Taking Emotional Abuse Seriously

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Philosophy

Hours required p/week: 3-8
Credits anticipated: 1-3

This project sketches changes that medical professionals might make to start taking the emotional and/or psychological abuse of children more seriously, and more systematically so, than has been done in the past.

Part of my discussion will include an investigation into changing public perception of emotional and psychological abuse. While there is extensive empirical evidence that emotional abuse can harm children as severely as physical abuse, it is unlikely that this is taken to heart among the general public. Consider, for instance, the difference in social acceptability between yelling at a child in public and physically hitting a child in public. While the latter comes with almost universal public scorn and high odds of someone involving law enforcement, the same is unlikely to happen when the parents discipline measure of choice is aggressive words rather than physical aggression. Because in a child’s interest to stay in the care of their parents (as opposed to entering foster care), there is reason for medical professionals to be concerned with the public perception of emotional abuse, because members of the public are of course, parents.

Research assistant’s duties:

The undergraduate would assist my research work on this project. The main duties will involve a literature review: gathering information about current and past laws on emotional abuse, as well as reviewing what scholars have said on the topic. The work might also involve interviewing physicians, psychiatrists, social workers, and youth counselors about emotional abuse.

Required skills or qualifications:
The student should have a strong grasp of the English language, and be familiar with the basics of internet research. Strong analytic ability and dedication to scholarly activities is also desired.

Skills student will acquire:
The student would acquire the general skills of conducting scholarly research on empirical manners, as well as theoretical research. Interviews would help the student learn to interact with professionals on an academic level. In addition, the student would gain specialized knowledge about the medical profession and psychiatric issues in pediatrics.