

TYPES OF RELATIONAL TRAUMA

PHYSICAL TRAUMA -- The body is not treated with respect. Examples: striking with an implement, slapping, tickling into hysteria, shaking a child, hair pulling, head banging, too much touching (to the point the child wants to get away), being intrusive physically or lack of appropriate physical nurturing, giving child the message "I don't want to touch you."

SEXUAL TRAUMA:

***Physical Sexual** – hands on activity with child, includes sexual intercourse, oral sex, anal sex, masturbation of a child, having a child masturbate an adult, sexual touching (fondling), sexual kissing and sexual hugging, incest by family member or molestation of a child under age 18 with someone outside the family.

***Overt Explicit Sexual** -- voyeurism, peeping, exhibitionism – flashing, nudity in the family, parent gives off energy that feels overwhelming, doesn't feel safe when undressing. Family rules of no privacy.

***Covert Sexual** – occurs when a parent does not set appropriate sexual boundaries for a child. Verbal includes inappropriate sex talk, innuendos, joking, grilling after dates. Information not given about sex or giving too much information too soon. Give message that masturbation is evil, shameful. Child is aware of parent's sexual behavior – hear/see. Covert-sexual trauma occurs when a child witnesses sexual trauma.

***Emotional Sexual Trauma:** Drawing a child into parent's relationship. Confide in child about relationship, child feels need to take care of parent. Daddy's little princess plays surrogate wife. Son feels need to take care of mom while dad is gone.

EMOTIONAL TRAUMA – A major caregiver refuses to allow a child to express feelings, shames a child for his/her feelings or demonstrates improper expression of his/her feelings in front of the child.

***Verbal** – attacked by someone else's mouth—name calling, sarcasm, yelling, ridicule (or hear others being ridiculed). It is just as abusive to listen or watch.

***Demanding perfection from a child**

***Over-controlling child**

***Social** -- parent interferes with access to peers, can't bring friends home because ashamed of parents or fearful of what they'll do.

***Neglect or abandonment** – Parent does not take care of a child’s basic needs. Needs for time, attention and direction are not met. Parent commits suicide.

SPIRITUAL TRAUMA: Includes a parent or caregiver being disrespectful of a child’s reality, demanding to be a child’s Higher Power, demanding perfection or over-indulging a child. Parent does not follow the established family rules or values as though he/she is above the rules, giving message to “do as I say, not as I do,.” Family without rules or rules that are anti-social, skewed or crazy. Child’s thinking is attacked. Being physically, sexually or emotionally abused by a parent, surrogate, parent or religious person. All relational trauma is spiritual trauma because it teaches a child to be one up or one down.

OTHER TYPES OF TRAUMA – include peer or social trauma for reasons of race, religion, sexuality and/or physical appearance.

adapted from Pia Mellody