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An ounce of prevention: The life stories and perceptions of men who sexually offended against children

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An Ounce of Prevention:

The Life Stories and Perceptions of Men who Sexually Offended against Children

by

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Bachelor of Arts, University of Auckland, 1987

THESIS

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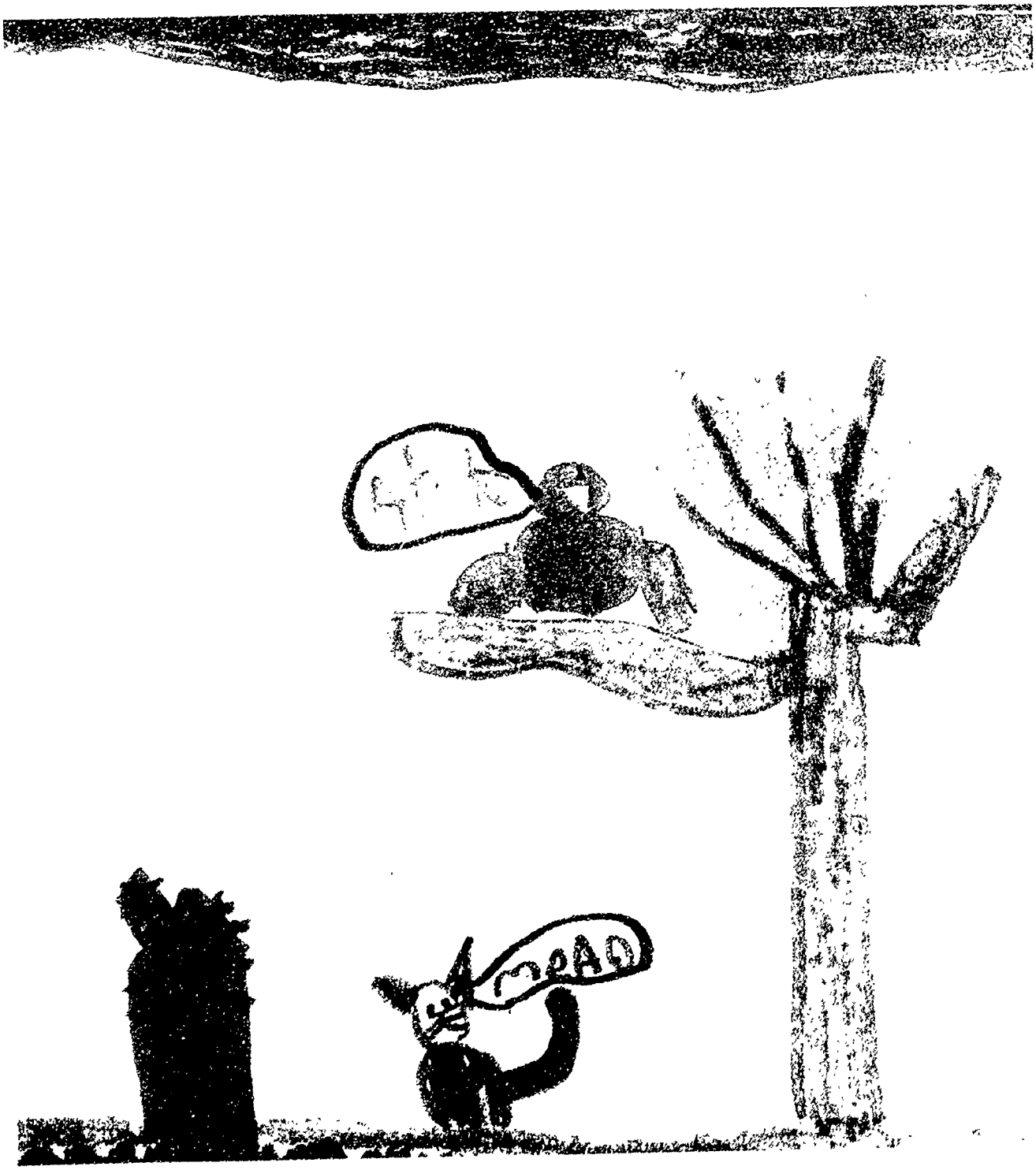

"A recurrent pattern emerges: the 'top' attempts to reject and eliminate the 'bottom' for reasons of prestige and status, only to discover, not only that it is in some way frequently dependent upon the low-Other, but also that the top includes that low symbolically, as a primary eroticized constituent of its own fantasy life. The result is a mobile, conflictual fusion of power, fear and desire in the construction of subjectivity: a psychological dependence upon precisely those Others which are being rigorously opposed and excluded at the social level. It is for this reason that what is **socially** peripheral is so frequently **symbolically** central. The low-Other is despised and denied at the level of political organization and social being whilst it is instrumentally constitutive of the shared imaginary repertoire of the dominant culture."

(Stallybrass & White, 1986)

DEDICATION

FOR MY SON MAX, AND ALL CHILDREN IN OUR COMMUNITY; BECAUSE THEY DESERVE TO BE NURTURED; BECAUSE THEY ARE THE CARE GIVERS OF THE FUTURE.

REMEMBERING MY FRIEND JEANNE (1951-1993) WHO PRACTICED THE BELIEF THAT RAISING CHILDREN IS A COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY.

Acknowledgements

I want to thank my advisor and confidant Professor Geoff Nelson for his patience, constant support, honesty, and insightful suggestions throughout the conception and writing of this thesis. His ability to keep the thesis within realistic limits, his willingness to "go the extra mile" , his reassurance that I have something to say, and above all his commitment to an equitable working relationship have been an encouragement and inspiration to me. My appreciation also goes to Professor Isaac Prilleltensky for his ability to share ideas in a way which challenged me to understand the practical implications of research efforts generally and prevention work specifically. His creative exploration of wider social issues greatly enhanced my comfort with and understanding of working at the margins. I also gratefully acknowledge Professor Steve Chris for encouraging me to apply for participation in the community psychology programme and for openly sharing approaches to community dialogues which enhance a sense of hopefulness about the possibilities for change. Special thanks goes to Mark Yantzi from CJI for always being there when I needed to share more tentative feelings and thoughts about the research. His confidence in people, his knowledge of the subject matter, his creative optimism, and his modesty are a unique combination of human qualities in helping professions.

Above all I want to gratefully acknowledge the research participants. Without your trust, openness, and energy this thesis would not have been written. You have helped me to break my silence, and I in turn hope to have assisted you in your

attempts to break a silence enforced on you by many people past and present. What you will read in the pages to follow is your work far more than mine. I wish you well, and hope that your goals and aspirations for a better future will be realized.

Special thanks to my son Max for continuously asking. "Are you done yet mommy? And what is a thesis anyway?", and for providing an appropriate cover-page where: "Cats and birds are friends because they talk to each other". [1] In time, I hope you will understand that adults don't have all the answers and often need to engage in obscure tasks in their search for meaning. I also hope you, like all children, will benefit from the finding that loving is the most complex and yet singularly crucial parental and communal task. Many thanks also to you, Gary, for the opportunity to love and nurture a child. I have learned much from our son's devoted trust in us as individuals, and partners joined in parenting.

Finally thank you, Holt, for being my special friend, for your patience during many word processing traumas, for creatively encouraging me to rediscover the fun side in Eeyore, and for providing the first venue for a real thesis presentation. Above all I want to thank you for having said once: We will get this done. We did.

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[1]During one of those many long evenings of editing Max wanted to help me and I asked him to draw me a picture of a "happy world". He has been anxious for this to be included in my thesis. So - here it is.

Table of Contents

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to modify *primary prevention models in child sexual abuse* by incorporating the perceptions of men who sexually offended against children. In open-ended, conversational style interviews I asked 10 men, who are/were involved in self-help community based treatment groups at Community Justice Initiatives (CJI), Waterloo Region, to convey their understanding of how sexual abuse could have been prevented in their own lives, and can be prevented in our communities. The participants shared their views about prevention based on their experiences, and their interpretations of these experiences. I based the research results on the stories I was told and paid particular attention to factors which research participants believed to have significantly contributed to the abuse. In essence the research was a life cycle study. Participants shared experiences from their early childhood, marriage, the time preceding and following the abuse, the time around the disclosure, and their involvement at CJI.

I analyzed the results qualitatively in terms of thematic content, by keeping close to the original interview transcripts. The emerging themes became the topics for focus groups during a workshop organized by interview participants, CJI volunteers and staff, and myself. During this workshop, service providers and consumers were asked to make recommendations for changes at individual, family, social, and cultural levels of intervention. I summarized these recommendations and reflected upon them in terms of (1) a model for primary prevention in child sexual abuse, and (2) primary

prevention action research generally. Workshop participants jointly endorsed the utilization of results.

The family of origin was a key point of discussion throughout the interviews. Experiences of neglect and abuse were shared by many of the participants and were described as greatly inhibiting future abilities to accept fully others' rights and one's own responsibilities when placed in a care-giving role. Many of the participants emphasized that as children they had their experiences denied and invalidated and how this silence put them at risk of justifying and minimizing their own abusive behaviour as adults. The effects of having one's pain denied was often not actively felt until the onset of adolescence and early adulthood, when dating relationships and friendships became more significant than relationships in the family of origin.

However, abused children do not inevitably become abusive parents. Cultural, communal, and social expectations and actions affect families' approaches to child rearing. Parents are particularly at risk of perpetrating abuse if expression of emotion is and was discouraged in the family context. Traditionally boys are more likely to experience this limitation.

Workshop participants highlighted two primary prevention action plans. (1) for parents to raise their children to reach their emotional, cognitive, physical, social and spiritual potential, they need to be aware of and able to access community support which fosters their own growth in these areas; and (2) communities have a responsibility to model a child friendly environment which actively recognizes children's rights for a life characterized by nurturing and age appropriate expectations.

Lastly, workshop participants expressed that healthy sexuality, in the holistic sense of the term, can only become a reality in communities which are willing to discuss sexual expression. Definitions of sexuality in terms of the prohibition of sexual transgression, such as the incest taboo, are negative in focus and inadequate when it comes to setting a sound social and moral climate. Throughout the research a critique of systemic failures was cited by research and workshop participants alike as a critical need in primary prevention work.

What began as a research interest on my part soon became a starting point for future social events initiated through CJI. The research process is action in itself and can gain a momentum well beyond its own original narrow focus. An agenda towards an increased and shared sense of empowerment can aid to establish community change if built on the capacity of all parties involved. A phenomenological approach, which is inclusive of the multitude of realities in any situation, lends itself to increasing our understanding beyond the narrow confines of officially sanctioned knowledge. The reality of sexual abuse as it emerged from the research exposed this "private" act as something which is embedded in silence. This silence was and is actively and sometimes violently enforced in many families and finally the community at large.

Introduction

In 1987 I facilitated a women's group in a therapeutic setting for people with psychiatric disabilities. Eight out of the 10 group members had been sexually abused as children. I began to grasp the long-term physical, mental, and emotional ill-effects of sexual violence experienced during childhood (Finkelhor, 1984). Later, I co-led therapeutic groups for child victims of sexual abuse. Some were barely six years young. I observed that healing from sexual abuse is a drawn-out and painful process and became interested in early intervention efforts. I did not get to know the perpetrators of sexual abuse in either of these two settings, other than through the stories of their victims. In these stories the offenders did not appear as "monsters", but as people formerly trusted and often continuing to be loved. Many of the women and children portrayed their perpetrators as actors in a social system characterized by poverty, isolation, drug abuse, and a sense of hopelessness. Victims even described how they protected offenders from taking responsibilities for their actions for fear of losing a father, brother, uncle, husband, or other significant adult.

I began to question our legal, cultural, sub-cultural, and therapeutic knowledge of the dynamics of abuse. I began to wonder about the lives of men who sexually harm children. Was it possible to conceive that in the social reality of sexual abuse the boundaries between being a victim and being an offender become blurred in one life-time? What is missing in our theories of the "cycle of abuse"? Had we surrendered our hopes for social change to a comm inal need for judgement? What

motivates adults to inflict pain on children? What are the reasons for this harmful act being expressed sexually?

Since 1991 I have co-facilitated a group for adolescent and young adult offenders and victims in the Sexual Abuse Treatment Programme (SATP) at CJI. Although this work does not form part of my research results it has provided me with ample opportunity to question and re-question my own assumptions about offenders. One of the recurring points of discussion has been that most offenders know sexual abuse to be wrong. Yet, something allows them to overstep this moral and social boundary. During such discussions I was often disturbed to find that rationalizations, justifications, if not minimizations of sexually abusive behaviour can uncannily echo societal believes, and values of "maleness" and "sexual control". On the basis of my experiences over the years, I believe that, when trying to understand sexual abuse, the picture of analysis is likely incomplete unless we are willing to speak to and understand the people who commit these offenses.

In 1990 I enrolled in the Community Psychology programme of which this thesis is a part. I became interested in exploring the active differences between tertiary, secondary, and primary prevention when it comes to sexual abuse. Primary prevention attempts to "keep (all) people from becoming casualties" (Albee, 1991, cited in Pransky,p. 247). The idea of working for a future free of the pains reported by the victims of sexual crimes became a matter of urgency for me. So far my work had been restricted to tertiary prevention efforts in an attempt to improve the life quality of those who had already been harmed. Secondary prevention attempts were

solely focused on relapse prevention with young offenders as the officially identified "high risk" population. Unlike in other secondary prevention projects, high risk indicators are hard to establish in an area of work which affects people across dimensions of class, ethnicity, and gender.

Primary prevention inevitably constitutes a critique of social conditions, which predate the actions of individuals within those conditions. It includes an imperative to understand pathology as something that goes beyond individual psychology and behaviour Primary prevention approaches further demand social actions based on the exhaustive evaluation of experiences of all parties involved. The influences of our social and community values on individual actions cannot be absolved from this analysis. And yet, it is precisely this critique which I found sadly lacking in most sexual abuse treatment models. The women and children I worked with were already scarred for life, and assisting them in transcending these experiences towards healing is a social responsibility not to be abandoned. It is also a drawn-out, and humanly and financially costly process.

In November 1990, the K-W Record ran a weekly public awareness column about sexual abuse, after Rogers, as a Special Advisor to the Ministry of Health and Welfare Canada, submitted his federal report Reaching for Solutions (June, 1990). I have since met men who received press coverage in these columns as offenders. Suffice it to say that their stories differed greatly from those the media had provided. In January 1992, a local judge referred to the importance of understanding "the cycle of abuse" after having sentenced an offender (himself the victim of extensive sexual

abuse during childhood) more leniently than was expected. In February 1992, the K-W Record reported that a mother had been accused of sexually abusing her toddler because she continued breast feeding beyond the time that is felt to be socially acceptable. Having approached helping agencies in order to ascertain whether her pleasurable feelings during nursing constituted a form of abuse, the child was removed from her custody until the court decided that the mother's actions were strictly seen not abusive (K-W Record, Friday, 6 February 1992). One day later a local radio station (570 CHYM) asked people in a phone-in to convey their opinions about appropriate punishment for repeat sex offenders. Eighty percent of people who participated in the poll felt that castration should be a favoured course of action. I could go on.

The above examples from within this community serve to illustrate that sexual abuse, as a result of public education, media reporting, and the continued need for protective services, has moved into the awareness of everyday citizens. The examples also show that what is produced under the mantle of keeping the public informed at one and the same time provides "entertainment", and an opportunity for communal indignation and moral outrage. This makes for often sensationalist and inaccurate reading. It also keeps divisions between offenders and those who feel justified to condemn them alive. While the public may by now be aware that sexual abuse happens frequently and "in the best of all families", it is barely if ever encouraged to consider one's own sexuality as it relates to power and non-consent. Media reports about sexual abuse, as indeed all media efforts, exist in a tension between fostering

awareness and providing "good reading". They contribute to a sense of moral superiority which for many years made victims' stories unbelievable. The recent dismay about abuse in the Catholic churches provides a point in turn.

I first proposed my thesis topic when the second anniversary of the Montreal Massacre was taking place. Like many other women in Canada the shooting of 14 women because they were "feminists" brought me face to face with the possibility of violence as the result of belonging to a disenfranchised social group (Brickman, 1989). I sensed that such "marginal" action was symbolic of a wider central reality, that there is an active social discrepancy between empathy with victims and communities in which women's and children's rights are barely acknowledged. In some sense, somebody taking up a gun and ending the lives of 14 women is a long way off from sexually abusing a child. And yet, two processes strike me as hauntingly similar: (1) communities have silencing methods in place which by way of omission continuously attribute such crimes to individual failure, and (2) we suppress any voices that point to a wider social trend. Taboos are a double-edged sword. We openly declare that sexual transgression is socially and morally unacceptable, and if it occurs, we choose to explain it in terms of the pathology or deviance of individuals. In this selective process we derogate women and children to the status of victims, and marginalize and sensationalize the actions of offenders. Voices which call for wider social change are ascribed to misguided political agendas which are not grounded in reality. Satisfied that Marc Lepine was after all crazy, and persuaded that sexual abuse is a freak instance committed by monstrous men, communities rest assured that catching people

and locking them up will deal with the problem for good. "Off with his head" the Queen of Hearts shouts in Alice in Wonderland.

Anger and pain constitute a shared emotional reality for many members of our community. But we cannot rest there. It is somewhat easier to judge and disregard others if they are not your father, uncle, brother, teacher, priest, and so on. As we will see, this makes sexual abuse an entirely different phenomenon for one in four girls and one in 10 boys in Canadian society (Bagley, 1984; Bagley & King, 1990; Rogers, 1990). Once a relationship has been established, once a caregiver has been defined as such, it is close to impossible to have feelings about that person on the basis of one form of behaviour only. Or as a child, in a group I facilitated once, said to me about her abusive father: "I don't want him to go away, I want him to smarten up".

In seeking only retribution, communities do a disservice to children and women: (1) they refuse to listen to their hopes that abuse can be prevented; and (2) they do not consider how sexual violence as a form of differential power has been with us for a long time in many locations. I am troubled by the realization that, what is publicly judged and described as marginal, is also central to the experience of many women and children. With few exceptions abuse is also gender specific when it comes to the offender population. Sexual power acted out in the privacy of many homes is anything but a peripheral phenomenon when it comes to society at large. We are applying a band-aid to a cancer. It is critical that we begin to take prevention seriously.

My choice of topic is further informed by an interest in theories of marginalization, and more specifically Foucault's (1979, 1980) understanding that we peripheralize individuals whose behaviours uncomfortably point to communal conflicts. This process of exclusion and detention (whether in psychiatric or penal institutions) officially functions as a protective and deterring social mechanism. It is for Foucault, more importantly, indicative of a wider social pathology. communities attempt to push undesirable behaviour to the margins. And yet, in essence these frowned upon acts are more often than not central to their own structures. In other words, exclusion of undesirable individuals serves communities in two ways. (1) it visibly critiques certain behaviours as unacceptable; and (2) it lets us rest assured that such acts are marginal or can in the very least be marginalized.

Traditionally women have been more likely to have a "deviant" status ascribed to them, simply by merit of being women. Schur (1984) asserts:

> In daily interaction women are often perceived and reacted to in terms of their category membership - as female - [...] femaleness appears to be a devalued (and deviant) status. (p. 7)

In deviance theory women do not have to act to be perceived and treated as marginal. Heidenson (1985) further explains that the criminally deviant status has been reserved for men, and that as such men need to display a particular form of behaviour to become excluded from the community. Women experience exclusion in the absence of any behaviour which could publicly justify this. What all the sociological theories of deviance have in common is a healthy scepticism about positivist approaches to understanding human interaction. Truth becomes social truths,

"right and wrong" become guidelines that serve to protect communities from their own failings.

Law prescribes behaviour. The existence of law implies that there is a need for it, that within our communities (and within all of us) there are abusive elements which cannot be tolerated. Sexual abuse in this understanding is not a freak individual deviation from a communally embraced social and moral norm. In Discipline and Punish Foucault:

> analyzes penal affairs coded by "civilization", the great crimes not as monstrosities, but as the fatal return and revolt of what is repressed, the minor illegalities not as the necessary margins of society, but as a rumbling from the midst of the battlefield (1979, p. 290).

Far fetched? I believe not. Throughout this research I have challenged myself to explore attitudes about the psychology and experiences of people who are easily dismissed as different, cruel, sick, or sexually deviant. My hope is that in turn I may challenge others to rethink some of our convenient answers to a widespread social ill.

Prevention efforts depend on our ability to reject harmful behaviour, not the whole of the person perpetrating such behaviour. Our success in preventing abuse is also directly linked to our willingness and ability to study the experiences of offenders. Eagleton (1991) argues elsewhere that ideologies are not untrue in themselves, but untrue by the exclusion of other important factors. Community psychologists in that sense imperatively take a holistic approach to social phenomena. The inclusion of the perceptions and experiences of "uncomfortable" others constitutes a valuable understanding from the margins. By opening our minds to the possibility that offenders will help us to better understand abuse dynamics we may find that

communities do not only have the recipe for poison but also for its antidote (Fraser, 1987).

The political and personal challenge is to reject labels. It may be a far cry from the emotional responses invoked in all of us, when confronted with the painful realities victims of abuse are forced to endure. It is the only response consistent with a community psychology orientation which takes primary prevention seriously. It is critical that we stop our neglect of wider abuse issues by trivializing social criticism. Consider the simple truth that some of the 80% of people who favour castration for repeat offenders could well include persons who sell or consume pornographic material; many of the people in our community who are a source of strength and leadership when it comes to social issues could be abusing a child. Social conditions of inequality help to perpetuate the lack of rights and resources experienced by women and children and other people at the margins.

Proponents of social welfare philosophies commonly emphasize strategies for individual and family interventions over and above social change, to the extent that the status quo is retained, and social analysis disappears from the agenda altogether.

> Theoretically psychology can influence society in two opposite directions: (a) It can reaffirm or reinforce policies and consequently ratify the status quo, or (b) it can criticize the social order and thus foster change. Practically, the former significantly outweighs the latter (Prilleltensky, 1989, p. 796).

Individuals are expected to affect life changes in a de-contextualized way. It is the communities' equivalent of the parental paradox: "Do as I say, don't do as I do!" Structures which depend on the derogation of women and the subjugation of children

remain unquestioned and intact. In the face of a repressive Victorian morality, Freud conceived of such pathology as something "uncanny". the cyclical return of that which is socially repressed. As he never extended this reflection to his own work, he was unable to come to terms with the painful realization that many of his women patients had truly been victims of sexual abuse. Experiences which could have pointed to a social ill and the need for social analysis were ill-fitted to explanations in terms of intra-psychic processes (Masson, 1984). In his well-known case of "Dora", Freud inevitably concluded that child sexual fantasies rather than repressed memories were the causes of her pain. It was too difficult, and, one could claim, too costly to conceive of the possibility that underneath the cover of the good citizen, who paid his daughter's way through therapy, could be an abusive father figure. All of this, upon reflection, seems uncanny indeed.

I do not wish, however, to re-enter the old "nature versus nurture" debate. I do not seek to apologize for individual actions by pointing to similarities between social and individual conflicts. Neither approach would take us beyond the boundaries of already established intervention philosophies. Abuse is wrong. Abuse does hurt. This much we can no doubt agree on. But where do we go from here? As the literature review will outline, we judge, we treat, and we sometimes despair that the situation simply seems to be ongoing, that beneath the "business as usual" mentality, social processes are at work which stand in conflict with our superior morality. The decision to study sexual abuse in terms of the experiences of offenders is based on the hope that there are new insights to be gained from an inclusive approach. By

neglecting an important part of the story we have resigned ourselves to many children learning about their own sexuality not from textbooks, not from words of caring parents and friends, but from having their bodies and privacy invaded, their trust abused. Prevention strategies have remained focused on the victim: children are taught about good touch and bad touch. Why they may find themselves in a de-powered situation in the first place is rarely addressed. Abuse does not begin and end in individual acts. Victims of abuse often carry their secrets for years; some of them will have gone on to abusing others; most of them are engaged in some form of abusive behaviour towards themselves. What is certain is that the cycle of pain in some form or another continues, and also that we can interrupt this process at various points. What we consider less often is: how can we stop it from occurring in the first place?

> If life is given for more than just coping, if growth means not repetition or comfort but adventure and courage means going beyond our known selves [...] well then perhaps we are getting somewhere and are not easily mocked by clinical experts whose own personal development may be prematurely stunted (Reeves, 1973, p. 8).

In community mental health approaches we have long recognized that pathology cannot always be attributed to individual or physiological causes. We have discussed the possibility that another person, a family, or even a community can "drive you crazy". Laing (1965, 1967), Showalter (1985), Chesler (1972), Szasz (1974) and others have moved the social context into the picture of individual "wrong" or "odd" behaviour and thought patterns. The opposition from more clinically oriented professionals to this approach continues. There is little gratitude to be gained from

prevention work, and all of us who work within the human service sector are desirous of such immediate results. We have, however, begun to invite consumers into our meetings, our conferences, our service, in an attempt to hear their side of the story, to better our intervention efforts in their presence, rather than objectify their experiences in their absence. Many of us continue to be deaf to their voices or only hear sounds muffled by prejudice or "expert" knowledge. But a process of exchange, even if it is by no means perfect, has begun. Why, then, has this promotion of community mental health not been extended to the problems of sexual abuse? Allow me to speculate.

Whether we are talking about the mentally ill, the physically challenged, battered women, new immigrants, and so forth, such marginalized people to some degree elicit empathetic feelings, however patronizing or paralysing these may be. Sex offenders by contrast elicit responses of disgust, fear, anger, or plain moral outrage. So far so comprehensible. And yet, such reactions seem ignorant of the tension between public exposure and private secrecy, when it comes to sexual expression, or should I say oppression. While the local corner video stores are able to sell pornographic material such as "Daddy's little Girl" (as a brochure of my local store advertised), our communities seem equally able to maintain that abuse of power through sexual violence are "freak" instances.

With this established it is hardly surprising that our efforts have been restricted to "healing" the victims and ignoring or penalizing their perpetrators. True to a clinical paradigm we only help once it has been established that a person is in need of

help. Pain becomes your entry ticket into social support. Excerpts from a poem written by a 12 year old girl illustrate how this support can be experienced:

> I asked you for help, and you told me you would, if I told you the things my dad did to me. [...] then you made me repeat them to 14 different strangers. I asked you for privacy and you sent two policemen to my school in front of everyone.[...] I asked you to believe me and you said you did and then connected me to a lie detector. [...] I asked you for help and you gave me a doctor with cold metal gadgets and cold hands who spread my legs and stared, just like my father. He said I looked fine - good news for me you said, bad news for my "case". [...] Do you know what it feels like to be the one that everyone blames for all the trouble? [...] I asked you to put an end to the abuse and you put an end to the whole family. You took away my nights of hell and gave me days of hell instead. You have exchanged my private nightmare for a very public one (cited in Horton, Johnson, Roundy & Williams, 1990, pp. 147-149)

Our main efforts in service provision are restricted to "secondary" and "tertiary" prevention. It is, no doubt, valuable and important to provide help to the children, women, and men who have experienced abuse. They must not be left to their pain. But wouldn't it in the most ideal of worlds make more sense to combine these efforts with attempts to avoid this pain in the first place? Yet such endeavours are few and far between and often restricted to academic platitudes. Avoiding recidivism always and inevitably means that somebody has already been hurt, and when that somebody happens to be the most vulnerable in our communities, namely children, we must explore alternatives, become creative and ask again. why? I have asked children, non-offending parents, "experts", service providers. I have read studies and theoretical explanations which span the range from "biology is destiny" to "the ecology of the situation is rotten at the core". I finally found the courage to ask those people who

commit the offenses; I explored their perceptions about what is needed in our community to reach for a solution. I listened to their side of the stories.

Several people while preparing for this study expressed that as a woman, I may well be out of line, that by making the voices of offenders heard I show a kind of empathy that alienates the victims. It would be a topic in its own right to respond to this criticism. My intentions are based in feminist thought, central to which is the break-down between the private and public sphere, whereby the latter stands critiqued. Unfortunately such social critique has often been juxtaposed to the demand for individuals to take responsibilities for their actions. I believe this is a false dichotomy. Everybody should be held accountable for what they do, but if such actions go beyond isolated individual cases, it would seem sensible to assume that there is a shared reality in place; and further that changes to that shared reality will affect the individuals within. Feminism for me has always demanded that we see the "big picture", that oppression is a reality shared by women and other people at the margins, because there are structures in place that make this process possible. The "I hate men" approach avoids collective action, which stands at the heart of social change. In that sense community psychology thought and feminist values can merge into a social critique and finally a social action plan.

The focus on individual or family systems, no matter how benevolent it may be, is ultimately dis-empowering to victims. It is based on the assumption that women and children by their very nature are depowered, passive and in need of protection. This interpretation of interchange between those in sexual power (men and/or parental

figures) and those in receipt of this power (women and children) ironically constitutes a main component of the experience of abuse itself. It may further contribute to it occurring in the first place. Our treatment approaches mirror the very power dynamics they claim to reject. During the actual abuse situation a victim and offender are clearly visible. Our failure to analyze how these power differences come to be in the first place is a failure of social imagination. We need a collective vision of a society in which raising children is a communal responsibility.

I am well aware this may sound like an ambitious undertaking. I hope my research will make a small contribution towards our understanding of sexual abuse as a social process, which as all social processes is open to change. We have continued the process of victimization by concentrating our intervention efforts on those who have been offended against. We have shied away from dealing with those who commit the offenses, and have separated ourselves from them. We have ultimately failed to see how these offenses are a private expression of a public contempt for women and children. Many years ago, while studying anthropology, I learned that the incest taboo as a universal phenomenon is cross-culturally variable. What we share across cultures is the belief that it can control human behaviour and the realization that it does not. It functions in two incompatible ways: communities describe who is sexually inappropriate as a partner, and equally prescribe that transgressions of this rule are best not talked about. The silencing function has overtaken the active implementation of social boundaries. ignorance has become bliss for those who are not expected to suffer in silence.

Through my research I wanted to establish a dialogue between offenders and the community they live in. I wanted to understand: What happens to sexual abuse offenders prior to and after disclosure? What is their career in a society which continues to neglect a social analysis of sexual transgression? What would have helped to prevent the abuse in the first place? How can we overcome the barriers to taking prevention seriously? I asked these questions as a woman dissatisfied with the current responses to this widespread ill. I asked them also for my sister, who was abused by one of the "pillars" of my community, and my son, who at age six still remains (blissfully) unaware of the connection between "masculinity" and power.

Literature Review

Finkelhor, during a 1987 symposium in Montreal about sexual abuse of children, claimed that despite increased research the "myth surrounding [this issue] continue, and indeed multiply". My own experience of researching the topic in preparation for this thesis could find no better description. Trying to select journal articles and books for my review of the literature was fraught with difficulties. The first problem I encountered is that little to no readings are devoted to self-help approaches such as they are applied at CJI. Nor was I able to find any references to primary prevention efforts other than in highly theoretical systemic analyses, or in programmes which put the emphasis on women and children to not become victims of sexual violence. Many authors seemed to dismiss the ecological context as peripheral. I felt discouraged.

My agenda was to shed some additional light on prevention efforts. My research preference was to gain access to these change activities by phenomenological means. My overall goal was to get a better sense of the gestalt of sexual abuse by including the life experiences and perceptions of offenders. Yet there were little to no previous activities which allowed me to take such hopes seriously. The voices of offenders were close to absent altogether. What follows, thus, is a brief selection out of a vast body of research, in which I could find no support for my own undertaking. Although inclusive qualitative research approaches are becoming increasingly acceptable, studies about sexual abuse appear to have been exempt from this process.

Upon reflection I realize how much of what we know about sexual abuse offenders mirrors a broader social "knowledge" based on some of the same speculative efforts. There are, of course, exceptions to the rule. Some therapists and researchers promote a social action approach and do speak of prevention even if many of their colleagues critique such efforts as too vast to achieve in one's life time. Such conflicts are rampant in professional circles and led me to believe that, when it comes to understanding sexual abuse, we must treat current knowledge with a healthy amount of caution. We must engage in a continuous process of self-reflection to keep a sense of hopelessness and a need for premature judgement if not resignation at bay. There is, to be sure, a definite urgency to move beyond what we claim to know towards taking prevention seriously even if the journey proves to be an uncomfortable one.

Some sources, thus, which informed the research goals could not be found by means of browsing university library shelves. They deserve mentioning here. CJI made many video tapes available to me, some of which have been produced by educational institutions for public consumption, some of which are internal to the setting. Friends and colleagues, who have worked with victims and/or offenders have speculated with me, reflected on current legislation, pointed me towards readings they found helpful, and above all shared their experiences with me. Finally, while preparing any research topic one's eyes are keenly alert to public media presentations of the same, which in more recent years have been plentiful and sometimes overwhelming. The "stories" I read and heard provided intensely personal and

disturbing accounts of sexual abuse and its aftermath. They were all told by survivors. Many of these accounts blurred with my own professional experiences to an extent that I was sometimes ready to abandon the notion of prevention in incestuous abuse altogether. In the video To a Safer Place a victim recalled the following:

> It was on this bed that I learned to leave my body. I used to hide in the cracks in the wall, a wall that was too cold for him to reach me - a safer place. But when he took me upstairs, I had nowhere to hide me and he took me there until there was no me left. (The National Film Board, Canada, own transcript).

I, like others, became overwhelmed with how sexual abuse pains children. I became aware how readily a need for retribution can hinder prevention efforts. Sexual abuse as a topic in public and professional circles alike is loaded with feelings of anger, disgust, and incredulity.

Listening to stories takes empathy, and most of what I encountered by way of research and public education allowed for little to no empathy with offenders. The "monster" images of the public at large surfaced and re-surfaced in academic writings, even if their terminology may have been kinder or more detached. It is there that I want to begin, albeit briefly, with my reflections about our current knowledge. It is the "offender as monster" literature which informs many clinical orientations to date.

Individualist Explanations and Interventions

Phallometric studies are the most disturbing examples of how clinical examinations continue to be restricted to exposing the short-comings of individuals. Explanations are firmly rooted in biological reasoning. Many of these studies were "scientifically persuasive", and as Pransky asserts, it was at times hard to understand

why we would punish rather than treat people, if these people are physiologically or psychologically destined to behave in certain ways (1991, p. 7). Several studies described how researchers would measure penile erection to assess the extent of individuals' erotic responses towards children. These studies were almost always conducted with offenders in the prison system and resulted in making a distinction between sexual arousal in pedophiles, incest offenders, and "normal" men. No study, incidentally ever questioned their own use of child pornography during such research.

The Clark Institute has been at the forefront of many of these professional efforts. Treatment includes the use of the drugs provera and depo-provera to suppress sexual arousal, as a chemical alternative to castration. Cooper (1986), however, cautions that offenders' motivation for such interventions appear to significantly affect treatment success. Many researchers who try to understand sexual arousal patterns in offenders also admit to a sense of confusion if not helplessness. To cite but one, Langevin (1987) concludes:

> To complicate the issue, normal men show statistically significant penile reactions to female children as young as 6 years of age. Of course their largest reactions are to adult females (p. B-77).

In many of these approaches therapists and clinicians attempt to put sexuality back into the treatment of sexual abuse and actively avoid explanations in terms of broader interpersonal dynamics as potential justifications. In a radio broadcast Dr.Barbaree (Director of the Sexual Behaviour Clinic at Warkworth Penitentiary) suggested that therapy with offenders must target the sexual act and that "we must not allow [the offender] to say that his motivation was anything other than sexual" (CBC

Radio, 27 January 1992, own transcript). This suggestion is echoed by Fredrickson (1982) who points out the addictive pattern in sexual compulsivity, and concludes:

> The offender is preoccupied with sex, and the more he acts out sexually, the more the compulsivity grows, until the offender is spending most of his time thinking about or acting out sexual feelings (p. 10).

Physical arousal is seen as central to all sexual activities. In some men this arousal is connected to the presence of children because their sexuality is flawed.

Another body of research adds assessments in terms of personality deficits and psychological developmental delays. In some of these, consideration about the family of origin made for challenging reading. Groth (1982) is probably one of the best known experts from this orientation. His typology of the "fixated" versus "regressed" offender has by now been well accepted in lay and professional circles alike. He contends that the fixated offender abuses children because of "maladaptive resolutions of life issues", while the regressed offender makes "maladaptive attempts to cope with specific life stresses" (p. 217). In other words, while fixated offenders are primarily sexually interested in children, regressed offenders usually engage in sexual relationships with adults and only turn to children in times of stress. Regressed offenders hence experience(d) circumstances in their own childhood or current marriage as stressful. Children become pseudo-adults whom the offender abuses because of a frustration with the real adults in his life. The nature of these stressors are individually different but commonly include dissatisfaction with adult relationships between men and women, especially preceding and following separation. The

regression model is limited to cross-gender relationships within the traditional marriage and family. And

> [...] over 12 years of clinical experience working with child molesters, we yet have to see any example of regression from an adult homosexual orientation (Groth, 1978, p. 181).

This suggestion does away with the prejudice that sexual preference for one's own gender predispose one to sexual attraction for children. In other words, the perceived similarity in "deviance" between homosexuality and sexual acts involving children is exposed as a misguided judgement. What disturbs me is that in Groth's analysis the introduction of family dynamics as a central cause in sexual abuse at times smacks of mother or wife blaming. Men, no longer able to cope with the demands placed on them by marriage and work responsibilities, compensate for their insecurities either by becoming child-like and dependent on their partner, or by implementing rigid family regimes which leave them in complete control, and allow for the sexual exploitation of their own children.

The "modus operatum" in these abuse incidents is commonly seduction (17%), or threat (27%), but rarely force (9%) (Groth, 1978, p. 178). Without a doubt, Groth's studies have advanced our knowledge of offenders' treatment needs, and many of his assertion were reiterated to me by people working with offenders. He has also raised our awareness of behavioral indicators such as "grooming", which refers to that very process by which men "prepare" a child for abuse, however unconscious this preparation may be. Sharing this knowledge with offenders may well be helpful in preventing recidivism. For example, in my own experience offenders often report that

is helpful to redefine their opportunistic approach to children as an act of impulsive but controllable planning.

I am hesitant, however, to fully accept Groth's analysis. It contains some central contradictions. He argues that "there is no set of unique features that distinguish incest offenders from other individuals" (Groth, 1982, p. 229), and yet what he in fact describes are distinct traits and characteristics that could amount to a personality profile. He introduces the social context into the assessment, but largely restricts himself to an assessment of dynamics within the family. He attempts to put ownership onto the offender and yet contends that a more attentive partner may have been able to fulfil her husband's "emotional needs" before he chose to do so himself in sexual activities with a child (Groth, 1982). To his credit, Groth did actively listen to the perception of offenders, before offering tentative explanations. His treatment suggestions, however, leave little room for hope:

> It would be erroneous to believe that an incest offender can be cured. Instead it is more realistic to regard this problem in the same fashion as a drinking problem. [...] There is always the risk of recidivism (Groth, 1982, p. 235).

Reducing the risk of reoffending, in this analysis, is the best we can hope for. It is a far cry from primary prevention work.

Some researchers concentrate their effort on understanding the emotional make-up of offenders by analyzing their early childhood experiences. They claim that victimization in childhood can lead to a reenactment of this experience in later life. The offender, who found him/herself out of control while being abused by a trusted adult tries to regain this control by adopting the role of his/her perpetrator. This

perspective, which grew out of the psychoanalytical tradition, gives recognition to the long-term impact of childhood sexual trauma. Allow and encourage the victim (potential offender) to get in touch with his/her experience, allow for a resolution to pain and empathy with the child within, and the fear and feelings of loss underneath all the pain will become visible, and move into the individual's real control. Anger is cited as central to sexually abusive behaviour. It allows offenders to find relief from fear, vulnerability, and rejection (Mayer, 1988).

Many group and individual therapies with abused children, and particularly young adolescent offenders, are based on this approach. In a study focused on Metropolitan Toronto Mathews found that:

> A significant number of youth had been victimised as children. [...] Perpetrators appeared to be caught in a self-reinforcing cycle as they, through the abuse of others, attempt to master the disturbing feelings from their left over from their own victimization (1987, p. 19).

Miller (1990) points to a critical dimension in this form of treatment:

> One thing is certain: the injured child in all of us can only be reached by means of gaining access to the physical sensations of a trauma. This is the imperative of therapy. This access will remain hidden, if, as in the psychoanalytical tradition, intellectual guessing is our main tool. As much as these speculations may be fashionable they are by their very definition as limited as deception itself (p. 241, my own translation).

This cautionary note about psychoanalysis informs many treatment approaches in which we encourage offenders to gain a better awareness of where emotions are placed in their bodies and when they first experienced this sensation. The goal is to identify trigger mechanism and related physiological indicators. In my experience adolescent offenders were often frighteningly inept at naming emotions, let alone in showing an

awareness of how feelings changed their physiological responses. This was particularly true of those who had been victimized as children, and had learned to "shut down" their bodies during the abuse. Having basic needs of safety and trust denied created a state of deficiency during childhood which became again central to their behaviour later in life. Much as in Maslow's "hierarchy of needs" this explains why offenders still engage in abusive acts when their sexual needs are met but their emotional needs remain unfulfilled (Poole, 1987, p. 13) Research as this seeks to make a linear connection between perpetrating sexual abuse and childhood trauma. As intra-psychic processes today remain as elusive as ever, such analyses can appear highly speculative. We need to ask offenders whether they make these connections and yet need to be conscious of not providing rationalizations.

The re-enactment and regression theories also leave several questions unanswered: (1) why do women, who are by far the more common victims of sexual abuse, rarely abuse their own children? (Bagley, 1984), (2) why do only some male victims in turn hurt their own children or a child well known to them? and (3) what are the cultural and societal factors which can foster or prevent this cyclical return to a painful event? (Finkelhor, 1984).

Some of the answers to these questions may have to be sought in the context in which the abuse happens, by which I mean the immediate family (as already mentioned), the community (in terms of formal and informal networks), and the cultural values and social structures. Countless studies, for example, make a connection between the consumption of pornography and onset of sexually abusive

fantasies. This is not the place to discuss the neglect by which we keep studies which make a connection between ideology and individual behaviour in the realm of theoretical considerations. Suffice it to say that even a brief look at clinical orientations exposes that a knowledge of the impact of pornography and other value constructions rarely inform our treatment approaches. Finally, clinical approaches generally are only ever as good as the therapist and/or the client. They are also inevitably restricted to that small number of members in our community who have been identified as having problems in living, and contribute little to a broader prevention agenda.

The Family Systems Approaches

Horton, Johnson, Roundy, and Williams (1990) critique the previous individualist approaches for drawing inferences about the whole offender population from prison samples. They attempt to address this imbalance by introducing the salience of the family and the community context. Isolation within the family of origin is cited as a strong factor in the subsequent seeking of intimacy with a child, when placed in a parental role (pp. 63-75). The authors examine dynamics in the family of origin as well as roles offenders occupy in their current family. Preventative measures focus on breaking the abusive cross-generational cycle. As with the more clinical orientation, treatment is centred on identified abusers, or victimized children. Interventions live in the tension between primary and secondary prevention and in the absence of any longitudinal studies, which could help us to assert that working with

victimized children will avoid that they themselves in turn will victimize others, this research remains speculative.

The interaction between the offender and the victim and the actions of other family members are the central areas of investigation in this research. Above all else this approach depends on families showing an awareness and willingness to face their practices and history. This is complicated by the fact that for 50% of sexually abused children, their victimization precedes the onset of puberty. Child victims of sexual abuse receive a double message. While sexual expression in children is discouraged and described as "dirty and even dangerous", they are at one and the same time forced to endure painful and shameful sexual acts at the hands of these "educators" (White-Blake, & Kline, 1985). It is at best hard to imagine that such families willingly enter therapy.

What interests me is that family system theorists, extend the analysis of sexual abuse to include mothers and siblings. Horton, Johnson, Roundy, and Williams (1990) persuasively argue that sexual abuse has been rather narrowly defined in a number of ways. Women offenders are rarely discussed, and some of their abusive behaviour remains covert under the mantle of nurturing. I was reminded of a little boy, I once worked with, who although never actually touched by his mother felt traumatized by her gazing looks while he was taking a bath or changing clothes. Objectifying another's body does not need touch, as pornography illustrates. Sibling abuse as the "most common form of incest" remains largely unrecognized and is usually put down as a "passing phase" (Horton, Johnson, Roundy, & Williams, 1990; and Hoorwitz,

1984). Treatment approaches include the whole family and echo the perception that there need to be certain family structures in place for the abusive situation to arise in the first place.

> Blurred role boundaries and poor communication can be addressed to some degree by teaching communication skills, and by helping family members to develop realistic expectations of one another (Hoorwitz, 1984, p. 12)

Research about the dynamics in incestuous families relies on a rather out-dated definition of the "family". Horton and colleagues found that in fact 49% of offenders did abuse children other than their own (p. 21). This discovery either questions the causal connection between sexual abuse and family structures and patterns of communication, or in the very least poses the need to broaden our understanding of the subjugation of children. Some of the family dynamic theories have ignored the simple fact that access to one's own children in terms of physical space and emotional connections is simply easier than access to the child of friends or neighbours. But the closeness to a child of friends can lead to some of the same abusive behaviour, precisely because the inferior status which children are awarded in our communities makes this possible.

Such considerations put the studies by Krieger (1984), Levang (1986), Kline, Grayson, and Mathie (1990), and Baker (1985) into a slightly dubious light. Pointing to patterns within the family of offenders is certainly valuable in terms of helping the families to move towards healing, but does little to explain behaviour outside of these parameters. What the family systems research approach achieves, is to reiterate how important it is that we believe children when they report abuse. Working with victims

can assist them in becoming supportive and alert parents, and non-offending parents are encouraged to pay attention to their child's behaviour and expression of emotion. Krieger contends that:

> As a result of their inability to face their own experience, it was expected that victim-mothers would have been less likely to believe their daughters' initial reports of incestuous abuse than were non-victim-mothers. [...] The feminist theories in particular have suggested the effect of keeping incestuous abuse a secret can almost be as damaging to the victim as the effect of the abuse itself (Krieger, 1984, p. 79 & p. 146 respectively).

I must admit that I was often uncomfortable with the shift of attention away from the offender to the non-offending parent and victimized child. But leaving this discomfort aside for a moment I had to recognize the contribution of these authors in broadening the analysis and avoiding individual blame by seeing the family as an "adaptive interacting unit, rather than a collection of static parts" (Tzteng, 1992, p. 53). However, Tzteng also cautions that:

> This perspective lacks strong empirical support. In fact, some empirical evidence suggests that the connection between family characteristics and sexual abuse is non-existent or weak at best (p. 54).

The Cultural and Social Analyses

I was overwhelmed with the amount of literature which sought to establish a connection between pornography and sexual abuse. Having reviewed abstracts of some 125 articles, published in the last ten years, this part of my search for answers has barely begun. Most of the articles consider the influence of the consumption of pornographic material on adolescents, that developmental stage, when sexuality comes to the fore-front of a person's thinking and feeling. Several researchers asked

offenders to examine their understanding of womanhood and sexuality, and consistently found degrading perceptions which are sanctioned and encouraged in pornography. What is challenging about this research is the idea that sexuality is a construct rather than simply a biological function. Culturally transmitted values inform individual choices and interpretations of experiences. In pornography specifically and society generally, women are visible as objects, as potential victims beyond the actual abuse situation. Brownmiller (1975) documents how disturbingly consistent the connection can be between men who rape and their consumption of pornographic material which degrades women. And as Theis argues in his article about sexual abuse in the Catholic churches, one risk factor is simply "being a man".

> One cannot take lightly the clear fact that virtually all disturbed sexual behaviour is male behaviour. Rather than simply criticize, punish, or attempt to eliminate men there is a profound need to consider their socialization patterns and to do something to counter that socialization (1992, p. 48).

The "disturbed behaviour" Theis refers to is the sexual abuse of children by Catholic priests, who do not, as he rightly points out, have access to adult sexual relationships.

I was reminded of the film Broken Mirrors, in which a Dutch feminist script writer reclaims the incident of a man, who overtly presented himself as a stable and socially conscious citizen. So persuasive was his image that his own wife did not know of his secret apartment, in which he chained women up, deprived them of food to the point of starvation, in order to photograph their deteriorating naked bodies. I saw this film in 1985, the theme re-emerged in Silence of the Lambs more recently. What horrifies me is that "entertainment", such as this, presents images of the criminal

who degrades and hurts women through his actions, in the service of voyeurism. What horrifies me more is that the audience joins the voyeuristic gaze. I wonder what effect pornographic material must have on a young mind set to understand his/her own gender identity. I believe, it is a question worth pursuing.

Beyond a critique of pornography I found little by way of putting the actions of sexual abuse offenders into the social context in terms of making treatment suggestions. To some extent this is hardly surprising. Once a community at large stands accused of fostering values which inform the actions of its members, comfortable refuge into explanations of individual pathology is no longer possible. A sense of social pathology emerges.

Two sources, however, deserve mentioning. Marshall and Barrett (1990), and Marshall, Laws, and Barbaree (1990) point to the importance of assessing the wider social context in establishing preventative methods in sexual abuse. In Criminal Neglect Marshall looks "beyond the short-term answers" and examines cultural values such as they are reflected in organizational structures of Canadian society (1990, p. 164-173). He concludes:

> Countless royal commissions, public inquests, and internal government investigations have identified the cracks in the system. It is time to start mending them. [...] Sex offenders prey on the vulnerability of women and children. [...] While the solutions are not without cost, this expenditure will be more than justified by the long-term savings it will effect in both financial and human terms. [...] A society that permits public expression of contempt for women can only expect that women will be victimized. A society that keeps children in ignorance and in unquestioning obedience to adults cannot hope that they will not be abused (Marshall, 1990, p. 166 ff).

Marshall's call for systemic change points to the courts, the welfare system, and the government as cental agents in setting an agenda for change. He calls for treatment according to need, for a community where education about healthy sexuality is encouraged and actively pursued.

What I wish to explore, by means of this thesis, is what these needs and dynamics are and what a community can do to meet them. For example, with child pornography being outlawed, time will tell whether a decrease in child sexual abuse will follow. I suspect that such a direct link, although plausible, will be hard to establish. Pornography mirrors and justifies a wider subjugation of women and children, it does not establish it. Ideological values, as Foucault asserts are representative of a social connection between sexuality and power, they do not create them.

> When sex and pleasure are concerned, power can "do" nothing but to say no to them; what it produces if anything is absences and gaps [...] it overlooks elements; [...] separates what is joint and marks off boundaries (1980, p. 83).

The goal is to introduce the need for a macro-system analysis in child sexual abuse. Garbarino (1980), for one, claimed that child maltreatment is the direct outcome of a sense of isolation and, social and economic stresses, and a reduced willingness to look at the community responsibility in raising children. I believe that the contributions made by offenders will consolidate the need for a systemic approach. Yet, I found few studies which provided a model for such inclusive research.

Two studies, however, need to be mentioned here. Finkelhor and Williams interviewed 118 incestuous fathers to ascertain "whether men are socialized to see all

intimacy and dominance as sexual" (cited in Lears, 1992, p. 60). They found five "types" of men who are most prone to sexually offend against their child: (1) the sexually preoccupied, (2) the adolescent regressives, (3) the instrumental self-gratifiers, (4) the emotionally dependent, and (5) the angry retaliators. Although these results reinstated a typology, they were based on perceptions of men who committed the crimes. As the authors conclude that "it is conceivable the sequence of events that leads to abuse can be interrupted", I began to suspect that there is a direct link between hopefulness about prevention and understanding all sides of a social problem (Finkelhor & Williams, 1982, in Lear's , p. 61). Increased awareness furthers prevention efforts and the possibilities for change move into the control of professionals and community members alike. Omitting parts of the story has often left us helpless and overwhelmed.

In a qualitative study Gilgun and Connor (1989) interviewed 14 offenders about their views on sexual abuse. A content analysis revealed that perpetrators consistently reported an inability to see their victims as "anything other than sources of pleasure" (1989, p. 250). In objectifying the child they gave themselves permission to detach from the experience of the victim. "He never looked at his victim's face" (p. 250). The authors concluded that we need to overcome our own barriers in dealing with offenders and regard their perceptions as a valid contribution to treatment alternatives. One of these barriers is disgust and the inability to come to terms with the idea that sexual encounters with a child can be pleasurable for the offender. This idea if often unacceptable to the very people who perpetrate the abuse and

> a practitioner who understands that sexual abuse can be pleasurable can help perpetrators to come to terms with that fact (p. 251).

Outside of these examples, studies based on the experiences and perceptions of offenders were few and far between whereby the open-ended method of inquiry was virtually absent.

Dawson (1982) adds another dimension when he points out that 85% of all abusers involve fathers or father figures and that by concentrating public information on molestation by strangers has led to "conflicting emotions". should we react punitively or therapeutically?

> Faced with a conviction under the criminal code for a sexual offense and an absence of community treatment programs, judges have few alternatives to incarceration for sexual abuse offenders (Dawson, 1982, p. 3).

The Fathers' Anonymous programme in Oxford County has taken up the challenge to treat offenders in a community self-help oriented setting. They were able to do so because they put sexual abuse back into the context in which it belongs. out of the media limelight, that thrives on public disgust, into an analysis from which no-one can ultimately emerge unquestioned or unchanged. Whether or not programmes such as these prevent recidivism remains to be seen. What seems certain is that preventative approaches will depend on our willingness to include experiences from the margins.

We may well find, as Stallybrass and White (1986) suggest, that what is defined as marginal is also symbolically central. We know, that at this centre of our communities, sexuality and power mix always to the detriment of women and children. We know that the margins are like a mirror of this process. The behaviours of

offenders are not isolated incidences but rather constitute an expression of broader social contempt. Should this not in the very least encourage us to think again, to consider what feminists have analyzed and critiqued over and over; our view that there is a natural world, a natural way for men and women to interact, for children to be? The questions we will have to address are definitely uncomfortable, the actions likely encourage a move beyond individual change towards a broader social action.

Preventative Approaches

In the brief literature context outlined above, I could find few suggestions for prevention efforts. In the following pages I want to sketch an overview of research which includes such strategies. What I found overall is that "sexual abuse prevention efforts have primarily targeted children" (Dube, Heger, Johnson, & Herbert, 1988, p. 11). Accordingly many books reiterated the "Statement of Entitlement" as outlined in the Children First document which demands a future for children free from:

> family and societal violence, physical harm, sexual molestation and exploitation, neglect, emotional harm, and abandonment [...] as well as protection of the whole entitlement by society as a matter of substantive as well as procedural right (1990, p.36).

Many of such programmes propose an altered perception of children as capable human beings with inherent social and individual rights. The societal and communal methods for implementing these entitlements are described as far-reaching and at times hard to conceive of when financial limitations make prevention a low priority in social services.

Prevention efforts within the Waterloo Region have been restricted to identifying high risk factors and focusing interventions on populations which display

the largest number of these risk factors. "The greater the number of risk indicators, the greater the risk for emotional and behavioral problems" (The Waterloo Regional Social Resources Council, May 1990, p. 8). In most of these approaches a distinction between risk factors and economic and social conditions which pose a risk are rarely if ever made. Contributing elements quickly become a form of labelling rather than a call for the elimination of risky conditions. Programme suggestions commonly include preschool and school education about "safe touch", as well as parent awareness raising classes. The latter depend on adults showing an interest in topics of child rearing and may not reach populations which show difficulties in identifying their own needs (Kline, Grayson, & Mathie, 1990). By contrast, school programmes do reach the majority of children in our communities. In terms of their preventative value, however, they are based on a variety of unfounded assumptions. One such assumption is that:

> Children will be able to transfer knowledge gained from prevention programs into effective action when needed. Prevention programs are governed by the idea that increasing children's knowledge about abuse, providing them with action alternatives such as giving them permission to say no and get help, and bringing the dangers of abuse to their attention may be important in preventing sexual victimization, but there is no evidence to demonstrate that these idea actually prevent abuse (Reppucci & Haugaard, 1989, p. 1273).

The tentative nature of approaches in prevention child sexual abuse is unmatched in any other area concerning child welfare. Literature on physical abuse and neglect show a more definite moves towards prevention work. Support programmes for new parents are commonly cited as an important avenue for change, whereby active encouragement for fathers to bond with their children is seen as

instrumental in these changes (Finkelhor & Williams, 1992 in Lears). And "some evaluations of the best of these support programmes have demonstrated the effectiveness in primary prevention" (Justice, 1990, p. 102).

A times it was hard to comprehend why this "national agenda" does not extend to prevention of child sexual abuse. Prevention work in child physical abuse and neglect do however create a vision of alternative strategies for

> delivering preventative services to general populations without regard to their risk status. This strategy eliminates the stigma associated with being singled out for special services and ensures that no person needing the intervention will be denied (Caldwell, Bogat, & Davidson, 1988, p. 620).

Rosenburg and Reppucci in that context advocate for a "multifactorial causation model" as being "congruent with prevention ideology". However, an assessment of the utilization of a hot-line for parents revealed that only one percent of stress calls were actually related to primary prevention efforts (1985, pp.577-580).

The only real encouragement to examine primary prevention options in child sexual abuse was provided by Bagley and King (1990). They found courage in Canada's advanced approach to multi-culturalism. Although this is an arguable point of reference, the authors do provide an agenda for hope and transition from what is known and socially accepted toward taking chances with our social imagination. Mutuality is proposed as "an alternative model of relationships" which must permeate all layers of our community and finally society at large (Bagley & King, 1990, p. 218). This call for equality is extended to the crucial area of child rearing. Process of interaction receives due regard. Sexual abuse in this analysis is an upshot of abusive

attitudes and behaviours towards children generally. Ill-treatment of children whether sexual, physical, or emotional constitutes a continuum of abusive actions.

> If society is to heal itself in the matter of child sexual abuse, it must heal itself also in the matter of physical and emotional abuse of children (Bagley & King, 1990, p. 221).

The authors claim that weak definitions in the studies of child abuse reflect a social tolerance for the derogation of children, and that this is further indicative of "dynamics of power imbalance, sexual objectification, and general violence". Society needs to move in a "non-patriarchal, non-sexist, and non-violent direction to promote healing" (Bagley & King, 1990, p. 228). Prevention is directly linked to our willingness and ability to empower children.

Piglet teaches that big is not always better.

> Piglet is the material from which heroes are made. Beneath the stalwart exterior of most any courageous rescuer, gallant knight, or great achiever, a piglet can be found if one looks closely enough. [...] In many ways Piglet may appear the least significant of the Pooh characters. Yet he is the only one of them to change, to grow, to become more than what he was in the first place. And in the end, he does this not by denying his smallness, but by applying it for the good of others. He accomplished what he does without accumulating a large ego; inside he remains a very small animal but a different kind of a very small animal from what he was before (Hoff, 1992, p. 49-50).

Overall, despite an array of change efforts in child sexual abuse the literature review exposed a glaring omission. The dominant research approaches were to the exclusion of the voices of the offenders. More disturbingly they were to the exclusion of children as human beings with equal rights and valuable resources. Implicitly this points to a classical and cyclical return to the invalidation of children's perceptions and

experiences. It is an omission which is as frighteningly present in the sexual abuse act itself as in our communal and social responses to it.

An Alternative Model

The model which best captures my initial perceptions about prevention in child sexual abuse and which became the framework for the community workshop tasks is based on the following assumptions. (1) all social problems are multi-faceted, (2) a linear causal connection for human actions can rarely be found and is not a prerequisite for investing in preventative efforts, (3) preventative action plans address desired changes at individual, family, cultural and social levels concurrently, and (4) as socio-cultural changes affect the lives of more people than small-scale therapeutic ones, they are more likely to be sustained over time and across communities. Strategies can be divided into long-term societal/cultural and short-term individual/family changes, whereby for changes to persist with individuals and families, they must be accompanied by change efforts in the wider society

Further, proactive social and community interventions will be more effective if they are based on a comprehensive understanding of the problem at hand, and grounded in real life experiences. To ignore parts of the picture and the voices of some, weakens the acceptance and promotion of action plans within the wider community of which these people are a part. As Sarason (1978) persuasively argues social phenomena do not lend themselves to rationally attractive and scientifically seductive solutions and "problem changing rather than problem solving is figure" (p. 376). Professional intervention which is designed in the absence of community input may, then, scientifically and rationally make sense but does little to foster ownership over the process and final outcome. It is experienced as remote and inaccessible.

Ownership over "designing the future" and appreciation for the diversity of resources within any one community are indispensable criteria for successful planning and implementation of community action. And it is "in the fusion of research and action that community psychology can best fulfil its dream" (Tolan, Keys, Chertok, & Jason, 1990, p. 34). Empowerment to affect change is the essence of ecological research in action, and encouraging and soliciting participant input takes the magic out of research and finally community building.

Lastly, interventions with children will have a snowballing effect: future generations will benefit from creative efforts we make today, even if these efforts have little immediately visible results. Activities at all levels are dependent on a sustained individual and communal hopefulness. This hopefulness in turn is created and supported through action, the shared experience of small but significant successes. As children, so adults tend to learn about the possibility of change through doing, taking action. Communities need to stay empowered to attend to the process of their interventions. Understanding and agreeing on how we have arrived at a particular point of transition acknowledges that certain social change criteria are indispensable while others have hinder the process. Equitable distribution and use of resources as one of the basic criteria ensures that constant evaluation occurs, and that activities are centred in the experiences of people. Unlike children, adults can gain some of their motivation from a shared investment in the future. Having a vision based on intrinsic human values is imperative to all social action and allows for a variety of approaches towards a common end.

The model to follow is an adaptation to a model proposed by Howze and Kotch (1984) for primary prevention efforts in child physical abuse and neglect. The authors claim that an ecological model advocates most effectively for children's rights and needs. This was compatible with my understanding that for child sexual abuse to be possible there have to be differential power dynamics in place which allow such harmful actions. The subjugation of children within the family setting is one of these conditions: within our culture children tend to be regarded as inferior rather than developmentally removed. Adults are a child's yard measure for successful growth. We have few if any childhood heroes, and even Peter Pan who succeeds in keeping the evil Captain Hook at bay, needs Wendy (the maternal figure) to use her sowing skills to return his shadow to its rightful place. There are losses in the refusal to grow. (My own childhood heroes Max and Moritz two rebellious little boys ended up being turned into duck food, and "in the whole village there was no sign of sadness. Everybody agreed it had to end like this, such is the outcome of badness"). While the young child has much to learn, and while some of this learning will include consistent parental guidance sometimes against his/her wishes, such need should not be interpreted as an apology for subjugation. Nor is there any relief in awarding a child an adult status.

I changed the model by Howze and Kotch in two ways. (1) In trying to give recognition to the power of ideology and conditions in living, I put cultural and societal components before family and individual ones, and (2) I omitted their idea that "*perception of stress*" is the most salient factor, and replaced it with "*experience*

of stress". Cognition is valuable for making behavioral changes; it can also be undermined by persistent experiences to the contrary. Stress-reduction as one accepted preventative measure will be ineffective if targeting the behaviour and perception of individuals alone. The experience of gender constructions, for example, is stressful, deeply internalized, and shared across communities. Changing this process of "acculturation", as Freire called it, at the individual cognitive level ultimately does little to change its existence. It may further support it:

> Indeed, the interests of the oppressors lie in "changing the consciousness of the oppressed, not the situation which oppresses them", for the more the oppressed can be led to adapt to that situation, the more easily they can be dominated. [...] Within [this paternalistic social action apparatus] the oppressed are treated as individual cases, as marginal men [sic] who deviate from the general configuration of the 'good, organized and just' society. They are regarded as the pathology of the healthy society which must therefore adjust [...] these folk by changing their mentality (Freire, 1990, p. 60).

In current sexual abuse treatments efforts we invest much energy into "healing" the individual while we avert our eyes from a broader social pathology, which is part of this experience and may even inform it. We need to get to the source of our value construction.

I asked myself the following basic questions: Would sexual abuse occur in a society free of sexually exploitative structures and ideologies? Would incest be the most common sexual crime in a society which recognizes children's inalienable right to have their bodies, minds and feelings respected? How free are individuals to make choices which stand in contrast to internalized values? The latter is more easily answered, lest I believe that individuals are simply the sum product of their

surroundings. We don't solely act on impulses provided to us by the society we live in. But consider the following thoughts: for abuse to occur there have to be certain differential power dynamics in place that allow for this transgression, such as the lack of children's rights. For abuse to remain covert, there have to be certain social agreements in place which foster this secrecy, such as the sanctity of private life. For sexuality to move towards exploitation there have to be concepts in place which link sex and power.

The model does not offer solutions. It was next to the interview summaries a starting point for discussions during a workshop, which is further described in the method section. It was a tool, not an end in its own right. My basic proposition is that raising children is a community affair and that sexual abuse is indicative of a communal neglect. We need to ask the following questions:

(1) What is healthy sexuality?

(2) How do people in our communities experience the effectiveness of this definition?

(3) How do we respond to transgressions of the norm?

(4) How do we understand and deal with the discrepancy between "what should" be and "what is"?

(5) What is needed for communities to be able and willing to move towards what should be?

Sexuality is rarely if ever openly discussed in community settings. I had to make the assumption that despite a visible lack of such exchanges we can agree that sexual abuse is wrong, that many of us have a personal and professional investment

in decreasing the number of people with wounded sexualities. Is it possible to construct a collective vision of a better future and propose changes needed to work towards that future? The model can be read in two ways: (1) it can serve to identify areas where preventative efforts are needed; and (2) it allows for identification of possible action steps to realize such visions. Vision and action steps became combined in a final and new model which is summarized in the discussion. The differences between the initial and final model document my own learning processes throughout this research. They also, as we will see, confirm the potential of community-based popular education strategies over and above individual/professional capacities. In other words, the transition from one model to the next would not have been possible in the absence of the research participants' and community input to follow.

Model I

This model documents my initial suggestions for levels of prevention in child sexual abuse leaning on Howze and Kotch.

Table 1

Levels of Intervention for the Prevention in Child Sexual Abuse

SOCIETY	*CULTURE*	*FAMILY*	*INDIVIDUAL*
Formal and Informal Networks	*Attitudes towards Women and Children*	*Relationship Stability*	*Experience of Own Childhood*
General Community Welfare	*Attitudes towards Violence and Abuse of Power*	*Interaction between Family Members*	*Parenting Practices*
Social Integration	*Attitudes about Child Rearing*	*Special Needs of Family Members*	*Physical and Emotional Health*
Community Awareness	*View of the "Nature" of the Family*	*Extended Family Relations*	*Tolerance of Frustration*
Economic Resources	*View of the Role of Formal and Informal Networks*	*Living Conditions*	*Approach to Problem Solving*
Educational Opportunities	*Values placed on Individualism, Utility, Merit, and*	*Family Violence Patterns*	*Coping Skills*
		Awareness of Inter- and Cross-Generational Patterns	*Self-Image and Self-Identity*
			Locus of Control

The Research Context

The National Context

The most recent and comprehensive study about the incidence of sexual abuse in Canada was completed by Rogers (1990) in his report Reaching for Solutions. I had the opportunity to hear an address by Rogers at Waterloo Regional Family and Children Services, which was sadly under-attended. Glancing back over notes I took during this address, two areas distinguish Roger's study. First, he emphasized that all solutions are likely short-lived unless accompanied by broad-scale societal change. He particularly underscored the negative impact of patriarchal values as they are visible in the persistent lack of advocacy for children's rights. Second, given the endless cuts in health and welfare, he acknowledged the importance of para-professional interventions and the need for a concrete, joined, and interdisciplinary approach.

In Canada, sexual abuse affects one in four girls and one in 10 boys (Bagley, 1984; Rogers, 1990). Since 1985 we have seen an increase in sexual abuse reporting partially accounted for by greater public awareness about the topic. As we do not gather national statistics, the incidence rate of sexual abuse across Canada can only be inferred from regional and territorial numbers (Rogers, 1990, p. 19). There is a disturbing discrepancy between national population data, police force statistics, and hospital and child protection survey numbers. The most striking example can be found in reports about male victims between the ages of 14 and 15. According to a national population survey 35.6% of adolescents report experiences of sexual violation. Statistics gathered by the police (18.3%), hospitals (4.5%), and child protection agencies (12.0%) show a far lesser incidence rate (Rogers, 1990, p. 22). This suggests

that many adolescents who experience sexual abuse never access any social and judicial services. Given that many sex offenders have themselves been victims, and further given that the majority of first offenses are committed during adolescence, this is a frightening social welfare omission (Finkelhor, 1984; Groth, 1982).

Does the absence of national data collection reflect a wider disinclination to systematically deal with sexual abuse? According to Rogers (1990) and Marshall and Barrett (1990), some offenders reported having as many as 73 victims. Imagine thus, the number of children who could be spared the experience of abuse should effective preventative measures be in place. Imagine further, a proportional redistribution of funding into prevention, and the long-term human and financial "savings" in not having to deal with the aftermath of abuse. In his two-year trip across Canada Rogers listened to many personal accounts of sexual victimization. He came to the conclusion that sexual abuse is::

> symptomatic of deeply rooted societal values that tolerate and thereby promote the misuse of power and authority against vulnerable populations, including children. The sexual abuse of children is a pervasive social problem that can be reduced and ultimately eliminated only through comprehensive social change and culturally appropriate community development strategies (p. 43).

We cannot admit defeat before the work has begun. Prevention agendas above all else depends on a sense of hopefulness about the future. Change efforts need to involve radical transformations of formal and informal structures.

The Provincial and Regional Context

According to Sexual Assault Legislation Canada: An Evaluation (1990) "sexual assault level 1" is by far the most commonly reported sexual crime (95% of

all assault cases in 1988) (Document 4, p. 31). Ontario, as the most populated province, has the highest number of reported cases after British Columbia. From 1983 to 1988 cases of sexual assault have increased by 46% (from 46,272 to 67,433) (Document 4, p. 18). After a visit to the Waterloo Regional Police Station, I learned that neither the police nor helping agencies keep comprehensive incidence data. I, thus, fail to understand why rape incidents can fall into three different categories, while sexual abuse of children is lumped together into "Sexual Assault 1". The labels correspond to provincial and national guidelines which define sexual abuse charges by the force used during the abuse. As incestuous abuse tends to be characterized by the abuse of power rather than physical violence, on the surface one category seems to suffice but does little justice to the impact of emotional violence. Bill C-127 was passed in the legislature in January 1983 and specified these levels of sexual assault. A Review of Bill C-15 which deals specifically with the incidence of child sexual abuse did not begin until late 1992. The avoidance to deal with the complexity of the incest phenomena makes provincial and regional agencies somewhat helpless when it comes to understanding the real extent of incestuous abuse. It also does a disservice to children in our communities.

Waterloo Regional Police reported 2232 actual cases of "sexual assault 1" for 1990, 1804 cases of which have been cleared.[2] This constitutes an increase of 43 actual cases over the previous year (Annual Report, 1990, p. 26). When compared to "sexual assault with a weapon" (three actual, three cleared), or "aggravated sexual

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"Cleared" means the number of cases which have been solved by the police in one year.

assault" (five actual, six cleared) for the same year, it is obvious that by far the most cases reported to the police include sexual abuse of children. A visit to Guelph penitentiary adds another dimension to understanding how we address sexual abuse. During an interview with the head psychologist who works on average with 117 men at any one time (52% of whom are incest offenders) he emphasized to me the importance of community back-up when trying to reduce recidivism. In his experience linking inmates to community resources prior to leaving the penitentiary is the single most successful form of relapse prevention. And yet such efforts are far and few between as the immediate community context will illustrate.

The Community Context

According to the Waterloo Region community Blue Book CJI is the only organization which specifically states an involvement with sexual abuse offenders. Other helping organizations predominately list victim/survivor programmes. One of CJI's group members told me that he tried to find help prior to abusing his daughter. He confronted threats or long waiting-lists for the few affordable therapeutic interventions.

> CJI offers a service to offenders unmatched by other local community agencies.
>
> [CJI] seeks within Waterloo Region, to promote intra-personal, interpersonal and systematic healing for the hurts caused by violence expressed through sexual abuse. Through education and mutual support, the program offers opportunity for understanding the nature, dynamics and effects of sexual violation and the hope and opportunity to take control of those dynamics and effects within our individual and collective lives (SAT Programme description, 1989, p. 1).

Through mutual support programmes and empowerment philosophies, staff and volunteers aim to stop sexual violence, whereby such abuse is understood to be the "outcome of learned behaviour, societal expectations and gender socialization" (SATP, 1989, p. 10).

CJI has two locations in Kitchener and one in Cambridge. During the time of my research nine full-time and four part-time staff were continuously supported by a pool of 80 to 100 volunteers. CJI practices a philosophy of participatory democracy and social justice in its two distinct programme parts: the Sexual Abuse Treatment Programme and the Mediation Services Programme. The latter concerns itself with. community mediation, victim offender reconciliation, and pre-release mediation. Participants for this study came from the Sexual Abuse Treatment Programme (SATP) which provides group work for survivors and offenders of sexual abuse, as well as public education.

CJI also offers mutual support groups for non-offending parents. A male survivor group confirms that sexual abuse is not restricted to female children. Cross-gender groups do not exist. During an intake assessment a coordinator determines with applicants their willingness to partake in group intervention. Offenders who have been court-ordered to attend may exhibit a different level of motivation than their voluntary peers. The impact of involuntary participation in self-help groups has been an ongoing topic of discussion at CJI. In my experience group members often continued attending a group well after they had fulfilled their probationary terms.

The groups follow a self-help model and are facilitated by trained volunteers or past group members. In 1991 the offender programme held 290 group sessions,

which accounted for over a half of the total SATP group schedule. One hundred potentially new members were interviewed of which 88 joined the programme. The average attendance of group members made for a total of 160 sessions in the offenders programme, as opposed to 117 sessions out of 130 available in the survivor's programme. Twenty volunteers contributed 4000 hours, making for an equivalent of 2.5 full-time staff positions. Quarterly statistics reveal a waiting list of 17 potential members for the period of April to June '91, which would amount to an average of 68 men and women waiting to attend groups annually. There is certainly no lack of demand for CJI's interventions within this community.

Methodological Choices

Staff and group members in CJI took an active and invaluable part in the final methodological decisions. The process was communal and collaborative in as much as the setting not only determined what should be asked, but also how it should be asked. Jointly we made the assumption that collective experience is greater than the sum total of its parts and indicative of a shared social reality (Lord, Schnarr, & Hutchison, 1987).

Research as a Form of Social Action

Consensual decision-making processes demand that we critique the notion of "researcher as expert".

> The qualitative researcher seeks to understand the gestalt, the unifying nature of particular settings, events, perceptions, or interactions (Lord, Schnarr, & Hutchison, 1987, p. 20).

Even a brief glance at current social conditions affirms that adequate help continues to be lacking, in spite of a large quantity of "objective" assessments. The social researcher often lives in a tension between addressing questions about immediate needs and rationalizing his/her actions in terms scientifically acceptable truth. In setting ourselves apart from the imperative of external validity, community psychologists can advance the acceptance of research as a form of social action which is grounded in the validity of subjective experiences. This position actively contrasts with conventional research approaches, but gives meaning to research beyond the pursuit of knowledge.

My thesis is informed by personal, professional, and political discontent with a knowledge which constitutes detached objectification of multiple shared realities. If we try to provide an honest representation of social needs, we need to use measures

which are entirely social in ethics and process. The goal is not to discover the "truth", but to explore social conflicts inherent in even the most personal experiences. Methodological choices are a political and intensely personal act, which demand that the researcher takes a stand.

Research as a Form of Dissonance

Prilleltensky (1990) asserts that:

> the statement of the problem is [...] crucial. In order to attain hegemony, social conditions and problems are defined in such a way that they will not pose a threat to the status quo (p. 321).

He adds that research aimed at social change "denunciates" the notion of pure scientific knowledge as a realistic possibility, or even less a desirable outcome. Psychology in research rationalization and execution has a tradition of concentrating on the well-being of individuals "at the expense of proactive moral behaviour towards society at large" (Prilleltensky, 1990, p. 310). If knowledge is socially constructed it is also changeable.

Researchers are part of the multifaceted reality they seek to explore. Lincoln and Guba (1985) persuasively argue that researchers must embrace and share the hope, that social reality can be re-constructed. As the proverbial saying goes. if you are part of the problem, you can also be part of the solution. One small but essential method to safeguard myself against a stance of scientific superiority (which would be inconsistent with community research) was to write a journal throughout the research process. This allowed me to record my own subjective experience of the research process which I refer to in the discussion. Research is a form of education, from which neither the researcher nor the participants emerge unchanged. Some of this

change was personal and strongly felt during, not following, the collection of data. The research process, then, must receive equal attention to the research outcome to ensure an empowerment agenda for researcher and community participants alike.

The Empowerment Agenda

Methodologies need to be communally agreed upon processes which foster a discourse about social questions by means as essentially social as the questions themselves. The context in which these exchanges take place, the position of the researcher within, and the changes to this position over time, constitute a crucial part of the overall experience. Empowerment is the amount of control felt and practiced by research participants over the research process and outcome. Rappaport (1981) suggests that empowerment directly increases as we treat research participants as collaborators rather than clients.

Nelson and Earls (1986) assert that:

> action oriented approach[es] to community research may be valuable not only in terms of practical utility, but also in terms of enhancing the process of scientific inquiry (p. 20).

Action outcomes of such inquiry are directly related to citizen participation in the determination and finally application of methodology. Qualitative research allows participants and researcher to <u>experience</u> scientific inquiry as mutually beneficial and challenging. In turn it adds to our awareness of alternative methods of inquiry inside and outside the setting, in a social climate currently dominated by quantitative information. Participants who actively partake in the research are less likely in the future to accept alienation from their own life experiences in academically detached representations. Accordingly, I had to concern myself throughout with intermittent

outcomes of data collection and analyses, and this concern was at times extended beyond the research setting to the discipline of community psychology as a whole. Qualitative research is still a rarity, and the body of social knowledge as it stands relies heavily on traditional scientific methods. Ethical considerations, in that sense, inform methodological agreements beyond the narrow scope of the research itself. Unable to draw on a multitude of precedents, qualitative research is a form of social intervention in its own right. The overall agenda of this intervention is to increase individual and community control over our lives and to advance social justice. My own empowerment depended on the opportunity to be socially creative.

Prevention Research

Upon reflection, the national, regional, and community context was anything but empowering to people in the setting and myself. Social science research is too intertwined with social welfare philosophies to promote prevention-focused alternatives. We tend to design programmes which help people to adapt to environmental and social conditions which cause harm. We rarely attempt to eliminate such conditions altogether (Heller, Price, Reinharz, Riger, & Wandersman, 1984, p. 183). I was tempted at times to seek comfort in proposing quantifiable measures such as the reduction of recidivism over time. Prevention of sexual abuse has received little serious research efforts to date, let alone from the perspective of offenders. The argument that we don't know if prevention efforts would actually produce change has allowed us to keep prevention agendas out of the realm of action and reduced to academic platitudes. But retroactive treatment approaches by their very definition are

inadequate when it comes to avoiding pain, and we owe it to our children to take prevention seriously and to take risks with our social imagination.

Researchers often stand in relative distance to the problem they propose to study. I most strongly felt this when I shared my ideas with local service providers before the research began. Pursuing a pro-active approach to sexual abuse put me in conflict with dominant trends, and was perceived as a threat to the current status quo. It was at times hard not to get discouraged by the prevailing idea that when it comes to sexual transgressions "prevention will never work". We tend to describe the social context as an important contributor to sexual abuse, but restrict our suggestions to changes of an individual nature. Additionally, promoting an awareness of a wider social reality rarely begins with understanding the experiences of people who are seen to be deviating from the norm. We persist with the belief that there is a healthy normative sexual climate, despite the fact that women and children continue to be hurt. Naus insists, that "There is nothing natural about sexuality, beyond the bodies' capacity for pleasure".[3] It is easy to become overwhelmed with the complexity of sexual violence. But these legal, social, cultural and sub-cultural feelings of bewilderment preclude primary prevention models receiving due considerations. We are addicted to simple answers, and it is easier to label individuals as "sick" than to consider the sexual ill-health of communities. It is also difficult to conceive of a community

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Prof. Peter Naus has been actively involved with CJI since it began over 11 years ago. During a workshop in 1990 he gave a lecture on male and female sexuality as portrayed by the dominant media. (This quote is extracted from my own notes which I took during this presentation).

actively defining creative and positive sexual interactions. Our definitions in the realm of sexuality tend to be created by process of negation. Like the research participants I felt at times marginalized in my hope that something can be done.

Pre-Entry Issues

Acceptance into the setting was, in part, connected to my willingness to reject notions of individual pathology and to admit to an interest in processes of marginalization. Needless to say I had to "jump a few emotional hoops", before I was capable of actively listening to people who are depicted as "deviants" and "monsters". It was also a challenge to establish relationships of equitable power with the participants. By definition sexual abuse becomes possible because of differential power, and I needed to overcome the fear that a need for power is an inherent part of offenders' interactions with other people. Communal responses to offenders constitute a reversal of the power dynamics of the abuse situation. Those of us who claim to have no abusive attitudes and behaviours are allowed (and indeed encouraged) to feel emotionally and morally superior. Researchers are often exempt from this process and

> studies on offenders are usually considered as more valid when they show a greater prevalence of deviance [...] . We sometimes are suspicious of results that don't confirm what we think (Sleek, 1994, p. 33).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) assert that

> Change [is] construed as relatively more or less desirable by different stakeholders. Value differences [can only] be resolved through political negotiations. Failure to provide the opportunity for such negotiations is tantamount to disenfranchisement" (p. 16).

Such negotiations between myself and the participants persisted throughout the research. Sex offenders rarely have a <u>voice</u> beyond that sanctioned by legal and

clinical experts. It was a challenge to hear their stories, and to summarize their individual and collective experiences in a way that can be heard by others.

The Beginning of the Research Process

My involvement with CJI began in June 1991, when I approached one of the coordinators of the SAT programme, with the offer to devote my thesis to broaden the understanding of CJI's work in its community context. I had no set agenda but rather suggested to generate research questions and methods in collaboration with staff and group members. I had chosen the setting because of its emphasis on preventative and self-help approaches, and because I felt certain that collaboration and consensus would be a welcome opportunity. In order to foster the trusting relationships critical for a participatory approach I became involved in C.J.I. in two capacities. (1) as a research agent for this project, and (2) as co-facilitator in a group for adolescent offenders and victims.

My contact with the coordinator soon extended to volunteers and group members in the SAT programme following my attendance at CJI's intensive training weekend in July 1991, an annual event for public education and recruitment of volunteers. During the second day of the workshop, participants divided into two groups: those wanting to work with survivors, and those wanting to work with offenders. I attended the latter and was provided with the opportunity to introduce myself and my research intentions. To my surprise I was encouraged to be a participant observer in a group for offenders. "The ice was broken", and I realized from the interest of group members, that there were stories to be told.

On Becoming an Insider

During the CJI workshop I took part in the "secret" exercise in which everybody was asked to describe affective memories of having been victimized and having offended. Sexual violence was defined as part of a broader social and subjective continuum of abusive patterns. I knew that. And yet it was a difficult task to address the "abuser within" as Foucault and others have challenged us to do. I had internalized notions of "woman as victim" in a way that did not allow for emotional empathy with the perpetrator. I wondered if I would be able to actively listen, as long as I found it hard to accept that some of the affective components of victimization and "villainization" can be strikingly similar. And yet, offenders and survivors alike describe feelings of loss, guilt, anger, and anxiety as common responses to the abuse situation.

I struggled with the personal realization that identification with victims is more than a simple empathetic response. It can also be a form of avoidance behaviour by which we excuse ourselves from the process of dialectic exchange. While I had politically opposed the social unwillingness to attend to offenders as a sophisticated form of victim blaming, I had also personally absolved myself from this critique. I realized that this research would be a challenging experience well beyond the academic criteria.

After the workshop I paid weekly visits to CJI's office in Kitchener to check for messages and distribute parts of the research proposal. I looked through reading material provided by CJI, viewed video material used in groups, and simply asked copious questions of whoever had the energy to spend some time with me. In August

'91 we established a working committee to determine research goals and methods. This group included group members and facilitators from the offenders' and survivors' programme, representatives from the non-offending parent programme, administrative staff, coordinators, and the executive director. We met monthly for the duration of my proposal writing and committee members often contacted me outside of these times with questions and suggestions. Glancing back over the minutes from these meetings, some essential process and content areas can be highlighted.

The Research Committee

Initially the group worked on setting community psychology principles apart from traditional psychological approaches. My role as a researcher was the focus of these discussions, and the group members' sense of equitable power increased the more I was able to talk myself out of being the central agent in the research process. Group members increasingly embraced their own importance, abilities, and rights.

I was frequently reminded of two community psychology principles. (1) "when people agree with you, worry"; (2) "having rights, but no resources [...] is a cruel joke" (Rappaport, 1981, p.4 and p.19, respectively). To invite feedback does not set an empowerment agenda. Empowerment is pending on researchers' ability and willingness to make the ethics and practices of their form of social inquiry accessible.

I was less familiar with the topic content than any of the committee members and it was important for them to hear this. When I advocated for qualitative methods as most appropriate for community research, I needed to do so without seeking reprieve in expert language. Language use is central in fostering participants' sense of their own resources, and addressing fears about becoming a "subject" at the hands of a

scientific expert. I learned much from CJI staff's ease in interacting with volunteers and group members alike.

The Research Content

In the initial phases the committee concentrated on ensuring methods for easy contact and informed consent, both of which are essential for shared decision-making and communal ownership over research process and data. Later we generated a wish list of all the questions we wanted to address. This list was narrowed in focus to realistic limits by way of a nominal group process. We finally explored a variety of methodological possibilities before we decided on a qualitative approach. We agreed that the thesis should be understood as a continual learning process for all involved. With this, the importance of the research process was settled and we had thoroughly explored our mutual and individual value bases. The gestalt of empowerment demands a dynamic relationship between researcher and participants at all times. Walsh (1988) asserts that:

> In contemporary society science dominates consciousness, and its practitioners, especially psychologists, inherit this mantle of societal adulation. We contribute to iatrogenesis, when we perpetuate the dogmas of immaculate perception and value free research and when we enact the arrogant role of possessing the Truth. In the absence of a humbler conception of science, the temptation to act out this culturally sanctioned superiority is strong and persistent (p. 249).

Co-facilitating a group for young offenders in the SAT programme allowed me to stay grounded in the experience of working in the area of sexual abuse and the need to avoid iatrogenic effects of intervention at all costs. I was recently reminded of this imperative when a group member challenged me to finally admit that he was "sick". He could not, so he claimed, understand how I could reject his abusive behaviour and

yet continue to care about him as a person. I realized that by dismissing sex offenders as deviant or sick we have communally provided the perfect justification for re-offending. If you are "sick" you ultimately cannot help what you do. Brickman, Rabinowitz, Karuza, Coates, Cohn, and Kidder (1982) distinguish the responsibility for the causes of a problem from the responsibility for solving a problem. This approach puts the ownership to control undesirable events back onto the individual (or community) who, although he/she may not be entirely responsible for the situation, can nevertheless experience him/herself as capable of addressing it. The "compensatory model" proposed by Brickman et. al. offers a welcome treatment alternative in working with offenders.

Throughout the two years of facilitating a group, my co-leader and I have tried to emphasize that if you can chose to abuse a child by picking your time and victim, you can also chose to walk away or not be in that situation in the first place. At times it was important to extend this analysis to an analysis of broader, social abusive elements such as pornography. The group's focus was on relapse or secondary prevention, although primary prevention ideas were frequently a topic of discussion. I have learned that prevention work is at best a prolonged and challenging process. I also had to realize that the more we believe to be immune to or helpless in the face of abuse dynamics the less we are likely to invest in a future free of them. Facilitating a group has added an essential emotional component to my involvement at CJI. Group members constantly impressed upon me that our communities lack the opportunity for discussing sexuality generally, and sexuality and control specifically.

The WLU Thesis Committee

The university thesis committee followed the guidelines of the Graduate Studies Council, with the exception that a CJI representative had equal opportunity to provide feedback in this context. I hoped to bridge the gap between the community setting and the academic arena as much as possible. Additionally I was privileged to be part of a group of students who met weekly as a thesis support group with the principal goal to discuss practical and ethical considerations about ones thesis in progress. These peer evaluations of the research process constituted an indispensable part of the thesis efforts.

Additional Community Contacts

When trying to understand the "career" of sexual abuse offenders we need to attend to the wider social and legal context. Key stakeholders are: (1) the Regional Police, (2) the Courts, (3) the Correctional Centres, (4) the Protection Services; (5) probation and parole, and (6) other community settings which concern themselves with sexual abuse. I approached these stakeholders of the community to determine realistic utilization guidelines as it is compatible with an action research model. Additionally I made contacts with self-help groups, US branches of Parent's Anonymous, and the Self-Help Clearinghouse in Toronto to introduce my intent and gain a sense of existing self-help models in sexual abuse. Many of my journal entries are reflections about these contacts which I was able to share with the committee at CJI. Suffice it to say that self-help approaches in working with convicted or potential sex offenders are few and far between and met with plenty of scepticism.

Research Questions

Following a process of making several methodological choices the thesis committee at CJI arrived at an outline for the parameters of the research overall. These research goals can be summarized in three questions:

A description of life histories: How do sex offenders describe their childhood and life prior to the first abuse instance?

A description of the situation: How do sex offenders in the Waterloo Region describe their "career"?

These two questions were aimed at understanding the life histories of participants as they remembered them. The final question directly addressed the potential for primary prevention efforts. I asked all participants to share with me their perceptions and believes about prevention. This question also became the basis for the community workshop when members had the opportunity to creatively assess our ability to work for the elimination of sexual abuse. In part this community effort was based on inferences drawn from the life cycle descriptions of participants.

An assessment of needs: What needs to be done to further pro-active approaches to sexual abuse in the community?

All three research questions were consistent with the notion that in-depth understanding of subjective experience is a valid form of social inquiry. Patton (1990) asserts:

> The fact of the matter is that we cannot observe everything. We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe behaviour that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meaning that they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions

about these things. The purpose for interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into other person's perspective. Qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and to be made explicit (p. 278).

Methods

The Participants

Ten men from the CJI offender programme participated in qualitative, open-ended, conversational style interviews. To recruit volunteers for the research I initially met with group facilitators who agreed to ask group members if they were open to me visiting one of their group sessions. I attended all but one of the offender groups to introduce myself, the thesis goals, and methods. The majority of group members were eager to find our more about the research goals and many offered to be a research participant. Because of the time and energy involved in this form of research, I regretfully had to turn down several offers for interview participation. Instead these group members were encouraged to provide input in the workshop described below.

The experience that members were more than willing to take part in the research contradicted my initial expectations that sex offenders would be reluctant to participate in face-to-face interviews for fear of personal exposure. I had underestimated how powerful the offer to tell your story is. Interestingly several men communicated an adverse reaction to clinical approaches such as they had experienced in clinical settings or for parole assessments. Once they realized that they would not have to respond to copious survey questions and that the goal was to review primary prevention models rather than individual relapse prevention, many group members were keen to talk to me.

Interview times and venues were mutually agreed upon by phone, following a visit to group, or by means of passing on messages through the mail system at CJI. The interviews started with a brief collection of demographic data which I wrote down

but did not record on tape. I only gathered details which during the workshop allowed me to provide some descriptive data about the interviewees. I was not concerned with providing a representative sample, because the research emphasis was on in-depth knowledge of subjective experiences. I omitted demographic information which has no salient status in current sexual abuse research (ethnic identity, professional status, and so on) (Groth, 1982) (for a summary of these demographic data see Appendix 1).

I tape-recorded the interviews and switched off the recorder at any time participants requested. Prior to turning on the tape recorder, I reiterated my research intentions, described the methods for data analysis, and reassured participants that they could withdraw from the process at any time. I asked participants to "tell (their) stories in their own words". I also asked them to share their perceptions about primary prevention based on these experiences. Interview participants received a signed letter in which I committed myself to. (1) ensuring confidentiality within the parameters of the Family and Children Services Act, and (2) protecting but not owning the interview data (for a copy of the letter of consent see Appendix 2). Finally, I made transcripts of interviews available to the participants prior to data analysis for corrections and additions. A brief interview guide helped me to keep focused on the goals. I made this guide available to participants if they so requested, but encouraged them to think about the topic in their own terms. Only one participant used the guide briefly.

Principally the interviews were informal conversations guided by two values: (1) to keep any questions and responses in line with a capacity model and avo. negative foci on my part, and (2) to actively seek for participants' connections between

their subjective experiences and the wider social context. This method comprised a combination of "interview guide" and "informal conversational" approaches, as outlined by Patton (1990, p. 280). I listened to whichever parts of their life-story participants chose to share with me in any way they saw fit. I wanted to hear the "other side of the story", and in doing so to touch on key issues from the perspective of offenders in the current system. Participants knew that I hoped to summarize their individual and collective experiences by keeping to four parts:

Past Experiences: What happened?

What happened prior to the sexual abuse incidence and the disclosure?

The Present: Where are you at now?

How has life changed since disclosure and following participation in the treatment programme?

The Future: How do you see your future?

What are your hopes and goals for the future? What will help you to avoid re-offending?

Hindsight: What would have helped to prevent the abuse?

What needs to change in our communities for primary prevention to become a realistic possibility?

Data Analysis

I transcribed the interviews word for word, only omitting any identifying information, or parts of the conversation in which we got sidetracked into clearly

unrelated issues.[4] I then searched these transcripts for themes. Data analysis was data-driven and followed an inductive method of analysis. I was unable to ask an outsider to check my analysis for coding dependability as several participants regarded it as a potential confidentiality issue. Maximum comfort about my ability to keep the material confidential was essential to the process. My main reliability check rested in encouraging interviewees to participate in the set-up and presentation of preliminary results during the community workshop. My intention was to accurately reflect the stories I had invited to hear in terms of key issues, and to use these key issues as the starting point for community reflections about primary prevention approaches.

The transcripts were coded as follows. I began by reading the first transcript and in keeping close to the actual wording categorized statements in terms of the topics they addressed. These topics were appended to separate files, and I marked the original texts to allow for cross-checking in the future. The subsequent interviews were treated equally with the exception that I moved quotations from the texts into already existing topic files if appropriate. New themes became a new file in their own rights. By this method I arrived at an original total of 75 different themes. I then used the historical sequence guide to narrow the results down to a presentable data collection of several main topics. These key subjects are summarized in my results section in extensive quotations from the text.

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[4] I asked permission from participants to disregard certain parts of the conversation such as they had the option to have interview parts omitted from the research. Principally if I had any doubt whether parts of the story were of significance I continued with the transcription.

Data analysis was a complicated and demanding process as I actively tried to avoid judgements about the relative significance of statements. To safeguard against value judgements I employed two techniques. I kept interview participants informed about intermittent results (usually by phone). I also asked all participants after the workshop whether I had accurately reflected their stories without major omissions. The interviews took anywhere from 45 minutes to three and a half hours with an average length of two hours. I was in the possession of 14 tapes and 182 pages of transcripts. I cannot claim to have established an exhaustive analysis of the data. What I do know is that I listened with an open mind and tried to base the results on what I heard.

The Workshop and Research Utilization

As I kept regularly in touch with interview participants, as much as time and distances allowed, research utilization was an ongoing topic of discussion. Participants became increasingly excited about sharing the results of the research with the community at large, and we set up a workshop committee consisting of CJI staff, volunteers, interview participants and their spouses. Six of the 10 participants actively helped in making this community event possible. All but one attended the workshop and those who were not able to help in preparatory work assisted in house keeping tasks during the retreat. The workshop date was finally set for 19 and 20 June 1992 and some 200 invitations were sent out, or distributed by hand to relevant service providers, interested members in the community, and family members of the participants. A copy of the invitation to the workshop and planning committee are included in Appendix 3.

Setting up th s workshop was the most exciting community process I have ever been able to partake in. We set and achieved three main goals. (1) to share the results of the research work with stakeholders in the community; (2) to affect an open dialogue between service providers, service consumers, and the public; and (3) to encourage a particip atory approach by means of thematic groups. The groups had to attend to two tasks: (1) We asked them to identify barriers to thinking preventatively; and (2) in overcoming some of these barriers we encouraged them to envisage preventative strategies for a community "in the best of all worlds".

Driscoll and McFarland (in Tomm, 1989) argue elsewhere that the main impact of feminism on research has been to abolish the division between the public and private sphere, whereby the first provides inadequate measurements for understanding the latter. In other words, in-depth personal knowledge is favoured over broad public knowledge in the recognition that the public powers to be have always been to the exclusion of women specifically and marginalized people generally. Asking "why" in this approach becomes again valid and desirable.

> Feminist research methodology is oriented towards contextualizing the research process, the researcher, and the subject of research, based on a non-dualistic world view. [...] The social context and the intricate connection (Messing 1986: 66) between the various aspects of life should be dealt with. A continual self-consciousness focused on the research process itself should be part of the work (p. 189).

I believe the workshop provided the opportunity for a community to reflect upon the private events, offenders and victims alike have so often endured in silence. Sexual abuse emerged as something that can be understood beyond the boundaries of blame and guilt. Throughout the workshop I truly saw a community in action. A

local news reporter was invited and interviewed a research participant, a CJI coordinator, and myself. Although the reporter was present for most of the first and some of the second day the report focused on a brief suggestion made by one of the workshop facilitators that incestuous abuse should be decriminalized and treated therapeutically. Taken out of context this, not so surprisingly, prompted an incest survivor to write a rather angry letter to the paper. However, with even less favourable press coverage in the past research participants expressed that "it could have been worse" (for a copy of these articles see Appendix 4).

Utilization is an ongoing process. Since the workshop in June 1992, a follow-up event has taken place and a third one is in the planning stages. The discussions in some shape or form continue. Officially my research ended with the summary and evaluation of the workshop. My personal exploration of the process and issue has barely begun.

Research Results

Three Life Stories

Throughout the data analysis and representation of results I struggled with the realization that no matter how much I tried to ground myself in the experiences of the participants, a selection of quotations and themes from 182 pages of transcript was bound to include subjective judgements on my part. The stories I heard have a meaning in their own right, and to "dissect" them even if done with compassion and care still resulted in incomplete images. It further did little justice to the experience of interviewing.

I decided to summarize three stories in terms of the sequence of events mentioned as they were mentioned by participants. I wrote three brief case studies from the interviews, followed by a summary of suggestions the participants made to work for change. The selection of three interviews out of ten was not an easy task. All of the interviews made an invaluable contribution to the research. The final selection, hence, does not constitute a value statement on my part, but was rather informed by my intention to provide a sense of how three very diverse lives can make for a shared reality.

The sequential approach was consistent with the goal to explore and represent life histories. I hope it will further aid the reader to hear the voices of participants more clearly and not have them drowned by my thoughts, suggestions, and speculations. However, this approach did mean an addition to my original results section, and the case studies you will read below were not part of the workshop. Upon reflection I believe they could have made a valuable contribution to an

understanding of the topic. To be able to keep to my agreement with participants not to use fictional names or their initials, I have used the letters X, Y, and Z instead. This is not meant to derogate the participants to numbers, and I suggest that the reader gives a name to the person him/herself to allow for a more personal and empathetic response.

The Story of X

X was the second youngest of five children. His parents both came from abusive family situations although the nature of this abuse remains unclear to him to the present day. As a child X had several episodes of ill-health and the hospital stays caused a constant fear of abandonment. This became particularly pronounced after his two older brothers were removed from the home to go into foster care or reformatories. Reasons for this action were not mentioned and X seemed quite unclear about them, as they were never discussed in the home.

At age 13 X was sexually assaulted by his oldest brother who had returned for a home visit. This brother had been somewhat of an idol for him which made the abuse a particularly disturbing event. X felt at the time that both of his brothers were resentful over him being allowed to stay at home. As he felt partially responsible for this unfairness he never reported the abuse. Shortly after this first abuse incident, X was assaulted by a high school teacher. He reported this incident to his parents who were not willing to discuss it, let alone take action against the perpetrator. This discouraged X from revealing the abuse he had suffered through this brother, and he internalized the blame. He concluded that it was important not to trust people if he wanted to keep safe. Shortly after the abuse X's school performance suffered dramatically. Until then he had been a good student, leaving aside his absenteeism. During grade nine X changed high schools six times and eventually quit school altogether.

He moved away from home and started low-paid jobs spending most of his free time drinking and sometimes picking fights, particularly with men he suspected to be homosexual. The family continued to challenge him to be like his older brother who was more successful, while X tried his utmost to not be associated with him in any shape or form. If his brother succeeded at something, X set himself up to fail in the same area.

X married at 18 to get away from the family and had two children from this marriage. The marriage lasted nine years. Shortly after his third child died during infancy, X assaulted the babysitter of his brother who was a friend of the family. He

was charged with "carnal knowledge" and served 16 months in prison. His wife divorced him. Two months after release from prison he met and married his second wife. He felt that women were attracted to him because he provoked nurturing responses in them due to unresolved pain. During both marriages he had multiple extra-marital affairs. He had one son and one step-daughter from the second marriage. He experienced his wife as getting too close to him and soon became involved in a variety of criminal activities (thefts, fraud, assaults). He was sentenced to nine years in prison and could have been released within three years. But close to each time when release from prison was pending he would partake in actions which prolonged his stay. X felt safe in prison and could thus avoid his parental duties as well as his wife who continued to wait for him. She finally divorced him and X was released after five years and seven months.

After his release he joined AA but did not take the programme seriously. Every eighteen months he would go back on binges and return to a life centred around alcohol, bar fights, and women. During an AA meeting he met his third wife. Like him she was a sexual abuse survivor although she was not to find out about his victimization until many years later. He sexually assaulted his step daughter from this marriage and was reported by his other daughters. After the disclosure he attempted suicide and his own sexual abuse was disclosed for the first time. He was advised to join CJI while the court hearings were pending. X was finally charged with sexual assault 1 and sentenced to two years at OCI. He was released from OCI after one year on parole because of his father's ill-health. He has since confronted his brother about the abuse perpetrated on himself, and assisted his wife and step-daughter in attending group programmes for victims and non-offending parents. He remains married to his third wife and continues to volunteer time in community work. He currently no longer attends CJI but had been actively involved in the programme for six years.

X suggested the following preventative strategies:

[1] People need knowledge about sexual abuse, about the difference between love and sex, and about community resources dealing with these issues.

[2] There should be a help-line for male victims which can also be accessed by potential offenders. This help-line can only be successful if we seriously consider therapeutic interventions before we seek recourse in criminalization. "I would have phoned before I assaulted my step-daughter", he told me.

[3] Families need to be encouraged to have open discussions and expression of affection and emotions. This is particularly important if parents and children have some pain in their lives. He expressed that this made a big difference in his current life and was instrumental in avoiding re-offending: "I can cry now. I don't think that makes me a wimp. Keeping all my feelings in was the wimpy thing to do".

[4] Everybody should know coping mechanism for stress reduction. "As soon as I got stressed out all hell broke loose".

[5] People who over-consume alcohol or suffer constant inexplicable ill-health should become aware that they may be hiding emotional trauma behind the physical pain and their attempts to numb their feelings through drugs.

The Story of Y

Y was the third oldest child of nine children. His father was an alcoholic and frequently beat both his wife and the children. He suspects that his father sexually assaulted his sisters but has no proof of this to the present day as none of the family members will talk about it. When Y was six years old he was sodomized by two neighbours. He told his mother about the abuse who denied that any such thing could happen. He was forbidden to talk about this. The neighbours continued to live in the same apartment building for one and a half years after the assault and Y lived in constant fear of their presence. They finally moved to the other end of town.

Y was also sexually abused by his two older sisters and a baby sitter. Other than in punishment he felt entirely unattended to by his parents, and the abuse gave him a sense of closeness and a feeling of being "loved". He never spoke about this abuse until after he had been charged. His childhood was characterized by erratic parenting and the power of a remote and unpredictable father who told everyone what to do and not to question him. Y became increasingly quiet and introverted. In school he suffered constant failure and ridicule because of a learning disability which impaired his spoken language. He left home when he was 15 years of age.

In his young adult years he constantly drank and had multiple sexual relationships. He reports using women for sex and a sense of power. His first marriage lasted six months. He used anger to keep women at a safe distance and

reports feeling no respect for women. During his second marriage he often worked away from home for months on end and shortly after the birth of his daughter his wife left him for reasons he is unsure of to the present day. Despite several attempts he never saw his child until a chance encounter some 13 years later.

He has two girls from his third marriage which was characterized by fighting and constant disappointments. He stopped drinking during this marriage upon a request by his daughter and to this day is puzzled that he was able to do so. The marriage finally ended after 11 years and his wife avoided any contact with him. His visitation rights with his children became exceedingly difficult due to her moving quite a distance away. Even during the marriage Y reports that his wife mistrusted him in the presence of the children although he did not sexually interfere with them. Y believes that his wife was a victim of sexual assault and had an inherent mistrust for men. He finally lost contact with his children for five years, and only shortly before the interview had received a visit from his oldest daughter.

Y was charged with sexual interference of his oldest stepdaughter. He had been living with his new partner for some time, who had two daughters from a previous relationship. The children finally reported the abuse to a teacher who informed F&C.S. He continues to be involved in programme at CJI and hopes that following a divorce from his third wife and after treatment he will be re-united with his partner and her children. His family has broken all contact with him, while the family of his partner continues to be supportive. Two weeks prior to the interview one of the neighbours who had assaulted him had died. Y felt deprived of the chance to confront him.

Preventative strategies mentioned by Y are:

[1] We need to believe children when they report discomfort and abuse, as otherwise they might get the impression that sexual abuse is ok. "If you don't talk about [abuse perpetrated on you] it is never a road forward, it is an iceberg".

[2] Men need to learn to give and receive affection outside of sexual contact.

[3] Men need to learn to respect women not for what they wear, how they look, but for who they are.

The Story of Z

Z grew up in a small community as the second oldest of five children. He was very close to his youngest brother and spent most of his childhood years in his company. His oldest brother who was much taller than Z used to fight with his siblings using his size to overpower them. Z and his younger brother would gang up on him together. Z respected his father but did not receive any affection from him that he is able to remember. His father was an alcoholic and spent most of his time working to sustain the family. His mother was affectionate and caring but only in her husband's absence. He reports feeling that although he suffered no sexual or physical abuse he had experienced mental abuse and was constantly down on himself and did not trust people. He describes his family as having very high moral standards.

His younger sister was killed at the age of five in an accident while Z and his brother and friends were playing nearby. Z continues to feel guilty about his sister's death. Z had a positive relationship with his grandfather who in his father's absence would take the children on hiking trips and picnics.

When Z was 13 years of age the family moved away from the community to come to Ontario where economic conditions promised to be better than back home. Z's teenage years were uneventful. He was interested in cars and girls and reports having quite a few friends. His marriage was the result of an unplanned pregnancy and his wife brought a daughter who was nine years at the time into the relationship from her first marriage. Z adopted this child and shortly after this his biological daughter was born. Z had a calm but distant relationship with his wife and they increasingly went their own ways as they became more and more involved in volunteer activities. Z was successful in his work and well recognized in his community for his volunteer work.

He began to abuse his stepdaughter during one of the many evenings when his wife was out of the house involved in social activities. The abuse did not progress to penetration largely because the stepdaughter resisted this. Until the abuse started Z felt ill-respected by his stepdaughter and he reports that the abuse gave him a sense of control and power. He admits that he was very autocratic at home and only opposed in this control by his stepdaughter who never accepted him as a father.

The abuse first started shortly after his favourite brother got killed in a car accident and went on for quite some time until his stepdaughter finally moved out of the house. She reported the abuse some time after it had discontinued and Z was charged and sentenced to prison. Throughout the trial and even after his stay in prison he denied the charges.. Z's parents had both died many years previously and his remaining siblings refuse to have anything to do with him since his return from prison. Z became a group member at CJI and following several peer reviews successfully requested a reconciliation meeting with his victim. He takes responsibility for his actions but is still anxious about other people in the community finding out

about his charges. Z now no longer attends CJI having quite suddenly discontinued it. Many years prior to the first abuse incident Z had been diagnosed with a chronic physical condition which he was hiding from even close friends as he believed it to be a sign of weakness.

Preventative strategies suggested by Z are:

[1] Men need to learn to nurture children equally to women to avoid a feeling of being displaced in their parenting.

[2] Sex education must include education about self-discipline. "You always have a choice but not always the control to make that choice".

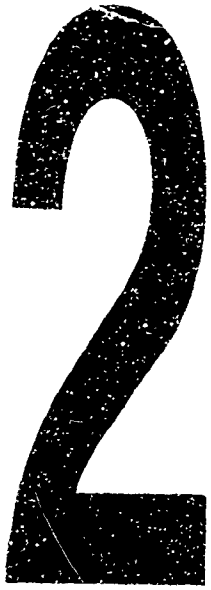
[3] Education about sexual abuse must concentrate on prevention and causes of abuse. People also need to be made aware of impending signs of sexual abuse such as emotional withdrawal. This education should supersede any education in terms of right and wrong. Explanations are imperative.

[4] We need to be taught to be empathetic not to feel shamed. As it stands in our society "empathy is always smaller than shame. The latter involves more people".

The Experience of Interviewing

The perceptions and stories you will read are as individual as the people who shared them with me. My goal was not to provide a profile of offenders, or to abandon one myth for the sake of creating another. The emphasis was on understanding a shared social reality rather than to construct a clinical image of individual failings and needs. The men I interviewed all had committed incest, the most common sexual crime (Dube, Heger, Johnson, & Hebert, 1988). They had sexually abused their daughters, or stepdaughters, nieces, nephews, or children of friends. The abuse spanned exposure, gazing, fondling, inappropriate kissing, touching, coercion into touching, "dry intercourse", and penetration (Segroi, Blick, & Porter, 1982). Their methods of keeping this secret over often many years included bribery, threats, denial, or even force.

At the time of the abuse, they were trusted fathers, uncles, brothers, friends, adolescents, young adults or men in their early 50's. Some had left school before grade 12; others had gone onto completing a degree at university. Some lived in relative isolation; others were actively respected members of their community. When the abuse was disclosed it was either still ongoing or had discontinued many years before. They had served jail sentences in federal or provincial institutions, were on probation, or sentenced to community work on weekends. They were involved in private therapy, couple counselling, professionally-led or self-help oriented groups. They were married, re-married, single, or had never been in a relationship.



There was at times as little rhyme or reason to the communal and judicial response to their crime, as there was to trying to find a demographic pattern. As one participant said:

> *I don't know how to put into words my feelings. When I think of the other guys in the groups who weren't charged or served it on the weekend, all they have to do is go to CJI. They don't go anywhere else. It makes me feel -like - am I worse than everybody else.*

They were men of all ages, all professions, from different cultural backgrounds. Some were religious; others were strongly opposed to religion. These men looked, behaved, and thought no differently than many of my friends, colleagues, or neighbours. They were articulate, understanding, even charming. And yet they were also men who had a secret which often remained undetected by their best friends, colleagues, or spouses. They were not visible. I would not be able to pick them out of a crowd. The popular image of them as "freaks" is not only false but downright dangerous. The search for prevention and change has to begin elsewhere. It cannot begin by means of ascribing overt high risk factors to certain men in our community. Whatever puts people at risk of perpetrating sexual abuse is not related to simple demographic characteristics but must be sought in the life histories, circumstances, and the environment.

Seven interviews took place at CJI, two in the participants' homes, and one in my own home. Some participants kept closely to their story, others mainly shared their perceptions. Some simply named the abuse, and the relationship to their victim, others described the process of manipulation that preceded it, the first time it occurred, and the cycle which continued it. Several times I had to turn off the tape recorder,

when interviewees requested a break, or felt too overwhelmed with anger, hurt, or regret to talk. The offer to do this was established from the start and reiterated when I felt it to be important. Qualitative research is about people meeting people, and I tried throughout to maintain a sense of fairness and concern for the well-being of participants.

As interviews progressed I became more skilful at interrupting at the right time, asking relevant questions, or being aware of my own non-verbal cues. To cite but one example, my first interviewee critiqued me for not asking enough questions about the victim, and the offender's relationship to the victim. These and other suggestions changed my subsequent approaches, although the intent to guide interviews as little as possible remained. All interviews ended with a request for feedback about the process. and the question whether participants felt they had the chance to accurately tell their story.

All participants were men. This was not because women don't offend, not because "biology is destiny", but because at the time there were no female offenders in the SAT programme at CJI. In any case, as we will see, what we are talking about are not men as in the physical body, but men as in the social, cultural, and famiiy role. men in control.

The openness of participants to talk to a relative stranger was totally surprising to me. Whether their stories were truthful or not, I have no way of knowing. I wanted to hear how <u>they</u> saw their lives, what <u>they</u> chose or were able to remember, and share, and what meaning they attached to these memories. Some wept, some expressed anger. Some were deeply regretful, others were still dealing with the break-

down of their family, the court hearings, the experience of being in jail Many were struggling with a changed perception of self, their own initial denial, or the recognition that in the eyes of many the label "offender" overshadowed their past and current actions. Some were initially cautious and questioned my motivation. All without exception told me that it was a relief to be able to tell a story that people rarely want to hear. Several participants shared that every time they told their story they felt one step closer to "healing". One participant confided:

> *I was especially comfortable with your compassion - it made it easier to be honest. I've learned a lot about myself doing this work.*

Another claimed:

> *Every time I tell my story it gets a little lighter for me to hold.*

The stories I heard were individual and unique and yet showed some frightening similarities that pointed towards a shared reality. Here is what they told me.

Childhood and the Family of Origin

While describing their childhood experiences, the family of origin was central in all stories while observations about culture and social climate took a place of secondary importance. I quickly came to understand the family during early childhood as somewhat of a filter through which messages from the outside pass, are transformed, exaggerated, or deleted. There were three exceptions to this rule . religion, growing up in small isolated communities, or being economically deprived, whereby religious expectations appear to have had a strong effect on how families approached child rearing. Interestingly, several participants recalled the oppressive nature of religious values, but the family functioned like either a filter or magnifying

glass for these limitations. The impact of belonging to a religious group which discouraged sexual expression was strongly felt but without exception described in terms of its place within the family context. Religious ideologies were part of family life and sometimes violently asserted by parents.

Cultural context.

> *I was raised in a very strict Catholic environment with a lot of expectations. [...] Of course sexuality was taboo in the Catholic church. It was a terrible thing. I felt a great deal of oppression. I struggled through all my teenage years with masturbation. [...] As long as I remember I never felt good about myself. [...] I would rush to confession, come out of it, and three days later something would happen and I would succumb to masturbation. I wouldn't go on a journey, a train, or an airplane without going to confession first. I was quite sure that, if I was going to die, I would go to hell. Terrible! I lived in fear. Daily fear. It was the dominant thing in my life: this guilt and the fear to do with the sexual side of my life. It was pretty bottled up. Very confused. [...] I knew what a sinner I was, how impure and evil I was. But I was able to convey to people that I was an ok sort of guy. But inside of me I was going through just awful things.*

> *We didn't have a lot. We didn't meet the standards of the neighbourhood. For example our clothing was less than acceptable. It kept us warm and that was basically it. We depended on care packages for food supplies occasionally. Therefore we developed somewhat of a reputation for being the family on the street, the undesirable. [...] We had a problem with hygiene. My brother was a bed wetter and I was forced to sleep with him. That really bothered me. I could try and stay clean, but I would get up in the morning and of course water was there that surrounded me.*

One of the participants who grew up in a small isolated community recalled:

> *My family was the street. We were close. We knew who got spanked, and who didn't. We knew everything that went on in the house. It was just crazy. Everybody got their spanking. Broom handles over the head. It was crazy.*

Interviewees largely described their childhood in terms of the dyads and triads of interaction within the home. Cultural, religious, and socio-economic components were seen as part of the family structure or philosophy, whereby the connection to the community evaded them as children. During early childhood, home was culture.

Separation experiences. For many this culture was characterized by early separation experiences, and a sense of abandonment. removal of siblings, moving into a foster home, death of a parent or sibling, hospitalization as a child.

> *When I was five my two brothers were taken out of the home. One was age, I believe, seven, and one was nine. I am not really sure to this day why they were taken out of the home, but it had a real negative affect on me, because I never understood where they went, why they went. It was never talked about. We didn't discuss things in the home. [...] I was at home and they were away [and] I almost used to feel responsible.*

> *I don't have many happy thoughts about my childhood. I guess when I look back all I can think of is that I was a kid, and I didn't have to worry about drugs or anything, but I didn't have the normal childhood that any kid in the world would like to have. I spent 13 years of my life in hospital. Which meant I got no education. [...] I had 430 days of education. It [being in hospital] meant that I didn't know my family, I didn't know my brothers, I didn't know my sisters. Visiting times were two hours on Saturday and two hours on Sunday. I always remember my mother coming up, but I have no recollection of my father coming up. Other memories are some of my friends in the same ward dying with sickness and that.*

> *I remember I found my father in bed - he was unconscious. I was sent to wake him up on Sunday morning and he wouldn't wake up. The ambulance came and took him away and I don't know how long after that - a week or two -he died. What I remember about that at 10 years old -back in those days they used horses. [...] It was a big coach for us to go in. There were four horses pulling it. They had black horses. I remember even to this day thinking I was a cowboy in a coach. My father was in the one in front but I was too young to realize. I thought it was great to be in a coach. I can't recall any grief that I showed, I don't recall that. But I always felt that I was different. I always felt that I missed something. I didn't have a father to go to.*

Physical abuse. For many home was a battleground characterized by stifling silence, neglect, and even violence. "The belt as the famous object" caused broken limbs and fear. The threat of physical abuse was constantly present and often reasserted. Parents had power over their children by means of size, physical strength, and access to uncensored subjugation. "The belt" was an icon of this imbalance.

> *My dad is an alcoholic. He did a lot of beating. There were lots of fights and arguments between my mum and dad. He had bouts. It went on with my dad for 32 years. We were taught to do what we were told to do. We were taught not to assert ourselves in the family. [...] I couldn't wait to get away from home. I left when I was 15. I was tired of the beatings. You couldn't do nothing right.*

> *He [dad] was a very mean person. I can remember one summer, I think I was about eight, he broke all my ribs on my one side. He was just mad about something that I did. So that side is about half an inch lower than the other. [...] On my 12th birthday my dad bought me a bike. So I thought: this is alright - if I behave I get something. So I got this bike. And he let me invite a bunch of the neighbours. They came on to us right after school. And he broke my arm in front of all my friends. He didn't actually do the breaking he kicked me off the bike because he didn't like the way I was riding. [...] And when I landed I broke my arm. That was when they sent me to the psychiatrist. [...] Nothing ever came of it. [...] I was about 16 and I had my driver's licence and he let me borrow his car to go to the big dance at school. And he said I had to be back at midnight. [...] So we got about half way home and I only had a block and a half to go and this Indian was driving, and he was drunk, and he lost control. He hit this big tree and went through the windshield and he cut his head off. So, I was pretty out of it. [...] I kept saying to him [brother]: Listen, I got to go home he [father] is going to kill me. Don't worry, he said, I am going to go with you. It was only five after 12 when we got home. And he explained it to my dad. "Yeah yeah" he said "oh it can't be helped". As soon as my brother was out the door he started punching me.*

The abuse was not always perpetrated by the father.

> *You'd get it all the time. I was pretty young, four or five, when I was at the house. I can't get the whole story but I know she [mother] chased me and I had no clothes on - I was in the bathtub or something - and I ran through the door and into the main street - no clothes on. And she*

got these two guys to catch me. They were older. They brought me back. She took me and she put me over a stool in the middle of the kitchen and that is where I got it with the belt. I remember I danced and danced and she just went smack. It was confusing in a way. She would tell me she loved me and then she would do that to me.

There seemed to be little difference in emotional pain between those participants who observed abuse against a sibling or their mother, or those who became the "object of [their] father's anger outlet as early as when [they] were two years old".

Mum didn't have time. She was either being abused by my father or in the hospital being taken care of because she had been abused by my father.

Mortification. Sometimes mortification accompanied the abuse and turned punitive measures into an overt act of subjugation.

There was no love feeling [in the family]. Know what I mean? There were no love zones in that family. The only time that you ever got attention was a beating. Not even when you have done wrong. Lots had to do with how the parents were. What their days were like. If you didn't put certain things away at times, there was no shame - all there was - you got kicked. You got beaten. And he [father] wouldn't quit till you [wet] your pants. Once you [wet] your pants he would walk away from you. Even when he was wrong he would never come back and apologize. My sisters and brother grew up with the same hate for my parents as I did. [...] They are screwed up bad.

The reasons for being hurt ranged from minor infringements to "mum and dad (having) had a bad day". The image that soon emerged was one of de-powered parents, attempting to raise children in adverse circumstances, whether these were of an economic nature, or due to the pressures of being "high profile in the local community". Hopelessness and a sense of de-powerment was passed down to even

more powerless children, who often were forced to assume roles well beyond their capacity.

Overwhelmed parents.

> *My sister and I partially raised the kids [in a family of 10]. My mother was overwhelmed by what was happening. She couldn't deal with it all. She never drank, she never smoked. She always was a fairly good Christian. But there would be times when she would just lose it, because of the pressure. She would shriek. We would be afraid to say anything for fear of her going crazy. There was times when we went out in public for example when one of us would wonder of and she would loose sight of us and she would start shrieking. Or if things were not organized her way, she would begin to shriek in public. We would all basically run and hide and say, we don't know that person. Why embarrass us like that in public?*

As children, life did not make sense for the participants. The world was either a dangerous place, or a place controlled by standards that no-one could possibly meet. Constant monitoring pre-dominated over any sense of caring guidance.

Punitive discipline.

> *I just seem to remember there were an awful lot of rules to follow. It was a big struggle just to keep track - keep up with the rules - make sure you were obeying the rules. "If you don't do this, then when dad comes home he will be told, and you will be spanked" - I don't think the women [nannies, mother] were necessarily threatening. I just remember that in terms of control and authority in my life there were always older women around.*

Abuse and oppressive rules were experienced as out of context and characteristic of erratic parenting. that was just the way parents were. One participant had learnt to justify his parents' behaviour by claiming that he never received any more abuse than "[he] deserved". Most of this control was enforced by the father who as the "head of the household" or the "king of the castle" ensured that children took an inferior place within the family. Fathers were hence described as "distant", "remote",

and "lacking affection". If they were not physically abusive they certainly were not loving. Fathers had a silent and silencing presence in the house.

Remote father.

I only ever saw my father argue twice. He would just sit there [...] sometimes I think he only hears half of what is going on.

My father never showed any affection whatsoever. My mother showed affection but only when my father was not present.

That is one thing about them [parents]. I had never seen too much affection. My father wasn't that type of person. [...] No affection. There was regular Sundays with the door closed and they'd still be in there and we [the kids] assumed - you know. [...] It would take 15 or 20 minutes for him [father] to boil a little. And he'd come out with a remark and it would be a little bit sarcastic, not much, and he'd make a statement and that was it. He wasn't a loving father. But he definitely was a father. He took us out and stuff like that. We went camping - we did. He used to take us out for a meal or something - and he would just sit there. Too controlled.

This silence was particularly threatening and oppressive for those children who suspected their father of sexually abusing a sibling. One participant recalled that his sister had an abortion and how the secrecy surrounding this event confirmed his fear that the pregnancy was the result of incest. Another stated:

My father had all the power in the house, even sexual wise, over my sister, I believe. But nobody ever talks about that.

Lack of love. Many of the participants to this day struggle with the realization that most basically their home life lacked nurturing and support. In their family of origin, however, this was and is not talked about. Religion as one set of "explanations" prescribed that authority could not be questioned It was like "being raised by remote control".

Everything was secret. We didn't talk about nothing. That really bothers me.

Taboo topics included: religion, power, money, sex, family structures and dynamics, and most significantly feelings. Home life was a persistent dissonance between experience and suspicion on the one hand, and active silence on the other. What is a child to believe his/her feelings of neglect or what parents say,or rather <u>not</u> say?

I saw my parents as the perfect couple. I once thought I heard them arguing but it was through a fairly thick wall. [...] My brothers and sisters used to say that my mother used to come to breakfast at times with red eyes. She had been crying. Father would sit there grim-faced, not say anything. Father's way of dealing with any form of deviation from what you were supposed to do was the big shut-out. I mean he didn't express anger. He just shut you out. He just didn't recognize you. That was terrible. It was terrifying. I'd do anything, just anything, to not have him do that. [...] Shutting out was a powerful experience.

One of the big things in our family was church. My mum was very religious. We were Salvation Army and we were not allowed to do anything outside. Just stay in the house and go to church. I didn't want to go but in my childhood I was not allowed to show feelings. [What would happen if you did?] I probably would get a smack in the head.

Nothing was discussed, nothing was discussed.

I have seen my parents maybe kiss twice. When I was growing up there was no affection, as a boy I had affection probably until I was about four, and then it was just - it was off - eh? I had a lot of problems dealing with affection. I obviously thought there was something wrong with it.

<u>Made to feel guilty</u>. Guilt served as a powerful instrument of control. To one it felt like a "Catch 22" situation with multiple forever changing rules: "you were doomed if you did, and doomed if you didn't". Daily life was dominated by hearing or fearing the "censoring voice of [the] father".

At boys boarding school masturbation was a very common thing, and at times boys in that environment would go and do some mutual masturbation. That was quite common. It wasn't homosexual, not in my perception. I got involved and I got caught by the monks. [...] I was reported to my father and my father - it was the only time that I have really seen him angry. He was angry. He was absolutely furious with me. And he just bawled me out. No question of trying to find out why, or what was this about. He just made me feel even smaller. It was "shameful for the family and what would your mother and your sisters think?" The degradation. It was the end of the world. [...] But the curious thing was -I think we were raised in his image; like the old catechism where you are raised to God's image. That' s what he wanted his kids to be. His position. In the community we were regarded as the perfect family. So -it just wasn't going to go any further. My mother knew about it. He knew about it. I went to visit him in his office; he tore a strip of me for an hour. Raged about it, kicked me out and then behaved perfectly normally to me, as though nothing had happened. And I knew that it would never go any further [...] Always when I met him -face to face - I knew he knew, and that told me what an awful person he thought I was.

Unacknowledged sexual abuse. The silence and absence of emotional expression was particularly painful for those who had been sexually abused. This was true of over half of the participants. For some this abuse went on for years within their home; others had a one-off sexual encounter with strangers, even others described observing sexual abuse, or even being forced to observe it. Whether in abuse or neglect, or emotional trauma, these children had little to nothing explained to them, worse, many had their experiences actively disavowed. Nobody provided them with answers which could make sense of at least of some of that pain. As much as they had not experienced a sense of protection inside the home, they were also unable to protect themselves outside. This failure to gain an appreciation for boundaries not only left them open to abuse in both places it also served to explain away their experience and perception of the abuse itself. Many of their questions were either met

with more abuse, or brushed aside with ready made responses. It was the beginning of a life built on lack of trust.

Mistrust.

I was sexually assaulted by two guys when I was six. I was in the wrong place at the wrong time. My parents lived in an apartment upstairs and there were two guys downstairs. We rented the upstairs. We were there for a couple of years, and one day I came down the stairs and I heard a girl screaming and so I went in and wanted to know what was going on and the two guys that were in there said they were going to teach me a lesson. And they did. After that I kind of explained it to my mother and she said: you don't know what you are talking about. They wouldn't believe me. [...] I didn't have anybody to talk to. It was considered one of those things. You don't know who to talk to. I thought that nobody believes you.

There is something I was going to bring up that I haven't brought up to anybody [...] but that is what I'm here for. The first time I ever masturbated - a guy showed me. [...] There was a time when three of us - this guy picked us up he was 20 we were 12 or so - and he picked us up and brought us out somewhere and showed us how to masturbate. [...] We didn't know what to do. He got his kicks, I guess. He grabbed us and that is how he did it. [...]

Many also learned to internalize the blame.

Victim blaming.

The brother I looked up to the most - most wanted to be like - whatever - he came home and sexually assaulted me. And a little while later a high school teacher from [...] picked me up one night. I was walking home from my friends, and he offered me a ride, and I don't know why but I got in, and I ended up 230 miles away from home because I jumped out of the car finally. I ran into a house and they let me call my parents . My parents came to get me and when they brought me home this guy had been drinking and ended up with his car in the ditch. And I said to my parents: "that's the guy right there in the ditch". And they drove right on by.

I kind of explained it to my mother, and she said: "you don't know what you are talking about". This told me I was to blame. It was my fault.

So to me this said that it was my fault. That I was the one to blame. [...] So I never told anyone about my brother. I told them about [another incident of abuse] and nothing was done of it. [...] I just internalized everything.

I saw my uncle sexually abuse my sister He said: she is asleep - watch this. I should have done something but I didn't. I don't know why. Two weeks after - I assaulted her.

Denial. They shared the experience that there was no tolerance for expressing pain, even when (or especially when) they had been sexually violated. The message of silence when it came to sexual transgression was a powerful one:

It was considered one of those things. No charges were laid. Nobody believed you. Things had simply not happened. Like that!

They told you, if you told anybody, they would do it again. So, you had a lot of fear. You bottled up the fear. You bottled up the anger It was never talked about. To this day my parents will not talk about it

There was a lot of (sexual) abuse in the street. None in the family that I know about. But I can recall the people on the street. It was going on every day. It pretty well occurred whenever you could find somebody who would do it.

The most striking lessons they learned from this denial and silencing is that "you can get away with it", because when it comes to sexuality "people only believe what they want to believe". They also learned not to trust their feelings and perceptions.

Mistrusting own feelings.

Your whole life changes. [how does it change?] You learn not to trust anybody. You don't even really trust yourself. I got to be awfully quiet. I didn't identify with anybody after that. I was mostly alone. [.] You put a wall around you and that is how you live.

When I was 10 I witnessed this guy take this girl into the woods and she was about 13 and he was about 17. And he raped her. We heard it. She was crying for her mother and things like that. He came out laughing. A lot of

that went on. [...] Nobody got punished for it. That was the way we grew up. It was a hard way to grow up.

For some, sexuality was additionally from early on associated with male power.

When I first saw pornography, when I first drank, my father said to me: now you are a man. [...] I saw something and felt it had to be ok.

Sex is love. Several participants described how sexual abuse became a form of "loving" attention, the only time "you feel loved and wanted". As we will see this theme appears again when participants talk about their first offenses. Sexual abuse became the perfectly ambivalent experience. you hate the abuse perpetrated on you, and yet thrive on this special attention in a life otherwise characterized by neglect.

When I was sexually assaulted that was the only time that I can honestly remember feeling wanted. You felt wanted. You knew it was wrong, but at the same time you had feelings. It gave me feelings that my parents or nobody else was able to give. I believe that is where I got that to love people is to have sex.

Silence about abuse was part of a broader quiet. There was no expression of any emotions, especially not anger towards parents.

I don't really hate my parents for what they have done. I realize now what they have done. I could hate them, but I don't. I wouldn't bring it up to them. They would deny it anyway. I did bring it up to them. My daa gave me a spanking at one time and he cut me in the face with the belt. Blood was just coming out of my mouth and everything. And they denied that. So I just felt that it was pointless to raise any more.

"Forgetting". To survive meant to "forget". Family dynamics persisted with secrecy. This forgetting was not actual, but rather a "forgetting" willfully enforced through threats or censorship. It was a forgetting not of the actual abuse situation but

of the emotional pain caused by it. If nobody validates your perceptions, after a while you change them to fit in with the rest of the "culture".

> *After this and the other incident I built up walls and I said that nobody will ever get close enough to hurt me again. And I started working out when I was 15 and put on 20 pounds. For a long time I went around building up hurt. [...] My brother [offended against participant] - I tried to kill him twice. I emptied a gun at him from about 15 feet. I am a marks man and I missed him every time. I still don't know to this day how I missed him. [...] I just repressed the abuse and didn't know it was affecting me at all. I just thought I was crazy when shooting my brother.*

> *I didn't realize it [sexual abuse] affected your life that bad. Not at the start. I didn't realize it affected your life until after I got charged with the same thing. [...] You realize how much damage it did in your life. You think about how you would like to make them pay for what they have done to you. But I got older. I thought about it less and less out of anger and out of fear. At the same time I didn't care. You bottle up the anger, you bottle up the fear, and you get to a stage when you can't bottle up any more. [...] I put it way back into my mind. I don't think you actually ever forget about it.*

> A secret inner self.

> *I shut out all feelings - clammed right up: the beginning of starting to establish an outer and a secret inner self. Imagine a clam: hard and unbreakable on the outside - no way of opening it. I built up walls and let nobody in.*

To briefly summarize, the family of origin was described as a place of conflict between family members, between rules and actions, between experience and understanding. This conflict took at times violent expressions, while at other times it remained covert, enclosed in a shrine of silence. The silence contained powerful messages when it extended to emotional expression and sexual violence. It finally caused a split between stressful experiences and sanctioned interpretations of these experiences.

Feelings about "Self" as a Child

The children who emerged from this felt useless, without support, and had little to no sense of hope about their future. "My main obsession was how can I (could) get people to like me".

Low self-esteem.

I felt stupid and guilty and thought that I [was] different to everyone around me.

The most important thing was that I felt totally useless. I had no sense of belonging, I felt alienated from everyone. [In your family?] It didn't matter. Family, peers, elders. I felt that I just did not belong and I carried that belief for years. I felt inadequate, I couldn't accomplish anything. I never would accomplish anything. Therefore I existed.

Seeking affection from friends - that became an obsession almost. What can I do to get people to like me. Each day you set yourself up, you think: if I do this it is going to work. And then it doesn't work. You just keep piling it [a sense of rejection] and piling it, and finally you get buried under it and something has to break.

Sometimes they made attempts to have their distress noticed.

Repressed feelings.

I had all this guilt plus what I had piled on over the years and so I thought: I can't handle this, and I will kill myself tonight. So I thought: what is a good way to do that? Just get a can of lighter fluid. It is poison. It will kill you. So I took it. [...] They [hospital] kept me there for a week, for observation and some kind of counselling. I never really got anything. I had a nun come in and talk to me for a few minutes. So all that crap stayed there. It was never resolved.

You see I don't know what it [sexual abuse] did to me. I feel that my life from now on should be a tremendous lot better than all the years before. I look back and it was really nothing. I just feel that some of us were never molded when we were young into the right kind of person. I could never sit down and talk to my mother. She is the type of person, she was very silent.

> *[As a child] I could be happy at times but not all the time. [...] When I put aside the mental abuse my childhood looked ok. [what do you mean by that?] I did not recognize the mental abuse factor. I was a stubborn child. I still am a stubborn person, bad-tempered sometimes. When anybody did something that was hurtful to me I would do something to them, yet more extreme.*

The general consensus was that during their childhood there was no room for emotions which demanded nurturing. It was like "fill[ing] up a water jug. You never empty it and one more drop and it overflows".

So far we have the profile of a victim. But victims by definition do not harm others but are being harmed. It was in school that for many of the participants the boundaries between right and wrong, self and pretence became actively blurred for the first time. Their potential to harm others manifested itself

The Experience of Going to School

> *I used to get kicked out of school. It was about April - I used to go to the supply room and steal boxes of erasers and stuff - I was just too cut up about my father. I would try to overflow the toilet, and they knew it was me. I didn't try to hide it. Once, both of my brothers, me and a bunch of other guys, we broke in and painted the school. And I knew if I did something, I wouldn't get caught. So I had to put a bunch of stuff from the supply room in my desk. That way I knew I would get caught. [Why did you want to get caught?] Just to make my dad mad.*

> *I don't remember a lot about school. I just remember being so unhappy. I had to struggle because they had thrown me in at the deep end, and I had to establish myself. And I suppose in many ways it made me capable of being on my own and standing up to a lot of stuff. Which meant really shutting out feelings and <u>acting</u>.*

As students they were either harmful to themselves, or harmful to teachers, and children around them. School too was a battle-ground, a place where the fittest survive: and if it couldn't be done by academic means, they used the means they knew

best: fighting or shutting people out. Picture a child who lives in fear of abandonment, having lived a life of neglect. a "small adult" who mostly had a sense of being a child when he was faced with parental authority. Enter the teacher, another authority figure, but at a somewhat safer distance. What you get is a child characterized by quiet resistance, or outright expression of anger. Some were "always scared of failure - so you do nothing", or "stubborn and learned to fight", and were "kicked out of every school in the area for acting out, stealing, etc". Others were desperate for attention. Even others experienced a "sudden drop in grades" following the abuse which was not attended to, or considered it "luck" that their marks were alright. School was a place where they practiced separation from the world around them:

> Gap between reality and fantasy.
>
> *I would go off into my own mind. I can still do it. That is where I started to establish a fantasy life: one day I will be popular, loved by all.*
>
> *I'd find it [school] very very hard because I also thought of myself as a retard. I thought I was slow. I always saw myself as very very stupid: low [self] esteem. I was my worst enemy. I never felt good about myself. For years. And I was always scared of being put down, and I was at school, every day of my life. I was told I was stupid, retarded. It wasn't because [I] didn't want to learn, it was because.[I] couldn't learn. So you would hear something, kind of compute it through my mind, but never see it.*

In school the sense of low self-esteem turned into depressive thoughts of unavoidable failure.

> *My marks were always in the higher end of the scale. I still felt that that wasn't me. I must have done something wrong. This was a fluke that I got 95% in grammar. It was nice, but it is not going to last. [...]*

So basically I was doomed to go through my life and accomplish nothing, or be a factory worker. I wasn't cut out to be a surgeon, or God forbid, I should work in an office, or anything like that. There is no hope, no sense of accomplishment. Nothing. That is a pretty scary existence. If I did something that was good, I didn't really think that it was important. because I wasn't expecting any recognition. I couldn't get any recognition, that is the way it felt. [...] Of course you are also afraid to ask for it. In other words, you don't feel that it is justified to say I need some attention, I need some stroking, I need somebody to tell me that yeah I am ok, and that I am loved, and I am needed. But it just didn't happen. So I walked around for years thinking that some day somebody will tell me. Or I will go out of my way to do things so that I will get that recognition. And therefore you sacrifice your individuality because you are doing things we would normally not do.

Some participants felt particularly inadequate when it came to making friends.

Avoidance of peer relationships.

Somehow or other I got into a situation where I became an easy target for other students. I developed a habit of being late so that I wouldn't have to associate with anybody else. I would go to my class room and I would always be late and everybody else would already be seated. Of course I took the flack for being late, but it was easier for me to deal with that than it was for me to deal with to try and form friends.

Teachers did not seem to ask why It all became a question of behaviour management: the child received a label for being difficult, retarded or anti-social, and in need of even stricter control. School was a source of constant additional anxiety At times it even felt like being in prison because no matter how many rules they broke or chose to ignore, there was no way out. One participant was told by his principal.

Now we can have a good year, or we can have a bad year. I don't kick kids out of school, I lay beatings on them.

In school the perception that adults act unpredictably and are potentially harmful continued. A chance for positive social interactions with peers was overshadowed by inner conflicts.

> *I hurt a guy badly once in school. [...] I put up with teasing and everything because I couldn't get my words right. I have problems with speaking. When I got frustrated at school, I would sit down and bawl. Or put my head down and went to sleep. That was my way of coping with it all.*

In school like at home participants described themselves as unable to make meaningful and positive connections with others. Inner conflicts and low self-esteem overshadowed their opportunities for making engaging peer relationships. The teachers neither recognized these difficulties nor attended to these children in a way that would have decreased a growing sense of isolation. Some participants reacted to this pending failure by creating a fantasy world, while others acted out a violent image of the world.

The Young Man and First Relationships

Most participants described how in their dating relationships and marriage, they continued to withdraw, and never allowed themselves to get close to people. Some felt under pressure "to be the perfect husband, father and colleague" and "whenever you reached the goal a new one took its place". Trust and affection were simply dismissed as impossible or burdensome. Sex became the central avenue for feeling. Sex was also a means for controlling other emotions (your own or those of your partner), a distancing mechanism from a wider sense of loss and anger. Sexual feelings could be expressed safely, as they did not touch on a more secret, inner world. Emotions were hidden or denied, and dishonesty characterized their interactions. The split between the private and social self became further consolidated, and deceptions were central in this process.

Dishonesty.

I lied to her. [...] I still wanted to be in control. That was another one of my drawbacks. I did lie and I find sometimes I still lie about the stupidest things. I don't know why.

I waited three or four days [before I contacted her] so that she wouldn't think I am anxious. I never wanted anybody to know me. I thought that I was vulnerable if you knew who I was. I used to lie to try and protect myself. And the lies were so stupid. So I walked away from that, and every other relationship after that. Once a girl got close to me, that used to frighten me and I'd walk away from it. [...] They would say: I am getting really close to you. And that was like hitting me over the head with something.

Another felt a strong sense of inadequacy when it came to initiating and understanding social situations:

Part of my problem is that I can't read people. They can read me while I am busy reading somebody else.

Optimism and hope were not part of entering a relationship.

I thought: well, there really isn't much to look forward to, sort of thing. When I met her, as a female she would use "love". And I wouldn't use that because I said I don't know for sure if it is or not. It hasn't been proven to me.

Sometimes the first dating relationships were a way out of the parental home with little to no resources to make such move a successful venture:

I was living with this girl. We moved in together; she was 15 and I was 17. Her mum and dad kicked her out of the house. We just moved in together. She got pregnant, had the baby. We used to go on these really wild binges. Start Friday night right after work and we'd be pissed until Sunday morning. Then take all day Sunday to recuperate. And then we would go to work. I went to work Monday and when I got home she was gone. Never did ever find out where she went. I tried a couple of times. She disappeared. Somebody said she moved out West for a long time.

A life characterized by censoring emotions continued in their relationships with increasingly well established patterns of secrecy and control.

Secrecy and control.

> *Through the years I sort of developed a pattern of secrecy. I don't talk about a lot of things. I think the reason for that is that I mistrust a lot of people. Not anyone in particular. It is sort of an attitude I have in the head.* [...] *Probably because in two or three incidence I trusted someone and they let me down.*

> *Basically in the first six or seven years I did run the marriage. She did what I told her.* [...] *By using your temper you didn't have to hit, because it worked. You kind of tell them* [*wife and children*] *what to do and it worked.*

Hiding pain, confusion, and fear was normal, while getting emotionally close to someone felt painful, provoked anxiety, and was to be avoided. For many this stance of emotional distance was unshakable even when it came to less easily controlled feelings such as fear.

> *Boy, I have done things you wouldn't believe. I didn't care whether I lived or died. I mean how can you scare or threaten somebody if they don't care whether they die*?

When the pain got too big there was always alcohol, or a safe public display of the guy "who got it all together", who "can conquer women at the drop of a hat". Interestingly, alcohol was frequently mentioned as a central focus for social interactions with peers. Although none of the participants made a direct link between alcohol and abuse, I was stricken with their descriptions of alcohol as a painkiller, a means for numbing emotions, placing themselves at a safe distance to the world around them. This addictive pattern again emerged in the interviews when participants explored the potential causes for perpetrating abuse. Self-destructive living habits are

in many ways indicative of childhood victimization and yet when put into the context of interacting with friends they can be easily disguised as "having fun" or "relaxing with a few drinks". Overall, having a relationship for the participants meant having power over self and others: being autocratic and remote.

Detachment.

We had a fucking awful marriage - we did. I didn't love her when we first got married. I got her pregnant. I was in love with sex. Not her. Because that is where all my feelings were. I couldn't feel feelings any other way, because in my childhood I was not allowed feelings

I kept everything bottled up. The only time that I felt that I had control was when I went from talk into rage. And when I went into rage nobody would interfere.

[My wife] was different to me. I couldn't understand her, because she was showing all these feelings. She would scare me more or less. I was afraid of her for years, even after we got married. It was her that helped me change to what I am now. She had a lot of god damn patience to put up with me.

I would just hold my feelings in and hold it in and somebody would drop something on top of that and I would explode. It could be something trivial and that person would get all the shit load that you are carrying and get it all the way from down there.

This authority worked best at a distance. To remain "emotionally safe" many did not allow themselves to admit to feelings, they actively refused to bond with and nurture their children. Most needs were sexually expressed, and child rearing was left to the partner.

Refusal to bond.

I was rejecting my parent role. I was feeling rejected and not loved and understood by my wife. There was a whole lot of stuff we couldn't talk about.

Those who married young (several times due to an unplanned pregnancy) were quickly divorced or continued to search for their "lost freedom" in extra-marital affairs.

Not knowing right from wrong.

I used to have five girlfriends at a time because I just couldn't get enough. The reason was, that I had to feed my power that was all that I knew. I didn't know anything else. I didn't know right from wrong, I didn't care about other people's feelings.

Some explained how their approach to women as property was part of the constant need to prove that the sexual abuse experienced during childhood did not make them homosexual. And if constant change of partners did not amount to sufficient "proof", masculinity could be asserted through bar fights and "gay bashing".

Fear about sexual orientation.

To prove to yourself that you are not gay you use sexually anything you can get your hands on. You use people for your own sexual needs. You never start to think of their needs and feelings. You are full of hate, full of anger. That was my way of love.

There was a split between the private and public self, a discrepancy between the man at home and the man in the local bar.

Divided self.

I was into drinking and the drugs which didn't help. I didn't realize that. I thought it was ok. I was ok when I got out of he house. It was just like a different personality. I'd go out and talk to people and back in the house I was a different person altogether. My whole family is like that. My younger brother would go out and be "happy go lucky" and he'd walk back in the house and you would be too scared to look at him.

More often than not the marriage ended in disaster and repeated the sense of abandonment and confusion experienced during childhood.

The second marriage I had a daughter. We were married for three years. I drove a truck, was never home. And I don't blame her for leaving. The only thing I blame her for is that she never let me explain my feelings towards her and the baby. I worked for six months away -when that was up, I came home and when I was home for two weeks, I had another run, so I left, went to Mexico and when I came home, I pulled up in the yard, my house was empty. [...] was born that morning. Her mom and her step-dad they came and cleaned the house out. I fought with them for a year to see the baby. I have never seen the baby. I couldn't see my second wife. I wasn't allowed. Every time I got close to them they had the cops there. I was never explained to why she didn't want to see me, or why I couldn't see the baby. To that day I have never been explained to.

Marriage was like "sitting on a pressure cooker", not only because of the inability to truly connect with a partner, but also because all the emotions, which had been repressed for years, and still had no creative outlet. This was often the beginning of the child becoming like "an ideal partner", complete with emotional and sexual fantasies attached. Their victims became part of a separate reality and identity

Perceptions of the Victims

Out of 10 participants three largely described their victims as "objects" upon which they could exert "a sense of control". In two of these descriptions it soon became obvious that the victim was not part of their immediate family but rather a child of friends. The third victim was a stepdaughter who resisted any parent-child relationship with the offender long before the abuse started.

I felt that she had no respect for me at all. Maybe I'd ask her to do something and she wouldn't say anything but then she'd go and ask her mother: shall I do that? I was not accepted as a father. My other daughter. She lives at home. Her and I are very close. No sexual stuff. It never even occurred to me.

The more dominant theme was that victimization was the outcome of a close relationship which became "too close" for parental feelings. Their victims were

"special" to them. They became the focus of their emotional and sexual attention, and fantasies. The description of these relationships seriously challenged the popular perception that incest offenders experience sexual arousal in the presence of any child. In fact most participants found the notion of paedophilia repugnant. The relationship was central to the abusive act. For expression of feelings to be possible there had to be above all a sense of safety. Only part of this safety was gained from being in control. Most of it was the result of children being a non-threatening and often affectionate presence in their lives.

> *[The abuse] was specific to my daughter. You form a relationship. She became my 'lover' or partner. Of course that was all in my own mind.*
>
> *I was using her as a model for that underwear. Ok? Until the time when I used her as a model for her breast as well. In the last year or two. [...]*
>
> *The closest thing I can think of is that I was using her [stepdaughter] as a girlfriend. A model to see something else. [can you say some more about the model part?] All it was, was just using her for the style of underwear that I liked. I wasn't using my daughter. She is too young for one thing. But I don't have the same feeling about my daughter as I have about my stepdaughter. I almost think I loved her too much compared to my other daughter. [...] The feeling was not there for anybody but her. [Like] having a second girlfriend or something.*

The offenders saw themselves accordingly capable of expressing emotions with their victims which were not part of their adult relationships. Some expressed a strong need to be a "good friend to the child", "a brother" , but "not like [their own] father". The sexual abuse of the child was, to be sure, sexually arousing if not gratifying. Yet, participants described mainly how they sought affection and expression of love: "I showed her more feelings during the abuse than outside of it". One claimed. "When I was touching my daughter I was never erect".

Confusing love and sex. With sex and loving feelings being one and the same thing for most of these men, some gradually drifted, others suddenly moved into, and even others planned to experience this connection in a situation where they were in complete control.

> *There is a lot of things I didn't know how to deal with. I couldn't be open and honest with anybody. I didn't know how to be honest. I didn't know what love was. Love to me was instead of using your mind and your heart, you use what is between your legs.*
>
> *You want to show them that you love them you go to bed with them*
>
> *You block out the meaning of abuse and tell yourself sex is love.*
>
> *What I learned was - if you love someone - you sexually abuse them. Or you have sex with them - whatever. So - I had no distinction between love and sex. They were like that. Love and sex were one. If you love someone you go to bed with them. That was what I was dealing with.*
>
> *It is natural to go the whole length. You start a relationship, you get to know that person, you share things, and the next thing in the line of succession is to become physically involved. I told my wife that the reason I did it was because I formed a relationship - she could not believe that. Now she has to deal with a victim of abuse. What she basically has to deal with also is the other woman living under her roof. But in fact it was the truth.*

One even felt that there was a direct link between his victim's age and the age when he was abused himself.

> *Maybe there is a process that says that this is an attractive time, because that is when it first happened to you.*

This dynamic did not always stay restricted to one child.

> *It started in August of 19.. with [oldest daughter]. She was seven or eight. It started the year before she took her first communion. At that point I was just rubbing her and stuff like that. And it just kept escalating and escalating for more touching. Then she started touching me. It went on [...] about five years. Then I just stopped and went with my other daughter.*

A need for control.

It made me feel in control. I never had a sense of control before in my life. It gave me a sense of power for the first time.

Power, then, was central to the abusive act. But this power was not so much described in the sense of overpowering another person for self-gratification. It was rather a power which allowed them to set and enforce the agenda for their relationship with their victim. Participants were in control of the situation. Ironically this control was also precipitated by a sense that affectionate expression could be risked. While affectionate feelings were controlled and denied in their adult relationships, in a sense in the presence of their victims they allowed themselves to relinquish some control and feel.

Planning, anticipation, and a skewed sense of consequences were part of the initiation of an abusive relationship.

My daughter was then 14. She matured fairly quickly. It started out an isolated incidence. I was driving long distance to the States and had this trip to Philadelphia which required that I leave on a Saturday, and come back on a Sunday and so I asked her if she wanted to go with me. And she agreed. And she was sleeping in the back and we were coming up to a tunnel and I wanted her to see it and I reached back to wake her up. I accidentally touched her breasts. And I felt that was kind of interesting. And inside of me a trigger went off that said the false message, that that was ok. "Nothing is going to happen ever. It is nothing to get excited about". But it started it. It raised a possibility. And then I became obsessed with that. I found myself thinking about it. I started to create scenarios. "What is going to happen? What is she going to do?" And I started thinking: "Well nothing is going to happen". And then I had this fantasy that she was going to respond favourably.

Once the boundary between affectionate expression towards a child and sexual exploitation had been transgressed, the abuse for many became a habit, an addiction, a quick fix.

Addiction.

I fell into a worse pattern of self-denial, thinking: "God, I am useless. I really don't have any potential. I really don't care what happens". So you do something for a false sense of gratification, and after you achieve that you go into a guilt mode, and that increases depression, and then you come back around and you need something to give you a lift. You think:"Well the last time I felt better because I did it". You forget what you are going to feel like after. And you go right back into it. And so you just keep on going. [You think]:"I realize that maybe this isn't right, but one more time is not going to hurt". You find ways to justify it, so that you can do it without feeling guilty about it.

It was [like an addiction] for her. Basically. It grew more and more - the desire to do it. And why it was there I don't know. Yes, it was an addiction. That was what you were looking forward to doing, you wanted to do that. You wanted to do a bit of it and then you are alright. It was an addiction. And until you make up your mind and say no -and till you work on it: that is it.

Even others felt that there was something "different" about their victim that was inherent in their personality or the way she/he interacted with the world. They rationalized their behaviour in terms of perceptions about the victim and engaged in the same victim blaming they had experienced during childhood.

Blaming the victim.

My youngest daughter was always a restless kid. Somewhat manipulative. But then the youngest of five, you have to take care of yourself, or use what you can to get what you can. [manipulative how?] Mainly - getting concessions to stay up later or whatever. Very often with her younger brothers there would be some tensions between them and she was superbly good at timing it, so that it would seem like the younger brother had picked on her. I always saw that -I understood that. I used to try to talk to my wife about it. But she [the daughter] was a restless kid, fun-loving very energetic. Quite naughty in some

ways. Broke the rules a lot. And got away with it. And around that time she began to be quite affectionate with me, and sort of hang on my shoulder and then this whole question got out of hand.

She said to me out of the blue one day: you can touch me and I won't tell mum. I hadn't even been close beside her. And I said: what do you mean? And she said: you can touch me, that is ok, I won't tell mum. I let it go. When we were in the car she used to say to me: would you like me to sit on your knee. And one time we were sitting outside the store and we were waiting and waiting and she was in the back seat and I turned around and this beautiful looking girl walked across the cross walk and she had a mini skirt on. And I said: boy does she ever look good! And my stepdaughter says: That is an insult to me. [What did you make of that?] That surprised me [...] they seemed such grown-up words for a young girl to say. I figured that she meant that by admiring someone else I was insulting her. This was before [the abuse] started.

Definitions of abuse. The confusion and blurring of boundaries which characterized their relationship with their victim(s) was part of a wider inability to grasp the reality of abusive sexual behaviour. None of the participants at the time of the abuse felt for their victim(s), and in fact many "did not think it would cause any harm". They quickly and persuasively learned to justify their behaviour. Did they know it was wrong, I asked. Persistently the response was that they had a hard time conceiving of abuse as something that did not include physical violence. Many also impressed on me that the abuse did not include penetration and therefore could not be understood as a sexual act.

Confusion about abuse.

It was not meant to be abusive or violent or anything like that. She was at that age, you know, when they are very affectionate at times. Unaware of their sexuality. I overstepped the boundaries. I also used to share little private things about myself, which didn't help. I knew there was something that wasn't right about it, but I couldn't figure it out. There was this confusion in my mind. There was this sort of idea about incest, and on the other hand this idea that you could

accommodate some sort of sexual need in the daughter, as a father, without going the whole way.

Others knew that they were overstepping a boundary, but minimized the results of their behaviour. How could something be abusive that allowed them to express "loving" emotions otherwise hidden? The idea about incest did not match the experience of it. The participants, as many people, had definitions of abuse and images of offenders which are not grounded in reality. They were able to maintain that they would never perpetrate such a crime. They were sometimes able to hold onto this perception of self while the abuse was already ongoing. They were actively hiding their behaviour from others and themselves.

The hidden self.

That was the weird part. My daughter was starting to undress in the hallway [on her way to the bathroom] and I would freak and send her to her room. That would really make me mad. And yet I was molesting her.

I did talk about people that sexually abused - and I would say: "Yeah - You should do this and that". Probably covering my own track, I guess. I am good at that: hiding. That is probably the best thing I was ever good at.

This pattern was sometimes maintained even when their partner confronted them about changes in their behaviour and attitude.

I was hiding. I tried to segregate myself. I'd sleep on the couch, my wife would sleep in the bed, and everybody else was upstairs. [...] then my wife started to fight. She basically started to grill me as to what was wrong. As much as I tried to convince her that things looked normal, she'd say: well let's go and get counselling somewhere; this is more than we can handle ourselves. I'd say: no I can handle it. I refused.

Others felt that the lack of resistance on part of their victim indicated a willingness for sexual interaction. For them, the responsibility rested with the victim to stop the abuse.

> *She said at the time that it was pleasurable. This tied in with my concept of being the liberated father sort of thing. If she found it pleasurable, it seemed to me it was ok. So when she said no - I stopped. That seemed logical too.*

Cry for Help

Several participants described how in retrospect the abuse itself seemed like a "cry for help". Despite a fear of being arrested, judged, and abandoned they hoped that they would be found out and that this would put an end to a greater sense of pain and hopelessness. Their life was characterized by constant stress due to unresolved past and current conflicts.

Ongoing stress.

> *I beat people. I destroyed property. I went to jail. I was warehoused and went out. Nothing was ever accomplished. I did all that [show anger, hit out, pick fights]. Nothing came of it. Nothing ever came of it. I was still the same person. Nothing worked. We need to let people know we hurt, and have feelings or whatever - I had learned very well to suppress every feeling I ever had. A lot of [the abuse] was stress, giving up. Feeling out of control, lost - or a cry for help.*

> *I was depressed. I was on medication for deep depression at that time [when the abuse started]. When you are deeply depressed it is a horrible feeling. Sometimes I wonder if that is the time when some people commit suicide. You hurt inside and you don't know why, you don't know why you hurt so much. I was so depressed that all I wanted to do was sleep and escape from life.*

> *She [partner] fought me tooth and nail and was very cruel about a lot of things - when she was trying to control me, get me back into the church. So all that was going on. My job - that time was terrible. I was promoted beyond my competence. The job seemed very exciting. [...] the politics in the corporate headquarters - they were all fighting each other. It was terrible. It is real doggy job. [...] self-esteem was a big part of it. Inadequate feelings about myself.*

Many of the participants at some point in time decided to tell somebody about the abuse situation. Although the common feeling was that they "did not know where to look for help, but [...] did know that [they] were going to be arrested".

Fear of arrest.

> *That was my hesitation with getting help. Everybody has the obligation to report you, especially if child welfare is at stake. And that is justifiable. On the other hand if somebody comes in and says:"Look I need to talk to somebody, I really need to talk to somebody -".*

> *I knew as soon as I reported it that would be it. I would be charged. I tried to tell my social worker. The one time I almost had it out and this lady interrupted, and I just freaked. [...] We were really having problems, I couldn't have sex with my wife because I started to think of my daughter and I just freaked. I knew it was wrong. I knew all along it was wrong. I tried to tell a few times. But there is always a reason not to.*

Some tried to talk to their spouse, a friend, or even the family doctor. But, as in childhood when the abuse was perpetrated on them, they encountered silence or disbelief.

> *I really wanted to talk to somebody. I did try to talk about it, but nobody wanted to hear about it. They made me feel as if I was making it up.*

Societal expectations and judgements were frequently cited as a reason not to seek help. For one participant such expectations were more powerful than his own realizations. Several participants mentioned that we shame people from an early age on and avoid any open discussions about sexuality. The end result is that:

> *You have two feelings: empathy and shame. Shame is always bigger. It involves more people. It involves the whole society.*

Sadly, the main confidant often became the child him/herself. During these conversations with the victim some were able to feel empathy for the first time, and

recognized the harm they were causing. A few managed to stop the abuse because of this, and it was reported many years later

> Victim as confidant.
>
> *I came to [...] the realization where I said: "Holy shit, what am I doing here?" You know? I think it was a mutual conversation one day when she said: "Dad, what are we doing -what are you doing? Do you realize what you are doing?" And I stopped to think about it, and I said: "You know, I really probably don't realize what I am doing." [...] I think one of the biggest things was - did you ever see the film Something about Amelia? [yeah] So we watched that together. I was in the back room doing something. She was watching television. I kept popping in to look at this and thought: "Holy smokes." So I thought: "This has got to stop". Gradually she said: "No - I think we should stop this Dad." And I said: "Yeah ok".*
>
> *I knew there was something that wasn't right about it, but I couldn't figure it out. I felt quite a relief when she said "no". Because I felt in the background that this was not quite right. Maybe it was going too far, maybe it would go further. [...] I took her aside and told her: "This is going to stop. I give you my word and I can stay by that. And whatever happens, it will not happen again. So don't feel frightened or that if I come to say good-night to you when you are in bed, it won't be a question of me saying "Do you want a hug?" and then it will lead to something else. It won't". And she seemed to understand that.*

Some did not discontinue the abuse. But they like others talked to their victim about the situation, reached an "agreement" with her/him that established a pattern of victim(s) participating in sexual acts to "get it over and done with" or to "receive special favours". Although I had always maintained that it is hard, if not impossible, for victims to assert themselves, this was one of the more surprising results for me. Some victims reach a form of contract with their offenders that beyond threats of family break-down or grooming through special favours involve an actual "exchange". The secret is a shared one. The silence that surrounds it does not inform the interactions of the people who keep it. The emotional trauma of a child faced with

adult emotional and sexual needs to the point of ignoring her/his own well-being became glaringly obvious to me.

> *I never thought of my daughter leaving because I was doing this to her. Or anything happening to her. [...] she threatened to tell her mother what she did and stuff like this. But she didn't because she didn't want us splitting up. [When she told me to stop] usually I would back off. Not always. If I was there and I was determined to do what I was going to do, I was going to do it and then I was gone and it was over. Maybe it is a hidden - because that is the only force that I ever had. Even if she wouldn't want - there was no hitting or punching, nothing like this. Maybe it would have stopped then. She would just push away. [You would let her go?] She knew that these incidents wouldn't last any longer than 10 or 15 minutes. After that we would go our own ways. We would do what we were doing before it happened. But she probably still thought it would stop, even though it was getting worse all the time.*

> *After the first time she kind of consented. I pushed her to the point where she knew what was coming. She looked up to me.*

Another participant despite an "agreement" with his victim did not feel so sure that he would be able to stop the abuse and took a more practical approach. As he felt unsure about changing his behaviour, he attempted to change situational circumstances instead.

> *I learned not to be in the house with her by myself. [...] One thing I did do - I put an inside lock on her bedroom door. For her. [Did she use it?] Oh yeah. She used it.*

The most surprising result in the description of their victims was how essential the relationship was to the abusive act. I had often thought that for sexual abuse to be possible offenders need to separate themselves from the people they offend against to the extent that the relationship is lost altogether. Although empathetic feelings are absent during the abusive act the fantasies and feelings preceding and following it point to a different reality. The victims needed to be in an actual or perceived special

relationship with the offender for sexual interest to be present. Part of this specialness, unlike in their adult relationships, rested in the chance for uncensored and safe emotional expression. Finally this expression of feelings extended to breaking one of the many taboos offenders had encountered during their childhood. they communicated about their sexuality.

Disclosure

In whatever way the disclosure occurred most participants described feeling either totally destroyed (several wanted to end their life), or feeling totally relieved, or both: the "secret was out", everything was "in the open", "the pressure was off", now they "could deal with it". Others felt grateful to be able to put "an end to the vicious cycle" their life was evolving around. "God knows what else would have happened. I was out of control".

Feeling destroyed.

One of my other daughters made the disclosure. And that day I just went down in the basement of my house and I was sitting there, and it came all over me. The people I hated so much in my life - especially my brother. I had become just like. When I realized this, it hit me and I thought I just couldn't carry on any more. I took every pill I had in the house and I ended up in hospital.

So when it did actually happen, that is when I said: OK. That was it. I was crushed, totally destroyed. Believe it or not, I crawled on the floor in front of my closet when I was trying to get my belonging so that I was able to leave. I was in a fetal position and I just sobbed uncontrollably. I was a broken man, that was it, my life was over.

When the disclosure came I again started to think:"Do I run?" I thought that the best thing was to just disappear. The shame was terrible. When I went back to bed at night I wondered when I would do myself in.

Feelings of despair were closely connected to the knowledge that they would be charged, judged, sent to jail, loose their family, and likely be prohibited from seeing the victim. The latter effected those significantly who had a perceived emotional closeness to the child. In retrospect several participants felt that despite these consequences it was preferable to have their actions disclosed, as the cycle of abuse is hard to break once "you learn that you can get away with it".

Feeling relieved.

If I was not charged and brought out into the open, I would have hurt a lot more people yet. For my own satisfaction. Because I am full of anger, full of bitterness and hate. A lot of confusion.

I am glad that I was reported before anything major happened. [Before] any major involvement with girls went on. Because I believe if they did not stop it early, it would have went from touching private parts to more. I am grateful for that. I don't want them [victims] to have a life like I had.

Feelings such as these were shared by offenders who had stopped abusing long before the disclosure occurred - in one situation as much as 10 years previously. This reaffirmed my belief that sexual abuse goes well beyond the acts of sexual transgression towards actively keeping a secret of which the secret of a separate identity is a part. To be sure, there is relief in gaining a voice even at the expense of standing exposed.

Disclosure of the secret self.

As a matter of fact I did come across a note that I wrote to my daughter shortly after the abuse was disclosed and I thanked her for coming forward , even though I hadn't been through the court system or anything at that time. I felt this is probably the biggest relief to be able to start to deal with this issue. Cause I had always maintained that I was going to stop it. But where to go after that? In other words, I remember saying to her once: "This is not going to happen again"

And feeling helpless, because there was no place to turn. The damage had been done, it was a melting pot. And there was no way to turn it down, turn off the heat.

It was madness. So they [police] had me in the room - and I didn't know nothing, I had nothing, no lawyers, nothing. They wouldn't let me smoke. I was really wanting to smoke but they wouldn't give me one. And they sat down and talked to me, and they asked me did I want a lawyer, and I said: I wouldn't know who to phone. So they picked up the phone and talked to this guy and this guy said: "Don't say anything. Keep to yourself, until somebody talks to you". So I said: OK. And they said to me: "Well, did you or didn't you". And I wouldn't say nothing. I said the lawyer told me not to say anything. "OK - come on down the jail [holding] cell". And when I was walking down the hall, something just said to me: "What the fuck do I want to deny this for now?" And I looked at the two of them and I said: "Fuck, come back". I sat down and admitted it. Then they read out everything that my daughter had told them. She had been to this counsellor at F&CS. She must be a good counsellor because she got it right out of her. Just about everything.

I am now a firm believer that if you let everything out then there is no more. As long as you are hiding something then there is reason for you to move or change. But if everything is out and everybody knows about it, then there is nothing more I can do. I was really glad it did come out because it was over then.

Many lost their families as a result of the disclosure. Some were harshly judged and abandoned by the very people who had abused them in the past.

I went down and explained to my family what I was charged for and the first thing they say is:"Are you guilty?" And I said:"Yes, I am". And ever since that they disappeared. As far as the family goes, they don't want to look at me as a person. They would have to stop and look at themselves.

Others tried to find help in dealing with these issues but "did not know where to look" or were told by local service providers: "We don't deal with people like you". All learned from the reactions of people around them that denial was preferable to owning up, because for most with the disclosure the whole person stood accused, their

whole past was scrutinized; the black sheep had finally shown its true colour. Disclosure became the new divided experience containing losses and a sense of relief.

Sentencing and Jail

The overall experience with the judicial system was that "nobody ever asked [them for their] side of the story". Some struggled with the fact that there seemed to be little consistency in sentencing: "It was unfair that I had to go to jail and others got away with a bit of community work on the weekend". For even others prison was safe: "Now I had an identity at last, even if it was a criminal one".

> *I was safer in prison and I was free. I had no responsibility. There was no-one to hurt me or bother me. I actually got to like it in there.*

However, the far more dominant feeling was that in prison their worst fears about punishment and abandonment came true. It was a punishment and sense of isolation which extended well beyond the prison walls.

> Becoming marginal.
>
> *I was transferred to the court-house. And I was in jail there. I still had my work clothes and all this on. And I was called into the court-room, the court-room was cleared. And there was about three people sitting there on the benches. And one of the guys was the one who had been in the cell next to me. And it was all read out about me. I get back into the cells and this guy goes crazy in the cell, he rattled the bars and all his shit. But my feelings through all that was numb. That was all I felt: numbness. Police officer spoke to me and I just answered yes or no. I never had any conversation with anybody at all. Next thing you know, I am out on the steps -it was cold. Nowhere to go. I wasn't allowed to go home, anybody I knew wouldn't have anything to do with me, and I couldn't go to the people that didn't know anything about it. So I was pretty well out.*

Another participant was stricken with the realization that he was going to be punished while his past and future offenders got away with it.

One night - the night before I was transferred we [participant and fellow inmate] talked about sexual things. We wrestled and I fell to the ground and he sexually assaulted me. The next day I was transferred. [...] I kept all the ones when I was assaulted in. I let all the ones when I assaulted out. I didn't know how people would react.

The experience of being in prison varied greatly, however, between settings. Ontario Correctional Institute was described in more positive terms because of their sexual abuse treatment programme.

When I walked into OCI, there was a fellow there his name was [...] too and he walked right up to me and said "I am a sexual offender. I sexually assaulted my stepdaughter". Like - I looked around and thought "What are you nuts or something?" Well this is unheard of. Like you'd be dead in 3 seconds in any other place. And I said "Get away from me, eh? I've done the same thing and I am down low,but I am not down lower than you, right?" But that started it, right? The fact that he was able to talk, and we had lots of talks, like I talked with everybody right? No matter what they were in for and that. The big consensus was, if you are working on your problems and you are making changes - we are fine, and we'll accept you and back you. But if you're - if they figure that you're dragging your feet you are not [doing] something about your problem, then you got problems.

For some, police and judicial involvement changed little to nothing about their own perceptions regarding the abuse. The denial continued. For many reintegration into their community or family was experienced as difficult if not downright impossible.

Continued denial.

I went to the police station answered some questions, and denied it all. Even after I went to jail I was still in a state of denial for a long time. Basically I said it didn't happen. I don't know what she is talking about. This is something that society frowns upon. So I am not going to admit that I did it. I think what I did is that I sort of blocked it out. Never told a soul.

Feeling like a freak.

There is a song by Jethro Tull called Aqua [lungs]. . It is about a dirty old man on the park bench - drooling. It took me a long time to be able to listen to that song. Because that was the image I created of myself. My god, this is what I have become. And you walk around feeling that it is stamped right on your forehead.

Difficulties in reintegrating.

There is a lot of stress in settling back into society. Yeah - and lately I have been feeling tired. I go back to my apartment and I just feel like sleeping all the time. Then I think:"Am I getting depressed?" But I don't feel depressed. To be depressed is up to you if you want it to last a day or for the rest of your life.

Low self-esteem.

When I first got out I didn't have much self-esteem at all. When I walked down the street I would walk with my head down.

Now there is what society says about you; they condemn you and never give you a chance.

If I walked into a room and there was 100 people that liked me and one that didn't like me, I would focus all my energy on trying to get that person to like me instead of realizing that I had 99 that liked me already.

In summary, while the disclosure by the victim had a powerful change impact on offenders' lives and was largely described as a needed turning point, the courts and penal institutions caused ambivalence and resentment. With the disclosure came the chance to uncover a secret reality, and a secret and pained self. The experience with the judicial system by contrast limited the chance for new self-definition to adopting a socially despised identity. Only those institutions which offered a treatment programme were described as helpful while those where you simply "do time" contributed to an already low self-esteem.

The punishment may or may not have matched the crime, but it certainly served to reinforce a public contempt with sex offenders. Reintegration into the community and family following these experiences was difficult at best and indicative of the notion that "labels disable".

Group Participation at CJI

Participation in CJI programme was overall described as one of the main avenues for preventing future offenses. Many participants described their group as "a place where you can make your own realizations". At times this was preferable to professional help "where you cannot be sure of the judgement they make". A sense of power and control over your own healing was seen as essential for moving on. Part of this empowerment comes from being in a group with people who understand what you have done and can challenge you in ways which are aimed at changing behaviour and attitudes while showing compassion for the whole person. Some participants were initially apprehensive about being associated with other offenders. But a feeling of finding "peace and trust" and having the opportunity to share thoughts and feelings predominated in their descriptions of CJI programme. The support further continues outside group with many of the members meeting for one-to-one conversations. In descriptions of the group process, the peer review approach was mentioned several times as one way to effectively address rationalizations and minimizations of abusive behaviour. For most participants the prevailing air of honesty characterized the self-help approach. "It is harder to fool people who have been there". Empathy with the victim was seen as a milestone in the process of recovery and healing.

Peer review.

We put the life history on the board. Certain headings - eh? Like your charge, your sentence, family relationships, how you get along with father, brother, sister, mother, and so on. Like things will jump of the board at you. It is quite an experience. You do that about four times and after that you get a pretty good picture. A good plan for healing. But you let the person look at it and see it for themselves.

Empathy.

Everybody . as experienced some kind of abuse. Either directly or indirectly. Abuse takes many forms - right? Mental abuse, physical abuse, - I think if you have some kind of pain in your life and you can get in touch with it - you know - I haven't really thought about this - but I don't think anybody who read a book could help anybody. Not in my experience, I don't really believe that. I believe everybody has some kind of pain in their life. And you can draw on that to understand. It could be the death of a loved one or something - eh? The thing is if you work through it and come out at the other end. ok, then maybe you can get in touch through that.

If you don't talk about your pain it is not a road forward it is an iceberg.

It is impossible to ever hurt somebody else if you associate your own hurt.

Experience of other group members.

It is a fine line between being able to sit in a group and this guy is telling you story and you get all twisted up inside and think: Jesus man, how could you have done that? And yet you have done the same thing. You can't segregate yourself from that. [Do you ever find it hard to understand another group member?] I have never come across anyone. The one that did bother me was the one that was lying.

The group has been fantastic. [is it helpful?] oh yeah. It is wonderful. You get some helpful thoughts from the others. When I first got into group there were 4 other guys who went to jail and I made a point of visiting them as much as I could. That was helpful to me to see what they were going through. After I got to CJI I went to the police, I decided to tell my story.

When you talk about offenders I think of the first time I walked into the group: I remember walking over there and I knew I was alright, as a person. But all the stories I had heard over the years - they are retarded and shit like this - that's the way I grew up. And I walked in this door and I saw these guys and I said to myself: "Jesus they look alright to me". The wife came with me to the Christmas thing and after she said: "I look at these people - it was an eye-opener". They are normal people. Ordinary, normal people.

In all of the interviews CJI was described as a positive turning point. Unlike in the penal system participants described feelings of acceptance and consequently felt more open to taking ownership for their past behaviour. Acceptance of the person is essential in encouraging people to tell their story. Participants' experiences in group correspond to my own experiences of group processes at CJI, where I have seen a trust and willingness to change, unmatched in many other group settings. In terms of avoiding recidivism the challenges put to one by people who have been in similar situations are meaningful and hard to replicate in professional therapy.

Re-offending

Many described their group participation as crucial in preventing a repeat offense. For some this was made possible by linking feelings about their own victimization with a clear image of what their victims felt like. "I could never again do that to another person - put them through what I went through". Others clearly stated that they "continue to need support and people who challenge [them]".

I guess I just have to make sure that I don't get into a position where I get so depressed that I turn to my own daughter. But now I know where I can turn. With group - you got buddies. Like I can phone [another group member] any time. I don't think there would be another time. Those kids are everything to me that is all that I have.

Several participants felt unsure of themselves and simply "hoped" that re-offending would not occur, "but [...] still need to understand so many things to feel safe". There was a general sense that "people who have abused and had a chance to look at themselves are far less likely to do it again than those people who claim they could never do that". On the whole, all participants had subjective strategies for avoiding future perpetration of abuse. For one "it [was] a question of control. like giving up drinking". Another admitted that "some of the feelings of closeness are still there. They have been there for so long, but now I want to express them in a way that is not harmful". Or even: "I understand my rationalization and trigger and need to make sure that I get never that depressed again".

All shared the thought that it was likely a life-long task to heal from the abuse:

> *The potential is always there, but now I know what to do to avoid that: I need to keep my life on the upside, always make sure that I don't get into a position where I don't care.*

Most interviewees expressed that re-offending could be avoided. Through participation in group they had learned to address their behaviour all the while finding acceptance as a person.

A changed sense of self.

> *I am that person no longer: with the disclosure also came the disclosure of my secret self, the past I had not dealt with, because I didn't even know then that it was affecting me.*

Hopes and Goals

Many of their hopes and goals for the future were closely connected to hopes that the victim would heal, that the abuse had not caused irreversible harm. They expressed the wish to "do anything to help the victim to know it was not [his/] her

fault". They wanted their victims to know that they had learned to feel "fully responsible". But not all of their victims were open to hearing these apologies and many of the participants were struggling with having no avenue to make these changes known to the person they most wanted to express this too. It left them "long[ing] for reconciliation. Not forgiveness but understanding". Others hoped that eventually they would be allowed to "enjoy this sense of new potentials. I allow people to get close, I can be affectionate, I can cry". Or even "I have done more talking in the past two years [since disclosure] than I have done in my whole damn life. I want to keep it that way". Others were more cautious to trust this sense of current well being and hesitantly said: "I <u>think</u> I can live this down given the right support". There was a general consensus that while disclosure had brought many difficulties they had also learned to pay more attention to their private and secret selves than their public images.

> *What is important is how my family and friends feel, what they need to deal with all this. The general public is no longer important.*
>
> *There might be a whole society that condemns you, but there are people who stay with you - sometimes and ironically the people you hurt the most: I got so much respect for that - how could I ever hurt them again?*

Their hopes and goals for the future did not differ from hopes and goals of other people in the community. The odds to work against were greater when it came to reintegrating into the family, but not insurmountable:

> <u>A sense of a positive future</u>.
>
> *My future? Me and my wife to get a little more time on our own. Not far far away, but far enough away that we don't have the daily hassle of things. And get some enjoyment out of life for ourselves.*

I can't change what happened in my past, but I can change the future. My future is that I want to start my own business. I feel comfortable to do that. I was an auto-wrecker - I was my own boss. For 5 years. And I enjoyed that. And I want a family in the worst way. I let [...] and the kids down once and I never do that again. I believe that. as far as the family goes I hope in time they quit looking at me as the black sheep in the family. They go and get help. They themselves have suffered.

Hopefully my life will be no different to what it is. Maybe I shouldn't say that, [but] everything is fine at home.

I know what I have done wrong. I admit what I have done wrong. I take full responsibility for what I have done. And whatever it will take for me to make that right, I'm ready. I [am] not going to go half way through and then quit, like I did my whole life, when I would get frustrated, I'd walk away. But I am not doing that now. I see a future. If I can help somebody out, I'm ready.

Many spouses, although by no means all, stuck with these men. Many attended the workshop. Their side of the story still needs to be told. In the stories of my research participants they largely appeared as people who greatly enhanced a positive sense of the future. Even the actions of those you left their partners and did not stay in touch were described as "understandable". What interested me was the strong link most participants made between hopefulness and support, and finally hopefulness and prevention. For prevention to be possible people's actions need to be informed by images of the future which render this effort worthwhile.

Prevention

The previous sections were focused on <u>me</u> trying to find an answer to the question: What makes people do something that ultimately they know to be wrong? I tried to understand the participants' reality by listening to their life histories, as they remembered or chose to remember. It was also a question which I addressed directly

during the interviews. Few, if any of us, are ever fully aware of why we act in certain ways. Explanations in traditional psychology have ranged from psychoanalytical theories to more behavioral approaches which focus on making sure that certain acts do not happen again. For primary prevention work neither are very promising.

We need to find ways to step outside our knowledge of individual actions and dynamics and become inclusive of an understanding of broader social patterns. The responses of participants, not too surprisingly, were diverse and at times confused when it came to prevention. Individual experiences do not make us experts when it comes to the community at large. They do however add unique insights which are grounded in a particular reality and the meaning we attach to that reality. As the case studies showed, ideas about prevention were most strongly expressed if they gave meaning to an actual lived experience. In other words, participants' suggestions for cultural and social change were made from within an understanding of a family and individual history which was unique and strongly felt. Many participants expressed that they did not really know what made them perpetrate abuse, and that it would likely take a long time yet for them to figure this out. Others strongly stated that what mattered was the knowledge that somebody had been hurt and that this pain must not be repeated in the future. I quickly became aware that participants were not talking about a simple cause-effect dynamic. this happened and therefore I did this. Most, in fact, said that a search for causes in that sense was likely a futile task.

Causes are difficult to assess when it comes to sexual behaviour which involves many levels of human thought, feelings, and interaction. Further, such explanations are likely more representative of our need to control than the reality of the situation at

hand. The fact that sexual abuse exists well beyond isolated incidents points to elements within our families, communities and wider culture which are out of control. To be blunt, I did not find any themes that could lead to simple and effective suggestions for change. I rather found a colourful conglomeration of responses to my question about prevention which stood in contrast to some of the more simple explanations which our communities have grown accustomed to. Participants shared with me that no matter what the causes might be, we can learn from the experiences of individuals, and that change likely needs to span interventions from the most individual to the most social. What follows will then not so much provide answers but rather challenge all of us to re-think those answers which have done little to change the situation. They may at times have contributed to it. As several interviewees stated, the search for causes can lead into a search for excuses or accusations, while the search for adequate support can lead into making a difference.

> *I can accept the term cause to a point but not to the point of saying this is why. It happened because I caused it.*

Most comments about prevention were thus focused on who this "I" was and how this identity came into being. For many, discomfort with their social male identity formed a large part of their suggestions for change. When asked about their situation immediately prior to the first offense they told me this:

> *I lost the ability to realize and understand what was going on.*
>
> *I put up walls - felt nothing - and that is the way I lived.*
>
> *I had so much anger - a tremendous amount of anger.*
>
> *I was really bombed out, completely alone and she crawled into bed and said: Daddy - I love you.*

Of course I was sexually attracted at the time. Otherwise I would not have done it. That is the only way I knew how to show feelings.

They also spoke of: depression, recent trauma, failing marriages, and a loss as to how to reach out for help. The quick fixes of alcohol or "simply shutting down your body to not feel anything at all" quickly failed. In terms of prevention, then, speculations about self and other were intermingled with an almost desperate attempt to be able to say: this is what and how it can be changed - simple!

The suggestions for preventative approaches suggested by participants and which are described in the following pages were socially creative. They began with the premise that if all children grew up in a healthy family, culture and society, maybe - just maybe - all would be well. This led towards a definition of a healthy social climate. To be able to make these suggestions participants had to free themselves from staying within clinical parameters and think about creating a brighter future. Such visions are important if we want to avoid a wider sense of loss and resignation. Participants had the following to say about prevention.

Encouraging expression of emotions.

Letting males express their feelings. [...] Right from the crib on. It is ok to cry when you feel pain. It is ok to feel love for people. [...] We should be taught the difference between love and sex.

Mostly it is education and showing them, showing them - between parents and children the need to express their feelings, when they are young. They have to start with that from the cradle almost. They don't say "don't cry, be a man" stuff like that. Or "taboo is right". Kids don't need all that crap. They don't say "be a big girl" or whatever. They are children. They are going to cry if it hurts.

You have to let people express their feelings, get used to express their feelings. All the rest comes with that. If you are a survivor you have to put ownership back where it belongs and realize that it was nothing

to do with you. You have to learn to feel good about yourself. That there is nothing wrong with [you]. He is all male or all female - or whatever he [she] is.

We are allowed to show anger, because it is accepted that a man can show anger. And we are allowed to show that we seek sexual gratification. What is not ok, in society's eyes is for us to go up and hug our buddies. If we want contact from our buddies we have to run into them: a football game or something like that. That is ok. You go and pound a guy and your body feels alive.

Men are having a lot of problems. Men and their fathers. [...] I was raised not to express emotions, feelings, clam up, "stiff upper lip", "don't be angry", "turn the other cheek", "women first". All these things which where reinforced by the women in society that I knew. Society seems to reinforce that you are the strong one; that you have to take it on the chin and not flinch, and be the strong one when there are problems. You want to cry your heart out, and you couldn't. There was no question of admitting what was seen as a weakness. Feelings and emotions are not for a man. I learned all those things terribly well, and now I am told that I have to move on, that all that was crazy and so wrong. But when you try to do something about it, society says we don't want a lot of wimps around here.

I guess there is no quick fix there. It is a question of getting started in educating young males and females from a very early age that it is ok if guys cry. It is like me once jumping of a rock on a sandy beach, and landing on the beach, and there was a hidden rock in the sand and I landed and I couldn't get up. I just cried. I was about six or seven. And all these women - maybe my aunt and a nanny - and they were all shouting at me to stop crying. In a sense there is an element of abusiveness in there. They didn't know any different. Men were raised tough.

Increasing awareness.

There should be more awareness of what is happening. What seemingly is not important in the long run, leads to this type of pattern of abuse. If a guy comes to me and says: I did this because I drank. Well, why did you drink? Each question that is answered poses another question.

One of the things that has to be sent out as a message is: don't be afraid to try new things in your life. Be willing to accept a small degree of rejection.

As offenders we have to let the general population know that it is less likely for somebody who took a look at himself to re-offend than somebody who does nothing. If men were encouraged more to come forward earlier in life and talk about what has happened to them, that should be as acceptable to the community as women victims.

First I think society has to be educated. I don't mean the type of education where somebody says: well, that is bad and you should not do this. I mean the kind of education what causes this thing to happen. Asking: is it happening in your family? You think about that by yourself. That could be a danger signal to you, which the person may not even recognize themselves.

Recognizing male victimization.

If you have been victimized, get it out now, before it is too late, before you start losing control, not coping when the pressure is on. I think you have to go to men and tell them that if they have been victimized or even just feel that you may have been, get some help. Come and talk to us. We run seminars. You might have to use well-known personalities. The Globe and Mail did an article about Robin Williams. He is "getting in touch with his feelings". For example Hook: that is all part of his new getting through [drug abuse] and getting in touch with his feelings. Apparently that film profoundly affected him.

Maybe we need a hot line for men victims to call. Any victims but men victims too. If you feel you have been victimized come and talk about it before you maybe do something crazy. A quote in this article [participant brought along] from a male victim is:"I didn't go into therapy to get my memory back. I went to fix what is happening to me today. Therapy is a deliberate betrayal of all the safety mechanisms that helped me in my life. Not remembering the sexual abuse served me well". Crazy isn't it? Maybe some people who just won't go near therapy are frightened. The defense mechanism is so effective. It is scary to lose it.

If somebody would have listened to me back then, helped me deal with it. If the family -I always say that wasn't the only thing the family didn't talk about. That [sexual abuse] wasn't a thing to remember. There was no love [...] you know what I mean? I believe that when I was sexually assaulted if there was somebody there to do something about it, or explain to you that that was wrong. Nobody told me that it was wrong. I felt that it was wrong, but at the same time it felt good. You felt wanted.

What they [male victims] have bottled up inside is like a dynamite ready to go. Maybe if I had met with even one of them [own offenders] I wouldn't have bottled it up, maybe it all wouldn't have happened to me. I don't know.

Educating about "right" and "wrong".

I think if it [sexual abuse] starts the only one who really has a chance at all [to stop it] is the victim. But if alcohol is involved and there is force there, she doesn't stand a chance. In my case if I was strongly told what was right and wrong right of the bat, that would have helped me.

They are going into school, they are doing educational programming and: ok touch and not ok touch. Stuff like that. Just educate them [children], what is right and what's not right. You don't go and say "don't go into a car with a stranger" you say " you don't accept feeling uncomfortable with anyone, family , anybody" you say "don't get in a car with a stranger" and an uncle says "come on I give you a ride" and you say "yeah, ok you are not a stranger" and that's where most of it happens, right? It is inappropriate, it is not acceptable. And you know - something inside of you says "I'm not feeling right, don't go there" but you do.

Using popular media.

The only thing you have to depend on is the old tv that everybody keeps watching. Some part breaks down, they relax, and open up an area.

Establishing privacy in the home.

Probably being a little more private or whatever. I would have changed in the bathroom. I wouldn't be so open. Even when my daughter was 12 to start undressing half way down the hall, drop all her clothes, and she'd be totally nude before she'd got to the bathroom. Those kinds of things.

Establishing accessible help.

Talking about it gets you more away from doing it. How do you get people that haven't abused yet to these places [like group]? They don't want to talk even if they have done things like that. They are certainly putting a lot of money out there to get these people - but often it is 20 years later or so. There is a lot of damage being done. So I hope they are right when they are doing that.

I guess being nowhere to go to talk. If I had had some place - like now we have the EAP programme at work where you just go and talk to a counsellor for free - money has always been a problem.

Many people do not know where they can get help. I did not find out about this group until I got out of jail. Many fellows who come now have not even been sentenced yet. Why didn't somebody tell me about it before?

Educating about danger signals.

Another danger signal might be: does he brood a lot? Does he lose his temper? There may be other reasons. But this could be one of them. Does he sort of become remorseful, very quiet, doesn't talk to anybody? And if he talks just says things like: yeah - ok yeah. But really has his own thoughts going on.

My feeling on that is that they [offenders] may honestly believe that they just drifted into it. But there was things that was happening that was pushing them closer to it. They didn't recognize them, and nobody else did.

Overcoming taboos.

We need an open society. A society - it is not only sexual abuse, there is so many things that society won't sit down and talk about. They don't want to know. A lot of society is like that. And if I had not done what I have done, I probably would be the same way. I would not be sitting here talking to you.

To summarize, participants' strategies for prevention closely matched their life experiences. Expression of emotion, willingness to communicate, and concrete education about sexual abuse were frequently cited as avenues for change. Increased awareness above all needed to include an understanding of childhood trauma generally and male victimization specifically. Finally, many expressed that the ability to make right and informed choices as adults depends on us taking a look beyond experiences in childhood towards a treatment of the experiences within the family and community at large. Abused and neglected children are most likely to offend as adults if their

own victimization remains covert or is actively denied. The cycle of abuse will continue if such denials extend beyond the family to the society at large. Moving our communities towards healing means facing such historical omissions in much the same way as individuals have to face their's. Primary prevention cannot occur without an analysis of these historical dynamics of failure which we call taboo.

The suggestions of research participants uncannily echoed the results of a study conducted with people with psychiatric disabilities.

> The most striking finding of this study is that psychiatric patients felt that their psychological dysfunction could have been prevented if interpersonal relations and factors in their community had been different. These variables were suggested three times more frequently than changes in their own disposition. [...] Problems in living can be prevented through environmental manipulation (Karlsruher, Jensen, & Nelson, 1976, p. 58-59).

It was during the workshop that we had the opportunity to further explore the impact of environment on individual actions.

The Workshop Participants and Set-up

The workshop was a combination of educational and participatory efforts. Seventy people registered and attended most of the sessions. We asked people to identify themselves only by first name to avoid divisions between service providers and consumers. It is therefore hard to determine in retrospect how well we achieved a cross section of the community. From the evaluation forms completed at the end of the two days I was pleased to find that we did have several representatives of major service providers present. Because the workshop partly took place during the weekend I have to assume that at least some of these people attended on their own time. We had staff from: Family and Children Services, Guelph and Ontario Correctional Institute, therapists in private practice, government and private day care centres, counselling services, Probation and Parole, Public Health, and the K-W Record in attendance. The presentations ranged from talks about CJI self-help groups, personal accounts shared by victims, an offender and a non-offending parent, a perspective about cultural influences on the development of male sexuality, and a summary of my research findings. This summary was a synopsis of results presented in the previous section.

During preparations for this workshop, the planning committee had to deal with a variety of hopes and fears about an unusual combination of people being expected to creatively work together. I was content to find that workshop participants established a community characterized by enthusiasm and openness, and comments in the evaluation were overall positive and encouraging. Everybody who completed an

evaluation expressed interest in a follow-up workshop in 1993 (for a copy of the Evaluation and Feedback Form see Appendix 6) [5]

The Tasks

All workshop participants divided into groups of approximately seven people per group. We encouraged participants to join people they did not commonly work or socialize with, to allow for as many different voices in each group as possible. From my observations this truly happened, and I was pleased to see groups of service providers, interview participants, and members of the wider community come together as people identifiable only by first name. Prior to the workshop interviewees had expressed fears about working in groups with victims of abuse or community members who may have a strong sense of retribution. We tried to create a safe environment for all participants by giving the option of forming groups according to gender. With this approach we hoped to: (1) avoid revealing offenders' identity, and yet (2) ensure those victims who feel uncomfortable in the presence of offenders could remain in an all female environment. This strategy was not helpful for male survivors or in terms of preventing groups comprised of survivors and women offenders. It was the only approach that the committee was able to take for safeguarding confidentiality and recognizing possible victim apprehensions at the same time. It was not meant to disregard the reality that men suffer sexual abuse and that women can be perpetrators of abuse. Interestingly, none of the groups chose the option of gender-specific

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[5] It is beyond the scope of this study to include a summary of this survey. After I had a chance to read the comments, data were given back to CJI for planning of a future workshop.

selection. This in itself was a mark of the safe and trusting atmosphere that quickly developed. One victim, in fact, chose to join a group with her offender. Two research participants later shared with me that they had for the first time publicly admitted to their charges.

Barriers to Creative Problem-Solving

The first task was for groups to identify "barriers in creative problem solving". We introduced the task by stating that preventative efforts because of their relative novelty in the community can be conceived of as a problem-solving exercise. We had established the parameters of sexual abuse as the problem through reference to incidence rates and theoretical considerations. The task was to consider what precludes individuals and communities from implementing preventative approaches in sexual abuse. If prevention in child sexual abuse is a problem that <u>can</u> communally be addressed, what hampers our ability to be socially creative in this area? Groups were asked to exchange and summarize their thoughts about obstacles, and pass them onto the workshop organizers. Interview participants, volunteers, and I displayed these barriers on big sheets of construction paper. Towards the end of our first day together we had a visual display of dynamics which hinder us in working for a better future. The task for the second day was to overcome or break down these barriers and collectively envisage a future free of sexual exploitation.

The wall of construction paper was a colourful and daunting display of acknowledgments, fears, questions, and resignations from the most personal to the most system-focused. I summarized these barriers in terms of their affective, conceptual and systemic components, keeping as close to the original wording as

possible. Systemic elements are further divided into those with options for collective control, and those of a more removed global nature.

Affective barriers. The most frequently mentioned barrier was a feeling of fear Group members expressed a collective fear of talking about sexuality let alone sexual transgressions in a society which has traditionally defined these topics as personal, if not "dirty and shameful". This was compounded by apprehensions about exploring one's own sexuality in a communal setting. There are little to no precedents for people within a community getting together and sharing experiences about the sexual side of their lives. This generates a sense of covert competition. Unable to have a clear sense about other people's sexual feelings and preferences, there is always the imagined danger that "one's own sexuality is lacking by comparison". Several groups identified strong feelings of dread about identifying a lack of clear boundaries within their own sexual feelings. "We might discover the abuser within". For victims there was also the fear of "opening up old wounds". They struggled with the realization that whatever had assisted them in surviving the abuse may be an inadequate resource when it comes to dealing with a more public exposure. Offenders admitted to similar trust issues. They feared rejection and sudden surfacing of "collective retribution needs".

The second most commonly mentioned feeling was a sense of isolation: "maybe nobody else really wants to talk about this taboo topic - nobody really wants to do the work"; "you end up with a label. too idealist, too naive, too feminist". This sense of marginalization was further complicated by the feeling that society at large was characterized by hopelessness when it comes to addressing issues in human

sexuality. Consider for a moment global efforts in Aids prevention which have been marginally successful, precisely because our communities are challenged when it comes to discussing human sexuality in a language accessible to all. Lastly group members expressed a sense of feeling inadequate when it comes to affecting change. "what would I know about changing society?". This feeling of being "ignorant" and de-powered further served to divide those with a large personal investment in addressing the problem from those who had a hard time "showing empathy", "dealing with embarrassment", "overcoming homophobia", or feeling "overwhelmed with the issue". This division puts the responsibility for starting the dialogue on victims of sexual abuse who "having been silenced in the past, mostly had any sense of personal power destroyed".

Conceptual barriers. The distinction between feeling and thought is at best a problematic one, as one group asserted. "feelings come first and can block creative thinking". Ideas about sexuality have traditionally "combined fear and fascination". This otherwise unlikely alliance of responses was for participants particularly visible in "religious traditions". It was further characteristic of the "double bind experienced when the message (one receives) does not match the behaviour", an experience that was equally present in "sexually liberated circles, where everybody can freely talk about sex but [you] can't ?" While some churches have hushed up the topic or officially only endorsed sex as a from of procreation, the advocates of sexual liberation philosophies have denied people's freedom to remain private.

There are also "necessary fictions" about one's sexuality and the sexuality of identifiable sub-groups. "Kids are seen as having no sexual feelings" and to learn that

"something that is emotionally and morally repugnant, can nevertheless be physically arousing" demystifies human sexual exchange as something that does not inevitably include the whole person. Our bodies can experience pleasure while our mind and spirit do not. Conceptually this establishes a grey zone and an "ambiguity about our bodies" which adds to the discomfort of discussing abuse. These and other challenges to a common belief system are responsible for the wider "disbelief" and "denial" that sexual abuse is a wide-spread phenomena. Taboos are a powerful social tool especially when they are connected to the concept that "admitting that something exists might increase the frequency of it occurring". In other words, there is a belief that we can keep social ills at bay by keeping them covert.

Discussions about gender role confusions are in the very least strenuous. Concepts which stand in direct contradiction to one another ("big boys can cry, but all men are strong") have caused confusion in those whose "sense of self and sexual being are strongly interwoven". People of the same gender or sexual orientation are at one and the same time expected to "compete and bond" with one another. And while we attempt to "break down barriers between men and women" we are equally invested in making sure that "women are seen as weak - as victims". These and other ideologies about sexuality were described overall as confusing, ambiguous, and forever changing. It helped me to understand why group members identified fear as the strongest emotional barrier. A little knowledge can feel like a dangerous thing.

Systemic barriers. There is no clear real-life distinction between areas over which people express a sense of control, and those which are experienced as being largely controlled by others. What struck me from the group summaries was a

repetitive connection between empowerment and community involvement, and conversely depowerment and institutional authority. Group members identified such barriers as: "the criminal code stops potential offenders from seeking help", " there is little available treatment", and "money always goes into protection work when it comes right down to it" as strong and resistant to change. This was particularly the case if combined with the experience that "social services as a rule don't like networking", and members of the wider community tend to lack "knowledge about the availability and accessibility of resources".

Other inhibiting factors were collective attitudes which needed to be recognized before they can be altered: "all social groups have a punitive need - sex offenders are convenient scapegoats". They allow us to think that "it is possible to think black and white, good and bad". They help us to order the world around us as much as other "stereotypes about men and women". By the same token "what would our social service sector do without victims?" We are invested in keeping divisions alive and keeping collective actions at bay. The "media", for one, benefit greatly from the belief that the world can be split into villains, victims, and heros. Discussions about sexual abuse are stuck in the grey zone. We seem to lack the ability to predict who is most likely to offend and/or be victimized, and ideas about sexual abuse prevention are still associated with the idea of identifying high risk groups. Primary prevention as a form of action seems "too big and overwhelming". When predictions are hard to come by prejudices take over the function of ordering the social world. "sexual abuse had to be connected to class and ethnicity; it couldn't possibly be happening in my world". What was clear to all participants is how difficult it can be to problem-solve if you

perceive the situation as a crisis of moral and social break-down. What also became clear is how this was a shared feeling, and that empowerment can begin with a community admitting that it is in need of change.

Overcoming the Barriers

The second task was for groups to overcome these barriers and identify how prevention in child sexual abuse could become a reality. Group members received a copy of my model as an example of primary prevention topics. They were also provided with a conceptual framework and instructed to make group decision about which level of prevention a particular approach belonged to (for a copy of this chart see Appendix 4). Several new people joined the workshop for the second day, and we briefly summarized proceeding from the first day, and I again shared my definitions of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention. I also encouraged participants to "let (their) social imagination go wild" and not be hindered by considerations about costs, time limits, current service provisions, or the sense of hopelessness addressed during the first day. Group members presented their discussion results in a plenary session. For sake of ease I have summarized these results in the columns provided by participants. Interestingly most groups attended mainly to the primary and secondary prevention level, and only mentioned tertiary prevention approaches if they were raised by a group member and found to be inadequate for approaches at a broader scale.

Table 2

Levels of Preventative Actions

	INDIVIDUAL	
	VICTIM	OFFENDER
PRIMARY	Early awareness of boundary issues Awareness of own rights and resources Age-appropriate information about sexuality Taking joy not shame in own body Encouragement to be honest through hopefulness about social interventions Education for healthy self-esteem and appropriate questioning of authority	Encouragement to use 24-Hrs. community help-lines through de-stigmatization Increased counselling for male sexual abuse victims Awareness of own childhood patterns Education about first dating relationships and consent Healthy self-esteem independent of social status Knowledge about rationalization, justification, minimization, and victim blaming dynamics Knowledge about long-term impact of abusive experiences Encouragement for paternal bonding' and nurturing of infants (increased involvement from birth)
SECONDARY	Accessible support structures Encouragement to use peer counselling Knowledge of abusive family patterns Knowledge about retribution and victim/offender treatment options Choice for supervised access with offender Focus on counselling as self-awareness	Encouragement to identify own risk Accessible confidential support services Encouragement to use peer counselling Knowledge of cycle of abuse Neighbourhood buddy systems for high risk offenders
TERTIARY	Group and individual support "You are not alone" message Addressing the need to feel safe in all life areas Recognition for strength and coping abilities Option to initiate free and constructive family therapy	Decriminalisation of sexual abuse as encouragement to "own up" Awareness of own risk factors Participation in activities which increase self-esteem and internal resources Ongoing support and assessment in peer settings. "not getting away with it" 24-Hrs. probationary peer help-lines Learning to understand what the goals of abuse was, and how victims are "chosen" Learning to meet own needs of love, and sexual gratification without guilt

Table 2 (cont.)

	FAMILY
PRIMARY	Encouraging close contact with neighbours to avoid isolation
	Awareness of sexual boundaries and incest issues
	Regular family meetings to assess interaction patterns and effect (family, a group)
	Open discussion about sexuality especially with adolescents
	Establishment of mutually agreed upon comfort levels (e.g. nudity in the home)
	Challenge of conventional male and female roles (no more kings of the castle)
	In-home sessions discussing "abuse"
	Clear boundaries and respect for individual property and privacy
	Establishing a common vocabulary ("love", "trust" "space", etc.)
	Parenting identified as a skill to be learned
	Knowledge about family of origin
	Avoidance of media which sensationalize, glamorize, and provoke fear
	Reconsidering the basis of family structures
SECONDARY	Monitoring family boundary issues
	Awareness of pre-sexualization
	Assessment of family living space in terms of maintaining individual privacy
	Free family counselling upon request
	Participation in Parent Effectiveness Training with focus on father/daughter and mother/son dynamics
TERTIARY	Ongoing family support networks
	Recognition that incest is a family affair
	Support (moral and social and safety) for families who want to stay together

Table 2 (cont.)

CULTURE	
PRIMARY	Promotion of self-care (e.g. work places avoiding tasks that cause mind/body split) Communal recognition of sexual abuse as a crisis People with high public profiles owning up to abuse (e.g. as with Aids) Bringing media into the home to humanize events Promotion of expression of feelings Education about abuse as part of a continuum Changes in attitude towards therapy and helping professions Non-acceptance of violence of any kind Magazines promoting positive male identities (e.g. paternal roles) Censorship of advertising which promotes boundary blurring Education about cultural expectations (e.g. new immigrants) Discussions about community integration and against isolation (e.g. rural communities)
SECONDARY	Specialized support groups in line with cultural identity/diversity Prohibition of pornography Criminalization of child pornography Production of material with positive erotic contents Elimination of monster and freak images of offenders
TERTIARY	Identification of cultural ill-health and strategies to address this problem Changes to revenge sub-culture of prison populations

Table 2 (cont.)

	SOCIETY	
	FORMAL	INFORMAL
PRIMARY	Participatory model of service provision Equitable distribution of power Bottom-up approaches (Formal learns from informal) Service providers to devise and model conflict resolution Advocacy bodies for children's rights Humanization of court system Laws in which punishment fits crime Decriminalisation of incest School curricula focused on assertiveness not aggressiveness and competition Discourage churches from teaching sanctity of family and authority Pre-school sex-education: what is ok touch? Quality free information distributed where the people go Awareness of formal and informal resources Paternity leave to ensure fathers' involvement	More professional recognition for mutual support approaches Peer groups to get in touch with "loners" Recreational and educational programmes towards greater citizen participation and empowerment Bring services to the people in people focused way (e.g.neighbourhood events which couple fun and education) Parenting classes in neighbourhoods to include findings about incest De-stigmatized peer hot-line for parents and other care givers Use of pre-natal classes to address "infants have a right to their body" Broaden mandate of neighbourhood watch
SECONDARY	Education of doctors, lawyers,clergy and teachers about early warning signs of abuse and abusive behaviour Schools offering street and "family" proofing Using knowledge of victims and offenders to design programmes Recognition of sexual abuse as a social crisis	Neighbourhood support for keeping families together if so desired Identifying high risk groups locally through peer support exchanges Identification of local stressors and means to reduce these events
TERTIARY	Programmes for constructive victims - offenders reconciliation Special police training for dealing with all components of abuse	Structures that allow for sexual abuse to be dealt with in neighbourhood Involvement of culture specific supports (ethnic background, subcultures, etc)

Final Comments made by Group Members

Several group members found it hard to keep to the model outline as they felt that there was much overlap between them and that approaches needed to happen consecutively or were interdependent. The strongest areas of overlap were between suggestions made for victims and offenders at the primary and secondary prevention level in the column dealing with individual strategies. Others expressed that it can be difficult to separate primary and secondary approaches as the traditional identification of "high risk groups" for secondary intervention was at best problematic when it comes to sexual abuse. Unlike in other prevention projects, sexual abuse is not restricted to certain categories of economic status, ethnic background, profession or housing area. One of the suggestions made to overcome that difficulty was to give recognition to the fact that offenders; (1) tend to be male; (2) tend to be closely related to the child; and (3) have reported histories of abuse and neglect. Several group members therefore strongly advocated to provide increased services for men who have been the victims of sexual offenses or other abusive experiences.

Finally all groups emphasized that they were struck with the fact that the societal, cultural, family and individual components of any crisis are interwoven and can affect each other, whereby societal intervention was seen as more potent in prevention strategies. The abusive elements of our society need to be exposed as directly influencing the actions of individuals and families within. A "buffer" can be found at the communal level. Communities can create their own "culture" to some degree and broad-scale community self-help and empowerment models were seen as a

good staring point in any prevention work. One of the suggestions repeatedly made was that we need to have community opportunities to discuss positive and creative sexuality. We need to create alternatives which are real and based in the life experiences of people. The prohibition of sexual transgression was seen as inadequate when it comes to fostering a wider healthy normative sexual climate. Several people in this context pointed to the influence of churches and other spiritual institutions who deny or prohibit expression of sexual feelings. They needed to begin "making use of the S-word" and abandon the approach whereby churches and therapists are responsible for the mind, while science is responsible of the body. Several holistic approaches of alternative medicine as well as therapeutic interventions centred in body work were proposed as a good starting point for individual and family intervention.

There was general consensus that prevention work needs to begin at as early an age as possible, and that we need to target our communal interventions with infants as a starting point. This starting point further needs to be conceptualized as a community responsibility before it can be put into practice. Families are abandoned to caring for their children. Child-rearing is defined as a "family task" although dwindling resources often make this an unsuccessful venture.

The workshop ended with a panel discussion with several service providers and other professionals from within this community. I was stricken with the realization that professionals had been forced to concentrate on protection and retribution issues and some admitted to feeling at a loss as to how prevention could fit into their agenda. Prevention had become a nebulous term. There was also a feeling that service

providers had learned to compartmentalize sexual abuse cases. Some worked with victims, others made sure that offenders stayed locked up until relapse was a reduced possibility. These different parts of one and the same situation rarely if ever met and talked. Participants suggested that this workshop had greatly contributed in encouraging unification around a shared reality. This was only possible for those service providers who were ready to abandon their sense of "expertise" and have an open dialogue with the people they served. Lastly there was a call for an annual prevention conferences. Most participants felt that, after all, something could be done.

During a second workshop which took place in October 1993 I was again given the opportunity to present a brief summary of my findings and more importantly to share the results of our efforts in the previous event. Several new people had joined the group, those who returned were ready to move from suggestions about what needs to change in our community towards how this change can be implemented. It is well beyond the scope of this thesis to reflect upon this second event. But it deserves mentioning in order to illustrate how a process of empowerment can be ensured by participant inclusion and respect for the value of contributions from the margins. The experience that a small research project can become an annual event of community discussion has given me a strong sense of hopefulness about community capacity building. It may in turn suggest that grounding our interventions in the life experiences of a few people who are prepared to share them is an effective and dynamic staring point for actions.

Discussion

"To that piece in each of us which refuses to be silent". (Audre Lorde, 1980)

Research Process and Action Outcomes

Well over a year has passed since I nervously presented research results in the community workshop. The second "Ounce of Prevention" workshop has since passed and several of the interview participants who were part of the original planning committee again helped to organize this event. Among other presentations two community members discussed the establishment of a help line for male victims. This was an exciting outcome for me given the suggestions the research participants had made about the need to address male sexual victimization as a preventative measure. A pilot study which preceded the call for a help line revealed that out of 56 callers, 41 were male survivors. Ten percent of these had never disclosed the abuse, and 50% had not told their current partners. [6] I was again stricken with the realization of how powerful it is to offer people to tell their story.

The originally isolated exchanges between the research participants and myself have gained a momentum of their own beyond the narrow confines of the interviews. Members of the community continue to discuss prevention in child sexual abuse, and the fact that such discussions are possible and wanted is a gratifying result in itself. We have come a long way since a few participants suggested that my research findings needed to be shared with the wider community. By paying equal attention to

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6 Bob Horton and Paul Davock presented these results at the second Ounce of Prevention workshop.

the research process and outcomes we can ensure a sense of ownership over the utilization of results.

For grassroots community action to become a reality I believe we need to continuously demonstrate to participants their significant contribution in community events. Without the stories of 10 men neither the call for and establishment of these workshops would have occurred. Effectiveness of action research, thus, is directly linked to ownership over the process and outcome of the research. Researchers need to be willing and able to stand back from the process and make room for creativity if new strategies for change are to be discovered. Much as Patton asserts:

> in qualitative inquiry the researcher is the instrument (and further) qualitative data will tend to make the most sense to people who are comfortable with the idea of generating multiple perspectives rather than the absolute truth. Tolerance for ambiguity seems to me to be associated with comfort in dealing with perspective rather than expecting certainty or truth (1990, pp. 14 and 483 respectively).

The activities which took place during both workshops of which the creative exploration of sexual dynamics was one, affirmed my initial belief that qualitative means would be best suited to this topic. It also made me aware of the impact of collective capacity over and above individual professional understanding.

During the second workshop several participants attributed the existence of an investment in prevention to my research findings. I strongly believe and expressed that the real "pioneers" of the event were those 10 men who dared to go public with stories that were as difficult to share as they were difficult to summarize. If I was not able to do justice to the experiences of interviewees and my own experience during the research process, the call from workshop participants to continue the

discussions does give credit to the trust these men invested in me. I hope that our joint efforts helped to shed some light on sexual abuse on children from the perspective of those who commit these offenses.

Community interventions which foster an equitable relationship between professionals and community members have hidden within their activities a model or prototype for producing change. The onus is on community psychologists to expose the essential components of these interventions and to emphasize the importance of individual and collective actions which are grounded in real life experiences. In a sense the disempowerment of a professional elite is crucial for the empowerment of the community large. As Fraser asserts in the context of validating "strange" human experiences:

> laboratory evidence is not always as authoritative as it appears. Nor is personal anecdote so sorry a source of information when the test-subject is the human animal (1992, p. 33).

The stories of ten people in some form or another constitute the basis and beginning for discussions which likely took place because the participatory approach of the research encouraged ownership over the results. In other words, research participants wanted to share their stories with the wider community and felt empowered to make a decision to that end. I believe it is precisely because of the emotional and disturbing content presented in the words of interviewees that workshop participants felt challenged to keep themselves in the picture and not be overwhelmed by "professional judgement". "Science has been so phobic for so long about emotion as an enemy of truth that it blocks it out even when it is central to the

story" (Fraser, 1992, p. 33). In retrospect I realize how the methodological choices imperatively shaped the outcome of the interviews and workshop events, precisely because research participants felt encouraged to determine the utilization of results. Communities' abilities to be creative depend an acceptance of subjective experiences as a valid contribution to our understanding of shared social issues. Not objectivity but increased community involvement is the goal of social inquiry. In Sarason's (1978) theory all communities need to deal with three issues which are central to our interactions: (1) how to reduce isolation, (2) how to maintain a sense of community, and (3) how to give meaning to life. Research is part of this process. At the end of this thesis, then, it is hard for me to see how the community spirit which was generated during the workshop would have been possible had I followed a more traditional research approach.

Themes of Silence

In revisiting the research process, I quickly found that there is a significant gap between my original intentions and the actual events. I was, to be sure, able to infer some strategies for change from the shared realities of interview participants by pointing to the imperative of breaking a taboo of silence. More importantly, I had my hope for the possibility of developing a prevention agenda in child sexual abuse affirmed by the fact that in the very least it is a hope which I share with many members in our community. I did not expect that listening to 10 stories could lead into community actions well beyond my control and efforts.

The purpose of this discussion then is not to come up with results beyond the results of the previous sections, but rather to reflect upon primary prevention needs following my own experience of the research. For these reflections to be possible I briefly had to return to the journal which I kept throughout the research process. In it I found landmarks of the journey from which I returned changed. As with all emotional and attitudinal change, there were no sudden shifts but rather a gradual move towards a different understanding of the problem at hand. The differences between my point of departure and arrival constitute strongly felt changes, although the precise transitional points evade me. To cite but one example I wrote in September 91:

> Surely it is simple: we cannot teach children to stay away from their family members, we have to teach the family to respect the child. But I must be crazy to think that anybody will ever listen to this. After all, I sometimes think, we banish offenders to the margins because we have such a hard time to banish the offending behaviour in ourselves. If internal change cannot be achieved we can always concentrate on changes on the perceived outside. It makes me wonder about so many professions which rest on methods of exclusion.

While writing this I was still focusing on possible interventions within the family, precisely because I could not envisage a community event where sexual abuse prevention would be the agenda. I continue to believe in the validity of therapeutic interventions for those who experience them as helpful. But I have long changed my understanding that we can educate people about children's rights and needs by means of sharing information. Education is communication. And this communication needs to be grounded in life events which can be made real and tangible. It further needs to be a form of exchange which is visibly encouraged in the community at large. We

cannot expect offenders to expose their own abusive behaviour in a society which continues to disguise its own abusive elements.

The silencing methods employed within the family of children who endure abuse and neglect are part of a broader quiet. Changes within the home and changes within the community need to be implemented concurrently. To be sure, the active effects of taboos on interactions within our community and families were the most surprising and frightening result of this research for me. I heard stories of abuse and neglect. I listened to descriptions of childhoods which lacked emotional expression and comfort. These to some extent I had expected. But "child sexual victimization appears to be neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for becoming a child molester" (Hanson & Slater, 1988, p. 7) The greatest similarity, then, between all of the stories, the strongest theme was the powerful impact of being silenced. In losing their voices, the participants as children and later as adults lost validation for their experiences. Affective components of sexual abuse experiences were denied whether they were the victims or perpetrators of such actions. Offenders finally put these significant experiences to the margins of their lives or placed them within a secret self. This not only made healing impossible, it also established a life of division. on the one hand, they retained a sense of their pain, on the other hand, they were told that this pain may not be expressed and likely was a figment of their imagination.

The precise connection between this ongoing inner conflict and adult abusive behaviour are at best hard to decipher. We may never be able to establish a direct link between childhood trauma and adult actions and perceptions. But, I believe that

if we listen closely to the voices of childhood victims we can also detect our own discomfort and finally see our own need to disguise childhood pain as marginal and fictitious events. Lorde in her essay "The transformation of silence into language and action" says this:

> I have come to believe over and over again that what is most important to me must be spoken, made verbal, and shared, even at the risk of having it bruised and misunderstood. That the speaking profits me beyond any other effect. [...] And of course I am afraid, because the transformation of silence into language and action is an act of self-revelation and that always seems fraught with danger. [...] In the cause of silence each of us draws the face of her own fear, fear of contempt, of censure, of some judgement, or recognition, of challenge, or annihilation. But most of all, I think, we fear the visibility without which we cannot live. [...] The fact that we are here and that I speak these words is an attempt to break that silence and bridge some of the differences between us, for it is not differences which immobilize us but silence. (1977, p.40 ff)

Foucault (1979) and others have argued that we marginalize undesirable people and actions through methods of exclusion. That was my starting point for engaging in this research. I have since learned how officially sanctioned language and expression is one of the most powerful methods for marginalization, and how further language informs not only our community interaction but finally interactions in the family generally and with children specifically.

Levels of Analysis and Preventative Intervention

Preventative efforts rely on our ability to put children first and work towards a community which is child friendly and beyond that cognizant of children's rights to have their perceptions heard and attended to. We are all hard pushed to conceive of a future built on the experiences of children past and present. And yet to be able to do

so lies at the heart of prevention efforts. I also believe that too quickly we tend to look towards changes necessary in the home or in parental behaviour if we try to construct a healthier future for children. We rarely if ever examine the broader context of the community and national agendas. We pay lip service to the idea that children are our future and that our current actions and interactions will damage or foster well being. The lack of focused individual and collective actions harm the potential for a future free of sexual exploitation. Justice (1990) cautions that

> Although national attention and resources are now being focused on child abuse there is still a question of how long it will last. The public is fickle when it comes to its interest in unpleasant problems, regardless of the fact that the welfare of so many children is at stake (p. 98).

Short sighted activities may differ in terms of their individual versus social impact but essentially are the same in their disregard for children. No prevention agenda can be written without an active focus on the future of all children in our community.

For the final comments in this thesis, then, I would like to do just that. I would like to discuss the results of my research in terms of changes needed within and beyond the family and individual context. In part this brief discussion will be based on what interviewees told me as well as the suggestions made during the workshop. In part it will be based on inferences which I believe we can draw from the research results as they are illustrated in model two. The suggestions constitute a brief summary of results which for me seem most significant in terms of change. I need to state what I have learned about prevention in child sexual abuse.

Above everything I learned that we need to be able to see the whole picture before we can work towards change. In part what prevents us from often taking this

route is that taboos are powerful beyond our imagination. They force many children in our culture to experience a split between what is happening to them and what they are allowed to share and address. It is one of our greatest neglects of children that we do not give credence to their perceptions and emotions. They quickly and persuasively learn to apply this split reality to other areas of their life. They learn that the private and public do not always match, and in fact that a division between the private and public is actively fostered and demanded. Communities have a tendency to protect the sanctity of private life, particularly if parts of this life constitute a possible critique of broader social dynamics.

Let me revisit for a moment the divisions participants told me about. They mentioned a split between emotional and sexual self, acting and thinking self, as well as between reality and fantasy or belief. They further impressed upon me how such divisions were demanded well beyond their family context, at school, in their social life, at work, and later in the court system. I began to realize that censorship and social control can deny the very actions they foster. To stay within the original framework of individual, family, cultural, and social components I want to suggest that this result has strong implications for our interventions in incest situations and prevention agendas generally. I would like to offer a definition of health and well-being which relies on our willingness to open up the discussion and avoid exclusions of any experiences.

Model 2

A Final Model for Prevention

This model documents my suggestions for prevention in child sexual abuse following the interviews and the workshop. It is an elaboration upon and change of the alternative model proposed in the earlier section.

Table 3

Preventative Approaches

Preventative Social Approaches	Preventative Cultural Approaches	Preventative Approaches with Families	Preventative Approaches with Individuals
Equitable distribution of community resources Linking formal and informal networks Empowerment of and capacity building in community based groups Exploring viability of self-help options Providing ongoing educational opportunities for helping professionals Active lobby for children's rights	Advocacy of children's rights Popular education about parenting and family dynamics Affirmation of the importance of consent Constructive images of women and children in media Affirmation of communal responsibilities Public awareness of risk factors Sustained considerations about prevention	Ensuring basic healthy living conditions Addressing family violence issues and inter- and cross-generational abuse Ensuring social integration and support Enhancing relationship stability through meaningful support, educational opportunities based in real life experiences	Protection of the right to have adequate food, shelter, and meaningful activities Assisting in establishing meaningful support Educational exploration of consent, equality, healthy sexuality, gender identity, positive parenting Enhancing positive self-image and coping skills Fostering creative problem solving and taking issue with thinking errors

A healthy individual, then, has a positive self-image which grows out of the integration of experience and perception or validation of experience. An integrated self by definition is an undivided self which is able to constantly avoid or narrow the gap between private and public, knowledge and action, experience and meaning.

For children to be able to move towards such healthy individuality they need to have an experience of a family life which is well integrated into the wider community. Such families are likely capable of open communication about all dynamics affecting its members and actively foster expression of emotion, recognition of conflict, and discussions about sexuality. The ability to state a common ground while embracing diversity is crucial for the emotional survival of all its members. Healthy families will be able to constantly examine their barriers to equality of which the disempowerment of children is an essential part.

The cultural dimension models a communal responsibility to foster a life free of abuse. The constructive portrayal of consent and equality are visible as a communal goal in the recognition of the inherent worth of all community members. Finally this investment in an equitable distribution of resources will be actively implemented in formal and informal sectors alike. Power dynamics and potential abusive elements will be constantly challenged and addressed. Equitable distribution of community resources are basic to formal and informal groups which constantly seek to narrow the gap between rights and needs. Process receives due attention.

Based on this a society which is invested in prevention of abuse displays a large amount of activities which foster community mindedness and by implication the

ability to build capacity and a constructive sense of personal power. It is a society where equality and empowerment are visible in all legal, social, and economic actions.

I realize that this vision is a long way off from the reality at hand, that it means an almost fatal return to being marginalized as someone who wants utopia now. But consider this: at the end of this thesis I have learned above all how sharing a vision of a better future needs to include suggestions for systemic changes such as the workshop participants have made. And how further this process can become an agenda of people empowering themselves to critique what is in existence now. Instead of fixing blame we can take the risk to make changes however small and insignificant they may seem at the time. We owe it to our children to be creative and actively partake in building a better future.

I have recently seen informal and formal service providers get together and be inspired by such a vision. Health and Welfare Canada (to the surprise of many) has funded a proposal for a "Community Action Program for Children" in the Waterloo Region. The fact that the federal government invested money in a unified intervention approach towards creating a healthy future for all children within one region, points to a broader disenchantment with past intervention efforts. Prevention agendas are beginning to gain recognition and we should not allow them to be abandoned again amidst our efforts to heal the pain of past neglects.

The levels of intervention in the final model essentially remained the same as in the original one. The workshop results put the levels of intervention into a potential action framework. This framework in turn is informed by a strong sense of interrelatedness between social, cultural, family and individual dimensions. An

equitable distribution of power in all of these dimension is imperative if we want to address the broader dynamics of abuse. As Bagley (1990), Marshall (1990), Rogers (1990) and others have expressed, abuse dynamics between individuals likely continue in a society which pays no due attention to a broader abuse of power.

We silence or dismiss voices which point to the reality of inequality as something which is all pervasive and at the core of social interactions. To expect individuals and families to change in a de-contextualized way leaves social structures of inequality unquestioned and intact. It further creates a split in our intervention efforts. While as professionals we frequently engage in social critique, such efforts are marginal when it comes to our overall action plans.

> Child sexual abuse cannot be dealt with in isolation of other issues such as poverty, housing shortage, the legitimization of corporal punishment as a form of discipline, and the vulnerable position of children in society [...]. The inter-relatedness of social and economic factors and negative socialization attitudes in our society are significant factors that must be addressed as part of a primary prevention program (Rogers, 1990, p. 46).

I believe that above everything my thesis establishes a small part of that inter-relatedness in two areas: (1) the impact of culturally and socially enforced taboos on individual perception and action, and (2) the acceptance of a split between public and private action as it relates to justifying, rationalizing, and minimizing activities in the home. The discrepancy between moral outrage on the one hand and active silencing on the other, needs to be addressed in formal and informal circles alike. The continued portrayal of sexual abuse as a freak sexual act which bares no relevance to the social structures at hand and invokes an empathy with victims which does not serve them in the long run. Much as women have to struggle to keep their critique of

social inequality within the public discussion, so concerned parents and professionals need to speak out for a community in which children can be heard and validated. This un-silencing needs to extend to a continuous assessment of conditions which foster and sustain inequality. Primary prevention in sexual abuse is directly linked to our willingness and ability to engage in systemic criticism, not as a vague after-thought, but as a central component in any work for change. Sexual abuse needs to be understood as a from of social injustice.

In a way this analysis takes my research beyond the efforts of Finkelhor and Williams (1992), and Gilgun and Connor (1989). The inclusion of the voices of offenders alone does little to effect community discussions about sexual exploitation. It is the response of the community to these voices which exposes the systemic elements of these issues. Taubman (1984, 1986) suggests that women and children are frequently victims of abuse because their economical status and social subjugation makes this possible. By listening closely to the voices of offenders and by observing the communal responses to these stories we can make a start at addressing the root conditions of sexual exploitation. We can design a primary prevention agenda which includes attempts to heal society by pointing out power imbalances, the objectifications of human beings, and the tolerance of violence.

One victim recently told me that she used to hide in a closet to avoid her perpetrator. She had shared with me many experiences of abuse and victimization. She had never shared with me this futile attempt on her part to prevent the abuse. I wondered why. At the end of my thesis I had to realize that this small private act was symbolic of a wider reality. Long ago when I completed my first literature search

about primary prevention in child sexual abuse I was unable to find any references which put ownership back where it belonged. I could not find any research efforts which had been inclusive of the voices of offenders, and which demanded a community response to these voices. There was aside to the abuse experiences of many children which had stayed in the closet. My hope was that this thesis would make a small contribution to opening the door, gaining a glimpse, getting a better image, and working towards different approaches for change. My hope was also to begin a community dialogue. And as with all things which have remained hidden, we often fear to find the monster intact behind closed doors. I found no monsters. What I found instead were ten stories, some different, some similar to my own and those of many people I know. I believe they could have been stories with a different ending if only we would have been prepared to listen.

Finally, while reading through quite a large amount of literature about sexual abuse, no book left as lasting an impression on me as Sylvia Fraser's account of her sexual victimization in My father's house. Her compassion and courage to address her relationship with her father both from within the pain of being a victim and through the continuing but harmed love of a daughter were an inspiration to me. She gives credence to the voices of many victims and she gives credit to our ability to heal, our strength in moving on, our need to gain a voice, and give meaning to experiences. This is what she says:

> All of us are haunted by the failed hopes and undigested deeds of our forbearers. I was lucky to find my family's dinosaur intact in one deep grave. My main regret is excessive self-involvement. Too often I was sleep walking through other people's lives, eyes turned inward while I washed the blood of my hands. My toughest lesson was to renounce my own sense of specialness,

> to let the princess die along with the guilt-ridden child in my closet, to see instead the specialness of the world around me. Always I was travelling from darkness into the light. In such journeys, time is our ally, not our enemy. We can grow wise. As the arteries harden, the spirit can lighten. As the legs fail, the soul can take wings. Things do add up. Life does have shape and maybe even purpose. Or so it seems to me. (1991, p. 61)

I would like to conclude this thesis by reiterating the call for preserving the dignity of children as it was made during a U.N. Convention about children's rights. Among other things this event established the state's responsibility in protecting children from exploitation.

> The duty to protect the integrity of children as persons implies a duty to prevent assaults on that integrity whenever possible. It is obviously more respectful of personhood to ensure that children are not degraded or exploited than it is to permit preventable assaults to occur and then try to make children whole again When suffering is foreseeable, its occurrence is preventable, and no action is taken, surely authorities are culpably negligent (Melton, 1991, p. 347).

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Appendix 1

Demographic data collected at the beginning of the interviews:

age groups

16-18 N=1
36-40 N=3
41-45 N=2
46-50 N=2
51 + N=2

length of involvement at CJI

six months and under N=2
six months to one year N=4
one to two years N=1
two years and over N=3

interruptions to participation

continuous N=7
interrupted by sentencing N=3

nature of involvement

voluntary N=8
was voluntary, now court-ordered N=3
probation N=2

legal status

no charge or sentence N=2
served sentence N=8
[full parole N=1, probation N= 4, community work N=1, no current involvement N=1]

involvement in additional community or professional agencies since disclosure

yes N=7
[individual counselling N=7, couple counselling N=2, psychiatrist N=1, sex offender treatment N=2]
no N=3

Appendix 2

Christiane Sadeler
CJI Kitchener
ph (home): xxx-xxxx
January/February '92

Dear

Thank you for agreeing to talk to me as part of my research, towards completing the MA in community psychology at Wilfrid Laurier University. The interview will focus on telling your story. My hope is that by having the opportunity to understand your perceptions, emotions, experiences, and needs, a more complete model for prevention of sexual abuse will emerge. I want to understand the broader picture of which you are a part.

As agreed during my visit to your group, the interview will be in a conversational style, and principally it will be up to you to determine its direction. Interviews will be tape-recorded: (1) to allow for an easy flow of the conversation, and (2) to aid my memory during data analysis. Obviously, at all times you have the option to ask for the tape recorder to be switched off.

As a thematic suggestion for our conversation you may want to consider a view of your own experiences over time. (1) How do you see your past? (significant childhood experiences, important life situations prior to the abuse). (2) What happened around the time of the first abuse incident? (significant events during that time, your needs, what if anything would have helped to prevent the abuse?) (3) What happened following disclosure, and what would have been, or has been helpful to you at that point in your life? (4) Where are you at now? (What needs do you have? How do you think these needs can be met?) (5) How do you see your future? (what are your hopes and goals?)

I am interested in understanding your life history as completely as possible. I want to comprehend your perceptions about preventing sexual abuse in our community. Some time before the end of the interview I will ask you to tell me whether in your opinion anything has been left out to allow for an accurate picture of your own life experiences and understanding. I will also ask you for some feedback about how you experienced our conversation and what could have been changed about it.

Interviews will be transcribed fully (i.e. word for word) and I will pass on a copy of this transcript for your correction prior to data analysis, if you wish. This is a time consuming task, and you may instead choose to make additions and/or deletions directly after the interview. I would however like for you to read my summaries of the interview to ensure that my perceptions of your thoughts and experiences are correct. Finally, you will want to be aware of the time commitment on your part which is likely to be involved in the process. interviews of this kind principally take as long as you wish. However, as a rough guide, past experience shows that people need anywhere between 1 and 2 hours to cover the topics they feel to be important. The correction of the summary will hopefully allow you not to be worried about

forgetting important facts and feelings. Reading and changing the summary is also likely to take up to one hour.

Research results will be presented during a weekend retreat in view of making recommendations about utilization of. I very much hope you will attend this retreat, and you may even wish to be part of the planning committee for it (our next meeting for this will be at 39 Sterling St, 4 Feb. at 12 Noon).

Finally some ethical considerations:

(1) **CONFIDENTIALITY**: Everything we talk about during our meeting will be confidential. Only you and I will have access to the tapes, the transcripts, the computer files and the notes, all of which will be stored at my home in a safe place. I will have to use the university computer system for word processing, but will use the confidential line printer for the transcripts. Only I can access my computer files for which you need a confidential password.

Qualitative research such as this relies heavily on quoting from transcripts during the final write-up. The overall goal is to reflect the experience of people in their voice rather than in statistical numbers. I would like you to think about how I can refer to you, if and when I should want to include such a quote (i.e. first name, participant 2, "a man in his early thirties" etc). Again, any quote which could identify you directly will <u>not</u> be included.

(2) **INFORMED CONSENT**: Your participation in the research process does not end after the interview. Aside from reading the summary or attending the retreat, you also have the opportunity to be part of the thesis committee at CJI. You may want to have a copy of the thesis results when they are completed, and I hope you will make use of the opportunity to comment on the process as it continues. You can also withdraw from the research process at any time or get in touch with me at the above number should you want to make any additional comments, or have any concerns.

I hope this letter covers all the things we discussed and any questions you might have. Please feel free to call me any time.

I look forward to our meeting. Until then.

Regards

Christiane Sadeler (Graduate student, WLU)

P.S. Below you will find a brief list of demographic data which will allow me to summarize "who" the
ten people are, who agreed to tell their story. We will begin the interview by briefly completing these questions.

<u>Demographic Data</u>

(1) Which age group do you belong to: 18-25, 26-30, 31-35, 36-40, 41-45, 46-50, 51 and older?

(3) What is your position at CJI ? (i.e. court-ordered to attend, volunteer, group facilitator, other)
(4) What is your legal status? (i.e. awaiting trial, probation, no legal involvement, served sentence in the past, other)
(5) Do you participate in other community and/or organizational settings as a result of the sexual abuse? (i.e. John Howard Society, Interfaith, Catholic Family Counselling Services, individual therapy, others).

Appendix 3

From: Christiane Sadeler (Graduate Student in Community Psychology, at Wilfrid Laurier University); Contact Possibilities: xxx-xxxx (home) or xxx-xxxx (leave a message with the secretary of graduate studies in psychology) or you can leave a message at CJI, Sterling St office.

To: All CJI members and staff past and present in the Sexual Abuse Treatment and Community Mediation Programme.

SEASONS GREETINGS ALL!!

Next to your usual stocking stuffers most of you will hopefully receive this brief letter. Mark suggested this may be a convenient way of reaching as many people at CJI as possible to introduce myself and to invite you to a retreat in May or June '92 (venue and date are yet to be finalized). As you can gather from the above I am currently enrolled in a graduate degree at WLU. As part of my fulfilment towards the MA I am doing a thesis with the topic. "Fostering Prevention in Child Sexual Abuse". For that purpose I will be conducting ten in-depth conversational style interviews with group members from the sexual abuse treatment programme for offenders. The result of these interviews will form the basis of a retreat to which you are invited. Our focus will be to consider how this community can move towards prevention of sexual abuse as well as increase its efforts in avoid re-offending. The retreat will be open to CJI people only, although I hope that the recommendations which will be generated throughout our time together will be forwarded to other relevant community groups and agencies in time.

My reasons for approaching you 5 months prior to the event is to encourage you to take this opportunity to have your perceptions heard and included in the final results. The retreat will begin with a presentation of my research results and continue in small groups about various agreed upon topics. As you can imagine it will take quite some energy to find a convenient venue and time as well as work out specific agenda items. The group of people who are currently working in close liaison with me and helped to set up the research as it stands would appreciate knowing if you would be interested in participating some time by the end of January '92. Some of you are likely to have run across me in the CJI's office or during my visit to various groups. Please feel free to call me should you have any questions. Alternatively x,y,z,(...) have been activeiy involved in setting up the study and will be able to provide you with information. For those of you still involved in groups, all group facilitators have received minutes of these meetings which can be available to you if you wish. I particularly want to encourage CJI members who are no longer actively involved to partake in the retreat as your perspective about prevention efforts will be invaluable. I have also provided x at the central office with enough copies for those of you who are currently writing to people in correctional centres. I would very much appreciate feedback from people inside the prison system and for that purpose can be reached at the above phone

numbers or through letters addressed to myself at CJI. I will also be visiting OCI and Guelph Correctional Centre again in February and am more than happy to make contact with you then.
I very much am looking forward to your input and feedback into what I believe can be a valuable exchange between people concerned with an important issue. Aside from the obvious work involved during the retreat I also hope it will provide many of you with the opportunity to renew old contacts, meet old friends.

BEST WISHES FOR 1992!

Sincerely

Please remember to confirm your willingness to participate as soon as possible. Even a brief note in my mail box at CJI will do.

Appendix 4

May 19, 1992

PREVENTION IN CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Dear

You have hopefully by now received an invitation to the workshop which grew out of the research in which you participated. The workshop will be held at Sterling St Mennonite Church on 19 and 20 June, and all group leaders have received sufficient brochures to invite as many people as possible. Some research participants were able to actively help in setting the agenda which is beginning to look very interesting and different. I am very much looking forward to this event which will allow us to share some of the things we talked about during interviews. Aside from group members in the CJI programme we have also invited relevant service providers, such as Family and Children Services, Probation and Parole, Community Division of Waterloo Regional Police and others. It remains to be seen how many people will take up the offer to spend some intensive time together discussing preventative options. I very much hope that you will be able to attend, as without you this event would not have been possible. Your identity will obviously remain confidential throughout.

On a more practical note, I have recently started a 20 hours p.w. position in Elmira as a Family Violence Prevention Coordinator This is a completely new programme which needs to be set in place over the next 11 months. Time, to say the least, has been running by for me and transcribing the interviews has been put on the back burner in favour of creating a positive workshop experience for all in June. I am anxious to complete this task as soon as possible to allow for your feedback prior to the event. Lastly, we are meeting on 22 May (Saturday) between 10.00 am and noon at 241 Weber for our second to last workshop planning session. You are more than welcome to attend, especially as we are still seeking some people to volunteer for the actual day. One last meeting will take place probably on the weekend prior to the workshop when I would like to present some preliminary results to make sure you will be comfortable with what I hope to present during the workshop. X, Y, Z, (...) or myself can be contacted to find out the actual date for the last planning meeting

The day after the workshop (21 June) Mark and I would like to invite all of you to a barbecue at either Mark's or my place. This will be an opportunity for you to give me some overall feedback about the research and the workshop, and I would like to share with you some of the effects of the research on my own development, some of which I would not be able to present in a workshop atmosphere. On that day I would also like to pass onto you the actual transcripts with some requests for final deletion and additions. Our contact thereafter will be on an individual basis only, and we are unlikely to meet again as a group. You may already know most of the other

participants, and if not so, this get-together will provide you with an opportunity to share some thoughts and ideas in a small and safe setting. I also hope that there will be plenty of room for some fun and leisure. I will send you and actual invitation for this closer to the time.

On a more personal note I can't express how much I have appreciated your willingness to be part of my research, to share your thoughts and experiences with much honesty and above all to exercise patience and understanding when some of our original agreements became delayed or altered. I have been in touch with some research participants more regularly than with others and want to reiterate the invitation to call me at any time should you need to express some concerns or questions. I very much view this process as a shared venture and want you to know that your input is welcome at any time.

Finally I would like to request that you let me know should you be unable to attend either the workshop and/or the social get-together, in which case I would like to arrange to meet with you for handing over the transcript and giving you some feedback.

You can call me at the above number.

Hope you are enjoying the onset of summer as much as I do. I look forward to seeing you at the workshop if not before.

Your's

In the space provided below we would appreciate your feedback on the agenda as it currently stands.

11:00 am Presentation
Christiane Sadeler, Graduate Student, WLU
"Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse: The Life Histories and Perceptions of Men Who Offended"
(Sharing of preliminary research results)
Followed by discussion.

12:30 pm Lunch (provided)

1:30 pm Thematic Groups
Facilitators: B. Bocking & C. Sadeler
We will identify barriers to prevention of sexual abuse as they emerge from the information previously presented. In small groups (max. 7 people) we will share ideas and attempt to make recommnedations on how these barriers can be addressed.

3:30 pm Break

3:45 pm Plenary Session

5:00 pm Supper (provided)

6:00 pm Panel Discussion
"The Practical Aspects of Prevention"
Presenters: Mark Yantzi, *Community Justice Initiatives*; Angnes Steffy, *Family Service Bureau;* Anne McManamen, *Ontario Correctional Institute*; Nikko VanderSluis, *Family &Children's Services*

Moderator: Professor, Geoff Nelson, Community Psychology, WLU

7:30 pm Evaluation & Feedback

8:00 pm Conclusion

Community Justice Initiatives
of Waterloo Region

39 Stirling Avenue, North,
Kitchener, Ontario
N2H 3G4
(5519) 744-6549

"An Ounce of Prevention"

A Participatory Workshop about Sexual Abuse:

Exploring Community Perspectives

Thesis Committee

Wishes to extend an invitation to you

for

Planning Meeting

for

Upcoming CJI Orientation Retreat

February 4, 1992
12:00

at Community Justice Initiatives
39 Stirling Avenue, North
Kitchener, Ontario

This retreat will involve an general orientation on CJI's programmes and activities and how we interact with other community agencies in the area. This proposed retreat will be 3 days, tentative planned for May. Details regarding dates, times, location and agenda will be discussed at this meeting.

Your input is welcome and needed!
Any input will help make this a successful endeavour for all involved.

Thank you.

Thesis Committee.

Reply of Bob or Christiane at CJI (744-6549)

CJI Invites you . . .

to participate in a Community event regarding the prevention of Sexual Abuse.

This worskhop is open to all CJI group members, CJI staff and volunteers, Service Providers and interested Community persons.

The purpose ot the workshop is to: present information, provide research findings, share various perspectives, and above all to begin a dialogue about how this community can promoite and encourage preventative actions in addressing sexual abuse issues.

The sessions will take place in a relaxed and safe environment: opinions are welcome and discussion is encouraged.

When:
June 19, 1992 6:00 - 9:30 pm
June 20, 1992 9:00 am - 8:30 pm

Where: Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church
57 Stirling Avenue North,
Kitchener, Ontario
Wheel chair accessible

Friday, June 19, 1992

6:00 pm Reception & Registration
Agendas, Name Tags, Introductions, Refreshments

7:00 pm Welcome & Overview
Mark Yantzi, CJI - Sexual Abuse Treatment Programme

7:30 pm Presentation
Moderator: Bruce Bocking, MD, with psycholtherapy practise, specializing in men's issues
A thought provoking prespective on "Cultural and Family Influences On The Development of Male Sexuality"

8:30 pm Break

8:45 pm Small Group Discussions
Facilitator: Bruce Bocking
"Barriers to Creative Problem Solving

9:30 Adjournment

Saturday, June 20, 1992

9:00 am The Issues
Group members and/or facilitators from the Victim/Survivor, Offender, Non-Offending Parent Programmes will briefly share their experiences and perspectives, followed by questions and discussion.

10:30 am Break

Please turn over . . .

Registration Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Phone # _____

Fee: $20.00 All inclusive
- Payable in advance by cash or cheque to CJI.
- No one will be turned away for inability to pay
- Price reduction available for families
- Call for details

Contact Persons:
Mark Yantzi 744-6549
Christiane Sadeler 884-1970 ext#2929

Appendix 6

Therapy urged as option in incest cases

Luisa D'Amato
Record staff

Men who sexually abuse their children should be able to avoid charges by taking intensive therapy sessions away from their families, says Mark Yantzi, co-ordinator of a treatment program for sexual-abuse offenders and victims

Yantzi

Yantzi, who is also a Kitchener alderman, made the comments after a day-long workshop Saturday at which participants discussed ways of preventing sexual abuse About 40 social workers, former offenders, incest survivors and others from as far as Owen Sound and Niagara Region attended the workshop at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church in Kitchener

Yantzi said that when an incest abuser faces criminal charges the court process costs the taxpayers money and often the shame and anguish hurts everyone in the family, including the young victims.

But often, "the only way (for an offender) to get help is to be charged," said Yantzi, who works for Community Justice Initiatives If an offender knows what he is doing is wrong and sincerely wants to get help, he could voluntarily sign up for a residential treatment program for sex offenders like the one at the provincial reformatory in Brampton If the therapy helped him stop the abuse, no charges would need to be laid, said Yantzi. Several people in the workshop suggested this idea and Yantzi said he agrees with it.

Offenders who don't complete the sessions or refuse to take responsibility for their actions should still be charged, Yantzi said

"The one thing you want to avoid is (the idea) that we're treating this as less serious"

The idea was also supported by Christiane Sadeler, a Wilfrid Laurier University graduate student in community psychology who has interviewed males who sexually abused their daughters, step daughters, nephews and nieces

Sadeler, who helped organize the workshop, talked about her findings.

Currently, if an abuser knows he's doing something wrong but can t stop himself, he has nowhere to turn If he tells anyone, he may be reported to police and charged.

And so, in a bizarre twist, he has no one to talk to but his young victim, Sadeler said

She said one man she interviewed put a lock on his daughter's bedroom door and said to her, "If you hear me, just lock the door"

Another man made a contract with his young victim that he wouldn t see her after a certain time in the evening Still another told the victim "I don't know why I'm doing this - help me"

Sadeler said it's well known that families are devastated when charges are laid. The young victims often want the abuse to stop but they don t want their fathers to go to jail, she said

● Abuser doesn't expect forgiveness: Page B2

Abuser doesn't expect forgiveness

By Susan Danard
Record staff

Tom doesn t look like a monster.

The Guelph resident is warm and personable He has a firm handshake and blue eyes that radiate kindness He looks like most men in their 50s - grey hair, a bit of a paunch If you saw him on the street, you wouldn t look twice

You certainly wouldn't guess he is a sex offender who sexually assaulted his 11-year old stepdaughter seven years ago.

"I'm a person just like you," Tom, who prefers not to use his real name, said in an interview

Tom was one of about 50 people, including victims and offenders, attending a weekend workshop in Kitchener on the prevention of sexual abuse. The workshop was sponsored by Community Justice Initiatives.

Tom, who served eight months in prison, said he doesn't expect to be forgiven for what he did "I deserved to be punished," he said He does wish, however, that something had been done to prevent his crime.

Tom, himself, was a victim of sexual abuse. Starting when he was nine years old, he was forced to engage in sexual acts for three years with two female boarders who were staying at his mother's house.

It's particularly difficult for men, who make up the majority of sex offenders, to discuss their sexuality, Dr. Bruce Bocking, a Guelph psychotherapist, said in a presentation at the workshop. "We joke about it, we brag about it, but we don't talk straight about it," Bocking said.

Men are taught to deny their need for physical contact, he said Most parents, for example, stop hugging and kissing their little boys around the age of five, he said.

"Anything that you repress will be expressed elsewhere," Bocking said Repressed male sexuality "leaks out" in the form of incest, rape and other types of sexual abuse, he said.

Tom, a former member of the Community Justices Initiatives support group for sex offenders, is now doing his part to spread the word. He works as a volunteer for the agency, visiting prisons and schools to talk about the issues of male sexuality and sexual abuse.

Appendix 7

	Society		Culture	Family	Individual	
	Formal	Informal			Victim	Offender
PRIMARY						
SECONDARY						
TERTIARY						

Appendix 8

Evaluation and Feedback

We would appreciate if during the workshop and before leaving you could respond to the following questions. Be as specific as you wish.

Please leave your comments with either Mark or Christiane.

(1) Has this workshop been informative and helpful to you? Please comment.

(2) Do you feel your sense of preventative strategies has changed as a result of the workshop and if so how?

(3) Were there any additional issues which in your opinion should have been addressed?

(4) How do you feel the workshop has influenced you?

(5) Do you want to receive a copy of the summary results?

YES [ ] NO [ ]

If so, where can we contact you?

Name:

Address:

(6) Would you be interested in a follow-up workshop?

YES [ ] NO [ ]

Please suggest some topics and/or activities.

(7) Any other comments: