

Links Between Adverse Childhood Experiences and Criminal Behaviour

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Introduction

In New Zealand alone there is approximately 8600 people in prison. Most violations committed by offenders have the potential to harm their own health and the health of others such as violence and drug use (Department of Corrections, 2014). The suggested reasons behind criminal behaviour and the increase in offenders has been linked to chronic trauma beginning in childhood and the ongoing punitive model of justice used within correction facilities (Ford & Blaustein, 2013).

'Is there a link between adverse childhood experiences (ACE) and criminal behaviour, alcohol or other drug use and imprisonment and what forms of recovery and treatment are available?'

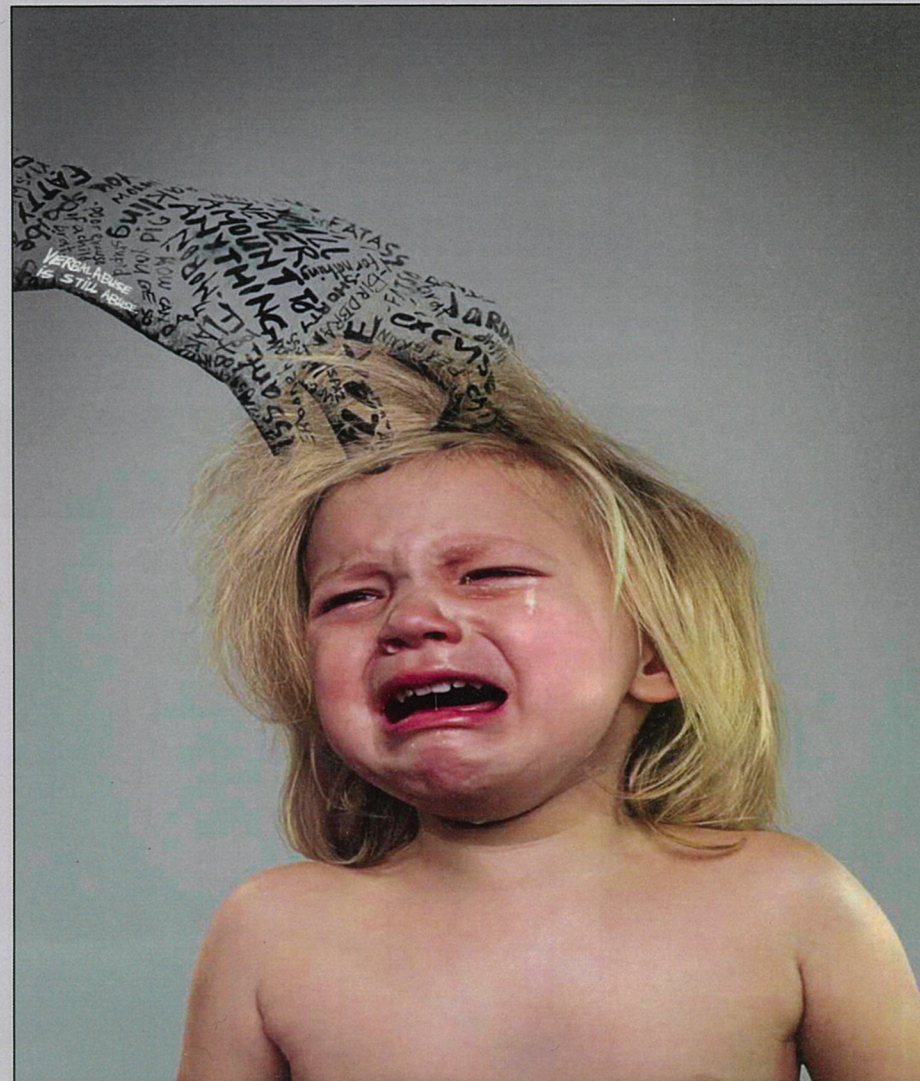
Literature Review

Links between adverse childhood experiences and devious behaviours

- The more adverse experiences an individual is exposed to in childhood the stronger the likelihood is of them having worse health and social outcomes later in life (Bellis et al., 2013).
- Chronic exposure to trauma alters coping strategies, decision-making and the ability to effectively manage emotions and behaviours leaving the individual vulnerable to high-risk activities (Ford, & Blaustein, 2013).
- Those exposed to adverse childhood experiences are more likely to expose their own children to childhood maltreatment (Bellis et al., 2013).

Recovery and treatment models

- Self-regulation can be used as a framework for trauma informed care and can provide an effective rehabilitative method (Ford, & Blaustein, 2013).
- Models focus on identifying and altering individual's attitudes and behaviours that increase risk-taking activities and put emphasis on taking responsibility for harm they have caused (Ford, & Blaustein, 2013).



Recommendations

- Further research into and government prioritising of successful adverse childhood experience prevention interventions (Bellis et al., 2013).
- Replacing the punitive model of correction with a more therapeutic and rehabilitative model that focuses on identifying the causes of the adverse behaviours and developing new ways for the individual to cope when high-risk situations arise (Ford, & Blaustein, 2013).
- Rehabilitative programmes need to take into consideration cultural beliefs of the individuals to promote self-identity and belief (Nakhid & Shorter, 2014).
- Staff working in rehabilitative facilities need to be trained adequately and be able to build therapeutic relationships based on trust and respect and promote role-modeling behaviour (Ford, & Blaustein, 2013).

Implications for practice

- Exposure to adverse experiences during childhood, such as abuse and neglect, leads to reduced physical and mental health of children.
- Exposure to chronic trauma throughout childhood leads to increased risk of causing harm to themselves or others later in life through violence, drug abuse and other criminal behaviour.
- These preventable but poor health outcomes lead to increased involvement of healthcare professionals in a range of different settings such as general practice, hospitals, prisons and rehabilitation centres.

Conclusion

By implementing these recommendations the cycle of adverse childhood experiences to delinquent and criminal behaviours may be broken. If so, this would mean better health and social outcomes for the population.

References

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- Department of Corrections. (2014). *Prison facts and statistics*. Retrieved from http://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/quarterly_prison_statistics/CP_December_2014.html
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- Nakhid, C., & Shorter, L. T. (2014). Narratives of four Maori ex-inmates about their experiences and perspectives of rehabilitation programmes. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 58(6), 607-717. doi: 10.1177/0306624X13476030

PICOT Category	Information Relating to Question	Rationale
Population	People who perform criminal behaviours paired with alcohol and other drug use which leads/has lead to imprisonment or past imprisonment	This is the population that I will need to look up articles on to find out if their criminal behaviour is linked to past expose of adverse childhood experiences
Intervention	Offenders and substance users who were exposed to adverse childhood experiences	I will be looking for articles that make links between criminal behaviour, substance abuse and imprisonment or past imprisonment
Comparison	Offenders and substance users who were not exposed to adverse childhood experiences	Provides a population that can act as a control group in which to compare those that have been exposed to adverse childhood experiences
Outcome	What forms of recovery/rehabilitation are there for offenders with a past of adverse childhood experiences	If there is a link between adverse childhood experiences and criminal behaviour, substance abuse and imprisonment then finding an appropriate recovery/rehabilitation model that addresses all these elements may prevent recidivism
Time	N/A	As criminal behaviour and substance abuse can expand across many age groups and time frames

(Whitehead, 2013).

Rationale

I have chosen a poster to present my literature review as a way to solidify and synthesise my newfound knowledge (Berry & Houston, 1995). This medium is a visually appealing and intriguing way to communicate information to a targeted audience or a larger group of people. It provides a brief and informative overview of the topic, including the use of pictures, making it easy to read, with the aim of attracting more readers. In this case, it enables students and other interested groups to learn from the literature review that I have performed. As well as them being able to read the main points it also provides me with a framework to present my findings. Additionally, it will create awareness and discussion surrounding a possibly less well-known area of health concern that effects many of the world's population. It also provides a quick and accessible way for me to reflect back on my literature review in the future if I wish to revisit the topic (Frankland, 2007).

References

- Berry, J., & Houston, K. (1995). Students using posters as a means of communication and assessment. *Educational Studies in Mathematics: An International Journal*, 29(1), 21-27. Retrieved from <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2F01273898>
- Frankland, S. (2007). *Enhancing teaching and learning through assessment: deriving an appropriate model*. Netherlands: Springer.
- Whitehead, D. (2013). Searching and reviewing the research literature (pp 35-56). In Z. Schneider & D. Whitehead (Eds). *Nursing and Midwifery Research Methods and appraisal for evidence based practice* (4th ed.). Australia; Elsevier.