Child Sexual Abuse: Hope for Healing

online training





Session 1 – Introduction and overview

Session summary – what will you learn?

- → Introducing the phenomenological experience of the adult mental health and behavourial impacts of child sexual abuse (CSA)
- → Exploring our options as listeners when confronted with a narrative of CSA and how to manage those impacts on us
- → Exploring societal responses to CSA and how these are manipulated by abusers in order to perpetuate abuse opportunities
- \rightarrow Exploring the lack of a single universe definition worldwide of a child
- → Examining national and international discrepancies between the age of consent and the age of childhood
- \rightarrow Exploring definitions of CSA and CSE from both a technical and phenomenological perspective
- → Exploring the phenomenological impact of CSA
- \rightarrow Exploring the difficulties in determining the prevalence of CSA
- → Exploring the spectrum of offences contained within the concept of CSA

Reflection Questions

I.	How do you plan to manage your emotional reaction today? How can you stay in your window of tolerance?

2. How difficult is it for you to talk about, or hear someone else talk about, child sexual abuse?

3. Are you familiar with the spectrum of non-contact and contact abuse? (see next page)

Session 1 - Resource: The Spectrum of Abuse

NON-CONTACT BEHAVIOURS

- · Grooming the child, off- and on-line
- Sexually inappropriate invasion of the child's personal space
- Insisting on sexually seductive behaviour and dress
- Nudity or disrobing in front of the child
- Verbal comments of a sexual nature
- Forcing the child to sleep in and share the same bed as an adult beyond age-appropriate development
- Deliberate genital exposure to the child
- Inappropriate watching of the child undressing or using the bathroom
- Encouraging the child to watch or listen to sexual acts
- Photographing the child for sexual gratification or later pornographic use
- Drugging the child in order to photograph him or her in sexually provocative poses or as a prelude to sexual assault
- Engaging in overtly sexual behaviour in the presence of the child
- Exposing the child to pornography in order to desensitise the child
- Filming the child in sexually explicit poses.
- Coercing the child into a paedophile ring
- Getting the child to recruit other children for the abuser
- Forcing the child to engage in sexual activities with other children, adults or animals not involving the abuser

CONTACT BEHAVIOURS

- Inappropriate or open-mouthed sexual kissing
- Sexual fondling
- Touch the child's genitals or private parts for sexual pleasure
- Making the child touch someone else's genitals
- · Forcing the child to play sexual games
- Masturbation of the child, of the abuser by the child, or mutual
- Oral sex to the child, to the abuser by the child, or mutual
- Ejaculating over the child
- Placing objects, sweets or small toys into the child's vagina or anus and then retrieving them
- Penetrating the child's vagina or anus with large objects, including adult sex aids
- Digital or penile penetration of the vagina or anus
- Dry intercourse placing the penis between the upper thighs of the child and simulating intercourse
- Forced sexual activity with other adults or children
- Filming sexual activity with adults or children
- Bestiality forced sexual activity with animals

Source:

Child Sexual Abuse Resource Guide (3rd edition) by Carolyn Spring

Session 2 – Who are the abusers?

Session summary – what will you learn?

- \rightarrow Exploring societal views of sex offenders, and the dangers posed when these are incorrect
- → Exploring the reality of the 'ordinariness' of most offenders rather than the usual depiction as 'monsters', with reference to the Stop It Now! campaign
- → Exploring the prevalence of abuse, including familial versus non-familial, gender of abusers, and the abuser's relation to the victim
- \rightarrow Exploring the high numbers of victims per abuser
- → Debunking the 'victim cycle' myth and exploring prior victimisation as a mediating factor but not a cause of future perpetration

Reflection Questions

1.	What have been your previous preconceptions of sex offenders? Do you tend to assume that they are
	'monsters'?

2. Why do you think women are so rarely convicted of sexual offences against children?

3. Why do you think people sexually abuse children?

Session 3 – Characteristics and motivation of abusers

Session summary – what will you learn?

- → Exploring the categorisation of child sex offenders as fixated v regressed paedophiles
- → Exploring the role of long-term grooming of adult relationships in order to gain access to child victims
- → Exploring the prevalence of incest versus extra-familial abuse, and prevalence of the gender of victims
- → Exploring multi-factorial theories for offending behaviours
- → Exploring the therapeutic usefulness of reframing abusers as weak and inadequate rather than strong and all-powerful
- → Examining in detail key shared characteristics of offenders based on research, including deviant sexual interests, cognitive distortions, interpersonal deficits, empathy deficits and poor coping and self-management
- → Exploring the therapeutic usefulness of understanding offender characteristics rather than victim characteristics

Reflection Questions

1.	What was	your response t	o the PIE video?	PHow did it make	e you feel?
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2. In what ways do you see 'cognitive distortions' (pro-offending attitudes) in society?

3. Given the lack of empathy for the victim from the abuser, how important is empathy now in their recovery?

Session 4 – How abuse takes place

Session summary – what will you learn?

- → Exploring the deliberate nature of offending behaviour and the extent of long-term planning involved in it
- → Exploring Finkelhor's Precondition Theory
- → Understanding the incidental role of the victim, as contrasted with the victim's usual mistaken beliefs around causality, and the therapeutic usefulness of this information
- → Examining the role of societal grooming in facilitating abuse
- → Further exploring the lack of agency of the child's (late) entry into the offending cycle
- → Exploring grooming through the incitement to proscribed acts and secrets, reduction of wariness via boundary erosion, special treatment, overcoming resistance, and transfer of responsibility
- → Exploring vulnerability factors to grooming
- → Exploring grooming as the platform for continuing acts of abuse

Reflection Questions

1.	Are there any members or groups of society (e.g. police officers, social workers, foster carers) whom you
	would struggle to believe could or would abuse children? Why?

2. If the family is groomed, to what extent or in what circumstances do you believe it is responsible for a failure to protect the child?

3. Are there any circumstances in which you believe that the child may be responsible for the abuse?

Session 5 – How abuse impacted me

Session summary – what will you learn?

\rightarrow	Examining the belief that victims will be affected by life, or the extent to which we have some power	and
	control over the outcome	

->	→ Exploring various first-hand case studies of children in care who had been sexually abused,	with overt	or
	covert presentations		

Reflection Questions

1. Do you thir	nk that a child v	who has been sexu	ally abused witl	nin the family	home should	always be rem	noved into
foster care?	What are the p	ros and cons?					

2. If an abused child acts sexually towards another child, at what age do you think they should be held responsible for their behaviour (e.g. seen as a perpetrator rather than a victim?)

3. How does the apparent 'normality' of abusers make you feel?

Session 6 – The impacts of abuse

Session summary – what will you learn?

- → Examining the long-term impacts of child sexual abuse with specific reference to the work and conceptualisations of David Finkelhor:
 - → Powerlessness
 - \rightarrow Stigmatisation
 - → Traumatic sexualisation
 - \rightarrow Betrayal
- → Exploring the role of dissociation and the freeze response and their role in long-term powerlessness and shame
- → Exploring the firsthand experience of overcoming traumatic powerlessness through compensatory strategies
- → Exploring the role of the therapeutic relationship to overcome traumatic stigmatisation
- \rightarrow Exploring the long-term impact on sex and sexuality from CSA
- ightarrow Exploring the role of safe therapeutic relationships in redressing issues of trust and betrayal

Reflection Questions

1. What can you do as professionals or supporters to help survivors in each of the four key areas of powerlessness, stigmatisation, traumatic sexualisation and betrayal?

2. Does an increased understanding of those impacts make you want to change the way you do anything?

Session 7 – Gender in abuse

Session summary – what will you learn?

- \rightarrow Exploring the prevalence of abuse of males and the rise of initiatives and services for males
- → Introducing the role of Oprah Winfrey's show in highlighting the abuse of males
- → Exploring the similarities and differences in impacts, challenges, and attitudes for male victims as contrasted with females
- \rightarrow Exploring societal attitudes towards females as perpetrators rather than as victims
- → Exploring the research base for abuse by females, in particular how it is viewed versus how it is experienced, especially in terms of violence and even sadism
- → Exploring the prevalence of abuse by females versus proportions of prosecutions, alongside the prevalence of physical violence by women
- \rightarrow Examining the relevance of females in a maternal or caring role as perpetrators
- → Examining differences in age for children abused by females as opposed to by males
- → Exploring the offending goals of female abusers
- \rightarrow Exploring the factors leading to females becoming perpetrators of child sexual abuse
- → Examining further how society responds to abuse by females
- → Exploring how disclosure by victims is limited by expectations of the 'normality' of what they have experienced, which leads to a vicious cycle of non-disclosure
- → Exploring the experience of being abused by one's own mother, including enmeshment, disidentification and gender identity

Reflection Questions

1. What obstacles are there for male survivors in accessing help, perhaps the help of your service or organis

2. Do you struggle to believe that women are capable of the abuse of children, including sadistic abuse?

3. What might you need to consider if you are working with someone who was abused by the same gender as you?

Session 8 – Images of abuse

Session summary – what will you learn?

- → Exploring up-to-date alternative nomenclature for 'child pornography' and the reasons behind the shift towards other terms
- → Exploring the phenomenological experience of being a victim used in the production of images of abuse
- → Examining the history of the production of images of abuse, and in particular the role of technology advances in the proliferation of the production, distribution and use of images of abuse
- → Exploring the multiple uses of images of abuse, including as currency for membership of networks of abuse
- → Exploring the role of collecting, indexing and cataloguing in offending behaviour and how this drives further production
- → Exploring insights from the COPINE project research
- → Exploring the categorisation of images according to police investigation and sentencing guidelines, contrasted with research classifications
- \rightarrow Exploring the nature of collections of images of abuse
- → Exploring the use of legal images of children in pre-offending settings
- \rightarrow Exploring the nature, production and use of pseudo-images
- → Examining the use of images of abuse in the offending cycle (per Anna Salter)
- → Exploring ways in which abusers reinforce their own cognitive distortions by the way images are produced

Reflection Questions
l. What do you think to the IWF's objection to the use of the term 'child pornography'?
2. Some offenders argue that viewing images of abuse helps them not to abuse children directly. Do you think this is a valid justification?

3. What might it feel like to be a victim of so-called 'child pornography' in a selfie-obsessed culture?

Session 8 – Images of abuse

The Copine Scale

1	Indicative	Non-erotic and non-sexualised pictures showing children in their underwear, swimming costumes, etc
2	Nudist	Pictures of naked or semi-naked children in appropriate nudist settings
3	Erotica	Surreptitiously taken photographs of children in appropriate nudist settings
4	Posing	Deliberately posed pictures of children fully clothed, partially clothed or naked
5	Erotic posing	Deliberately posed pictures of children fully clothed, partially clothed or naked in sexualised or provocative poses
6	Explicit erotic posing	Emphasising genital areas where the child is either naked, partially clothed or fully clothed
7	Explicit sexual activity	Involves touching, mutual and self-masturbation, oral sex, and intercourse by a child, not involving an adult
8	Assault	Pictures of children being subject to a sexual assault, involving digital touching, involving an adult
9	Gross assault	Grossly obscene pictures of sexual assault, involving penetrative sex, masturbation or oral sex involving an adult
10	Sadistic/Bestiality	 a. Pictures showing a child being tied, bound, beaten, whipped or otherwise subject to something that implies pain b. Pictures where an animal is involved in some form of sexual behaviour with a child

Session 9 – Recovery from abuse

Session summary – what will you learn?

- → Exploring the impact of early CSA during a developmental period of 'infantile self-preoccupation' and how this impacts our framing and understanding of the abuse
- → Exploring the Chowchilla bus kidnappings in 1976 as studied by Leonore Terr and its insights into the cause and effect thinking of the child victims
- → Exploring the influence of the lingering effect of magical thinking in survivors of CSA on our later adult core beliefs
- → Re-examining the offending cycle through the lens of the child's non-causal involvement
- \rightarrow Re-examining the motivation of the perpetrator as it impacts the survivor's guilt and self-blame
- → Introducing the concept of the 'Great Exchange', i.e. the transfer of responsibility from perpetrator to victim, and the need to reverse this therapeutically
- → Exploring key steps towards recovery: belief, reframing and social support.
- → Examining the feasibility of recovery and its legal and medical implications
- → Exploring Victor Frankl's ideas of the need for meaning within suffering, and the importance of an internal locus of control
- → Exploring the concept of powerlessness (including the belief of powerlessness to recover) as part of the syndrome rather than incidental to it
- → Exploring the work of Mary Main (attachment theory) around the mediating factor of the 'stance of the self towards experience' in recovery
- → The role of reframing in changing our view about ourselves after abuse, and the need to put an end to selfabuse
- → A re-examination of Finkelhor's impacts and the real-life experience of the positive and life-changing impacts of therapy in empowerment towards recovery

Reflection Questions

1.	Do you fundamentally believe that healing and recovery is possible? To what extent? How can you assist that
	process?

2. What can you do to help someone who has become powerless to overcome their powerlessness?

3. In what way(s) has this course changed your view of child sexual abuse? How will it help you in your own recovery, or in supporting the recovery of others?

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SESSION 1

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United Nations statistics

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SESSION 6

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SESSION 7

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Male support organisations

- Survivors UK: https://www.survivorsuk.org/
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- 1 in 6: https://lin6.org

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'What better way to free ourselves ...'

Be kind to yourself: self-care and the golden goose

www.carolynspring.com/blog/self-care

'I have had to change my view of myself ...'

Ten things I have learned about child sexual abuse by Carolyn Spring

www.carolynspring.com/blog/ten-things-i-have-learned-about-child-sexual-abuse

'We can heal ...'

Ten things I have learned about child sexual abuse by Carolyn Spring www.carolynspring.com/blog/ten-things-i-have-learned-about-child-sexual-abuse

Notes

Notes

Info and links

'Child Sexual Abuse: Hope for Healing' online training by Carolyn Spring

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Quick course links

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