I tried to de-emphasize the family situation because I didn’t want it to escalate to child protection services – P7

I spoke to [the psychologist] about my symptoms and I didn’t tell them anything about my father or any of the other people that were involved… I wasn’t really ready to talk about my father. I was still very concerned that I was gonna be killed for that – P8

Interestingly, they put me on Zoloft thinking that they had fixed me…I just let them believe it. “Oh yeah, that feels great”. What do ya do? I mean come on – P9

In the beginning it was absolutely terrible… My father had been abusing me since I was 2 years old until either 12 or 13 and… I got put into a psych hospital because we’re suicidal and I was there for a month. They didn’t know anything about the abuse – P12
The one good thing about the medications is it just blocks everything. Which, if you’re still a child or teenager stuck in a horrific situation you can always survive by not remembering. I guess it helped, ya know?...I became very attached to this idea...that I had never been abused, that I’d had the perfect childhood. I began to deny things that I had previously disclosed to my therapist...

It is so much easier to believe that I am crazy and that I had a perfect childhood with parents who loved me and simply got worn out from dealing with a mentally sick daughter – P13

Trauma rarely assessed

• Up to 93% of hospitalized adolescents report overt trauma, such as abuse
  • 32% meet full criteria for PTSD
  • Almost 50% of females hospitalized victims of sexual abuse

• Foster care children account for 41% of Medicaid mental health users and 27% of inpatient population
  • Prescribed neuroleptics at double to quadruple the rate of non-foster care children
  • Most on 5 or drugs

• Up to 99% of hospitalized adults report overt trauma, such as abuse
  • In general, trauma noted around 50%

Some stats...

• 4 or more ACE’s:
  • 1 in 6 alcoholic
  • 1 in 5 attempts suicide
  • 3 times more likely to be put on ADHD drugs
  • 460% increase in depression

• 7 or more ACE’s:
  • 5-fold increase in reporting hallucinations
  • 1 in 30 IV drugs

• Adults with ADHD diagnosis more likely to also meet full-criteria for PTSD

• High severity of child trauma – Psychosis 48.4 times more likely
What predicts psychosis?

But what about neurological findings??

- The brain correlates with EVERYTHING WE DO
- Difference does not equal disease
- Brain differences associated with environment not the DSM
- Environment affects expression of genes
- Chronic stress, isolation, and abuse lead to excessive pruning

How can we do better?

- Allow children to be children
- Assume behavior is for a reason
- Stop telling children they have a disease and are defective
- Do not assume abuse
- Be curious to helping parents with their own stress and trauma
- Family therapy
- Parent training
- Building safety
- Preventative and awareness training for bullying
- Mindfulness training
- Helping build positive relationships
- Social advocacy
- Educational reform
- Juvenile justice reform
References


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