



PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN: Advice from Adults who Sexually Offend Against Children

For First Responders

WELCOME

- ▶ This training was originally designed for law enforcement.
- ▶ Some of the content may be hard to hear
- ▶ It may challenge some of your beliefs and dispel myths
- ▶ If you are a parent, take the information home and think about it for awhile before talking to your children

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

- ▶ 95% of all sexual offenses against a child are done by someone they know and trust or the family knows and trusts
- ▶ Most children will not show signs that they are being molested
- ▶ More trauma results when children are not believed or supported when they tell
- ▶ Children process trauma differently
- ▶ Children who are not educated about child molesters are the most vulnerable of all
- ▶ Most children can recover from abuse

CHILD ABUSE..

Abuse can occur in **any** family, regardless of socio-economic status, religion or ethnic background

Abusers are typically someone the child knows and trusts

WHAT IS CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE?

Abuse can include any sexual encounter that occurs between a child and an older person for sexual gratification that may involve contact like:

- ▶ Forcing or persuading a child to engage in any type of act for sexual gratification
- ▶ Having the child touch the adult/older child
- ▶ Exploitation of child
- ▶ Sending pictures of exposed body parts to minors via text or internet
- ▶ It also includes non-contact acts such as:
 - exhibitionism
 - exposure to pornography
 - voyeurism
 - communicating in a sexual manner by phone or Internet

These acts can be a one-time incident or many acts over a long period of time. It is still considered abuse even if it only happened once.

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

- ▶ Nationally, it is reported that 80,000 children are sexually abused each year
- ▶ Approximately 1 out of 4 girls and 1 out of 6 boys will be sexually abused before they turn 18 (National Crime Victim Survey 2012)
- ▶ Children ages 7 - 9 are the most commonly molested
- ▶ Few children will disclose sexual abuse while it is happening

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KNOW THE SIGNS OF ABUSE TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM FURTHER HARM

Physical signs

**not common

But should be seen by a doctor if:

- ▶ Bruising, bleeding, redness around the genitals
- ▶ Urinary tract infections
- ▶ Ailments that can't be explained medically

Emotional and behavioral

**more common

- ▶ Withdrawal
- ▶ Depression
- ▶ Anger
- ▶ Agitation or inability to concentrate
- ▶ Fear of situations or people
- ▶ Sexual behavior and language that are not age-appropriate
- ▶ Falling grades
- ▶ Use of alcohol or drugs, especially at a young age
- ▶ Running away
- ▶ Not wanting to be where offender is (home, school on bus)

SEX OFFENDERS

- ▶ Only have a 3% chance of being caught
 - Out of 100 Incidents of CSA
 - Only 12-18% Cases get reported
 - Only 3-8% get convicted (London, Bruck & Ceci, (2005). *Disclosure of child sexual abuse*. Stroud & Martens, (2000) *Criminal Investigation of child sexual abuse*. Hanson, Resnick, Saunders, Kilpatrick & Best (1999), Abel & Becker, (1987) *Self-reported crimes of non-incarcerated paraphiliacs*)
- ▶ Commit an average of 190 or more sexual crimes before they're caught (FBI)
- ▶ 5% - 20% are female
- ▶ Although virtually all pedophiles are child molesters, not all child molesters are pedophiles

WOMEN THAT ABUSE

- ▶ 5-20% reported female abuse
- ▶ Females are less predatory and more opportunistic
- ▶ Types of Female Offenders:
 - **Teacher/Lover**: See themselves as lovers, in a relationship, fell in “love”, intense attachment to child, no malice toward children; does not see their acts as criminal
 - **Initiating / Predisposed**: Hx of sexual abuse, generally act alone; tend to victimize their own children or other young children within their families; difficulty with adult male or female relationships; seeks intimacy
 - **Reluctant/Male coerced**: Tend to be passive and dependent, Hx of sexual abuse and relationship difficulties, fear of abandonment, pressured by male partners to commit sex offenses (against own children), ignore abuse, go along with perpetrator to stay in good graces or relationship, feel powerless in relationship w/ offender

COMMON CONDITIONS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO SEXUAL OFFENDING

- ▶ They think about their crimes ahead of time
- ▶ Offenders, most often, know their victims
- ▶ They use relationship(s) to set up situations where/when abuse can occur
- ▶ Use of pressure, threats and guilt to keep child from telling
- ▶ They do not look like monsters

4 PRE-CONDITIONS TO SEXUAL ABUSE

Finkelhore

1. Motivation to sexually abuse a child

- Offender's have abnormal or unusual sexual interest. They are sexually attracted to children or young teenagers

2. Lack of internal controls

- A potential offender overcomes internal inhibitors that would ordinarily keep one from acting out sexual desires toward children

3. Lack of external controls

- A potential offender must have the opportunity to be alone with a child, they create these situations

4. Vulnerable Victims

- Force may be used to overcome the child's resistance, more commonly, perpetrators overcome a child's resistance by more subtle methods: Very young, have a disability, isolated, asleep, under the influence of D/A, emotional problems, unable to protect themselves

HOW OFFENDERS JUSTIFY THEIR BEHAVIOR

- ▶ Denial is used to avoid facing the consequences of their actions
 - Refuse to admit to others or themselves that they have committed sexual assault
- ▶ Rationalizing involves blaming the victim, others or circumstances.
 - “I didn’t know what I was doing”, “I was drunk”, “They came on to me”
- ▶ Minimizing is used to deny the seriousness of the acts/harm done
 - “It wasn’t that bad,” “I didn’t hurt them,” “They won’t remember”

HOW DO PEOPLE BECOME SEX OFFENDERS

- ▶ 75% started offending as a youth
 - Average age at first offense was 14
- ▶ 25-30% have child history of sexually abuse
- ▶ Early exposure to pornography
- ▶ Repeated sexual contact with other children that was stimulating and arousing (imprinting)
- ▶ Childhood sexual behavior problems that were not identified early and there was no intervention
 - Lack of healthy sexual boundaries and guidance
- ▶ (Only 3-5% of children ever develop these problems)

OFFENDERS' OWN VIEW OF THE BEGINNING

- ▶ “As a small child, I had a 4-year-old sexual friend with whom I enjoyed many childhood sexual experiences. Our friendship lasted four or five years and my victims reminded me of my childhood friend.”
- ▶ “As a kid, I developed a sexual draw to young girls that stayed with me as I grew older and I got better and better at finding victims.”
- ▶ “Once it got started, it snowballed and became commonplace in my life.”
- ▶ “ I was sexually aroused...felt very powerful.”
- ▶ “Having sex with my sons was more enjoyable then having sex with a man because I had control over what was going to happen.”

WHAT IS GROOMING...

- ▶ Grooming is the process by which an offender draws a young person into a sexual relationship and maintains that relationship in secrecy

6 STAGES OF GROOMING

- ▶ Targeting the victim
- ▶ Gaining the victim's trust
- ▶ Filling a need
 - The sex offender becomes more important in a child's life and child may begin to idealize them
 - Gifts, extra attention, affection
- ▶ Isolating the child
 - Creating situations where they are alone together
 - Isolation reinforces a special connection
 - Babysitting, tutoring, coaching, special trips
 - Parents may view this as an unique relationship, and extra attention, special bond
- ▶ Sexualizing the relationship
- ▶ Maintaining control
 - Secrecy and blame are used to maintain the child's continued participation and silence

HOW DOES GROOMING WORK?

- ▶ Sex offenders work to separate the victim from peers
- ▶ They typically get the child to feel like they have a very special relationship
- ▶ They convince the child that they are giving a kind of love to the child that the child needs

GROOMING TECHNIQUES

- ▶ If a child reacts negatively, they back off and try again later
- ▶ They make it feel good
- ▶ They try to make the child think that s/he wanted to do it
- ▶ They confuse the child that sex = love/affection
- ▶ They try to make it seem normal, act like it's a game or OK to do
- ▶ Molest the child at night (intrafamilia 41%)
- ▶ They reward the child for the sexual contact

HOW SEX OFFENDERS GROOM FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- ▶ They focus on families who are trusting and naive
- ▶ Families where parents and children aren't close and don't communicate
- ▶ Single-parent families; vulnerable families
- ▶ Families where there is high stress; children are not supervised closely
- ▶ Neighborhoods, churches and agencies that offer access to children
- ▶ Offender's past behavior is probably unknown in the new setting
- ▶ People in a new setting are often:
 - Open, trusting, friendly, accepting and unaware.
 - Unsure how to confront questionable behavior



**WHAT ARE SOME OF THE GROOMING BEHAVIORS
AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES THAT SOME OF
THESE OFFENDERS USE?**

HOW SEX OFFENDERS PICK THEIR VICTIMS

▶ OFFENDERS ABUSE CHILDREN:

- They can get close to
- They can develop a relationship with
- They are sexually and/or emotionally attracted to
- They can control, bribe or manipulate into keeping the abuse a secret
- Who are vulnerable
- With poor relationships parents/caregivers

HOW DO OFFENDERS MOLEST?

- ▶ 95% of offenders are known to their victim and the victim's family - 41% of interfamilial sneak into child's room at night
- ▶ They present as charming and friendly, therefore, gaining widespread trust
- ▶ Most offenders think of child sexual abuse as “seduction”
- ▶ Some find it more arousing when they make the child feel like a partner
- ▶ 60 - 80% of offenders **do not** cause physical harm or pain to the child; in fact most offenders don't use threats or intimidation
- ▶ Only 5% of cases result in physical evidence

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE ACCOMMODATION SYNDROME (CSAAS)

Dr. Roland Summit (1983)

What is CSAAS?

- Secrecy
- Helplessness
- Entrapment and Accommodation
- Delayed, Unconvincing Disclosure
- Retraction (Recantation)

SMALL GROUP BRAINSTORM

- ▶ Small group list:
 - What could be some reasons for secrecy?
 - What could be some the cultural-specific barriers to disclosure?
 - What could be some reasons for disclosure?

**Disclosure is a process
not an event**

RECONTATION

- ▶ Recantation is a retraction or withdrawal of a reported sexual abuse allegation
- ▶ Research supports that of the children who do recant, the majority of them do recant actual abuse, particularly after a child begins to experience the consequences of revealing abuse.
- ▶ Why might a child who has been abused recant?

WHY DO KIDS RECANT?

- ▶ Secrecy
- ▶ Societal Attitudes
- ▶ Feeling pressured by the perpetrator or other family members
- ▶ Child and family interactions with professionals
- ▶ Inability to return home
- ▶ While in therapy
- ▶ Initiating of the criminal proceedings against a loved one

“Parentally abused children with low levels of family support will exhibit lower disclosure rates and higher recantation rates than other abuse victims.”

Lone et al, 2008

CAN WE AVOID RECANTATION?

Simple and realistic answer

NO

But we can minimize the likelihood of recantation

WHAT CAN WE DO TO MINIMIZE THE LIKELIHOOD OF RECANTATION?

- ▶ Important to assess the case for recantation risk factors:
 - Child's relationship to offender
 - Family's response after disclosure
 - Child's placement after disclosure
 - Evidence of direct pressure
 - Evidence of negative reaction to family/criminal justice system
 - Media coverage
 - Over interviewing the child (*Multiple unnecessary interviews of child*)

FALSE REPORTING: DO THEY LIE?

- ▶ Crime statistics and research have found that between 2-10% of reports of sexual abuse and sexual assault are false reports
 - That means: 90-98% are founded
- ▶ Of those 2-10%
 - adolescents are the group with the highest rate of false reports
- ▶ Most of the fabricated reports are made by adults involved in custody disputes or by adolescents
- ▶ Understanding case dynamics is critical to understanding a teen's behavior and statements
- ▶ Studies show it is much more common for all age groups to deny true abuse than it is for them to make up abuse that didn't happen

READY SET GO!

What we know about Interviewing Children/ Adolescents

- ▶ Unwillingness to ask for adult assistance or clarification
- ▶ Fear, embarrassment, self-blame
- ▶ Shame that could result from telling outweighs the benefits of disclosing
- ▶ Trauma can affect communication and presentation
- ▶ Adolescents can be uncooperative witnesses
- ▶ Physical and language development
 - psychosocial issues and their still-developing brains cause unique developmental risks for victimization and responses post-victimization

INFORMATION GATHERING

- ▶ Start with the proven, “Tell me why you came to talk with me...”
- ▶ Ask and address their feelings regarding the subject
- ▶ Be aware of your judgements – maintain neutrality
- ▶ Ask open-ended questions
- ▶ Do not rush into abuse-focused questions...
 - Exploring the nature of the relationship
 - The disclosure process
 - Feelings about the interview process may be the path to description of the act(s) and event(s).
- ▶ This discussion can provide spontaneous information and details which otherwise might not emerge
- ▶ Do not take attitude personally

BALANCING SENSITIVITY AND NEED FOR INFORMATION

- ▶ Before asking a question that might be difficult or upsetting, consider:
 - Why do I need this information?
 - Child's Readiness
 - Child's Well Being
 - Is there another source for that information?
 - Preface difficult questions with an explanation about why it is important for you to ask/have this information



DISCLOSURE AND REPORTING

- ◆ Only 5% to 13% of children report to anyone that they are being abused while it is occurring (London, 2005)
- ◆ The majority of victims delay reporting for years
 - ◆ 73% of child victims do not tell anyone about the abuse for at least 1 year
 - ◆ 45% of child victims do not tell anyone for at least 5 years
- ◆ In 2009, 8% of adults reported that, during the previous year, they knew someone who was probably abusing a child
 - ◆ Only 65% intervened, 22% said they did nothing (Amick, 2009)
- ◆ Most offenders don't have to tell children not to tell

WHY DON'T CHILDREN TELL US ABOUT ABUSE?

- ▶ REMEMBER, an offender is usually someone the child and family are close to, likes, and maybe depends on
- ▶ Some children are afraid they will not be believed
- ▶ Children believe that someone will get in trouble or that their family will break up
- ▶ Children fear adults/caregivers will look at them different
- ▶ They worry that parents/caregivers will want to keep talking and asking questions about it
- ▶ They are worried caregivers will feel helpless, and/or responsible
- ▶ Even though what happened to them was not their fault, they still feel like it was
- ▶ The more incidents there are, the less likely a child will disclose

WHO MIGHT CHILDREN REPORT TO

- ▶ Older kids frequently report to a friend
- ▶ Mothers are most likely to be told out of all family members
- ▶ Out of all professional authorities, teachers are most likely to be told

Now What??

WHAT YOU DO MATTERS



- ❑ Educate yourself on referrals within the community to support clients, parents/caregivers, and the family
- ❑ Clearly state your role in the process
- ❑ State your willingness to assist the client and the parent/caregivers
- ❑ Believe your client's statement
- ❑ Remind them who is responsible - Do not blame client or non offending parents/caregivers for the abuse
- ❑ Expect a wide range of emotions and responses from all involved
- ❑ Expect anger to be directed at you – don't take it personally
- ❑ Always try to point out their strengths – and normalize their feelings

WHAT TO DO

IF CHILD TALKS ABOUT BEING ABUSED

- ▶ Do not press for details-Let them tell you in their own words
- ▶ Believe and take what they are telling you seriously
- ▶ Assure them that they did the right thing by telling you
- ▶ Tell them the adults will take care of things
- ▶ Tell them they are not to blame for what has happened
- ▶ Call the Child Abuse Hotline
- ▶ Call local police department
- ▶ If you are a Mandated Reporter, you have a legal responsibility to report suspicion to Child Protective Services

REMEMBER, with support and good treatment, most victims will recover

YOU SHOULD NOT:

- ▶ Allow contact between the child and offender
- ▶ Confront the offender in the presence of child
- ▶ Remember:
 - Most guilty offenders are prepared
 - They will lie and deny
 - They will say the child is lying
 - They will try to convince you they will not do it again/it was the first time/they will get therapy

BE PREPARED!

- ▶ They might say:
 - It was an “accident”
 - It was a mistake
 - It was the first time something like this has ever happened

- ▶ They might say
 - They “feel terrible”
 - They are going to “seek therapy”

- ▶ They might tell us:
 - That if you report it would ruin their life forever
 - They are sick, that it is a “disease”
 - That they were molested as a child
 - The child is lying or it is the child’s fault

REPORTING PARTY

(Do not do it alone)

- ▶ Reporting Party – Reasonable suspicion
 - Talk to the victim
 - Try to talk to the victim alone if possible
 - Show interest and focus on what the child is saying
 - Use open-ended questions
 - Do not go further than you have to
 - Basic information to get:
 - What type of abuse occurred?
 - Where did it happen (jurisdiction)?
 - When did it happen (last time)? Is an acute exam needed?
 - Who is alleged offender & relationship?
 - Are they physically and emotionally safe?
 - Is the non-offending CG/parent protective?
 - Is medical attention necessary?



HOW TO TALK TO CHILDREN ABOUT SEXUAL ABUSE AND OFFENDER BEHAVIOR

- ▶ Blend a discussion of sexual abuse in with other “safety talks”
 - Explain about “Secret Touching”
 - NOT “Good Touch, Bad Touch”
- ▶ Be clear that breasts and genitals are “private” and that sometimes parents/caregivers may have to help clean or that doctors may have to examine them. Let them know that this should never be done in secrecy.
- ▶ Describe abuse as a “touching problem” and that it is similar to stealing or lying. Do not call sexual abuse a sickness.
- ▶ Tell children it is not OK for adults or older youth to use sexual/nasty words with them, or to act in a sexual or nasty way.

- ▶ Tell a child it is important to tell you if anyone tries to touch or look at their private areas, or if anyone asks them to touch or look at their private areas.
- ▶ Explain that secrets can be harmful, and if someone asks them to keep a secret, they should tell someone about it as soon as they can.
- ▶ Explore with children who their trusted adults are in the settings they frequent. Make a list of other people the child can tell.
- ▶ Teach children not to give out email or home addresses, phone numbers or other personal information while using the Internet or handheld devices.

- ▶ Ask children about their online experiences and learn about the sites and services they use.
- ▶ Tell child you will not be mad if they tell you something has happened or is happening to them. They will not get in trouble.
- ▶ Tell them to tell you if anyone tries to trick them or if they “make strange suggestions, talk about sexual things, or if they seem to touch or brush up against them accidentally.”
- ▶ Speak and listen quietly and calmly. It is important that children feel safe and loved in all of these discussions

Review these rules 3 – 4 times a year with your child.

QUESTIONS ?

BREATH!

- ▶ There is 95% chance that you do not have a relationship or friendship with someone who will molest a child
- ▶ Nevertheless, keep your eyes open and listen
- ▶ Adults, not children, are responsible for the safety of children
- ▶ If a child says he or she has been abused, it's likely true
- ▶ Most victims can overcome the abuse they suffer
- ▶ It is best for everyone report suspected abuse
- ▶ Do not report alone, talk to supervisor
- ▶ The victim, family, and offender will all benefit from good treatment



For More Information About Child Sexual Abuse Visit:

- ▶ Darkness to light at: www.Darkness2light.org
- ▶ Enough Abuse at: www.enoughabuse@cirinc.org
- ▶ One With Courage at: www.onewithcourage.org
- ▶ National Children's Alliance at: www.nationalchildrensalliance.org
- ▶ Stop It Now! at: www.stopitnow.org



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