



Ninth Edition

UNDERSTANDING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

CYNTHIA CROSSON-TOWER





CSWE's Core Competencies and Practice Behavior Examples in this Text

Competency	Chapter
Professional Identity	
<i>Practice Behavior Examples...</i>	
Serve as representatives of the profession, its mission, and its core values	10,16
Know the profession's history	1
Commit themselves to the profession's enhancement and to their own professional conduct and growth	16
Advocate for client access to the services of social work	10
Practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development	
Attend to professional roles and boundaries	16
Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication	16
Engage in career-long learning	
Use supervision and consultation	16
Ethical Practice	
<i>Practice Behavior Examples...</i>	
Obligation to conduct themselves ethically and engage in ethical decision-making	10,12, 13
Know about the value base of the profession, its ethical standards, and relevant law	11
Recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice	10, 12, 13
Make ethical decisions by applying standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and, as applicable, of the International Federation of Social Workers/International Association of Schools of Social Work Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles	
Tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts	10, 11
Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions	12, 13
Critical Thinking	
<i>Practice Behavior Examples...</i>	
Know about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment	
Use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity	12, 13
Requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information	10, 11
Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom	12, 13
Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation	10, 16
Demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues	10, 11

Competency	Chapter
Diversity in Practice	
<i>Practice Behavior Examples...</i>	
Understand how diversity characterizes and shapes the human experience and is critical to the formation of identity	1, 2, 10
Understand the dimensions of diversity as the intersectionality of multiple factors including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation	2,10–13
Appreciate that, as a consequence of difference, a person’s life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim	2, 4,5
Recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power	10,11
Gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups	16
Recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences	
View themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as informants	2
Human Rights & Justice	
<i>Practice Behavior Examples...</i>	
Understand that each person, regardless of position in society, has basic human rights, such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education	10,11
Recognize the global interconnections of oppression and knowledge about theories of justice and strategies to promote human and civil rights	8
Incorporates social justice practices in organizations, institutions, and society to ensure that these basic human rights are distributed equitably and without prejudice	
Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination	
Advocate for human rights and social and economic justice	
Engage in practices that advance social and economic justice	16
Research-Based Practice	
<i>Practice Behavior Examples...</i>	
Use practice experience to inform research, employ evidence-based interventions, evaluate their own practice, and use research findings to improve practice, policy, and social service delivery	10, 12, 13
Comprehend quantitative and qualitative research and understand scientific and ethical approaches to building knowledge	
Use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry	1
Use research evidence to inform practice	1



CSWE's Core Competencies and Practice Behavior Examples in this Text

Competency	Chapter
Human Behavior	
<i>Practice Behavior Examples...</i>	
Know about human behavior across the life course; the range of social systems in which people live; and the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being	3, 2,
Apply theories and knowledge from the liberal arts to understand biological, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual development	3–8
Utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation	3
Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment	3, 10–15
Policy Practice	
<i>Practice Behavior Examples...</i>	
Understand that policy affects service delivery and they actively engage in policy practice	10, 11, 14
Know the history and current structures of social policies and services; the role of policy in service delivery; and the role of practice in policy development	1,10,16
Analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being	16
Collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action	16
Practice Contexts	
<i>Practice Behavior Examples...</i>	
Keep informed, resourceful, and proactive in responding to evolving organizational, community, and societal contexts at all levels of practice	4–8,10,11
Recognize that the context of practice is dynamic, and use knowledge and skill to respond proactively	
Continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services	14
Provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services	16

Competency	Chapter
Engage, Assess Intervene, Evaluate	
<i>Practice Behavior Examples...</i>	
Identify, analyze, and implement evidence-based interventions designed to achieve client goals	12,13
Use research and technological advances	
Evaluate program outcomes and practice effectiveness	
Develop, analyze, advocate, and provide leadership for policies and services	
Promote social and economic justice	
(A) ENGAGEMENT	
Substantively and effectively prepare for action with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities	4-8
Use empathy and other interpersonal skills	10,11,14,15
Develop a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes	
(B) ASSESSMENT	
Collect, organize, and interpret client data	4-8,10
Assess client strengths and limitations	4-8,10
Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives	10,12-14
Select appropriate intervention strategies	10,12,13
(C) INTERVENTION	
Initiate actions to achieve organizational goals	
Implement prevention interventions that enhance client capacities	16
Help clients resolve problems	10,12-15
Negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients	10,12-14
Facilitate transitions and endings	12-14
(D) EVALUATION	
Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions	

Ninth Edition

Understanding Child Abuse and Neglect

Cynthia Crosson-Tower

PEARSON

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Preface

For Chay, Andrew, Becky, and Ruby

We live in a culture that values comfort and a sense of well-being. Even in today's difficult economy, the expectation is that, despite having to make some sacrifices, each citizen has the opportunity to achieve this sense of well-being. Yet many members of our culture—our children—are being beaten, neglected, and sexually exploited in alarming numbers. Every 10 seconds, a child is being abused or neglected.

Granted, child abuse and neglect have existed for centuries. And although some sources suggest that the incidence of child maltreatment has actually decreased slightly in the last few years, the fact remains that children are still being abused—in some cases more seriously than ever. Why has child maltreatment become such a serious issue? The answer may lie in several areas. We live in a more violent society than ever before. We are barraged with violent images, both in the news and in our entertainment. Crime statistics attest to the impact of this desensitization. The intensity and seriousness of the abuse perpetrated against children does, as well.

Does the answer also lie in the fact that the child protection system, set up to safeguard the lives of the children at risk for maltreatment, is not achieving its goal? As a former protective services worker, I recognize that individual professionals within protective services are often dedicated and well meaning, but the system as a whole is still not adequately protecting children, nor are these services often our fiscal priority.

What can be done to reverse the disturbing fact of child maltreatment? And how can society, and more specifically the child welfare system, better protect the children at risk?

These questions can be addressed from several vantage points. We look not only to raise societal awareness and increase research into causes of abuse and neglect, but we must also change social policy, triage the child welfare system, and provide better training for protective workers, not only in the skills important to do their job but in culturally sensitive ways to approach a variety of people from many different backgrounds.

After over 30 years of teaching courses on child abuse and neglect, many years in the child protection system, and over 40 years in the field of social services, I have written this book, now in the ninth edition, to prepare future and even current professionals to better intervene and treat the children and families at risk. This book draws on my years of practice to present an all-encompassing view of maltreatment, in its various guises, from symptoms of abuse and neglect to motivations of those who abuse and neglect children, as well as how the social services system intervenes. The questions asked of me by students,

social service workers, and trainees have helped to shape the direction of the book. My experiences not only as a protective social worker but also as a therapist treating victims, families, and perpetrators and now a clergywoman have helped to provide ideas for the illustrations and examples.

New to This Edition

There are many new and updated materials throughout the text. Below are a few of the most exciting changes:

1. The text has been reorganized into 16 chapters to correspond with the typical academic semester.
2. CSWE's Core Competencies and Practice Behavior Examples grid added to front matter
3. Chapter 8 features the new topics of sexting and sexual trafficking.
4. Chapter 10 now covers the full range of intervention from reporting through case management.
5. Chapter 16 outlines what it is like to work in the child protection system from the everyday experiences of a social worker through the need for workers to use their knowledge to address effective prevention as well as planning for the future.
6. Additional pedagogical materials and specially correlated multimedia available in the eText included with the purchase of MySearchLab.
 - New learning objectives, self-study assessment including key topic quizzes and chapter reviews
 - Multimedia including videos, readings, weblinks, and more

Plan for the Text

Chapter 1 lays a framework for the discussion of abuse and neglect by tracing the history of child maltreatment from biblical times to the present. Chapter 2 considers the responsibilities of families and what rights society accords families and children. Maltreatment and the developing child are the focus of Chapter 3, which examines the effects of abusive and neglectful behavior on children's progress, or lack of progress, through developmental stages.

Chapters 4 through 9 outline the symptoms of neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and emotional/psychological abuse, and they examine the needs and motivations of abusive and neglectful parents. Chapter 7 looks more closely at the incidence of incest, or sexual abuse within the family setting. Since sexual abuse can also be perpetrated by strangers, Chapter 8 considers abuse outside the family, including a discussion of child pornography, abuse on the Internet, prostitution, and sex rings. Chapter 9 considers the psychological abuse of children.

Chapters 10 and 11 focus on how to combat the problem of abuse. Chapter 10 discusses the intervention process—from the report through the investigation and case management—and highlights such important elements of protective work as home visiting, investigative interviewing, case management issues, and the roles of other professionals. The court system and how it might be called on to address abuse, neglect, and sexual abuse are

considered in Chapter 11, distinguishing between intervention through the juvenile court process and prosecution through the criminal court system.

Chapters 12 and 13 outline the models of treatment available for abused and neglected children and their families. Therapy approaches for each type of maltreatment are considered separately. Chapter 14 discusses foster care as a therapeutic tool.

Following this examination of intervention, Chapter 15 provides a view of the experiences of adults who, as children, never reported abuse. The treatment available for these survivors is discussed.

The experience of working in child protection is the subject of Chapter 16—from a typical day in the life of a protective social worker and the challenges the work to the part that workers must play in prevention and in planning for the future.

In this ninth edition, I have continued to search more current research. Majority of the most recent research is now coming from Britain, Australia, and Europe as these countries meet the challenges of responding to child abuse and neglect. I have used these sources when the information appeared to be applicable to the United States. I have also continued to use classic writings in the field as well as a few more recent, albeit smaller, studies.

In response to reviewer requests, this edition has been reorganized into 16 chapters to correspond with the typical academic semester. The information on intervention as well as case management is now contained in Chapter 10. A new Chapter 16 focuses on the important aspects of child protection work including the need for social workers to not only pay attention to prevention but also to use their expertise to anticipate the best solutions for the future.

There continues to be the attention to military families reflected in the eighth edition. Additional topics such as sexting, and sexual trafficking have also been added.

Understanding Child Abuse and Neglect can be used as a text for undergraduate as well as graduate courses in social work, human services, psychology, and sociology or in counseling, family studies, and education programs.

Acknowledgments

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Chapter 1

The Maltreatment of Children from a Historical Perspective

Maltreatment of children is deeply entwined with historical values and perspectives. The concept of child maltreatment has been defined and redefined throughout history. Society is slowly evolving from viewing children as property, subject to the whims of the family and society, to at least recognizing that children may have rights of their own. Each period in history—as well as each culture—has a concept of how children should be treated.

CHILDREN AS PROPERTY

Early in history, children were seen as the property of their families—usually headed and ruled by fathers. Children looked to their fathers for their very existence. Fathers had the right to determine not only the manner in which their child was cared for but also if the child were to live or die.

Issues of Life and Death

Infanticide, or the killing of infants and young children, has occurred since early times. The Bible cites Abraham's intention to sacrifice his son, Isaac, to God. In early Rome, the father was given complete power to kill, abandon, or even sell his child. In Greek legend, Oedipus was doomed to death until he was rescued by a family retainer. In Hawaii, China, and Japan, many female and disabled children were killed to maintain a strong race without overpopulation.

Infanticide was practiced for many reasons. Like the Hawaiians, Chinese, and Japanese, some cultures saw the practice of infanticide as a means of controlling and regulating the population so that society's resources could be expended on the strongest and most valued. As in the case of Abraham, babies were offered to appease gods, and infanticide was in some ways associated with religious beliefs. Attempts to limit family size or ensure financial security were also used as rationales for killing children (deMause, 1998).

In early England, as in many other cultures, infanticide was an unwed mother's solution to her act of shame. A well-known ballad tells of Mary Hamilton, lady-in-waiting

to the queen, who had the misfortune to become pregnant by the “highest Stewart of all,” ostensibly the queen’s consort. As she bemoans her disgrace, the balladeer sings:

She tyed it in her apron
And she’s thrown it in the sea;
Says, “Sink ye, swim ye, bonny wee babe
You’ll ne’er get m’air o’ me.” (Friedman, 1956)

In Germany, newborns were sometimes plunged into frigid water to test their ability to survive. A similar ritual was practiced by some tribes of Native Americans. The child was fit to live only if he or she surfaced and cried. Records in England in the 1620s attest to the burial of infants murdered by drowning, burning, and scalding.

Issues of Dependence

Children were dependent on their families not only for their early existence but also for their later survival. The feudal system in Europe established a concept of ownership and articulated a hierarchy of rights and privileges. Children were at the bottom, and the children of poor families fared the worst. If parents were unable to support themselves and their children, the fate of the family was often the poorhouse. Poorhouses offered a meager subsistence, which often ended in death for the weaker members of the family.

In 1601, the Elizabethan Poor Law sought to give some help to families and children by dictating that relief must be offered to the destitute. The poor were separated into three categories:

1. The able-bodied poor—those who were considered capable and were, therefore, forced to work
2. The impotent poor—those who were old, disabled, or mothers, who were excused from work and for whom aid was provided by the state
3. Dependent children—those who were orphaned or abandoned and for whom aid was provided

The fate of children still depended largely on their family constellation. Able-bodied people were sent to work. In some cases, mothers and their children were provided for at home by contributions of food and clothing but never money. Education was not viewed as a right or privilege of such families (Popple and Leighninger, 2010).

For those who were not poor, children fared as their families saw fit. Still seen as property, some children were slaves to their guardians, performing whatever tasks were expected of them. Certainly, the family life of a farming culture required that each member take part. For most children, this arrangement was satisfactory, but some children were assigned jobs far beyond their abilities or were beaten or neglected.

The early United States saw the arrival of immigrants other than Europeans. African slaves contributed greatly to the economic development of the new country, not only in the South but also in New England. The children of southern plantation slaves owed their allegiance to their parents as well as the masters who owned them. They were thought of as property and had little control over whether they worked, were sold (often without parents or siblings), or were used sexually by those more powerful. In the North, black children were not exempt from almshouses until 1822, when the Quakers in Philadelphia

established the first orphanage for such children (Ambrosino et al., 2011; Popple and Leighninger, 2010; ten Bense, Rheinberg, and Radbill, 1997).

Asian and Pacific Island immigrants came to the United States with their own values about dependent children. One significant value was that the family was involved with the care of the individual from the time of birth until death (Mass and Yap, 2000), which meant that dependent children were often absorbed into the ethnic community. Native American children were also generally regarded as the responsibility of the community. In addition, Hispanic children relied on extended family members or friends to supplement or substitute for parental nurturance.

Issues of Discipline

The subject of discipline has always been controversial. Many methods used in early Western culture would certainly be open to censure today. The philosophies of our forebears, however, differ from those of most modern-day societies. Not only in the home but in the classroom, corporal punishment was a means to mold children into moral, God-fearing, respectful human beings. Parents were expected to raise religious, dedicated, morally sound, and industrious contributors to the community. Obedience was the primary virtue to develop in children. Disobedience often carried significant fines; even older children were subject to such rules. An 1854 Massachusetts law stated,

If any children above sixteen years old and of sufficient understanding shall curse or smite their natural father or mother, they shall be put to death, unless it can be sufficiently testified that the parents have been unchristianly negligent in the education of such children or so provoked them by extreme and cruel correction that they have been forced thereunto to preserve themselves from death or maiming. (Bremner, 1970, p. 68)

The schoolmaster or mistress was accorded the same right to use corporal punishment:

School masters in colonial Boston were conscious of the need to maintain the great English tradition of “education through pain” and, if anything added refinements to the flagellant tools they had inherited from the old country. One Bostonian invented an instrument called a “flapper”—a heavy piece of leather six inches in diameter with a hole in the middle which was fixed to a wooden handle. Every stroke on a bare bit of flesh raised an instant blister. (Ingليس, 1978, p. 29)

Theologian John Calvin was of no help to children in the treatment accorded them by their elders. Calvin spoke of breaking a child’s will in the hope of saving the spirit from evil. Discipline was severe in the hope that children could be transformed into God-fearing individuals.

For a short period during the eighteenth century, the treatment of children improved. Philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau spoke of children as inherently good and encouraged educational methods that would enhance their positive development, not break their spirit (Lenoir-Degoumois, 1983).

Other cultures had their own interpretations about discipline. Many (e.g., Asian/Pacific, Hispanic) stressed the dominance of elders or males who had the right to determine

how to deal with children. The strong kinship relationships of African Americans and the community responsibility inherent in Native American cultures indicated that the care and discipline of children were shared by parent figures.

CHILD LABOR

One of the earliest forms of child labor was *indenture*—a system in which parents apprenticed their children to masters who taught them a trade but who were free to use them as virtual slaves in exchange for room and board. Indenture began at a very young age and continued until 14 or 16 years of age for boys and 21 years for girls. Writings by historians, novelists, and social reformers show that apprentice masters could be cruel—concerned more for the work they could extract than for the development or abilities of their juvenile charges. Charles Dickens wrote of Oliver Twist’s days as an apprentice to an undertaker. Exposed to death in its basic forms, fed very little, and chided and belittled by his master’s older apprentice, Oliver thought he had little recourse. In fact, English society assumed he had inherited a good lot and one for which he should be most thankful.

Indenture and child labor were also issues in early United States. As the Industrial Revolution progressed, the practice of prematurely bringing children into the labor market began to be a concern. Children were brought to the colonies to work until they were 24 years old. Child labor was seen as an inexpensive boon to the labor market, since a child could be hired for less wages than an adult. Some jobs, such as chimney sweeping and mining, were suited to children’s small bodies (Hindman, 2002; Mintz, 2006; Rose and Fatout, 2003; ten Bensel et al., 1997).

As the 1800s dawned in the United States, the role of children remained little changed. They continued to be the property of their parents, who could choose to beat them, neglect them, or send them out to work. As the population increased and society became more impersonal, assaults on children were more easily hidden.

In the late 1880s, the settlement house movement evolved. It contributed much to the future of children and their families and had a substantial impact on the reduction of child labor. The settlement houses became known through the establishment of Toynbee Hall, as a result of the influence of Arnold Toynbee in London. Inspired by the dedication of such an act, Jane Addams established Hull House in the Chicago slums. Hull House not only bridged the gap between new and more established immigrants, but it was the impetus for later reforms of benefit to children. One of Addams’s special concerns was child labor:

Our very first Christmas at Hull House, when we as yet knew nothing of child labor, a number of little girls refused the candy which was offered them as part of the Christmas good cheer, saying simply that they “worked in a candy factory and could not bear the sight of it.” We discovered that for six weeks they had worked from seven in the morning until nine at night and they were exhausted as well as satiated. The sharp consciousness of stern economic conditions was thrust upon us in the midst of the season of good will. (Addams, 1910, p. 148)

Addams also described the dangerous conditions:

During the same winter three boys from the Hull House club were injured at one machine in a neighborhood factory for lack of a guard which would have cost but

a few dollars. When the injury of one of these boys resulted in death, we felt quite sure that the owners would share our horror and remorse, and that they would do everything possible to prevent the reoccurrence of such a tragedy. To our surprise they did nothing whatever, and I made my first acquaintance then with those pathetic documents signed by the parents of working children, that they will make no claim for damages resulting from “carelessness.” (Addams, 1910, p. 148)

Although Addams and her staff at Hull House fought hard for changes in these conditions, it wasn't until much later that laws protecting children from unreasonable labor were enacted.

In addition, African American children were largely excluded from settlement house programs and from the predominantly white Charity Organization Societies (Jackson, 1978). As a result, until legislation was later passed, there was little to protect them from being used as laborers.

SEXUAL VALUES, ATTITUDES, AND EXPLOITATION

Early History

The definition of *sexual exploitation* has evolved throughout history. Although we might today consider the values and attitudes of the past as exploitive, the fact remains that our current customs exploit children in other ways.

In ancient times, the child, especially the female, was considered the property of her father, to do with as he saw fit. His permission was required for all her dealings. She was something with which he could barter for lands and money. With the father's permission, a betrothal could be sealed by intercourse with the underage (under 12 years) daughter. Marriage of extremely young girls was not uncommon. Since early times, fathers paid dowries for the marriage of their daughters. When dowries could not be provided for all female children, some girls entered the convent, sometimes by the age of 9, to take their vows by age 13. Rush (1992) relates a prioress's confession that young nuns were treated like wives by the monks associated with the convent. The girls were threatened with excommunication if they told of this sexual exploitation.

Boys were not immune to sexual misuse in early history either. In Greece, pederasty (men using boys for sexual relationships) was practiced widely. Boys were taken for their attractive appearance, their softness, and their youth but were expected to show strength in battle. In fact, pederasty was the training ground for future soldiers. Most sons of noble families were actually compelled to take adult lovers, and in turn, the boys were protected and plied with gifts. The protector was teacher and counselor, accepted and approved by the boy's family (Rush, 1992). In early Rome, however, sex or sexual relationships were not seen as a means of elevating children, as in Greece. In Rome, the rape of a child was a humiliation rather than a means of owning a treasured plaything (Rush, 1992).

It was not until 1548 that any legal protection from sexual abuse was offered to children. In that year, England passed a law protecting boys from forced sodomy. In 1576, another law was enacted that prohibited the forcible rape of girls under the age of 10 (Conte and Shore, 1982, p. 22). In the 1700s, some educators warned parents to protect their children from abuse by supervising them at all times and by ensuring that they were never

nude in front of adults and in general suggested enforced modesty (Conte and Shore, 1982). This warning was one of the earliest indications that the larger society recognized children could be sexually exploited.

The Nineteenth Century

The rigid standards of the Victorian era also colored society's attitudes toward sexuality and children. Masturbation was vehemently condemned as being a precursor of insanity, growth retardation, and early death for boys; for girls, it was said to promote precocious sexual development, promiscuity, and nymphomania. Attempts to curb this practice of self-gratification were extreme—surgery to remove the clitoris, slitting the penis, or cutting the nerves of the genitalia in both sexes. With these measures came the message that children should not be seen as sexual beings.

The Victorian era, however, was replete with contradictions. On one hand, society was undergoing unbelievable advances in industrial enterprise and scientific discoveries; it was a time of deep thought and analysis. Yet behind the closed doors of so-called God-fearing homes, sexual abuse apparently flourished. Child molesters, even those who took their interests outside the family, seem to have been well protected. Numerous revered men in the public eye were taken with the charms of little girls, some to the point of acting on their desires. William Wordsworth expounded on his admiration of nubile young girls, and at age 26, Edgar Allan Poe wed his 13-year-old cousin (Rush, 1992). Victorian morals viewed this union as scandalous, even though girls marrying at a young age had been a common practice. Lewis Carroll was well known for his interest in children. He is said to have had an entourage of whom he took nude photos. Biographers and critics have questioned whether his activities extended beyond taking pictures, telling stories, and playing games with the children (Lennon, 1972; ten Benschel et al., 1997).

Pornography and child prostitution also increased during the Victorian period. Men who dared not “prevail upon their wives to do their duty too often” and who shielded their children from explanations of sexuality thought nothing of frequenting child prostitutes in city slums. In the early nineteenth century, U.S. slave owners delighted in “breaking in” their young slaves or using them for breeding. Often, 11-, 12-, and 13-year-old girls were impregnated (Olafson et al., 1993; Rush, 1992).

Into this scene came a man who was to be the father of modern psychoanalysis. Sigmund Freud, a therapist in nineteenth-century Vienna, treated women who were diagnosed as having hysterical neuroses and exhibiting a variety of symptoms from compulsive vomiting, sneezing, and coughing to blindness, deafness, and paralysis. In the course of therapy, a large number of patients reported having been sexually abused at a young age. In response to this phenomenon, Freud (1966, p. 584) wrote, “Almost all my women patients told me that they had been seduced by their fathers. I was driven to recognize in the end that these reports were untrue and so came to understand that the hysterical symptoms are derived from phantasies and not from real occurrences.”

Note, however, that in 1905, in the case of “Dora,” Freud included a vivid description of the 14-year-old girl's seduction by her father and her subsequent use as a “pawn in [his] elaborate sex intrigues” (Herman, 1997, p. 14). From his account, the abuse obviously seems to have occurred so that it is difficult to believe Freud later discounted the

credibility of the situation (Rush, 1992). We will never know what caused Freud's reversal of his theories,¹ since he destroyed his notes and diaries. Certainly, his attitudes have had an influence on our current denial or reluctance to recognize the symptoms of sexual abuse in children.

The Twentieth Century

Over the years, literature has reflected a preoccupation with sexual activity and children. In 1955, Vladimir Nabokov's novel *Lolita* shocked the public and was banned from numerous bookstores and libraries. People's fascination with this type of story was obvious, and the book became a popular seller and later a movie. At age 12, Lolita is seduced by 50-year-old Humbert Humbert, who had become captivated with her. Unfortunately, the story perpetrated the belief that children—especially young girls—knowingly seduce older men, who are helpless to resist. As such, this novel—and later ones like it—likely provided rationalization for incestuous fathers and added to the misconceptions of the general public. *Greek Love*, by J. Z. Eglinton (1965), recounted love and sexual tutelage of boys by adult men and how such a relationship prepares boys for adult sexual experiences. Lawrence Sanders's *The Case of Lucy Bending* (1982) gave the impression of an adult abused by a disturbed child who had instigated the relationship.

It is clear that our current society harbors a contradiction in its view of children and sexuality. On one hand, we state that children should not be exploited sexually; on the other hand, child pornography thrives, both in print and on the Internet, and the courts are often more likely to believe molesting adults than molested children. Television commercials use nubile girls posed seductively. The Internet provides an excellent vehicle for perpetrators to contact children for sex. Such practices can only give molesters and children a mixed message about what society believes about sexual abuse and the sexual exploitation of children.

Newly immigrated cultures bring with them their own contradictory practices. For example, father–daughter incest is rare in India. Rather, an Indian father finds his power in his ability to offer a virginal daughter in marriage—hopefully, one that will improve her economic status. However, sexual abuse of young boys is not uncommon though rarely discussed. Indians often bring these taboos and attitudes with them as they immigrate to other cultures.

THE INCEST TABOO

History

In some form, the taboo against incest appears to be universal. Historically, prohibitions of marriage and sexual relations with one's immediate blood relatives are found even in early writings. In the Bible, Leviticus outlines those individuals whom one could

¹Some theorists (e.g., Rush, 1992) attribute Freud's shift to personal experiences, whereas others (e.g., Meiselman, 1992; Olafson et al., 1993) suggest that collegial pressure was the primary reason.

not uncover: “You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father, which is the nakedness of your mother; she is your mother, you shall not uncover her nakedness” (Lev. 18:7). Throughout the scripture, sisters, granddaughters, stepsisters, aunts, and daughters-in-law are specifically cited as protected from sexual contact with relatives (Lev. 18:9–18). Marriage with particular individuals was also discouraged. This taboo may actually be the basis of current mores in the United States. The Greeks and Romans prohibited sexual relationships between cousins. Emperor Claudius of Rome married his niece, Agrippina, making uncle–niece marriages acceptable for a time (Weinberg, 1955). In Egypt, during the Pharaonic and Ptolemaic periods, brother–sister unions among royalty were not unusual, with Cleopatra’s marriage to two of her brothers perhaps the best known. There is some indication that during their conquest of Egypt, Romans also saw sibling marriages as acceptable (Middleton, 1962).

Christianity and the early Catholic Church in Europe reestablished and strengthened taboos on incest and intermarriage. Historically, the penalties for incest ranged from severe censure to decapitation (in eighteenth-century Scotland). By the early 1900s, punishment through “penal servitude” or other types of incarceration were favored, and thus the offense became civil rather than religious (Weinberg, 1955).

Reasons for Taboo

Religious laws and legal writings have devoted much attention to the commission of incest. How did this taboo originate? Several possible explanations have been offered for the taboo of incest.

Biological

In *Ancient Society* (1877), L. H. Morgan suggested that incestuous marriages created defective offspring. His information appeared to be based on the experiences of animal breeders who discovered that constant inbreeding created a variety of physical and mental disabilities.

The biological theories of Morgan and his contemporaries were later discounted, however, on the basis of several factors and beliefs. First, geneticists argued that although one can create dysfunctional characteristics by inbreeding and thus giving more opportunity for recessive genes to combine, it is also possible to create superior individuals through the same process. Some breeders of animals practice inbreeding to produce a stronger and better species. Second, it is difficult to detect whether the inferior offspring are a result of weaknesses on the part of the founders of the strain or if the process of inbreeding is at fault. Third, since animals use little selection in mating, they would be extinct if Morgan’s theories were true.

Sexual Aversion

Meiselman (1992) discussed the theories of E. Westermarck and J. K. Fox. Despite a fundamental belief in the biological interpretation, Westermarck in 1922 suggested that another explanation could be that people who live together constantly develop a sexual aversion. This theory was later supported by Fox, who in 1962 used the example of children raised

in the Israeli kibbutzim. Thrown together from birth, these children seek sexual partners elsewhere.

Family Disruption

Family disruption was the basis for Malinowski's theory (1927) of the origin of the incest taboo. This anthropologist suggested that the family could not tolerate the ambiguity, blurred role definitions, and confusion of feelings brought on by the sexual involvement of its members. Interestingly enough, family disruption is considered today to be one of the major causes as well as one of the effects of incestuous behavior.

Multidimensional Theories

In *Incest*, Meiselman (1992) reported that in the 1940s, L. A. White contributed to the incest controversy, and G. P. Murdock created his own multidimensional theory. White contended that survival in early societies was difficult and often depended on ingenuity and cooperation with others. As language developed, people became better able to exchange goods and ideas with other cultures. Marriage with other cultures increased networks and enhanced the possibilities for survival. Inter marriage created isolation and reduced the number of individuals available for marriage outside the tribe, thus limiting the chances of networking.

Murdock later used White's theory but suggested that it be combined with the premise that family members had a repressed desire for each other and that the family itself had to preserve its stability by keeping confusion and sexual jealousy to a minimum. This stability was most likely achieved by prohibiting incestuous behavior.

Subsequently, a variety of theorists reemphasized the importance of the incest taboo to the family structure and suggested the influence of such a taboo on the child's development. As noted by Justice and Justice (1980), Talcott Parsons wrote in 1954 that the incest taboo helped the child develop autonomy and social roles necessary to eventually leave the family. Prohibited from having sexual relations with family members, the child must then seek others outside the family structure. Carl Jung also mentioned the incest taboo as part of the child's vital struggle for individualization. Freud also spoke of the necessity of the child giving up incestuous wishes in order to succeed and procreate outside the family system (see also Turner, 2005).

Legal and Social Prohibition

Today, marriages with blood relatives are prohibited by law in the United States. Individual states differ in prohibitions against marriages between cousins, stepparents, and step-siblings. The penalty for breaking this cultural and legal taboo is a jail or prison sentence. Perhaps more powerful, however, is the social stigma attached. Culturally, Weinberg (1955, p. 31) describes the stereotype as having four components:

1. An inner revulsion to incest
2. Disgust with the participants
3. Perception that participants are mentally or emotionally abnormal
4. Perception of a disorganized or even absent family life