

CORE SKILLS: THE COMPLEXITY OF TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE

Clinical Case Exercise

This case can be broken down into three sections. Consider the following questions while reading the case:

Section I: Before Personal Injury

What is the child's experience of the traumatic event up until the moment he is injured?

Section II: Under Personal Attack

What is the child's experience of his injury and the immediate aftermath of the violence?

Section III: After the Cessation of Violence

What is the child's experience after the violence is over?

While reading the case, please do the following:

- **Circle** the child's ongoing *appraisals* of the violent event.
- **Underline** times when the child experiences *emotional and physiological reactions*.
- **Star** times when the child has *intervention thoughts* about
 - Prevention (how can I stop this from getting worse?)
 - Protection (how can I prevent myself from getting hurt?)
 - Repair (how can I get my mom to the hospital?)
- **Check** efforts at *emotional regulation* (Does the child look to his mom for comfort?)

Identify and describe the following *salient moments* in this case:

- Where are the moments of concern or changes in foci of attention?
 - Identify where the child felt estranged from his sister.
 - Identify the moment when the child's attention was drawn away from concern over his mom's safety.
 - Describe the child's different moments of concern for his mother.
 - Describe the different moments of concern for him.
- When is there a radical shift in attention or concern when physical integrity is violated?
 - Identify the moment of the child's estrangement from others (when the child is injured)
 - Identify the time when the child may feel the need to inhibit his wishes to intervene.
- Are there additional traumatic moments after the cessation of violence or threat?
 - Describe the child's experience of acute separation from his mother.
 - Identify where the child felt shame in telling the police that the father was the source of the violence.

For Discussion: Consider how cultural issues might play a role in this case:

- How are distress and danger defined and appraised by different cultures?
- How might emotional and physiological reactions within this case vary across cultures?
- How would the experience of shame in this case be influenced by culture?
- How might intervention thoughts vary across cultures?
- How might culture impact efforts at emotional regulation?