

Report of the Child Protection Awareness workshops for Georgetown Public Hospital staff on 2,3,4 May 2012.

The Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC) has embarked on a programme to ensure that the primary health care centres are child friendly. The GPHC has four health centres – the Enmore Polyclinic, the Campbelville Health Centre, the Industry Health Centre and the Kitty Health Centre. The health centres offer a range of services to the public including children. Children attend the clinic as patients, or in the company of adults who are seeking medical attention.

The participants included public safety officers, attendants, medical officers, nurses and other care staff, pharmacists, dentists and clerks from the four health centres. The three sessions were conducted for separate groups. Day 1 had 17 participants, Day 2 – 16 Participants and Day 3 – 17 Participants.

The Childcare and Protection Agency was invited to discuss their role and function and to interact with the participants. The CPA was represented each day by the following persons :

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Ms Bryan	Ms Bryan	Ms Bryan
Ms Speede	Ms Speede	Ms Speede
	Ms Boatswain	Ms Boston

The CPA representatives brought copies of the laws and other materials for the participants.

Expectations and Learning Objectives

The participants were invited to state their expectations of the training. The cumulative list of questions w over the three days is

Day 1

- what are the signs of child abuse?
- how to advise parents?
- how to ensure prosecution of abusers?
- how to deal with children?
- how to tell parents?
- how to deal with personal anger and frustration if parents don't want to follow up?
- what are the laws?
- how to be effective in dealing with child protection?
- how to practise skills at health centre?
- how to deal with children ?
- what protocol to follow when abuse is suspected?
- how to help abused children?
- how to approach parents who are abusing their children?
- Is it against the law for parents to beat children?
- What is the standard for the child friendly space?
- what causes child abuse

- what can be done?
- who to contact
- what is neglect
- how to keep the child safe when reporting
- What to do when teachers are beating children in schools?
- what is child abuse
- Do we have operational guidelines?
- Public education – what happens after the session?

Learning Objectives :-

Each one day session was organised so that by the end, participants should be expected to

- Define child abuse and explain their role in preventing child abuse.
- Recognise cultural and personal factors which may hinder appropriate interventions in cases of child abuse.
- Identify physical and behavioural indicators of child abuse.
- Learn some skills to interact with child survivors of abuse
- Discuss some ways to prevent child abuse
- Understand the legal framework for reporting child abuse

Methodology

The methodology followed the one established by the **Facilitator Resource Kit for Training Nurses in Child Protection** produced by Help & Shelter and available from <http://www.hands.org.gy/nursesresourcekit>. Additional information was provided to meet the participants' knowledge expectations.

Each session was intended to be participatory and interactive, and to also draw on participants' experiences with child abuse prevention and detection. There was active discussion on beating children as a form of discipline. This discussion resulted in several revelations including the feelings of powerlessness when parents hit children in front of the medical staff. There were discussions about children's vulnerability in situations in which there is intimate partner violence.

The opinion statements were discussed as a way of exploring cultural and personal factors which influence child abuse. The first day's evaluation had a comment about there being no role play to help to liven the session. The session was reorganised so that the role plays were used on Day 2 and Day 3 to demonstrate the skills to be used in detecting and questioning when abuse was suspected.

Evaluation

The evaluation sheets were submitted by participants on each day. The evaluation results are organised by the questions. Two participants left early and did not submit evaluations.

1. Did you understand the information presented?

There was a 100% **yes** response

2. Did you learn new ideas or skills?

All of the participants said that they learnt new ideas and skills. Some partners had similar training and were glad to recap.

3. Can you identify the signs of child abuse?

The participants all said that they could recognise the signs of abuse.

4. What can you do to help a child who is in need of protection?

Some persons did not answer the question. Other participants indicated the following and similar responses:-

- Report to the CPA
- Intervene somehow
- Report to the social worker at the clinic
- Call the police
- follow up on the case
- counsel them, provide medical attention, food

5. What do you think you can do to prevent child abuse?

The participants indicated the following :-

- Educate and intervene
- try to counsel parents and guardians
- bring them to the health centre to talk to social worker and others
- get more knowledge on the matter
- Listen to what children have to say
- report any abuse
- observe and look for signs
- Let people know that they are their brothers' keepers
- educating children about abuse

6. Did you like the way the session was facilitated?

All of the participants said they liked the way the session was facilitated. Many persons commented that they appreciated that the session was interactive and participatory. One person said 'Not 100%'.

7. What was your favourite part of this session?

The responses included :-

- the role playing
- the interaction with the CPA
- the group discussions
- Questions and answer sessions
- no favourite part, the entire session
- learning how to prevent child abuse

8. What did you not like about the session?

[Note : There was a delay in the delivery of the lunch on the first day. Participants reported on this and that there were no snacks available. Some participants did not appreciate vegetarian food]

Other responses included

- Nothing, everything was good
- Lengthy reading materials

- (No role play) - Day 1
- learning that numerous cases were not dealt with even when they were reported
- role play
- wish we had visual/graphic aids eg of abused children, some pics are spell binding
- Sessions could have been longer to go into more details

9. How will you use the knowledge you have gained?

The participants generally said they would share with other persons at work. Some said they would also share with family. Others noted that they would try to be more observant and put their knowledge into practice.

Recommendations :

During the discussions, there were several recommendations from the participants to ensure that the GPHC objectives are met to ensure that children not only receive medical care, but would also ensure that they would be protected from abuse. These are some of the recommendations :

- GPHC should develop a Child Protection Policy which includes the procedures for reporting and follow up. Some persons were not certain as to who to report to, eg when the police were involved or when the cases required specialist medical examinations¹
- There should be a 3 month follow up meeting with the participants (or at the work sites) to see how the training has been used, how the reporting has been going and any gaps. It was suggested to also include the CPA and even the police in this discussion.
- Some participants asked about certificates of attendance . Future training sessions could be modified so as to enable certification.
- The medical officers especially recommended that there be a CME or other specialist presentation which will educate them about the various laws concerning children and the healthcare profession. These laws include the Protection of the Children Act , the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act and the Sexual Offences Act.

Submitted by

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1 Help & Shelter has a child protection policy at <http://www.hands.org.gy/childprotectionpolicy> which is available as a template. GPHC might have more specific needs. The NGO Everychild/Childlink is also a resource for assistance in helping to develop a child protection policy.