The Michigan ADVOCATE

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THE MICHIGAN ADVOCATE was created in 2000 to provide information and resources to VOCA Grantee-agencies, other crime victim programs, and advocates in Michigan and throughout the country. This publication strives to help professionals maintain comprehensive and quality services to victims of crime and to inform advocates of broader issues affecting crime victim services.

THE MICHIGAN ADVOCATE is published twice yearly and has recently evolved into an electronic format allowing for broader distribution of news relevant to crime victim services.

www.michiganadvocate.org

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SPOTLIGHT: Angel House

By Julia Heany

> *"If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them."*
> –Henry David Thoreau

From shared vision to firm foundation, the story of Angel House reveals what can happen when concerned and dedicated citizens come together to make a difference in the lives of children. Almost ten years ago, a collaborative group of stakeholders in Ingham County recognized that the community needed a safe and comfortable space to assess, stabilize, and temporarily shelter abused and neglected children. With the support of over 1,500 individuals and organizations, this vision has transformed into a beautiful and welcoming building housed with dedicated and warm staff, fully equipped to care for the community's most vulnerable children. In an era of budget cuts, how did this "castle in the air" become cement-and-brick reality? Let's find out…

The Marriage of Innovative Ideas

Located in Mason, Angel House is unique in that it houses both an emergency shelter for children and a child assessment center (CAC). The shelter is the first of its kind in the community, providing a safe place for children who are caught in the middle of a crisis or are crime victims themselves. During their stay at the shelter, children will experience developmentally appropriate care in a safe and welcoming environment. Children will have plenty of space for age-appropriate play, rest, and study, while being cared for around the clock by qualified shelter staff. If it is safe, older children will continue to attend school, while young children will be cared for in a structured, pre-school-like play space at the shelter. For children in the middle of a crisis, the shelter will provide a secure and comfortable temporary place to stay.

The CAC team that will work at Angel House when it opens has actually been operational in Ingham County for four years. Crossing eight municipalities and characterized by strong relationships between partners, the CAC team has been conducting developmentally appropriate forensic interviews with children in various locations in the community. However, Angel House will provide the CAC team with child-friendly and state-of-the-art facilities to conduct these interviews. In addition, the CAC houses the necessary equipment to conduct forensic medical exams. The potentially traumatizing interviews and exams that children must endure after abuse will all take place within one facility, which is designed to be non-threatening and child-friendly.

Strong Partnerships & a Supportive Community

The idea for Angel House originated in September 1997 when a collaborative group of stakeholders came together in Ingham County, led by Jim Papparella of Child and Family Services, Capital Area.

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SPOTLIGHT: Angel House continued…

This group of stakeholders, deemed the Angel House Community Advisory Council in 2002, together with a generous community built Angel House from the ground up. Co-chaired by Anna Macielinski and Catherine Emerson, the Advisory Council brought together partners from across the community, raised funds, and rallied community support. Ms. Macielinski was a driving force behind the project from its initiation, and, joined by Ms. Emerson, the co-chairs assisted with every detail of the planning and building process, working tirelessly on behalf of Angel House.

> *"The outpouring of community support for Angel House has been overwhelming. From adult survivors of child abuse to people who have a big heart for kids, this project has touched the lives of many."*
>
> –Jim Papparella

As Mr. Papparella points out, the Advisory Council did not have to go it alone. In the nine years since the project's inception, countless partners have donated time, labor, and funds to make Angel House a reality. In fact, over $1.8 million was raised in grants, donations, and labor, including a $100,000 donation from the Dart Foundation, a federal appropriation sponsored by Mike Rogers of $193,000, and a $425,000 grant from Federal Home Loan Bank of Indianapolis with the MSU Credit Union. Generous donations from Ledy Design Group, Timberland Development, Granger Construction, the Hoekstra Company, Dart Container, and Dart Energy helped to build the building on 2.5 acres of land donated by Dart Properties, with the help of volunteer labor from the UAW Jobs Bank. Furthermore, an outpouring of business and community support has stocked the building with everything from furniture to handmade quilts to stuffed animals. According to Angel House Executive Director Jerre Cory, it was the passion and support of the Advisory Council, community members, and business and political leaders that transformed Angel House from a great idea to a great reality.

An Inspiring Facility

Angel House is a truly beautiful facility. To see for yourself, please view the Angel House photo album posted on the home page of The Michigan Advocate website (www.michiganadvocate.org). Built to be welcoming and child-friendly, the environment is decidedly non-institutional inside and out. Located on a private lot away from the road, the building's exterior looks fresh and new. Landscaping, donated by the Capital Area Landscape and Nurserymen's Association (CALNA), is progressing nicely and will add another element of beauty to the welcoming building.

Half of the first floor, the second floor, and half of the ground floor are dedicated to the shelter. The shelter has a truly home-like environment. The great room on the first floor includes an open, yet cozy living room, complete with fireplace, a large dining area, and an open kitchen. The awning-covered back porch provides a great place for grilling and looks over the private, wooded lot behind the building. Bedrooms, with two or three beds each, line the upstairs hallway. Each bedroom has its own decorative theme – half for girls and half for boys. On the ground floor, there is a wide, open playroom equipped with toys, games, and books for all ages. It is the little touches found throughout the shelter - the stuffed animals, handmade quilts, paint and decorative borders, curtains, and attention to detail - that make Angel House feel more like a home than a shelter.

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SPOTLIGHT: Angel House continued…

The CAC is housed on the other half of the first floor and is also designed for children. The door to the CAC opens into a waiting room stocked with toys, books, and stuffed animals. The examination room does not feel medical or institutional, but rather like a cozy little office. There is a pleasant space for meetings and counseling as well. The highlight of the CAC, though, is the state-of-the-art interview facility. There are two interview spaces – one for older children and another for younger children. They are equipped for observation through video-cameras and microphones, but they do not feel like interrogation rooms. They are comfortable and developmentally appropriate. Staff offices are also housed in this area of the facility, as well as on the lower level. Each office is decorated with paint colors picked by the staff, and one office even has a beautiful beach scene painted on the wall. Personal touches, color, and toys make the CAC a more comfortable place for children in the midst of a trauma.

A Hopeful Future

Having hired staff and trained over 50 volunteers, Angel House is now operational. We all hope that through prevention and early intervention our community's children will not face the kinds of crises that bring children to Angel House. However, recognizing that there are children in crisis in our community, Angel House will provide these most vulnerable children with a safe space where their needs will be the first priority. As a testament to a community's dedication to its children, Angel House reminds us all that our vision of a safer, happier world for children can indeed become a reality.

To learn more about Angel House, please contact Jerre Cory at 517-244-4444 x103 or by email at jerre@childandfamily.org.

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Julia Heany, Ph.D., is the Project Leader for the Crime Victim Services Commission Technical Assistance Project at the Michigan Public Health Institute.

Department of Human Services Strengthens CPS Policies to Protect Children

By Ted Forrest

In accordance with the Michigan Department of Human Services' (DHS) strategic plan and continual efforts to protect and care for children, DHS released a new Children's Protective Services (CPS) policy in January 2006. This new policy is very much in line with DHS's child welfare reform initiatives including:

- Continued implementation of the Family to Family team approach to making the best decisions for children throughout their experience in the child welfare system.
- Expanded use of background checks to protect children.
- Locating absent parents and engaging them in active planning for their children.
- Mandatory training in program supervision for all child welfare supervisors.
- More automation and better tools to give workers more time to protect children and help families.

The new CPS policy was the result of a thorough internal review of child welfare cases. This review focused on substantive issues that could strengthen child welfare policy and case management practices. Based upon the findings from the review process, a multi-disciplinary team was convened to develop a multi-pronged approach to enhance the protection of children.

Additions to the 2006 CPS policy include a process for handling complaints involving families that have had multiple child abuse complaints and a policy on child abuse and neglect complaints where domestic violence is present.

Multiple Complaints

Many of the child abuse and neglect cases reviewed during this effort resulted in fatalities. The committee identified "multiple CPS complaints" as a common factor in all reviewed cases that resulted in a child death. In each of these cases there had been several abuse/neglect complaints filed involving these families. However, many of the complaints did not meet the legal definition of child abuse and neglect and were rightfully rejected as CPS complaints.

The work group determined that a more in-depth review of the underlying issues facing these families beyond the scope of the complaint itself might have positively impacted the outcome of these cases, particularly in those families involving children under the age of three. In Michigan, 25% of child victims in abuse/neglect cases are under the age of three. This is consistent with national data indicating that in 80% of cases where a child dies there is a history of more than two complaints filed and there are children under the age of three living in the household. Based on these common characteristics, a CPS "multiple complaints" policy was developed and implemented. Specifically, this policy states:

In situations where the current com-

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plaint constitutes at least the third CPS complaint on a family and the complaint includes a child age three or under, CPS must conduct a thorough preliminary investigation. A preliminary investigation includes background checks, collateral contacts, and a review of CPS history. The policy goes on to require review and approval of all decisions made on the case by the supervisor, the DHS county director, or their designee.

The intent of this new policy is to enhance child safety by assuring that every aspect of the family is thoroughly reviewed prior to making a decision to investigate, open for services, petition the court, or close with no action for complaints that have these characteristics. The intent of the policy is also to ensure that appropriate strategies, service plans, and community referrals are developed in conjunction with the family to address any issues they are facing.

Domestic Violence

There is significant overlap between domestic violence and child abuse cases. During the internal review, the committee identified domestic violence as another characteristic common to many cases. In fact, domestic violence was present in approximately 20% of the substantiated child abuse/neglect cases in Michigan in FY 2005. Over the past several years, most experts have acknowledged that the safety of children and their mothers are intertwined. Efforts to address this issue began in Michigan in 1993 with the formation of a multi-disciplinary task force created to draft policy and best practice guidelines governing the CPS response in cases where domestic violence is present. In 1998, the Department of Human Services developed and implemented a new policy in this area.

Ongoing efforts to improve on this policy continued internally, and in 2003 the Governor's Task Force on Children's Justice convened a Child Welfare/Domestic Violence Subcommittee. This subcommittee conducted focus groups in three Michigan communities. Each session involved law enforcement, DHS workers, domestic violence advocates, and service providers. The key issues and recommendations from the focus groups were consistent with the issues that were identified previously. The recommendations were to:

- Focus on the safety of the child.
- Coordinate with stakeholders to protect mothers, enhancing the protection of their children.
- Provide education and cross training on domestic violence and child abuse issues and cases.
- Hold domestic violence perpetrators responsible for their actions.

The recently released CPS policy on domestic violence takes into account many of these issues and recommendations.

The best way to protect children is to engage families to provide safety without being punitive to the adult victim of domestic violence. In situations where domestic violence is a factor, the preferred approach is to assist the adult victim of domestic violence in planning for her safety and the safety of her children. Also, it is imperative that all applicable laws and policies are utilized to hold the abusive partner accountable. Responding to cases involving domestic violence may involve coordination with law enforcement, domestic violence programs, the criminal justice system, and intervention programs for batterers.

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Department of Human Services Strengthens CPS Policies to Protect Children continued…

A complaint in which the sole allegation is domestic violence does not provide a sufficient basis for a CPS investigation, according to the policy. The complaint must include information indicating the domestic violence has resulted in harm to or threatens to harm the child. However, CPS must at a minimum contact law enforcement to evaluate the complaint and to determine whether a child has been injured or is at risk of injury as a result of the domestic violence.

In all CPS investigations there must be a routine inquiry about domestic violence throughout the efforts on the case. When investigating these cases, CPS workers must assess and document what steps the parents have taken to assure the child's safety. If no steps have been taken, but the parent is willing to take action, CPS workers should refer parents to and coordinate with appropriate domestic violence support services. CPS workers should also work with the parent and domestic violence service provider to develop an immediate safety plan. When making the decision regarding whether to confirm a finding of child abuse and neglect, full consideration should be given to holding the perpetrator of domestic violence accountable and the strategies put in place by the victim to protect the children.

Interventions in open CPS service cases where domestic violence is a factor should be consistent with the three principles upon which this policy is built:

- The safety of the child (and then the adult victim) is the primary consideration in all phases of the process.
- The perpetrator of domestic violence must be held accountable.
- Safety and service plans should increase the likelihood that the adult victim will be successful in protecting the child(ren).

CPS workers and policy are only one element of the overall effort to ensure child safety in families where domestic violence is present. Creating safe environments for children requires coordination and collaboration between CPS, service providers, law enforcement, domestic violence advocates, prosecutors, and the courts to eliminate the risks that children and their caregivers face.

For more information about CPS policy, please contact the CPS Program Office at 517-335-3704. To view the CPS Policy Manual, please visit the following websites:

- The entire manual can be accessed at: http://www.mfia.state.mi.us/olmweb/ex/cfp/cfp.pdf
- The section on Multiple Complaints can be accessed at: http://www.mfia.state.mi.us/olmweb/ex/cfp/712-5.pdf page 2
- The sections on Domesetic Violence can be accessed at: http://www.mfia.state.mi.us/olmweb/ex/cfp/712-6.pdf page 6 http://www.mfia.state.mi.us/olmweb/ex/cfp/713-8.pdf page 6 http://www.mfia.state.mi.us/olmweb/ex/cfp/714-1.pdf page 7

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Ted Forrest is the Manager of the Children's Protective Services Program in the Michigan Department of Human Services.

Why Congress Needs to Save the Crime Victims Fund

By Leslie O'Reilly

The Administration's proposed FY 2006 budget would remove $1.267 billion from the Crime Victims Fund, wiping out the Victims of Crime Act funds that support Federal, state, and local victim services. This would leave no money in the Federal budget for victim services at the beginning of FY 2007.

VOCA provides critical funding that helps millions of victims of all types of crime every year.

The Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) is the only federal grant program that supports direct assistance and services to victims of ***all*** types of crimes. Some 4,400 local programs depend on VOCA grants annually to provide services to nearly 4 million victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, drunk driving, elder abuse, robbery, and other crimes. In addition, VOCA funds supplement state efforts to provide financial assistance to hundreds of thousands of victims of violent crime, and support services for victims of Federal crime.

The Crime Victims Fund is supported by the collection of Federal criminal fines – NOT TAXPAYER REVENUES.

The money used by VOCA programs comes from the Crime Victims Fund, which is generated through Federal criminal fines, forfeitures, and special assessments. Since the inception of the Crime Victims Fund in 1984, the amounts deposited into the Fund in one year are distributed to victim services the next year.

Congress has repeatedly stated that *all* deposits into the Crime Victims Fund will be made available for victim services.

Through the VOCA statute and in annual appropriations since FY2000, Congress has repeatedly expressed its commitment to keeping all of the offender-generated monies deposited into the Fund for the use of victim services "to ensure that a stable level of funding will remain available for these programs in future years."

Rescinding $1.267 billion would mean that there would be *no* funds available to support victim services at the start of FY 2007.

Although the Administration proposed $650 million in VOCA spending for FY2006, it would like to remove the funds that were pledged for future victim services PLUS funds deposited during FY 2006 - funds that would otherwise be available in FY 2007 and subsequent years - and begin FY 2007 with a zero balance. Since nearly 90% of VOCA funds are distributed by formula in grants to States, the Justice Department's Office for Victims of Crime must be aware of how much is available at the beginning of each year. Beginning FY 2007 with nothing in the Fund would mean there would be no mo-

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ney available for State victim assistance and crime victim compensation grants (or to pay Federal personnel providing victim services).

The time to act is NOW.

The Administration's attempt to zero out the Crime Victims Fund would create a disastrous situation for crime victim service providers and their clients. Congress is considering the FY 2006 budget NOW, so immediate action is needed.

Last year's attempt by the Administration to eliminate the Fund's balance was defeated by Congress. The Fund was saved because Senators and Representatives heard from their constituents regarding the importance of the services that the Crime Victim Fund supports.

Call, email, or fax your Congressional delegation and urge them to SAVE THE FUND by opposing the Administration's proposal to rescind the balance of the Crime Victims Fund.

Members of Michigan's Congressional Delegation

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www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm

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269 Russell Senate Office Building
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US House of Representatives
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www.house.gov/writerep/

Bart Stupak - 1st District
Peter Hoekstra – 2nd District
Vernon Ehlers - 3rd District
Dave Camp – 4th District
Dale Kildee – 5th District
Fred Upton – 6th District
John Schwarz – 7th District
Mike Rogers – 8th District
Joe Knollenberg – 9th District
Candice Miller – 10th District
Thaddeus McCotter – 11th District
Sander Levin – 12th District
Carolyn Kilpatrick – 13th District
John Conyers – 14th District
John Dingell – 15th District

CSPAN Federal Elected Officials Search Tool:
www3.capwiz.com/c-span/dbq/officials/

Congress Merge Online Congressional Directory:
www.congressmerge.com/onlinedb/index.htm

Last Year's Effort to Save the Fund:
www.michiganadvocate.org/ArchivedEditions/Spring2005Spotlight.pdf

More Information about Saving the Crime Victims Fund:
www.navaa.org/07/index.html

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The Effects of Stress, Trauma, and Neglect on the Developing Brain

By Julia Heany & Courtney Chapin

As anyone who has spent time with young children is well aware, the first five years of life are an amazing period of growth and development. From infancy, children are mesmerized by the world around them, taking in the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and feel of the environment that they are born into. As children experience, observe, and interact with their world, they develop, learning everything from the subtleties of social interaction to the complexities of language at an astounding rate. The virtually helpless infant becomes the talkative, playful, active, and sometimes opinionated preschooler in no time flat.

> *"The brain is designed for adaptation. It is designed to help us function as best we can in whatever environment we are born into."*

Children's early development has fascinated parents, caregivers, and scholars alike for centuries. Consequently there are plenty of theories explaining the how's and why's of early development, many of which are supported by interesting and creative research studies. In the past few decades a new body of research focusing on the developing brain has helped us better understand the relationship between children's biology and their developmental accomplishments.

The Basics of Brain Development

The human brain is the control center of human function. It controls our physiological functioning, is the seat of emotion, makes sense of the stimuli brought in by our senses, and produces higher order thinking. However, at birth, the brain is only about 30% formed and most of these functions have not yet developed. The infant brain contains billions of cells, called neurons, ready to connect with other neurons to create the neural networks that control all of our functions as human beings. A fully formed brain contains trillions of these connections between cells, and not one of those connections is arbitrary. The question for scientists has been: How does the infant brain transform from full of potential to amazingly complex in a matter of years, and why is the brain so unformed at birth when all of our other organs are fully functional?

The answer lies in the relationship between our genetic potential, our brain activity, and our environment (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Our genes provide a roadmap, specifying what should develop when and where. For example, the genes specify that the brain should develop in a bottom-up fashion, with more complex functions building on simpler functions. The lower part of the brain controls basic physical functions, such as our breathing and heartbeat, and it develops first. The middle part of the brain, including the limbic system which regulates our emotional experiences, and the cortex, which regulates higher order thinking, each follow in turn. Furthermore, our genes specify when specific functions should develop, such as language or the ability to

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interpret visual stimuli. These time periods are referred to as "windows of opportunity" because they represent the time when the brain is most prepared to accomplish a particular developmental task.

However, our genes only tell half of the story. The brain is so unformed at birth because the environment is absolutely critical to determining the path of development. The brain is designed for adaptation. It is designed to help us function as best we can in what ever environment we find ourselves in. If we are born into an environment where we hear English, our brain will learn English. If we are born into an environment where we hear Swahili, our brain will learn Swahili. If we don't hear any language, our brain will assume language is not needed, and our capacity to learn language will dwindle away. The brain develops in a use- and experience-dependent fashion. The experiences we have as young children shape the developing brain.

What then, if a child's early experiences are characterized by stress, trauma, and neglect? We know that millions of children in this country live in terror, experiencing or witnessing violence at the hands of their caregivers or within their communities. Millions more children are neglected, living without developmentally appropriate care. How are these experiences manifested in the developing brain during this delicate period? Not surprisingly, a small but growing body of research suggests that experiencing stress, trauma, and/or neglect directly impacts the developing brain, shaping the course of development.

Developing Under Stress

All of us are designed with physiological systems for responding to traumatic stress (Perry, 2001). When we are in a state of fear, our sympathetic nervous system kicks into action. Our heart beats faster, our blood pressure increases, and blood flow is restricted to nonessential organs, preparing us to fight or flee. This reaction is automatic - our brain directs it but we do not control it. When in a state of fear we can also dissociate, or mentally take ourselves out of a situation we cannot control. This reaction too takes place without our conscious awareness or control. Children who live in fear activate their fight/flight or dissociative response systems on such a regular basis that these systems seem to become over-developed within the brain. The brain recognizes that a heightened stress response mechanism is needed because of the regular threat posed by the environment and adapts.

However, when the environment changes, at school or if the child is removed from the home, the brain cannot automatically reorganize itself (Perry et al., 1995). A child with a heightened stress response system, who startles easily, is ready to fight with little provocation, or is overly sensitive to the body language of others, has no choice but to use these self protection mechanisms until the brain has enough new experiences in a safe environment to reorganize. The brain is not fickle, and patterns, once established, take time to change. Unfortunately, a heightened stress response system can mean trouble for children when they are outside of their homes. They have difficulty shifting to higher order thinking, making learning, logical thinking, and decision making very difficult. They are less able to control their behavior, causing fights and getting into trouble. We all know that these issues lead to additional problems that can have lifelong impacts.

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Responding to Neglect

The brain has an entirely different response to neglect. We've learned that the brain requires environmental stimulation to build connections between neurons. When environmental stimulation is absent, in any or all areas of development, those connections are not made and the brain does not grow. One of the most startling illustrations of this discovery comes from Romania. Due to the policies of Dictator Nicolae Ceausescu banning contraception and abortion, by 1990 tens of thousands of children were abandoned to overwhelmed and underfunded Romanian orphanages (Carlson & Earls, 1997). Infants were fed and their diapers were changed, but they experienced very little human interaction, heard little sound, and saw only their cradle. After the dictatorship fell and international attention was directed toward these orphanages, scientists discovered that, in this situation of extreme deprivation, the infant brain simply does not develop. Not surprisingly these children were physically and developmentally delayed; but what was surprising was that when examined using brain imaging technology, the most deprived children had brains that looked like those of Alzheimer's patients. However, rather than having degenerated, their brains had never developed.

Following these children after adoption, scientists have found that the earlier children were left in the orphanage and the longer they were left there, the more difficulty they have had regaining ground in the areas of social, emotional, and cognitive development. The nature, degree, and timing of deprivation have a tremendous impact on the nature and degree of impairment (Perry, 2002). For example, cognitive neglect will delay or damage the development of higher order thinking and reasoning, whereas emotional neglect will delay or damage the development of attachment capabilities. While deprivation can permanently impair brain development, particularly after "windows of opportunity" close, the brain is remarkably malleable and will strive to gain ground once given an appropriately stimulating environment.

Taking Action

It is increasingly clear that early stress, trauma, and neglect can have a lasting impact on the organization and functioning of the brain, and that the brain requires time and environmental support to readjust after harmful early experiences. While these findings may come as no surprise to professionals who interact with abused and neglected children everyday, they do provide a steppingstone toward effectively preventing and responding to abuse and neglect. There are several ways all of us can apply these findings to our daily lives and work:

- Give children time to recover – once established, neural systems within the brain do not easily change.
- Help individuals who interact with children who have been victimized by violence or abuse remember that these children pay close attention to non-verbal signs of threat and help caregivers find ways to create emotionally safe environments (see *Embracing Complexity*, this issue).
- A traumatized child's environment must change in order for the child's brain to re-adapt. Services should therefore be family-centered and community-based in order to target change within the child's physical, social, and emotional environment.
- Look for relationships between the impact of traumatic stress and a child's other developmental challenges. For

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example, trouble with math may have to do with the child's reaction to the instructor's demeanor rather than a learning problem.

- When working with parents and other caregivers, help them understand the importance of developmentally appropriate stimulation in each area of development. Many caregivers simply do not know that children need stimulation to develop cognitively, socially, emotionally, and physically.
- Remember that each child is biologically unique and has had a unique set of experiences – service delivery must be individualized.
- Support the development of programs and policies that fit with our understanding of the impact of stress, trauma, and neglect on the developing brain.
- Use this research to support the argument for prevention and early intervention when communicating with the community, policymakers, and other stakeholders.

To learn more about the developing brain and the impact of stress, trauma, and neglect, please visit:

www.pbs.org/wnet/brain/about.html
www.childtrauma.org
www.zerotothree.org/brainwonders

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Embracing complexity: Understanding the impact of child trauma

James Henry, Connie Black-Pond, & Mark Sloane

Trauma can be defined as an "overwhelming external experience that renders a person helpless" (Terr, 1990). Children are particularly vulnerable to trauma because of their limited experience, developmental stage, and dependency on adults. Unfortunately, childhood trauma is extremely common, with approximately 50% of children prior to age 18 having experienced at least one traumatic event. Over the past 10 years a dramatic increase in research on child trauma has helped us to identify ways to successfully identify and treat childhood trauma.

Children who are chronically exposed to traumatizing events (e.g., familial violence, community violence, sudden loss, or serious illness) may develop multiple difficulties across several domains of functioning, including trouble with relationships, mood and behavior difficulties, and academic delays. These difficulties are particularly associated with complex trauma (Cook, Blanstein, Spinazzola, & van der Kolk, 2004), which also interferes with the development of positive esteem, a sense of competency, and a sense of relatedness with others (Bowlby, 1988). Early and repeated episodes of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse can even lead to changes in brain functioning, which may result in difficulty understanding and appropriately responding to environmental stimuli. These changes can seriously compromise children's ability to achieve the state of calm necessary for learning.

Traumatized children are at risk for delays in language development and are eight times more likely to be referred to special education for speech and language difficulties. However, speech and language therapists may find themselves unprepared for the complex needs of traumatized children. Traumatized children may have delays in grammar, vocabulary comprehension and production, conversational skills, receptive and expressive syntactic skills, and semantic skills, including difficulties with multiple word and sentence meanings (Hyter et al., 2003). Importantly, traumatized children may not have adequate social communication skills, including those necessary to "exchange information, initiate and develop social relationships, cope with changing environmental demands and assert one's needs, desires and preferences." This becomes particularly problematic in middle and high school as the demands for taking the perspective of others in social situations and complex language conceptualization (e.g., inferring meaning to words and phrases) increase.

Preschool-age children who have experienced complex trauma may have difficulty mastering basic skills, including self-regulation, relational working models, and emotional regulation in response to stress (Kaufman, 2000). These developmental patterns have the potential to negatively impact the quality of these children's academic and social experiences (Cohn et al., 2000; Dunn, 2001). A history of early exposure to repeated neglect and/or abuse is likely to result in vulnerability to stress, including severe

Continued on next page

reactivity to mild stressors (Gunnar & Donzella, 2002). Under stress, a child's capacity to problem-solve may disintegrate, resulting in helplessness, confusion, withdrawal, or rage (Crittenden, 1998).

Maltreated children may demonstrate over-control, such as overcompliance and resistance to change, or under-control, such as aggressive or defiant behavior (Crittenden & DiLalla, 1988). Even intermittent abuse may result in hypervigilance, where children are constantly aware of potential danger in their environments. Unfortunately these effects are lasting, and even benign changes in the environment have the potential to trigger re-enactment behavior that may include aggressiveness, self-injury, or controlling behavior.

Assessment and Response to Affected Children

The problematic behavior caused by trauma in children and adolescents commands the attention of parents, caregivers, and educators. In order to effectively manage this behavior, we must understand its underlying causes. Adult frustration with problematic child behavior tends to revolve around not understanding the "why" behind such behavior. This frustration is compounded by the common assumption that all "bad" childhood behavior is somehow caused by parental shortcomings, lack of discipline in the home setting, and/or the child being "willfully disobedient" (Chasnoff, 2001).

Most behavioral management systems assume a willful/deliberate etiology (or underlying cause) of problematic behavior and have employed the principles of conditioning to change problematic behavior. These systems have been quite successful with a variety of behavioral disorders but have fallen short when employed with traumatized children and adolescents.

Understanding that traumatized children have limited coping strategies, we must use strategies that maximize these children's chances of being successful. Figure 1 provides an alternative framework for intervention that is based on the needs and limitations of traumatized children. Figure 1 indicates how adult perspectives on the cause of children's challenging behaviors directly affect their response. The discipline paradigm on the left, which assumes willful disobedience, leads to power struggles as the adult attempts to affect child behavior change through rules and strict consequences. However, traumatized children are not likely to respond positively to more stringent rules and punishments because they perceive these as threatening due to their basic distrust, difficulty managing emotions, and inflexibility. In addition, such an approach may trigger children's fight/flight/freeze responses because of their traumatic history. Consequently, power struggles are likely exacerbated and the negative cycle of conflict between adult and child is reinforced.

In contrast, the alternative approach displayed on the right side of Figure 1 is premised on an understanding of the impact of traumatic stress. Traumatized children will unconsciously reenact their trauma, spontaneously responding with fight/flight/freeze survival behaviors. The goal of this approach is to reduce this response by providing physical and psychological safety, which are prerequisites for developing the ability to manage feelings and behaviors. Without feeling safe, children will continually reenact their past traumas without learning new skills.

Continued on next page

In this approach, adults become safety sentinels, utilizing challenging behavior as an opportunity for teaching children how to respond differently.

Through appreciating children's overwhelming fear, we can create safe external structures that affirm children's feelings. This is essential to building trust and relieving the devastating impact of traumatic stress. Adults need to help children discover new language for accurately identifying and expressing their feelings. As children become more proficient at recognizing and expressing their anger and unresolved grief, oppositional and aggressive behavior decreases. Children learn self-awareness, which allows them to make connections between their traumatic histories and their challenging behaviors. Relationships with adults can then become more reciprocal and less stressful, which lays the foundation for one of the pillars of child development – trust.

For articles providing practical advice regarding helping children cope with trauma, please visit:

www.nctsn.org
www.childtraumaacademy.com
www.cwla.org
www.wmich.edu/traumacenter
www.aboutourkids.org/aboutour/articles/crisis_index.html
www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/violence.cfm
www.nctsnet.org/nccts/nav.do?pid=ctr_top_trmnt
www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/publications/factshts/monograph.htm

Suggested Reading

Working with Traumatized Children in Child Welfare, by Nancy Boyd Webb

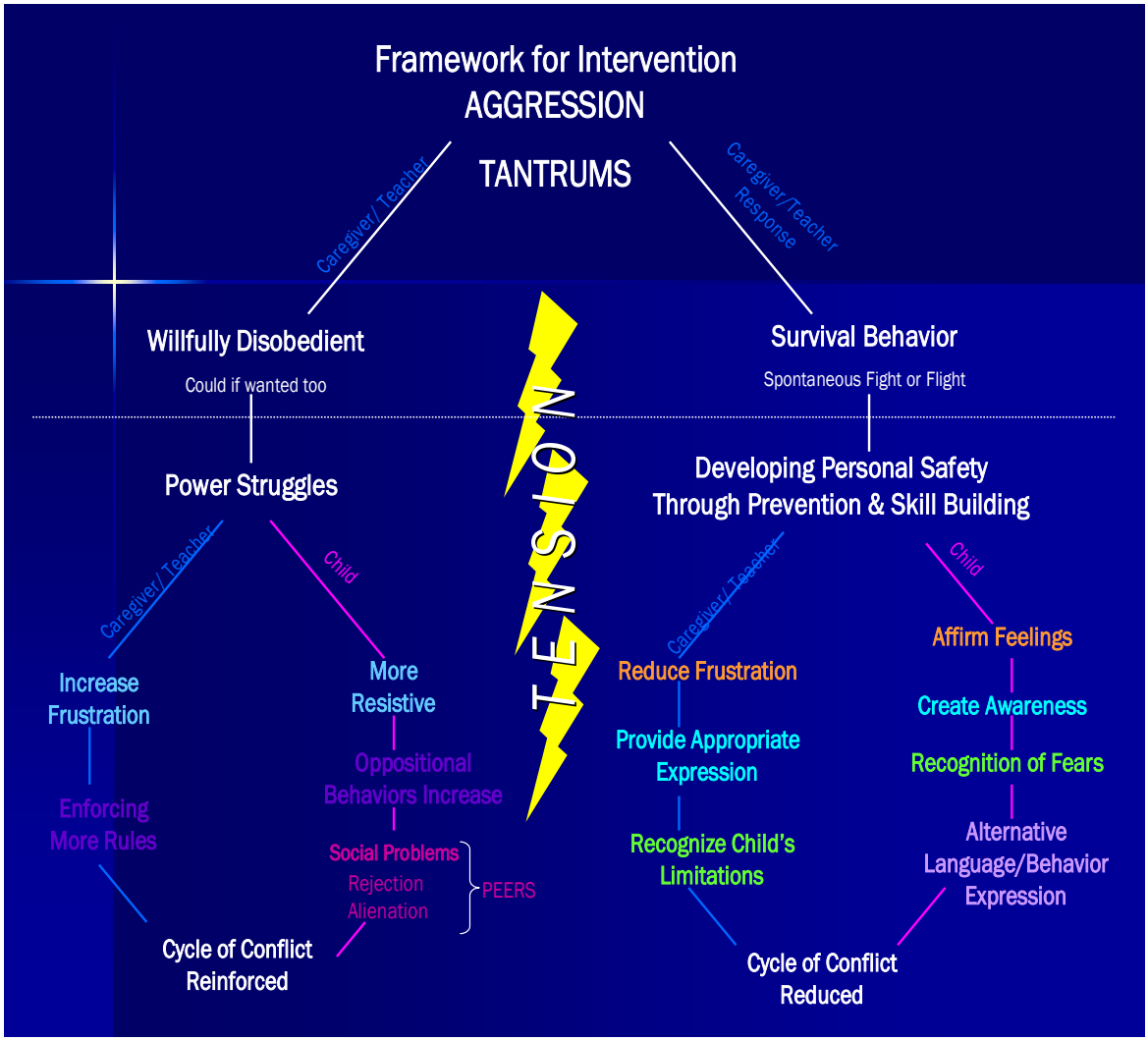
Parenting from the Inside Out, by Daniel Siegel

Young Children and Trauma, by Joy Osofsky

Those working with children who have survived traumatic stress can provide support in several concrete ways. For example:

- Make sure that the child is, in fact, safe.
- Facilitate the process of building a secure relationship between the child and a safe adult.
- Help the child discover ways to calm him or herself.
- Help children understand the real risks they face.
- Provide the child with age-appropriate, accurate information about events impacting their safety and security.
- Recognize that, in addition to anxiety and depression, physical complaints can signal difficulty recovering from trauma.
- Model effective coping mechanisms.
- Treat the child with compassion and patience.
- Establish and stick with routines.
- Do not avoid talking about the trauma the child has experienced, but do not pressure the child to talk either.
- Support developmentally appropriate expression of feelings, such as through drawing or play.
- Be aware of signals that the child may need special assistance from a mental health professional, and help the child get help early.

Figure 1


Framework for Intervention
AGGRESSION
TANTRUMS
Caregiver/Teacher
Caregiver/Teacher Response
Willfully Disobedient
Could if wanted too
Survival Behavior
Spontaneous Fight or Flight
TENSION
Power Struggles
Developing Personal Safety Through Prevention & Skill Building
Caregiver/Teacher
Child
Caregiver/Teacher
Child
Increase Frustration
More Resistive
Reduce Frustration
Affirm Feelings
Enforcing More Rules
Oppositional Behaviors Increase
Provide Appropriate Expression
Create Awareness
Recognition of Fears
Social Problems
Rejection
Alienation
PEERS
Recognize Child's Limitations
Alternative Language/Behavior Expression
Cycle of Conflict Reinforced
Cycle of Conflict Reduced

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James Henry, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor in the School of Social Work at Western Michigan University, and the co-founder and co-director of the Southwest Michigan Children's Trauma Assessment Center.

Connie Black-Pond, M.A., L.P.C., C.S.W., is the co-director of the Southwest Michigan Children's Trauma Assessment Center, specializing in the assessment and treatment of child trauma.

Mark Sloane, M.D., is a board-certified pediatrician and the medical director of the Center for Behavioral Pediatrics in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Dr. Sloane is a founding member of the Southwest Michigan Children's Assessment Center's transdisciplinary team.

VOCA Grantees Making A Difference

"My worries quickly disappeared, as my original hope for the group came alive before our eyes."

A Camp Experience for Child Victims of Sexual Abuse

- By Joyce Siegel

Once upon a time… I had an idea! While visiting a beautiful outdoor camp and recreation site, I wondered what it would be like to take a group of children who were victims of sexual abuse to this type of setting. I thought that combining outdoor recreational activities with social time and therapeutic group interventions could be a positive experience for child survivors. My goal for the experience was to challenge each child physically, to build self-esteem, to improve confidence in social settings, and to address sexual abuse through validating and supportive group therapy.

The right combination of an enthusiastic staff member to coordinate the event, funding from our Child Abuse and Neglect Council, and a great partnership with the YMCA at Sherman Lake made this dream come true for 14 girls and boys ages 9 through 13 in June 2005. Key components of the event were a well-defined outdoor recreation program, staff from the camp who facilitated all of the activities, and transportation and meals for our group. Our staff provided extra supervision during recreational activities and conducted all therapeutic activities with the children.

Initially I was concerned that bringing the topic of sexual abuse into this "fun" summer setting might put a damper on the experience for the kids. My worries quickly disappeared, as my original hope for the group came alive before our eyes. The children thoroughly enjoyed the recreational activities and took great pride in their ability to swim, play games, practice archery, and, most of all, climb the towers. Even more powerful, though, was the instant camaraderie of the group. The children shared their feelings and experiences with each other without judgment and with relief in knowing that they were not alone as survivors.

A bi-monthly support group is now being held after school at our agency based on the recreation-social-therapeutic model used at the camp. In addition, a follow-up day at the camp was held last fall, which included time on the low ropes course and the climbing wall. Both programs have been very well-received.

It is heartening to see that children who have survived so much are able to work to rebuild self-confidence, make new friends, and laugh out loud with the joy of success!

Joyce Siegel, MSW, is the Program Coordinator for Sexual Assault Services of Calhoun County.

Just say NO!

By Joyce Wright with contributions from Penny Hackett-Evans

Isn't this what the public thinks is the solution to the problem of teen dating violence? *Why don't victims just wake up and stop dating "those boys?"* Alas, this is exactly what the two of us heard when we recently attended a dating violence presentation given by a nationally recognized psychologist. The speaker was the author of three books on the issue and had appeared on major television programs as an "expert" in the area of dating violence. At this workshop, her message boiled down to one point – *let's get these gals to recognize that these boys are not good for them.* We all know that it is not that simple, and, even if it were, the focus should be on getting "*these boys"* to stop abusing their girlfriends. The public in general and even some professionals would like a quick and easy solution to this frightening problem.

Thousands of young people experience the emotional and physical trauma of dating violence everyday in this country. While many of us are familiar with the impact of domestic violence on adults, we have not fully acknowledged the impact of dating violence on teens. Young women between the ages of 16 and 24 are particularly vulnerable to dating violence, experiencing the highest per capita rates of non-fatal intimate partner violence of any age group (DOJ, 2000). A full one-third of teens report experiencing some form of abuse in their romantic relationships (Halpern, 2001), and 22% of female homicide victims ages 16-19 are killed by their intimate partners (DOJ, 2000).

Dating and domestic violence are similar in many ways. In both, the batterer engages in a pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviors designed to control the survivor. Like adults, young survivors endure constant criticism, false accusations, verbal abuse, threats, and isolation from family and friends. In addition, young survivors are often reluctant to reveal the abuse they are enduring for a variety of reasons. Adults and young survivors both exhibit fear of their abuser, are concerned for the safety of family and friends, are often blamed for the abuse, face increased risks when they end the relationship, and may lose their life. Survivors and batterers come from all lifestyles. The majority of survivors are female; however, some young men and boys are survivors as well.

Last year in Michigan, a 20-year-old man beat his girlfriend to death crushing her skull with a baseball bat in her parents' home. He then stabbed her with a kitchen knife, wrapped her body in plastic and duct tape, and dumped her body into a garbage can**. His girlfriend recently told him that she wanted to break off their relationship.** Illustrating that dating violence crosses all walks of life, these two young people were from affluent families, were in college, and their families had been friends for years. Like many families, their families did not recognize any signs of trouble before the murder. Friends and family described the young man as passive, kind, and doting.

Unfortunately, many are not aware of the signs of potential lethality that may lead up to or occur after the survivor ends the

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relationship. Therefore, it is imperative that we understand the complexities of dating violence and the unique barriers that young adults face in getting help. Such obstacles include but are not limited to:

- Fear that adults will not believe them
- Fear of isolation or risk of harassment from their peers
- Belief that they should be able to handle the situation
- Fear that their sexual orientation will be revealed
- Limited social services and resources for minors
- Distrust of institutions (e.g., law enforcement, courts, etc.)
- Confidentiality concerns
- Lack of awareness of legal options

In order to meet the needs of today's young adult survivor, one has to consider the following:

- Address the issues of confidentiality early on, without it you will not get far.
- Explain everything that you need to do in order to provide services, being sure to pause and ask if they understand.
- Realize that one-size does not fit all – listen to what each young adult has to say about their experiences.
- Give teens accurate information about the dynamics and risks of dating violence, resources, and safety information that is pertinent to their individual lives.
- Understand their culture (ethnicity, race, religion, dress, environment, etc.), and the way it may impact their response to abusive behavior.
- Learn their language – for example ***dating*** may be described by them as kicking it, hooking up, or just chillin'.
- Consider how victimization can impact adolescent development.

Addressing the needs of individual survivors is critical, but it is not enough. Publicly held misinformation about dating violence should be countered with the facts. The public must understand that dating violence *is* potentially lethal, very complex, and frighteningly common. Parents, judges, educators, law enforcement officers, religious leaders, youth leaders, and others who work with teens should recognize that danger signals such as jealousy, ownership, and stalking in a dating relationship must be taken seriously.

In the aforementioned case, the police are quoted as saying, "We're going to get to the heart of this argument – and why it took an angry shift." As advocates, we need to inform people that abusive behavior and murder are not the result of "an argument that took an angry shift." This murder occurred because a young man was determined to control his girlfriend. He purchased the weapon (baseball bat), duct tape, gloves, and garbage bags on his way to her house. He was not going to let her end the relationship.

It is imperative for victims, families, and the public to understand that an abusive dating partner can be extremely dangerous. Moreover, there is little that the victim can do to stop the threatening behavior. Ending dating violence requires the collaborative efforts of families, systems, friends, and the community. It is certainly not appropriate to suggest that an issue as complex as dating violence can be addressed by survivors by "just saying no."

For information about the Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment

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Board's Dating Violence Youth Education Package, please visit:

http://www.michigan.gov/dhs/0,1607,7-124-5460_7261_21516---,00.html

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Joyce Wright is a staff member for the Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board.

Congratulations to Recent Award Winners in Children's Services!

By Julia Heany

The crime victim services community in Michigan stands on the dedication, passion, and knowledge of its many outstanding advocates. *The Michigan Advocate* would like to recognize three recent award winners in children's services and congratulate each of them on their many accomplishments.

Jerre Cory was honored with the national *Angels in Adoption* award in Washington D.C. on September 13, 2005. Nominated by U.S. Representative Mike Rogers, Ms. Cory received the award for her dedication to improving the lives of children in the child welfare system. Ms. Cory has served children and families in the Lansing community for 35 years. After working as a teacher for the Lansing School District, Ms. Cory served as a social worker with Hospice. Ms. Cory started the "Kids for Kids" program in Lansing and co-founded Ele's Place, a vital service for grieving children in the Lansing community. Ms. Cory now serves as the director of the newly established Angel House in Mason, a one-of-a-kind facility that is both an emergency shelter for abused and neglected children and a Child Assessment Center. In the Congressional News Release announcing Ms. Cory's receipt of this honor, Representative Rogers said "Jerre has been called 'an angel with wings on earth' by some who have worked with her and by those children and families she has served. This national recognition is one way for the community and the nation to express their appreciation for all she does for others." We couldn't have said it better ourselves. Congratulations Ms. Cory, and thank you for all you have given the children and families of the Lansing community.

The Michigan Chapter of the National Children's Alliance awarded **Dr. Debra Simms** with *The Champion for Children Award* this year at its annual Legislative Reception on April 26. Dr. Simms is the medical director for the Child Protection Team at DeVos Children's Hospital in Grand Rapids. She is also the medical director for the Kent County CAC, the Ottawa County CAC, and Safe Harbor CAC in Allegan County. She is a fellow with the American Academy of Pediatrics and a Board Certified Pediatrician. Dr. Simms was appointed by former Governor Engler to serve on Lieutenant Governor Binsfeld's Children's Commission. She is an active member of the Child Death Review Teams in Allegan, Kent, and Ottawa Counties. Dr. Simms is a Clinical Assistant Professor of Pediatrics for MSU and enjoys teaching Emergency Medicine and Pediatric residents at Spectrum Health and Family Practice residents at Saint Mary's Hospital. Congratulations Dr. Simms, and thank you for your commitment to Michigan's children.

In October 2005, **Barbara Welke** received the Ray Helfer Child Advocate Award presented by the Michigan Professional Society on the Abuse of Children. Ms. Welke was honored with this award for her service and dedication to the field of child sexual abuse. Having

Continued on next page

received her Masters of Social Work from the University of Michigan in 1985, Ms. Welke has dedicated her career to improving the welfare of children in Michigan. Ms. Welke is currently the Director of the Children's Assessment Center of Berrien County, where she also conducts forensic interviews. As a champion of the CAC concept in her community, Ms. Welke has been instrumental in bringing together key partners and establishing a successful multidisciplinary approach to responding to childhood sexual abuse in Berrien County. Ms. Welke is also the President of the Michigan Chapter of the National Children's Alliance, and has served as the Board President for Safe Shelter of Benton Harbor. Over the course of her career Ms. Welke has touched the lives of countless children and families through skilled and compassionate service provision, leadership, and vision. Thank you, Ms. Welke, for your years of service and dedication to Michigan's children, and congratulations on receiving the Ray Helfer Child Advocate Award.

Julia Heany, PhD, is the Project Leader for the Crime Victim Services Commission Technical Assistance Project at the Michigan Public Health Institute.

Eighth Annual Council of Advocates Held

By Courtney Chapin

Each year the Crime Victim Services Commission (CVSC) and the Michigan Public Health Institute (MPHI) collaborate to hold a day-long, roundtable discussion called the Council of Advocates. The Council of Advocates (COA) is composed of a small group of VOCA-funded agency representatives from across the state. The annual COA meeting provides an opportunity for grantees to network and to discuss the issues that are facing crime victims and victim service agencies. Participants have the opportunity to give open feedback to the CVSC and MPHI, and the CVSC is able to relay any new and relevant information regarding VOCA grant administration.

This year's Council of Advocates' meeting took place on December 7, 2005 at the Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center in East Lansing, Michigan. COA participants traveled to the meeting from all over Michigan, including Detroit, Lansing, Battle Creek, Kalamazoo, Holland, Saginaw, Muskegon, Mt. Clemens, and Ironwood. These participants represented a variety of VOCA-funded agencies serving victims crime, including domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse.

The meeting began with a warm welcome and opening remarks from Mike Fullwood, CVSC Director, and Leslie O'Reilly, Program Specialist. The group then transitioned into an open question and answer session, which focused on questions that had been submitted by participants prior to the meeting. Topics of discussion included VOCA-agency funds and budgets, how to make voices heard in the "political arena" concerning importance of serving victims, Senate Bill 119 regarding reimbursement for rape exams, struggles with issues related to DHS policies, CVSC funding priorities, and the current state of VOCA funding for the next fiscal year.

The afternoon agenda included additional items of importance. The CVSC provided an update on the VOCA Online Application and Reporting processes, and Randy Parker from the CVSC provided an update on the Grant Compliance Review and Needs Assessment process. Julia Heany from MPHI led a discussion about *The Michigan Advocate* newsletter, possible topics for future articles, and website expansion. In a discussion of the upcoming Program Evaluation Trainings, participants were invited to share questions and concerns about their evaluation efforts, as well as suggestions for improving the program evaluation trainings. After the meeting these training dates were set for the summer of 2006: June 23rd in Traverse City and August 4th in Lansing. The COA meeting concluded with thanks to all participants for atten-

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ding and for providing valuable feedback to the CVSC and MPHI. The date for the 9th Annual Council of Advocates' meeting has been set for Wednesday, December 13th, 2006 in East Lansing.

Discussions at the COA were summarized in a report and will be used to help guide CVSC priorities and VOCA grant administration in Michigan. Copies of the Council of Advocates Report Summary were mailed to all VOCA-funded agencies to keep victim service advocates informed of current issues and developments. If you would like additional copies of this Report, please contact Courtney Chapin at (517) 324-8307 or at cchapin@mphi.org. The Report is also available online at www.michiganadvocate.org/council.htm.

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Courtney Chapin is the Research Assistant for the Crime Victim Services Commission Technical Assistance Project at the Michigan Public Health Institute.

Program Evaluation Training is Coming Up!

By Julia Heany

Last summer the Crime Victim Services Commission (CVSC) and the Michigan Public Health Institute (MPHI) hosted two successful trainings in program evaluation under the excellent leadership of Dr. Cris Sullivan. Both trainings were well-received by grantees, and we look forward to another successful season of evaluation training this year.

This summer's trainings will be held on June 23rd in Traverse City and on August 4th in Lansing. All VOCA grantees will be invited by the CVSC to attend one of these trainings within the next few months. Grantees are encouraged to send staff who are directly involved in the program's evaluation efforts, and it makes sense to send new staff each year. Only new agencies and agencies with new directors are required to attend this event, but those of you who have been around for awhile are more than welcome to come again! The format and content of this year's training will be similar to last year. The training will take place over the course of one day and will present a practical approach to outcome evaluation specifically designed to meet the unique needs of agencies serving victims of crime.

Although each year the evaluation of this training has been overwhelmingly positive, several participants have commented that they would like more information on evaluating children's services. The CVSC has heard this request and is responding. A child-focused version of the evaluation training is currently under construction, and will be available beginning in fiscal year 2007. More details on this new opportunity will be available within the next several months, so stay tuned!

For more information on the CVSC's training in program evaluation, please contact Julia Heany at 517-324-7349 or jheany@mphi.org.

Julia Heany, Ph.D., is the Project Leader for the Crime Victim Services Commission Technical Assistance Project at the Michigan Public Health Institute.

Technical Update

WWW.Walter's Words of Wisdom

The Holy Grail of Word Document Formatting: The Use of Styles

- **By Walter Pelowski**

In each issue of The Michigan Advocate, Walter Pelowski of Agate Software, Inc., discusses technological developments impacting the VOCA online application and reporting systems.

You may recall that in my last WWW article, I talked about reviewing documents in Microsoft Word. Although I believe that information was useful, I was using it to introduce my next topic, which is vastly more important and more difficult to understand and to explain.

Let me begin by stating that by applying the concepts here, you can take your knowledge of Microsoft Word formatting to the next level. However, mastering this next level could take the rest of your life and then some, and may cause some to become mildly obsessive. *(Read ahead to the part about my document formatting affliction and you'll see what I mean.)* This article focuses on using "styles" to format your Word Documents. If you're not already familiar with what styles are or how they affect your documents, that's okay. From my experience, most people who use Word don't know about styles, and yet styles govern all formatting in Word, even though this isn't obvious. From a techie's perspective, that last statement was sublimely profound, so let me repeat it. **Styles govern all of the formatting that you do in Word, even if you don't recognize it.** People who use Word utilize stylized formatting every day without realizing it. Let me make another assertion. **I believe that the styles function in Word is both Word's best feature and its biggest hindrance.** I will not try to convince you of this, but for those of you that don't already know about styles and read this article to its conclusion, I would appreciate your response to the following two questions:

1. Is formatting in Word a lot easier to understand once you understand styles?
2. Considering that all formatting in Word is based on styles, why is it that the ability to use these styles just doesn't jump out at you when you first use the software? *(In Microsoft's defense, I heard that one of the first versions of Word sent a*

Continued on next page

shock through your keyboard to your fingertips when you misused the formatting options. This "feature" was later removed on the advice of legal counsel.)

When used properly, styles are amazingly useful, but for the 95% of people that don't use them or even know that they exist, their implementation is profoundly confusing and complex.

Beginning the Long Journey through the Land of Styles

There is no way this document will answer all of your style-related questions. I can't even answer all of my own questions about styles let alone all of yours. I do however hope to accomplish the following two basic tasks:

1. Illustrate what styles are and how they are used in Word.
2. Begin to address how you might utilize styles to make your formatting life much, much easier.

Required Versions

Let's set some ground-rules. Although styles were heavily used in Word 2000 and in earlier versions, some of the features I will be describing are not available in those versions. As in my previous article, I will be confining this article to those features available in Word XP/2002 and Word 2003.

To check your version of Word please follow these steps:
With Word open, click "Help" on the "File, Edit, View" toolbar.
Click "About Microsoft Word."
Look to see that your version is Word XP/2002 or higher.

Setting up your toolbars

After you've checked your version of Word, make sure that you have the right toolbars showing. If you're a CVSC grantee, you should be quite familiar with how to enable or disable toolbars, because you've probably sat through VOCA Grant Application training sessions, where Megan and I have discussed enabling and disabling toolbars in Internet Explorer. The process for Word is very much the same. The two toolbars you want to select (at a bare minimum) are the "Standard" and "Formatting" toolbars.

To enable these toolbars (shame on you for not knowing this - pay attention the next time Megan is doing her training!) please follow these steps:
With Word open, click "View" on the "File, Edit, View" toolbar.
Hover over "Toolbars" and make sure both "Standard" and "Formatting" are checked.

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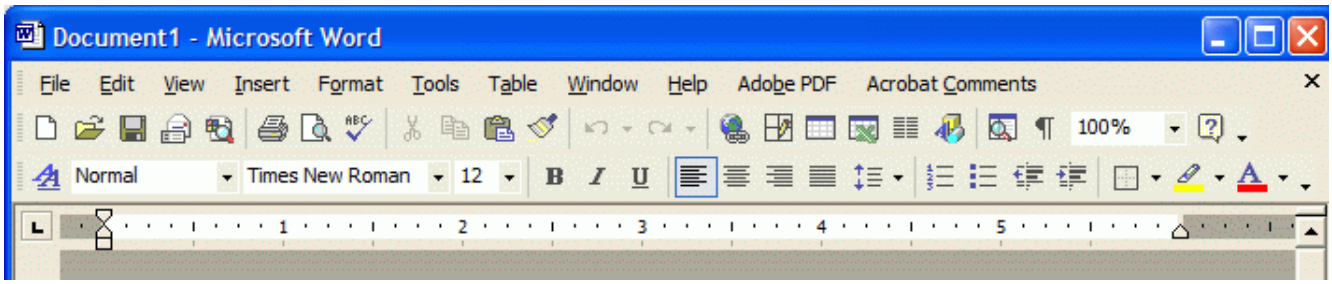
Your screen should look fairly similar to the one shown below.

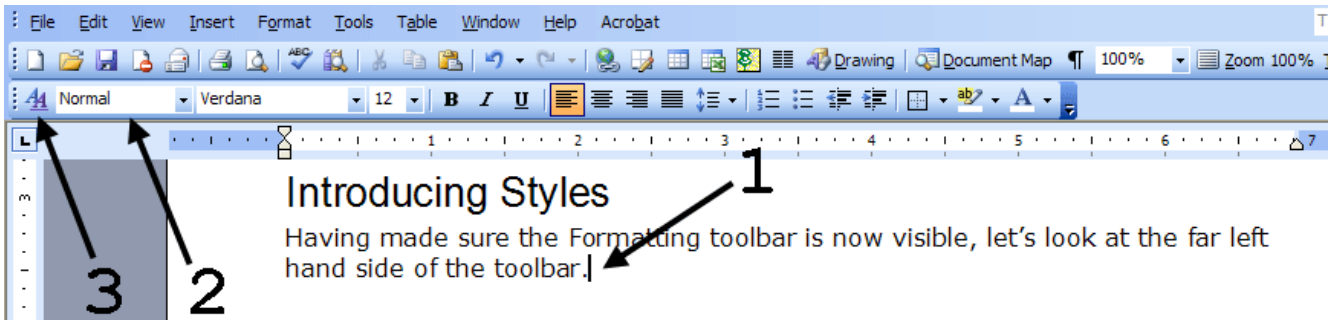


Configuring Toolbars

The great thing about toolbars is that you can add and remove buttons from them as you see fit. I personally try to leave the standard toolbars pretty much the same, mostly because I don't want to confuse users by adding options that they won't typically see. However, you can edit your toolbars as you wish. In fact, I usually add my own toolbars for those options I use frequently, *(just in case you were thinking, "That's funny, my version of Word didn't come with a "Walter's Toolbar.")* Although you can get to all of the options via one of the menus, it's much more convenient to have quick and easy access through a button on the toolbar.

Introducing Styles

Having made sure the Formatting toolbar is now visible, let's look at the far left-hand side of the toolbar. In the following examples, I will use this article to illustrate my points.



I have labeled three important locations in the picture shown above. The first is the cursor position. You can see the cursor at the end of the line of text. The position of the cursor will show the style element. In this case, it's the paragraph, and the style for the paragraph is "Normal." If the formatting for the paragraph changes (either by choosing a different style or by adding direct formatting) the style shown by the #2 arrow would change. Here, I show the "Normal" style in the screenshot, but for this paragraph that I'm now typing, I'm using the "Body Text" style. The

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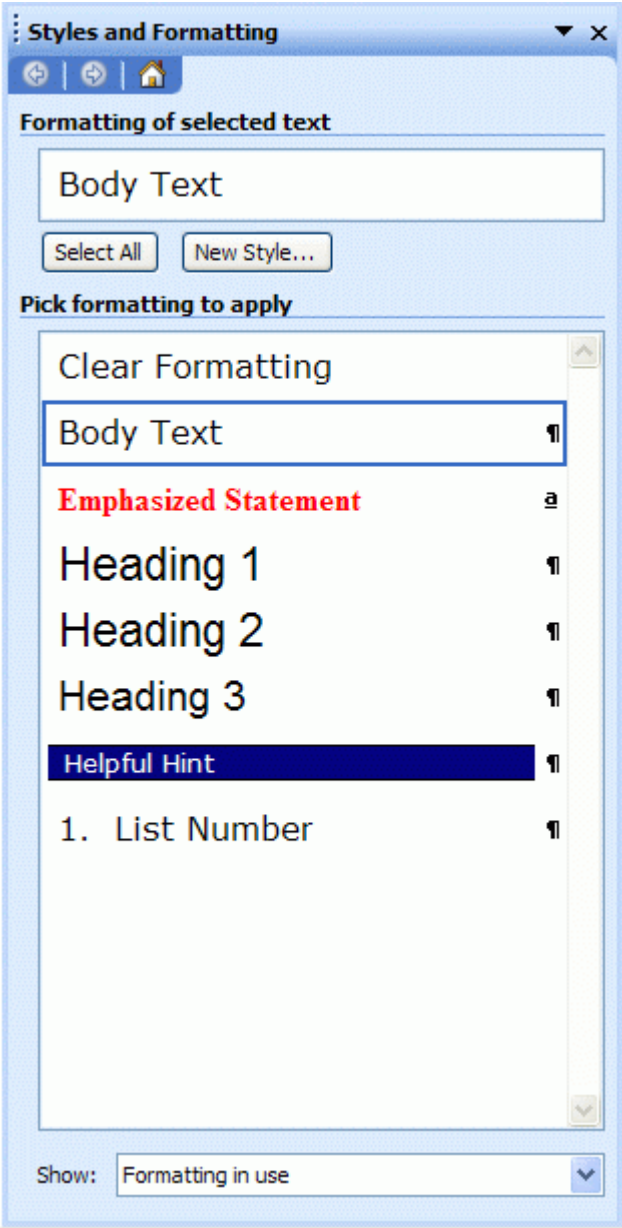
"Normal" style has far broader applicability because it is the style upon which all other styles are based. We'll discuss this in more detail a little later. Arrow #3 points to an icon that makes style navigation and selection much easier. It's called the "Styles and Formatting" window and can be activated by either clicking that button or by clicking "Format," "Styles and Formatting."

The Styles and Formatting Window



The Styles and Formatting window provides lots of information. We can see all of the formatting styles that are currently in use in image to the right. We know we're viewing those styles in use by looking at the "Show" option chosen at the very bottom of the window. The list of styles includes all of the styles I've used in this document thus far. As I go along, I'll add a few more. The style highlighted with the blue border is the style of the paragraph that I was viewing when I created this screenshot. It was a paragraph that was formatted using the "Body Text" style.

To the right of the style name is a little icon. For all except "Clear Formatting" and "Emphasized Statement" there is a paragraph icon. That paragraph icon means that the style is a paragraph style, and choosing it will change the format of an entire paragraph.

The default setting in Word hides paragraph markers in your document. To see paragraph markers, click the show/hide ¶ icon on your formatting toolbar. This will let you see paragraph marks at the end of each of your paragraphs, dots for spaces, arrows for tabs, and a variety of other marks. These little marks will prove useful to us later on.

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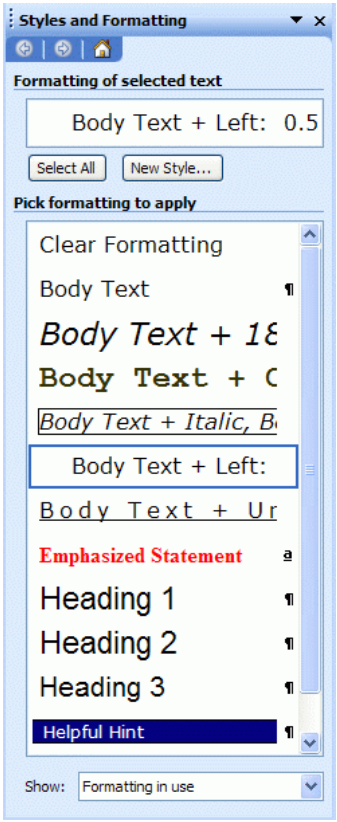
"Emphasized Statement" is followed by a different icon. The underlined, lowercase "a" indicates that this style is a character style. A character style affects parts of a paragraph without changing the entire paragraph. I used the "Emphasized Statement" style on the very first page of this article to emphasize certain statements (click this link to automatically scroll to that section). The "Clear Formatting" option is not really a style at all, but can be used to remove both applied styles and direct formatting.

Direct Formatting

Direct formatting is what I believe **most** *(notice the renewed use of the "Emphasized Statement" style ☺)* users use to format their documents. Honestly, I don't blame them because direct formatting just absolutely begs to be used. It's right there on the standard formatting toolbar, so how could you not use it?! Direct formatting (for the purposes of this article) is basically using the formatting toolbar to format your Word documents. Let me give you an example.

Elements·of·*this*·paragraph·**use·direct·formatting**·
that·was·applied·using·the·formatting·toolbar.¶



I have to apologize for the hideousness of the above paragraph. It insults my sense of aesthetic beauty. But that is nothing compared to what it did to my styles! What happened?! Look at the styles that show up in my document after I added that unappealing paragraph. I now have styles called "Body Text + Left: 0.5in" and "Body Text + Olive Green." What does that even mean?! Well, I used the tab icon on the formatting toolbar to push the entire paragraph over, and on the "use direct formatting" text I increased the size, changed the font, and made it olive green. The problem with direct formatting is that with each direct formatting task, you essentially create these unwanted pseudo-styles in your document. Word makes them for you automatically to make sense of the formatting that was applied. The more direct formatting options you use, the more pseudo-styles Word creates.

I think it's about time for me to come clean with you. I couldn't in good conscience add such a paragraph to my document. It's actually a screenshot, not an actual paragraph. I couldn't leave it in this impeccably formatted

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document. *(At this point you may be thinking, "Wow, this guy is really into formatting!" and yes, you're correct in that assessment. I am a document formatting nerd and, despite my best efforts to curb this affliction, I cannot. I'd share some of my other nerd maladies, but I don't want to burden you.)* So I chose to remove that paragraph and just include the screenshot. I hope you can forgive my nerdy ways. Moving on….

The problem with these pseudo-styles demonstrates the biggest advantage of using styles – quite simply, **styles are flexible, easily changeable, and consistent, while direct formatting is not**.

The Advantages of Using Styles and the Pitfalls of Direct Formatting

Styles work on the concept of inheritance. Formatting can be inherited or pulled from another style on which your style is based. For instance, by default everything is based on the "Normal" style. Changing the "Normal" style can change your whole document. That's a really powerful feature. To properly grasp the ramifications, let's use an example.

Let's say you have a 110-page document that describes your azaleas. You want to dramatically change the look of the whole thing. You've decided you no longer like the "Times New Roman" font *(it's just so eighties),* and you've decided that double-spacing your text would look better and also bump your page count up to 150 pages, which would really show your passion for your garden! Well, to do that using direct formatting could take a year and a day for a 110-page document if you wanted to maintain the sweet little Tahoma-font quotes by Robert Frost that you sprinkled throughout the document. But if you formatted your document using styles it would take just a couple of clicks and…… ***WABAAM!*** *(You can go ahead and make the sound if you want. Oh, and I now have a character style named "Wabaam!" I'd like to see if I can use it again.)* Your whole document has been reformatted to include that easily readable Verdana font, which is now double-spaced without affecting the sage wisdom of Mr. Frost. How? I thought you'd never ask.

Applying and Changing Styles

The easiest way to change a style is to right click the style's name in the Styles and

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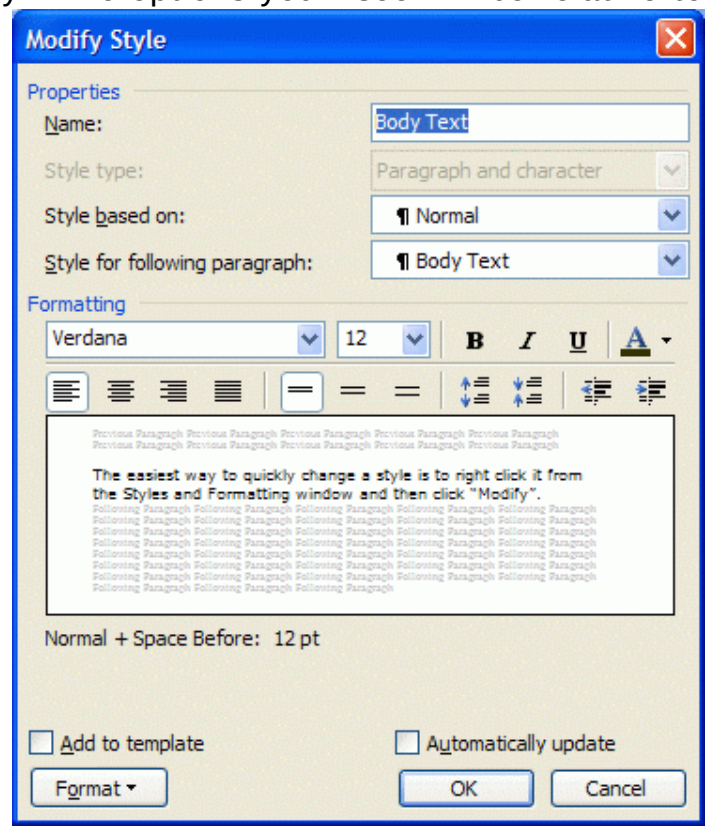
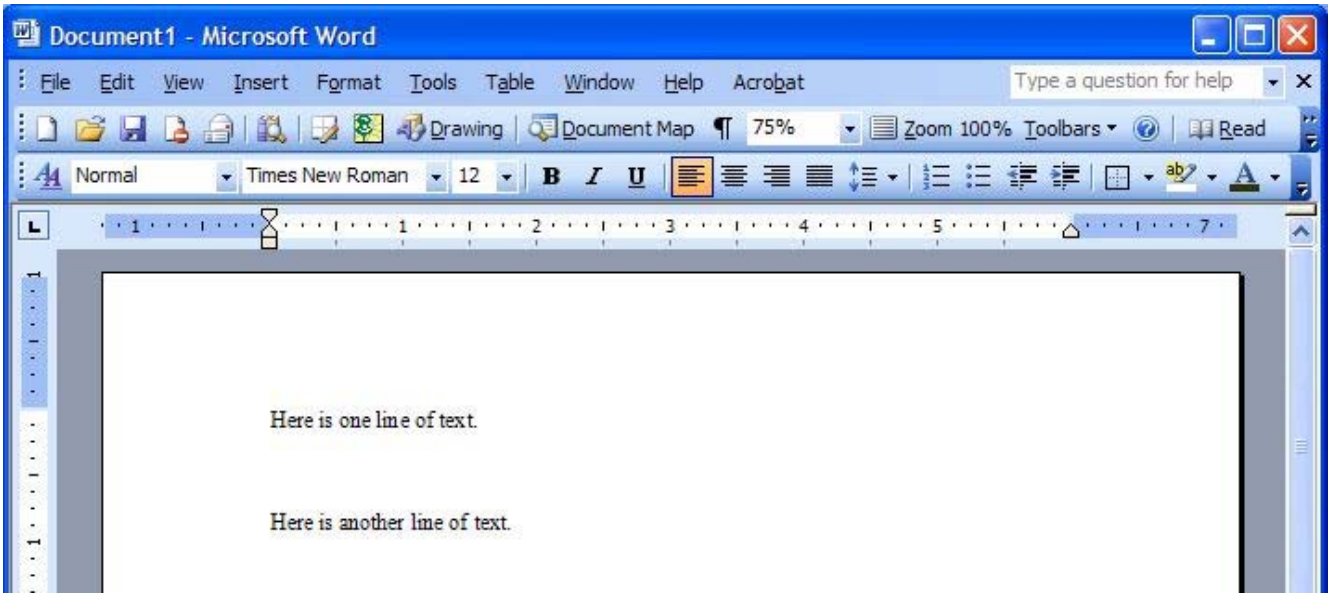
Formatting window and then click "Modify." The options you'll see will be relative to the "Style type" you are changing. You'll notice in the Modify Style box there is a "Style based on:" textbox. In most cases the default style will be "Normal." By changing the font, font-size, color, alignment, or spacing of the "Normal" style, you essentially change most of your document by changing the styles that depend upon the "Normal" style.



The following is an example of how to and how not to use Microsoft Word directly involving styles.

Question: How do you add extra space between lines of text?
If your answer is "I hit the Enter key a bunch of times," you're one of the legions of people that format their documents incorrectly. When you hit the "Enter" key you're adding a new paragraph. Paragraphs are for content. By hitting "Enter" multiple times, you're adding a bunch of blank content areas just to add a little bit of space. Let me show you why this causes problems.



The picture above shows a document, with space between two sentences created

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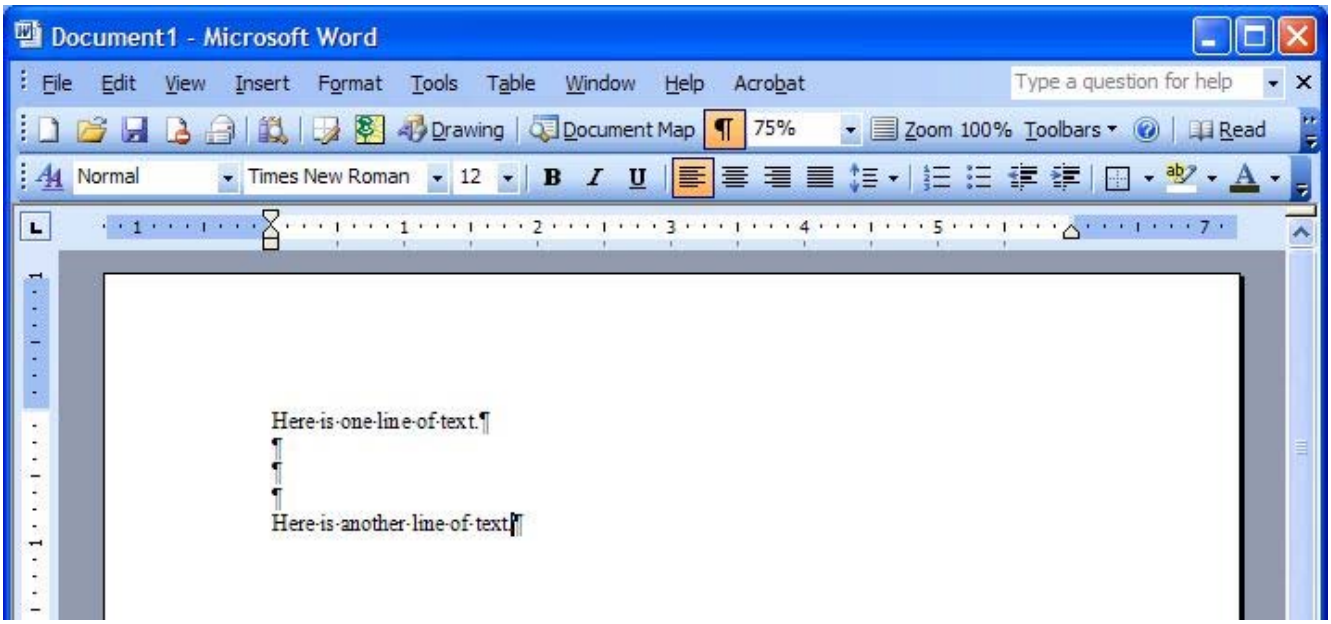
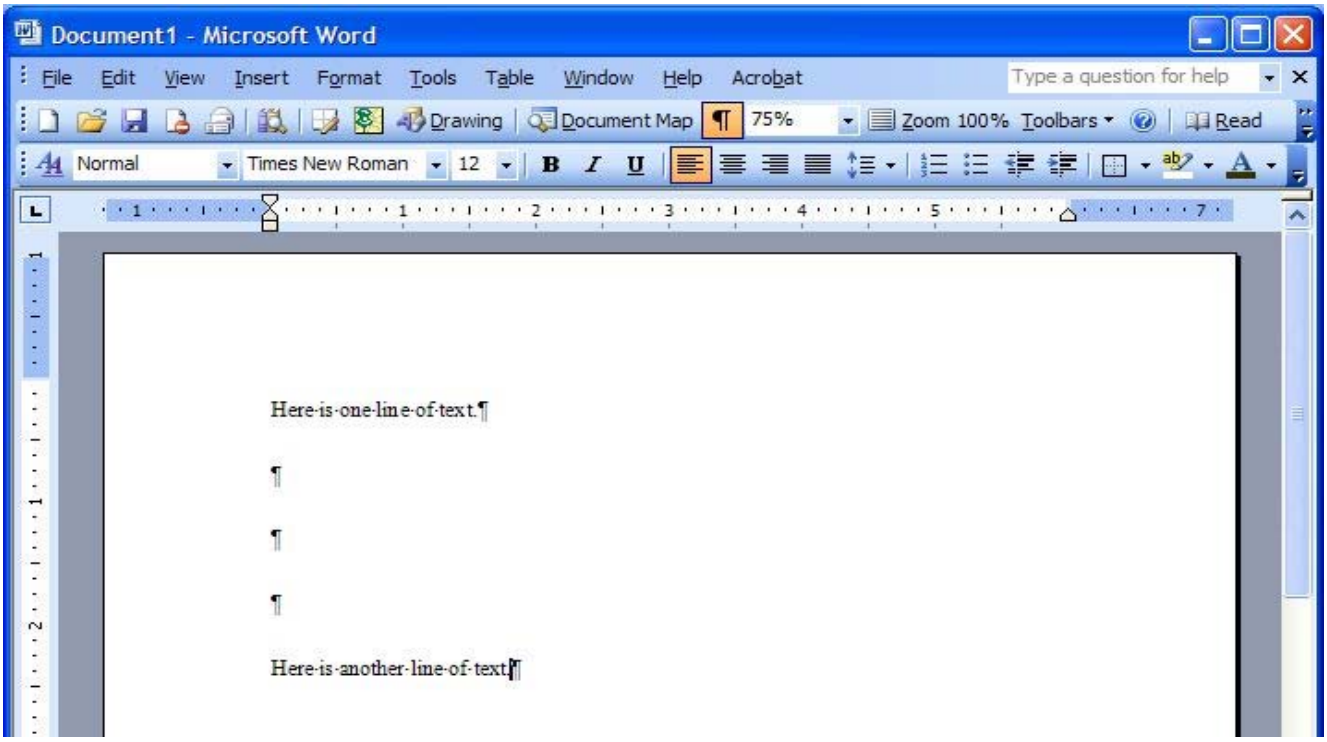
by hitting "Enter" a few times. With the default view, everything looks fine. Now let's turn on the paragraph tags by clicking the little show/hide button ¶.



Now we see the empty paragraphs. Some of you may be saying, "Tomato! Tomahto! The result is still the same! Who cares?!" The difference is that when someone intentionally or inadvertently changes the style (in this case "Normal") upon which the text is based, the spacing gets totally messed up. For example:



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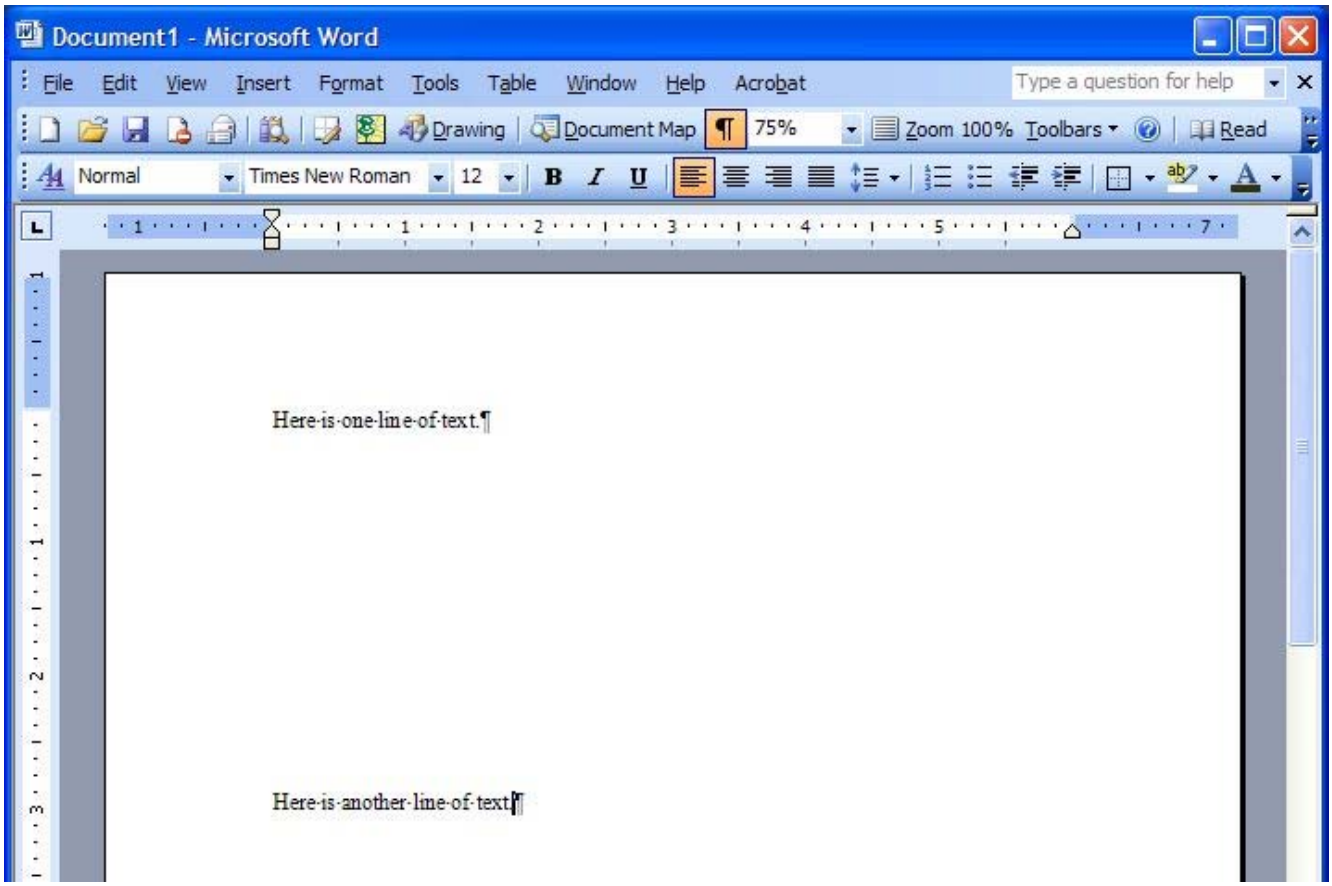
Now there is almost twice as much space between paragraphs. In this situation you can remove some paragraphs to regain the desired distance, but that isn't always an option, such as in the following example.



MU-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA!

(I just knew I was going to be able to reuse that "Wabaam" style.)

So now what do we do? Where are the paragraph marks we would otherwise delete? This is why adding space with empty paragraphs was a bad idea. This becomes even more confusing when the paragraph markers are turned off.

A Better Way of Adding Space

Avoid the temptation to add a bunch of blank paragraphs. Instead, add spacing to the style upon which those paragraphs are based. In this document, I have changed the "Body Text" style so that it has a "Space Before" of 12 points. This means that before each paragraph of text that uses the "Body Text" style there is a

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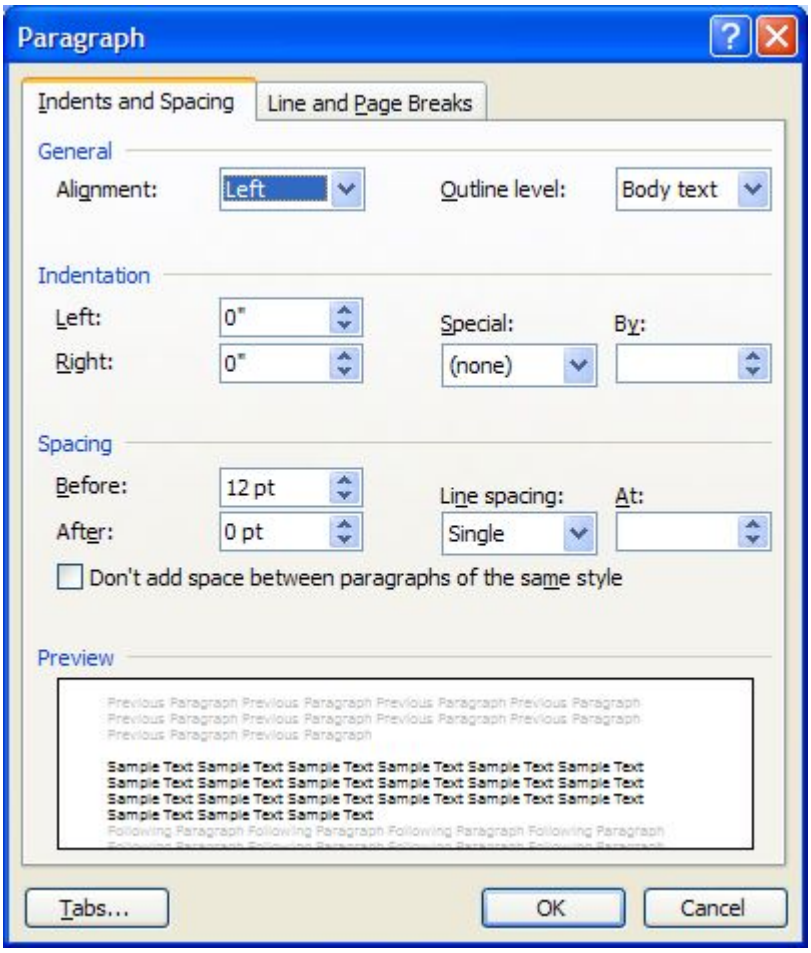
little bit of space. Access this option by following these steps.

1. Right click the style and click "Modify."
2. Click the "Format" button and click "Paragraph."
3. Change the "Spacing Before."

It's that simple. To the right, there's a depiction of this option.



You can see there are also places to change the style's alignment, outline level, indentation, and line spacing. You can also choose not to add any spacing between paragraphs of the same type, but only between paragraphs of differing styles. If you click the "Line and Page Breaks" tab, you can determine when and how line breaks affect certain types of styles. This can be especially useful in avoiding situations where a heading appears at the bottom of a page and the text below it is relegated to the next page because of a page break.

Tips to Remember

Avoid the Formatting Toolbar

The first thing you can do to make your document formatting life easier is to avoid using the formatting toolbar. Avoid it like the plague. Specifically, try not to use the buttons to the right of the style selection dropdown box. (Obviously I don't mind you using the "Styles and Formatting" button or the "Style" dropdown because that means you'll be using styles and not direct formatting.)

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If you need to change a paragraph, try changing its style first. If you want to create some formatted text, like "Wabaam!," create a character style, highlight the text you wish to change, and then click the style to apply it. If you start applying styles to your documents, you'll know what questions to ask.

Don't Use Empty Paragraphs for Creating Space

I've explained why this is a bad idea. Create some "Space Before" or "Space After" on a style in order to add extra space between paragraphs.

Until next time

We've only touched on what styles are and what they can do for your document, but that's enough for this article. My goal is merely to introduce you to the concept of styles and how to apply them. We'll spend more time on applying them in my next article.

I hope you found this useful. If you've gotten this far, you're obviously a person who wants to learn how to use the formatting features of Word. I truly believe that by following some of these rules, document editing will become much easier. I will be interested to know how many of you found this article helpful and to hear your questions and comments after you begin using styles to format your documents. Please email me at wpelowski@agatesoftware.com. I'll attempt to respond to your questions in my next article.