

# MIPSAC

## JUST VENTING

by Leni Cowling

As a Child Protection Worker, I have been seeing some things that concern me, but I have no network within the Department to voice them. One trouble area is that of custody disputes. I have had numerous cases where the biological parents, now separated and extremely spiteful of each other, claim that abuse is occurring to the children when they go to (mom's, dad's) house. While no evidence may be able to be obtained, the children are learning very well how to manipulate and get maximum attention. Of concern to me is that the children are learning how to have destructive relationships. If dad, or dad's girlfriend makes them angry, all they have to do is tell mom about it, but embellish the facts, or even let mom do the embellishment herself. If mom, or mom's boyfriend....The lessons are taking deep hold. Forget any concept of family unification. This kind of destruction is worse than abuse to them per se. The Friend of the Court workers simply sigh and shrug when confronted with these custody disputes as they are overwhelmed with them. There is no venue in Child Protection to deal adequately with custody disputes. Does the ball lie in Mental Health? Law enforcement says they can only enforce Orders. These parents don't

want mediation either. For some, the seeds of violence are set. And, I have had mothers who drag their children from Emergency room to Doctor to Doctor, claiming sexual abuse, but no medical evidence is found. How close is this to Munchausens syndrome? The mothers come in to Protective Services and claim we are not protecting their children. I see many young children today who will easily make false claims in the future.

Another area of concern is that of Sexual harassment of children. A recent case of a second grade boy kissing a girl on the playground was seen as sexual harassment and he was suspended. But we have many families who have no concept of boundaries and feel entitled to walk in on young adolescents bathing or dressing. Or pinching, suggestive comments, and dirty jokes told to children which make them uncomfortable. Lack of respect is very common in abusive families, as well as extreme boundary violation. Again, is this a mental health issue? Who does the teaching here, and who are the students?

Most Criminal Sexual Conduct cases are based on the evidence of the degree of sexual penetration. We have not begun to deal with Sexual harassment yet. While I have seen the devastation of the pain of sexual abuse, I see the trauma that harassment also causes.



#### COMING CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

Jan 27-31, 1997. 11Th. Annual San Diego Conference on Responding to Child Maltreatment. San Diego, CA. contact: Robbie Webb (619) 495-4940

February 5-8, 1997. Treating Sexual Trauma. Hilton Head Is., S. Carolina. Contact: Barbara Murdoch, Alexandria Assoc. (770) 933-8928

March 12-15, 1997. Standing Strong and Together for Children. Washington DC. Contact: Children's Defense Fund (202) 662-3684.

March 17-21, 1997. 13Th. National Symposium on Child Sexual abuse. Huntsville, AL. Contact: National Children's advocacy Center (800) 227-4645.

April 11-13, 1997. Dreamweavers: Child Abuse and Victim Advocacy. Itasca, IL. Contact: Beth Vargo (630) 515-5432.

May 30-31, 1997. 1997 Celebration of Healing. South bend, IN. Contact: The American Coalition for abuse awareness (ACAA) . (202) 462-4689.

June 3-7, 1997. 2nd World Congress on family Law and the Rights of Children and Youth. San Francisco, CA. Contact: Association of Family and Conciliation Courts. (608) 251-4001.

June 4-7, 1997. 2nd International Conference on Children Exposed to Family Violence. Ontario, Canada. Contact: Family Violence & Sexual Assault Institute (903) 534-5100.

June 18-21, 1997. 5Th. National Colloquium of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC). Miami Beach, FL. Contact: APSAC (312) 554-0166.

June 29 - July 2, 1997. 5Th. International Family Violence Research Conference. Durham, NH. Contact: UNH (603) 862-2525.

#### NEXT MIPSAC MEETING

**Friday, February 28, 1997. at the DeVos Children's Hospital at Butterworth.  
12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m. with lunch.**

For two days in Febuary, Butterworth Hospital is sponsoring a Pediatric Emergency Care Conference on the 27Th. and the 3rd Bi-Annual Child Maltreatment

Conference on the 28Th.. The Maltreatment Conference will be set up as a court room scenario, resembling as closely as possible, an actual case. It should prove to be an informative and learning experience.

**April 25Th.** Friday meeting. Noon at The Family Assessment center, 901 Michigan N.E., Grand Rapids. Directions: I96 to Fuller Exit, South. First light is Michigan Ave. Right. Three blocks down to 901 Mich. Ave. Call (616) 771-6400 if you get lost.

#### REMINDER!

**Please renew your annual membership to APSAC. You need National membership for MiPSAC.**

#### *Thinking Ahead:*

We are looking for articles of interest to our membership for the newsletter. Questions or suggestions to consider are always welcome and should prompt good feedback from everyone.

Membership committee

Legislative committee

Conference/Training committee

Newsletter /brochure committee

President: David L. Harrison 270 Wimberly ,  
Rochester Hills, MI 48306. phone (810) 651-8668

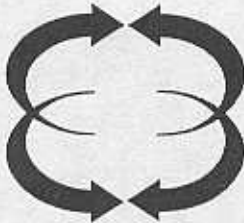
Vice-president: Dr. Vince Palusci, Devos  
Children's Hospital, 100 Michigan Ave. Grand  
Rapids, MI 49503 phone: (616) 391-8799.

Secretary: Debra Bennett, Gateway Community  
Services, 910 Abbott Rd., East Lansing, MI. 48823..  
phone: (517) 351-4000.

Treasurer: Susan Heartwell, 901 Michigan NE,  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503. Phone: (616) 771-6400.

## Goals:

- To bring together Michigan professionals working in the area of abused children
- To foster networking among Michigan professionals
- To be an information resource for Michigan professionals
- To sponsor quality training for Michigan professionals.



### JUST FOR ARGUMENTS SAKE

We still have unequal treatment towards women and children in our society. This is a basic injustice that labels individuals on the basis of gender, age, race and sexuality. Remember the furor over the suggestion that the ban be lifted on gays in the military? This was to fulfill the wishes of men to be free from unwelcome sexual advances. Yet, inappropriate sexual advances toward women in the military have been rampant and seem to get token serious examination.

I ask you, why do children, like women in the past, need to have overwhelming evidence to back-up their statements of

abuse? When a child feels unsafe, who is there to listen?



Please send articles for the newsletter to:

Leni Cowling

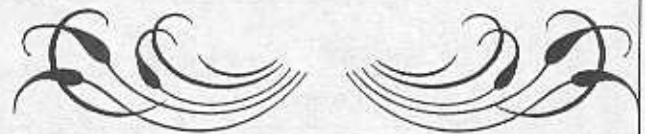
P.O. Box 892

Bellaire, MI 49615

### NOTES:

is anyone interested in collecting articles from the local newspapers that deal with Child abuse and neglect? It would be of interest to see the media coverage on a state-wide basis.

I am looking at the multigenerational patterns of abuse and would welcome discussion with anyone who would like to research it with me. Leni.



Who said: "Be careful how you raise your children in their youth - - they will be the ones taking care of you in your old age!"

MEMBERSHIP PLANS

New Membership

Renewal

Regular Membership

One year membership

- \$50,000 annual income and above. \$100
- \$25,000 - \$50,000 annual income. \$75
- Under \$25,000 annual income. (Does not include *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*) \$50

Student Membership

(Verification of full-time student status required). \$35

Group Membership

Discounts are available for five or more individuals from a single institution.  
Call 312-544-0166 for details.

Applicants outside North America add \$10 per year to annual dues.  
In order to be enrolled as a member, please enclose your payment with this form.  
Payment must be made in U.S. funds, by check, money order, or NY draft.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP  
(Please print or type all information clearly)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Degree \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate (✓ or X) your preferred mailing address.

Office Address (Agency name) \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (Office) ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ (Home) ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle the one category which most closely describes your field:

- |                      |                           |                            |                 |
|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| (001) Administration | (002) Children's Services | (003) Counseling, Licensed | (004) Education |
| (005) Judiciary      | (006) Law                 | (007) Law Enforcement      | (008) Medicine  |
| (009) Ministry       | (010) Nursing             | (011) Offender Treatment   | (012) Probation |
| (013) Psychiatry     | (014) Psychology          | (015) Social Work          |                 |

METHOD OF PAYMENT

Payment must be made in US funds, by check, charge, money order, or New York draft.

Visa or MasterCard payments may be FAXed to 312-554-0919.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed for membership dues.  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Please also accept this voluntary tax-free gift for APSAC's Endowment Fund.  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total amount enclosed.

Check # \_\_\_\_\_  Visa  MasterCard  
Card #  Expires: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please note: In renewing a membership, APSAC members certify their continuing compliance with the standards of conduct appropriate for APSAC members, including, but not limited to, the professional and ethical standards of, and all laws and regulations relating to, their respective professions.

APSAC is pleased to be participating in "Child Abuse and Neglect: The People of Color Leadership Institute" (POCLI). The goal of POCLI is to promote the leadership of people of color in child protective systems and to improve the cultural competence and sensitivity of those systems that affect families of color. As part of the effort to evaluate the effectiveness of POCLI, APSAC would like to gather information on the cultural diversity of its membership. Your participation is strictly voluntary.

I consider my cultural group identification to be: \_\_\_\_\_ (Please specify)