



Poly-victimization Among Children with Disabilities

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Defining "Disability"

- No universal definition
- Includes broad array of chronic conditions that limit functioning
 - Emotional and behavioral disorders (e.g. depression)
 - Physical disabilities (e.g. limitations in hearing, sight, or mobility)
 - Developmental and learning disabilities (e.g. attention deficit disorder, autism, or cognitive disability)

What is Poly-Victimization?

- Refers to experiencing multiple, different types of victimization
 - (e.g. physical abuse by a caregiver, bullying at school, and witnessing an assault in one's neighborhood)
- National Survey of Children's Exposure to Violence (NatSCEV) defines poly-victimization as exposure to 7 or more different forms of victimization in the past year

Effects of Poly-Victimization

- Strongest predictor of psychological symptoms
- Matters less which type of victimization a child experiences in comparison to how many different types of abuse sustained

NatSCEV Statistics

- Children with disability twice as likely to qualify as polyvictim compared to children with no disability
- ▶ 15% of children diagnosed with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) experienced polyvictimization
- I 1.5% of children with a physical disability were polyvictims

NatSCEV Statistics

- ► I1.7% of children with a learning disorder (other than ADHD) were poly-victims
- 23% of youth with internalizing disorders (such as Major Depressive Disorder, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder were poly-victims

Implications

- Disorders that are "invisible," but affect social skills and interaction patterns, may create greatest vulnerability to victimization
- Practitioners working with children with disabilities, including clinical, school, and home settings, should conduct comprehensive assessments of victimization exposure
- Will help create effective interventions for children with disabilities in all areas of a child's life