



International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation
Issues DVD Training Series to Recognize
Trauma and Dissociation in Maltreated Children
ISSTD Teaches Child Protection Professionals the Signs, Symptoms and Responses of
Dissociative Children

McLEAN, Va., September 23, 2008 — Each year, more than one million children in the United States are victims of abuse or neglect resulting in profound effects on children’s neurological development and their behaviors. The often devastating trauma of sexual, physical and emotional abuse and neglect can pose major challenges for those entrusted to protect children as they work to report and prosecute offenses, and deliver justice to the victims. The International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation (ISSTD), has produced a three-part DVD series and training guide to help these professionals such as child protective services workers, law enforcement investigators, forensic interviewers, and prosecutors understand traumatized children and determine the best ways to assist them during the investigative process.

Every day, four children in the U.S. alone die of child abuse, according to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families. *Child Maltreatment 2006* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2007).

US Department of Health and Human Services. A staggering 59 percent of the population knows a child who they suspect is being abused, yet only 21 percent did something about it: mostly because they didn’t know what to do. Many organizations are working to increase awareness of this tragic and prevalent cruelty to children through education, campaigns, and media initiatives. “We support the efforts of these critically important organizations,” says Fran Waters, executive producer of the training series and chairwoman of the ISSTD Child and Adolescent Committee, “and ISSTD wants to help ensure that the perpetrators, who are stealing the innocence of children, are held accountable. We want to help child protective service workers and prosecutors protect our children.”

The trauma of abuse can affect children's sense of self long-term; however for child protection professionals the trauma often can impede the legal process to prosecute abusers.

“Working with maltreated and traumatized children can be difficult,” Waters says. “Trauma influences children's abilities to regulate their emotions and to talk about what has happened to them. ISSTD leaders were compelled to fill a training void and help child protection professionals better understand the behaviors that abused and neglected children may display. We wanted to provide inexpensive but valuable resources to help them do their jobs even more effectively. These are amazing people with difficult responsibilities made even more challenging by the response from traumatized and dissociative children.”

With federal and state training funds greatly reduced, ISSTD stepped up to equip them with the tools they need to identify and cope with the behaviors of traumatized children. The Child Trauma DVDs are available through the ISSTD Web site, www.isst-d.org, or by calling 703-610-0240. The three DVDs are available as a set or may be purchased individually for the non-member rate of \$250 or for members \$215. The video set covers:

- Behavior indicators of trauma and dissociation
- Interviewing issues and prosecution strategies to make the process less stressful for children and produce better results
- Understanding the effects of trauma on children
- Recognizing dissociative symptoms
- Assisting children to minimize dissociative responses and allow more accurate reporting of the abuse

“The internal effects of trauma on children are directly related to the behaviors exhibited later in life: often dissociation,” Waters says. “Dissociation is the mental state in which thoughts, emotions, feelings, sensations and memories are compartmentalized or hidden for short or long period of time and ISSTD represents the professionals who treat these patients. We know the lifelong pain these patients have experienced and we provide the therapy and treatment to help them recover. At least 90 percent of adult patients with dissociative identity disorder report a history of childhood or adolescent maltreatment and we wanted to do our part to help children get the help they need early in their life by equipping child protection professionals with the knowledge and resources about dissociative behavior. Early recognition and appropriate

intervention can spare traumatized children years of suffering and problems performing in school and in society.”

For more information about dissociative disorders and the DVD training series, contact ISSTD by calling 703-610-0250 or visit the Web site at www.isst-d.org.

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Source: The Children's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Child Abuse and Neglect Data System