Overview of Family & Abuse
- Majority of abuse occurs within the family
- Home the most dangerous place for a child
- Most parents do **NOT** abuse their children
- No qualifications needed to be a parent
- Three factors put families at risk for abuse:
  - Parental characteristics
  - Child characteristics
  - The family ecosystem

Parental Characteristics
- History of abuse in the parent’s family
- Marital relationship in trouble
- Low self-esteem
- Unrealistic expectations of the child
- Nonchalant about the injury
- Parent not knowledgeable about normal child development

Parental Characteristics
- Drug and/or alcohol use
- Temperament of the parent
- Biological factors
  - Low IQ
  - Depression or other mental illness
  - Hormonal imbalance
  - Physical illness
- Very young or immature parent
- Punitive or neglectful parenting practice

Parenting Style – Baumrind
Authoritative Parenting
- Parenting style based on interaction of “support” and “control”
- Authoritative
  - High support/moderate control
  - Directive, warm, reinforcement rather than punishment, explanations

Authoritative Parenting
Child Outcomes
- Higher self-esteem
- Independent/Self-reliant
- Socially competent
- Co-operative/Friendly
- Less likely to use drugs, be promiscuous, etc
Parenting Style – Baumrind

Authoritarian Parenting
- High control/Low support
- Parents more likely to use corporal punishment
- Parents more likely to demand obedience

Child Outcomes
- Low self-esteem
- Angry and defiant
- Aggressiveness
- Behavior problems
- Neurotic

Permissive-Indulgent Parenting
- High support/Low control
- Accepting, warm, rarely punish, avoid use of power. Few rules.

Child Outcomes
- Dependent but friendly
- Self-esteem fluctuates
- More likely to experiment with drugs and sex
- May exhibit behavior problems
- May have issues with identity development

Permissive-Neglectful Parenting
- Low support/Low control
- Do not support the child
- May ignore or actively reject the child

Child Outcomes
- Low self-esteem
- Angry
- Socially incompetent
- Substance abuse
- Suicidal ideation
- “Expendable child syndrome”
Circumplex Model

Child Characteristics
- Normal Child at Risk
  - Difficult or unplanned pregnancy
  - “Wrong” sex
  - “Ugly” child
  - Born out of wedlock
  - Step/foster/adopted child
  - High activity level

Child Characteristics
- Abnormal Child at Risk
  - Premature
  - Congenital anomalies
  - Multiple births
  - Child who is seriously ill
- Difficult Child (10%)  
  - Fussy
  - Hyperactive

Goodness-Of-Fit
- Parent
- Child

Family Ecosystem
- Unemployment
- Social isolation
- Decreased income
- Unsafe neighborhood
- Crowding
- Family health problems

Sibling Abuse
- Most common type of abuse
- More than 50% experience it
- Abuser usually older and bigger
- May reflect what parents are doing
- Rate decreases as age increases
- Most common when older sib in charge
Undetected Problem

- The abuse is not validated
- Normal play can escalate into aggression
- Abuse or sibling rivalry?
  - Abuse becomes common and repetitive
  - Reaction of either sibling can make it abusive

Types of Sibling Abuse

- Physical
  - Hitting, biting, slapping, shoving, punching
  - Tickling
  - Life threatening actions
- Emotional
  - Name calling, ridicule, degradation
  - Promoting a fear
  - Threatening
  - Destruction of toys or belongings
  - Torture of destruction of pet
- Sexual

Profile of Abusive Parents

- Negative interactions with family members
- Discipline is punitive, inconsistent, and does not match child’s wrongdoing
- Communication with child impaired
- Believe that the child is deliberately annoying the parent
- Disregard child’s needs
- Often isolated from family and friends

Profile of Abusive Parents Emotional

- Angry, easily frustrated
- Flattened affect
- Unhappy
- Distressed
- Depressed
- Low self-esteem

Profile of Abused Child

- Aggressive, at risk for being violent
- Behavior problems, delinquency
- Precocious sexual behavior
- Developmental delays
- Academic difficulties
- Impaired social relationships
- Boundary issues

Profile of Abused Child Emotional

- Insecure/disorganized attachment
- Depression
- Learned helplessness
- Inability to empathize
- Low self-esteem
- PTSD