Adult Survivors of Child Abuse and Basic Income

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Speaker Background

- B.S. Accounting, Lehman College
- M.S. Accounting, Hunter College (Taxation and Public Finance)
- CFO, Himalaya Studios 2011-2017
- CEO, Sonic Toad Media 2016-present
- Economic justice activist, Democratic Socialists of America
- Basic income advocate
- Child abuse survivor with unique circumstances
Statistics on Child Abuse

• An estimated 6.6 million children are abused with 3.6 million cases reported to protection agencies (Childhelp.org)
  – Estimated tens of millions cases NOT reported, 60% of children do not tell anyone

• The United States has the worst record among industrialized nations with 4-7 children lost to abuse/neglect every year
  – 80% of fatalities occur in children under the age of 5 (CDC)
  – The younger a survivor was at the time of abuse, the more likely they are to experience persistent mental and/or physical health issues later in life (Australian Institute of Family Studies)
Statistics on Child Abuse

- 90% of abusers are the child’s parent, guardian, family member, or partner of a parent/guardian (RAINN)

- Mental and emotional abuse can be just as traumatic to a child as physical abuse and neglect/maltreatment, but virtually never warrants intervention from child protective services
Abuse Isn’t Always Physical

Types of Child Abuse

- Neglect: 59.0%
- Physical Abuse: 17.4%
- Sexual Abuse: 10.8%
- Psychological Maltreatment: 7.6%
- Medical Neglect: 4.2%
- Other²: 0.9%

Center for Disease Control, 2016
WHY WOULD A BASIC INCOME HELP CHILD ABUSE SURVIVORS?
The Shame of Surviving Abuse
Risk Factors for Adult Survivors of Child Abuse

• Child abuse survivors are more prone to depression and suicide ideation or attempts
• Poor self-esteem and difficulty with interpersonal relations
• 80% of legal adults (age 21+) who experienced child abuse meet the criteria for at least one psychological disorder (Childhelp)
• Child abuse survivors are 72% more likely to experience intimate partner violence (Australian Institute of Family Studies)
• Abuse survivors are more likely to abuse alcohol and/or drugs than people who did not have adverse childhood experiences (CDC)
Abusers purposely seek to economically control victims.

ABUSE AND ECONOMIC MOBILITY
(OR LACK THEREOF)

(This is a heavy and emotionally-taxing topic, I think we could all use a cute frog picture to get us through the rest of the session.)
How are economic concerns for child abuse survivors different than domestic partners?

• Victims and young adult survivors may not have family, community, school officials, or other adults they trust who can provide both emotional and financial support.

• Few or no resources available at the state level for legal adults except the tattered safety net.

• Teenage survivors who choose to report often find themselves at increased risk of violence at home.
“18 and out” no longer exists without a basic income

• Young adults who no longer have an abusive parent/guardian’s resources find it impossible to pay for living costs let alone attain upward mobility
  – Jobs and gigs available to teens do not pay a living wage
  – Higher levels of youth homelessness
  – LGBTQIA and disabled youth face disproportionately higher risks of abuse from a parent/guardian
The Cycle of Abuse

• Child abuse survivors are more at-risk for intimate partner violence

• Intergenerational abuse is 33% more likely and strongly correlated to poverty and unintended pregnancy (Australian Institute of Family Studies)
  – Both of which adult survivors of child abuse are more likely to experience than adults who did not have adverse childhood experiences
Physical Ailments Common in Adult Survivors

• Child abuse survivors on average live up to 20 years less than people who didn’t have adverse childhood experiences (CDC)

• Long-term chronic conditions associated with surviving child abuse:
  – Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
  – Liver disease
  – IBS, gastritis, Crohn’s disease and GI issues
Chronic Conditions Make Economic Mobility More Difficult

• Finding and retaining employment
• Reduced capacity in self-employment
• Disability hearings often determine survivors are still fit to work
• American workers lose a collective $36 billion annually on account of managing chronic conditions (Georgetown University)
Mental Health Issues Can Make Traditional Work Difficult to Retain

- Abuse survivors may find traditional work environments triggering and stressful, exacerbating any physical chronic conditions
- Higher degree of absenteeism
- Difficulties with memory and concentration
How Basic Income Can Build a More Equitable World for Abuse Survivors
Preventing Child Neglect Before It Happens

An overwhelming majority of reported child abuses pertain to neglect which has a very strong correlation to poverty, while intentionally abusive parents fly under the radar.

Alleviating poverty with a basic income is the first step in reducing child neglect charges to redirect child protective resources to the refuge and rehabilitation of physical and mental abuse victims.
Basic Income Gives Young Adults a Safety Net and the Power to Leave

Young adults can leave an abusive home without the fear of losing their parents’ economic support or simply not having access to it in the first place.

With little or no opportunity for the young and unskilled, a basic income can provide a minimum floor to focus on education and securing a future without the influence of an abuser.
Basic Income Makes Life Easier for Sufferers of Chronic Conditions

For people who cannot work a full-time job due to mental and/or physical health constraints stemming from surviving abuse, a basic income provides the supplementary income needed to mitigate the lost wages or provide a safety net in the pursuit of self-employment.
Breaking the Cycle of Abuse

Having more money won’t diffuse all of the reasons why parents abuse children or intimate partner violence occurs.

But nullifying the effects of an abusive partner or family member controlling the finances with an unconditional basic income enables survivors to leave and start over.
Q&A, and Thanks!