

Chadwick's Child Maltreatment, Encyclopedic Volumes 1 to 3, 4th edition

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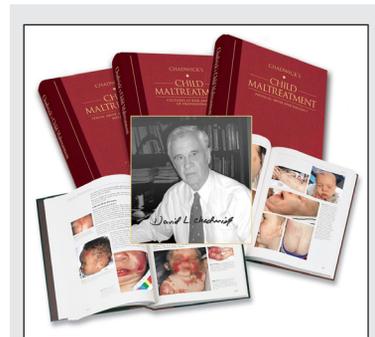
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Paraphrasing the famous quote attributed to German writer, poet, scientist, and statesman Johan Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) in an updated 2014 encyclopedia on child abuse and neglect may seem far-fetched at first glance. However, his statement “Man sieht nur das, was man weiss”—meaning that we only see what we look for, and that we look for what we know—is still valid. The intertwined capability of looking and seeing is grounded in the physiologic structures of the human eye and in pattern recognition as a means for distinguishing foreground from background. We know that human eyes must learn to see in the sense of perceiving that which can be seen, and that human beings need to learn how to make meaning of what they see. This implies that seeing is the result of purposefully looking for something. And surely, one will not look for something one does not know exists. The key significance of knowing for seeing is articulated in the first of three volumes on child abuse and neglect as follows: “To make a diagnosis of child abuse or neglect in any of its many forms, one must be willing to consider the possibility that children are abused and neglected by those in whose care their safety should reasonably be ensured.”¹ In other words, all professionals who see children in their daily work need to know both that child abuse and neglect exists, that it might be occurring to children they encounter, and what being abused and neglected “looks like,” how it shows—if they are both *enabled and willing* to see.

The present fourth edition of the encyclopedic work with a very long history has a proud reputation of being pioneering, advocating, and documenting a message from the dark side of our societies. This work has functioned, and continues to do so, as an excellent yet shocking eye opener. To open one’s eyes is identical with opening one’s mind; to open one’s mind implies rejecting prejudices, wishful thinking, traditional belief, and personal habits of avoidance. Opening up for learning about children’s suffering by the hands and acts—acts of commission and of omission—of their caretakers and other adults means stepping out of the comfort zone of the prevailing societal ignorance or disbelief. The topic as such—abuse, maltreatment, and neglect of children—and the documentation of the wide scope of types and occurrences turns the common proverb “I must see it before I believe it” upside down, because one must believe it before one can see it. The core message and paramount purpose of the present comprehensive, scholarly work are a call to a wide range of professionals: learn, know, see, and act!

The encyclopedia’s 3 volumes, impressively comprising more than 1800 pages, are presented in a sophisticated form carrying the marks of quality: hard-covered and bound, dark red with gold imprint, heavy paper, wide-spaced text pages in an easy-read type-setting, transparent tables, well-designed graphics, and an abundance of clear photos in near-natural colors and unambiguously coded and texted. The total edition must



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have been expensive to produce, even though printed in China.

The editors, 5 experienced health professionals, have applied a pattern of structures to the 3 volumes that facilitate searching, reading, and learning. After the list of the contributors, 107 in total, along with their titles and affiliations, 1 or 2 forewords written by professionals in law and in medicine, a preface written by the editors, and reviews written by specialists in relevant fields, follow 2 tables of contents: 1 “in brief” for quick thematic guidance and 1 “in detail” for a 3-leveled orientation within every chapter. Each chapter ends with a conclusion and a list of references. And each volume is complete with a

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3-leveled, alphabetically ordered, comprehensive index, reserved for terms and phenomena and not containing references or names.

Although the formal characteristics of the encyclopedia concord with classic criteria for outstanding academic textbooks, its tripartite content offers the condensed, updated documentation of its overarching topic, child abuse, structured by categories *yet also* in accordance with the multifaceted social and professional impact of this complex phenomenon, thus transgressing the traditional academic scheme of disciplines.

The first volume presents the broad "catalogue" of types of physical abuse and neglect, differentiated in fractures, head injuries, burns, bruises, damages of the eye, oral, thoracic, and abdominal injuries including poisoning, all kinds of neglect and of abandonment, and failure to thrive. Each of the issues is completed with an atlas of illustrations, including

radiologic pictures, followed by atlases of documentation of abuse and neglect.

The second volume contains the condensed contemporary knowledge engendered by the multidisciplinary research relevant to the various aspects of sexual abuse and psychological maltreatment, although it is obvious that such a differentiation or rather separation is more in line with scientific demands than experiential realities. For example, the field of relevant knowledge comprises epidemiology, child development, forensic medicine, social work, medical treatment, psychology, and pedagogy.

The third volume explores the variety of facets or aspects of relevance for the issue at hand, guided by questions of how the phenomena of child abuse and neglect relate to certain preconditions in society at large. This demands topics like culture, ethnicity, religion, law, family structures, technology, economy, research, children's rights, and child

protective services to be reflected upon with regard to effectively preventing children from being violated, appropriately helping children who have been violated, and adequately prosecuting persons who have molested children.

As a medical researcher on the long-term impact of childhood adversity on *adult* health, I really appreciate the meticulous work that materialized in this encyclopedia. It represents an excellent documentation of a horrible phenomenon, thus testifying to the fact that a hallmark of civilization, the paramount respect of children's integrity, is not yet achieved either in contemporary Western societies or globally. ❖

References

1. Chadwick DL, Alexander R, Giardino AP, Esernia-Jenssen D, Thackeray JD. Chadwick's child maltreatment, 4th edition, encyclopedic 1. Florissant, MO: STM Learning, Inc; 2014. p 153.