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**The Relationship Between Major Disciplinary Styles
and Cross-Generational Physical and Emotional Abuse:
A Study of Residential Treatment Children and
Incarcerated Adult Perpetrators**

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Abstract

This study explored the relationship between major disciplinary styles and cross-generational physical and emotional abuse. Seven hypotheses relating to disciplinary styles and cross-generational physical and emotional abuse were addressed in this study. It was also expected that there would be a high report of childhood abuse among the adult perpetrators. Two samples were used in this study. One sample of eleven adolescents in a psychiatric hospital and another of eight incarcerated adults serving sentences for violent crimes in a state correctional facility. Data was collected using two self-report measures designed by the investigator. Point-biserial correlations were used to analyze the data and results indicated that there were no statistically significant correlations between childhood abuse and adult violence, or between perceived disciplinary styles in the home and a high frequency of physical and/or emotional abuse. Explanations for these results are discussed.

**The Relationship Between Major Disciplinary Styles
and Cross-Generational Physical and Emotional Abuse:
A Study of Residential Treatment Children and
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From the dawn of civilization through the Middle Ages, the worth of a child depended on his/her ability to become a productive member of the family and the society. If a child were born deformed or handicapped it was socially acceptable to have that child disposed of. This would eliminate the risk of it being a burden on the community. In Egypt, unwanted children were thrown into the River Nile. The Bible records the command of the Pharaoh to commit nationwide infanticide of Jewish males (Exodus 1:16 and 22). Infants were disposed of in China if there was not enough food to feed the whole family (Schafer, 1967) and the ancient Greeks would leave babies on the mountainsides to die of exposure if the infants had tragic destinies predicted by the oracle of Delphi (Haluska, lecture notes, August 26, 1992), as it occurred in the story of the fall of Troy. Priam, king of Troy, and his wife attempted to rid themselves of Paris upon hearing his terrible destiny by leaving him to die on Mt. Aida (Haluska, lecture notes, August 26, 1992).

Similarly, abuse, physical, emotional, or sexual, was tolerated because the child was considered the property of the parents. He/she was expected to be constantly submissive and obedient and any expression of anger or punishment a parent deemed necessary to maintain control of the child was considered appropriate (All historical evidence cited from Iverson and Segal, 1990, chap. 1 unless otherwise noted).

With the Renaissance emerged a new appreciation for human rights, including the rights of children. Abuse became less acceptable to society and perpetrators were considered cruel and unjust. This concept spawned a fierce debate which has survived to this century: whether child abuse is a problem of the society as a whole or one of the perpetrators own personality flaws.

Child abuse has become an salient issue in America's society only since the 1960's. Before this, children rarely had their rights seriously considered by the nation as a whole.

In the mid-1700's and 1800's, the United States established some rudimentary child protection laws. The Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children (SPCC) was established in 1874 as a direct result of the drastic Mary Ellen case where the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals took her step-mother to court for inhumane treatment of the child and won. Although this case attracted enough political interest to result in the SPCC, the country's intrigue soon faded and even the Child Labor Laws of the late 19th and early 20th centuries or the problems of neglected children that were backhandedly addressed in the Social Security Act of 1930 didn't fuel public outrage sufficiently to create national concern.

During the 1960's with the Civil Rights and educational movements, however, America again focused on her children. No longer did society consider any form of child maltreatment acceptable. National attention led to the establishment of government agencies, community programs, and public awareness messages that have inundated our culture with statistics and studies for the last twenty years. The nation is again in danger of becoming complacent about child abuse. According to Iverson and Segal (1990), society losing interest

in the plight of its children is one of the greatest fears of researchers.

Prevalence/Incidence

As a guard against this potential loss of interest, professional research dealing with the topic of child abuse has increased dramatically in the last thirty years and several national agencies, along with numerous county and state programs, have been established merely for the sake of studying abuse and increasing public awareness of it (Iverson and Segal, 1990). The issue of child abuse is, according to Arthur Levine (1991), "one of the most troublesome social issues of the 1990's." Even with this increase in social awareness and political involvement Iverson and Segal point out that child maltreatment is still a problem that is not being solved.

According to Kantrowitz, King, Witherspoon, and Barret (1987), reported cases of child abuse have risen 223% nationally since 1976 and cases of reported child abuse have risen in just the last five years from 2 million in 1986, an increase of 12% over 1985 cases, to Levine's reported 2.5 million in 1991. There are estimates by Straus and Kantor (1987) of 6.5 million cases of physical abuse occurring every year in America alone. Pecora, Whittaker, Maluccio, Barth, and Plotnick (1992) report that approximately 25% of children in America ages 18 and under have been physically or emotionally abused by a caregiver.

Perhaps the inability of our nation to significantly impact the incidence of child abuse is partly due to the 'vicious cycle' of abuse. The United States has upwards of 2,178,000 residents who were abused as children (Straus and Kantor, 1987). Within 5-10 years these children will be legal adults. This poses serious questions about the well-being of the

generation yet to be born. How will these adults act towards **their** children or charges in relation to the abuse they themselves suffered? This is a question that can no longer be ignored or even overlooked. The increasing numbers beg for action.

Chain of Abuse Theory

The 'chain of abuse' theory, which postulates that abuse carries over from generation to generation, has been explored by several investigators with less than conclusive results. Widom (1989) accounted some uncertain findings. She looked up 908 child abuse and neglect cases in county court records for the years 1967–1976. When she studied the adult lives of these children, she found that only 29% of the child abuse and neglect victims had been arrested for violence as adults compared to 21% of criminal offenders who had not experienced abuse or neglect. In fact, Widom found that 7 out of 10 child abuse and neglect victims had no criminal record at all. Although these results seem to indicate that no significant relationship exists between childhood abuse and adult violence, Widom conscientiously indicated that the cases she studied were only the most severe ones that had come to the attention of the judicial system and so the findings might not generalize to the population as a whole. Widom also emphasized the need to research the factors that can hinder an abused or neglected child from duplicating the violence later on.

Several researchers (e.g. Zigler, Rubin, & Kaufman, 1988; and Egeland, Jacobvitz, & Sroufe, 1988) have identified some of the factors that help break the chain of violence. Zigler et al. (1988) found the following four qualities that distinguished parents who had been abused who did **not** abuse their children from parents that continued the system of abuse. 1)

The nonabusive parents had a stronger, more comprehensive social support system. 2) There were fewer conflicting emotions during the pregnancy of nonabusive parents. 3) The babies of nonabusive parents were physically healthier. 4) The nonabusive parents were more openly angry about their abuse and could describe it in greater detail.

Egeland et al. (1988) and Fox (1991) discovered that mothers who broke the cycle were more likely to: 1) have had emotional support from a nonabusive adult during their childhood, 2) have participated in therapy at some time, and 3) have experienced a nonabusive, stable, emotionally supportive, and satisfying relationship with a mate.

In an analysis of several studies conducted on the cycle of violence, Zigler et al. found that results of cross-generational abuse ranged from 18% to 70%. They estimated from these results that approximately one-third or 25-35% of abused children will grow up to abuse their own children.

Although Hunter and Kilstrom (1979) estimate that 82% of abused children do not grow up to be abusive parents, the fact remains that 90% of abusive parents were abused as children. Fox (1991) found that abused children tend to display greater amounts of aggression in adulthood than nonabused children.

Some of the studies that listed significantly high percentages of cross-generational abuse are those of Egeland et al. (1988) and Lake (1989). Egeland, et al. divided abuse into three categories: "physical abuse" like kicking, punching, or burning; "borderline abuse" which included frequent severe spankings; and, "other" which accounted for abandonment. They found that 70% of their 160 high-risk, low-income, mainly single subjects abused their

children by means of at least one category. Thirty percent of the subjects had been abused severely as children.

Zigler et al. examined this study's design and found that such a high percentage was due to the fact that the three categories were all included in it. The individual percentages for each category were much closer to the average presented by Zigler.

Lake (1989) studied 237 prisoners and found that 87% of these violent offenders had been abused before the age of 12. She concluded that just seeing violence, especially between parents, can have a strong influence on a child's tendency to abuse later on. By seeing the abuse a child learns to model that behavior. Lake also found that 55% of the criminally violent were not abused. She resolved that a major factor in determining whether or not violence in childhood will be repeated or imitated in adulthood has to do with how the individual channels the anger of abuse. Some express it outwardly through violence, others, she felt, channel it inwardly and become passive.

Although every study may not yield results as dramatic as Lake's, a well designed, matched pair study by Salzinger (1989) supported her results. Salzinger studied 106 families with a physically abused child between the ages of 8 and 12. He found that abused children showed significantly more general disturbances over home and school behavior, poorer social competence and adaptive functioning, greater tendency to be isolated by other children, and displayed more aggressive behavior compared to their matched controls.

Dodge, Bates, and Pettit (1986) tested 309 children and concluded that physical abuse in childhood is a risk factor for later aggressive behavior. They found that abused children

tend to acquire deviant patterns of processing social information which could mediate the aggressive behavior development. Their results were confirmed in the 1991 study by Haskett and Kistner who determined that abused children are also less discriminatory as to how they chose their friends as compared to their nonabused counterparts. Widom (1989) similarly contended that there is an increased risk of adult violence for formerly abused children. Even without these statistics, however, there is still the average of 30% from Zigler et al. (1988) of abused children who will grow up to continue that abuse.

Progressive Prevention Programs

Studies by zoologists and paleontologists on primate abuse are affording insight into the prevention of human abuse. Levine (1991) reports that researchers are finding that they can greatly decrease the mistreatment of infants at the hands of their mothers by providing two basic services to the mothers. First, they allow other relatives – the equivalent of aunts and cousins – to help and so reduce parental stress. Second, they give new, inexperienced mothers time with older mothers who are practicing good parenting techniques.

A review of child physical abuse and child neglect literature by Seagull (1987) showed that there is little evidence of a significant role of the lack of social support in the etiology of physical child abuse. However, the evidence is much stronger that neglectful parents are more deeply affected by social isolation. In fact, neglectful parents appear to be more sequestered across the board in comparison to physically abusive parents.

Such results are gaining public attention and researchers are encouraging that reforms such as Levine reported be made in the existing child abuse prevention programs. Some

institutions are already implementing such programs with success. The University of Rochester is running a program for teenage mothers where nurses actually visit the home during and after the pregnancy. These nurses teach the mothers how to care for the infants and provide examples of positive mother-child interactions through their own treatment of the babies.

Thus far, only 4% of the mothers who received this attention abused their children compared with 19% who did not. David Olds, the founder of the Rochester program points out that humans, unlike the primates, need a long-lasting, intensive program in order to successfully reduce abuse (Levine, 1991). Such demands are difficult but they are not unsurmountable. The focus of this present research is on identifying factors, such as disciplinary styles, that may have an influence on creating a cycle of violence and abuse. By delineating what factors have strong relationships with child abuse, psychosocial intervention can be implemented as a means of coping with and even preventing child abuse, much the way David Old's program purports to do.

Garbarina (1983) presented important goals that good support programs maintain in an address at the 91st annual convention of the American Psychological Association (APA). First, the program should improve the social skills of the parent; second, it should enlarge the resource base of the parents' social system; third, it should enhance prosocial orientation of the network by linking the parent to mainstream community values and institutions; fourth, it should reduce the degree to which the parent is a drain on the network; and fifth, it should provide greater positive surveillance of the family.

Lake (1989) reported in a dramatic study that 87% of violent criminal offenders were abused before the age of 12. She attributes this repetition of abuse to the child's tendency to model the behavior seen in the parents or caregivers. In fact, Lake posits that if the child just observes the abuse, they are just as likely to become abusive as children who are themselves abused.

Relevance/Significance

There is a paucity of research literature examining specific disciplinary styles and their correlation to cross-generational abuse. This study attempted to measure styles of discipline and the impact different styles have on abuse and the vicious cycle in conjunction with measuring the relationship between childhood abuse and domestic violence in adulthood. This study examined which type of discipline seems most related to abuse and which kinds are more apt to carry over from one generation to the next.

The results of this study could be a first step in providing helpful information to family practice professionals in evaluating styles of discipline and their relation to abuse patterns. Many such professionals, like Marion (1982) urge Family Life Educators to teach positive disciplinary maneuvers to parents as a means of breaking the abuse pattern.

It is imperative that the relationship between childhood abuse and domestic violence in adulthood be studied. Doing so can increase the knowledge base sufficiently enough to enable psychological science to devise a means of identifying potential abusers and implementing a prevention program for them. Such techniques would hopefully greatly reduce the incidence of child abuse in America.

Hypotheses

The research hypotheses in this study were:

1. Adolescents report a high frequency of physical abuse in their home related to disciplinary styles they perceive as non-democratic.
2. The older the adolescent, the more likely he/she is to perceive an autocratic style of discipline in the home.
3. Adolescents report a high frequency of emotional abuse in the home related to perceived non-democratic disciplinary styles.
4. Adolescents report a relationship between a perceived non-democratic disciplinary style and a high frequency of alcohol imbibition by their guardian(s).
5. Adult perpetrators who practice non-democratic disciplinary styles report a high incidence of emotional abuse in their home.
6. Adult perpetrators who practice non-democratic disciplinary styles report a high incidence of physical abuse in their home.
7. Adult perpetrators who practice non-democratic disciplinary styles report a high incidence of alcohol consumption in their home.

Disciplinary styles in the home are a focal point of the research, closely associated with the concept of abuse. The style most associated with abuse is thought to be the autocratic style of discipline in line with Fox's (1991) findings that two-thirds to three-quarters of abusive parents report being raised in a punitive household

The null hypotheses associated with each of the above research hypotheses were tested.

Operational Definitions

For the purpose of this study, several terms are here defined. **Childhood physical abuse** is any physical action by parents or caregivers that results in physical harm, i.e. bruises, broken bones, lacerations, burns, etc, to the body of the child. Examples of this abuse would be being beaten, slapped or whipped, cuffed, knocked down, or intentionally burned. Although Greven (1991) purports that any physical punishment of a child is abusive, disciplinary actions such as spankings that do not physical injure a child are not considered physically abusive for the purposes of this study.

Childhood emotional abuse is any communication from the parents or caregivers that demoralizes, frightens, or puts down the child, i.e. being called names, being cursed at, being threatened with physical harm, or witnessing or hearing physical or emotional abuse between caregivers, i.e., sex, defecation, rape, or murder. This abuse results in emotional and self-conceptual breakdowns.

A **physically abusive adult** is one who beats, whips, slaps, cuffs, burns, or knocks down family members. The abuse causes physical marks on the victims, i.e., burns, lacerations, broken bones, bruises, etc. An **emotionally abusive adult** abuses by calling names, making threats of physical harm, forcing family members to view abuse of another member, or cursing at another family member. These actions cause emotional and self-conceptual breakdowns in the victims.

The **laissez-faire style of discipline** is an unstructured, inconsistent form of control. The caregivers are, for the most part, uninvolved with their charges. They allow excessive freedom with little or no guidance or limits. Their punishment is sporadic, inconsistent, and unpredictable. The form the punishment takes may also be abusive.

The **autocratic style of discipline** contrasts laissez-faire. It uses punitive control of children, setting very rigid limits and high expectations which are vigorously enforced. No feedback or negotiations are possible concerning rules or policies. Punishment is consistent and the abuse pattern retains a uniform structure.

The **democratic style of discipline** denotes a balance between the two previously mentioned styles. Control over the children is consistent and firm, but is also loving and warm. Feedback on rules and policies is encouraged and negotiations are sometimes possible. Punishment is enacted along previously established guidelines and does not exceed necessary actions. Discipline is not abusive or harmful to the child in any way.

Frequency of abuse is vital in analyzing the data. It is defined by the number of times during the day or week that a child is subjected to either the physical or emotional abuse discussed earlier.

Two questionnaires (see Appendices A and B) developed for this study were used to test the hypotheses.

Limitations to the Research

No test-retest reliability data is available for the measures. The measures tested in the study are based on the individual perceptions of the subjects and the factual basis of their

reports is neither known nor collaborated objectively. The 'special' populations used in this research were not paired with 'average' controls so results obtained from the data are unlikely to occur in a survey of the general population.

Each measure does maintain construct validity by addressing only the items in the hypotheses: physical abuse, emotional abuse, disciplinary styles, and their effects on cross-generational violence.

Both samples employed volunteer subjects and this non-random status dictates that results of this study will not generalize to other populations. The samples used have very small *n* sizes, the adolescent sample utilized eleven subjects and the adult sample only eight. These modest samples sizes may have an effect on the significance of the data obtained from the research.

This study does not control for the effects of socioeconomic status (Trickett, 1991), environment, sexual abuse or offense, education of the parents, employment or lack of employment of the parents, IQ levels of the children, fertility patterns (Zuravin, 1988), or other factors that can influence child abuse, nor does it claim to. Results are not readily generalizable to the general population due to the nonrandom status of the samples that were used.

Method

Subjects

This study utilized two groups of subjects. The first sample consisted of nine male (eight Caucasian and one American Indian) and two female (one African American and one

Caucasian) residents (n=11) of a state psychiatric hospital in Chattanooga, TN. Subjects ranged in age from 10 to 18 years. Three of the subjects were between the ages of 10 and 14, five were 15 years old, and three were between the ages of 16 and 18. These subjects were volunteers and received points or privileges according to the system of their treatment program for participating.

The second group sample consisted of five men, all Caucasian, and three women, two African American and one Caucasian, ages 18 and older (n=8), who were being held in jail on charges of domestic violence. Two of the subjects were convicted of first and second degree murder, three of the subjects were charged with aggravated assault and battery/domestic violence, and three were charged with aggravated sexual assault/rape. These participants were obtained on a volunteer basis and received points or privileges according to the system of their treatment program for their involvement.

Materials

The materials for this study consisted of two self-report measures. Both instruments were designed by this researcher for use in the study. They examined whether a relationship exists between childhood abuse and adult violence as well as the effects that different types of discipline have on the continuation of abuse. These measures addressed types of abuse, frequency of abuse, and styles of discipline. They included yes/no, open-ended, and scaled questions. Based on an ordinal measure, they dealt specifically with frequency and severity of abuse. These measures were analyzed in the results.

The first questionnaire was designed specifically for the adolescents subjects in the

first group (see Appendix A). It focused on the abuse experienced in the home and the perceived style of discipline subjects encountered at home prior to admittance to the psychiatric facility. It contained 36 questions.

The second questionnaire was designed for adult perpetrators in the correctional facility (see Appendix B). It dealt with disciplinary styles and abuse patterns of the adult in the home. This questionnaire included questions concerning both the recent home situation and perceptions of the home environment in which the alleged perpetrator grew up. It consisted of 80 questions.

Procedure

Each facility was contacted by this researcher prior to executing the instruments in order to obtain approval of the appropriate survey and permission to administer it to volunteer facility residents. Those 18 and under in the psychiatric program were arbitrarily placed in Group A. Those subjects 18 years or older and incarcerated in the penile system were automatically placed in Group B.

The data collection phase of this study took approximately four months. Each subject completed the survey once with the option of psychiatric counseling available to them following the implementation of the instrument. Obtaining the subjects and executing questionnaire completion took considerable time; this accounts for the allotted four months.

Before a questionnaire was filled out, this researcher explained to each subject the purpose and goals of the experiment. Each subject was provided with a written statement of these goals and an informed consent form which had to be signed before the interview could

proceed (see Appendix C). The researcher then read the subject the instructions for the questionnaire which were also included on the test for the subject's own use. In order to avoid demand characteristics, the investigator said nothing else unless asked a question. If the subject was unable to read, the researcher read the questions on the appropriate questionnaire from an extra copy and the subject filled in the answers on their own questionnaire.

Following the introduction, each subject completed the appropriate questionnaire, depending on the group of the subject. The researcher remained with the participant while he/she was filling out the form in order to answer any questions. When the questionnaire was completed, the subject was provided with the option to speak with a counselor from their treatment program if they felt it was needed. The psychiatric facility provided counseling as part of its treatment program and the judicial system had a chaplain available to the inmates so both groups had counseling readily available to them. Each treatment program was provided with a copy of the statement and consent form and the instrument itself for their files if they wished.

The investigator then informed the participant of the hypotheses if the subject specifically asked. If the subject did not specifically ask, he/she was informed that a complete statement of the research hypotheses would be provided to them following the completion of all the questionnaires. Only one of the adult subjects displayed any curiosity as to the purpose of the questionnaire beyond that which was stated in the consent form. This guarded against the hypotheses being passed among the participants who had not completed

the survey.

Design and Analysis

This study was a quasi-experimental, one-shot, self-report survey. Two instruments were developed for the purposes of data collection and analysis.

A point-biserial correlation method was used to analyze the interval data collected from the questionnaires. The point-biserial correlation is used when one variable is expressed on an interval scale and the other is dichotomous. Autocratic and Other Disciplinary Styles provided the dichotomous variables of disciplinary styles for both adolescent and adult data. These variables were correlated with the following items: frequency of physical abuse, age, frequency of emotional abuse, and frequency of alcohol imbibition in the adolescent data. The same comparisons were made in the adult data with the exception of age.

Results

All questionnaire data dealing with the frequency counts of a variable are based on an interval rating scale of one to nine (1-3 = Never, 4-6 = Sometimes, 7-9 = Always).

Results for adolescent sample: In the first analysis (n=11), the disciplinary styles the subjects perceived their guardians to observe were compared with their reported frequency of physical abuse. The point-biserial correlation resulted in an r of .50. Although the data is statistically insignificant, these results indicated a correlation between the autocratic style of discipline and the frequency of existing physical abuse.

In the second comparison (n=11), perceived disciplinary styles were tested against the

age of the subjects. Point-biserial correlation tests revealed r as .006. Results demonstrated no statistically significant relationship between perceived disciplinary style and age of the adolescents.

The third comparison ($n=11$) dealt with perceived disciplinary styles and frequency of emotional abuse. The correlational data provided by point-biserial analysis produced a statistically insignificant r of .24 which seemed to show that an autocratic disciplinary style is somewhat related to a high level of emotional abuse in the home.

The final analysis ($n=11$) tested with the adolescent data occurred between perceived disciplinary styles and the frequency of alcohol imbibition of their parents/guardians. The point-biserial coefficient was a statistically insignificant $-.103$. This showed a slight tendency toward high alcohol consumption associated with styles other than autocratic discipline.

The correlation coefficient matrix for the adolescent sample is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Correlation coefficient matrix for the adolescent sample

	Perceived Disciplinary Style
Physical Abuse	.50
Age	.006
Emotional Abuse	.24
Alcoholism	-.103

Results for adult sample: The first analysis of the data from the adult perpetrators ($n=8$) compared the disciplinary style of the subject with the frequency of emotional abuse in their home. The statistically insignificant point-biserial r of $-.28$ ($r=-.28$) indicated an insignificant correlation between autocratic discipline and a high frequency of emotional abuse.

For the second comparison ($n=8$), the disciplinary style of the subject was analyzed against physical abuse. The coefficient $-.08$ ($r=-.08$) showed no statistically significant correlation between an autocratic disciplinary style and a high frequency of physical abuse.

The third analysis concerned alcohol abuse and its relationship with disciplinary styles. The statistically insignificant point-biserial r of $-.36$ seemed to indicate that excessive alcohol consumption plays a role, albeit an insignificant one, in the development of a dysfunctional disciplinary style.

Interesting findings for reported adult childhood experiences: Perhaps the most interesting analysis of the adult subjects was that of the perceived disciplinary styles of their childhood guardians and their own styles of discipline. In a separate analysis of the portion of their survey devoted to their childhood experiences, it was found that **all** of the subjects perceived their childhood guardians to be autocratic. From this upbringing, 38% of the subjects carried the autocratic style into their generation, 38% of the subjects moved to the opposite extreme and displayed a laissez-faire style, and 25% shifted to a democratic disciplinary style. Seventy-five percent (75%) of the subjects, no matter which end of the disciplinary spectrum they occupied, maintained a dysfunctional disciplinary styles. Although

the autocratic style was not the most likely to carry over these results do seem to indicate that dysfunctional styles of discipline carry over from generation to generation.

The correlation coefficient matrix for the adult sample is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Correlation coefficient matrix for the adult sample

	Disciplinary Style
Emotional Abuse	-.28
Physical Abuse	-.08
Alcoholism	-.36

Discussion

The statistical insignificance of the data reported by the adolescent and adult subjects is no doubt due to the number of subjects. The scanty sample size greatly decreased the probability of obtaining a significant score.

The scores acquire concerning the relationship between disciplinary styles and emotional abuse also supported the hypothesis that passive and autocratic styles are highly associated with abuse. Three of the subjects reported no emotional punishment, but the reports of the other subjects indicated that emotional abuse was highly frequent. All but one of the guardians who reportedly abused their adolescents emotionally were perceived by the adolescents as exhibiting a dysfunctional style of discipline. The subjects reported being cursed at or being the victim of a combination of cursing, embarrassing, or threatening.

The researcher concurs with investigators such as Herbert (1985) that it is critical for professionals who deal with children, namely school teachers, counselors, and principals, to recognize the signs of physical and/or emotional abuse in children and to provide the necessary intervention for that child. It is best to provide careful instruction of the signs and symptoms of abuse to the teachers and staff that associate with children. By importing the means of detection to these individuals, prevention and intervention of abuse cases will be greatly facilitated.

The results of the adult segment of this study point to no conclusive relationship between physical and/or emotional abuse in childhood and domestic violence perpetrated by the same child-victims in adulthood. The researcher feels there may be several reasons for

this apparent discrepancy. First, although the adults were asked to answer each question as truthfully as possible it is possible that they instead put socially acceptable answers in order to "please" the researcher. It is also possible that the subjects were offended by some of the questions in the survey and so avoided them or merely answered them randomly. Several subjects remarked that some of the items dealing with forms of physical abuse, especially those concerning the coerced witness of crimes, were "pretty graphic" and made them uncomfortable. The reasons for this discomfort are varied; perhaps they wished not to be reminded of past experiences with their parents or their own children, or perhaps they were afraid that answering the questions would make them look deleterious. A third possibility could be a fear that, regardless of the guaranteed confidentiality, other authorities or family members would find out if these questions were answered and the subjects would be at the receiving end of unpleasant repercussions. The formal nature of the survey and the fact that the researcher was a total stranger to the subjects could also have led to unreliable results. Of course, such theories are merely conjectures and it is also entirely possible that there is no apparent relationship between an abusive childhood and domestic or criminal violence in adulthood.

It was not found that the non-democratic styles of laissez-faire and autocratic discipline experienced in an abusive childhood were the same styles demonstrated in adulthood. It does seem, however, that an autocratic disciplinary style experienced in the childhood of an adult is related to a non-democratic style demonstrated in adulthood. There also seemed to be a slight tendency for the autocratic subjects to display more abusive styles

of discipline than the democratic and passive subjects.

The apparent contradiction between the results obtained from the adolescents and those given by the adults can be explained in several ways. First, it is possible that the adolescents portrayed their guardians as highly abusive in order to defer responsibility of their actions from themselves to the way they were treated. This explanation seems unlikely, however, for it stands to reason that the adults would have employed the same tactic for their situation. It is also feasible that either the adolescents and the adults were working from hazy, distorted memories and merely responded differently to the cues in the questions. If this is the case, though, the results from the adolescents concerning their childhood would be more reliable considering the shorter length of time between their experiences and the interview. The insignificant scores demonstrated by the adults concerning the treatment of their children must still be considered if this explanation is correct.

Regardless of their seeming discrepancy, however, these results seem to point toward an increase of the focus on family dynamics in social professions. Because it appears that disciplinary styles do play a role in physical and emotional abuse, it is imperative that professionals dealing with the family develop effective techniques of teaching the most efficient disciplinary styles to their clients. It is the recommendation of the researcher that attention be paid not only to family demographics, socioeconomic status, and physical environment, but also to the patterns of control exercised by the guardians of the family.

Several of the subjects listed rebellion against their guardians seeming rigidity as one of the first steps into a life of drugs, crime, and alcohol abuse which ultimately led to

incarceration for violent crime. This of course is not meant to imply that any degree of firmness on the part of the parent should be waived in favor of the child's psychosocial development, but that the strictness should be tempered by a democratic attitude and a display of genuine affection and concern for the child.

It is also considered preeminent that professionals dealing the adolescents who have been physically or emotionally abused in the home address issues concerning disciplinary styles. It has often been said that prevention is the best medicine and in the case of child abuse this aphorism is most appropriate. In order to avoid the tragedy of a dysfunctional disciplinary style carrying over from one generation to the next, it is vital that children who have suffered under either the passive or the autocratic styles learn new and effective ways of dealing with stress, alcohol, and other factors that seem to coincide with an abuse pattern. By teaching youth how to discipline efficiently, the next generation can be prevented from inflicting pain and harm on their children.

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Appendix A

Childhood Experiences Scale 1
Ages 10–18

My name is Kirstin Chalker and I am a psychology major at Southern College. I am studying how ones childhood experiences compare with ones adult experiences. Please answer each of these survey questions as truthfully as you can. If you are not sure about a question, please feel free to ask me about it, or just pick the best possible answer. If at any time you do not wish to continue this questionnaire, you are under no obligation to do so. You may stop at any time. However, I do hope you will complete this survey. There will be counseling available to you in your treatment program following your completion of the questionnaire if you wish.

The names of the people who complete the survey will not be used and the individual surveys will not be shown to anybody but the researcher unless you give special permission to do so.

Date: / /

Age:

Date of Birth: / /

Gender (circle one): Male Female

Instructions: Please answer these questions about yourself from before you came here. Mark the answer(s) that is/are the most truthful. If you have any questions about what a question means or which questions to go to next, please ask me so I can help you.

1. Before coming here, did you live at home?
 Yes (If yes, skip to #3)
 No

2. Where did you live? (Mark every answer that is true for you.)
 Foster home

- Treatment center (like HCA)
- State facility (like Chambliss or Moccasin Bend)
- Relative's home
- Other (please specify) _____

3. Who did you live with? (Mark every answer that is true for you.)

- Both parents
- Single parent
- Step parent (Circle one: Stepmother Stepfather)
- Relatives (Which ones? _____)
- Other (please specify) _____

4. Who took care of you? (Mark every answer that is true for you.)

- Both parents
- Single parent
- Step parent (Circle one: Stepmother Stepfather)
- Relatives (Which ones? _____)
- Other (please specify) _____

5. Are your parents:

- Married
- Separated
- Divorced

___ Other (please specify) _____

6. Do you have step parents?

___ Yes

___ No

Instructions: Please answer these questions about the rules where you lives before you came here to. Mark the answer(s) that is/are the most truthful. If you have any questions about what a question means or which questions to go to next, please ask me so I can help you.

7. Who was in charge at your house? (The one who made the rules and/or enforced them?)

___ Mother

___ Mother's Boyfriend

___ Stepmother

___ Father

___ Father's Girlfriend

___ Stepfather

___ Both parents

___ Relatives (Which ones? _____)

___ Other (please specify) _____

8. How strict were your parents/guardians?

Not Strict at All

Very Strict

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

9. How many rules were at your house?

Not Many Rules

A Lot of Rules

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

10. Did you know what all the rules in your house were?

___ Yes

___ No

11. Did you ever get to help make the rules or to choose your own punishment if you broke a rule?

Never Chose

Sometimes Chose

Always Chose

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

12. Did you ever get in trouble for breaking a rule that you never even knew you had?

Always Happened

Sometimes

Never Happened

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

13. Was the way you got in trouble for disobeying rules always the same?

Never the Same

Always the Same

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

14. Did your parents/guardians yell at you?

Never Yelled

Sometimes Yelled

Always Yelled

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

15. Did your parents/guardians yell at each other?

Never Yelled Sometimes Yelled Always Yelled

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Instructions: Please answer these questions about how you were punished with words where you lived before you came here. Mark the answer(s) that is/are the most truthful. If you have any questions about what a question means or which questions to go to next, please ask me so I can help you.

16. When you were being punished, did your parents/guardians do any of these things to you?

Yes (If so, check which ones)

Curse at you

Embarrass you

Threaten to hurt you

Other (please specify) _____

No (If no, then skip to #19)

17. How often did these things happen?

Never Sometimes Always
(even if you broke a rule) (whenever you broke a rule)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

18. How often did you get punished like this?

Never Sometimes Always

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

19. When you broke the rules, how often would you be punished for them?

Never Punished Sometimes Punished Always Punished

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

20. Did your parents/guardians do any of these things to each other when they fought?

Yes (If so, check which ones)

Curse each other

Embarrass each other

Threaten to hurt each other

Other (please specify) _____

No (If no, then skip to #22)

21. How often did they do this?

Never Sometimes Always

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

22. When your parents/guardians punished you, did they make you watch someone in your family being hurt?

Yes

No (If no, then skip to #24)

23. What did you have to watch?

24. When your parents/guardians fought with each other, did they make each other watch someone in your family being hurt?

Yes

No (If no, then skip to #26)

25. What did they have to watch?

Instructions: Please answer these questions about how you were physically punished where you lived before you came here. Mark the answer(s) that is/are the most truthful. If you have any questions about what a question means or which questions to go to next, please ask me so I can help you.

26. When you were being punished, did your parents/guardians ever do any of these things to you?

Yes (If so, check which ones)

Slap, cuff, or whip you with a belt

Beat or punch you

Knock you down or throw you

Burn you on purpose

Other (please specify) _____

No (If no, then skip to #29)

27. How often did these things happen?

Never (even if you broke a rule)		Sometimes (whenever you broke a rule)				Always		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

28. How often did you get punished like this?

Never		Sometimes				Always		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

29. Did your parents/guardians drink alcohol?

Yes

No (If no, then skip to #31)

I don't know (If I don't know, then skip to #31)

30. How often did they drink?

Never		Sometimes				Always		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

31. Did your parents/guardians do drugs?

Yes

No (If no, then skip to #33)

I don't know (If I don't know, then skip to #33)

32. How often did they get high?

Never		Sometimes				Always		
-------	--	-----------	--	--	--	--------	--	--

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

33. When were your parents/guardians most likely to punish you?

- When they'd been drinking or were drunk
- When they'd been doing drugs or were high
- When they were stressed
- While they were fighting with each other
- After they'd had a fight with each other
- Other (please specify) _____

34. Do you want to be like your parents/guardians when you grow up?

- Yes (If yes, then skip to #36)
- No

35. What would you like to change?

36. If you would like to say anything else about this questionnaire, you can write it as an answer here.

Appendix B

Childhood Experiences Scale 2
Ages 18 and Older

My name is Kirstin Chalker and I am a psychology major at Southern College. I am studying how ones childhood experiences compare with ones adult experiences. Please answer each of these survey questions as truthfully as you can. If you are not sure about a question, please feel free to ask me about it, or just pick the best possible answer. If at any time you do not wish to continue this questionnaire, you are under no obligation to do so. You may stop at any time. However, I do hope you will complete this survey. There will be counseling available to you following your completion of the questionnaire if you wish.

The names of the people who complete the survey will not be used and the individual surveys will not be shown to anybody but the researchers unless you give special permission to do so.

Date: / /

Age:

Date of Birth: / /

Gender (circle one): Male Female

Instructions: Please answer these questions about yourself. Mark the answer(s) that is/are the most truthful. If you have any questions about what a question means or which questions to go to next, please ask me so I can help you.

1. Are you: (check whichever answers apply to you)

- Married
- Separated
- Divorced
- Single and living alone
- Single with a live-in lover
- Other (please specify) _____

2. Do you have any children?

___ Yes

___ No (If no, skip to #5)

3. How many children?

___ 0 - 2

___ 3 - 5

___ More than 6

4. How often do you see these children?

Not Very Often

Very Often

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Instructions: Answer the following items by marking how much you Agree with the statement or how much you Disagree with it. If you have any questions about what a question means or which questions to go to next, please ask me so I can help you.

5. Children should be seen and not heard.

Agree

Disagree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

6. Children should never question what a parent tells them.

Agree

Disagree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

7. Children need spankings to keep them in line.

Agree					Disagree			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

8. It is O.K. to call a child names when you are angry because they will get over it quickly.

Agree					Disagree			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

9. Adults sometimes make mistakes by being too harsh with rules and discipline.

Agree					Disagree			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

10. Children can pretty much take care of themselves and do not need a lot of rules.

Agree					Disagree			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

11. Every child needs a good beating once in a while to let them know who is boss.

Agree					Disagree			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

12. Giving a child rules just makes them bitter towards their parents.

Agree					Disagree			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

13. Children should help make the rules in the house.

Agree

Disagree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

14. Any child who gets a whipping had it coming to them.

Agree

Disagree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

15. Children should know the rules in the household whether an adult tells them the rules or not.

Agree

Disagree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Instructions: Please answer these questions about the rules in your house before you came here. Mark the answer(s) that is/are the most truthful. If you have any questions about what a question means or which questions to go to next, please ask me so I can help you.

16. How strict were you?

Not Strict at All

Very Strict

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

17. How many rules did you have?

Not Many Rules

A Lot of Rules

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

18. Did the children in your house know what all the rules were?

- ___ Yes
 ___ No
 ___ I do not know

19. How often did the children in your house ever get to help make the rules?

Never Chose		Sometimes Chose			Always Chose			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

20. How often did the children in your house get to choose their own punishment for breaking a rule?

Never Chose		Sometimes Chose			Always Chose			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

21. Did the children in your house ever get in trouble for breaking a rule that they never even knew existed?

Always Happened			Sometimes Happened			Never Happened		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

22. Was the way they got in trouble for disobeying the rules always the same?

Not Always the Same						Always the Same		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

23. Did you yell at the children in your house?

- ___ Yes
 ___ No (If no, then skip to #25)

24. How often did you yell at the children in your house?

Never Yelled		Sometimes Yelled			Always Yelled			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

25. Did you yell at your spouse or lover?

Yes

No (If no, then skip to #27)

26. How often did you yell at your spouse or lover?

Never Yelled		Sometimes Yelled			Always Yelled			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Instructions: Please answer these questions about how you punished the children in your house with words where you lived before you came here. Mark the answer(s) that is/are the most truthful. If you have any questions about what a question means or which questions to go to next, please ask me so I can help you.

27. When the children in your house were being punished, did you do any of these things to them?

Yes (If so, check which ones)

Curse at them

Embarrass them

Threaten to hurt them

Other (please specify) _____

No (If no, then skip to #30)

28. How often did these things happen?

Never (even if they broke a rule)			Sometimes (whenever they broke a rule)			Always		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

29. How often did you punish them like this?

Never			Sometimes			Always		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

30. When the children in your house broke the rules, how often would they be punished for it?

Never Punished			Sometimes Punished			Always Punished		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

31. Did you do any of these things to your spouse or lover when you fought?

Yes (If so, check which ones)

Curse at them

Embarrass them

Threaten to hurt them

Other (please specify) _____

No (If no, then skip to #33)

32. How often did you do this?

Never			Sometimes			Always		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

33. When you punished the children in your house, did you make them watch someone in the family being hurt?

___ Yes

___ No (If no, then skip to #35)

34. What did they have to watch?

35. When you fought with your spouse or lover, did you make your spouse or lover watch someone in the family being hurt?

___ Yes

___ No (If no, then skip to #37)

36. What did they have to watch?

Instructions: Please answer these questions about how you physically punished the children in your house before you came here. Mark the answer(s) that is/are the most truthful. If you have any questions about what a question means or which questions to go to next, please ask me so I can help you.

37. When you were punishing the children in your house, did you ever do any of these things to them?

___ Yes (If so, check which ones)

- Slap, cuff, or whip them with a belt
- Beat or punch them
- Knock them down or throw them
- Burn them on purpose
- Other (please specify) _____
- No (If no, then skip to #40)

38. How often did these things happen?

- | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|--------|---|---|
| Never
(even if they broke a rule) | | | Sometimes
(whenever they broke a rule) | | | Always | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

39. How often did you punish them like this?

- | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|---|---|-----------|---|---|--------|---|---|
| Never | | | Sometimes | | | Always | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

40. Did you drink alcohol?

- Yes
- No (If no, then skip to #42)

41. How often did you drink?

- | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|---|---|-----------|---|---|--------|---|---|
| Never | | | Sometimes | | | Always | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

42. Did you do drugs?

- Yes
- No (If no, then skip to #33)

43. How often did you get high?

Never		Sometimes				Always		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

44. When were you most likely to punish the children in your house?

- When you had been drinking or were drunk
- When you had been doing drugs or were high
- When you were stressed
- While you were fighting with your spouse or lover
- After you had had a fight with your spouse or lover
- Other (please specify) _____

Instructions: Please answer these questions about your childhood. Remember as well as you can. Mark the answer(s) that is/are the most truthful. If you have any questions about what a question means or which questions to go to next, please ask me so I can help you.

45. Did you live at home?

- Yes (If yes, skip to #47)
- No

46. Where did you live? (Mark every answer that was true for you.)

- Foster home
- Treatment center (like HCA)
- State facility (like Chambliss or Moccasin Bend)
- Relative's home
- Other (please specify) _____

47. Who did you live with? (Mark every answer that was true for you.)

- Both parents
- Single parent
- Step parent (Circle one: Stepmother Stepfather)
- Relatives (Which ones? _____)
- Other (please specify) _____

48. Who took care of you? (Mark every answer that was true for you.)

- Both parents
- Single parent
- Step parent (Circle one: Stepmother Stepfather)
- Relatives (Which ones? _____)
- Other (please specify) _____

49. Were your parents:

- Married
- Separated
- Divorced

___ Other (please specify) _____

50. Did you have step parents?

___ Yes

___ No

Instructions: Please answer these questions about the rules where you lived as a child. Remember as well as you can. Mark the answer(s) that is/are the most truthful. If you have any questions about what a question means or which questions to go to next, please ask me so I can help you.

51. Who was in charge at your house? (The one who made the rules and/or enforced them?)

___ Mother

___ Mother's Boyfriend

___ Stepmother

___ Father

___ Father's Girlfriend

___ Stepfather

___ Both parents

___ Relatives (Which ones? _____)

___ Other (please specify) _____

52. How strict were your parents/guardians?

Not Strict at All

Very Strict

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

53. How many rules were at your house?

Not Many Rules

A Lot of Rules

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

54. Did you know what all the rules in your house were?

___ Yes

___ No

55. Did you ever get to help make the rules or to choose your own punishment if you broke a rule?

Never Chose

Sometimes Chose

Always Chose

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

56. Did you ever get in trouble for breaking a rule that you never even knew you had?

Always Happened

Sometimes

Never Happened

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

57. Was the way you got in trouble for disobeying rules always the same?

Never the Same

Always the Same

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

58. Did your parents/guardians yell at you?

Never Yelled

Sometimes Yelled

Always Yelled

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

59. Did your parents/guardians yell at each other?

Never Yelled		Sometimes Yelled			Always Yelled			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Instructions: Please answer these questions about how you were punished with words when you were a child. Mark the answer(s) that is/are the most truthful. If you have any questions about what a question means or which questions to go to next, please ask me so I can help you.

60. When you were being punished, did your parents/guardians do any of these things to you?

Yes (If so, check which ones)

Curse at you

Embarrass you

Threaten to hurt you

Other (please specify) _____

No (If no, then skip to #63)

61. How often did these things happen?

Never (even if you broke a rule)		Sometimes (whenever you broke a rule)			Always			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

62. How often did you get punished like this?

Never		Sometimes			Always			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

63. When you broke the rules, how often would you be punished for them?

Never Punished Sometimes Punished Always Punished

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

64. Did your parents/guardians do any of these things to each other when they fought?

___ Yes (If so, check which ones)

___ Curse each other

___ Embarrass each other

___ Threaten to hurt each other

___ Other (please specify) _____

___ No (If no, then skip to #66)

65. How often did they do this?

Never Sometimes Always

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

66. When your parents/guardians punished you, did they make you watch someone in your family being hurt?

___ Yes

___ No (If no, then skip to #68)

67. What did you have to watch?

68. When your parents/guardians fought with each other, did they make each other watch someone in your family being hurt?

___ Yes

___ No (If no, then skip to #70)

69. What did they have to watch?

Instructions: Please answer these questions about how you were physically punished where you lived before you came here. Mark the answer(s) that is/are the most truthful. If you have any questions about what a question means or which questions to go to next, please ask me so I can help you.

70. When you were being punished, did your parents/guardians ever do any of these things to you?

___ Yes (If so, check which ones)

___ Slap, cuff, or whip you with a belt

___ Beat or punch you

___ Knock you down or throw you

___ Burn you on purpose

___ Other (please specify) _____

___ No (If no, then skip to #73)

71. How often did these things happen?

Never Sometimes Always
(even if you broke a rule) (whenever you broke a rule)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

72. How often did you get punished like this?

Never Sometimes Always

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

73. Did your parents/guardians drink alcohol?

___ Yes

___ No (If no, then skip to #75)

___ I do not know (If I do not know, then skip to #75)

74. How often did they drink?

Never Sometimes Always

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

75. Did your parents/guardians do drugs?

___ Yes

___ No (If no, then skip to #77)

___ I do not know (If I do not know, then skip to #77)

76. How often did they get high?

Never Sometimes Always

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

77. When were your parents/guardians most likely to punish you?

- When they had been drinking or were drunk
- When they had been doing drugs or were high
- When they were stressed
- While they were fighting with each other
- After they had had a fight with each other
- Other (please specify) _____

78. Did you want to be like your parents/guardians when you grew up?

- Yes (If yes, then skip to #80)
- No

79. What did you change?

80. If you would like to say anything else about your home life, you may.

Appendix C

Informed-Consent Form

My name is Kirstin Chalker, I am a student at Southern College, and I am studying the relationship between childhood and adult experiences. Such information may be useful to social agencies in designing programs to meet the needs of parents and children.

In this study, you will be asked to fill out a questionnaire. There is no risk to your safety, but if you feel the need for it, your treatment program will provide counseling. The information obtained in this study will be used to prepare a research report. Any information obtained from you in connection with this study will be kept confidential and will be available only to the investigators. If the research report is published, your name will not be disclosed. Only the averages of the data will be reported. Individual results will not be reported. In fact, your name will not appear on any of the data forms.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation at any time.

This research is being conducted under the direct supervision of the Psychology Department of Southern College. If you have any further questions or complaints, please contact your program director who will tell me.

YOU ARE MAKING A DECISION WHETHER TO PARTICIPATE OR NOT TO PARTICIPATE. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE. YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS CONSENT FORM TO KEEP.

Signature of Subject

Date

Kirstin Chalker
Principal Researcher