was asked in the first article I read "Are serial killers born or made?" I believe that they are made, I don't believe that you are born evil or born with evil tendencies. I believe when you are born you have the possibility to do so many good or bad things or both. Elizabeth Smart shows that you can do great things with horrible pasts, it things like the Elizabeth Smart Foundation that is going to make this world a better place. That is why I believe that something needs to be done about child abuse, not only have I lived through it and know how hard and horrible it is, but I know the effect and I am so glad that I am able to say I want to do good things.

References

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