



Springer

1st
edition1st ed. 2019, XV, 199 p. 3
illus. in color.**Printed book**

Hardcover

Printed book

Hardcover

ISBN 978-3-030-05896-8

\$ 74,99

Available

Discount group

Medical (6)

Product category

Professional book

Medicine : Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

Westman, Jack C.

Dealing with Child Abuse and Neglect as Public Health Problems

Prevention and the Role of Juvenile Ageism

- Clearly presents evidence for the Cradle to Prison/Welfare Dependency Pipeline
- Illustrates why if all children had competent parents, we would have little crime and welfare dependency
- Describes application of the public health principles of primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention to child abuse and neglect
- Outlines problems with current child protection policies

This thought-provoking volume defines child abuse and neglect as a public health crisis, both in terms of injuries and mental health problems and as a link to poverty and other negative social outcomes. The author identifies key factors contributing to this situation—in particular juvenile ageism, the pervasive othering of children and youth—coupled with the assumption of parental competence until severe abuse or neglect proves otherwise. The book's practical answers to these complex issues involve recognizing and balancing the rights of parents and children, and responding to the diverse needs of new, competent, and dysfunctional families. To this end, a comprehensive prevention model is outlined, featuring primary, secondary, and tertiary interventions. Included in the coverage:

- Child abuse and neglect in the United States
- The impact of juvenile ageism on individuals
- The devaluation of parenthood
- The rights and needs of newborn babies and young children
- Overcoming our crisis-recoil response
- Barriers to change and hope for the future

Dealing with Child Abuse and Neglect as Public Health Problems should engage professionals in the public health, healthcare, and social services sectors. It should also attract parents in struggling families as well as other laypersons, such as policymakers and child advocates, interested in improving current social conditions.

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ISBN 978-3-030-05896-8 / BIC: MBN / SPRINGER NATURE: SCH27010

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