

# ***WORKING COPY: Human Dignity and Childhood:***

**Workshop with Leadership Team**

**Auburn Enlarged City School District, Auburn, NY**

***November 18, 2019***

**Lucien X. Lombardo, PhD and Karen A. Polonko, Ph.D. (In Spirit)**

**Professor Emeritus, Old Dominion University**

**Board Member, Champions for Children / Prevent Child Abuse Hampton Roads**

**Board Member, Harriet Tubman Center for Justice and Peace**

**Old Dominion University**

**Norfolk, VA USA 23519**

**315-406-7785**

# TO THINK ABOUT

- ❖ How people experience **human dignity in childhood shapes how they confront and experience differences** throughout their lives.
- ❖ **How a school system can apply human dignity** to its mission, curriculum, student organizations, student retention and graduation and teacher recruitment and faculty development efforts?
- ❖ How can a **human dignity perspective can make differences a source of pride** rather than a reason to marginalize those who are different, reflected in bullying, harassment, microaggressions and stereotypes?

**Karen A. Polonko, PhD.**  
**University Professor of Sociology and**  
**Founder, In Support of Children at Old Dominion University**

Teaching Course  
***VIOLENCE IN  
THE WORLD OF  
CHILDREN***

**OBJECTIVE:**  
Prevent Harm to  
Children by  
raising  
awareness and  
empowering  
College students  
who are or will  
become parents  
with  
KNOWLEDGE  
AND A NEW  
PERSPECTIVE!



Karen passed in  
2016.

When asked if  
another child  
should be  
corporally  
punished for  
'bad behavior'  
Opie Taylor says  
"I prefer not to  
say, Paw, **he's  
one of my kind.**"

# Violence in the World of Children

## Course Topics

### MODULES:

Learning a  
Child-  
Centered  
Perspective  
1-7

1. *Introduction to Social Ecology of Childhood\**
2. Developing a Child-Centered Perspective
3. History of Childhood and Children's Work
4. Childhood around the World (UNICEF, ECPAT, Child Labor)
5. *Human Dignity and Children, Children's Rights (CRC)\**
6. *(CV) Trauma, Neglect and Brain Development and Children\**
7. *(CV) Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) and Developmental Assets\**

Application  
to Specific  
Forms of  
Violence  
8-13

8. Violence Contexts – POLY-VICTIMIZATION Common Themes in: Families, Peers, Schools, Community, Media
9. *Violence in Home: Corporal Punishment Law and Impacts\**
10. *Violence in Schools: Bullying\**
11. *Violence in Communities: Gangs and War\**
12. *Child Protective Services Work\**
13. Preventing Violence in Children's Lives and Advocating for Children

*\* Modules with Writing Assignments: Students Complete 4*



# NOT TRICK QUESTIONS

How many of you here today were children? *(I hope everyone answers that they were!)*

Which is the longer period of your life:  
Childhood or Adulthood?  
*(Most people answer, ADULTHOOD!)*

## Lack of a Child Centered View of Dignity in Childhood

Which Is the Longer Period of Life: Childhood or Adulthood?

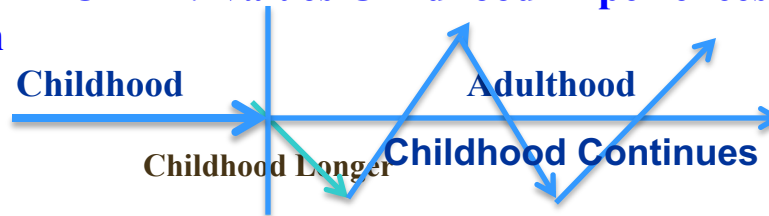
**MOST SAY ADULTHOOD** – We can't see that:

**Whatever Impedes Children's Work in Violence in Children's Lives**

**ADULT CENTERED MODEL: Devalues Childhood Experiences**  
Adulthood Longer:



**CHILD CENTERED MODEL: Values Childhood Experiences throughout life-span**  
Childhood longer



### Adult Centered

I'm OK,  
Children Resilient  
Hitting, humiliating OK  
Don't want to feel  
powerless, need power

### Child Centered

Hitting me affected me  
Children malleable  
Hitting, Humiliating  
Wrong  
Need to empower  
children

The Adverse Childhood Experience Study;  
Child Trauma Academy (Brain Development); Works of Alice Miller  
Life long Effects of Early Childhood Adversity and Toxic Stress (2012 PEDIATRICS)

AESCD Human Dignity and Childhood

11-18-19

# HOW WE BECOME DISCONNECTED FROM CHILDHOOD: (Why most say “Adulthood is longer”)

- Put Childhood behind us – Rites of passage
- Value adulthood and devalue childhood “Childish”
- Don’t want to be reminded of ‘negative’ experiences of our childhoods, don’t want to appear flawed or weak
- Want to grow, mature, have the power our childhood status never gave us.

# Children as a Social Class

- UN Convention on the Rights of **the Child** (singular – not seeing social class).
- The Wisdom of Opie Taylor (From the Andy Griffith Show)  
[Arnold, a new friend of Opie, has just been taken by his father to the woodshed against his will crying and screaming "I want my bike!"]

**Opie Taylor:**

Is Arnie going to get spanked, Pa?

**Sheriff Andy Taylor:**

Don't you think he deserves it?

**Opie Taylor:**

I don't want to say. After all, he is one of my own kind.

**WHEN OPIE says Arnold is ONE OF HIS OWN KIND – He is observing that Arnold and he are part of a distinct social class (a kind) called “Children” that has characteristics that are different from adults.**

# Dignity Perspective Recognizes Children as a CLASS doing CHILDREN' WORK:

**If we can remember -- We did all these things!**

What CHILDREN'S WORK means here is:

- All children, whether we realize it or not, are actively integrating their everyday experiences into their lives.
- They are learning ways of seeing, understanding and living in their worlds.
- They are trying to make sense of the world provided by their social maps.
- They are ESTABLISHING THE TEMPLATES that will guide their behaviors and lives in the future.

# Two Questions to Start Our Discussion of Human Dignity and Childhood

- How often do you think about or discuss the idea of “**Human Dignity**”? In **What contexts?**
- How often to you think about or discuss the “**Human Dignity of Children**”? In **what Contexts?**



## DO CHILDREN AS A CLASS HAVE DIGNITY? Is Childhood A Place For Dignity? It's often observed tht they don't!

In *Dimensions Of Dignity: The Moral Importance Of Being Human*,  
philosopher Dan Egonsson writes:

*One idea has been almost universally embraced among people in the West, namely that there is something special about being human. The idea is rather vague and that is partly due, I believe, to the fact that it has been taken for granted for a very long time and not much reflected upon until rather recently. For example, it is not clear whether the thought is (1) that being human is important in itself, or (2) it is important to be like a human being, that is, to have capacities which a normal grown-up human being has.*

*[Emphasis added] (1998, p.3) [Egonsson, Dan (1998)  
Dimensions Of Dignity: The Moral Importance Of Being Human.  
Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers]*

# Some Meanings of Human Dignity

**Three board philosophical contexts associated with dignity: (In the person – not interactions).**

1. Old sense: refined manners associated with high social rank (by definition lower social ranks don't have it – this view still prevails in our social divisions!)
2. Personal: Self-esteem, integrity (**Does it have to be earned, tied to accomplishments?** By definition, those without accomplishments don't have it):
3. Moralized: **inherent, unearned worth or status** (The kind of worth everyone has, and has equally, just because we are persons.)

FROM: Remy Debes, "Dignity is Delicate" (aeon) September 2018. <https://aeon.co/essays/human-dignity-is-an-ideal-with-remarkably-shallow-roots>

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# Human Dignity as an Interactional Experience

How we are treated by and how we treat others!

Human Dignity may be “inherent” (something we all have), but develops, is **felt** from experiences.

Human Dignity is **felt as personal** – inherent in the individual, but is **experienced as interactional** and develops in the contexts of interactions with others.

Human dignity of individuals is more likely to be supported and / or violated depending on **conditions of social structures (inequalities across social classes)**.

# Human Dignity As An Interaction Process

Meaning of human dignity derived from interactions with others.

- Others cannot grant or take human dignity from a person or group;
- Others can support or violate the human dignity of a person or a group;
- To support the human dignity of a person or group recognizes commonality, connection, understands context and perspective.
- To violate the human dignity of a person shows contempt for the person or group, it disconnects, self / group from others; self or group Identity as only context and perspective of seeing the world that matters.
- Those who violate HD of others deny their own HD and violate their own HD and transfer their personal human dignity to their 'group' identity

# Recognizing the Human Dignity of Children: UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

CRC Preamble :

The States Parties to the present Convention,  
Considering that, in accordance with the principles  
proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, recognition  
of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable  
rights of all members of the human family is the foundation  
of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Bearing in mind that the peoples of the United Nations have,  
in the Charter, reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human  
rights and in the dignity and worth of the human person,  
and have determined to promote social progress and better  
standards of life in larger freedom,

UNITED STATES THE ONLY COUNTRY NOT TO RATIFY THE CRC!

# Human Dignity and the CRC: How adults (and governments) should support and prevent violations of children's human dignity!

## Articles of CRC to **Support** Human Dignity of Children:

- 3.2. Provide CARE
- 12.1 Permit children to Express Views
- 13.1 Allow children to Seek and Receive Information
- 23.1 Care for Disabled
- 31.1 Provide opportunities for Rest, leisure and recreation
- 37(c) Dignity and humanity for children deprived of liberty
- 39 Support for victims of neglect, abuse, exploitation or other degrading treatment

## Articles of CRC to **Prevent Violations** of Human Dignity of Children

- 3.2 Protection of well-being
- 16.1 See that Privacy, honour, reputation not interfered with
- 19.1 Protection from physical or mental injury, abuse, exploitation while in care of parents or caretaker
- 32.1 Protection from Economic Exploitation
- 34 Protection from Sexual Exploitation or Abuse
- 37(a) Protection from torture or cruel , inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment



# “Human Dignity” in World Constitutions

- Pre 1945: “Human Dignity in 5 Constitutions
- 1945: “Human Dignity” in UN Charter
- 1948: “Human Dignity” in Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- 2012: “Human Dignity” in 162 Countries’ Constitutions

**D. Shulztiner and G. Carmi (2014), “Human Dignity in National Constitutions: Functions, Promises and Dangers”, *The American Journal of Comparative Law*, 62/2 (461-490) at 461.**

# Human Dignity in United States' Constitution: NOT PART OF OUR THINKING

Search of  
Constitution of the United States  
and its Amendments  
for word “Dignity”

**RESULTS:**

**Acrobat has finished searching  
the document.**

**No matches were found.**

# Though It's NOT in the Constitution – U.S.SUPREME COURT DOES DISCUSS DIGNITY:

**BUT IN A UNIQUE WAY – Dignity of Things not People!**

## Dignity in US Supreme Court Cases:

“The Supreme Court of the United States has recognized , since the beginning, that the concept of dignity is important in the interpretation of the Constitution, although it appears nowhere in the text. Ad yet, uniquely in the world, **the US Supreme Court has always been much more comfortable attaching dignity to inanimate things**, such as states and courts and contracts, **than to human beings.**” (p.71) (“Dignity” is found in: the United States, the Congress, courts, both state and federal, lower and appellate, the American flag and US citizenship). (p.77)

**State Immunity from law suits: TO maintain their dignity and autonomy**

SOURCE: Erin Daly (2021) *Dignity Rights: Courts, Constitutions, and the Worth of the Human Person*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

# US SUPREME COURT and DIGNITY AND THE INDIVIDUAL

Post WWII Human dignity of individual starting to be recognized  
(though often in dissents)

Areas where dignity found: (Dignity violated -  
autonomy)

- Dignity in the Police State: investigative, prosecutorial, and punitive practices
- Dignity and Discrimination: race and gender
- Dignity and Privacy: “self-incrimination, family, procreation, marriage, raising children)
- Dignity and Speech: Protests, prisons, elections

SOURCE: Erin Daly (2021) *Dignity Rights: Courts, Constitutions, and the Worth of the Human Person*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press. Pp.87-100.

# International: What's Happening with Dignity

## Dignity And Humiliation Studies

<http://www.humiliationstudies.org>



December 2019 Conference Theme  
Transforming Humiliation and Violent Conflict:

**"Can We Teach Dignity?"**

**Becoming Lifelong Apprentices of Dignity from  
Childhood Throughout All Ages"**

# LOCAL: What's Happening With Dignity

## Harriet Tubman Center for Justice and Peace, Auburn NY “The Road to Justice and Peace Goes Through Childhood”



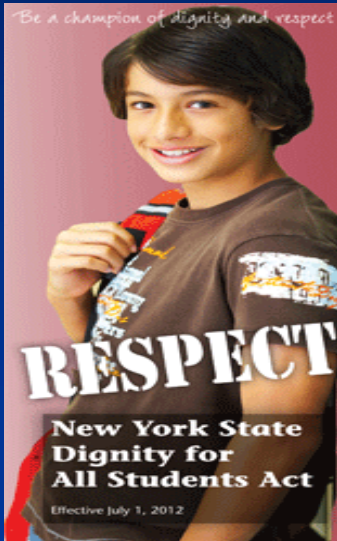
HARRIET TUBMAN CENTER FOR JUSTICE & PEACE, INC.  
Board of Directors Annual Meeting, July 10, 2019

Pictured left to right: Lisa Brennan, Secretary, Jack Hardy, board member, Kathy Barnard, Treasurer, Lou Lombardo, acting Chair, Bill Berry Jr., Vice-Chair, Rhoda Overstreet-Wilson, board member, Vijay Mital, founding board member, Eli Hernandez, board member, Steve Webster, board member, and Gilda Brower, founding board member. Missing from photo: Cathleen Dotterer, board member.

Working with local school system and surrounding community to focus on the dignity of all: effort to raise awareness of and support for human dignity as a standard of practice throughout the community.



# Links to Dignity for All Students Act (NYS)



## Dignity for All Students Act (DASA)

The Dignity Act was signed into law on September 13, 2010 and took effect on July 1, 2012.

**The Auburn Enlarged City School District** is committed to providing an educational environment that promotes respect, dignity and equality for all. Our District recognizes that harassment and bullying are detrimental to student learning and achievement. A student should never feel that it is not safe to come to school and participate in all school activities. **A student should never be prevented from concentrating on their schoolwork because another student or a school staff member is teasing them, making fun of them, pushing them around, or threatening them in some way, because of their race, color, weight, national origin (where their family comes from), ethnic group, religion, religious practices, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex, or for any other reason.**

A student may not act toward another student in a way that reasonably might make that other student feel threatened or unsafe, or that might reasonably make that other student unable to concentrate on their school work, because of the other student's race, color, weight, national origin (where their family comes from), ethnic group, religion, religious practices, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex, or for any other reason. It is against school rules for any student or school staff member to do this by physical actions or by verbal statements, including electronic messages. This kind of conduct is prohibited on school property, on school buses, and at all school-sponsored events.

# Links to Social and Emotional Learning

(Commission on Social Emotional and Academic Development 2018)

Research reveals that **teachers' own social and emotional competencies** influence the quality of the learning experiences they offer their students.<sup>54</sup>

In addition to the importance of teachers, **evidence points to the critical role that principals play in setting the conditions for classroom teaching and learning.** Principals are highly influential in setting priorities and goals, providing human and material resources, and establishing and sustaining programs and practices that support social, emotional, and academic development . (P 25)

***“We have to start with adults’ social and emotional learning, and then work on kids’ social and emotional learning,” said a 4th grade teacher in Seattle.***<sup>57</sup>

<https://www.aspeninstitute.org/programs/national-commission-on-social-emotional-and-academic-development/>

# When Dealing with Children We Deal with Generations of Childhoods (HTCJP THEME)

- ***“The Road to Peace and Justice Goes Through Childhood”:***
  - ***The Childhoods of Adults (our childhoods)***  
↓
  - ***The Childhoods of the Children with Whom Adults (us) Interact, and***  
↓
  - ***The Adults these Children Become”.***

# Adults Remember: *Restoring Connections* *Childhood and Human Dignity Workshop*

## *Adults Remember Human Dignity workshop:*

- It provides a space and time where you can **share your childhood experiences with Human Dignity.**
- It provides a space and time where you can remember and connect with your childhood.
- It provides a space where you can see first hand the importance of connecting human dignity to the children in your lives.
- It builds a community connected through and supported by these important encounters with dignity.

# The Importance of Human Dignity and Childhood – The Importance of Stories

- *“People are hungry for stories. It’s part of our very being.” Studs Terkel*
- This workshop provides you with an opportunity to contribute to a collection of stories about childhood. Not just any stories, but stories dealing with foundational experiences that often shape us as we move through life. These experiences are linked to the idea of **human dignity**.
- While human dignity is an idea not easily defined in words, it is something that **experience** teaches us can be supported or violated. Childhood is not a time in our lives we normally associate with having human dignity. Yet childhood is often a time period when it is most important.

**Vincent Fellitti (ACES): The profound effect of asking and listening, accepting: “NOTE from elderly woman: “Thank you for asking, I feared I would die and no one would ever know what happened!”**

<https://vimeo.com/349163412>

# The Human Dignity In Childhood Project

- *To contribute your stories to the project just provide your responses to the following:*
- ***Definition:***
- What is your definition of 'human dignity'?
- ***Background:***
- As you describe your childhood experiences with human dignity, be sure to indicate:
- (1) **your age now**; (2) **your age when these things happened** and (3) **where** (country, town, etc.) you had the experiences.
- ***Experiences:***
- Describe at least **2 examples** where you felt **adults supported your human dignity** when you were a child. (For each example, give as many details as you can and describe how you felt).
- Describe at least **2 examples** where you felt **adults violated your human dignity** when you were a child. (For each example, give as many details as you can and describe how you felt.)



# TWO STORIES

## ***EXPERIENCING VIOLATIONS AND SUPPORTS FOR HUMAN DIGNITY IN CHILDHOOD***

### **1. A LITTLE GIRL, A LAKE AND A BOAT:**

### **2. WHAT IF...? THE LOST COMMANDMENT: A Parable and Tribute to Alice Miller**

In The Body Never Lies Alice Miller continues her analysis of the links between our experiences in childhood and their impact and value in our lives as adults. In this book she courageously explores two themes central to our individual, relational and political health: the connections between our adult body, mind and spirit and childhood, and the religious and cultural prescription to love and forgive our childhood oppressors found in the Fourth Commandment's mandate to "Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother".

L.X. Lombardo - [https://www.naturalchild.org/articles/alice\\_miller/bnl\\_review\\_3.html](https://www.naturalchild.org/articles/alice_miller/bnl_review_3.html)

# St. Catherine's Monastery - Sinai

Established 564 AD



**According to the parable, this is where 'lost commandment' was kept hidden away and forgotten. Forgotten, that is, until it was recently discovered.**

**Be aware of the lost section  
of to 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment\* to  
“Honor thy father and mother”**

**The Lost Commandment\***

*Parents should honor and empower their  
children, so that they, their children and their  
children's children will live their own truths  
over long and authentic lives!*

***This is something ‘hitting children’ will not do”!***

**\* This commandment was lost when the first version of the stone tablets was broken and it was never replaced. While we traditionally apply the version we have to young children relating to adults, in the fable it is pointed out that “Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother” was really meant to apply to adults’ relationships to their elderly parents.**

# Your Stories

**Definitions of Human Dignity**

**Supports For Human Dignity**

**Violations of Human Dignity**

# *Specific Analysis: Sources of Human Dignity\*: Supports*

## INTERNAL – HOW WE SEE OURSELVES – Others Confirm or devalue

### SELF EVALUATIONS

- Self Pride
- Self Worth
- Self Esteem
- Self Respect
- Self Value

### AUTHENTICITY

- Pride in Own Abilities
- Who and What You Are
- Being Able to be Myself
- Being Comfortable with What and Who I Am

## INTERACTIONAL – IN RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS

### POWER AND CONTROL

- Involved in Decisions
- Freedom over Body, Opinions, feelings

### TREATED WITH

- Respect, Expressions of Kindness, Fairness, Not Controlled

### CONTRIBUTING

- Opportunities to help others

See: K.A. Polonko and L.X. Lombardo (2005) “Human Dignity and Children: Operationalizing a Key Human Rights Concept”, GLOBAL BIOETHICS, Vol 18, pp. 17-35.

*\*Derived from Undergraduate Student responses to the following questions: How would you define human dignity? Describe two examples of when you felt your human dignity was supported as a child? Describe to examples where you felt your human dignity was violated as a child? (Course: “Violence in the World of Children”)*



# General Analysis: Violations of Human Dignity in Childhood

**CONTEXTS:** Family, Schools, Peers, Community, Church

**DIRECT:** Physical, sexual, emotional, verbal . Being called names, embarrassed in public, ridiculed, yelled at in public and private; feelings denied, ignored, attacked

**INDIRECT:** Witnessing physical violence in family, parental fights, parental or caregiver alcohol, drug abuse, media violence, political hate

**TREATED AS 'LESS THAN':** needing permission, not involved in decisions, voice not respected, told worthless, choices not supported; no control or respect for own body, opinions, feelings; unfair treatment

# General ANALYSIS: Violations Status of Children **without Awareness of Dignity**

- Child-adult relationships are built on **inequality and adult dominance and children's submissiveness**
- **Law reflects and supports power relationships of adult dominance and children's submissiveness**
- **Children do not have a voice in decisions** that affect their lives
- Children are **passive participants** in creating their worlds
- Children's **human dignity may be degraded for their own good**
- Children have **no right to physical integrity**
- Adults have the power to **define children's 'authenticity'**

# SEARCH INSTITUTE 11/2019

## Reframing Adult / Youth Relationships

GAPS BETWEEN THE CONCLUSIONS FROM RESEARCH  
AND PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF RELATIONSHIPS IN  
YOUNG PEOPLE'S LIVES

|                         | RESEARCHERS   | PUBLIC'S BELIEF   |
|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| WHO'S RESPONSIBLE:      | MANY PEOPLE   | FAMILY            |
| DYNAMIC:                | BIDIRECTIONAL | UNIDIRECTIONAL    |
| YOUNG PERSON'S ROLE:    | ACTIVE        | PASSIVE           |
| ADVERSE EVENTS:         | REPARABLE     | IRREPARABLE       |
| FOCUS OF RELATIONSHIPS: | CARING        | MULTIPLE FEATURES |
| PROGRAMS & POLICIES:    | ESSENTIAL     | OFF THE RADAR     |

In this time of social fragmentation, isolation, and divisiveness, there is a readiness—even an urgency and yearning—for authentic relationships and meaningful connections. Perhaps the time is now.

[SEARCH INSTITUTE BLOG POST 11-07-19](#)



# General ANALYSIS: SUPPORTS

## Bringing Dignity to Children and Childhood

### Children Respected as Equal Actors in Life

- Child-adult relationships are built on **mutual respect** and value
- **Children's voices matter** to adults
- **Long-term child development** the central concern in adult obligations to children
- Children are **active participants** in creating their worlds
- Children as a class have a **right to physical integrity**
- Children as a class have a right **not to have their human dignity degraded**
- **Corporal punishment of children is violence** and proscribed by law and social norms
- Harm to children extends beyond the immediate **physical to long-term developmental subjective experience of psychological and emotional impacts of harmful acts**
- **All people** have a responsibility to protect children from violence

# Human Dignity Link to Meaningful SEL

## Templates derived from Human Dignity Experiences



# Focusing on Human Dignity in Childhood has Programmatic Implications – Dignity for ALL Cervantes: “All Comparisons are odious”!

## Extends to Interactions with all Marginalized in School and Broader Community:

(Microaggression, unconscious bias, bullying) – An alternative to ‘less than’ template)

### HUMAN DIGNITY Identity – Based Student Organizations

- LGBTQ people
- Girls / Boys
- People of color
- Religious minorities
- Differently abled people
- Where one lives (neighborhood)
- People of different sizes
- Elderly people
- People who have linguistic accents
- People whose names are not of European descent
- Different national origins
- Employers and Employees

# Dignity and Difference

- With a human dignity focus differences that normally divide take on new value, but not in a comparative way. Not 'better than' just different. Race, sexuality, gender, religion, ethnicity, economic position provide 'different perspectives and experiences than can be learned about. Individuals can share those experiences or not, even though we know the differences exist they matter when they matter. **Through the lens of human dignity differences are appreciated, but they don't get in the way of positive human interaction! Differences are expected and respected! Histories are acknowledged and accepted!**
- From Peter Handke, "The Song of Childhood"
  - When the child was a child,  
it didn't know that it was a child,  
everything was soulful,  
and all souls were one.

# Programmatic Use of Human Dignity

**MAKE “Human Dignity” a CENTRAL Organization THEME” for AESCD**

## **DECADE OF DIGNITY: AESCD**

- **Students, Teachers, Counselors Administrators**
- **Expand to Parents**
- **Expand to Community**
- **(Fits with Equal Rights Heritage Center theme of Auburn and Cayuga County)**

## **A FOCAL POINT**

- **Teacher Recruitment**
- **Faculty Development**
- **Curricular Development**
- **Student Organizations**

# PROGRAMMATIC USE OF STORIES:

- **Links Learning to Students Life Experiences**
- **Gives Value to Students Life experience and to substantive learning**
- **Gives Concrete Example that can be shared across 'identities'**
- **Provides Appreciation for Diversity of Meanings and Experiences**
- **Can be used across all substantive curricular areas**
- **Integrates rather than isolate experiences across curricula**
- **Provides 'repetitive' student experiences on dignity themes**

## *GOAL for END OF DECADE OF DIGNITY:*

*ALICE MILLER\*:*

*People whose integrity has not been damaged in childhood, who were protected, respected, and treated with honesty by their parents, will be--both in their youth and in adulthood--intelligent, responsive, empathic, and highly sensitive.... They will use their power to defend themselves, not to attack others. They will not be able to do otherwise than respect and protect those weaker than themselves, including their children, because this is what they have learned from their own experience, and because it is this knowledge (and not the experience of cruelty) that has been stored up inside of them from the beginning.*

*\*(1990b) Afterword to 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, FOR YOUR OWN GOOD: HIDDEN CRUELTY IN CHILDHOOD AND THE ROOTS OF VIOLENCE. NY: Noonday Press: Farrow, Straus & Giroux.*

# Additional Broader Implications

Bringing Human Dignity focus to Families, schools, religious organizations, all social organizations, government agencies, politics:

Bruce Perry – *The Boy Who Was Raised As A Dog*, p. 232

“What maltreated and traumatized children most need is a healthy community to buffer the pain, distress and loss caused by earlier trauma. What works to heal them is anything that increases the number and quality of a child’s relationships. What helps is consistent, patterned, repetitive loving care.” (Brain and USE-DEPENDENT DEVELOPMENT)



# Bringing to Human Dignity to the Work of Preventing Harm to Children

A Child Development Perspective: Children's WORK!

“Violence against children is anything that interferes with Children's work!”

The ‘*human development*’ perspective, on the other hand, focuses on **the ability of children to ‘lead lives they have reason to value and to enhance the substantive choices they have.’<sup>3</sup>** From such a perspective, therefore, all acts of violence are a violation of child rights. It follows then that there can be no threshold below which violence is acceptable. It does not matter whether the act of violence is harmful or not, whether it is deliberately committed or condoned, if it is provoked or unprovoked, if it is a legal violation or not, and whether the perpetrators believe they are acting in the interests of the child. **Regardless of whether an act of violence has an adverse effect on the child or not, it can never be justified because it breeds fear and violates the dignity of the child.**

**Ending Violence in Childhood (2017)**

AESCD Human Dignity and Childhood  
11-18-19

# Experiences of Human Dignity in Multiple Contexts: Student Responses

CRJS / SOC Module 5 Human Dignity and Human Rights and Children 10

CRJS / SOC 403W  
Violence in the World of Children

Dr. Lombardo

## Dimensions of Childhood Experiences with Human Dignity: Definitions, Violations and Supports

### DEFINITIONS: SOURCE OF HUMAN DIGNITY

#### A. INTERNAL: How We See Ourselves

#### B. INTERACTIONAL: In Relationships with Others

| Self Evaluations | Authenticity                | Power and Control    | Treatment by Others     | Contributing     |
|------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Self-Pride       | Pride in own abilities      | Make Decisions       | Treated with:           | Opportunities to |
| Self Worth       | What and who you are        | Not being controlled | Fairness                | help others      |
| Self Esteem      | Being able to be myself     | Rights               | Respect                 |                  |
| Self Respect     | Being comfortable with what | Freedoms:            | Expressions of Kindness |                  |
| Self Value       | and who I am                | Over ones body       | Valued by Others        |                  |
|                  |                             | Over feelings        |                         |                  |
|                  |                             | Over opinions        |                         |                  |

### CONTEXTS FOR VIOLATIONS AND SUPPORT OF HUMAN DIGNITY: FAMILY, SCHOOL, PEER GROUPS, COMMUNITY, CHURCH

A. Violations Leading To Feelings Of Powerlessness And Humiliation: needing permission,  
(More than just physical leads to pain)

B. Forms Of Direct Violations Of Human Dignity: physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, being called names, embarrassed in public, ridiculed and yelled at in public.

C. Indirect Violations: Being witness to physical violence in family, parental fights, alcohol and drug abuse

D. Supports For Human Dignity: encouraged, praised, listened to, informed of things, told was good, given choices, treated fairly, supported by adult, opportunities to contribute

**(SOURCE: Derived from undergraduate student responses to the following questions “How would you define Human Dignity? Describe two examples when you felt your human dignity was violated as a child? Describe two examples when you felt your dignity was supported as a child?)**

# Bring Dignity to our Discussions and Interactions



# AESCD SEL

<http://www.aecsd.education/districtpage.cfm?pageid=1890#Abuse>