



# Overview of Child Abuse

Theresa Costello, MA  
National Resource Center for Child Protective Services  
A Service of the Children's Bureau  
June 13, 2006



# Presentation Outline



- Definitions
- Domestic Violence
- Data – National and Mississippi
- Fatalities
- Long-term consequences
- Recurrence
- Methamphetamine impact
- Growing Healthy Communities



# Definitions



# Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect



- Child abuse and neglect are defined by both Federal and State law, and tribal code.
- The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) is the Federal legislation that provides minimum standards for the definition of child abuse and neglect that States must incorporate in their statutory definitions.



# CAPTA DEFINITION



- Under CAPTA, child abuse and neglect means, at a minimum: ANY RECENT ACT OR FAILURE TO ACT ON THE PART OF A PARENT OR CARETAKER, WHICH RESULTS IN DEATH, SERIOUS PHYSICAL OR EMOTIONAL HARM, SEXUAL ABUSE, OR EXPLOITATION, OR AN ACT OR FAILURE TO ACT WHICH PRESENTS AN IMMINENT RISK OF SERIOUS HARM.



# Sexual abuse



- The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct or;
- The rape, and in cases of caretaker or interfamilial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children, or incest with children.



# Physical abuse



- Any non-accidental injury to the child, and can include striking, kicking, burning, or biting the child or any action that results in a physical impairment of the child.



# Neglect



- Frequently defined in terms of deprivation of adequate food, clothing, shelter, or medical care.
- Several states distinguish between failure to provide based on the financial inability to do so and the failure to provide for no apparent financial reason. The latter constitutes neglect.



# Emotional Abuse



- All States and territories except Georgia and Washington include emotional maltreatment as part of their definition of abuse or neglect
- Typically defined as injury to the psychological capacity or emotional stability of the child as evidenced by an observable or substantial change in behavior, emotional response, or cognition, or as evidenced by anxiety, depression, withdrawal, or aggressive behavior.



# Substance Abuse



- Substance abuse is an element of the definition of child abuse or neglect in some States.
- Circumstances that can be considered abuse or neglect include:
  - Manufacture of a controlled substance in the presence of a child or on the premises occupied by a child



# Substance abuse, continued

- Allowing a child to be present where the chemicals or equipment for the manufacture of controlled substances are used or stored
- Selling, distributing, or giving drugs or alcohol to a child
- Use of a controlled substance by a caregiver that impairs the caregiver's ability to adequately care for the child
- Exposure of the child to drug paraphernalia, the criminal sale or distribution of drugs, or drug-related activity



# Abandonment



- 18 States and DC include abandonment in their definition of neglect, while 13 States, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands provide separate definitions.
- When the parent's identity or whereabouts are unknown, the child has been left by the parent in circumstances where the child suffers harm, or the parent has failed to maintain contact with the child or to provide reasonable support for a specified period of time.



# Standards for reporting

- Varies among the States.
- Definitions include harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare
- Acts or omissions, recklessly fails or refuses to act, willfully causes or permits, and failure to provide
- These standards guide mandatory reporters in their decision on whether to make a report to child protection...



# Exceptions



- Financial inability to provide for a child is exempted from the definition of neglect in some States.
- In 14 States, DC, American Samoa, and Northern Mariana Islands, physical discipline of a child, as long as it is reasonable and causes no bodily injury to the child, is an exception to the definition of abuse.





# Signs and Symptoms



# The child...



- Shows sudden changes in behavior or school performance
- Has not received help for physical or medical problems brought to the parents' attention
- Has learning problems that cannot be attributed to physical or psychological causes.
- Is always watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen
- Lacks adult supervision
- Is overly compliant, passive, withdrawn
- Comes to school or other activities early, stays late and does not want to go home.



# The Parent

- Shows little concern for the child
- Denies existence of or blames the child for child's problems in school or at home
- Asks teacher or other caretakers to use harsh physical discipline if the child misbehaves
- Sees the child as entirely bad, worthless, burdensome
- Demands a level of physical or academic performance the child cannot achieve
- Looks primarily to the child for care, attention, and satisfaction of emotional needs.



# The Parent and the Child



- Rarely touch or look at each other
- Consider their relationship entirely negative
- State they do not like each other
- See handout for additional indicators of physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect.





# Children and Domestic Violence



# Domestic Violence.....



- Generally defined as “a pattern of assaultive and/or coercive behaviors, including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, as well as economic coercion, that adults use against their intimate partners to gain power and control in that relationship”



# Domestic violence, continued....

- Approximately 40 States, DC and the US Territories include children as a class of protected persons in some way within their definitions of domestic violence
- Research shows that even when children are not the direct targets of violence in the home, they can be harmed by witnessing the occurrence of such violence.
- Children who witness domestic violence can suffer severe emotional and developmental difficulties similar to children who are the direct victims of abuse.
- In many states, a conviction of domestic violence in the presence of a child may result in harsher penalties.
- For additional information see handout Children and Domestic Violence





# Data – National and Mississippi



# Child abuse reports – National data

- For Federal fiscal year 2004, an estimated 3 million children were alleged to have been abused or neglected and received investigations or assessments by State and local child protective services agencies.
- Approximately 872,000 children were determined to be victims of child maltreatment.



# A little good news....



- During the past 3 years, the rate of victimization and the number of victims have been decreasing.
- The rate of victimization per 1,000 children in the national population has dropped from 12.5 children in 2001 to 11.9 children in 2004.



# Types of maltreatment

- 60% neglect
- 18% physical abuse
- 10% sexual abuse
- 7% emotional abuse
- 15% "other"
- Some children experienced more than one type of maltreatment



# Characteristics of victims



- Birth to 3 years old highest rate of victimization 16.1 per 1,000 children of the same age group in the national population.
- Girls slightly more likely to be victims than boys.



# Characteristics of victims, cont.



- African-American children, Pacific Islander children and American Indian or Alaska Native children had the highest rates of victimization at 19.9, 17.6, and 15.5 per 1,000 children of the same race or ethnicity, respectively.
- White children and Hispanic children had rates of approximately 10.7 and 10.4 per 1,000 children of the same race or ethnicity.



# Perpetrators



- 79% of perpetrators were parents
- 7% other relatives
- 4% unmarried partners
- 5% "other"
  
- 58% women
- 42% men



# Mississippi data....

	2000	2001	2002	2003
Children subject of a report referred for Investigation or Assessment	30,670	31,086	18,009	24,503
Rate of substantiation (per 1000 children in state population)	8.2	5.9	5.3	7.8
Children who died as a result of abuse or neglect	12	5	7	13



# Mississippi data, continued

	2000	2001	2002	2003
Child population (under 18)	775,187	762,951	761,589	761,268
Percent of children living in families below poverty	16.4	23.2	25.3	28.6





# Facts about children in foster care



# Facts.....

- 518,000 children were in the US foster care system on September 30, 2004.
- The average age of children in care is 10.1 years
- 53% are male, 47% female
- As a percentage, there are more children of color in the foster care system than in the general US population. However, child abuse and neglect occur at about the same rate in all racial/ethnic groups



# Facts...



- Children of color are likely to stay in foster care for longer periods of time and are less likely to be either returned home or adopted
- Nationally, African-American children are 4 times as likely and American Indian children about 3.5 times as likely as white children to be in state protective custody.





# Child abuse and neglect fatalities



# Fatalities, the most tragic consequence



- During 2004 an estimated 1,490 children died (compared to 1,460 in 2003) from abuse or neglect
- 81% of the children killed were younger than 4 years of age; 11.5% were 4-7 years old; 4.1% were 8-11 years old; 3.4% were 12-17 years old.



# Race and ethnicity of Fatalities



- 43.2% White
- 27.3% African-American
- 18.6% Hispanic
- 4.8% American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian, Pacific Islander, "other" and multiple race



# Perpetrator Relationships of Fatalities



- 78.9% one or more parents
- 31.3% mother acting alone
- 10.6% non-parental perpetrators (other relative, foster parent, residential facility staff, "other", legal guardian)
- 3.3% male partners of a parent



# Maltreatment types of fatalities



- 35.5% Neglect only
- 30.2 % Multiple maltreatment types
- 28.3% Physical abuse only
- 3.9% Psychological maltreatment only, other only or unknown only
- 1.4% Medical neglect only
- .8% Sexual abuse only




# Child fatalities - summary



- Exact number of children affected is uncertain, obviously a serious problem
- Fatalities disproportionately affect young children and are most often caused by one or both of the child's parents.
- Child fatality review teams appear to be among the most promising approaches to responding to and preventing child abuse and neglect fatalities.





# Long-Term Consequences of Child Abuse and Neglect



# Long-term consequences....

- Physical, psychological, behavioral and societal consequences. Impossible to separate completely.
- Most common consequences...



# Physical Health Consequences



- Bruises, cuts, broken bones, hemorrhage, even death.
- Shaken baby syndrome (infants)
- Impaired brain development
- Chronic abuse can cause “hyperarousal” response by certain areas of the brain resulting in hyperactivity, sleep disturbances, anxiety, increased vulnerability to post-traumatic stress, ADHD, conduct disorder, learning and memory difficulties.



# Physical health consequences, cont.



- Poor physical health – a study of 700 children who had been in foster care for 1 year or more found more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the children had some kind of recurring physical or mental health problem.
- A study of 9500 HMO patients showed a relationship between various forms of household dysfunction (including child abuse) and long-term health problems such as sexually transmitted diseases, heart disease, cancer, chronic lung disease, skeletal fractures, and liver disease.



# Psychological Consequences



- Poor mental and emotional health – depression, anxiety, eating disorders, suicide.
- Cognitive difficulties – language development and academic achievement
- Social difficulties – children who are abused often do not form secure attachments – lead to later relationship difficulties.



# Behavioral Consequences



- Difficulties during adolescence – delinquency, teen pregnancy, low academic achievement, drug use, mental health problems
- Juvenile delinquency and adult criminality – abuse and neglect increases the likelihood of adult criminal behavior by 28% and violent crime by 30%



# Behavioral Consequences, cont.



- Alcohol and other drug use – research consistently reflects an increased likelihood that abused and neglected children will smoke cigarettes, abuse alcohol, or take illicit drugs.
- Abusive behavior – estimated that approximately 1/3 of abused and neglected children will eventually victimize their own children.



# Societal Consequences



- Direct costs – child welfare system to investigate, judicial system, law enforcement, health and mental health systems to respond and treat. 2001 report estimates cost at \$24 billion per year.
- Indirect costs – long-term economic consequences – juvenile and adult criminal activity; mental illness; substance abuse; domestic violence; loss of productivity. Estimated at \$69 billion per year.



# Factors affecting the consequences



- Not all abused and neglected children will experience long-term consequences. Outcomes of individual cases vary widely and are affected by a combination of factors including:
  - Child's age and developmental status when the abuse/neglect occurred
  - Type of abuse



# Factors, continued

- Frequency, duration and severity of abuse
- Relationship between victim and his or her abuser
- Resilience
  - Optimism, self esteem, intelligence, creativity, humor and independence
- Protective Factors
  - Family or social environment
  - Child's access to social supports
  - Community well-being (neighborhood stability and access to health care)



# Recurrence



# Recurrence (who comes back)

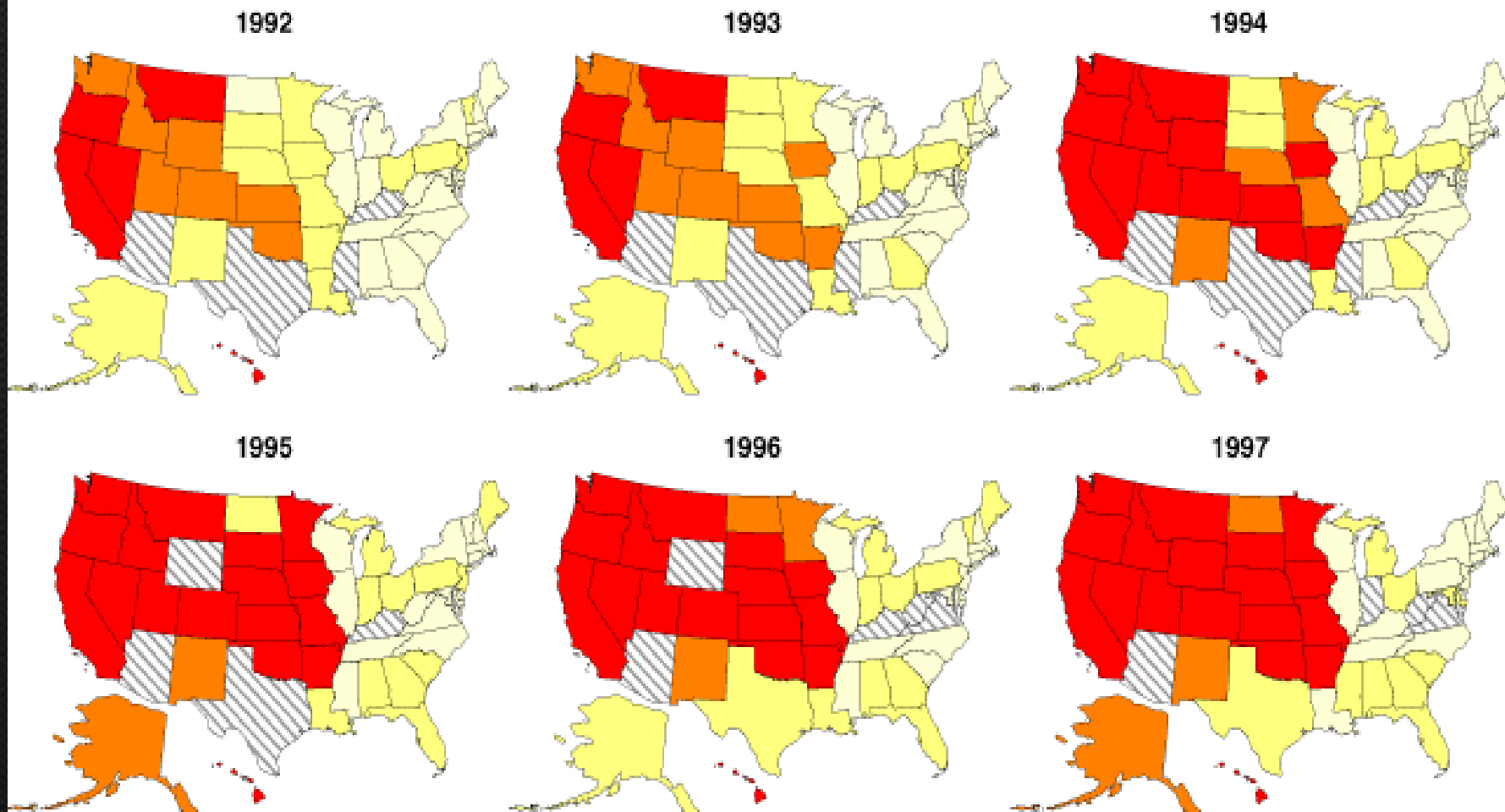
- Younger children
- Neglect cases
- Single parents or caretakers
- Alcohol or drug abuse involved



# Methamphetamine



# Eastward Spread of Methamphetamine



## Admissions per 100,000 population

NOTES: See Chapter 2.

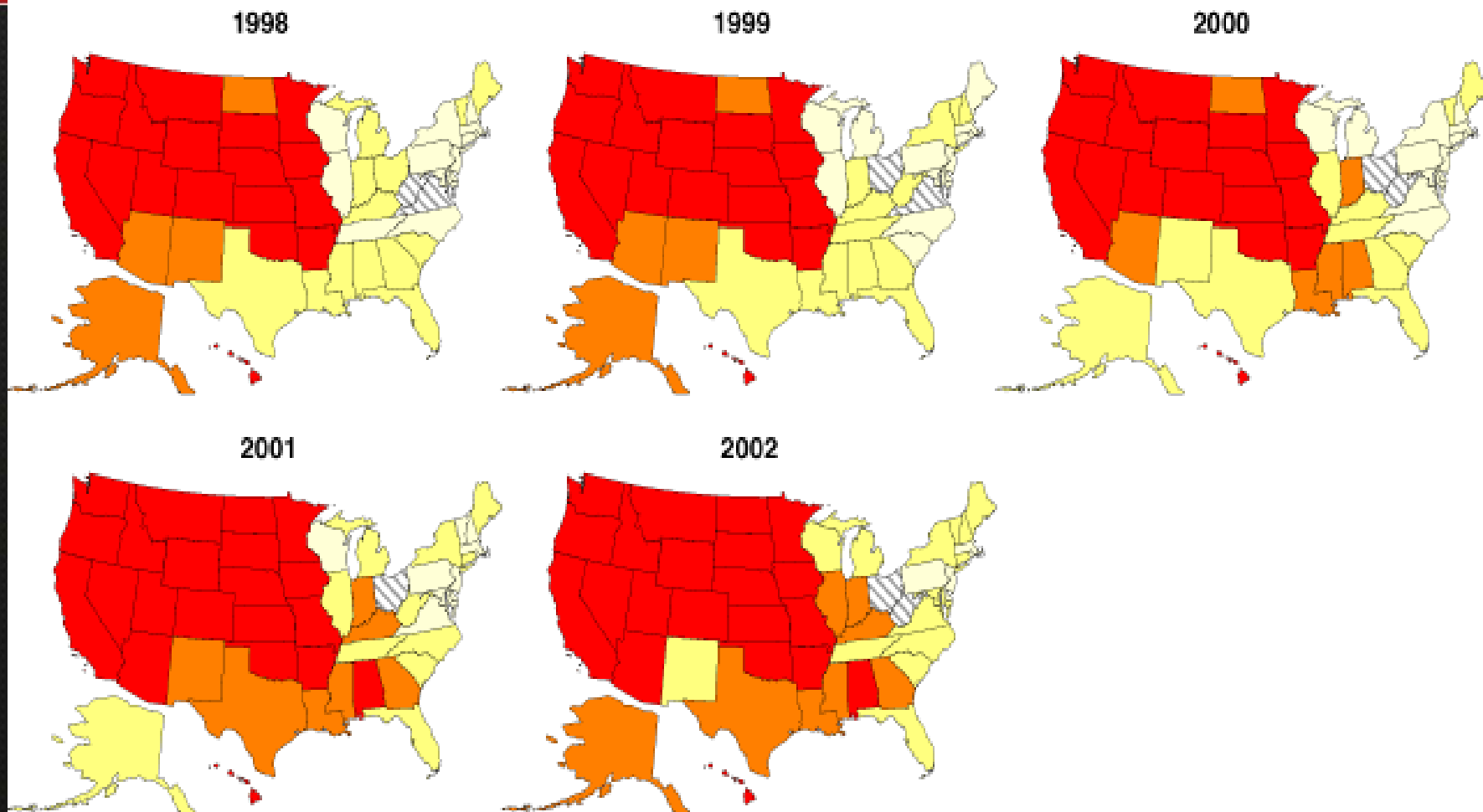
SOURCE: Office of Applied Studies, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS)—3.01.04.

Incomplete data 



KEY YEAR: 1992

# Eastward Spread of Methamphetamine



## Admissions per 100,000 population

NOTES: See Chapter 2.

SOURCE: Office of Applied Studies, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS)—3.01.04.

Incomplete data 



KEY YEAR: 1992

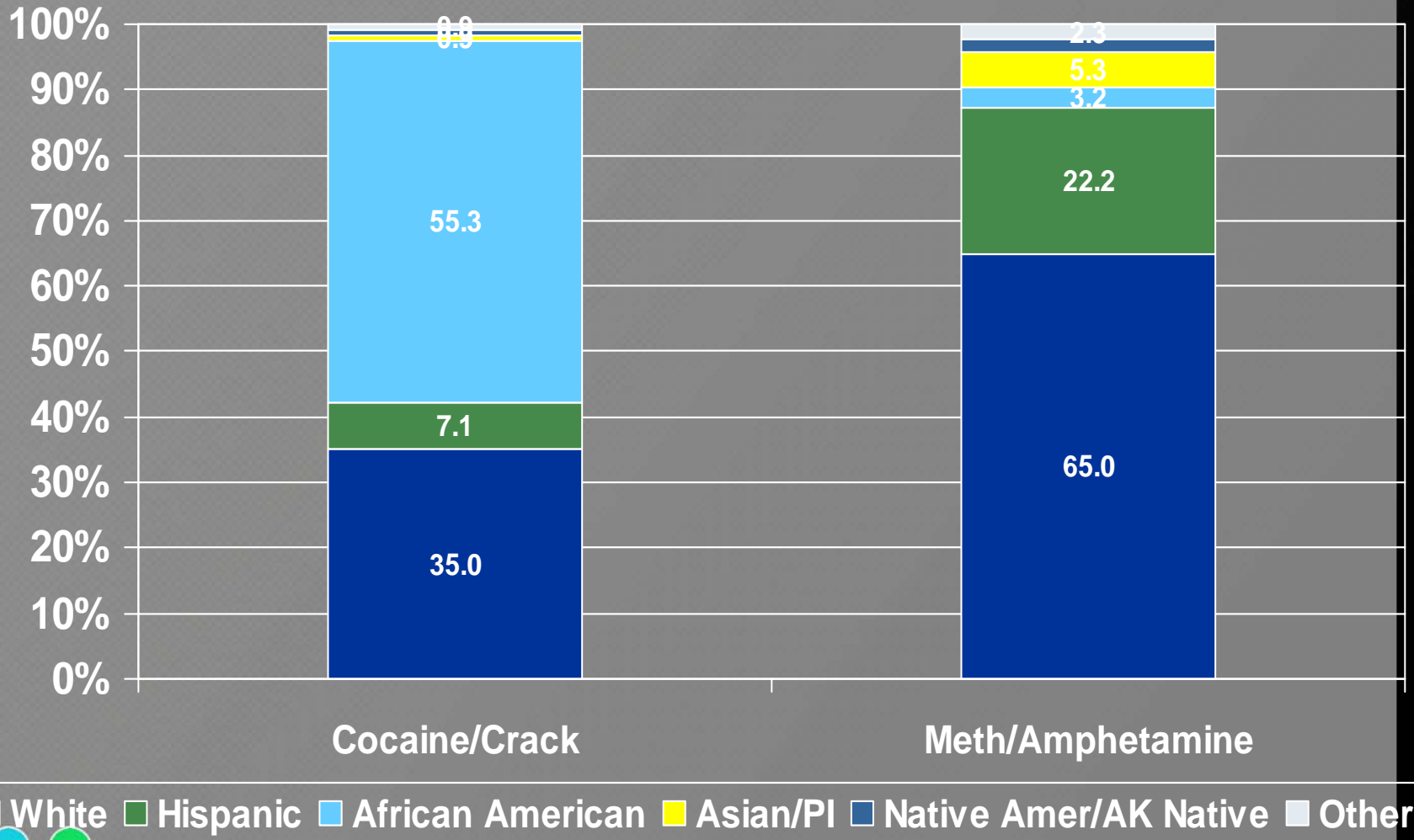
# Impact of Increasing Methamphetamine Use



- Methamphetamine is affecting communities that have not experienced prior stimulant drug problems
- Child welfare agencies are dealing with more cases involving methamphetamine



# Smoked Cocaine/Crack and Meth/Amphetamine Treatment Admissions by Race/Ethnicity



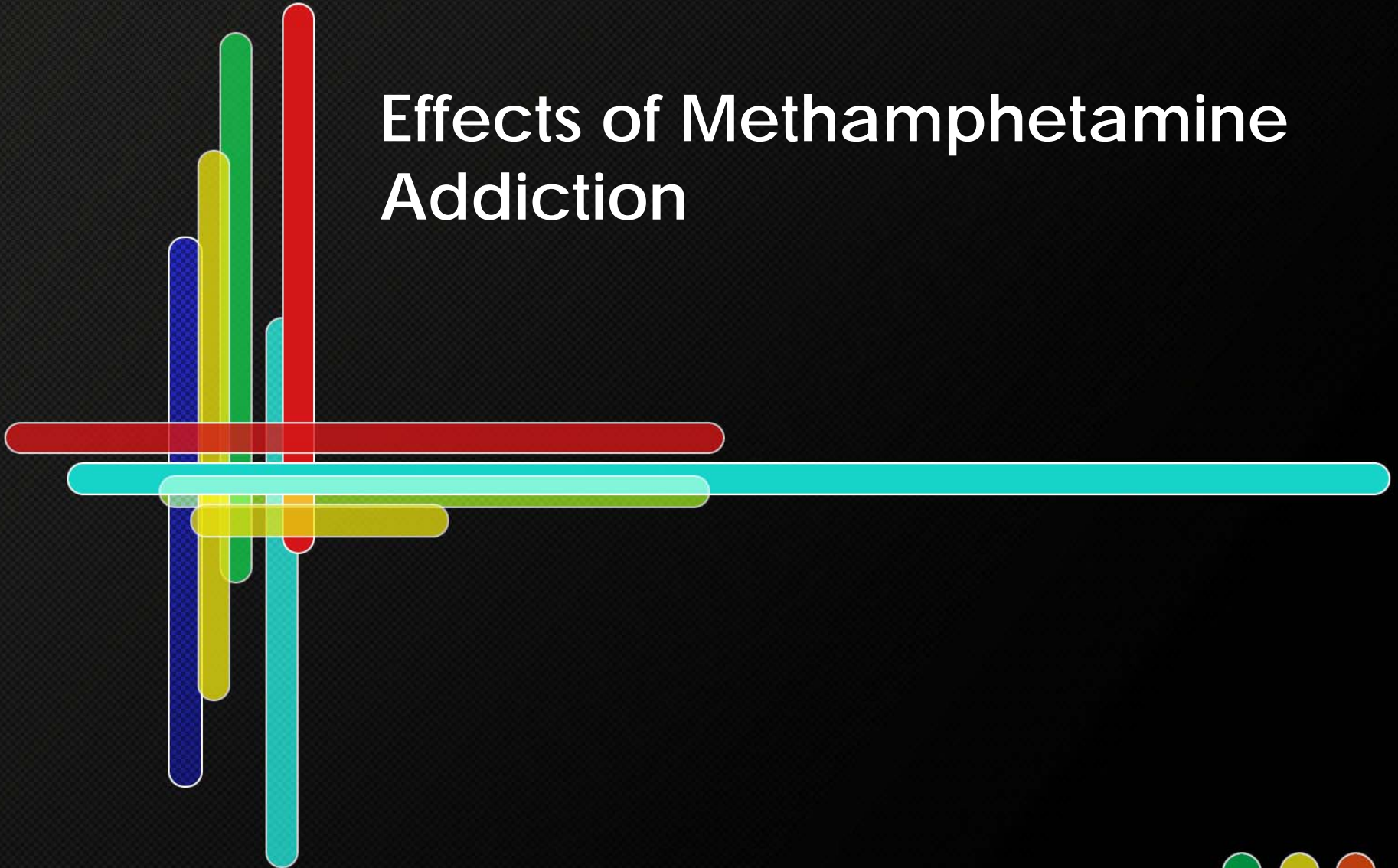
## Gender Differences



- 47% of admissions are women
- Since women are often caretakers of children, more children are likely affected.



# Effects of Methamphetamine Addiction



# Short-Term Effects of Methamphetamine

## PHYSICAL

Heart rate  
Respiration  
Blood pressure  
Pupil size  
Sensory acuity  
Energy

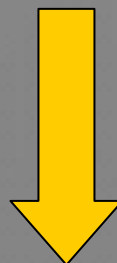
Appetite  
Sleep

Reaction time

## PSYCHOLOGICAL

Confidence  
Alertness  
Mood  
Sex drive  
Energy  
Talkativeness

Boredom  
Loneliness  
Timidity



# Methamphetamine Chronic Physical Effects

- Tremors
- Weakness
- Headaches
- Sweating
- Coughing
- Dry Mouth
- Oily skin/complexion
- Burned lips/sore nose
- Dental
- Weight Loss/Anorexia



# Methamphetamine

## Chronic Psychological Effects

- Confusion
- Concentration
- Hallucinations
- Fatigue
- Memory loss
- Insomnia
- Irritability
- Paranoia
- Panic reactions
- Depression
- Anger
- Psychosis



# Cognitive Effects

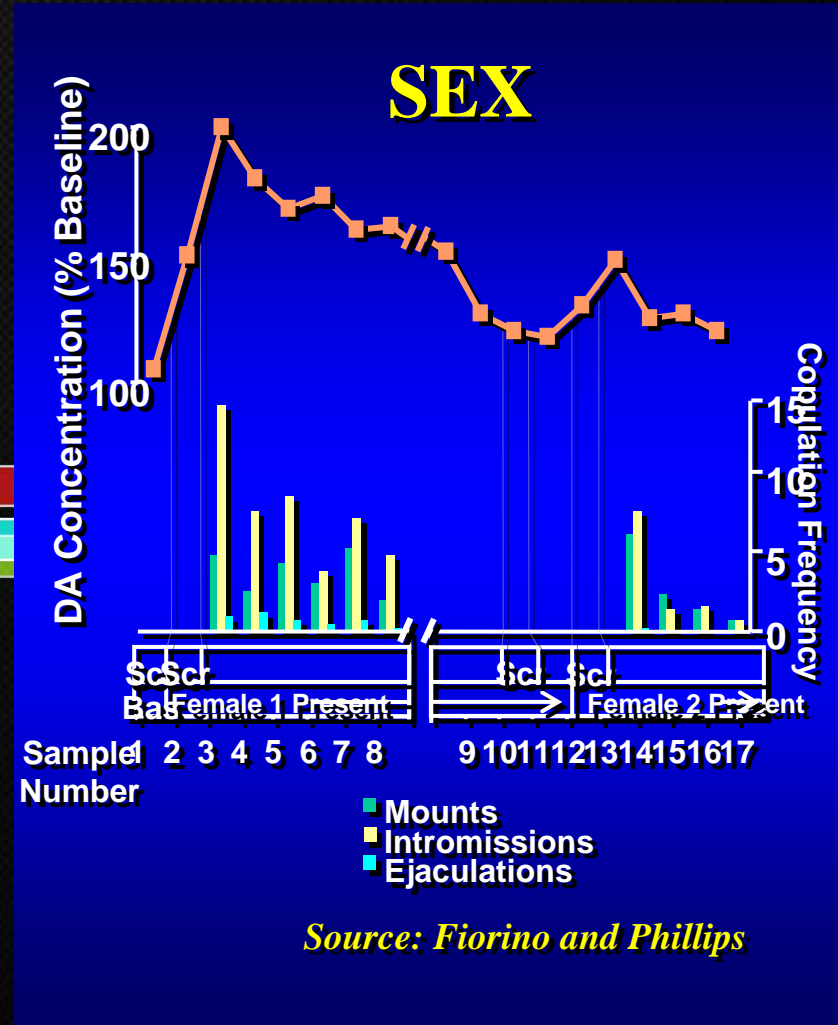
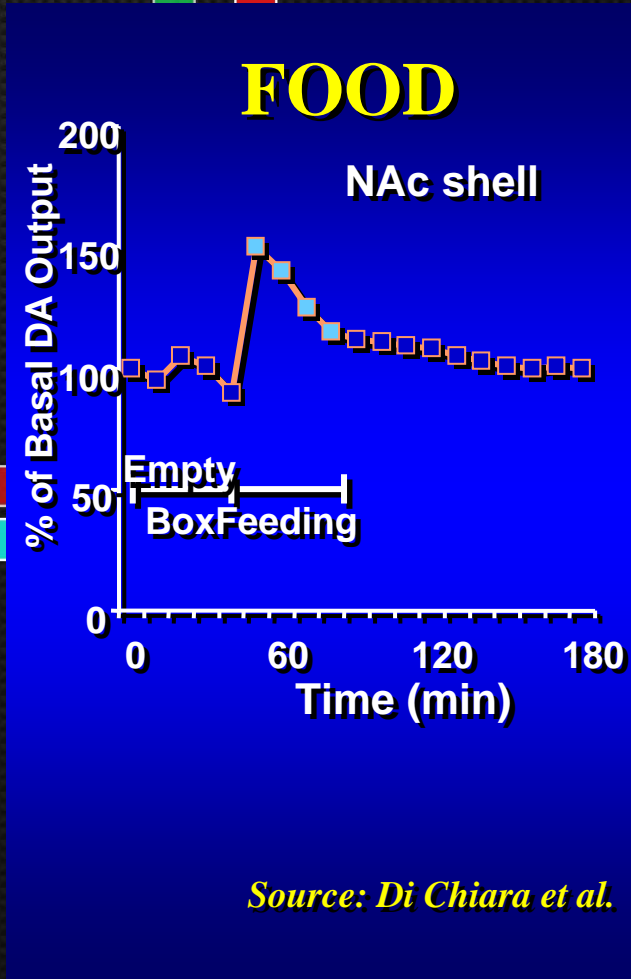
- Decreased ability to:
  - Recognize and recall words and pictures
  - Make inferences
  - Manipulate information
  - Ignore irrelevant information
  - Learn from experience
- Users and people in early recovery may find it difficult to:
  - Pay attention
  - Comprehend spoken and written information
  - Remember information

# Why Do People Continue to Use in the Face of Such Serious Consequences?

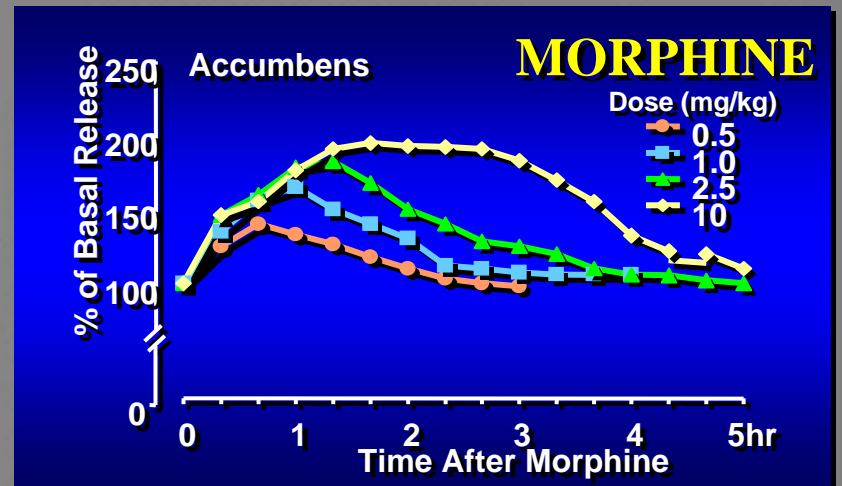
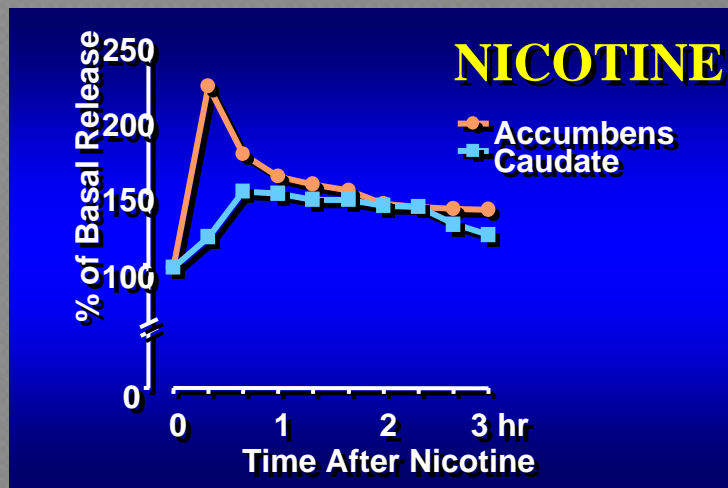
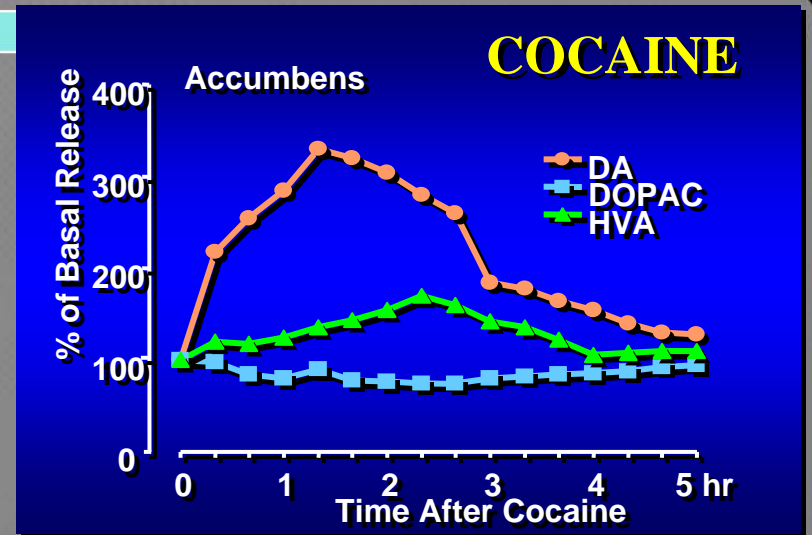
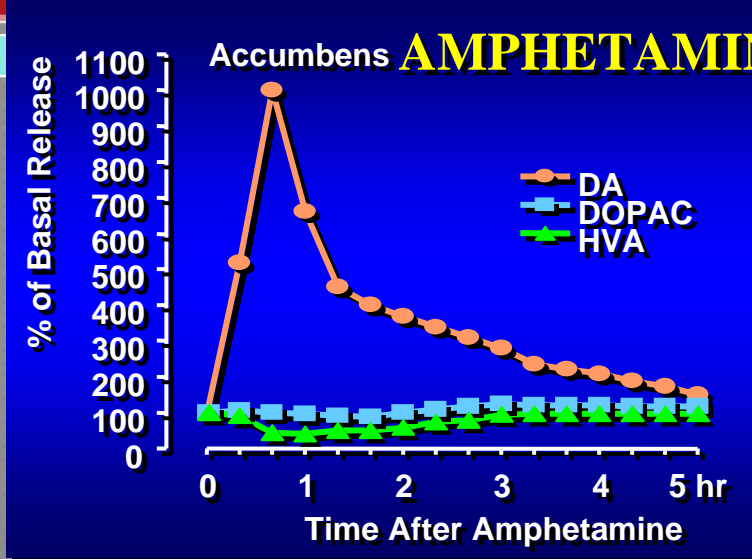
- Use results in very high rate of dopamine release
- 3 times more dopamine released than for cocaine, 4 times that of morphine
- Intense drug craving, combined with paranoia, and lack of tools to quit using



# Natural Rewards Elevate Dopamine Levels



# Effects of Drugs on Dopamine Levels





# Growing Healthy Communities



# "An integrated response to family violence"

- To examine the role of collaboration in the delivery of human services
- To enhance the skills and knowledge of professionals and para-professionals in the delivery of human services
- To examine research utilization in collaboration, implementation and advocacy to families
- To explore restorative approaches in response to violence in the Choctaw community which helps strengthen families



# Growing....some thoughts on the theme



- The heritage of the past is the seed that brings forth the harvest of the future.
- Authority does not make you a leader, it gives you the opportunity to be one.



# You are leaders...



- Three qualities
  - Sense of self- your journey to find out who you are; why do you show up every day? What is your story? Who was/is your champion?
  - Heart – you are a truth teller- your heart is your compass. What are you passionate about?
  - Strength of vision – What are you unwavering on? This is personal...



# Don't forget why we do this...

- Every child is a bundle of potential.
- Your children are not only heirs to your possessions ---they are heirs to your values and character.
- Thanks for making a difference.





Thank You!

[www.nrccps.org](http://www.nrccps.org)

