



Children's Response Center

SERVICES FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT AND TRAUMATIC STRESS

NEWS

Winter 2001

MAKING USE OF STRENGTHS CHILDREN AND FAMILIES BRING TO THE RECOVERY PROCESS

By Connie Au, MSW

As we listen to the radio, read the newspapers or watch television, we are informed daily of problems that threaten or traumatize us or cause serious inconvenience in our lives. In recent months, such events have included an earthquake, power shortages, decreasing water levels in reservoirs, gun violence in schools, domestic violence, physical and sexual abuse, homicide and accidents.

For those in the helping professions, we are not only repeatedly confronting these problems in the community, but we are assisting children and families in resolving their responses to the impact of traumatic events. Sometimes it seems that these problems saturate our lives and environment; because of our professional training we are acutely attuned to them.

At Children's Response Center, when families seek help following sexual abuse or a traumatic event, the initial response is often crisis focused and deals directly with the event. The problem bringing the family into treatment consumes a great deal of the attention and emotional energy of the child, the parent and the therapist. We find ourselves needing to deliberately step back and assess the strengths and the functional and normal parts of the child and parents' lives as these are available to draw upon in the recovery process. Some clients have a great deal of difficulty in acknowledging their own strengths and positive qualities. Sometimes this is due to years of abuse that resulted in poor self-esteem and self-image.

Despite the fact that some clients are diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Acute Stress Disorder or Major Depression, many have loving, caring parents or caretakers and friends who bring them to treatment and provide tremendous emotional support through treatment. Although some children may initially regress emotionally or behaviorally after a traumatic event, many quickly return to good academic performance and a functional social life. As a counselor, I am often amazed to see these wonderfully resilient qualities of children and families. It is our responsibility to share these

perceptions with the child when strengths and positive qualities become evident. When breakthroughs in counseling are achieved, it is important to find ways to celebrate with the child and the family and acknowledge the progress made. Moving a child and family from a problem saturated perspective to one that can contain both positive and negative elements is often a goal.

The following contributions by a nine-year old girl and an eighteen-year old young woman who have both progressed in treatment illustrate their individual successes and how they both have moved on to new pages in their lives. This is what Children's Response Center is about – recovery through a new found perspective and meaning given to the traumatic event.

Counseling is Fun

By Elena, Age 9

In the very beginning, I saw Susan. I played games with Susan. We talked about parts of our bodies. We talked about where we can touch and where we cannot touch. Then I saw Connie. We talked about private parts and touching rules. We played dollhouse and I learned about the touching rules when playing dolls. Connie and I read books together. We read "My Body is Private" and "The Right Touch". Connie gave me those books to take home. Now I don't let anyone touch me and I don't touch others. Sometimes we drew pictures together. I wrote things about my dad and mom. I wrote a few letters to my mom and dad. Connie came over to visit me at home. One time she walked over to my school with me. I showed her my classroom. I always showed her my homework and we talked about how important homework is. I have been doing my homework everyday except Friday, Saturday and Sunday. I like counseling because I like talking to my counselor, playing games and reading books. I would tell others that it is fun to have a counselor.

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Children's Response Center
SERVICES FOR SEXUAL
ASSAULT AND TRAUMATIC STRESS

Services

Crisis Intervention
Assessment and Evaluation
Individual/Family Recovery Counseling
Specialized Treatment Groups
Legal Advocacy
Medical Advocacy
General Advocacy
Information and Referral
Consultation
Community Education
Professional Education
Community Coordination
Prevention
Parent Child Interaction Therapy

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Debbie Doane, MSW
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Sarah Matthews, MSW
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Education and Prevention
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Program Support Supervisor
Linda Hueckstedt
Patient Services Representative
Dana Wilson
Volunteer Manager & Legal Advocate
Mary Ann Carlson

Newsletter Contributors

Connie Au
Maren Bergstrom
Mary Ann Carlson
Debbie Doane
Lauren Slovic

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Survivor

By Leigh-Anne

I am broken, torn, and dirty.
My soul cries for my shattered life.
Life has no place for me.
I question why?
Why me?

The fear of him stays with me
all day and night.
Scary, dirty, guilty moments
I am angry, but can not fight.
Rage builds up and festers into self hate.

Time crawls and slithers its way in my life.
I grow up; I stand up.
Life is a step away for my tattered soul.
I grip out for a helping hand.
New life is found.

I had healed and soothed my wounds.
Joy, spirit, light enter a grateful heart.
There is no victim here,
Only a survivor and awakened soul.
I am whole now.

Here's What You Can Do To Stop Sexual Assault

Confront attitudes and beliefs that support rape. Openly disagree with people who make comments that blame victims, and which you know are not true. Object to comments that degrade women or reinforce rigid sex role stereotypes. Point out that rigid beliefs about gender roles add to the risk of interpersonal violence.

Tell people it is never OK for someone to force sex. Not if a person has been drinking, not if a person has agreed to sex in the past, not if a person is sexually turned on-*never!*

Check the message. Identify TV programs, newscasts or advertising that reinforce myths about sexual assault. Supervise the media your children use and help them to think critically about violent imagery or messages that justify sexual abuse. Write to program managers and newspaper editors to tell them your views.

Donate to programs that address sexual assault. Give money or your time to your local community sexual assault center.

Base your own relationships in respect. Listen to and honor your partner's wishes. Never push or force someone into unwanted sexual contact.

Remember that you always have a right to say NO! to touching or sex, under any circumstances. If someone disregards your wishes, they have made a choice not to listen and it is not your fault.

Team up and help friends stay safer! Use the buddy system to keep friends from being alone in vulnerable situations.

Share these tips with people you know. Encourage your school, workplace, place of worship, community center, hospital or local library to provide current resources about sexual assault.

Source: Washington State Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs (WCSAP), Olympia, WA (360) 754-7583 or advocacy-ed@wcsap.org For more information, contact WCSAP or call Lauren Slovic at Children's Response Center in Bellevue, (425) 688-5130.

Totem Award Recognizes Annual Report

Last month, the Children's Response Center was honored for its 1998-99 Annual Report with a prestigious Totem Award from the Puget Sound Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA).

The project was spearheaded by GA Design in Bellevue and designed by Cami Pelozza. GA contributed and arranged over \$100,000 in graphic design, photography and printing services in this pro-bono effort. Other contributors recognized by the Totem Award include Mel Curtis Photography and ColorGraphics.

"We are thrilled by PRSA's acknowledgment of the high quality of this piece. The Center continues to make use of this annual report in its marketing and outreach efforts and we remain grateful to all the contributors who made it possible," noted Deborah Doane, Director.

"We were proud to take part in such an important initiative for Children's Response Center," says Cami Pelozza, GA Design. "It was rewarding to pool the talents and generosity of many to create an annual report that is such an important part of the Center's ongoing marketing efforts."



New Staff

Dana Wilson joined the Children's Response Center staff August 1, as a Patient Services Representative. Dana is the person who meets and greets those seeking services or assistance from the program as they call or come into the office. This is in addition to many other support tasks she is now performing.



Dana Wilson

Dana had been looking for a full-time position when she noted the job announcement at the Center. Most recently she was employed part-time by Eastside Periodontics, but other positions in health care settings are included in her resume. When asked about her interest in working at the Center she stated, "It felt like an important program and one I would like to be associated with. I have not been disappointed. I am very impressed with the caring and commitment on the part of all the staff while working toward the prevention of sexual assault and the healing of the survivors."

Dana, a Midwest transplant, arrived in Redmond in time to begin junior high. Today, she claims a husband, Jim and three daughters (Alex - 16, Lauren - 11 and Charlene - 9) as members of her household and llamas, chickens, and birds as members of her barnyard. Dana's extracurricular activities include animal husbandry, bird watching, home improvement, book reading, and attending a number of activities involving her children including soccer games and school related functions. A polished cook, Dana has treated the office staff and visitors to many wonderful home baked treats. We are very pleased Dana has joined the Children's Response Center team!

New Website

Thanks to the generous efforts of volunteer Andrea Hirz, Children's Response Center has a website – www.ChildrensResponseCenter.org

"We rely totally on the assistance of generous volunteers to bring skills and talents to help us in these technical areas," notes Director, Deborah Doane. "Having a website to assist in marketing the program's services and providing information about the issues we address will be a tremendous asset to the program."

The program is also grateful for the efforts of several volunteers who assisted in this project including Linda Comstock and Shelly Thorn.

Please visit the site and let us know your reactions or ideas. A new volunteer, Eric Adler, will soon be assisting the program in adding additional features and incorporating more graphic content.

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH and SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS WEEK

“Jack” who is 9 years old was referred to Children’s Response Center from Child Protective Services after an older teen-aged boy sexually abused him. When Jack started in counseling, he was very embarrassed. He felt he was to blame for the abuse and had difficulty talking about it. In time, he learned to understand that the abuse had not been his fault, felt proud of himself for having reported the abuse and learned skills to protect himself in the future if necessary. Counseling sessions also helped Jack deal with his conflicted emotions about the perpetrator and feelings of having been betrayed by this boy whom he’d previously considered his friend. Children’s Response Center also provided legal advocacy, tracking the case through the legal system, and providing a letter to the Judge to explain the impact of the abuse on Jack. Jack also wrote a letter to the Judge to describe his feelings about the abuse and the effect it had on him. This activity and the counseling sessions helped Jack to regain his sense of self and to heal from the trauma. (The child’s name has been changed for confidentiality.)

“Jack” is just one of many children served by Children’s Response Center who was impacted by sexual assault and benefited from counseling. The Center also supports and implements initiatives to prevent and raise awareness about sexual assault and child abuse. April is annual **Child Abuse Prevention Month** and also includes **Sexual Assault Awareness Week**, April 8 – 15. The goal during this period of time is to raise awareness about child abuse and sexual assault. Public and private agencies, community organizations, volunteers and concerned citizens are combining their efforts to highlight these problems, and educate the public about how to report and prevent them.

“Instead of feeling powerless when confronted by child abuse and neglect and sexual assault, each one of us should feel empowered to be part of the solution to these issues”, notes Lauren Slovic of the Center. “Participation in activities and initiatives during this month provides everyone opportunities to be involved in addressing these problems.”

Art from the Center’s young clients will be incorporated into posters around a theme of child abuse prevention and will be distributed throughout east and north King County. Sexual Assault Awareness Week posters will also be distributed in public locations. The poster theme, developed by the Washington Coalition for Sexual Assault Programs, is **“Together We Can Say No! to Sexual Assault.”** These posters will come

with detachable tip sheets with suggestions for what people can do to prevent sexual assault. **To obtain copies of the posters or to learn more about these campaigns, please call Lauren Slovic, Education and Prevention Coordinator at Children’s Response Center at (425) 688-5130.**



Mythically, a cat has nine lives.

**In reality,
a child has only one life.**

**Promise
to make a child's life
the best you can.**

April is
Child Abuse Prevention Month

**For help or information, please call
(425) 688-5130**

 **Children's Response Center**
SERVICES FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT AND TRAUMATIC STRESS

The sun will come up tomorrow!



**And WE will take better care of
ALL OUR CHILDREN**

When?

April is
**Child Abuse Prevention
Month**

**For help or information, please call
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BARNES & NOBLE JOINS IN AWARENESS CAMPAIGN EFFORTS

Barnes & Noble, 106th Avenue NE in Bellevue, will join the Children's Response Center in promoting child abuse and sexual assault awareness and prevention during April. The store will have a display of children's literature and other books related to the topics of sexual assault and child abuse. In addition, the store will display posters and materials about community resources including the Center's services. Children's Response Center staff and volunteers will be available on April 14th from noon to 5:00PM and 7:00PM –9:00PM to talk to customers. *Voucher forms will be available in the store on April 14th from 9AM to 11PM for customers who would like 20% of the cost of their purchases to go to Children's Response Center.* *

According to Laura Streckenbach, Community Relations Manager at Barnes and Noble, "Partnering with the Center allows Barnes and Noble to help raise awareness about these important issues and guide parents and others in the community to books and materials that can help them in talking to their children about these topics."

* For more information about the partnership with Barnes and Noble and to obtain vouchers in advance, please contact Lauren Slovic at (425) 688-5130 or lmslovic@u.washington.edu

THANK YOU

THANK YOU to the following contributors to Children's Response Center. You have helped support the program's ongoing counseling, advocacy and prevention services:

Obadiah Salon

"A Hair Affair to Remember"

Event raised over \$700

Gottschalks

Holiday sales of Paddles the Penguin that raised nearly \$500

Byron W. & Alice L. Lockwood Foundation

Ten Easy Ways to be a Friend to Children:

Be a role model. Children are watching you. They will learn from what you do, not what you say.

Reach out to a child. A smile or a word of encouragement can mean a lot, whether it comes from a parent or a passing stranger.

Reach out to a parent. Remember that all parents, rich and poor, want the same things for their children—a home, education, and a chance to succeed.

Keep an eye on local and national policy decisions that affect children. Find out who's for kids and who's just kidding, and elect officials who put caring into action. (A good local resource is the Children's Alliance www.childrensalliance.org.)

Encourage parents and other people who care about kids to register and vote. Set up voter registration booths in schools, day care centers, clinics, wherever people gather.

Make your neighborhood an extended family. Organize a block party, a family clean-up day, or a neighborhood watch. Be sure to include people of all ages.

Write letters to the editor applauding people who help children and families. Blow the whistle on those who hurt them.

Make your workplace family friendly. Form a parents' support group; campaign for onsite day care; promote corporate contributions to your community schools and recreation programs.

Volunteer. Child welfare agencies, churches and temples, schools, recreation centers, children's hospitals, and other organizations need capable, caring adults to work with children.

Write a check. Organizations need your support.

Source: Child Welfare League of America, www.cwla.org

Volunteer Opportunitites

Children's Response Center continues to seek volunteers to assist the program. Volunteer assistance can be used in the areas of office support, newsletter and annual report production, graphics, fundraising, community education, and Advisory Board membership. If you have skills and time that you'd like to contribute, please contact Mary Ann Carlson, Volunteer Coordinator at (425) 688 - 5130 or email macson@u.washington.edu. to learn more about how you can help.

ANNUAL "TO HEAL A CHILD'S HEART" FUNDRAISING EVENT

Plans are underway for Children's Response Center's 11th Annual "To Heal A Child's Heart" fundraising benefit. This year a luncheon event will be held on Friday, May 18, 2001 at noon at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Bellevue. Featured speaker will be 710 KIRO News Radio personality, **Dave Ross**, an award winning local broadcast journalist. The emcee for the event is **Molly Shen**, KOMO - TV, with T.A.L.K theatre group providing a special presentation.

Pro Sports Club Bellevue and John L. Scott Foundation are event co-sponsors. Other partici-



Dave Ross, KIRO Newsradio 710



Molly Shen, KOMO-TV

pation levels include: Pacesetter \$3,000; Table Sponsor \$1,500; Pillar \$600. The luncheon is complimentary to all those attending, with donations appreciated.

Last year's event was attended by nearly 400 guests. In the coming years, the Center, with the help of its Advisory Board, and many volunteers, will continue to direct efforts toward prevention and education for a healthier community. This year's goal is to raise \$75,000 to support these initiatives as well as the Center's ongoing advocacy and counseling services for children and families impacted by sexual assault and traumatic stress.

Please be our guests on Friday, May 18, 2001. The afternoon promises to be heart warming, entertaining, informative, and time well spent!

For more information, contact the Children's Response Center at (425) 688-5130. We look forward to seeing you there!

"Working Together We Will Make A Difference!"