

**P.E.A.C.E**  
**Protecting and Educating All**  
**Children on Earth:**

**An Interdisciplinary Model**  
**for Child Welfare**

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**"...in serving the best interests of children, we serve the best interests of all humanity." -- Carol Bellamy**



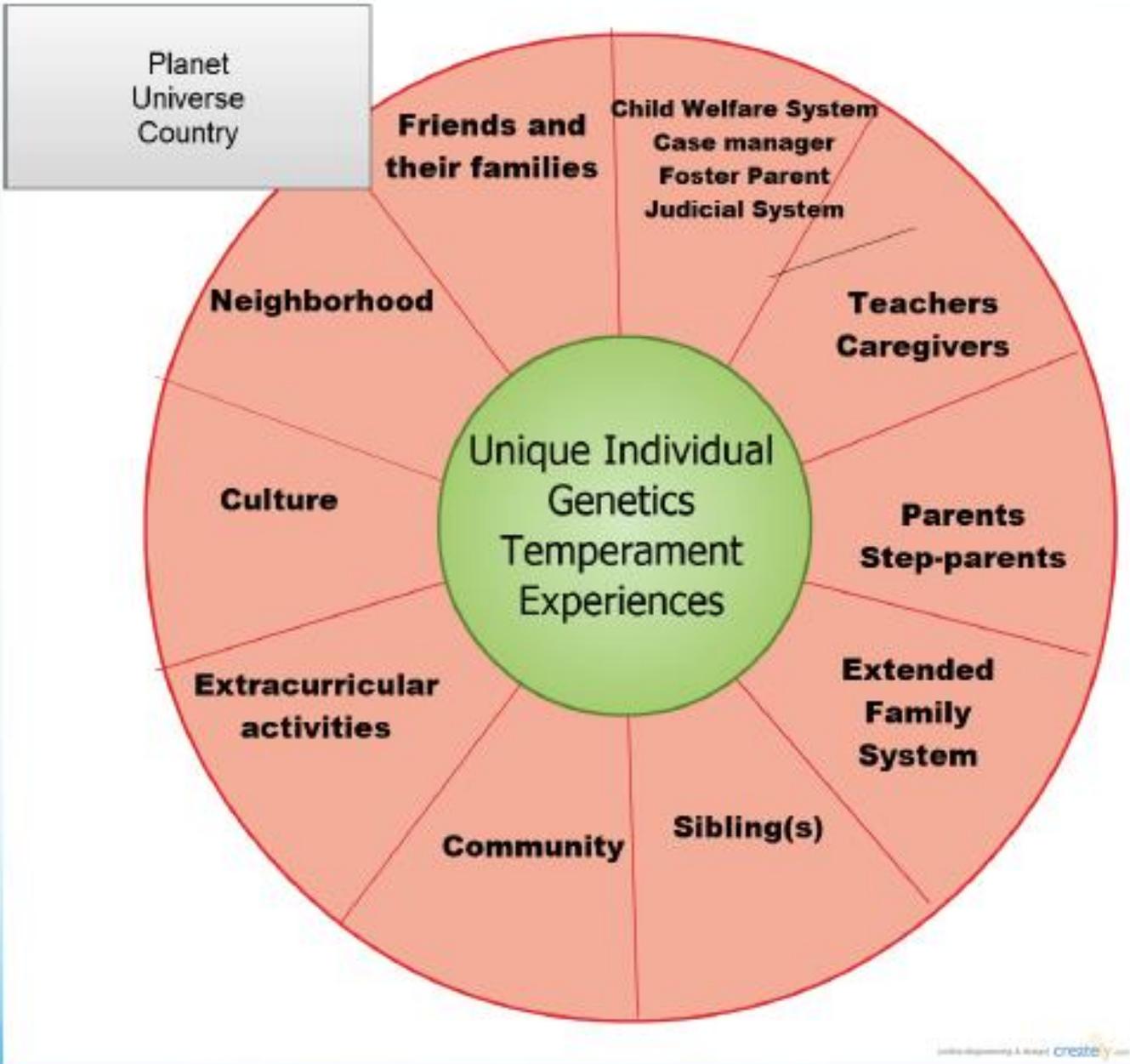
# Introduction and Organization of this Lecture

- Presenter: Dr. Adler-Tapia
- Language and cultural differences may be different, but passion to protect children is universal.

# **Definition of Child Welfare**

Protecting and caring for the safety, health, education, and well-being of all youth.

CHILD



# Child Maltreatment

- Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)
- Domestic Violence
- Child Safety
- Child Sexual Abuse
- Child Maltreatment in all forms whether intentional or unintentional

# Intentional versus Unintentional Violence Against Children

## **Unintentional:**

- IPV
- Neglect from impaired parent with Substance Use Disorders (SUDS)/Mental Health (MH) issues
- Poverty

## **Intentional:**

- Domestic Violence
- Child sexual abuse (CSA)
- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse

# Holistic Approach to the Best Interests of Children



# Goals of Child Welfare System

- Prevention and Protection
- Education
- Resources and Support
- Assessment
- Intervention
- Treatment

# Prevention and Protection

## **Governmental Stance**

- Create laws
- Community reporting
- Enforcement

## **Education**

- Children
- Parents – parenting skills to include safety and nutrition

## **Medical**

## **Nutritional**

**Safety** – where children live and grow – homes, community, playgrounds, schools

# Education

- Using multimedia through television, the internet, print materials to educate the public about child welfare and how to report concerns for children.
- Educating parents starting during pregnancy about how to parent and to get help before harming children.
- Educating professionals in government about the consequences of not protecting children.
- Educate professionals who interact with children how to identify and report concerns about children at-risk.

# Resources and Support

Community Support from:

- Government
- Legal System
- Culture and Society
- Religious organizations
- Child Welfare System
- Law Enforcement
- Media

# Assessment

- Create outreach teams to go into communities such as day care facilities, schools, and homes to assess the needs of children and families before the situation deteriorates and children are harmed.
- The goal of these outreach assessment programs are initially to support families before maltreatment occurs, ie. such as in homes where there are parents/caregivers with SUDS/MH issues or in families where there are children with special needs – providing information and resources.
- The second goal for these outreach programs would be to assess the need for a higher level of intervention and to make appropriate referrals.

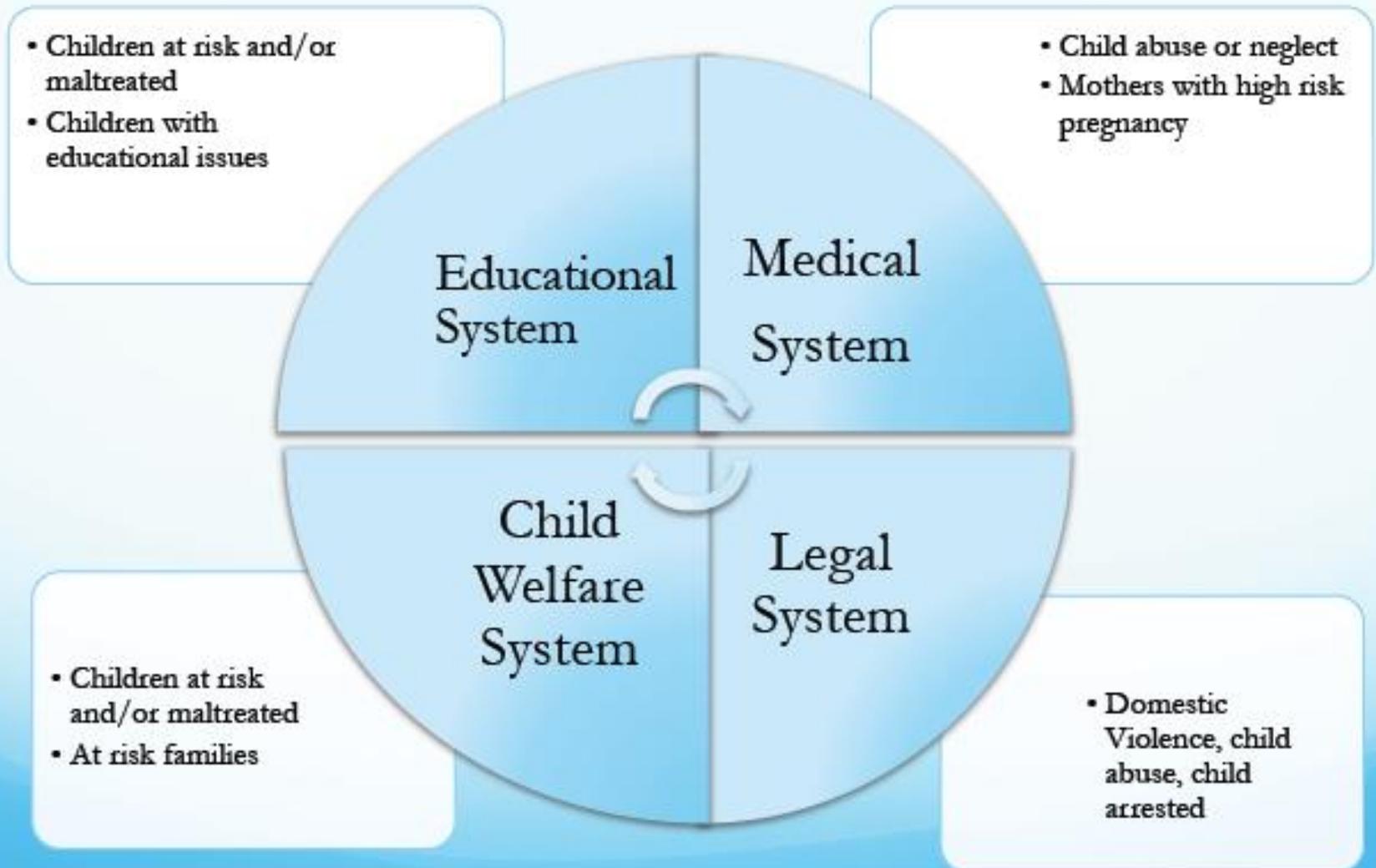
# Intervention

- **PRIMARY PREVENTION:** If children and families are assessed as being at risk, provide education, resources, and mental health interventions to treat the entire system BEFORE the child is harmed.
- **SECONDARY INTERVENTION:** If there are already documented instances of maltreatment to the child(ren), then intervention is required to protect the children. Interdisciplinary teams are assigned to investigate the harm to the child and intervene with services to prevent future instances of child maltreatment.
- **TERTIARY INTERVENTION:** If the parents/family are not willing or able to correct the risks to the child, then the child must be removed from the family and be protected by the child welfare system. These children still need healthy foster/adoptive homes and treatment services to recover from exposure to child maltreatment.

# Treatment

- Psychiatric and psychological services may be necessary for parents and children.
- Parents may need treatment for SUDS and/or MH issues. Many parents themselves experienced child abuse and therefore are experiencing mental health issues as a result. These same parents may be using substances to deal with their own child abuse histories.
- Children need early intervention and treatment in order to address the effects of child maltreatment that interfere with brain development, learning, and overall health. Dr. Bessel van der Kolk has written about “developmental trauma disorder” that looks at the effects of child maltreatment on the developing brain. Drs. Anda and Felitti documented the long-term consequences of child maltreatment in the ACE Study.

# Organizational Flowchart for Interdisciplinary Approach to Child Welfare



# Mandated Reporting Process

- Laws
- Education
- Toll free number to report abuse
- Directions and procedures for reporting
- Standardized forms to use for reporting

# Mandated Reporting Procedures and Forms

Example of mandated reporting directions and procedures:

[http://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/pdfs/childabuse/8572\\_instruct.pdf](http://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/pdfs/childabuse/8572_instruct.pdf)

Defines:

1. Who is Responsible to report
2. To whom reports should be made
3. Reporting responsibilities
4. Instructions
5. Distribution

Example of mandated reporting form to be completed by any citizen:

[http://www.ct.gov/dcf/lib/dcf/child\\_welfare\\_services/pdf/child\\_abuse\\_neglect\\_dcf\\_136.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/dcf/lib/dcf/child_welfare_services/pdf/child_abuse_neglect_dcf_136.pdf)

# Child Welfare Professionals

- Child Advocates – Paid professionals who advocate for children's welfare.
- Guardian ad litem (GAL) – Court appointed legal professionals who act in the best interest of the child when family members cannot.
- Court appointed special advocates (CASA) – Volunteers who meet with children and serve as a liaison between the child and others on the interdisciplinary team.
- Foster Care Review Board – volunteers who review cases and advise the legal system.
- Child and Family Teams – teams of professionals, child, and family who created plans for intervention, safety, health, and permanency
- Case Managers – Professionals who manage cases when children are at risk.

# **Interdisciplinary Response to Improve Child Welfare**

- Commitment
- Coordination
- Communication
- Cooperation
- Collaboration
- Co-location
- Consequences

# Summary & Questions

- Child maltreatment impacts us all! And, many countries are taking courageous steps to protect children and families. With laws in place, creating an interdisciplinary approach that is funded by multiple resources including public and private monies is a big step in creating a better world for us all.
- Questions: I'm sorry I am not with you to answer questions; however, I am available via email. I will attempt to answer questions to the best of my ability.
- Thank you for inviting me to participate!

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"There is no trust more sacred than the one the world holds with children. There is no duty more important than ensuring that their rights are respected, that their welfare is protected, that their lives are free from fear and want and that they can grow up in peace."

-- Kofi Annan

# References

- Bessel van der Kolk “Developmental Trauma Disorder”  
[http://www.traumacenter.org/products/pdf\\_files/preprint\\_dev\\_trauma\\_disorder.pdf](http://www.traumacenter.org/products/pdf_files/preprint_dev_trauma_disorder.pdf)
- Anda & Felitti “The ACE Study”: <http://acestudy.org>
- US Government Child Welfare resources  
<http://www.childwelfare.gov>
- Child Welfare League of America: [www.cwla.org/](http://www.cwla.org/)
- National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) <http://guidance.nice.org.uk/CG89>
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<http://www.un.org/rights/dpi1765e.htm>

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