

Emotional Maltreatment – vs – Emotional Neglect

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Emotional Maltreatment:

Volitional – (From the Journal of American Pediatrics), - “a conscious repeated pattern of damaging interactions between an adult and child that becomes typical of the relationship - - it could be chronic and pervasive or triggered by alcohol or other factors.” Emotional maltreatment occurs when an adult consciously conveys to a child that he or she is worthless, flawed, unloved, unwanted, endangered, or only valuable to meet the adults needs. - A NEGATIVE INVESTMENT !

THIS IS DONE BY:

- a) belittling, degrading, humiliating
- b) terrorizing
- c) encouraging anti-social behavior
- d) keeping the child home to wait on adult
- e) deny emotional responses
- f) isolating – confining – not allowing social interaction
- g) witnessing domestic violence

Emotional Neglect:

Withdrawing emotional energy and investment, (de-cathexis), from the child. The child does not have a relationship with one person who can accurately read and interpret the child’s cues, and respond in a caring and sensitive way most of the time. – LITTLE OR NO INVESTMENT

THIS IS DONE BY:

- a) unintentional neglect (UNS)
- b) non validation
- c) de-cathexis

THE DEVELOPMENT OF RAGE (PSOC Vol. 18, by Masud R. Khan)

1 MONTH : Child starts to feel unsafe, overstimulated, alone, unprotected

2 MONTHS : "Need tension" builds up. Scans, looking for help / soothing , someone to help regulate affect (negligere)

3-4 MONTHS : Child has perception they are separate (unheld in anyones mind) Kahn calls it "pre-mature separateness" Lots of signs of rage and fear, of hurt, or deprivation. Visually directed reaching is frantic.

5-6 MONTHS : More feelings of separateness. Starts to recognize he has Rage - this is frightening.

7-8 MONTHS : No specific stranger anxiety. What and when he gets fed is more important than who feeds him

9-10 MONTHS : Difficult to "hold" objects in his mind. Starts to project rage onto caregivers (to intense to own) rather than neutralize it. Caregivers become the enemy. If caregiver responds back ragefully , this only confirms the environment is unsafe, uncaring, dangerous, and undependable.

11-18 MONTHS : Mobile, practicing to live independently. This includes rage when needed. Lack of trust. Poor evocative memory of any kind of soothing object. Language used as a weapon or to get needs met not to control impulses. (and certainly not to gain pleasure through conversation) Lack of CONSCIENCE development.

19-26 MONTHS : Aggressive, non-trusting, hurtful child with lack of empathy. (I am the center of the universe and will get my own needs met.) Other people are either all good, (give me things), or all bad (frustrate their drives)

Effects of Emotional Abuse (De-cathexis)

- 1. Difficulty in forming an integrated body image**
- 2. Low self – esteem** (I am nothing)
- 3. Hurtful to any kind of relationship**
- 4. Unable to master physical separations** – cannot hold mental representations
- 5. Sets child up for maltreatment**
- 6. Flare – ups of impulses**
- 7. No boundary formation**
- 8. De-cathected child becomes a “de-cathector” as an adult**

What good Attachment does?

1. Promotes brain and neuro development
2. Neutralizes aggression
3. Promotes frustration tolerance
4. Promotes tolerance of ambivalence
5. Builds ability to trust
6. Builds self-esteem
7. Helps reality testing
8. Establishes boundaries
9. Promotes healthy identity formation
10. Helps to establish impulse control
11. Develops empathy
12. Encourages exploration without excessive fear
13. Defines Love, Hate, and Nothing
14. Banishes the “terrible nothingness”