

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| 1 Introduction to and Justification for the Book | 1 |
| References..... | 7 |
| 2 What Is Fatal Child Maltreatment? | 9 |
| 2.1 What Constitutes Fatal Child Maltreatment?..... | 10 |
| 2.2 How Children Die..... | 12 |
| 2.2.1 Death by Physical Abuse..... | 13 |
| 2.2.2 Death by Neglect—Supervision..... | 13 |
| 2.2.3 Death by Neglect—Physical..... | 15 |
| 2.2.4 Death by Neglect—Medical..... | 15 |
| 2.2.5 Other and Multiple Forms of Maltreatment..... | 16 |
| 2.3 How Many Children Die?..... | 16 |
| 2.4 The Bottom Line..... | 21 |
| 2.4.1 What We Know..... | 21 |
| 2.4.2 What Remains Unknown..... | 22 |
| References..... | 22 |
| 3 Risk Factors for Fatal Maltreatment Victimization and Perpetration | 27 |
| 3.1 Commonly Accepted Risk Factors..... | 28 |
| 3.1.1 Child Age..... | 28 |
| 3.1.2 Child Gender..... | 29 |
| 3.1.3 Parent/Perpetrator Age..... | 29 |
| 3.1.4 Socioeconomic Status..... | 29 |
| 3.1.5 Household Risk Factors..... | 30 |
| 3.2 Areas of Controversy..... | 31 |
| 3.2.1 Perpetrator Characteristics..... | 31 |
| 3.2.2 Prior Involvement with Child Welfare/Social Services..... | 32 |
| 3.2.3 Race and Ethnicity of Victims and Perpetrators..... | 33 |

| | | |
|----------|--|-----------|
| 3.2.4 | Child Behavior, Knowledge of Child Development, and the Parent-Child Relationship | 35 |
| 3.3 | Unconfirmed Research | 39 |
| 3.3.1 | Parent Mental Health..... | 39 |
| 3.3.2 | Social Isolation..... | 40 |
| 3.3.3 | Domestic Violence | 40 |
| 3.3.4 | Child Disability Status | 41 |
| 3.4 | The Bottom Line | 41 |
| 3.4.1 | What We Know | 41 |
| 3.4.2 | What Remains Unknown | 42 |
| | References..... | 43 |
| 4 | The Intersection of the Child Welfare Profession and Maltreatment Fatalities | 47 |
| 4.1 | Child Maltreatment Fatalities: Perceptions and Experiences of Child Welfare Professionals Study | 48 |
| 4.1.1 | CWWs' Knowledge, Practice Concerns, and Opinions About CMFs..... | 48 |
| 4.1.2 | CWWs' Knowledge of Risk Factors for CMFs..... | 50 |
| 4.1.3 | Training About CMFs | 51 |
| 4.2 | Workers Who Experience the Death of a Child Client | 53 |
| 4.2.1 | Handling of Case Prior to Fatality | 55 |
| 4.2.2 | How Do Workers Miss Red Flags? | 56 |
| 4.3 | The Aftermath of Child Maltreatment Fatalities..... | 59 |
| 4.3.1 | Post-Traumatic Stress and Child Welfare..... | 60 |
| 4.3.2 | Workers' Response to Experiencing a CMF | 61 |
| 4.3.3 | Supporting Workers After a CMF | 62 |
| 4.3.4 | Support Provided After Fatality | 63 |
| 4.4 | The Bottom Line | 64 |
| 4.4.1 | What We Know | 64 |
| 4.4.2 | What Remains Unknown | 65 |
| | References..... | 66 |
| 5 | Child Death Review Teams..... | 71 |
| 5.1 | Child Death Review Teams..... | 71 |
| 5.2 | Purpose and Composition of CDRTs | 72 |
| 5.3 | Selection Criteria and the Review Process..... | 74 |
| 5.4 | Outputs of Child Death Review Teams | 75 |
| 5.5 | Wide Acceptance and Use of Child Death Review Teams..... | 77 |
| 5.6 | Outcomes of Child Death Review Teams: Controversy and Success..... | 80 |
| 5.6.1 | Common Criticisms | 80 |
| 5.6.2 | Lacking Evidence..... | 81 |
| 5.6.3 | Bright Spots..... | 83 |
| 5.7 | The Bottom Line | 84 |
| 5.7.1 | What We Know | 84 |

| | | |
|----------|---|-----|
| 5.7.2 | What Remains Unknown | 84 |
| | References..... | 87 |
| 6 | State Safe Haven Laws | 91 |
| 6.1 | The Problem of Abandoned and Discarded Infants | 92 |
| 6.2 | History of Infant Abandonment and Safe Haven Laws..... | 94 |
| 6.2.1 | The Specifics of Safe Haven Laws..... | 95 |
| 6.3 | What if Safe Haven Laws Did Not Exist?..... | 100 |
| 6.4 | Common Concerns About Safe Haven Laws | 100 |
| 6.4.1 | Efficacy of Safe Haven Laws | 100 |
| 6.4.2 | Too Little of the Wrong Thing, Too Late | 101 |
| 6.4.3 | Marketing of Safe Haven Laws..... | 103 |
| 6.4.4 | Rights of “Other” Parent | 104 |
| 6.5 | The Bottom Line | 104 |
| 6.5.1 | What We Know | 104 |
| 6.5.2 | What Remains Unknown | 105 |
| | References..... | 106 |
| 7 | Criminal Justice and Legal Reforms in Response to Fatal Child Maltreatment | 109 |
| 7.1 | The Scope of the Problem | 110 |
| 7.1.1 | Problems with Investigations | 110 |
| 7.1.2 | Limited Charges | 111 |
| 7.1.3 | Problems Persist into the Courtroom | 112 |
| 7.2 | Innovative Approaches at Multiple Levels..... | 112 |
| 7.2.1 | Changes in Investigative Techniques..... | 112 |
| 7.2.2 | Legal Responses to Increase Penalties for Child Abuse and Neglect Deaths | 114 |
| 7.2.3 | Special Legal Reforms in Response to Religiously-Motivated Medical Child Maltreatment Fatalities..... | 116 |
| 7.3 | Are Criminal Penalties Increasing?..... | 118 |
| 7.4 | The Bottom Line | 122 |
| 7.4.1 | What We Know | 122 |
| 7.4.2 | What Remains Unknown | 122 |
| | References..... | 123 |
| 8 | Prevention of Fatal Child Maltreatment: What Are We Doing That Is Working? | 127 |
| 8.1 | Levels of Prevention..... | 127 |
| 8.2 | Previous Recommendations to Prevent Maltreatment Fatalities..... | 128 |
| 8.3 | State and County Programs..... | 128 |
| 8.4 | Prevention Programs That Are Specific to Fatal Child Maltreatment | 129 |
| 8.4.1 | Shaken Baby Syndrome/Abusive Head Trauma | 129 |
| 8.4.2 | Supervision of Children | 132 |
| 8.4.3 | Safe Sleeping Environments for Children..... | 135 |

| | | |
|----------|--|------------|
| 8.5 | Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, in General | 135 |
| 8.5.1 | Prevention Services | 136 |
| 8.5.2 | Parenting Education | 138 |
| 8.6 | The Bottom Line | 140 |
| 8.6.1 | What We Know | 140 |
| 8.6.2 | What Remains Unknown | 141 |
| | References..... | 142 |
| 9 | Conclusions and Recommendations Moving Forward | |
| | in the Arena of Fatal Child Maltreatment | 149 |
| 9.1 | The Need for More and Better Research..... | 149 |
| 9.1.1 | Incidence | 150 |
| 9.1.2 | More Complete Data Sources | 150 |
| 9.1.3 | Risk Factors..... | 151 |
| 9.1.4 | CMFs and Helping Professions..... | 152 |
| 9.2 | What's Working?..... | 153 |
| 9.3 | Child Welfare Profession—Crisis or Crossroads? | 155 |
| 9.4 | What if We Focused on the <i>Fatal</i> Part of a Child Maltreatment Fatality? | 157 |
| 9.5 | Is There Any Good News? | 158 |
| 9.6 | What Are the Final Recommendations?..... | 160 |
| | References..... | 161 |
| | Index..... | 167 |