

Consequences of Neglect

Disentangling Neglect from Poverty Across Definitions, Outcomes, Interventions, and Policy Recommendations

April 22, 2022

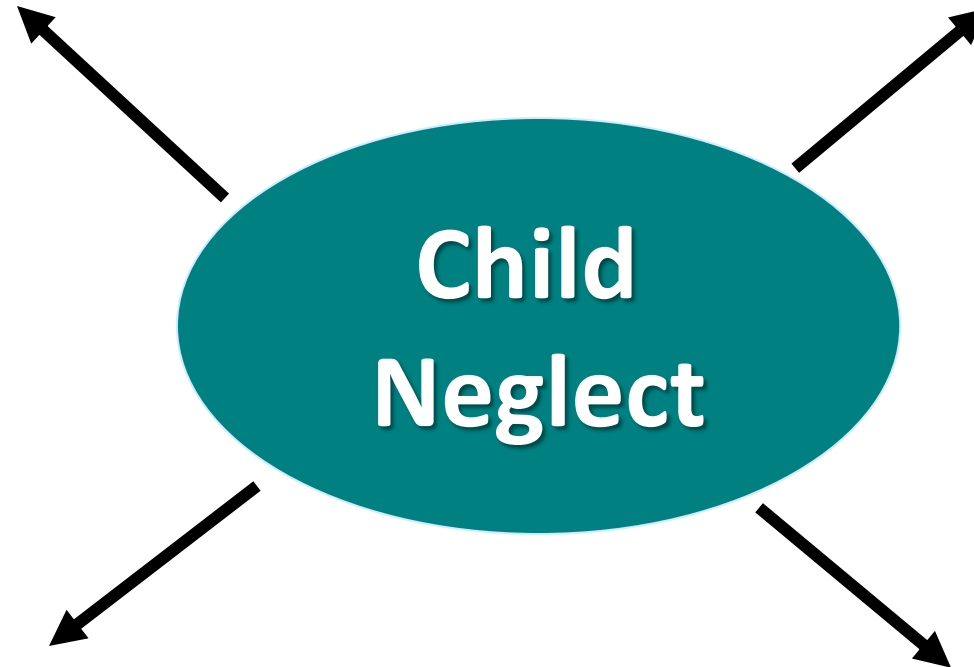
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Issues to Address

- Neglect's short term observable outcomes
- Developmental considerations in assessing neglect
- Nexus between parental actions/inactions and child outcomes
- Planning appropriate intervention (e.g., referrals, court petition)

Physical Health

Cognitive Development



**Child
Neglect**

Social Development

Emotional Health

Strathearn et al. *Pediatrics*. 2020.

Barth et al. *Research on Social Work Practice*. 2021

Manifestations of Possible Neglect

Inadequate health care → health problem

- Non-adherence (or non-compliance)
- Delay or failure to obtain medical, mental health, dental care

Inadequate physical care → health problem

- Poor hygiene, sanitation
- Inadequate clothing
- Hunger, poor growth (failure to thrive), severe obesity





Manifestations of Possible Neglect

Inadequate supervision → health, social problems

- Recurring injuries, ingestions (accidental poisoning)
- Unattended young child, abandoned

Inadequate emotional care → mental health, behavioral problem

- Lack of emotional support
- Lack of mental health care



“New” Forms of Neglect

- Exposure to tobacco smoke
- Car safety restraint not used
- Exposure to intimate partner violence
- Access to loaded gun
- Dangerous sleeping arrangement
- Lack of health insurance



Children's Needs and Vulnerability Vary

Implementing a definition of neglect must consider the child's:

- Development
- Cognitive
- Social
- Mental health
- Physical health

**Should we be concerned with
POTENTIAL harm?**

**Yes, if we're
interested in
prevention**

Assessing Potential Harm

- Epidemiological data
 - e.g., risk of being unvaccinated, not using a car safety restraint
- Child's specific condition
 - e.g., severe asthma
- What needed to reduce risk
 - e.g., parental substance use, motivation, ability
 - Protective factors - e.g., access to support, services
- Results of prior interventions
- Common sense
 - Infant left alone in bathtub

Assessing Potential Harm

Likelihood	Hi	X	X
	Low	✓	X
		Low	Hi

Severity

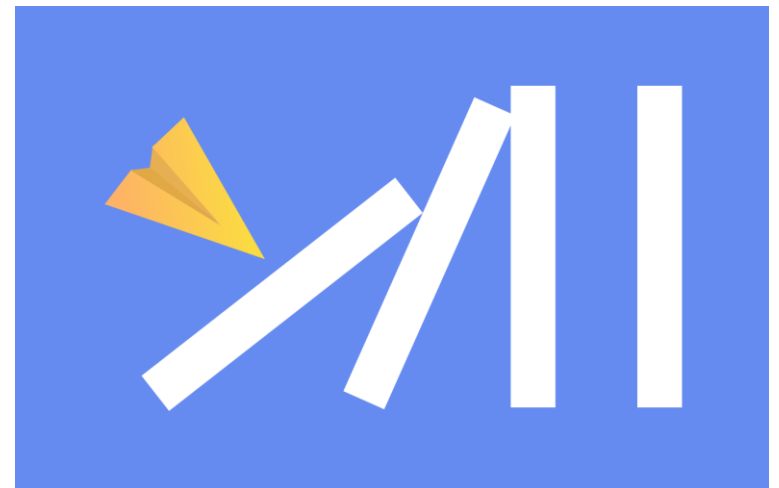
The table illustrates the assessment of potential harm based on Likelihood and Severity. The top row represents High Likelihood, and the bottom row represents Low Likelihood. The left column represents Low Severity, and the right column represents High Severity. The cells contain: (Hi, Low) an orange X, (Hi, Hi) a red X, (Low, Low) a green checkmark, and (Low, Hi) an orange X.

Past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior



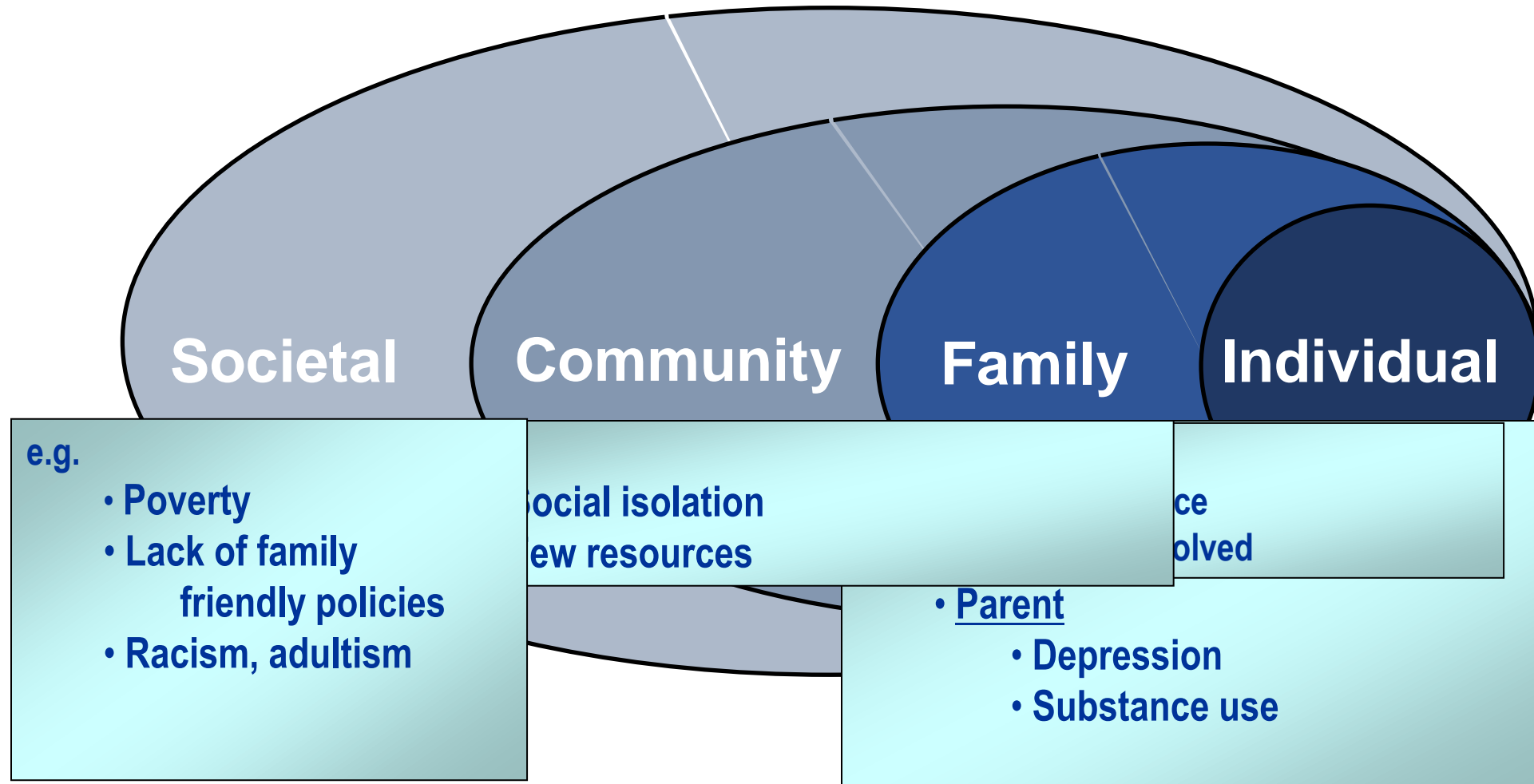
Nexus Between Parental Inaction and Outcome?

- Is the outcome clearly attributable to parental inaction?
- To what extent?
- What else contributed to the neglect and the outcome?

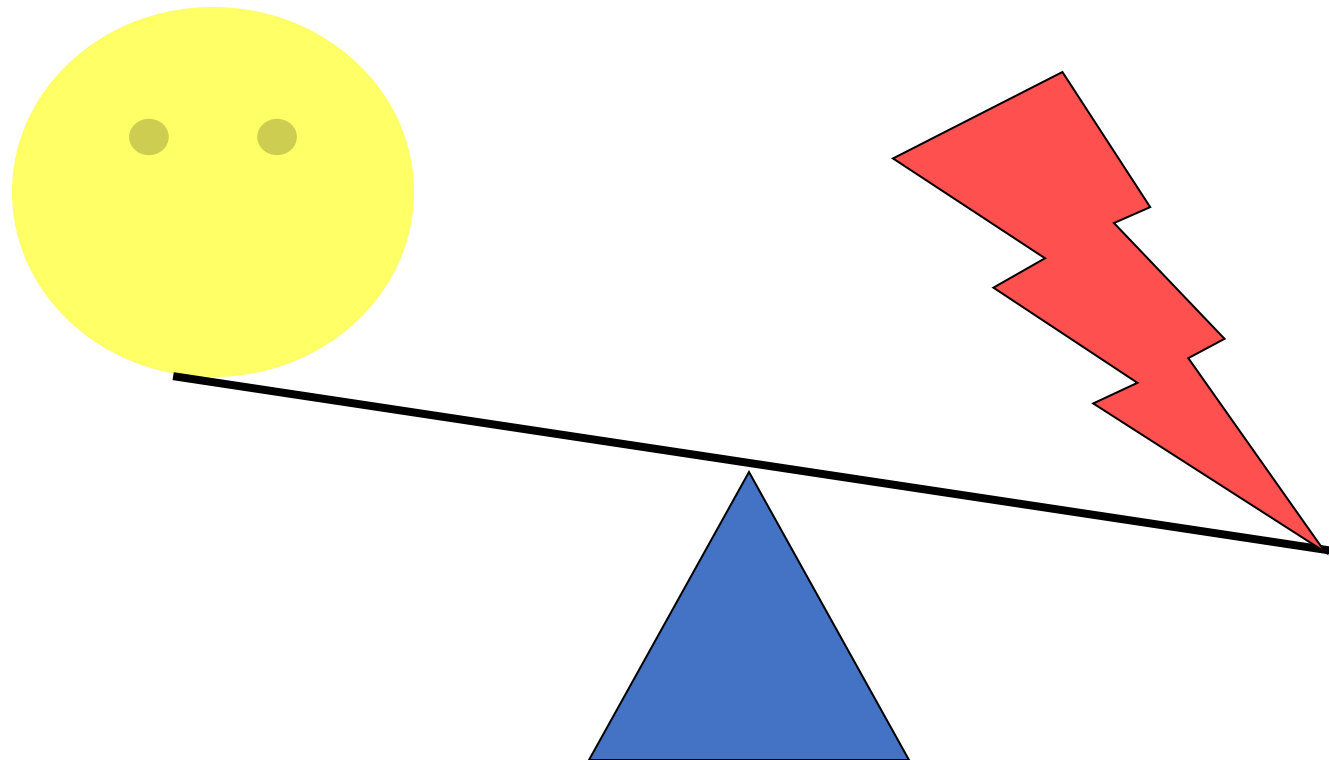


Risk Factors for Neglect

An Ecological Framework



Risk and Protective Factors



Thank You!



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