



CHILD PROTECTION BULLETIN

STATE CHILD
PROTECTION
SOCIETY, ASSAM

MONTHLY BULLETIN OF ACTIVITIES CONCERNING CHILD PROTECTION IN ASSAM

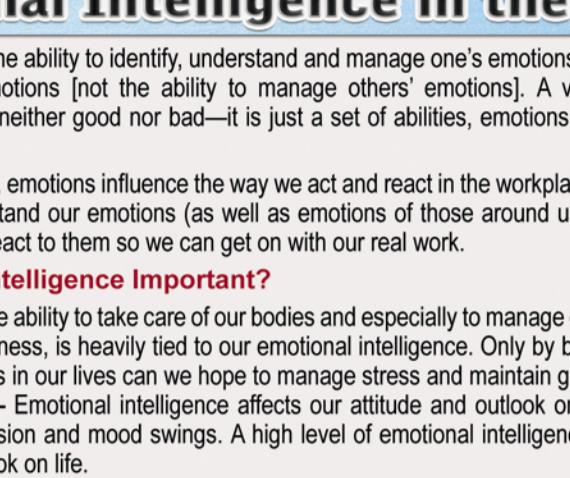
EDITORIAL

Every child is different and unique. The worst thing you can do with your children is comparison. Comparison reduces self-confidence among the children. We should understand that every child is unique and every child is special. We only have to identify it and once we identify them we should try to enhance those qualities. And also it is important to address their weaknesses. If we cannot address their weaknesses at the right time we are not doing justice to our children. We have to create a child friendly environment so that they feel comfortable and come forward to share their problems with the caregivers. We have to break the bridge that exists between a child and an adult. An adult always feels that he/she knows what is best for the child. But we should only think for the best interest of the child. Every situation is different and every case is different. Therefore, the case intervention will be different for every case. The child should be so comfortable with the caregiver that she/he can come forward easily even if he/she becomes a victim of child sexual abuse. Here the role of the care givers is very important.

Editorial Board,
State Child Protection Society, Assam

Social Justice for Children

Across the country, communities are coping with the consequences of social injustice: poverty, racism, inequity, violence, isolation, and economic segregation. These challenges undermine the capacity and well-being of our nation's most precious resource, our children. Indeed, there is no more important endeavor than helping our children and youth become positive, productive, and creative citizens. We start by making their well-being and opportunity to grow an unequivocal priority no matter where they learn, play, and live. We must be advocates for



the systems and services that lower barriers and create genuine, sustained equity and opportunity.

As parents, caregivers, and educators, we also have a critical responsibility to help children and youth see adults as keeping them safe, understand the challenges at hand within a problem-solving context, and see themselves as active participants in our collective national commitment to liberty and justice for all. Front and center is the need to address in a meaningful way the issues of race, privilege, prejudice, and power.

Emotional Intelligence in the workplace

Emotional intelligence is the ability to identify, understand and manage one's emotions; the ability to identify, understand and influence others' emotions [not the ability to manage others' emotions]. A values-neutral concept; emotional intelligence (EI or EQ) is neither good nor bad—it is just a set of abilities, emotions and beliefs which tend to lead to characteristic behaviors.

Just as with the rest of life, emotions influence the way we act and react in the workplace. Emotional intelligence is about learning to better understand our emotions (as well as emotions of those around us) while finding the most effective way to manage how we react to them so we can get on with our real work.

Why is Emotional Intelligence Important?

Physical Health – The ability to take care of our bodies and especially to manage our stress, which has an incredible impact on our overall wellness, is heavily tied to our emotional intelligence. Only by being aware of our emotional state and our reactions to stress in our lives can we hope to manage stress and maintain good health.

Mental Well-Being – Emotional intelligence affects our attitude and outlook on life. It can also help to alleviate anxiety and avoid depression and mood swings. A high level of emotional intelligence directly correlates to a positive attitude and happier outlook on life.

Relationships – By better understanding and managing our emotions, we are better able to communicate our feelings in a more constructive way. We are also better able to understand and relate to those with whom we are in relationships. Understanding the needs, feelings, and responses of those we care about leads to stronger and more fulfilling relationships.

The basic idea is, rather than letting our emotions control us, we instead learn to identify them when they arise, recognize their causes and outcomes, and as best we can control them—or at least our reactions to them. Emotions have so many triggers we could never stop them all from coming up—in fact that would be kind of like trying to plug a volcano with ice. Plus emotions can tell a useful story—once we learn to mindfully observe them when they appear. They just shouldn't be given the chance to run the show.

The real trick is not in fighting against them (or hoping they magically disappear), but in learning to handle them intelligently when they do come up.

Once we become aware of connections between our emotions and our actions (as well as the actions of those around us) we have a better chance of learning to recognize any automatic reactions that may get in our way. Instead of letting emotions take the lead over our brains, emotional intelligence techniques help us learn to relegate emotions to their proper place—while we step through them and act with an eye toward achieving maximum work outcomes as best as possible, unhindered by the buzzing bees of emotions gone wild!

"Children are like buds in a garden and should be carefully and lovingly nurtured, as they are the future of the nation and the citizens of tomorrow" - Jawaharlal Nehru

1. First and foremost...don't give up your power!

Each and every one of us feels powerless at some time or another—and all too often such feelings arise in the workplace. It's really important for you to know you are not alone in this. But you also have choices—even if your choice is to stay and do what's being asked of you for whatever reason, even if it means being nice to a boss you who drives you crazy. Or being pleasant to a co-worker you think is an idiot. Or staying in a job you don't love.

Sometimes there are good reasons to do so. And sometimes not. But it's no small thing for you to recognize you're making the choice—consciously and intentionally. You gain nothing from feeling as if you're a victim of your circumstances. This may seem like a small point, but if we realize we are choosing to do something—even staying in a job we don't love—we release some of the powerlessness of feeling trapped.

When you feel trapped, your power shrinks—as does your ability to see solutions right before your eyes. So even if you're staying in a job because your family depends on you to bring home that paycheck, give yourself credit for making that choice—and for the strength it takes to do just that. Rather than feeling like a victim, you can start to think about ways to use your power to get yourself into a better situation, either with your current company (there are often ways we don't see) or elsewhere. But you won't get anywhere if you feel powerless to affect your own fate!

2. Build strong relationships at work.

One of the most important things you can do—something that can shape your entire work experience and career—is to start to build a strong support network from the first day you begin a job. Slowly, over time, these alliances (kind of like on Survivor but I hope less nefarious), will be there to help you move ahead, and also when you need support accomplishing every day assignments.

A good tip is to see everyone as someone you can build a work relationship with—and that includes administrative help. In fact, in particular administrative help. Need to get in to see someone whose calendar is full? Who do you think can help you get there?

Now some people will resist your attempts based on their own agendas or views of the world. Don't let that bother you. Focus on those relationships you can build by being helpful and supportive (and creative and capable of course) as you get chances to work together. Most importantly, base the relationships on positive actions and not office gossip or complaints. Over time the reputation and relationships you build help you. And you never know which of those people might get you jobs in the future. Plus, it just makes your work environment a lot more enjoyable!

3. Your attitude at work.

Speaking of enjoyable...you add so much to your own work experience. If you come in with a sour attitude or always see THEM as wrong and you as right, you are the one who loses out. I remember a woman I worked with—an admin—who is extremely bright and talented. But she spent each day feeling slighted (oh those feelings) and telling people off. And then she was angry when people didn't want to work with her or she got passed over for promotions.

Attitude is a matter of perspective and perspective matters. If you heard the story from that admin, you would get a woeful tale of all kinds of hurts and slights. But a good tool for your work belt is to try telling the story from someone else's eyes—a powerful way to re-frame what's happening so you can start to see ways you might change your game plan.

Hint: It's not always THEM, and even if it is, the power to change is still mostly in your hands.



4. When emotions hold you prisoner.

Sometimes, for whatever reason, you find yourself getting caught up in a rush of anger or frustration. In one of my first jobs, I found out a co-worker I trusted was working to undermine me, and soon our boss was giving him all the good assignments. I was so mad, instead of working smart, I just sat around complaining and feeling upset with everyone. Meanwhile, there were other people I could have built alliances with and there were things I could have done to improve my own standing. But I let my anger cloud my vision. I don't recommend it as a career plan.

At times like these, remember your power to choose and help change things for yourself. And also remember that letting your emotions control you takes the control out of your hands. (Also be aware of things you might have done or be doing to set yourself up as a target. In my case, I let my co-worker build the relationship with my boss—"handle things" as he assured me—since I wasn't crazy about my boss and I shared that with my co-worker. Two bad moves on my part.)

5. Beware the blame game.

The blame game is when you point your finger at everyone and everything except yourself, blaming the world for your misfortunes. This is simply spinning your wheels. As I've mentioned before, when you get caught up in emotions or useless behaviors, you lose precious time and perspective that could be helping you create a more enjoyable experience for yourself in this job and in future jobs.

Now it's important to vent at times and to both acknowledge and discuss your feelings (preferably to a friend or therapist), but if your days are filled with blame and venting at the workplace, you're only setting yourself up for more dissatisfaction. People react to who they see and not who you really might be—or what you could offer them if you could only step past those wheel-spinning behaviors. Basically, what they see is what (the impression) they get.

6. Being right just doesn't matter.

"Of course it does!" I hear one or two of you shouting at the screen. Oh...sure it feels great. But if you spend your day being caught up in being right—and making sure everyone knows you are—you're focusing on the wrong things and you'll only wind up diverting yourself from getting ahead. More time spinning your wheels.

To revert to my grade school years...nobody likes a smartypants! In the workplace actions speak louder than words. Prove your worth not by being right all the time but by being someone who helps things get done and problems solved. Down the road, people will see you know what you're doing. You don't have to be right in every case to be extremely effective and appreciated. (I'm still working on that one myself).

7. Seeing possibility.

When we get our heads out of seeing the anger and hurt and all that is missing in our work lives, we open up to seeing what might turn into real opportunity. Possibility is all around us if we just learn how to look for it.

I wrote a post about something I call job morphing that includes some of my own experiences where seeing possibility turned into real opportunity for me. In case you're curious about some ways I've used job morphing in my own life and some job morphing tips.

"The best way to make children good is to make them happy".

Sex crimes against children: Few convictions in Assam, several victims turn hostile, finds study

The National Law School in Bengaluru study recommended speedy investigations in cases registered under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act.

A new study of special courts set up under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act in Assam has added weight to the popular perception that in sexual offence cases conviction rates are low, victims turn hostile and trials are delayed.

Put together by the Centre for Child and the Law of the National Law School in Bengaluru, the report, released on Wednesday, looks at 172 judgements that were passed in Assam over a three-and-a-half-year period ending August 2016. The research team also conducted 32 interviews with prosecutors, judges, victims and others. The report painted a bleak picture of the implementation of the special law introduced in 2012 for the protection of children.

The report found that the conviction rate under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act was 24.4% in Assam over the period examined, with victims turning hostile in 32% of the cases before the special courts.

"Respondents stated that delay in completion of trial contributed to victims turning hostile and stressed on the need to ensure speedy trials," said the report.

The Centre for Child and the Law has previously studied the implementation of this Act in Delhi.

Minimize time gap

The study found that children were less likely to turn hostile when their statement was recorded within six months of the crime being registered. The percentage of children turning hostile increased to 40.42% in cases where it took six months to a year to record the evidence, and touched 48.78% when it took between one and two years from the date of the FIR.

"It is crucial that this time gap be minimized so that not only can the child victim testify when the events are fresh in her mind, but also so that she/he can heal and journey ahead instead of having to recall traumatic events after a prolonged period of time," said the report.

Children turned hostile in various ways: saying that the offence hadn't occurred, that the accused hadn't committed the offence or that they were not children at the time.

For instance, in one case, a girl said she had merely been slapped and not assaulted by the accused. In another, a victim said her father used to misbehave at home, but said nothing about sexual abuse. In yet another case, a victim said the person who had impregnated her was not the person who was the accused.

As is common in such cases, the accused was known to the victim in 78% of the cases.

In cases referred to as "romantic cases" where the two were in a consensual relationship, 25 out of the 27 accused persons were acquitted. Though consent given by a person below the age of 18 does not count as consent legally, the courts tended to deal with such cases using their discretion.

Though some respondents felt that in such situations, treating the girl as the victim and the man as the accused was unfair, they said there were other things to consider.

"Factors such as grooming, age gap between the victim and the accused, age of the victim, or an offer of marriage to evade punishment, are rarely considered while acquitting the accused," said the report.

Local peculiarities

While some of the findings of the Assam study reconfirm some long-held beliefs, they also shed light on specific situations peculiar to the region. For instance, those living in the tea growing regions in Dibrugarh district of Assam were especially reluctant to take offences to the police.

"From our interviews in Dibrugarh, which is the tea estate area, we found that because of the nature of living in a commune, families don't want to file complaints," said Swagata Raha, a legal consultant with Centre for Child and the Law, who led the study. "We found this hesitation more pronounced here." Instead, the report noted, people often approached the village head or tea estate manager before approaching the police. "These complaints have been filed only if the settlement was not amicable," it said. "It emerged during the interview, that families are pressurized to compromise. In cases where the girl is pregnant, the families inevitably compromise and get her married to the perpetrator."

For instance, in one case cited, the family waited for the promise of marriage, and when that wasn't given, only then did they file the FIR.

Over the three-and-a-half-year period studied in Assam, 172 cases were decided in courts in 24 districts. This figure is considerably lower than the 667 judgments from Delhi courts that the Centre for Child and the Law had studied previously. The Delhi study looked at cases over two years and nine months starting January 2013.

"Perhaps fewer cases went to court because the police have been slow in applying the Act [in Assam]," said Raha. "As a result fewer cases have then gone to court."

Although the conviction rate in Assam (24.4%) was higher than in Delhi (16.8%), it is unclear how much can be read into this.

"We couldn't explain why a lower percentage turned hostile in Assam compared to Delhi," said Raha. "Perhaps because there might have been a compromise between victim and accused before even coming to court." She emphasised that there was still "a long way to go" in Assam.

The report itself recommended a slew of measures that need to be taken, including periodic training for judicial officers, greater attention towards compensation for victims and facilitation of community level support groups, among other things. The Centre for Child and the Law is also in the process of concluding a similar study of judgments related to the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act in Karnataka.

Courtesy: <https://scroll.in/article/829559/sex-crimes-against-children-few-convictions-in-assam-several-victims-turn-hostile-finds-study>

"While we teach our children all about life, our children teach us what life is all about".

For any feedback, write to :
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DSW, Government of Assam

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| Sl. No. | Districts | Juvenile Justice Boards | | | Child Welfare Committees | | |
|---------|------------|--|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| | | No. of cases instituted | No. of cases disposed | Total cases pending | No. of cases instituted | No. of cases disposed | Total cases pending |
| 1 | BAKSA | Cases are jointly dealt with Nalbari JJB | | | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| 2 | BONGAIGAON | 2 | 0 | 9 | 3 | 5 | 10 |
| 3 | BARPETA | 6 | 4 | 118 | 5 | 2 | 41 |
| 4 | CACHAR | 1 | 4 | 29 | 4 | 2 | 10 |
| 5 | CHIRANG | 2 | 2 | 26 | 10 | 11 | 16 |
| 6 | DARRANG | 1 | 3 | 67 | 4 | 3 | 17 |
| 7 | DHEMAMI | 8 | 3 | 23 | 6 | 6 | 4 |
| 8 | DHUBRI | 3 | 7</ | | | | |