

Chapter 13

Childhood Trauma and Barriers in a Rural Setting: My Experience with Childhood Trauma and Barriers in a Rural Setting

Sonja Lee Salcido
Center of Hope, USA

ABSTRACT

This chapter details the experiences author had while attempting to obtain medical and psychological help for her children while living in a rural area. This chapter, per the author's request, addresses childhood trauma and barriers that need to be broken down so that emotional healing can begin. This submission is personal, and real occurrences. Rural areas generally have less resources available and because rural areas are sometimes remote, financial resources may not be available for a parent or caregiver to travel to obtain the needed help. Rural towns are normally condensed. This means that there is less privacy, and more ways for perpetrators to work a system of abuse within the schools, community, and churches in order to continue "getting to" the victim-- the child, or in this submission, child and parent. Healing from trauma can only begin when the barriers are recognized, broken down, and eliminated.

INTRODUCTION

The outside of a house looks much different than the inside, it is no different in the life, or lives of victims of abuse. The intention of this chapter is to give a close look at the inside of what life can be like for the victim. A sort of "walking tour" of the world that can easily encompass them and keep the locked up, unable to leave. Barriers must be broken down, but in order to do that successfully, one must first identify and address each barrier individually. Rural barriers can be much different than most others, and this chapter shall identify and address each one and how they can be broken down so that the victim can live in peace, begin to heal, and be a victim no more. It is important for the counselor to understand to quickly and appropriately identify the source of the issues and act appropriately and diligently without delay.

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BACKGROUND

I am the mother of ten children (all my own), and I have navigated my large family through 15 years of extensive and outstanding emotional, financial, legal, professional, and social sabotage-- not always successfully, but always persistently. Nine of my children are from a twenty-year marriage. Their ages now range from 18 to 34 years old. My youngest child, who is now 14 years old, is from a second marriage that lasted nine years. *It is her situation that this chapter is primarily about, because we succeeded, with our therapist, in ending the abuse that was making my daughter physically ill.*

MAIN FOCUS

This chapter focuses on what I have learned while trying to obtain help for my children in a convoluted system of government red tape. I am not a trained psychologist, nor a counselor; what I learned about this subject came from years of first-hand experience. It has not been an education that I could have learned from a book, nor is it the kind of education that I would have sought by my own volition. I will explain our situation in the following synopsis. I will then discuss a few barriers that we were able to overcome, and I will list the barriers that we needed someone professional to help us--for I was not equipped to handle everything on my own. Some barriers I never was able to overcome, partly due to our remote location, and partly due to the lack the resources needed to seek help. Sometimes the help that I did find, turned out to be a negative influence.

MY STORY

The first 17 years of parenting were easy. Our home was joyful in Minnesota, where the first nine of my children resided with their father and me. We had a strong sense of community, because we were actively involved in it in many positive ways. We were highly respected among our peers, involved in church and community clubs, and we also had extended family support. We raised animals and a garden, we took meals to new parents, shut ins, and the ill, we produced a home-school newsletter which had subscribers all over, including Canada, New Zealand and England. We often visited residents of a local nursing home, and entertained orphaned children once a week.

So how did all of that goodness come to an end? It all began with an 1,800 mile relocation to the Southwest in 1998. The culture and social shock of the move laid the foundation for the problems and a divorce, remarriage, another baby, surgeries, loss of a home, and another divorce built the framework of the stress and drama of everyday life. Little did I know that there was more yet to come; not so much because of relocating and having “bad things” happen, but because of the men that fathered my children. And not just those men (even though they were the *source*), but also much misery came by way of the people that were enlisted to help my ex-husbands with their personal vendettas against me and our children.

It is almost unbelievable when I look back on the extent of the misery. In fact, I probably would not believe it, had it not happened to my family and me.

The beginning of the end of our struggles started with our finding a new therapist, after having gone to many others. I thank God every day for the day when she accepted our case. Was it by chance, persistence, or the Hand of God? Probably all of the above. Whatever it was that brought her to us, we will

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