



***Psychological and Social
Needs of
Drug Endangered Children***

**National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children
Webinar**

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Introduction

- What we won't have time to cover...
 - Epidemiological
 - Academic
 - Descriptions of Interventions
 - Resiliency
- What we will have time to briefly discuss...
 - Pre and/or postnatal drug environmentally exposed risks
 - Psychological & Social Needs
 - Basics of Intervention

Psychological and Social needs are in context of **ECOLOGY**

- Multiple factors which affect the children
 - Usually have several significant negative childhood events
 - Histories are complex and overwhelming
- Intervention will then likely need to be a collaborative response of multi disciplines and agencies and the community....
 - It does take a village...

DEC Ecology: Risk

- Poverty
- High Risk Neighborhoods
- Number of Changes
 - Caregivers
 - Home
 - Education
 - Treatment
- Abuse/Neglect
- Chaotic home life
 - Domestic Violence
- Lack of nutrition
- Medical conditions






Children AT RISK!

Abuse AND Drugs

- 85% of States report substance abuse as one of the major problems in homes with suspected maltreatment of children.

– Childwelfare.gov



Child abuse

Primary reasons are:

- #3. Poverty
- #2. Better reporting
- #1. Substance Abuse

Abuse Risks for Drug Endangered Children.....

- **Physical Abuse**
 - Adult paranoid state
 - Physical assault due to caregiver aggression/irritability
 - Burns from spills in home lab
- **Neglect**
 - No provisions in the house
 - Caregivers not present, high or 'crashed'
- **Sexual Abuse**
 - Pornography/Sex acts in front of children
 - Adult euphoria effect from drug – direct abuse of child
- **Emotional Abuse**
 - Caregiver frustration & negative influence
 - Daily living chaos

DEC Psychological & Social Need:

- Disruption (Neglect, Abuse, Trauma) of normal developmental experiences may result in negative impact on neurodevelopment
- Changes the emotional landscape
 - Distorting view of the world
 - Without ‘intervention’ this may result in later, developmental, behavioral & emotional problems
 - A central point in trauma literature by Perry, Osofsky, Pynoos, Zeanah and others

Psychological & Social Needs:

Emotional Issues

- Attachment Disorders
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
 - Developmental Trauma Disorder
- Anxiety
 - Mistrust/Fears
 - Especially with adults
 - Sleep Disorders
 - Restlessness/Insomnia/Nightmares
- Depression
 - Withdrawal or acting out
 - Aggression
 - Suicidal Ideation
- Complex Emotions
 - Love/Anger
 - Guilt/Self-Blame
 - Shame

Psychological & Social Needs: Behavioral Issues

Interpersonal Problems

- Poor Communication Skills
- Aggression
- Oppositional behaviors
- Conduct Disorder
- State Regulation/Arousal
 - Low Threshold for Stimulation
 - Impulsivity
 - Hypervigilance
 - Attention Issues
- Eating Disorders
 - FTT
 - Starvation
 - Obesity

Psychological & Social Needs: Cognitive Difficulties

- Mental Deficiencies Varied
 - At or above average
 - Low Average
 - Borderline
 - Learning Disabilities



Psychological & Social Needs:

Neuropsychological

- Language
 - Delays/Deficiencies
 - Paucity of vocalizations/verbalizations
 - Hearing Loss
- Visual spatial/scanning/motor skills
 - Deficits
- Sensorimotor/Sensory Processing Difficulties
 - Sensory Integration
 - Touch
 - Auditory
 - Visual
- Attention
 - Hyperarousal
 - Hypervigilance
- Memory
 - Working Memory difficulties
- Decreased trial & error
- May not learn incidentally

Psychological & Social Needs: Sense of Self/Meaning Making

- Poor Self Esteem
- Helplessness/hopelessness'
- No values/spirituality
 - » Hard Wired to Connect



Psychological & Social Needs:

Loss Issues

Death	School	Physical
Neglect	Relocation	Rape/Incest
Special Needs	Home/ Possessions	Parental Separation
Disabled	Substance Abuse	Foster Care
Pet Loss/ Death	Sibling Separation	Incarceration

Psychological & Social Needs:

Cycle of Abuse

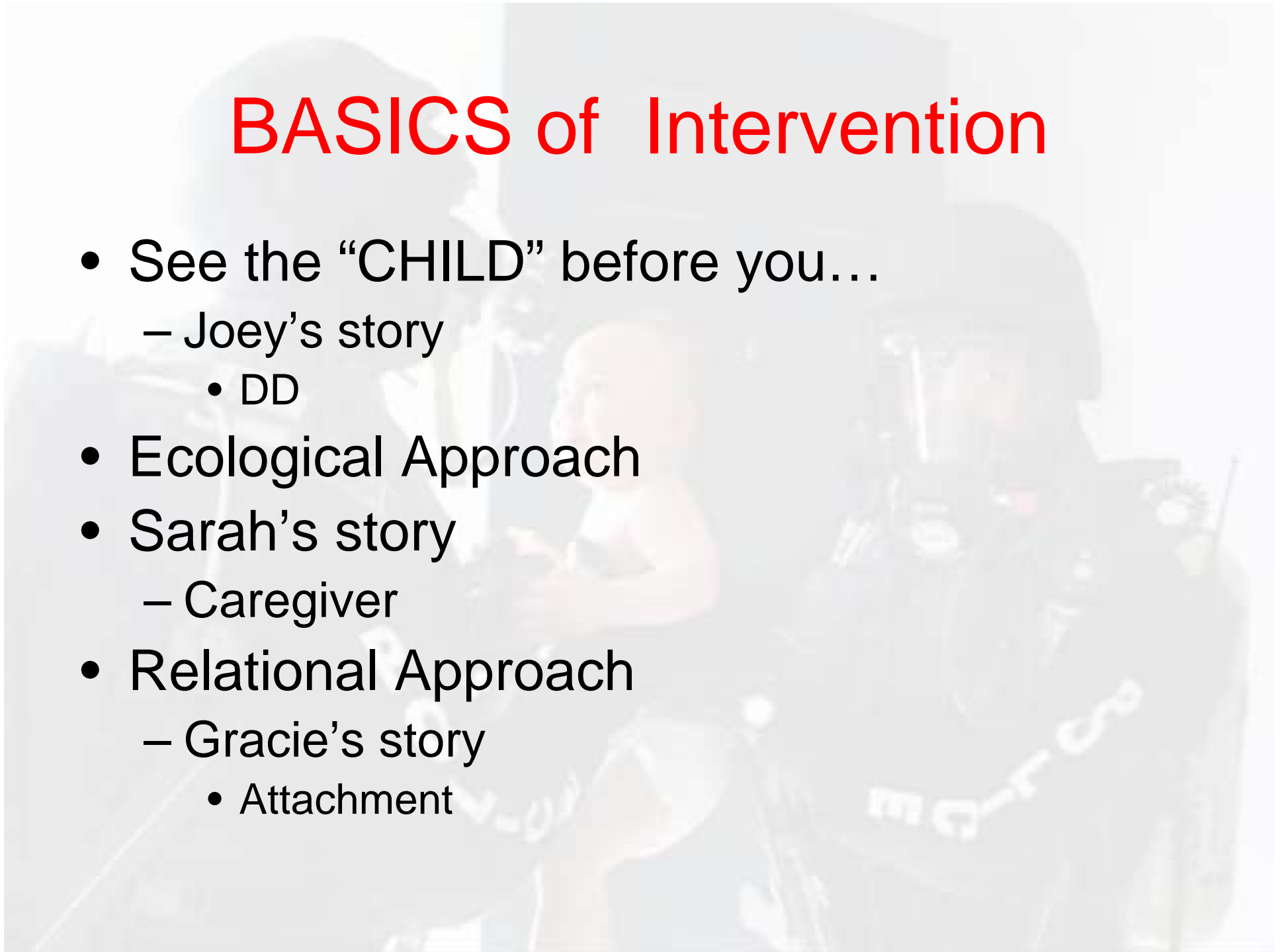
- Children who have been abused are at high risk to become victims of abuse as an adult or become a perpetrator of violence
- Children of addicted parents are the highest risk group of children to become alcohol and drug abusers themselves...
- When they begin to abuse or use - are they a victim????
 - Angela's story...

Psychological & Social Needs: Basics of Intervention

- Structure, Predictability & Nurturance are key elements in successful intervention
- Primary source for these key elements – Caregiver (thus critical to train and intervene with caretakers)
- Assessment & Intervention can help to change a child's trajectory and also be a prophylactic – helping to prevent a prolonged acute, neurophysiological, neuroendocrine, and neuropsychological trauma response
 - Adapted from work by Bruce Perry

BASICS of Intervention

- See the “CHILD” before you...
 - Joey’s story
 - DD
- Ecological Approach
- Sarah’s story
 - Caregiver
- Relational Approach
 - Gracie’s story
 - Attachment



Basics of Intervention

New Scientific Case

- **The child's deep need for connectedness (other people & meaning) is essential to the child's health and development**
 - Attachment – biologically primed, increasingly discernable in the basic structure of the brain
 - Meaning Making influences well-being
- **Environment – an improved social environment has changed the heritable vulnerability into a positive behavioral asset**
 - The brain/environment relationship is ONGOING
 - A reason for optimism!
 - Trajectories can be altered...
 - *Hardwired to Connect*



What you think of me

I will think of me;

What I think of me

I will become...

Anon

Those of us who work with or on behalf of children, can help tilt the balance from vulnerability to resiliency



From Emmy Werner, 1984

QUESTIONS & CONTACT INFO



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