



CAGED PARENTS RAVAGED CHILDREN: Time To Inquire About Technology Driven Workaholism While Scoring ACEs/BRFSS

Peer review status:

No

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Article ID: WMC005774

Article Type: My opinion

Submitted on: 09-Apr-2022, 08:45:01 PM GMT **Published on:** 06-May-2022, 07:31:01 AM GMT

Article URL: http://www.webmedcentral.com/article_view/5774

Subject Categories: PSYCHOLOGY

Keywords: Technology, Workaholism, ACEs, BRFSS

How to cite the article: Gupta D. CAGED PARENTS RAVAGED CHILDREN: Time To Inquire About Technology Driven Workaholism While Scoring ACEs/BRFSS. WebmedCentral PSYCHOLOGY 2022;13(5):WMC005774

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Source(s) of Funding:

NOT APPLICABLE

Competing Interests:

NOT APPLICABLE

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My opinion

Among the eleven questions of Module 21 related to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) in 2020 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) questionnaire by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [1], three questions are related to sexual transgression while two questions each are related to aggression and addiction, and one question each is related to depression, incarceration, separation and condemnation. Although questions overtly related to neglect during childhood are missing in the most recent BRFSS questionnaire, ACEs questions pertaining to addiction are covertly related to neglect primarily and aggression secondarily. Now, the concern worth raising is that cohabitants' addiction has not remained limited to alcohol, illegal street drugs and prescription medications in technology driven post-pandemic world. Although technology has been creating a wedge between quality time offered by care-givers and quality time sought by care-seekers well before the onset of pandemic, the pandemic has just blown the wedge wide-open that may never get sealed. Therefore, technology driven workaholism among cohabitants should be included in Module 21 related to ACEs in future BRFSS questionnaires because caregivers' workaholism transgressing into odd-hours and after-hours due to inescapable reach of all-pervasive technology is the new normal and therefore, its impact on ACEs is a given. Moreover, as envisaged in Universal CAGE-WANT Questionnaire adapted from Ewing's CAGE Questionnaire [2], "caging" may happen not only with alcohol, illegal street drugs and prescription medications but also with technology and workaholism. Now the unborn newborns potentially prone to facing ACEs in their future question whether they should have been conceived by "caged" parents in the first place.

To explain, I am now wandering off into ancient mythology [3]. Despite being an ardent follower of Lord Krishna since ever, I have wondered about the plight of His six elder brothers who as newborns were lost to infanticide at the hands of Kansa, His mother's

cousin. As the story goes, Kansa had caged His mother and His father who both despite knowing the infanticidal intentions of Kansa conceived a total of eight children while being caged. Although their youngest two sons got saved by antenatal surrogate motherhood and postnatal foster parenting respectively, the larger question remains how the caged parents could conceive while being caged despite knowing the blighted future awaiting their newborns. The simplest answer could be that to remove Kansa's shackles from His caged parents, Lord Krishna needed to be conceived as His parents' eighth child. However, Lord Krishna needed to be raised by foster parents till after the age of eleven when He could free His biological parents from Kansa.

Henceforth, as pertaining to "Absent Parents Lost Children" in the times of immature-parent/adult/peer-orientated children of yesteryears growing up to raise technology-orientated children of their own who may themselves grow up as caged parents of future unless they are timely freed from their displaced and yet invariably strong attachments to existentially non-essential substitutes/surrogates so that the vicious cycle of mature-parent/adult-orientated children's dwindling numbers may be reversed where-after the freed children may even work to free their own caged parents [4], conductors of ACEs/BRFSS questionnaires can consider from among the following templates of questions as the twelfth question:

- Did you live with workaholic parents?
Yes/No/Don't Know/Not Sure/Refused
- Did you live with anyone who was workaholic?
Yes/No/Don't Know/Not Sure/Refused
- Did your parents work more than 2080 hours annually? Never/Once/More Than Once/Don't Know/Not Sure/Refused
- How often did your parents work more than eight hours in a day during weekdays?
Never/Rarely/Sometimes/Often/Always/Don't Know/Not Sure/Refused
- How often did your parents work during odd-hours, after-hours, weekends and holidays?
Never/Rarely/Sometimes/Often/Always/Don't Know/Not Sure/Refused
- How often did your parents' work preclude them

from being mentally present with you?
Never/Rarely/Sometimes/Often/Always/Don't
Know/Not Sure/Refused

The bottom-line is that although conception of future children is a natural birthright, caged parents may need foster parents permanently to nurture their children until the caged parents' children can grow mature enough to free their biological parents from their cages unless the biological parents need only temporary collaborative support from foster parents to help them raise their biological children while the biological parents are breaking away from their cages on their own [5]. Every child needs an anchor and if both biological parents are flying high on the technology driven workaholism due to innate/peer/societal/modern pressures, fostering anchors their biological children till the biological children themselves become the anchors needed for their caged biological parents considering that the modern times of dizzying expectations do not offer respite to caged parents unlike the historical times of manageable expectations ensuring buffering support from nurturing tribes to successfully raise nurtured progeny of highly fertile parents.

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