

The UN Secretary-General's

International Study on Violence Against Children

(Adapted from SAVE THE CHILDREN'S child-friendly version draft, 2
April 2004)

The Study is to help us learn

- How different types of violence affect children around the world
- What we all need to be doing to prevent all forms of violence against children
- Good ways of helping children who have faced violence
- What children do to protect themselves from violence
- What are the causes of violence against children

Many organizations and persons are being asked to assist and make contributions

- Governments (national reviews of related factors are to occur)
- NGOs
- Experts on children, families, schools, institutions, violence, and interventions, including children

Study leadership include

- Paulo Pinheiro, International Independent Expert from Brazil leads the Study
- Amaya Gillespie, UNICEF, Directs the Secretariat for the Study in Geneva
- OHCHR, WHO, and UNICEF are primary organizations helping with the Study
- The NGO Advisory Panel for the Study

Forms of violence under consideration include abuse, neglect and exploitation in basic areas of --

- Physical violence
- Psychological violence
- Sexual violence

Settings or conditions of violence to be considered include-

- Families/homes
- Schools
- Religious institutions
- Residential and detention settings
- Sports
- Streets
- Work
- Gangs

The Study will produce a report to the UN Secretary General, which will then be shared with governments through the Commission on Human Rights

VAC STUDY OUTCOMES – PROJECTIONS and POTENTIALS

Recommended by The NGO Advisory Panel

- Knowledge Base – Clearing House
- Public Information
- Education and Training
- Facilitation and Mobilization Mechanisms
- Standards and Accountability
- Child Participation
- Legislation and Regulation
- Intervention and Tools
- Strategy, Planning and Prioritization
- Monitoring and Reporting
- Research
- Resource Availability and Allocation

Destructive developmental impact associated with psychological maltreatment has been identified for ...

- intrapersonal thoughts, feelings, and behaviors**
- emotional problem symptoms**
- social and anti-social functioning**
- learning problems**
- physical health**

- **PSYCHOLOGICAL MALTREATMENT (ABUSE & NEGLECT)**

Psychological maltreatment (i.e., emotional abuse and neglect, mental injury) is broadly defined as “A repeated pattern or extreme incident(s) of conditions that convey the message that the child is worthless, flawed, unloved, endangered, or valuable only in meeting someone else’s needs.”

Five major forms

- **spurning** (hostile rejecting/degrading)
- **terrorizing**
- **isolating**
- **exploiting/corrupting**
- **denying emotional responsiveness** (ignoring).

UNIVERSAL VALUES *For Child Character*

- Patience and Self-Control
- Generosity and kindness
- Braveness
- Imagination and creativity
- Commitment and industriousness
- Self-Esteem
- Choice making competence, including problem solving and decision-making competence
- Capacity for deep thought, contemplation, reasoning and critical thinking
- Moral and ethical understanding, appreciation and behavior
- Pro-social skills competency

- **Ability and willingness to judge one's own behavior** in accord with standards and commitments, to identify **causes and consequences** of one's own behavior, to be concerned about the **effects of one's own behavior on others**, and to **repair or rectify wrongs** resulting from one's own behavior.
- Ability to **express feelings honestly** and **communicate constructively** and non-aggressively
- Ability to **find personal and collective meaning** and relevance in events directly and indirectly experienced
- Ability to **participate in the construction** of rules and establishment of **consequences** for behavior

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- **Respect for others and their views**, including those of different generations, gender, sexual orientation, and racial-ethnic background
- Respect for and ability to **promote harmony in multi-cultural relations**
- **Capacity for constructive group membership**, to be in a partnership with others (adults/elders, peers) in support of common purposes, to discuss and resolve conflicts cooperatively, and to work to consensus with others regarding important issues and standards

Human Universals (Brown, 1991, 2000)

- **choice making (choosing alternatives) and decision making**
- **consultation and mediation to deal with conflict**
- **empathy**
- **fairness**
- **moral sentiments, good and bad distinguished**
- **law (rights and obligations, rules of membership)**
- **reciprocity**
- **redress of wrongs**
- **sanctions for crimes against the collectivity**
- **self as subject and object**
- **self control and self as responsible**
- **self-image**
- **true and false distinguished**
- **proscribed forms of violence**

UNESCO PUBLICATION ON CONSTRUCTIVE DISCIPLINE

The case against corporal punishment as a discipline practice has been made.

- Established human rights standards provide the imperative for eliminating it through law reform and public education
- Research knowledge concerning its effects on child development argues strongly against its use.

Principles for Constructive Child Discipline

- **Respect the child's dignity**
- **Develop pro-social behavior, self-discipline, and character**
- **Maximize the child's active participation**
- **Respect the child's developmental needs and quality of life**
- **Respect the child's motivational characteristics and life views**
- **Assure fairness and transformative justice**
- **Promote solidarity**

Respect the child's dignity

- The physical, psychological, social and moral integrity of the child, present and future, should be protected and respected.
- Efforts to correct erroneous, anti-social, hurtful or dangerous behavior on the part of a child should be educative in nature and sustain the person as valuable and accepted.
- Adults should be the stewards not the owners of the child; they should be the protectors, guides and supporters of the child's inherent rights and quality of life, present and future.

(Art. 28.2: "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child human dignity and in conformity with the present convention;" (Art. 23.1: "...a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, ...") (Art. 37 (c): "Every child deprived of liberty shall be treated with humanity and respect for the inherent dignity of the human person...").

Develop pro-social behavior, self-discipline, and character

- The potentials of human beings for pro-social behavior should be recognized as great and best fostered by education that leads to personal integrity self-discipline, and character, requiring the adoption of pro-social values, choice making that reflects those values, and behavior that manifests those values.
- Emphasis should be given to respecting and expanding capacities for compassion, justice, and fairness.
- Support should be given to educative procedures that specifically foster values internalization, pro-social skills, convergent and divergent thinking, non-violent problem solving, empathy, maximum development of the child's personality and talents, and that prepare the child for full citizenship in a free society.

(Art. 29.1[b & c] Education of the child shall be directed toward “The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms” and “The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin”)

1 Maximize the child's active participation

The child should be a partner with adults and peers, in developmentally appropriate ways, in considering and dealing with issues, problems and opportunities of concern that are relevant to the child's life.

- Participation and involvement on the part of the child are necessary to achieve investment in shared pro-social values and to promote self-efficacy and respect for the child's dignity.

(Art. 12.1 “ States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child”)

Respect the child's developmental needs and quality of life

- Procedures should be formulated both to resolve issues and problems and meet the needs of the child in the present setting and developmental context and to foster the child's healthy and full development over the long term.
- Problems should be reframed as challenges and opportunities for learning, development and mastery.
- Optimism based on self-efficacy and trust should be promoted.

(Art. 6 “States Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child;” Art 29 [a] “education of the child shall be directed to: The development of the child’s personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential”)

Respect the child's motivational characteristics and life views

- -The behavior of children and adults should be understood in terms of efforts to meet human needs (e.g., connectedness-interpersonal affiliation and support, competency, autonomy, and self-esteem).
- -Behavior should be respected as an expression of a person's unique combination of temperament, evolving talents, values, perspectives, styles and strategies as influenced by learning through experience.
- -The capacity of human nature for development throughout the lifespan should be appreciated and used as a foundation and point of departure by all persons involved in resolving issues and promoting constructive practices.

(Art. 3.1 “In all actions concerning the child the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration;” Art. 12.1 “ States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child”)

Assure fairness and transformative justice

- Equity, non-discrimination; freedom from capricious and degrading punishment or reward; application of logical and natural consequences respecting the dignity and integrity of persons; and opportunities for appeal and redress should be assured to foster respect for the “rule of law,” adoption of pro-social principles and values, and self-discipline.
- Restorative and rehabilitative interventions should be applied as necessary to fit offenses and their negative impact.

(Art. 2 “States Parties shall respect and insure the rights ... to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind; Art. 39 “States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to promote the physical and psychological recovery and social integration of a child victim”)

Promote solidarity

- The diverse and shared motivation, values, and perspectives of others should be clarified and respected for their existing and potential contributions to peaceful conflict resolution, tolerance and mutual respect.
- Implicit membership in an expanding circle of persons who value and respect one-another and who share and exhibit principles/ethics for positive human relations and behavior should be promoted.
- The powerful influences of peer relations and cultures should be respected and incorporated in practices where applicable.
- Partnerships between and among children and adults should be formed and activated to improve the psychological, social and physical environments.
- Respect for personal dignity and the rights of each and all persons should be promoted, taught and lived.
- Families, schools and communities should establish conditions supportive of constructive child rearing principles and care.

(Art. 29.1[c] “Education of the child shall be directed to ... development of respect for the child’s parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own” and Art. 29.1[d] “responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of the sexes, and friendship among all peoples”)

An international panel of experts provides descriptions some of the constructive discipline orientations and practices known to be applied in **Asia, Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and South America**. They include:

- *involving learners and their parents in decisions* about codes of conduct and associated practices (Shirley Mabusela);
- *providing guidance in the selection of positive models* in peers and classmates (Hassan Qasem Khan);
- *family meetings and inter-generational dialogue* (Elizabeth Protacio-de Castro);
- *rendering services to the community to rectify rule infractions* (Benedito Rodrigues dos Santos);
- *exploring ethical-moral meanings* and implications in current events (Nora Katona).

- **Two experts on Indigenous peoples** provide descriptions of constructive child rearing and discipline orientations and related practices for peoples they know well, including:
 - The provision to young children of a *mentor among the older youth* who gently guides them into the practices and norms of good behaviour appropriate for their age and status (Anastasia Pinto)
 - Reinforcement of connectedness* to each other and the community through *guided observation and the words and advice of elders* (William A. White/Xalemuxw/Kasalid).

Additional Concepts-Strategies

- Example as a prime motivator
- Parental responsibility for a child's misconduct
- Exposure to folk tales and family/community histories
- Verbal correction accompanied by terms of endearment, affection, respect, and compliments about the child's wisdom and goodness
- Making sure the child feels secure and loved
- Reinforcing the child's self-image, self-respect, and determination to be uncompromising in choosing good behavior
- Sharing by older persons of their own misdemeanors and consequences experienced

- Use of gender specific dormitories
- Peer pressure and peer socialization
- Minor infractions treated as pranks with good humour
- Non-conformity showing particularly high talent channeled into apprenticeships
- Disciplinary acceptable to injured parties, offender, and group
- Reparation of damages preferred over punitive consequences
- Separation from the group for repeated or dangerous offenses
- Careful observation in the presence of elders
- Emphasis on sharing, cooperation, being kind

- Value of order and stability
- Belongingness – existence within family and community
- Obligation to help others
- Spiritual ceremonies and activities
- Being together in moving, eating, singing, being serious and laughing
- Family work
- Family songs and rites
- Being raised without harsh criticism or physical trauma
- Being held, stroked, told how important you are and that you are loved
- Being able to ask questions at provided times within the traditional family