



A White Paper: Preventing Abuse – What's In It For US

**By Gregg Tyler Milligan, Author & Abuse Prevention Advocate
April 17, 2013**

<http://www.godmustbesleeping.com/>

This particular white paper will not begin with a group of statistics. I avoid them at all costs for several reasons, but the main reason is because they ‘anesthetize’ the reader to the true core of the issue. This white paper will present the facts. Here are some worthy of knowing:

- The [consequences] of abuse include impaired lifelong physical and mental health. I am a living example of this due to suffering from anxiety and chronic nightmares that not even medication can cure. The best I can expect is that it takes the edge off and allows me a more functional life.
- The social and occupational outcomes [will] ultimately slow a country's economic and social development. This specific fact is OFTEN overlooked by those in a position of power to Make A Difference. In other words, try and think of just one tax payer resource that ‘is not’ adversely affected by abuse of any kind (e.g., medical/cost of hospitalization, therapy/mental health treatment, legal, social welfare systems, penal system, abuse prevention organizations, shelters, protection services; such as fire, rescue, and police, - the list is endless). There is a State Budgetary Estimate based on a 2013 study involving the cost of just ‘Shelter’ services; {paraphrasing}, “Per Individual: It cost \$3,337 USD per month to care for a homeless person and \$207 USD per month to educate and employ.” This is not even specific to ABUSE.
- Cost Avoidance is the key; therefore, my question is: *Why Wouldn't We Do All We Can to Prevent Abuse [before] It Begins?*

Let us not delude ourselves. Preventing abuse is a multifaceted approach. Effective prevention programs support parents and teach positive parenting skills. Ongoing care of children and families can reduce the risk of abuse reoccurring and can minimize its consequences. Education is Key. Forget the moral, ethical, religious, etc., aspects of preventing abuse. We may simply begin with Education. It is what drove me to eventually Break the Cycle.

Everyone in the world knows the difference between Right and Wrong; therefore, we [must] do what is Right and Fix What is Wrong. This takes both Intellect and Compassion – which always results in Wisdom. No exceptions to this fact. Abuse of any kind includes physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, negligence and commercial or other exploitation, which results in actual or potential harm to a human's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.

The Scope of the Problem:

Abuse has always been a Global Problem with serious lifelong consequences. There are no reliable global estimates for the prevalence of abuse. Data for many countries is lacking. Abuse transcends all demographics, socioeconomic status, any and all cultural boundaries, and gender. It would be correct to say that abuse is, at the very least, without prejudice.

The Limitations of the Problem (Impediments to Advancements made in the Prevention of Abuse):

People believe abuse is complex and difficult to study. It is not. Again, everyone in the world knows the difference between Right and Wrong. The geographical location of a person has no discernible bearing on ‘making a positive difference.’ No matter how limited resources may be in a particular geographical area – each area is ruled by a standing government or organization – made up of humans who can Do the Right Thing.

Method:

This begins with Compassion. Once embraced by those in a position of power – anything is possible.

Hindrances:

- Ignorance

- Lack of Compassion
- Those in a Position of Power to Act Responsibility and Ethically

Having established that foundational, fact-based understanding, it is now appropriate to introduce {some} supporting statistics. International studies reveal that approximately 20% of women and 5–10% of men report being sexually abused as children, while 25–50% of all children report being physically abused. Additionally, many children are subject to emotional abuse (sometimes referred to as psychological abuse) and to neglect. Every year, there are an estimated 31,000 homicide deaths in children under 15. This number underestimates the true extent of the problem, as a significant proportion of deaths due to abuse are [incorrectly] attributed to falls, burns, drowning and other causes.

In armed conflict and refugee settings, girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence, exploitation and abuse by combatants, security forces, members of their communities, aid workers and others.

Consequences:

Abuse of any kind causes suffering to children and families and has long-term consequences. Abuse causes stress that is associated with disruption in early brain development. Extreme stress can impair the development of the nervous and immune systems. Consequently, as adults, abused children are at increased risk for behavioral, physical and mental health problems such as:

- ✓ Perpetrating or being a victim of violence – repeating the cycle
- ✓ Depression
- ✓ Smoking
- ✓ Obesity
- ✓ High-risk sexual behaviors
- ✓ Unintended pregnancy
- ✓ Alcohol and drug misuse
- ✓ Behavioral and mental health consequences
- ✓ Heart disease
- ✓ Cancer
- ✓ Sexually transmitted diseases
- ✓ Suicide

Moving Forward:

Abuse Prevention and Treatment [must] involve education at All Levels. In addition to this, there must be collaboration with city, state, federal, and global organizations and governments. We must also establish a significant number of advocates to provide increased international support for and investment in evidence-based abuse prevention and treatment. This, in particular, is one of the main reasons I am now continuing my advocacy – which began in the U.S. after publication of my two books, and am now living and working to draw attention to this blight on human existence in S.E. Asia.

Please join me. This is a fight that is crucial the very existence of the human race. And, last time I checked, [all] of us on Earth are part of this amazing race.

Gregg Tyler Milligan is an internationally-known author and child abuse prevention advocate. He has written two books, *A Beautiful World*, detailing his childhood and the horrific suffering Milligan endured at the hands of his mother and strangers. Milligan later completed the continuation to *A Beautiful World*, describing his next eleven years. Both books are published under the same volume, titled *God Must be Sleeping*. Milligan is a member of the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN) Speakers Bureau and continues to spread his message of hope.

In his words, "Please remember, the reason we are here is to save one another – Break the cycle." More information can be found at godmustbesleeping.com/.