Child Abuse

By Andrea Grall
Questions

- According to *Courage to Heal*, why do adults have psychological problems?
- What is an environmental factor leading to schizophrenia?
Overview

- False Memories
- Dissociative Identity Disorder
- Schizophrenia
What are false memories?

- Distortions of an actual experience
- Confabulation of an imagined one
How are false memories created?

- By confusing or mixing fragments of memory events
- Error in source memory
- Through dreams
- Through the prodding, leading and suggestion of therapists and counselors
The controversy...

- *Courage to Heal*
  by Ellen Bass and Laura Davis

- Elizabeth Loftus
Courage to Heal

- There is no such thing as the false memory syndrome
- Psychological problems as adults are due to sex abuse in the child’s environment
Courage to Heal

“There is no such thing as a ‘false memory syndrome’. There is psychosis; there is hallucination and delusion, and there is outright lying and malingering... There is, however, no ‘false memory syndrome’ and no real evidence to support...” -Mary Harvey
Courage to Heal

- Memories have always been there, they’ve been repressed
- Trauma of abuse is reflected in everyday lives
- Some abuse victims have permanent physical damage
Elizabeth Loftus

- Nadean Cool’s false memories
- Through hypnosis and suggestive techniques
- Memories of having been in a satanic cult, of eating babies, of being raped, of having sex with animals and of being forced to watch eight year old murdered
- More than 120 personalities
Let's experiment...

- Do you remember going to Disneyland?
- Do you remember Mickey Mouse?
- How about Bugs Bunny?
- Do you remember hugging him and the way his fur felt?
If you remember Bugs Bunny, you’ve just had a false memory planted.

Bugs Bunny is not at Disneyland
Creating false memories

- False memories are easy to plant
  - First, there are demands to remember
  - Second, imagining events can be encouraged if an event is not remembered
  - Finally, it is encouraged not to think about whether the memory is real or not
Psychotherapists

- Psychological disorders and problems due to repression of child sex abuse
- Fragmented memories of infant abuse can cause psychological damage in adults
Dissociative Identity Disorder

- Lack of connection in thoughts, memories, feelings, actions or identity
- Can be any level from daydreaming to creating alternative selves
Genetic Influence

- Very little
- Depression types run in families
  - Suggestion of heritability
Environmental Influences

- Violence so extreme, the child cannot absorb the trauma
- Separate themselves from the abuse
- Causes: repressed memory of childhood sexual abuse
Dissociative Identity Disorder

- The longer the abuse continues and the more severe, more alters are created.
- The victim is not always aware of these alters
- Alters emerge at different times
Schizophrenia

- A severe and disabling brain disease
- Multiple genes involved
- Prenatal implications
- Perinatal implications
- Nonspecific stressors
- Possible link to chromosome 13 and 16
Genetic influences

- 1% chance in population
- 10% chance if parent or sibling is schizophrenic reared in same household
- 10% chance if reared by adoptive parents and biological parent is schizophrenic
- 40% chance in MZ twins
- Strong genetic effect
Schizophrenia

- Not just a genetic disease
- Caused by human relationships
Environmental Influences

- People who are abused as children are more prone to developing schizophrenia.
- High rate of physical and sexual abuse among children later diagnosed with schizophrenia.
- Changes in brain found in abused children were similar to those found in adults with schizophrenia.
Environmental influences

- Childhood abuse and neglect results in permanent physical change to the developing brain.
- Changes in brain structure appear to be significant enough to cause psychological and emotional problems in adulthood.
Survivors of Abuse

- Abnormal development of the left hemisphere of the brain
  - associated with depression and memory problems
- More likely to experience epileptic seizures caused by changes in the limbic system
  - controls emotions
- Hippocampus damaged and brain chemistry affected
Therefore...

“Childhood abuse and family history of schizophrenia may both be seen as additive risk factors for the development of schizophrenia at some stage in the life span.” -Amanda Hall
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