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# The Budding Disorders: Mental Health of Children

We would like to think that we have built our environments in such a way that they minimize the factors that could result to psychological and behavioral disturbances among individuals. Thus, optimizing our mental health. But statistics tell us that the majority of our population's mental health is largely subjected to negative environments.

#### Complications brought about by negative environment

For many children, symptoms of psychological disorders are linked to the negative stressors in the environment. In the United States alone, one in every five children suffers severe physical abuse and one in every group of five lives below the poverty line. Additionally, psychosocial structures in cities where there is poor housing expose children to violence that could detriment their mental health. (You can imagine how many children in other countries which have far lower economic status and far fewer programs for child protection are subjected to negative stressors.)

Both of the above stressors are considered as traumatic experiences to children that could resurface as psychological disorders during adulthood.

A negative or a positive environment during childhood explains why there are adults who are more likely than not to develop psychological disorders and there are those who are not affected by these at all.

If you find yourself confused by what you've read to this point, don't despair. Everything should be crystal clear by the time you finish.

For example, children who repeatedly experienced sexual trauma or sexual abuse are most likely to develop dissociative disorders such as multiple personality disorder. The rate of victimization within intimate relationships only reinforces the dissociative response. Also, repetitive exposure to violence or to the activities of a dysfunctional environment could also contribute to the development of severe dissociative disorders. These mental illnesses root from the child's effort to deny the violence, abuse, or trauma they experience as coping mechanism so as to protect his mental wellness. However, failure to completely get over these experiences would result to the impairment of his psychological wellness and even his social and emotional well-being.

#### Parental deprivations

Some researchers assumed that the large difference in number of psychological disorders being treated these days as compared to prevalence in the past century is largely contributed by dysfunctional family structures and parental deprivations. Indifference and neglect by familial figures, maternal-social deprivations, isolation and separation from parents are viewed as the root causes of psychological disorders such as depressions, mental retardation, psychomotor impairments and the manifestations of autistic-like behaviors among children.

#### Pathogenic Parent-Child Relationship

The traumatic interpersonal relationship between a parent or a parent-figure and a child is viewed as a negative environment for the child's growth and development. This relationship only means that their relationship is structured in the manner that it damages a child's psychological well-being. These give stress to certain beliefs that are psychologically unfavorable to the child such as irrational beliefs on self-blame, irrational explanations on traumatic experiences, maladaptive behaviors, unconscious guilt, shame and doubt about oneself. These beliefs are very powerful and could lead the child to over generalize negative incidents.

Children experience all sorts of negative environments including war and violence, daily stress, economic problems and accelerating negative effects of technological changes. But among these, the most aggravated is the disabling relationship he has with his immediate environment- his parents, his family and his direct interaction to his society. Above everything else, there is a need to modify these negative environments in order to develop children with better mental health and in the future, adults who can readily adapt to the stressors from their environments.

Of course, it's impossible to put everything about Mental Health into just one article. But you can't deny that you've

just added to your understanding about Mental Health, and that's time well spent.

About the Author

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