Everybody Needs to Know: The Rationale, Research & Experience of Education for Abusive Head Injury Prevention

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In the past twenty years, Abusive Head Trauma (AHT) and Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) prevention efforts have been implemented in many areas worldwide.

E.g. Period of PURPLE Crying

and Western Sydney SBPP
Prevention of these forms of abusive injury has primarily been focused on educating both caregivers and professionals on the dangers of shaking and normal infant crying.
Two decades later, it is pertinent to examine this prevention work.

What does the literature say about the need for education? What is the efficacy of this education?

Mixed messages!
Abusive Head Injury - What we do know:

• Relatively frequent occurrence

• Recurrent- multiple instances of shaking/abuse common

• Surprisingly low recognition of dangers of shaking in both developing countries and developed countries
What we need as professionals:

• Awareness of crying norms, dangers of shaking, risk-factors for abuse, presentation for shaken infants
• Knowledge of prevention approaches and identification of abuse strategies
• Better knowledge of ‘at risk’-ness across socioeconomic, gender and culture
• Skills in conversing with at-risk families
• Better knowledge of learning application and behavioural regulation in the context of stress eg. accommodation stress, sick babies, etc
Prevention: The How

• Health promotion theory based: influences social and environmental factors to reduce risk

• Delivery of education to modify social risk factors

• Psychological models - help parents tolerate the stress of parenting and the impact of crying on parental stress

• Global programs: Materials have been delivered to birthing parents, families, professionals and communities

• Community Education about harsh discipline and about the causes of crying
Prevention: Dilemmas

• Knowledge to action
• Information effects in problematic circumstances
• The impact of lack of relationship support on parenting
• Targeting and focusing on needs
• Psychological models - help parents tolerate the stress of parenting and the impact of crying on parental stress
• Links with other forms of abuse and exposure - e.g. Family Violence
Prevention: Suggestions

See document and sample posters and business cards
Past Presentations

Overcoming challenges to prevent abusive head trauma with low-income parents
» Lúcia C.a. Williams, Nahara Rodrigues Laterza Lopes

Also article by Lucia and Nahara in Portuguese called - Brazilian Parent’s knowledge of abusive head trauma -

Building capacity to recognise and respond to traumatic head injuries in a paediatric hospital in Việt Nam
» Jennifer Fraser, Tara Flemington, Donna Waters, Cathrine Fowler

Potential for safety - Can education reduce trauma and harm in the assessment and investigation of unexplained traumatic injuries
Jenny Rose, Kim Sindel, Sue Foley

A systemic education model of prevention
» Sue Foley, Jenny Rose, Martine Simons-Coghill

Research Theses on Shaken Baby issues: Dr Melissa Kaltner, Dr Amanda Stephens and Nahara Rodrigues

Also websites eg Don't Shaken.Org