



The California
Professional Society
on the Abuse of Children

Strengthening Practice Through Knowledge

THE CONSULTANT

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Grandparent-Headed Families: A Vulnerable Population

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Note: Dr. Kelley was the recipient of APSAC's Mark Chaffin Research Career Award presented at the APSAC Colloquium in Salt Lake City, Utah June 2019. She was nominated for the award by CAPSAC Treasurer Bea Yorker, JD, RN, MS, FAAN.

An estimated 2.7 million grandparents serve as surrogate parents to grandchildren in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). While this family arrangement is generally considered more desirable for the well-being of the grandchildren than placement with non-relatives in the foster care system, it may be linked to negative consequences for the caregiving grandparent's well-being (Denby, Testa, Alford, Cross & Brinson, 2017; Whitley & Fuller-

Thomson, 2017; Xu & Bright, 2018). Grandparent-headed families tend to be economically disadvantaged and headed by single women of racial-minority status, although they are represented across all socioeconomic and racial sectors (Whitley & Fuller-Thomson, 2017). Parenting “later in life” often exacts its toll on custodial grandparents. Research indicates that grandparents raising grandchildren have a propensity for diminished physical health as well as relatively high levels of psychological distress, including depression, which can interfere with their ability to effectively nurture and support the children in their care (Kelley, Whitley, & Campos, 2013; Musil, et al. 2011; Whitley & Fuller-Thomson, 2017).

Children Raised by Grandparents

Psychologists and other professionals should be alert to the significant traumatic stress most children raised by grandparents have experienced prior to living with grandparents. Substance abuse and other mental health disorders; child maltreatment, including abandonment; incarceration, and the death of one or both parents are the major reasons children are in the care of grandparents. Furthermore, many of these children have witnessed family and community violence. Given their histories of adverse experiences, it is not surprising that these children often display significant behavioral difficulties (Kelley, Whitley, & Campos, 2011; Smith & Palmieri, 2007). Because of the traumatic antecedents to living with grandparents, these children should routinely receive behavioral health screenings to determine if trauma-focused cognitive-behavioral therapy or other interventions are indicated. Other interventions may include family-focused therapy and participation in grief counseling related to the death or absence of one or both parents.

In addition to behavioral problems, children raised by grandparents frequently have developmental delays (Kresack, Gallagher, & Kelley, 2014). Because prenatal substance exposure is common in this population and increases the risk for developmental delays, clinicians should pay close attention to histories of prenatal exposure to alcohol and other substances. Even in the absence of a history of prenatal substance exposure, these children are at increased risk for developmental delays due to early childhood neglect; disruptions in attachments, especially involving relationships with birth parents; and chronic toxic stress. Accordingly, children aged 5 years and younger who are children raised by grandparents need developmental screenings with referrals for comprehensive developmental evaluations, as warranted. Early identification of developmental delays allows for timely access to early intervention services for the children and can lead to appropriate education, resources, and support for the custodial grandparents.

The vast majority of children raised by grandparents are in informal kinship care, which involves unofficial arrangements among family members; as a result, their families are not entitled to the same benefits and support services as official foster care families. This is of particular concern because custodial grandparents often lack the basic resources needed to raise grandchildren (e.g. adequate housing, clothes, beds, food). The lack of resources is exacerbated when they are thrust into assuming the care of their grandchildren with little or no time to prepare. Psychologists and healthcare providers alert to these stressors can play an important role by providing referrals to social workers who can assist with accessing public benefits such as

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Local kinship navigator programs can also provide important information on resources available to grandparents raising grandchildren (Lin, 2014). Because many grandparents do not have legal relationships with the children in their care, referrals to legal service agencies are important.

Caregiver Well-Being

It is also imperative for providers to encourage caregiving grandparents to access health care for themselves. This is particularly important because custodial grandparents tend to ignore their own health needs while attending to the myriad needs of the grandchildren in their care. This self-sacrificing, while admirable, could ultimately be detrimental to the well-being of the grandchildren they are raising. For instance, research findings indicate that poor physical health and increased stress levels in custodial grandparents is associated with increased behavior problems in the grandchildren they are raising (Kelley, et al., 2011). Furthermore, if grandparents become too ill to continue parenting, the grandchildren are likely to enter the foster care system leading to further emotional trauma. Lastly, because grandparents raising grandchildren often experience social isolation, referrals to local support groups for grandparents raising grandchildren are beneficial.

Interventions

A number of intervention models for grandparent-headed families are described in the literature. The most common intervention model involves support groups. These are generally low cost, easy to implement, and considered an effective form of peer support and information

sharing. Additional interventions include resourcefulness training and other forms of psychoeducation, as well as multi-modal approaches that include case management by social workers and home visitation by registered nurses. Descriptions of various interventions and their effectiveness can be found in several systematic review articles (see Chan, Chen, Lo, Chen, Kelley & Ip, in press; McLaughlin, Ryder, & Taylor, 2017; Sumo, Wilbur, Julion, Buchholz & Schoeny, 2018). In general, interventions for grandparents raising grandchildren have been shown to be effective in improving their mental and physical health, increasing social support and enhancing access to resources. With effective supports in place, grandparents are in a better position to foster improved outcomes for the traumatized grandchildren in their care.

Generations United's website provides additional information on custodial grandparents on its website: <https://www.gu.org/explore-our-topics/grandfamilies/>

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Application Deadline Extended!**Call for Applications for the...*****Paul Crissey Graduate Student Research Grant****to be awarded January 2020 by CAPSAC**

The California Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (CAPSAC) annually awards a grant of **\$750** for outstanding research by a graduate student (up to one-year post MA/Ph.D. degree) in the field of child maltreatment. The recipient will also receive a one-year membership to APSAC (American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children) and CAPSAC.

The American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (apsac.org), founded in 1987, is a nonprofit national organization focused on meeting the needs of professionals engaged in all aspects of services for maltreated children and their families. Especially important to APSAC is the dissemination of state-of-the-art practice in all professional disciplines related to child abuse and neglect.

CAPSAC aims to provide additional support to California professionals working in the field of child abuse through training, consultation, advocacy and networking.

Applicants must:

1. Be a graduate student within one year completion (before or after) of a Master's or Doctorate degree from an accredited California educational program;
2. Submit a one thousand word summary of the research in progress or completed study in the field of child maltreatment. The study title should be on the first page of the summary. Identifying information (name, address, telephone number, title of study and academic institution) should be sent in a separate file that will not be sent to the reviewers;
3. Submit one or two letters of recommendation from faculty members or academic readers who are familiar with your research;
4. Be available to receive the award and present a poster of the study at the CAPSAC reception Sunday, January 26, 2020 at the San Diego International Conference on Child and Family Maltreatment from 4:30 to 6:30 PM. Travel expenses will be paid not to exceed \$300.00. Alternatively, be available to receive the award and present an overview of the study at a CAPSAC meeting or a CAPSAC training event in 2020.

5. Agree to the publication of the submitted summary in the CAPSAC newsletter, *The Consultant*.

***Deadline:** All materials must be received by **December 1, 2019**.

Send submissions to:

CAPSAC Research Award Committee, c/o Toni Cavanagh Johnson, Ph.D. at toni@tcavjohn.com

If you have any questions, contact Research Award Committee Chair: Toni Cavanagh Johnson, Ph.D. at toni@tcavjohn.com/ +1(626) 817-2142.

You're Invited...

Please join us in San Diego on **Sunday, January 26, 2020 from 4:30 to 6:30 PM at our CAPSAC Reception** at the Town and Country Hotel. There will be light refreshments and the opportunity to network with colleagues and meet leaders from our reception co-hosts, the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC), Young American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (YAPSAC), the Academy on Violence and Abuse (AVA), the National Children's Alliance (NCA), and the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN). We are especially excited to welcome YAPSAC, our newest co-host joining the reception this year.

This year, two awards will be announced - the CAPSAC Paul Crissey Graduate Student Outstanding Research Award and the Neal Snyder Outstanding Service Award (see p.11) - and it will be my pleasure to introduce CAPSAC's incoming President, Lauren Maltby, Ph.D.

It's been an honor and privilege to serve as CAPSAC's president. CAPSAC is strong, healthy, vibrant, and growing. Our dedicated professionals/members from all disciplines throughout California represent an enormous wealth of expertise generously shared to support and strengthen the challenging and important work we do for children and families. I am deeply grateful.

Susan Moan Hardie, RN, Ph.D.

An outstanding training opportunity...

Munchausen by Proxy: Clinical and Case Management

Offered by the California Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (CAPSAC)

An all-day Pre-conference to the San Diego International Conference on Child and Family Maltreatment

Sunday, January 26, 2020 | Town and Country Resort

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CAPSAC is offering in depth training for a one-day pre-conference that provides multidisciplinary guidance for identifying, investigating, and prosecuting fabricated illness in a child. New APSAC Guidelines for Practice will be used to illustrate effective interventions in cases of MBP and Medical Child Abuse. Attendees are encouraged to bring difficult cases for consultation with national experts.

Participants will also work in small groups with a disciplinary specialist. In addition, case studies and the experiences of an adoptive family of a victim of MBP will be shared. There will be opportunities for expert consultation on cases brought by attendees, as well as resources for ongoing professional support.

Presenters: *Mary Sanders, Ph.D., John Stirling, MD, FAAP, Michael Weber, BS, Beatrice Yorker, JD, RN, MS, FAAN*



**The California
Professional Society
on the Abuse of Children**

Strengthening Practice Through Knowledge

**California Professional Society on the Abuse of Children
Neal Snyder Outstanding Service Award**

The California Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (CAPSAC) established the Neal Snyder Outstanding Service Award in 2019 to recognize professionals who demonstrate extraordinary dedication and efforts on behalf of children.

Neal Snyder graduated Phi Beta Kappa from UC Berkeley with a BA and MA in sociology, and obtained his JD from Hastings College. As an attorney, he specialized in protecting children from abuse - an area he helped make a legal specialty - and became a role model for many others in the field. Neal worked for the California State Department of Social Services in day care licensing litigation. He was a co-founder of CAPSAC, drafted its initial bylaws and assisted with its incorporation. He continued to serve as a board member, supporter, and consultant to CAPSAC for the rest of his life. Neal was an intelligent, even-tempered, positive, athletic, and kind man who loved jazz, his wife, Yvonne Garcia, their annual visits to Thailand, his children and grandchildren.

Any professional in California may submit nominations. Nominees cannot be CAPSAC Board Members or CAPSAC Executive Committee Members.

Nominees should demonstrate the mission and goals of CAPSAC:

The mission of CAPSAC is to improve the effort and response of professionals working with children who have experienced abuse and neglect.

The goals of CAPSAC are to promote collaboration among all disciplines working in the area of child protection, to promote education on child maltreatment of professionals and community members who work with children, to promote research on child abuse and neglect in the areas of prevention, identification, intervention, and treatment, and to promote appropriate and effective services to the children and families who have experienced child maltreatment.

Nominees should exhibit outstanding service in the area of child maltreatment. Nominees should model outstanding professionalism and have made contributions in the area of child maltreatment.

The Neal Snyder Outstanding Service Award recipient will be selected from among the nominees by the CAPSAC Board of Directors and presented with the Neal Snyder Outstanding Service Award certificate as well as a one-year membership to APSAC/CAPSAC on January 26, 2020 at the CAPSAC Board Meeting and Reception at the San Diego Child Maltreatment Conference. Travel will be reimbursed not to exceed \$300. Also, an article about the recipient will be published in the CAPSAC newsletter the *Consultant*. The person who nominated the award recipient will receive a 10% discount on their APSAC/CAPSAC membership fee.

Nomination Deadline: 12/1/2019

Please return completed form below with the nominee's CV/Resume to:
Toni Cavanagh Johnson, Ph.D. at toni@tcavjohn.com

If you have any questions, contact CAPSAC Awards Committee Chair: Toni Cavanagh Johnson, Ph.D. at toni@tcavjohn.com / +1(626) 817-2142.

**California Professional Society on the Abuse of Children
Neal Snyder Outstanding Service Award
Nomination Form**

Your Name and Agency _____

Your email address _____ Phone # _____

Nominee's Name and Agency _____

Nominee's email address _____ Phone # _____

Describe the current role and position of the nominee as well as any previously held positions relevant to this award.

Describe the qualities that make the nominee excel at their position.

Describe your nominee's most significant contribution to their profession.

Give an example of how the nominee has shown leadership through mentoring or has served as a role model for others.

Was there a specific event that prompted you to nominate this person? If so, please describe.

Additional comments.

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