



Healing the Heart Through the Creative Arts, Education & Advocacy

Hope, Healing & Help for Trauma, Abuse & Mental Health

Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seared with scars. - Kahlil Gibran

The Surviving Spirit Newsletter April 2014

“Words that enlighten the soul are more precious than jewels.” Inayat Khan

Boston Strong – Nation Strong – World Strong

If you Google, *Boston Strong*, *One Fund earnings*, you get an amazing amount of information about countless people and organizations who are still actively engaged in raising funds for the victims and survivors of the Boston Marathon bombing that took place last year. That to me is simply incredible. There are wonderful examples of people and business organizations showing compassion and caring for others, and they still want to raise more money to help those impacted by the horror of that day.

The news media, politicians and others have been nonstop for the past week speaking out about that painful day. Again, I think this is commendable....my thoughts and questions regarding this outpouring of gift-giving and empathy has me wondering why this same level of love and generosity cannot transcend into the areas of child abuse and other forms of violence and terror that affect people on a daily basis. People living in the city of Boston have lost all kinds of loved ones to horrible crimes of violence. The child who is being subjugated to a daily regimen of abuse, whether it is physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, neglect, etc, does not get the same level of support that is being given to the victims of the Boston Marathon Bombing. Why? Why does society overlook the other victims of crimes and terror that takes place everyday? How can we change this paradigm? When will we hear a President, a Vice President, a mayor, senators, congress officials, etc, hold press conferences and come to events to speak out for the victims of child abuse? When will they hold a press conference and promote an agenda to help those impacted by crimes of violence in neighborhoods that cripple and hurt people every single day? When will the news media decide that these forms of violence, terror and abuse deserve the same dedicated coverage to bring this to another level of awareness? When will we see these leaders and journalists push for a campaign to help promote the good will generated by the Boston One Fund example and spread it Nationwide and then Worldwide *to help all of those impacted by violence and terror*? Before I leave this earth I hope that I do come to see these things take place....

The month of April is dedicated to awareness of child abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault, autism and many other important concerns. This April issue of the Surviving Spirit newsletter shares some great information and resources that touch upon some of these vital concerns. So much information to share and not enough space....

[Half Of Young Men Sexually Coerced - Huffington Post Live](#)

A new study has found that 43% of young men say they've had an unwanted sexual experience and, in most cases, the sexual coercion was perpetrated by a woman. So is there enough help out there for men who are victims of sexual assault?

Originally aired on April 18, 2014 22:10 minutes long Hosted by: Ricky Camilleri

Guests: Bryana French (Columbia, MO) Assistant Professor of Psychology at the University of Missouri

Dr. Howard Fradkin @DrHFRadkin (Columbus, OH) Psychologist, Co-Chair Male Survivor Weekends of Recovery, Author of "Joining Forces: Empowering Male Survivors to Thrive"

Michael Skinner @MichaelSkinner11 (Goffstown, NH) President of Michael Skinner Music; Survivor of Childhood Sexual Abuse www.mskinnermusic.com

Cory George @IamCoryGeorge (Washington, DC) Survivor of Childhood Sexual Abuse; Advocate for Victims of Sexual Abuse

["It shouldn't hurt to be a child." – How can we create awareness and prevent child abuse?](#)
– Michael Skinner

Most of us who are survivors, know of the harm that is caused when child abuse is not addressed. What can we do to help create **Awareness, Acceptance and Action** to help prevent and put an end to child abuse?

1] What would have helped you when the abuse was taking place?

2] What would help you today?

3] What can be done to help those being hurt now?

4] What can be done to help our family and friends who have been affected by our trauma and abuse?

I would like to create a document of your thoughts and ideas to then share with others – you can sign your name, your first name or be anonymous. Whatever feels right for you!

1] [The Surviving Spirit and its origins of Hope, Healing & Help](#) – Michael Skinner

"Although the world is full of suffering, it is full also of the overcoming of it." Helen Keller

I've always been amazed at the power of the human spirit. The courage, tenacity and the resilience that has been shown by so many throughout time has always given me hope. As a young boy, I spent a lot of time reading about the struggles and depravations that others had encountered and endured. I was in amazement at their perseverance to carry on, despite the troubles they were in the midst of. It helped to foster my own sense of strength and determination to carry on – in spite of the perverse and brutal child abuse I was experiencing at the house of horror I lived in.

I was drawn to reading books and stories about people's struggles and anguish in surviving the Holocaust and war time. Many of the books were about battles and tales of soldiers enduring these horrific experiences. This was the key word for me, surviving. I was like a sponge in trying to fathom how people not only survived these times of terror, but how they were also able to help others, despite their own pain and suffering. I wanted to know how they did this, what made them so special that they could look past their own suffering and lend a helping hand. These books led me to the stories about the "[Trail of Tears](#)" and the personal accounts of those who were held in slavery. Despite their suffering and the abuse being inflicted upon them, they somehow carried on.

I did survive my childhood abuse, but now came the task of learning to thrive in life. [Read the entire article](#)

"Your toxically shamed inner child doesn't believe he has the right to want anything. You can champion him by listening carefully to what he needs and wants. You may not always be able to give him what he wants, but you can listen and give him permission to want it. Without desire and wanting, our life energy gets crushed." Homecoming by John Bradshaw

2] [Why Do We Hurt Our Children?](#) - Michael Goldfield - Truth Can Prevail - Truth & Justice in a Free World

"Almost everyone in Western societies agrees that it is morally wrong for people to settle arguments or impose their will on each other with blows. When a big kid hits a little kid on the playground, we call him a bully; five years later he punches a woman for her wallet and is called a mugger; later still, when he slugs a fellow worker who insults him, he is called a troublemaker, but when he becomes a father and hits his tiresome, disobedient or disrespectful child, we call him a disciplinarian. Why is this rung on a ladder of interpersonal violence regarded so differently from the rest?" – Penelope Leach

As a psychologist who specialized in working with emotionally disturbed children and as a person who has a special fondness for children, I am extremely troubled that punishment, both physical and otherwise, is an intrinsic part of child rearing in the United States. None of my three children, now adults, were ever punished. Just as people who state, "I was spanked and punished and I turned out OK," my children are able to say, "I was never spanked or punished and I turned out OK." And based on the kind of people they are as adults, I would agree that, not only did they turn out OK, but they are much

more caring of others, including their children, than most of their contemporaries. They do not, of course, punish their children. [Read the entire article](#)

“The happiest of people don't necessarily have the best of everything; they just make the most of everything that comes along their way.” Unknown

3] [“Running on Empty”](#) - Childhood Emotional Neglect - Truth Can Prevail - Michael Goldfield

The material that follows is simply the most profound and enlightening I have ever posted on this blog. Jonice Webb, Ph.D. has written one of most revealing books I have ever read on the subject of why so many of us suffer emotionally and are at a loss to identify a reason or reasons for our issues. Dr. Webb has made a psychological breakthrough with her stunning and insightful description of what she calls **Childhood Emotional Neglect** or simply CEN.

With Dr. Webb's gracious permission, I present the **Introduction** and **Chapter One** of her highly praised and award-winning book: *Running on Empty: Overcome Your Childhood Emotional Neglect*. Also included is her brief questionnaire which quickly gives the reader a useful sense as to whether he/she might be experiencing the symptoms of CEN. [Learn more](#)

“Never allow another to take the hopes from your heart, the dreams from your mind, or the goodness from your soul.” A.D. Williams

4] More about Dr. Jonice Webb and her book - [Running on Empty: Overcome Your Childhood Emotional Neglect](#)

“Jonice Webb has written a terrific book about what you didn't get in childhood. What wasn't there that should have been: guidance, attunement; in some cases, love. The damage caused by Emotional Neglect and what to do to heal it are the subjects of this exciting, readable, and potentially life-changing work.”

Terrence Real, Internationally known family therapist and best-selling author; regular contributor on Good Morning America and ABC News

During 20 years of practicing psychology, I started to notice an “invisible factor” from childhood which weighs upon people in adulthood, sapping their joy, making them feel disconnected or unfulfilled, or causing them to struggle with self-discipline. I call it Emotional Neglect.

First, I saw it in my psychology clients. Then, the circle widened, and I began to see it in the people all around me: at the grocery store, the mall, and even on reality TV shows.

This factor from childhood is so subtle that it goes virtually unnoticed by everyone while it does its silent damage to people's lives.

As I became aware of the full power and prevalence of Emotional Neglect, I felt compelled to drag it out of the darkness and into the light; to help people to see how it affects them, and to give them the tools to fix it.

“F-E-A-R has two meanings:

Forget everything and run or Face everything and rise.” Zig Ziglar

5] [Emotional impact of nightmares 'rarely due to fear,' study shows](#) - Medical News Today

Many of us have woken up in a sweat in the middle of the night as a result of a nightmare. And those are the dreams that tend to stick with us. Now, new research suggests that nightmares are more likely to impact us emotionally through feelings of sadness, confusion and guilt, rather than fear.

This is according to a study recently published in the journal *Sleep*.

Bad dreams vs. nightmares For their study, the researchers wanted to determine the differences between bad dreams and nightmares, as the majority of people classify these as being the same type of intensity. [Read the entire article](#)

“If we wait for the moment when everything, absolutely everything is ready, we shall never begin.” Ivan Turgenev

6] [The Dhamma Brothers](#) – East meets West in the Deep South
<http://www.dhammabrothers.com/>

“The Dhamma Brothers have taken their own passage to India and discovered a practice of meditation that guides them down their inner path to freedom.” – John Lewis, U.S. Congressman

Mission Statement

To create a national conversation and a call to action about the need for effective prison treatment programs through a [national public television broadcast](#), widespread theatrical, grassroots and educational [screenings](#), and distribution to prisons of *The Dhamma Brothers* documentary film. Both film and companion book, [Letters From the Dhamma Brothers](#), open hearts and minds to the possibility that prisons can become places for effective rehabilitation, ensuring safer prisons and safer streets.

Brief Synopsis

An overcrowded, violent maximum-security prison, the end of the line in Alabama's prison system, is dramatically changed by the influence of an ancient meditation program. Behind high security towers and a double row of barbed wire and electrical fence live over 1,500 prisoners, many of whom will never again know life in the outside world. But for some of these men, a spark is ignited when it becomes the first maximum-security prison in North America to hold an extended Vipassana retreat, an emotionally and physically demanding program of silent meditation lasting ten days and requiring 100

hours of meditation.

The Dhamma Brothers tells a dramatic tale of human potential and transformation as it closely follows and documents the stories of the prison inmates at Donaldson Correctional Facility as they enter into this arduous and intensive program. This film has the power to dismantle stereotypes about men behind prison bars.

*“...the film *The Dhamma Brothers* captures brave attempts by the prisoners that even the unimprisoned would find difficult to carry out...”* – Sushumna Kannan, Centre for the Study of Culture and Society [Theatrical Trailer](#)

“The problem of distinguishing what we are and what we are not responsible for in this life is one of the greatest problems of human existence...we must possess the willingness and the capacity to suffer continual self-examination.” M. Scott Peck

7] [Vipassana Meditation](#) - Vipassana, which means to see things as they really are, is one of India's most ancient techniques of meditation. It was taught in India more than 2500 years ago as a universal remedy for universal ills, i.e., an [Art of Living](#). For those who are not familiar with Vipassana Meditation, an Introduction to Vipassana by Mr. Goenka & related videos and [Questions & Answers](#) about Vipassana are available.

The technique of Vipassana Meditation is taught at ten-day residential courses during which participants learn the basics of the method, and practice sufficiently to experience its beneficial results. There are no charges for the courses - not even to cover the cost of food and accommodation. ***All expenses are met by donations from people who, having completed a course and experienced the benefits of Vipassana, wish to give others the opportunity to also benefit.***

Special Courses and Resources - Vipassana Meditation courses are also being taught in [prisons](#). A special 10-day Vipassana course especially for business executives and government officials is being held periodically at several centers around the world.

“Let the beauty we love be what we do.” Rumi

8] [Julie Kilmer – singer/writer/advocate](#) - *Hallelujah* – You Tube video – live performance 2:45 minutes

A beautiful version of Leonard Cohen’s song, *Hallelujah*. [I’m hoping to have Julie sing on my next cd – *stay tuned!!*]

“Worry is a misuse of the imagination.” Steve Chandler

9] [12-Step-Style Yoga for Addiction and Depression](#) - Huffington Post - Rob Schware

This is an interview with Suzula Bidon, a certified yoga teacher, an addict in recovery (working on six years), an Ivy League graduate (Barnard/Columbia), a third-year law

student (on the Dean's List), and a federal ex-felon (30 months for a conspiracy drug charge).

In the course of Suzula's recovery from addiction and depression, she found that 12-Step programs provide a solid framework for healing mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. However, they don't always offer tools for physical healing, or for reconnecting the mind and spirit with the body.

She has developed a sequence of yoga postures that embodies the spiritual principles of 12-Step recovery. She teaches that sequence in Minnesota to people in recovery twice a week. She is also a certified student attorney, and volunteers time helping women reentering society from prison (most of whom are addicts) with their civil legal matters (custody, parenting time, evictions). She also does pro bono defense work in [Ramsey County Mental Health Court](#), a diversionary/specialty court. In an odd twist, the Minnesota Corrections Department won't let her into prisons to teach yoga. Before she couldn't get out; now she can't get in! [Read the entire article](#)

“The solution isn’t to talk ourselves out of our feelings. The solution is to simply allow our feelings to be exactly as they are.” Bethany Butzer

10] [What To Do When You Can’t Shake a Bad Mood - Positively Positive](#) - Bethany Butzer, Ph.D

When we get upset, many of us start by trying to figure out why we’re feeling the way we’re feeling. Then we try to use reason and logic to talk ourselves out of our feelings. We tell ourselves that everything is ok, or we urge ourselves to suck it up, or we might even tell ourselves to shut up. Notice that all of these solutions are verbal. They all involve trying to get the feeling out of the way so that we can move on with life.

So the voice that’s trying to talk me out of my feelings is the voice of my false self, or ego. My ego is scared of feelings. My ego wants to barrel through life and accomplish as much as possible so that I can feel good about myself. My True Self, on the other hand, knows that I’m already worthy no matter how I feel or how much I accomplish.

My feelings are my True Self’s way of speaking to me. If I try to get rid of these feelings by letting my ego talk me out of them, then I’m not listening to my True Self.

11] [Positively Positive Facebook page](#) – lots of great quotes and helpful insights shared. FYI – 1.7 million Likes [Wow!!!]

“Where there is great love there are always miracles.” Willa Cather

12] [I stopped the cycle of abuse in my family](#) - Svava Brooks - **Speak4Change**
Dedicated to ending child sexual abuse, through education and outreach

I am a survivor of childhood sexual trauma and I have spent the last 20 years healing and restoring myself the best I could and as fast as I could. We all know the mantra of

trusting the timing and the process but it hurts when we can see that it is not happening fast enough. I am sharing this because I can see my trauma in my 17 year old daughter.

I am sharing this with you in the hopes that you feel encouraged too. *Parenting is a tough job*. The hardest in the world, I think, and the most undervalued job there is. There are many parents that are struggling with how to repair themselves in order to become better parents. Most of us were not parented or given what we needed in order to thrive.

The good news is we can learn and we can grow and change for ourselves, no matter how challenging our beginnings or childhood were. And for our kids, to give them a better chance, it is never too late to start.

If you are looking for a good resource to help you and your family with parenting, I recommend positivediscipline.com and a wonderful book called “Growing Up Again: Parenting Ourselves, Parenting Our Children, Jean Illsley Clarke, Connie Dawson”. These resources focus on connection before correction and put the relationship and the needs of the child above the task, skill or the check list. [Read the entire article](#)

Svava Brooks is a survivor thriver of childhood sexual trauma. Svava is a certified parent educator, childhood sexual abuse prevention educator, passionate about educating adults, especially parents, on how to keep their kids safe from child sexual abuse. To sign up for her prevention webinars please follow this link. educate4change.com Svava also works as a facilitator, and life coach helping adult survivors recover from sexual trauma through online life coaching and support groups. You can connect with Svava and other survivors supporting each other, online in the OneHealth community, at cst.onehealth.com

“What we teach ourselves with our thoughts and attitudes is up to us.” ...In All Our Affairs

13] [Child Sexual Abuse: Right Under Our Noses](#) - A blog post by a very special guest! - Elisa Brooks [Svava Brooks daughter]

One of the worst misconceptions of child sexual abuse stems from a line that we all tell ourselves about one issue or another: “It will never happen to me. It will never happen in my own family.” Many believe that since the issue of child sexual abuse isn’t talked about as much as political, religious, or international issues that it isn’t as prevalent. The truth is precisely the opposite. According to Darkness to Light, an organization dedicated to the prevention of child sexual abuse, 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will experience sexual abuse before they turn 18. That means in a kindergarten class of 20 children, at least four are likely to be sexually abused before they graduate from high school. (www.stopitnow.org)

If that seems scary to you, it gets worse. A majority of these events are occurring in our friend’s homes and even our own. As reported by Darkness to Light, 30 to 40% of children are abused by family members. And as many as 60% are abused by people the

family trusts. Add all that up and you see that only about 10% of abusers are strangers. Do you have goose bumps yet?

So why isn't this more common knowledge? The answer: It's because lines we tell ourselves like the one stated above. "I'm too smart to let it happen to me or my family." These are lines we tell ourselves about rape, about drunk driving, about drug use, and yes, even about child sexual abuse.

Child sexual abuse is not only closer to home than we think, it takes place in our homes, sometimes under our very noses. [Read the entire article](#)

Elisa Brooks is a 20 year old college student, currently getting her degree in English. When she is not editing or writing for her mother, Svava, she is playing soccer, reading and writing poetry, and watching movies with her family.

"Our doubts are traitors, and make us lose the good we oft might win, by fearing to attempt." William Shakespeare

14] [Former Maine State Police chief charged with unlawful sexual contact with a child](#) - Portland - Bangor Daily News

NEW GLOUCESTER, Maine — A former chief of the Maine State Police faces charges of unlawful sexual contact with a child younger than 12 years old.

Andrew E. Demers, 73, of New Gloucester turned himself in to the Cumberland County Sheriff's Office at 9 a.m. Monday. He was charged with unlawful sexual contact — a Class B crime — then released on \$5,000 cash bail, according to Cumberland County Sheriff Kevin Joyce.

The incidents that led to Demers' arrest allegedly took place during the past several months. The alleged victim was a young member of Demers' family, Joyce told the Bangor Daily News by phone Monday.

In recent years, two other former state troopers - one who served on Maine's force and one from Massachusetts - were convicted of sex crimes in Maine. [Read the entire article](#)

"Good thoughts bear good fruit, bad thoughts bear bad fruit – and man is his own gardener." John Leonard

15] [Laughter Bridges - Bio Phenomenon](#) - Grace Karen Sweet

Laughter Improves the Functioning of Our:

- Immune and Endocrine Systems
- Respiratory System
- Circulatory System

- Cellular Memory

The Bio-Science of Healing Behind Laughter

The brain contains billions of neuron transmitters - each one, a synapse which transmits chemical information across it, forming Neuro-Synapse Networks. Research has found that networks of neuro-synapses develop pathways in the brain as a result of our thought patterns, attitudes, feelings and behaviors. Electromagnetic transmissions feed various chemicals and hormones into the body supporting the perpetuation of our behavior patterns.

So, our repetitive thoughts, attitudes, feelings and behaviors have always been affected by these pathways, and these pathways in turn, affect our thoughts, feelings and behaviors. This is the foundation of habit. These synaptic transmitters have a changeable quality to them called "plasticity." When the chemical information being transmitted is "happy chemistry," which is created from laughter and other positive experiences, the patterns of synapses will begin to form new, happier pathways, thus affecting our life experience.

What Happens in Our Body When We Laugh?

OUR MUSCLES RELAX... Laughter is a light aerobic activity which moves the diaphragm up and down which massages our lungs. Blood pressure is decreased and the body releases tension because the diaphragm is directly connected to our Parasympathetic Nervous System.

Laughter Makes Our Body Happy! Our Immune & Endocrine Systems produce hormones which allow the body to go into a natural state (Eustress - the opposite of Stress) [Learn more](#)

"The highest form of wisdom is kindness." The Talmud

16] [Autism Speaks – It's time to listen](#) - Employment Can Help Adults with Autism Overcome Disabilities - Science News

A study funded in part by Autism Speaks suggests that job activities that encourage independence reduce disabling autism symptoms and increase daily living skills. [The report](#) appears in the [Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders](#).

"With generous support from Autism Speaks and the National Institutes of Health, we've been exploring the role of employment and vocational activities in the development of adults with autism," says lead author Julie Lounds Taylor, of the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center, in Nashville. The Vanderbilt center is a member of the [Autism Speaks Autism Treatment Network](#). Dr. Taylor's co-authors included Autism Speaks-funded researchers Marsha Mailick and Leann Smith, of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. [Learn more](#)

17] ['Autism rates soar 30% in 2 years,' CDC say](#) - Medical News Today

The number of US children with autism spectrum disorder has soared approximately 30% in the past 2 years, according to a new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [Learn more](#)

"Give yourself to love if love is what you're after. Open up your heart to the tears and laughter. And give yourself to love, give yourself to love." Kate Wolf

18] [Mari_aspie.: I wish I was more autistic.](#)

My name is Marianthi and everything (or almost everything) in my life revolves around autism, since I work with and about autism as a special education teacher as a master's student and privately with families as well. Oh.... Also I am on the autism spectrum myself (minor detail :P)! I have known about it since September 2012 and I was diagnosed this March (2014). I have my own perspective on autism stuff. Free internet blogging allows me to share it. So there you have it.

But let me explain what I mean by "I wish I could be more autistic".

I wish I had less of a social understanding than I do. I wish I was less obsessed in the past in understanding the world I live in, I wish I was less interested now too, I wish it didn't matter for me. I wish I saw less things. I wish I "got" less things. I wish I was less socially aware. Because I see too much, I do. I am obsessed with identifying patterns of behaviour in people and figuring out the way they react and why they react that way because that, to me, is often exciting, like playing a giant sudoku. What I encounter in the process, however, is frustrating, to say the least. The times I've seen misunderstandings been created over, what it seems to me, nothing. [Learn more](#)

"Not everything that steps out of line, and is 'abnormal', must necessarily be 'inferior'." Hans Asperger

19] [Autism: not just a childhood disorder](#) - Medical News Today

"My facial expressions and body language do not always match my mood. I may look terribly angry, but I am happy as can be. I am unable to read between the lines or communicate with hidden messages. Please try to take what I am saying at face value and do not try to read into it. I am not capable of that kind of phrasing."

These are the words of Claudia Curry, founder and executive director of the [Asperger's Syndrome & Autism Research and Rehabilitation Institute](#). She was diagnosed with high-functioning [autism](#) (HFA) - a form of the disorder that incorporates delayed language development at a younger age - when she was 48 years old. [Learn more](#)

"One doesn't have to operate with great malice to do great harm. The absence of empathy and understanding are sufficient." Charles M. Blow

20] [The Antidepressant Antidote: Five Steps to Get Off Antidepressants Safely and Effectively](#) -Bethany Butzer Ph.D. Amazon.com: Books

Do you want to get off antidepressants and move toward a more full and balanced life? Have you tried several times to get off antidepressants, only to end up right back on them? If so, this book is for you.

- How to get the support you need as you taper off antidepressants.
- Tips to deal with the withdrawal effects that can arise when reducing your antidepressant dose.
- Techniques to let go of stress, anxiety, sadness, and depression.
- Smart choices to move you toward the type of life you desire.
- Strategies to stay off antidepressants over the long term.

In this book, Dr. Butzer doesn't stand up on an ivory tower and tell you what to do. She took antidepressants for 6 years, and after several failed attempts she finally managed to get off the medication for good. She offers moving, real-life stories from her own experiences to show you how to bring the principles in this book to life.

Written by an expert in psychology who understands antidepressants both personally and professionally, The Antidepressant Antidote provides a holistic 5-step program to help you kick your antidepressant habit for good.

“The past is our definition. We may strive with good reason to escape it, or to escape what is bad in it. But we will escape it only by adding something better to it.” Wendell Berry

21] [Unseen Battles](#) - The Recognition, Assessment, and Treatment Issues of Men With Military Sexual Trauma [MST] Sage Publications

While there is increasing attention on sexual violence in the military, the focus has been primarily on women. There is very little information regarding the effects of and treatment for men who experience military sexual trauma (MST). The aim of this article is to consolidate the known information about men with MST including prevalence rates, factors that affect those rates, gender differences, medical and psychiatric sequelae, and finally a review of two experimental studies. Implications for future research, practice, and policy are also discussed. [Abstract - Learn more](#)

“The past is but the beginning of a beginning.” H.G. Wells

22] [Helping the Sexually Abused Child](#) - By Leah Davies, M.Ed.

School personnel have a responsibility to acknowledge that sexual abuse happens. Since they are mandated by law to report suspected cases of abuse, school staff need to be prepared to assist a child who has allegedly been molested.

Child sexual abuse is sexual behavior by an adult or older child including kissing, fondling, sexual intercourse, oral sex, forced nudity, prostitution, photographing, or other

behaviors with sexual connotations. Since children are trusting and look to older persons for direction, every child is vulnerable to sexual abuse. The frightening truth is that most of the abusers are either a relative, neighbor, family friend, babysitter or someone else the child knows and trusts. Therefore, a teacher or other school personnel may be the only adults who can ensure a child's safety.

The following are some indicators commonly found in situations of sexual abuse. They may raise suspicion, but alone are not enough to report suspected cases. [Learn more](#)

23] [Emotional Abuse of Children](#) - By Leah Davies, M.Ed.

Emotional abuse is commonly defined as systematic attacks on a child's emotional well-being and sense of self-worth. It is based on power and control and often accompanies other forms of abuse. Emotional abuse is the most challenging form of child maltreatment to identify and stop. Since it is difficult to detect, assess and substantiate, many cases go unreported. Yet, emotional abuse leaves deep, hidden scars in children that can impede their intellectual, social and emotional development. Educators need to be informed about emotional abuse and steps need to be taken if abuse is suspected. [Learn more](#)

“Treat everyone with politeness, even those who are rude to you - not because they are nice, but because you are.” Unknown

24] [Child Abuse and Neglect](#) - By Leah Davies, M.Ed.

Although federal legislation provides basic guidelines for definitions of child abuse and neglect, each state has specific laws. State statutes describe abuse in terms of "harm or threatened harm" to a child and mandate when to intervene. Exemptions vary in each state but can include religious exemption, corporal punishment, poverty, and cultural practices. States usually provide separate definitions for different types of abuse and neglect. It is important for educators to become familiar with the statutes of their state.

Being abused and/or neglected can have a long-term negative impact upon children. They have an increased risk of being developmentally delayed and experiencing social and emotional difficulties. Abused children are more likely than the general population to use drugs, become violent, and engage in delinquent behavior.

Educators are mandated by law to report suspected cases to the local child protective services agency or to the police department. Since abused and neglected children are represented in most classrooms, teachers and other school employees need to become aware of the signs of abuse. However, one indication is usually not enough; a cluster of symptoms needs to be observed before a report is made. Dated, written observations of concerns for a child are extremely helpful when reporting.

General indicators that a child may be abused or neglected are early arrival at school and/or requests to stay late, poor impulse control, extreme sadness, rigidity, sleepiness, and/or destructiveness toward self, others or animals. These children often seem unable to

trust others or to concentrate. Distinct changes in behavior, character and/or school performance are also signs of possible abuse.

Abusive parents or caregivers tend to have unrealistic expectations for the child, deny the existence of difficulties, or blame the school or teacher for the child's problems. They may show little concern for their child, request harsh discipline, and/or isolate him or her. Observing extreme parental over-protectiveness or harshness can provide additional information concerning the possibility of abuse. [Learn more](#)

“Feeling lost doesn't mean that you are lost... sometimes when we feel lost, that is when we truly begin to find ourselves. That is when we begin to turn things around and find out who we really are.” Kim Bayne

25] [How to Plan, Write, and Develop a Book: Writing about Tough Topics: When It Gets Personal in Your Story, How Do You Keep Going?](#) – Mary Carroll Moore - an award-winning, internationally published author of thirteen books in three genres, writing teacher, editor and book doctor for publishing houses.

Memoir writers face this question head-on. But novelists may also draw from real-life experiences, processed into fictional scenes as they draft their manuscript: one student in my classes is writing about a drowning in her novel that pulls memories and senses from her brother's death at a young age. Another has crafted an excellent main character based on her mother's difficult life.

What about nonfiction writers? Because nonfiction now includes stories--most nonfiction books today are humanized by illustrations of the theories and methods--most deal with this question as well.

If the body is somatic, translating emotion into cellular experiences, we will process trauma as we write. Writing about a business bankruptcy during the 1980s recession made me literally ill. But the writing was wonderful catharsis, bringing deep healing, as well as being an unexpected gift to readers who felt shame at their own financial failures.

Nevertheless, it can be tough going. [Read the entire article](#)

Take care, Mike, Mary, Zsuzsi, Becky, Cynthia, Lynn & Mary Ann

PS. Please share this with your friends & if you have received this in error, please let me know – mikeskinner@comcast.net

Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter. Martin Luther King, Jr.

A diagnosis is not a destiny

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"BE the change you want to see in the world." Mohandas Gandhi