

PREVENTING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE— PERSPECTIVES FROM PUBLIC HEALTH

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UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS LOWELL

WI-ATSA— Thursday, June 13, 2019

8:30 – 10:00

Child Sexual Abuse: A Review

Child Sexual Abuse: A Public Health Approach

10:00 – 10:15

Break

10:15 – 11:15

The Help Wanted Prevention Intervention

11:15 – 11:45

Small Groups and Discussion

Conclusion

BACKGROUND

- 2005-2008 Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
- 2008-2013 Ph.D. in Criminology, Florida State University
- 2013-2017 Assistant Scientist, Johns Hopkins University
Associate Director, Moore Center for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse
- 2017- Assistant Professor, University of Massachusetts Lowell

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE: A REVIEW

A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

“The juvenile sex offender label is demonstrated to produce particularly robust effects, enhancing support for policies that subject youth to public Internet notification and affecting beliefs about youths’ propensity to re-offend as adults” (Harris & Socia, 2016, p. 660).

Alternatives:

- Child with sexual behavior problems
- Child who has engaged in harmful or illegal sexual behavior
- Minor youth who has committed crimes of a sexual nature

SCOPE OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE (CSA)

- CSA is a serious but preventable public health problem
- CSA affects approximately 15% of girls and 5% of boys
- CSA is associated with an increased risk of a host of behavioral, mental, and physical health problems

COST OF CSA

Estimated economic burden of CSA (Based on substantiated CSA cases in 2015):

- Estimated annual economic burden of CSA is approximately **\$9.3 billion**
- Estimated average lifetime cost = **\$283,000 per female victim of nonfatal CSA**
- Lacked credible economic data to estimate the cost for male victims of nonfatal CSA

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Research article

The economic burden of child sexual abuse in the United States

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Child sexual abuse
Economic burden
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ABSTRACT

The present study provides an estimate of the U.S. economic impact of child sexual abuse (CSA). Costs of CSA were measured from the societal perspective and include health care costs, productivity losses, child welfare costs, violence/crime costs, special education costs, and suicide death costs. We separately estimated quality-adjusted life year (QALY) losses. For each category, we used the best available secondary data to develop cost per case estimates. All costs were estimated in U.S. dollars and adjusted to the reference year 2015. Estimating 20 new cases of fatal and 40,387 new substantiated cases of nonfatal CSA that occurred in 2015, the lifetime economic burden of CSA is approximately \$9.3 billion, the lifetime cost for victims of fatal CSA per female and male victim is on average \$1,128,334 and \$1,482,933, respectively, and the average lifetime cost for victims of nonfatal CSA is of \$282,734 per female victim. For male victims of nonfatal CSA, there was insufficient information on productivity losses, contributing to a lower average estimated lifetime cost of \$74,691 per male victim. If we included QALYs, these costs would increase by approximately \$40,000 per victim. With the exception of male productivity losses, all estimates were based on robust, replicable incidence-based costing methods. The availability of accurate, up-to-date estimates should contribute to policy analysis, facilitate comparisons with other public health problems, and support future economic evaluations of CSA-specific policy and practice. In particular, we hope the availability of credible and contemporary estimates will support increased attention to primary prevention of CSA.

1. Introduction

The present study aims to estimate the U.S. economic impact of child sexual abuse (CSA), defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that violates the laws or social taboos of society. [CSA] is evidenced by this activity between a child and an adult or another child who by age or development

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¹ The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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CSA PERPETRATION

The surprising statistic for the general public:

- Approximately 30-50% of CSA is committed by other youth
- Why do youth engage in harmful sexual behavior?

WHY DO YOUTH ENGAGE IN HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOR?

1. Traumatized children reacting to their own abuse
2. Persistently delinquent teens
3. Otherwise “normal” adolescents acting experimentally but irresponsibly
4. Expression of aggression, anger, or violence
5. Expression of immaturity or impulsivity
6. Adolescents engaging in normative but illegal consenting sex
7. Youth indifferent to others who selfishly take what they want
8. Youth imitating what they see in the media
9. Youth misinterpreting what they believed was mutual interest

WHY DO YOUTH ENGAGE IN HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOR?

10. Youth ignorant of the law or potential consequences of their acts
11. Youth imitating what is normal in their own family/ecologies
12. Youth attracted to the thrill of rule violation
13. Socially isolated youth who turn to younger children as substitutes for peers
14. Seriously mentally ill youth
15. Youth responding to peer pressure
16. Youth preoccupied with sex
17. Youth under the influence of drugs or alcohol
18. Youth swept away by sexual arousal of the moment
19. Youth with incipient problem sexual behavior

Findings from Meta-Analysis with 106 Studies & > 11,000 Cases

- Youth adjudicated of a sex crime are unlikely to reoffend
- 97% or more of these youth will *not* reoffend with a new sexual offense
- Recidivism rates have declined over time

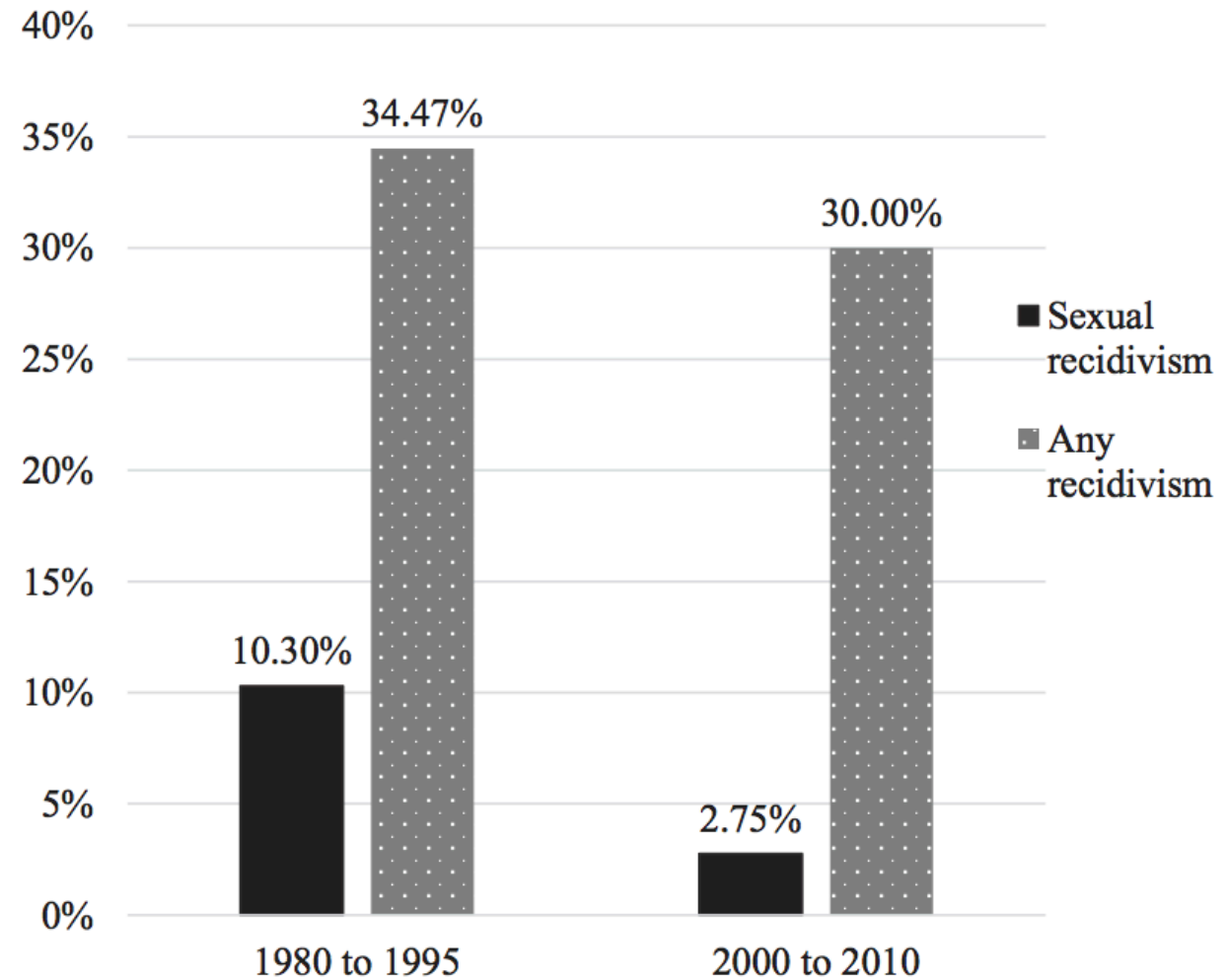


Figure 1. Sexual and general weighted recidivism rates for older studies ($n = 45$), compared with recent studies ($n = 33$). $F(1, 77) = 10.49$, $p = .002$.

Caldwell, M. F. (2016). Quantifying the decline in juvenile sexual recidivism rates. *Psychology, Public Policy & Law*.

CSA HISTORICALLY VIEWED AS A SOCIAL PROBLEM WITH A CRIMINAL JUSTICE SOLUTION



ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER A CJ PERSPECTIVE

Social Problem

- A new safety net of shelters for women and children
- Increased awareness among public, policy makers
- Evidence-based therapy for CSA victims

Criminal Justice Solutions

- Clear demarcation: adult sex with children is illegal
- Increased consequences
- Advances in risk assessment
- Advances in offender treatment and reintegration efforts

CJ RESPONSE TO SEX OFFENDING

- Current system responses to sexual offending
 - Reactionary
 - Punitive
 - Increased odds of incarceration and sentence length
 - Increased use of civil sanctions (e.g., registration and notification, residence restriction, civil commitment)
- Limitations of current approaches
 - Low base rate of recidivism
 - Focus on *identified* offenders
 - Focus on stranger danger
- Application of adult punishment approaches to youth

JUVENILE SEX OFFENDER REGISTRATION AND NOTIFICATION (JSORN)

WHAT IS REGISTRATION LIKE?

- Verify information in person at state or local police station
- Every year on your birthday and (depending on “risk level” or “tier”), every 6 months, or every 90 days,
- Must do this *at each jurisdiction* where you live, work, reside
- May be shackled or placed in a cell while awaiting processing
- A sign may announce: SEX OFFENDER REGISTRATION desk
- Adults and children are registered in same place

JSORN

WHAT IS REGISTRATION LIKE?

- Agents handling registration can be kind, unkind, or indifferent
- Provide about 75 pieces of information including SSN, internet identifiers, email addresses, vehicle description and registration, addresses for residence, workplace, and schools
- Must report any changes in information *within 3 business days*
- Registration status may be made broadly disseminated online, or be released to schools and other child-centered organizations, or restricted to law enforcement personnel

JSORN: ARE WE REGISTERING THE “WORST OF THE WORST”?

Studies by Michael Caldwell and Ashley Batastini examined US federal juvenile registration policy

- Most children (60-70%) adjudicated for sexual offenses will be required to register
- Tiering disproportionately places low risk youth in higher tiers
- Recidivism rates for children meeting tier criteria are low (<3% sex recidivism)
- Recidivism rates for children meeting criteria do not differ from those not meeting criteria or from other juvenile offenders

JSORN POLICY EFFECTS

The Influence of Sex Offender Registration on Juvenile Sexual Recidivism

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This study examines the influence of South Carolina's sex offender registration policy on juvenile offender recidivism risk. Juvenile male sexual offender ($N = 1,275$) risk of recidivism was examined with an average 9-year follow-up. Survival analysis was used to examine the influence of covariates, including the primary time-dependent covariate registration status at time, on risk of new sexual offense charges and adjudications. A competing risks model was used to explain the effects of covariates on different types of recidivism events (sexual, assault, and other). Registration status at time had a significant effect on risk of new "other" offense charges and a marginal ($p < .10$) effect on risk of sexual offense charges (survival analysis) but no statistical evidence of affecting risk of new adjudications. Results suggest a surveillance effect leading to unnecessary charges for registered (vs. nonregistered) youth. State and national policy implications are discussed.

Keywords: *juvenile sexual offender; registration; recidivism*

Since 1994, state and federal policies have required long-term and public registration of some adult sexual offenders. Until recently, states could choose whether to subject juveniles to public registration. In 2006, the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (SORNA), Title I of the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety

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Letourneau et al. (2009) examined the effect of JSORN on juvenile sexual recidivism in SC, 1990-2004:

- Sexual recidivism was rare for juveniles
 - 32 youth (2.5%) had new sex crime convictions
- New sex crime charges predicted by:
 - Offense-free years in community (negative)
 - Older age at index offense (positive)

JSORN POLICY EFFECTS

Letourneau et al. (2009) continued:

- Being registered did not predict new sex crime convictions
- Registration status was associated with new nonsexual/nonviolent offense charges but not convictions
 - These results suggest a supervision effect

JSORN POLICY EFFECTS

DO SEX OFFENDER REGISTRATION AND NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS DETER JUVENILE SEX CRIMES?

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This study examined whether South Carolina's sex offender registration and notification (SORN) policy was associated with a general deterrent effect on juvenile sex crimes. Using juvenile justice data from 1991 through 2004, trend analyses modeled the intervention effects of 1995 (the year South Carolina's SORN policy was initially implemented) and 1999 (the year the policy was revised to include online registration). Initial results suggested a significant deterrent effect of SORN on first-time juvenile sex crimes. However, comparison analyses with nonsex offenses identified a similar effect on first-time robbery crimes. Follow-up analyses indicated that the apparent declines identified for first-time sex and robbery offenses were due to another legislative change, also enacted in 1995, that moved the prosecution of 16-year-old defendants from juvenile to adult court. When these cases were included in the database, follow-up analyses indicated no significant effect for the 1995 intervention year. Thus, South Carolina's SORN policy was not associated with a general deterrent effect on juvenile sex crimes. Specific policy changes are suggested regarding the application of registration and notification requirements to juveniles.

Keywords: sexual offenders; registration; notification; juveniles

The deterrence of youth violence, particularly youth sexual violence, has been a public health priority for 15 years (Mercy, Rosenberg, Powell, Broome, & Roper, 1993; National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2002). Despite this focus, few youth sexual violence prevention programs have been developed and evaluated, and those that have been studied focused on teen dating violence prevention (e.g., Foshee et al., 1998) versus targeting sexual violence more comprehensively. The deterrence of sexual violence also has been a legislative priority for 15 years, during which time the legal culpability of youthful sex offenders has moved from a relatively laissez faire approach (e.g., "boys will be boys") to equating youthful perpetration of sexual violence with adult sexual predation (Zimring, 2004). As a consequence of this broad shift in legal policy, many states subject

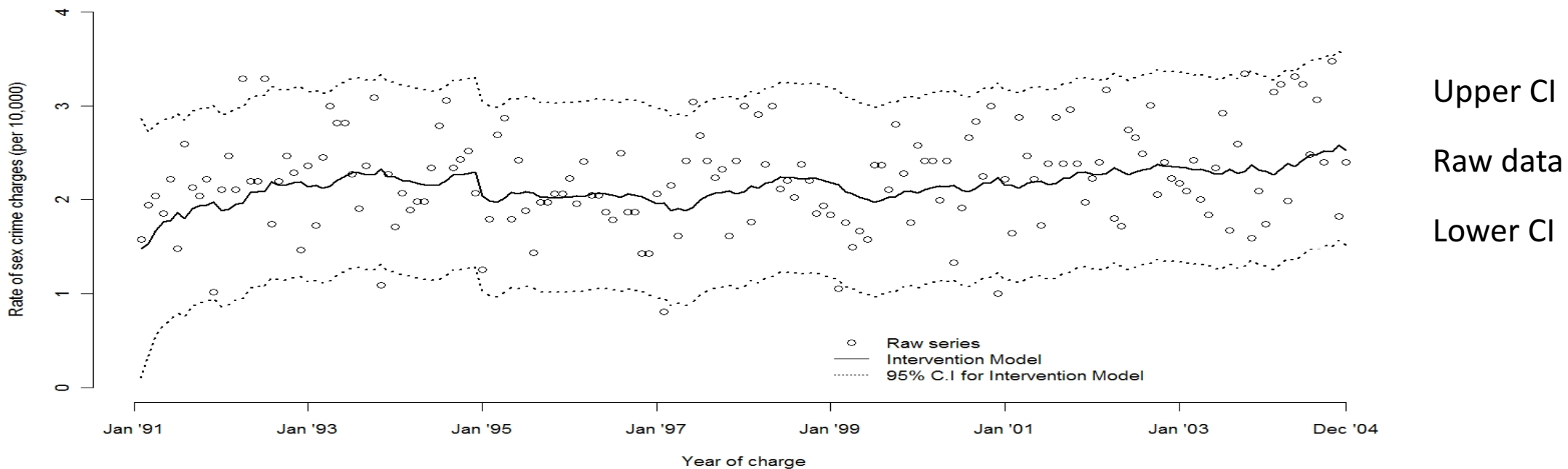
AUTHORS' NOTE: This manuscript was supported by Grant R49 CE00567 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Grant SES 0455124 from the National Science Foundation. The data for the study were made available by the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), via collaboration with the South Carolina Budget and Control Board Office of Research and Statistics (ORS). We are thankful for ongoing consultation with Mr. Charles Bradberry (ORS) and for initial support from Ms. Trudy Trotti and Mr. Erroll Campbell (DJJ), which was crucial to completing the aims of this study. The findings and opinions expressed in this article reflect the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of ORS, DJJ, or federal funding agencies. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Elizabeth J. Letourneau, Family Services Research Center, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Medical University of South Carolina, 67 President St., Suite MC406, MSC 861, Charleston, SC 29425; e-mail: letounej@musc.edu.

Letourneau et al. (2010) examined whether registration/notification deterred first-time sex crimes

- Trend analyses included data on 26,574 youth charged with 28,288 crimes from 1990-2004
 - 3,148 youth charged with sex crimes
 - 23,046 youth charged with assault crimes
 - 2,094 youth charged with robbery crimes

JSORN POLICY EFFECTS

No significant reductions in rates of first time sex crimes following 1995 enactment of registration/notification policy



JSORN POLICY EFFECTS

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Juvenile Sexual Crime Reporting Rates Are Not Influenced by Juvenile Sex Offender Registration Policies

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Texas State University

Ryan T. Shields
Johns Hopkins University

Mark Chaffin
Georgia State University

National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) data on juvenile sexual crime reports originating in 4 states were used to assess the association between 4 different juvenile sex offender registration policies and juvenile sexual crime reports. Autoregressive integrated moving average (ARIMA) analyses revealed no significant changes from before to after the implantation of juvenile registry requirements, suggesting that none of the tested policies influenced juvenile sexual crime reports. These results are commensurate with the only study evaluating juvenile sex offender registration on first-time sexual crimes and with the broader literature evaluating (and failing to find) an association between juvenile sex offender registration enactment and juvenile sexual offense recidivism rates. Juvenile sex offender registration policies were implemented with the primary aim of improving public safety. To date, no published studies support any public safety effect associated with juvenile sex offender registration policies. The current findings, when coupled with the larger literature base, support efforts to exclude juveniles from state and federal registration policies.

Keywords: juvenile sex offenders, registration, sexual crime prevention, public safety

States vary in the ways they sanction and monitor youth who have sexually offended. Although some states maintain a rehabilitative framework for youth with problem sexual behavior, many states take a decidedly punitive approach, utilizing punishment and management techniques similar to those that are used for adult sex offenders, including registration and public notification. As noted and summarized by Pittman and Nguyen (2011), the specifics of these juvenile sex offender registration and notification (JSORN) policies vary from state to state. Some states require registrants to update their information annually, some require registrants to update their information several times each year. Some states require registrants to stay on the registry for a set number of years, and some require registration for life.

Given the costs associated with maintaining registries and the potential unintended consequences that can impact registered youth, it is important for scholars and policy-makers to evaluate whether these policies are associated with instances of sexual victimization. Much of the extant research on the topic focuses on whether JSORN policies are related to either sexual or nonsexual recidivism, and so far no research has found any evidence of any recidivism reductions (Caldwell & Dickinson, 2009; Letourneau & Armstrong, 2008; Letourneau, Bandyopadhyay, Sinha, & Armstrong, 2009a). However, to date few scholars have examined whether JSORN policies are associated with reductions in either first-time or overall juvenile sexual offending, which is an important component to the “public safety” argument for JSORN. Therefore, the goal of this study was to advance scholarship on JSORN by examining the association between JSORN enactment and juvenile sexual crime within a multistate framework. Using data from the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), the current study tested whether JSORN enactment has been associated with juvenile sexual crime reporting rates in various policy contexts.

Development of Sex Offender Registration Policies

U.S. sex offender registration policies first proliferated in the mid-1990s in response to the federal Jacob Wetterling Crimes Against Children and Sexually Violent Offender Registration Act (part of the federal Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994) and subsequent amendments to that act. The Wetterling Act mandated that states and other U.S. jurisdictions establish registration protocols for at least some people convicted of sexual crimes, and it was subsequently modified to include public release of information about some registrants. The Wetterling Act was focused on adult offenders and neither required nor

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This article is dedicated to the memory of our dear friend and colleague, Dr. Mark Chaffin, a passionate champion of evidence-informed policy and practice with vulnerable youth.

This research was supported by a grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. To date, these data and results have not been publicly presented, published, or discussed elsewhere.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Jeffrey C. Sandler, 208 River View Road, Green Island, NY 12183. E-mail: jesandler@gmail.com

Sandler et al. (2017) examined the effect of JSORN on first-time sexual offending in Idaho, South Carolina, Utah, Virginia

- Used NIBRS data
- No effect of JSORN on first time offending in any of the 4 states

JSORN POLICY EFFECTS

Juvenile Registration and Notification Policies Fail to Prevent First-Time Sexual Offenses: An Extension of Findings to Two New States

Elizabeth J. Letourneau¹, Ryan T. Shields²,
Reshmi Nair¹, Geoffrey Kahn¹, Jeffery C. Sandler³,
and Donna M. Vandiver⁴

Abstract

This study evaluated the effects of Maryland and Oregon juvenile sex offender registration and notification policies on first-time sexual offense charges and adjudications. We used autoregressive modeling to compare the monthly average of first-time sexual offense charges ($N = 5,657$ and $13,278$ for Maryland and Oregon, respectively) and adjudications ($N = 1,631$ and $5,451$ for Maryland and Oregon, respectively) across pre- and post-policy years. Results indicate that neither state's registration policy had any impact on first-time sexual offense charges or adjudications and are consistent with prior studies evaluating the juvenile registration and notification policies of four other states. The absence of general deterrence effects across three studies evaluating six state registration policies suggests that, regardless of specific policy characteristics, juvenile registration and notification policies fail to improve community safety via deterring first-time sexual offenses among children. Recommendations include replacing juvenile registration policies with more effective prevention and intervention practices.

Keywords

children, registration, notification laws, policy implications, juveniles

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- Letourneau et al (2018) examined JSORN effect on first-time offending in Maryland and Oregon

JSORN POLICY EFFECTS

- Letourneau et al. (2018) continued:

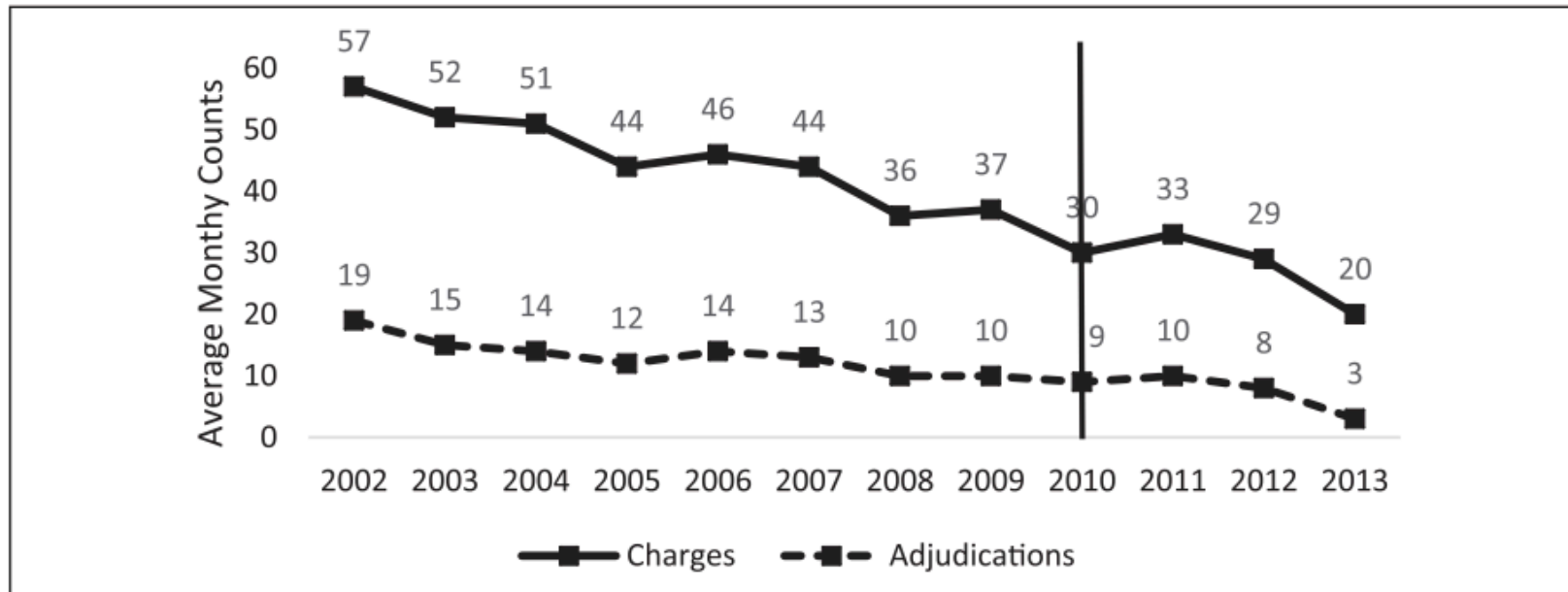


Figure 1. Juvenile sexual offense charges and adjudications in Maryland, January 2002 to September 2013.

Note. Vertical line at 2010 denotes first year of juvenile registration policy implementation.

JSORN POLICY EFFECTS

- Letourneau et al. (2018) continued:

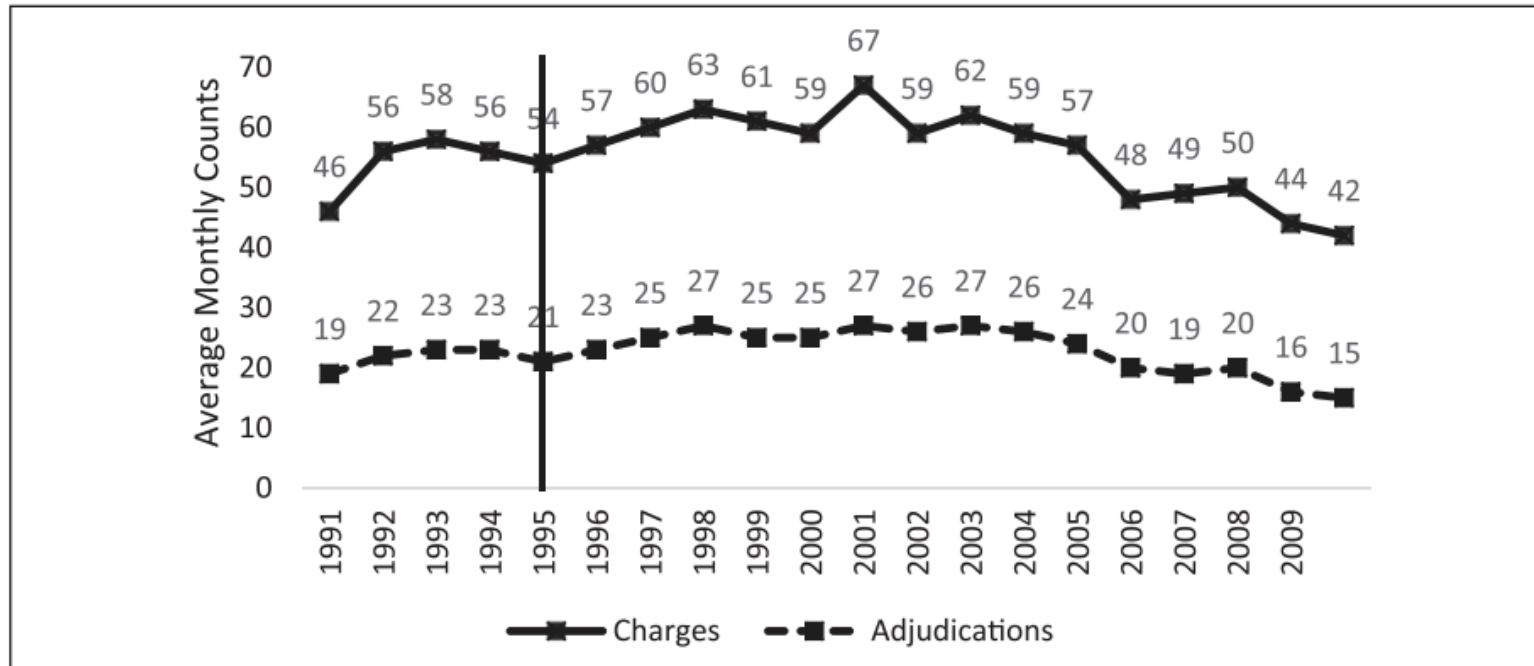


Figure 2. Juvenile sexual offense charges and adjudications in Oregon, January 1991 to December 2010.

Note. Vertical line at 1995 denotes first year of juvenile registration policy implementation.

WHY IS JSORN NOT EFFECTIVE?

In order for JSORN to have an effect, a youth would need to recognize that a given action is:

- illegal
- likely to be discovered
- likely to result in punishment
- likely to result in registration

JSORN POLICY EFFECTS

Effects of Sex Offender Registration Policies on Juvenile Justice Decision Making

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This study examines effects of sex offender registration policies on juvenile judicial decision making. Prosecutor decisions and disposition outcomes are examined across a 15-year period. Results indicate that prosecutors are significantly less likely to move forward on both serious sexual and assault offense charges after registration implementation, with the estimated effect nearly twice as large for sexual offenses. There also is increased likelihood of guilty findings for sexual and assault offenses over time. As new policies legislate harsher consequences for juvenile offenses, prosecutors become less likely to move forward on sexual and assault charges. This effect is especially strong for juvenile sexual offenders, who face reforms targeting both violent and sexual crimes. Results suggest that state and national policies requiring long-term public registration of juveniles might unintentionally decrease the likelihood of prosecution. If replicated, the results indicate a need to reform registration policies as applied to juveniles.

Keywords: *juvenile sexual offenses; registration; prosecution*

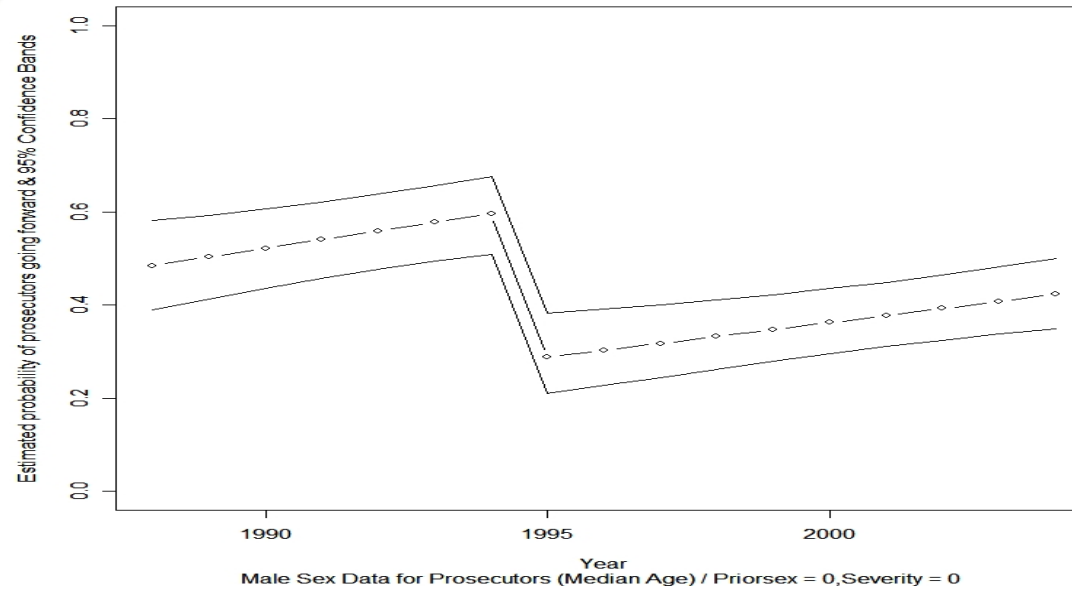
During the past 2 decades, new laws were enacted by state and federal legislatures that created new classes of sexual crimes (e.g., spousal rape), increased the penalties for existing sexual crimes (e.g., by lengthening sentences or requiring

Authors' Note: This research was supported by grants to Elizabeth J. Letourneau from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Grant CE000567) and the National Science Foundation (Grant 0455124). We thank Ms. Trudie Trotti, director of research and statistics, and Mr. Errol Campbell, senior research associate, South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice. We also thank Mr. Charles Bradberry, senior statistician, and Ms. Diana Tester, statistician, South Carolina State Budget and Control Board, Office of Research and Statistics. Ms. Janice Rivers originally developed the DJJ database in 1979 and provided helpful consultation on its use for this study. The conclusions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the funding agencies or South Carolina state agencies. Please address correspondence to Elizabeth J. Letourneau, Family Services Research Center, Medical University of South Carolina, McClellan Banks 4th Floor, 326 Calhoun St., STE MC406, Charleston, SC 29401.

Letourneau et al. (2009) examined likelihood of solicitors prosecuting juvenile sex offense cases

- Examined all violent offending cases from 1990-2004:
 - All juvenile sex crime charges ($N = 5,503$)
 - All juvenile assault crime charges ($N = 14,095$)
 - All juvenile robbery crime charges ($N = 2,942$)

JSORN POLICY EFFECTS



41% reduction in the odds of prosecutors moving forward on juvenile sex crime cases following registration enactment

JSORN POLICY EFFECTS

Article

Sex Offender Registration and Notification Policy Increases Juvenile Plea Bargains

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DOI: 10.1177/1079063212455667
<http://sax.sagepub.com>
SAGE

Elizabeth J. Letourneau¹, Kevin S. Armstrong¹,
Dipankar Bandyopadhyay², and Debajyoti Sinha³

Abstract

The aim of this study was to test the hypothesis that South Carolina's sex offender registration and notification policy influenced juvenile sex offense case plea bargains. Two types of plea bargains were examined: initial sex offense charges amended to nonsex offense charges and amended to lower severity charges. Comparison analyses were conducted with juvenile assault and robbery offense cases. Archival data on cases involving 19,215 male youth charged with sex, assault, and/or robbery offenses between 1990 and 2004 informed analyses. Of these youth, 2,991 were charged with one or more sex offense, 16,091 were charged with one or more assault offense, and 2,036 were charged with at one or more robbery offense. Generalized estimating equations (GEE) were used to model changes in the probabilities of plea bargain outcomes across three time intervals: before policy implementation (1990 to 1994), after initial policy implementation (1995 to 1998), and after implementation of a revised policy that included online registration requirements (1999 to 2004). Results indicate significant increases in the probability of plea bargains for sex offense cases across subsequent time periods, supporting the hypothesis that South Carolina's initial and revised registration and notification policies were associated with significant increases the likelihood of plea bargains to different types of charges and to lower severity charges. Results were either nonsignificant or of much lower magnitude for the comparison assault and robbery analyses. Suggestions for revising South Carolina and national registration and notification policies are discussed.

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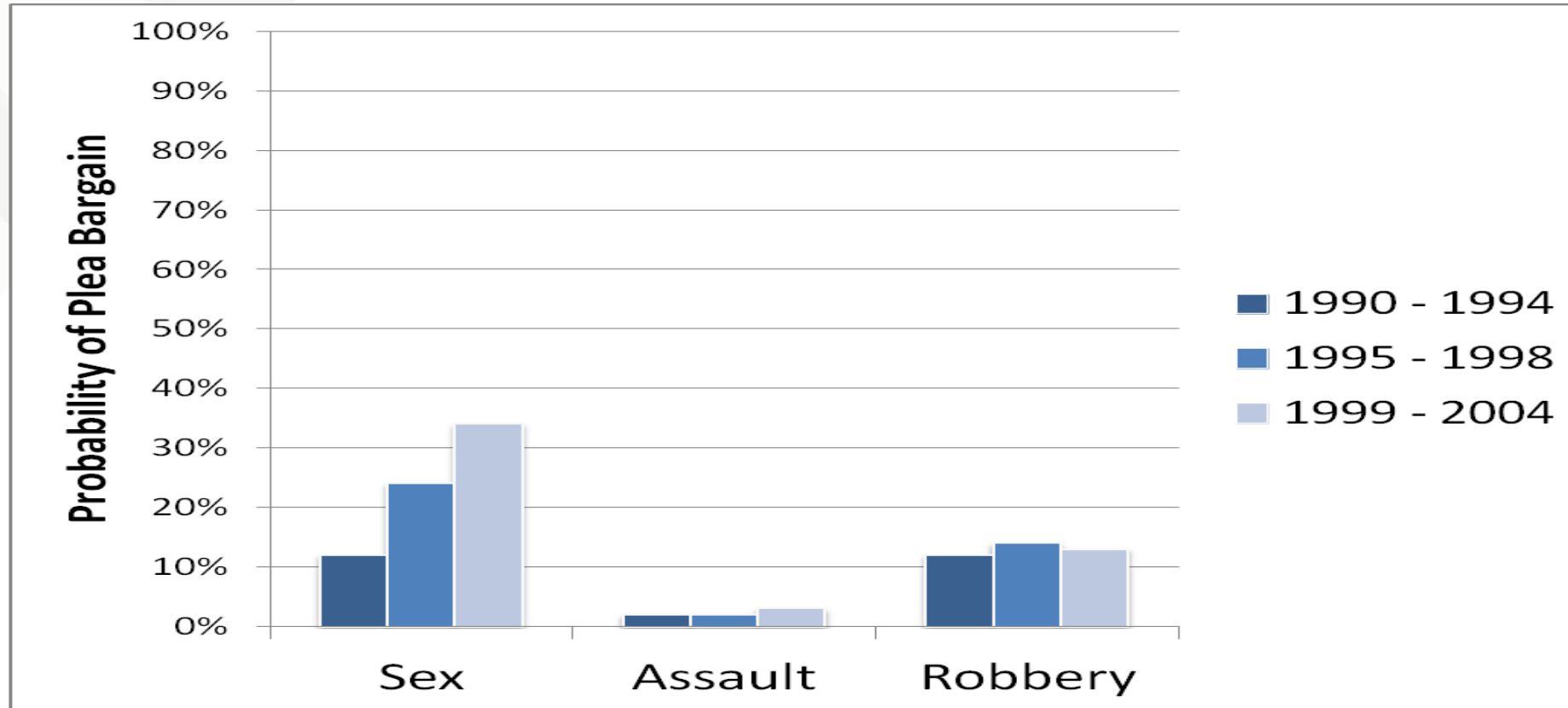
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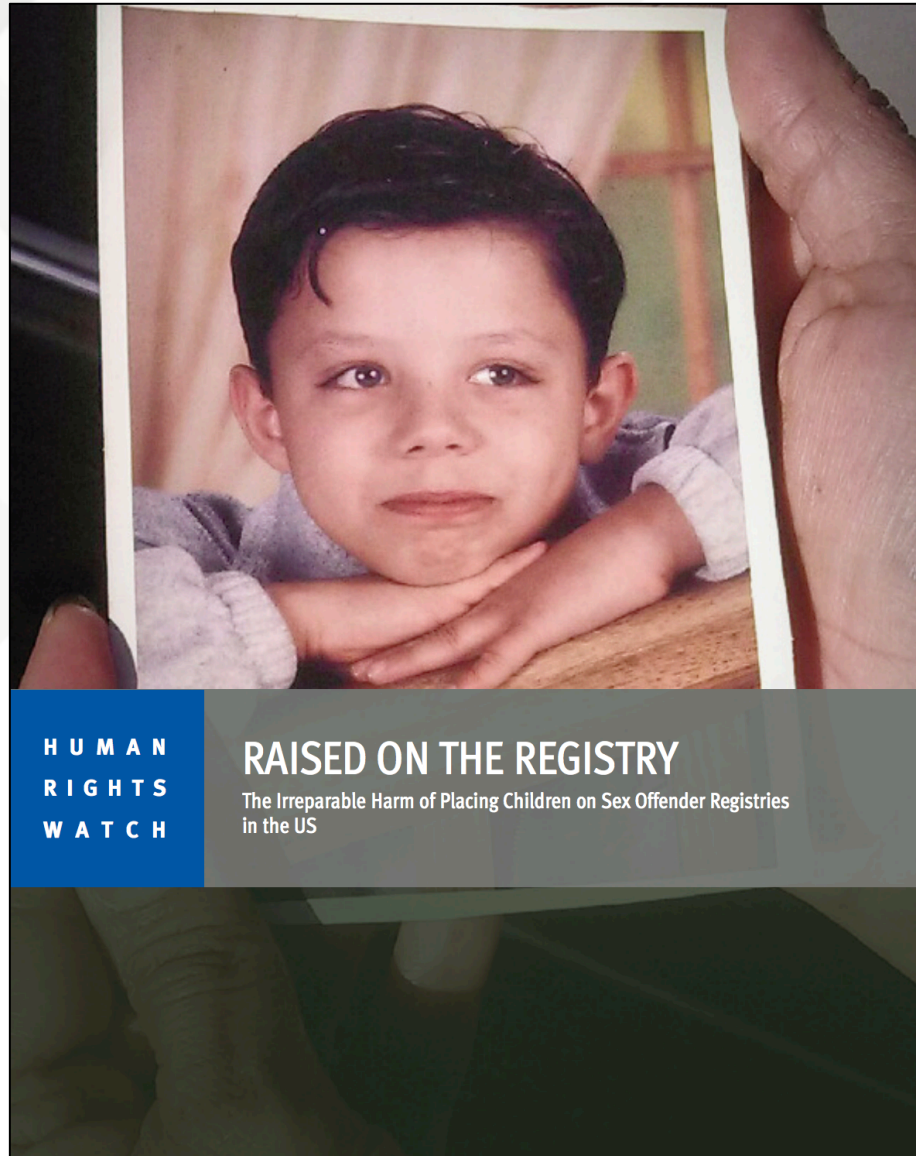
Study examined the effect of JSORN on plea bargains, using data on all juvenile sex, assault and robbery cases processed between 1990 – 2004 in SC

- 19,215 cases informed the analyses
 - 2,991 cases initially charged with sex offense
 - 16,091 cases initially charged with assault offense
 - 2,036 cases initially charged with robbery offense
- Two types of plea bargain examined:
 - Initial charge amended to lower severity charge
 - Initial charge amended to different type of charge

JSORN POLICY EFFECTS



JSORN POLICY EFFECTS



- Human Rights Watch 2013:
- Interviews with 296 individuals in 20 states who had committed sexual offenses as children and their immediate family members
- Attributed serious harm, including
 - Experience of isolation
 - Depression
 - Denied access to education and employment opportunities
 - Residence restrictions
 - Suicidal thoughts and attempts
 - Threatened with or experiencing physical violence

JSORN POLICY EFFECTS

Article

Collateral Consequences of Juvenile Sex Offender Registration and Notification: Results From a Survey of Treatment Providers

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Abstract

Among many in the research, policy, and practice communities, the application of sex offender registration and notification (SORN) to juveniles who sexually offend (JSO) has raised ongoing concerns regarding the potential collateral impacts on youths' social, mental health, and academic adjustment. To date, however, no published research has systematically examined these types of collateral consequences of juvenile SORN. Based on a survey of a national sample of treatment providers in the United States, this study investigates the perceived impact of registration and notification on JSO across five key domains: mental health, harassment and unfair treatment, school problems, living instability, and risk of reoffending. Results indicate that treatment providers overwhelmingly perceive negative consequences associated with registration with an incremental effect of notification indicating even greater concern across all five domains. Providers' demographics, treatment modalities, and client profile did not influence their perceptions of the collateral consequences suggesting that provider concern about the potential harm of SORN applied to juveniles is robust. Policy implications are discussed.

Keywords

sex offender registration and notification, juvenile sex offenders, treatment providers

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Harris et al. (2016)

- Completed survey with 265 treatment providers who work with youth with problem sexual behavior
- Practitioners reported a wide range of negative effects on children related to their mental health, social development, family relationships, peer interactions, and school experiences
- Results did not vary by demographics, modality, or client profile

JSORN POLICY EFFECTS

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Effects of Juvenile Sex Offender Registration on Adolescent Well-Being: An Empirical Examination

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For decades, commentators have drawn attention to the potentially harmful effects of subjecting children to sex offender registration and notification policies. To date, however, these concerns have received limited empirical attention. This study is the first to compare registered and nonregistered children on several key domains in an effort to evaluate the unintended consequences of juvenile registration and notification. We surveyed 251 boys receiving treatment services for inappropriate or harmful sexual behavior, of whom 73 (29%) were or had been subjected to registration requirements. As predicted, Registered children reported more problems or fewer strengths on in the domains of mental health, peer relationships, and experiences with safety and victimization. Most notably, relative to Nonregistered children, Registered children reported significantly more severe suicidal cognitions and had higher odds of having recently attempted suicide in the past 30 days. Likewise, Registered children were 5 times more likely to have been approached by an adult for sex in the past year. Unexpectedly, Registered children also reported significantly greater perceived social support, perhaps reflecting efforts by family members and others to mitigate the harmful effects of registration. In combination with the available literature indicating that these policies do not improve public safety, the results of this study offer empirical support for the concerns expressed by those calling for the abolition of juvenile registration and notification policies.

Keywords: juvenile, policy, sex offender registration, survey

Since the 1990s, laws have required that some people convicted of sexual offenses must register their information with law enforcement and have stipulated that certain registry information be

made available to the public. These sex offender registration and notification laws are ubiquitous across the United States. All 50 states operate their own independent sex offender registries, as do all U.S. territories, the District of Columbia, and over 100 tribal jurisdictions (U.S. Department of Justice SMART Office, 2017). Although there is incomplete knowledge regarding how many people are or have been subjected to registration, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children estimates that more than 860,000 people are registered in the U.S. and U.S. territories (National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, 2017). As described more fully below, many policies also subject children (<18 years of age) adjudicated as minors to registration and notification requirements. To our knowledge, there is no agreed upon estimate of the number or percentage of people registered for offenses committed as children (i.e., <18 years of age), although some state-level studies report on hundreds and even thousands of registered children (e.g., Vandiver, 2006). Thus, even these incomplete numbers demonstrate the broad reach of registration policy.

Although governed by state law, the growth in the nation's systems of sex offender registration and notification has been promoted in part by federal action. Beginning with the 1994 Jacob Wetterling Crimes Against Children Act, the U.S. Congress passed multiple pieces of federal legislation establishing parameters for state-level registration and notification policies. These include the 1996 Megan's Law requiring states to disseminate certain registry information to the public, and the 2006 Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (SORNA), also known as Title I of the Adam

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Letourneau et al. (2018)

- Completed survey of 256 youth currently in treatment for problem sexual behavior
- 29 percent (n=74) required to register
- Odds of suicide attempt within the past 30 days were 4 times higher for registered youth
- Odds of experiencing a sexual assault were 2 times higher for registered youth
- Odds of an adult contacting the youth for sex were 5 times higher for registered youth

SUMMARY OF JSORN POLICY RESEARCH

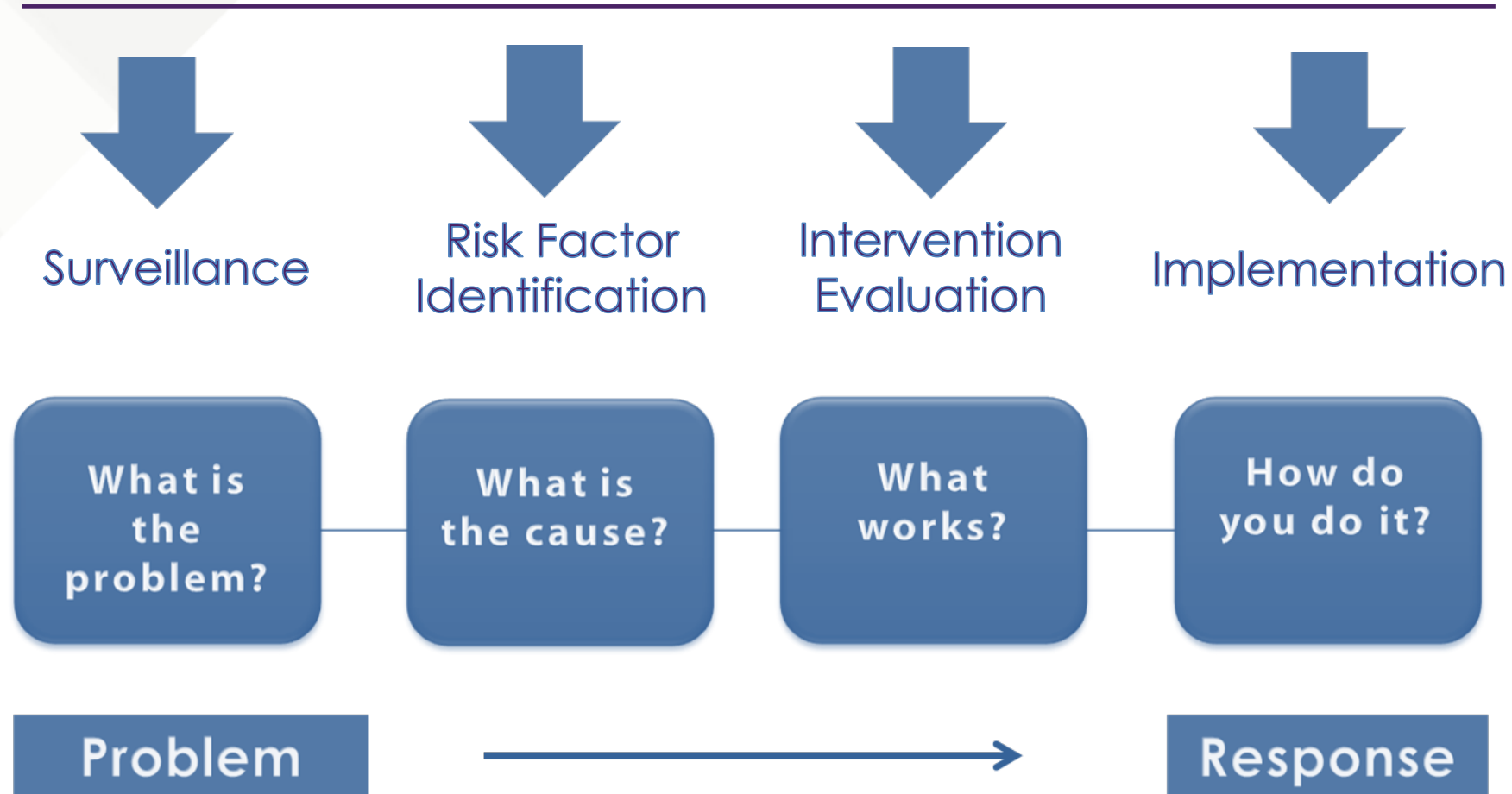
JSORN:

1. Overwhelming targets low risk youth
2. Fails to reduce sexual or violent recidivism
3. Increases risk of nonviolent charges
4. Fails to reduce first-time sex crimes
5. Deters prosecution of juvenile sex crime cases and encourages plea bargains
6. Is harmful for youth

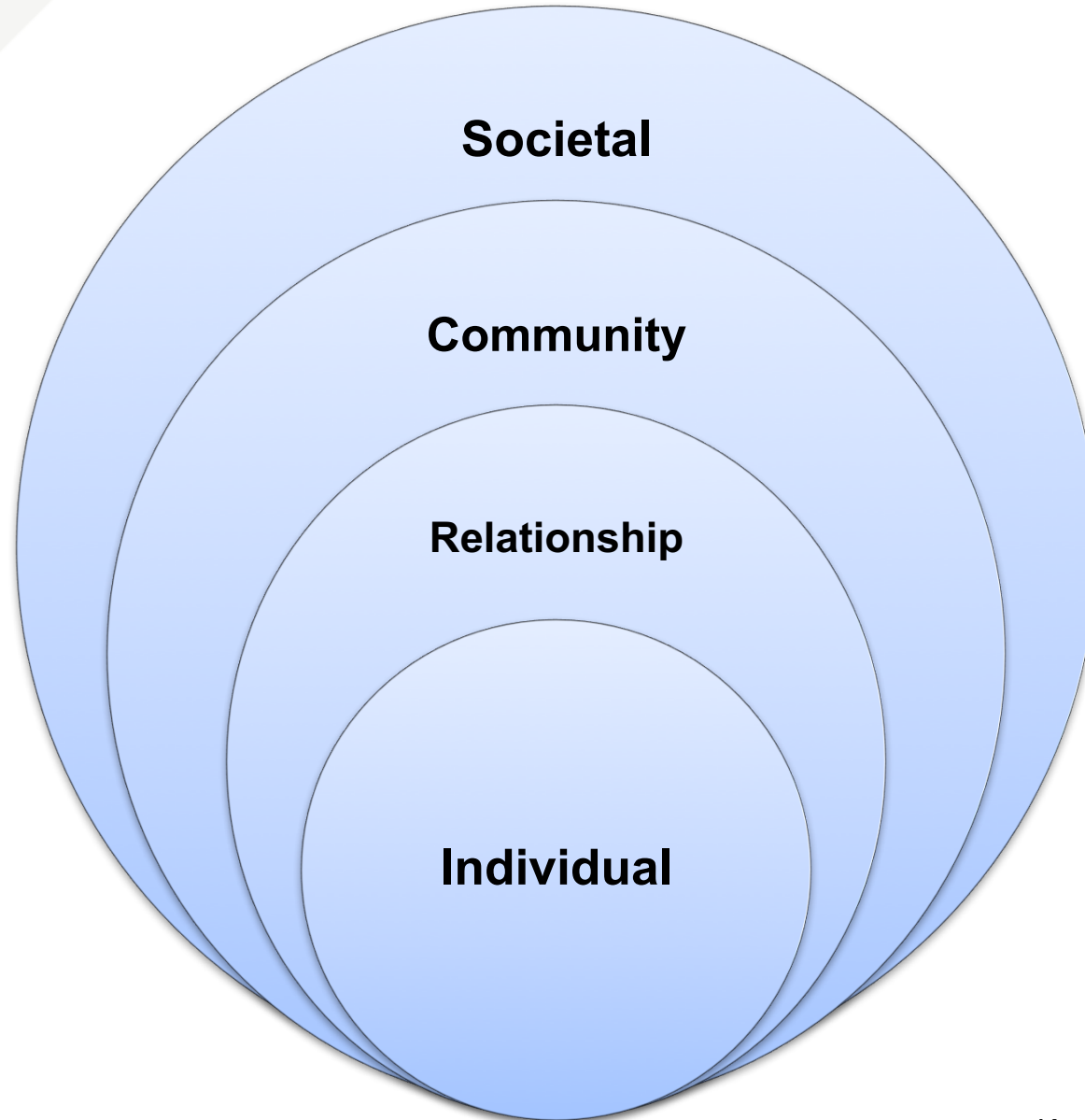
Why, then, do we continue with JSORN as the dominant response?

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE: A PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH

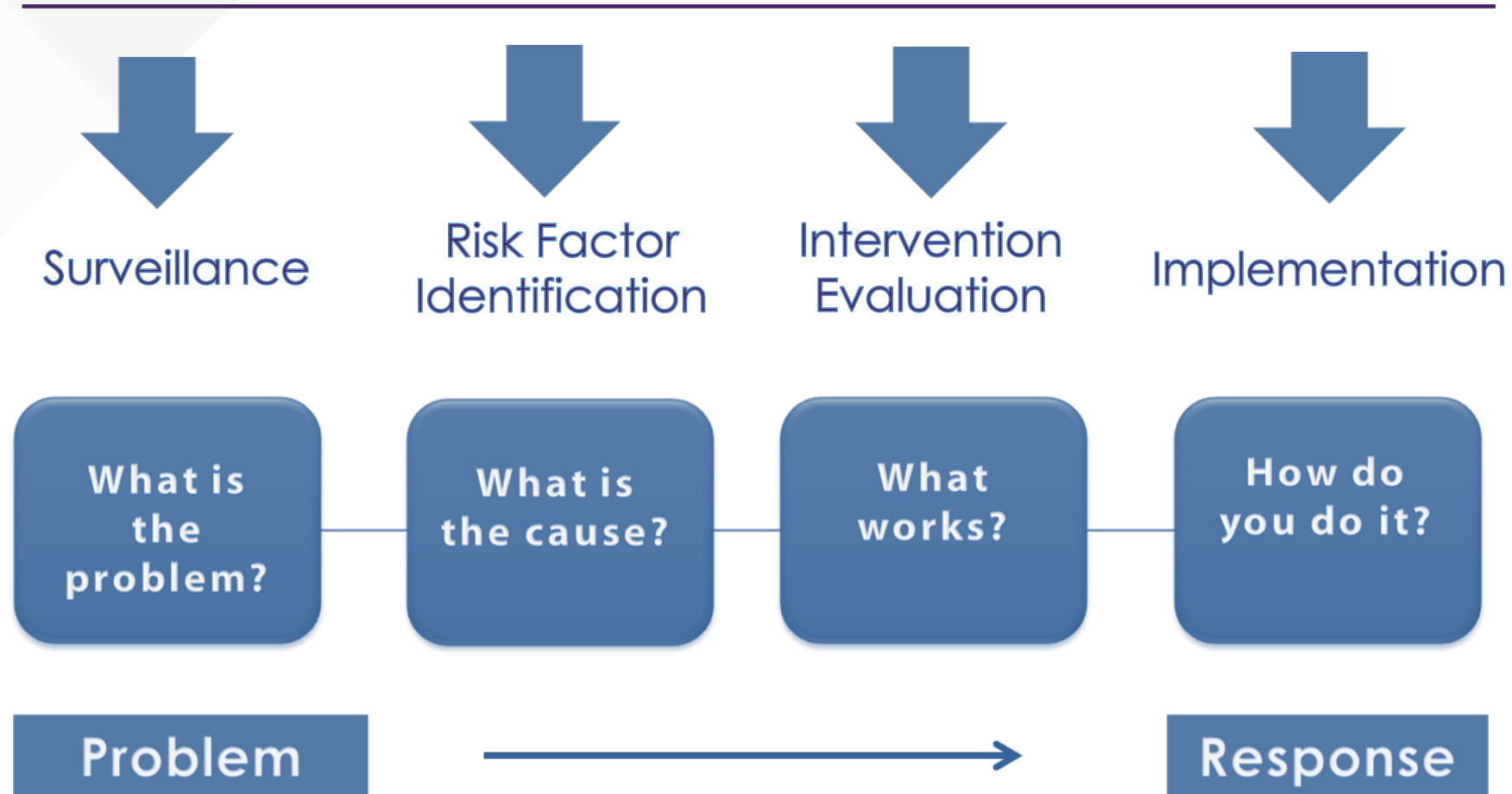
A PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH TO CSA



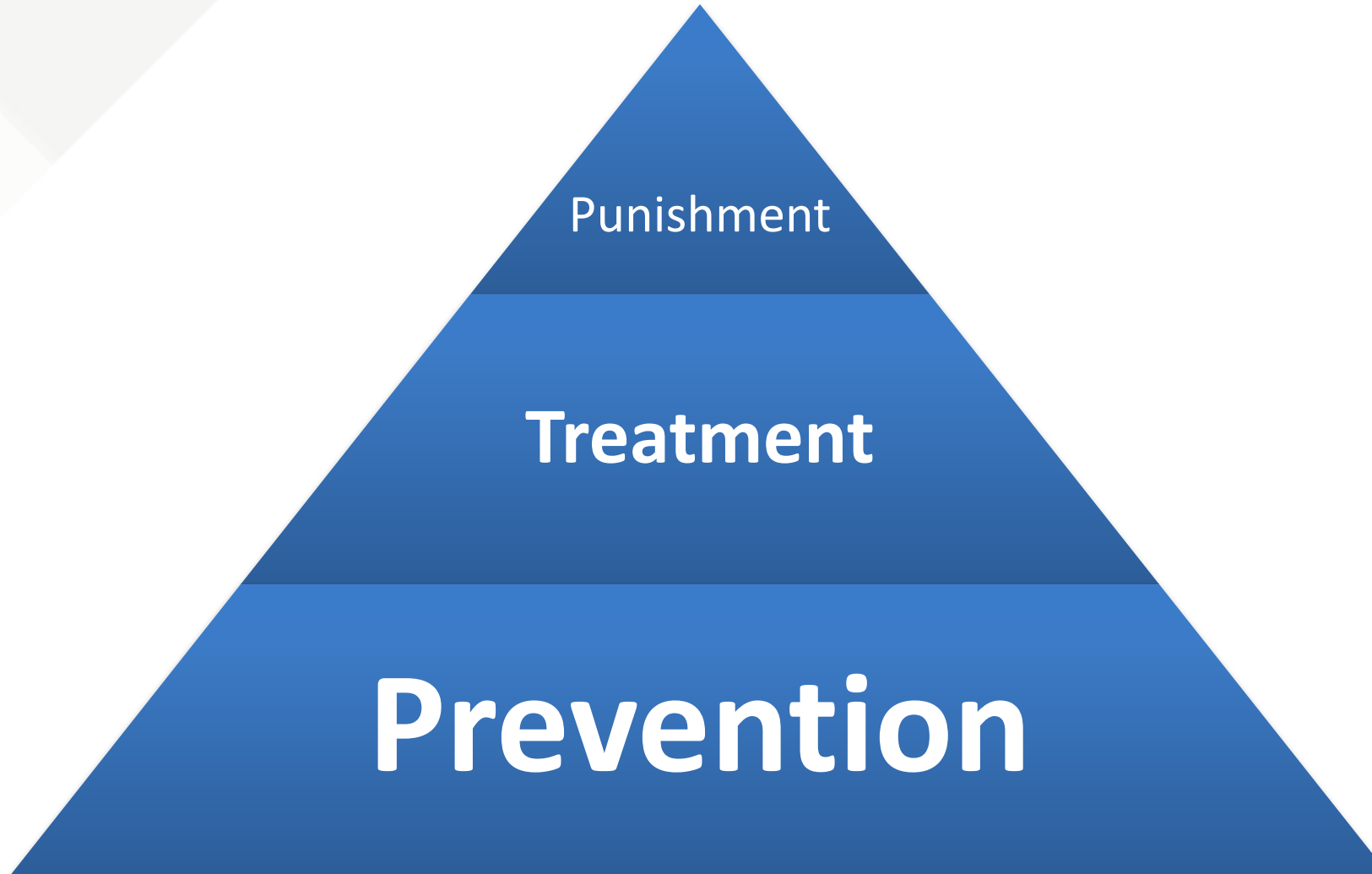
THE SOCIAL ECOLOGICAL MODEL



A PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH TO CSA



THE PUBLIC HEALTH MODEL OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION



PREVENTION

- At the ***primary*** level: prevent sexual violence before it occurs
- At the ***secondary*** level: sexual violence has already occurred, and intervention efforts are aimed at reducing the short-term effects of that event
- At the ***tertiary*** level: prevention efforts are focused on addressing the long-term effects of sexual violence

PREVENTION TARGETS

- **Universal interventions**, prevention efforts are focused on the general public, or large populations
- **Selective interventions** are targeted towards individuals at risk of engaging in a particular behavior
- **Indicated interventions** are targeted towards individuals who have already engaged in a particular behavior for the purposes of reducing future occurrences

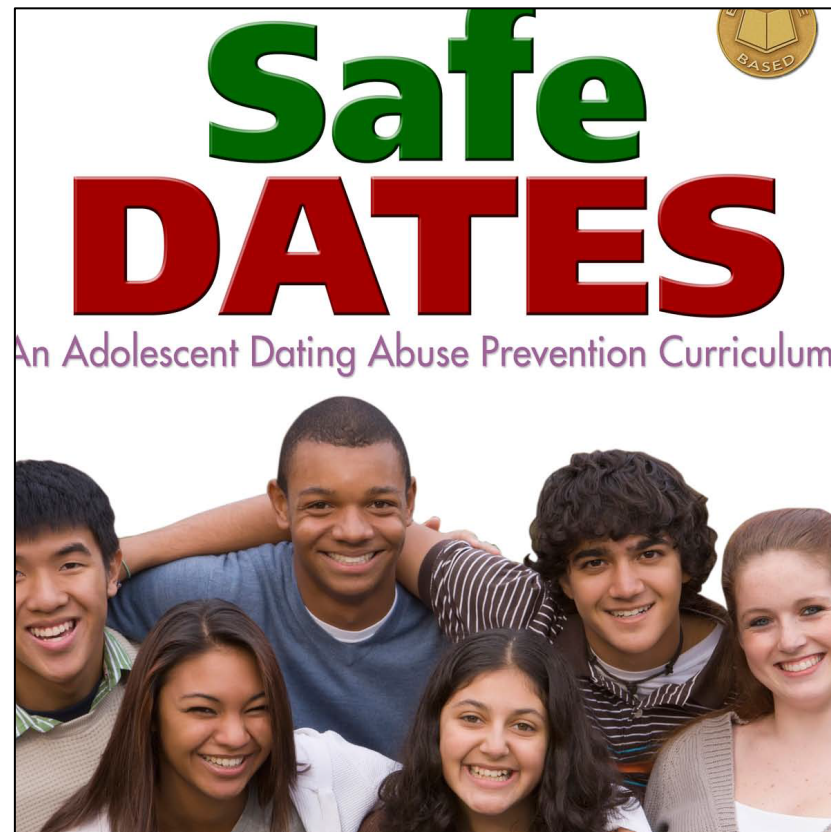
CSA PREVENTION APPROACHES

1. Criminal justice interventions
 1. Specific deterrence
 2. General deterrence
2. Therapeutic interventions
 1. Oklahoma University CBT for problem sexual behavior
 2. Multisystemic therapy for problem sexual behavior
3. Victim-focused prevention
 1. Often school based
 2. Recognize, Resist, Report
4. Primary perpetrator prevention

PRIMARY PREVENTION TARGETING YOUNG PEOPLE



Taylor et al., 2013



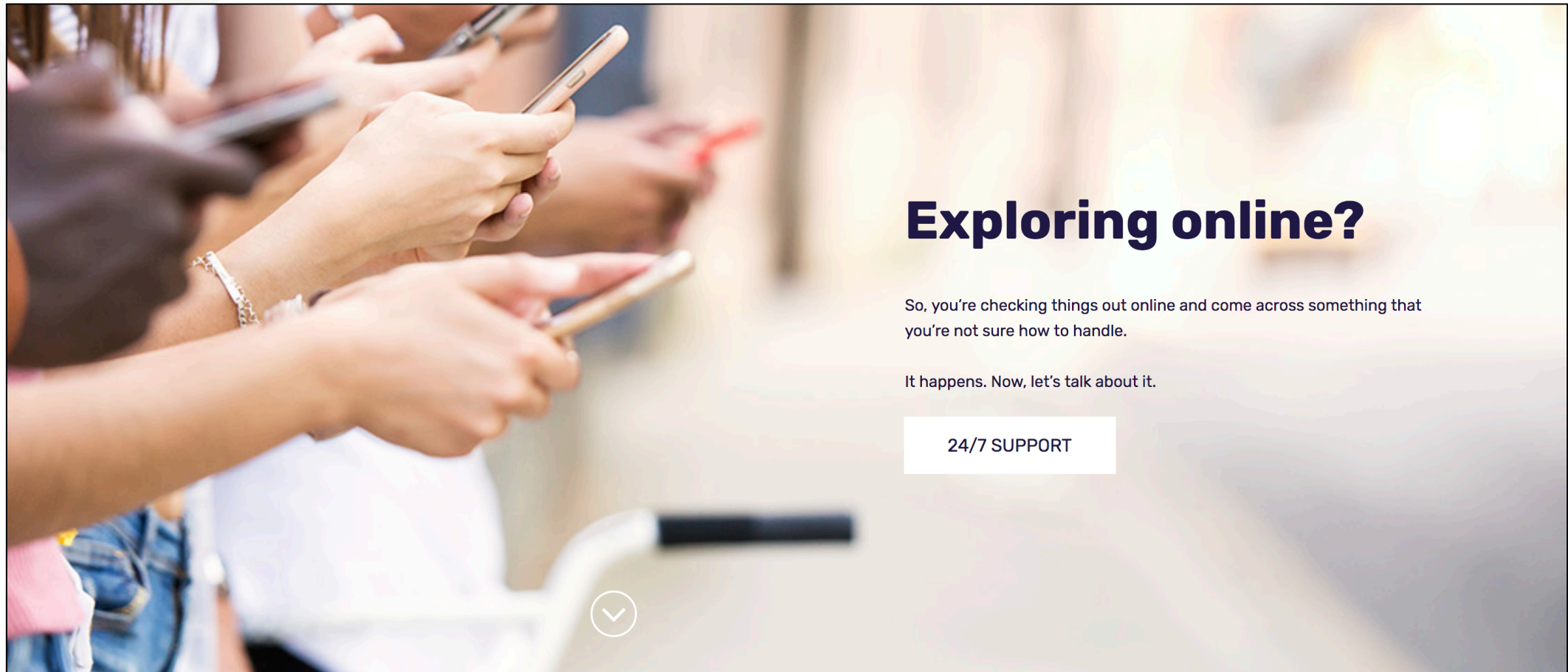
Foshee et al., 2004

 			
SCOPE AND SEQUENCE 2017 Middle School Program			
Grade 6			
UNIT 1 Mindsets and Goals 1. Welcome! 2A. Starting Middle School 2B. Helping New Students 3. Grow Your Brain 1 4. Grow Your Brain 2 5. Can Personalities Change? 6. Setting Goals 7. If-Then Plans Unit 1 Review and Assessment (Optional)	UNIT 2 Values and Friendships 8. Values and Decisions 9. Social Values 10. What's a Friend? 11. Making Friends 12. Challenge: Making Friends Unit 2 Review and Assessment (Optional)	UNIT 3 Thoughts, Emotions, and Decisions 13. What Are Emotions? 14. Values and Emotions 15. Spot the Thought 16. Calming Down 17. Slow Breathing Unit 3 Review and Assessment (Optional)	UNIT 4 Serious Peer Conflicts 18. Perspectives 19. Challenge: Perspectives 20. Recognizing Serious Conflicts 21. Challenge: Recognizing Conflicts 22. Resolving Serious Conflicts 23. Challenge: Resolving Conflicts 24. Making Amends 25. Bullying 26. Gratitude Unit 4 Review and Assessment (Optional)
Grade 7			
UNIT 1 Mindsets and Goals 1. Welcome! 2A. Starting Middle School 2B. Helping New Students 3. Making Mistakes 4. Embracing Challenges 5. Personalities Change 6. Setting Goals 7. If-Then Plans Unit 1 Review and Assessment (Optional)	UNIT 2 Values and Friendships 8. Values and Decisions 9. Online Values 10. What Kind of Friend Are You? 11. Strengthening Friendships 12. Challenge: Friendships Unit 2 Review and Assessment (Optional)	UNIT 3 Thoughts, Emotions, and Decisions 13. The Role of Emotions 14. Handling Emotions 15. Unhelpful Thoughts 16. Be Calm 17. Frustration Unit 3 Review and Assessment (Optional)	UNIT 4 Serious Peer Conflicts 18. Jumping to Conclusions 19. Challenge: Conclusions 20. Avoiding Serious Conflicts 21. Challenge: Avoiding Conflicts 22. Resolving Serious Conflicts 23. Challenge: Resolving Conflicts 24. Taking Responsibility 25. Gender Harassment 26. What You Learned Unit 4 Review and Assessment (Optional)
Grade 8			
UNIT 1 Mindsets and Goals 1. Welcome! 2. Your Identity 3. Identity and Social Groups 4. Your Interests Matter 5. Overcoming Failure 6. SMART Goals 7. If-Then Plans Unit 1 Review and Assessment (Optional)	UNIT 2 Values and Relationships 8. Values and Decisions 9. Positive Relationships 10. Relationships Change 11. Negative Relationships 12. Challenge: Relationships Unit 2 Review and Assessment (Optional)	UNIT 3 Thoughts, Emotions, and Decisions 13. Emotions and Decisions 14. Responding to Anger 15. Handling Rejection 16. Stay Calm 17. Anxiety Unit 3 Review and Assessment (Optional)	UNIT 4 Serious Peer Conflicts 18. Assumptions 19. Challenge: Assumptions 20. Helping Friends Avoid Conflicts 21. Challenge: Avoiding Conflicts 22. Helping Friends Resolve Conflicts 23. Challenge: Resolving Conflicts 24. Helping Friends After a Conflict 25. Sexual Harassment 26. High School Unit 4 Review and Assessment (Optional)

Espelage, et al. 2015

EMERGING APPROACHES

Thorn Youth Deterrence Project



Exploring online?

So, you're checking things out online and come across something that you're not sure how to handle.

It happens. Now, let's talk about it.

24/7 SUPPORT

⌵

EMERGING APPROACHES



The Prevention Network Dunkelfeld

In 2005 the Institute of Sexology and Sexual Medicine started the "Prevention Project Dunkelfeld" which has now developed into a nationwide network of outpatient clinics providing treatment for self-identifying and help-seeking pedophiles and hebephiles outside of the legal system. It aims to help these men to guarantee continuous sexual self-control to prevent child sexual abuse and child pornography consumption.

EMERGING APPROACHES

[ABOUT](#)[WHO WE ARE](#)[FOR ADULTS](#)[CONTACT](#)

**ER TRÄUMT NOCH VON
DINOSAURIERN.**
DU TRÄUMST STÄNDIG VON IHM.



**SIE TEILT SICH IHR BETT MIT
KUSCHELTIEREN.**
DU WÜRDST DEINS GERN MIT IHR TEILEN.



Your friends fall in love with stars or the girl from the parallel class. You're the only one who knows what it looks like inside of you. But that doesn't mean that nobody can help you. If you feel sexually attracted to children, with us you can find doctors and psychologists who listen to you. Free of charge and with patient-therapist confidentiality.

Contact: ppj-internet@charite.de

Hotline: 030/450 529 529

Monday - Wednesday 3pm-5pm, Thursday - Friday 11am-1pm

**FREE OF CHARGE
CONFIDENTIAL**
JUST-DREAMING-OF-THEM.ORG

THE HELP WANTED PROJECT

THE HELP WANTED PROJECT: A PROGRAM FOR ADOLESCENTS ATTRACTED TO YOUNGER CHILDREN

- Aim is to develop an online prevention intervention for older children and teens who have an unwanted sexual attraction to young (prepubescent) children, for their parents, and for professionals.

Funding from:

- Moore Center for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse
- RALIANCE
- HAND Foundation
- University of Massachusetts Lowell

THE HELP WANTED PROJECT

Principal Investigators

- Elizabeth Letourneau, Professor, Johns Hopkins University
- Ryan Shields, Assistant Professor, UMass – Lowell

Collaborators

- Amanda Ruzicka, Research Associate, Johns Hopkins University
- Karen Baker, Director, National Sexual Violence Resource Center
- Maia Christopher, Executive Director, ATSA
- Geraldine Crisci, Therapist, Geraldine Crisci and Associates
- Gerald Hover, INTERPOL Crimes Against Children
- Jill Levenson, Therapist and Associate Professor, Barry University
- Kieran McCartan, UVW, Bristol
- Michael Miner, Professor University of Minnesota
- Daniel Rothman, Psychologist, Forensic Psychological Services
- Joan Tabachnick, President, DSM Consulting

HELP WANTED: THE PATHWAY TO PREVENTION

- **Project 1: Qualitative Interviews** to develop well-grounded understanding of the needs of youth attracted to children.
- **Project 2: Intervention & Outreach Materials** designed to destigmatize asking for help and providing help.
- **Project 3: Initial Evaluation and Feasibility Study** to pilot the intervention.
- **Project 4: Randomized Clinical Trial** to rigorously evaluate intervention efficacy.

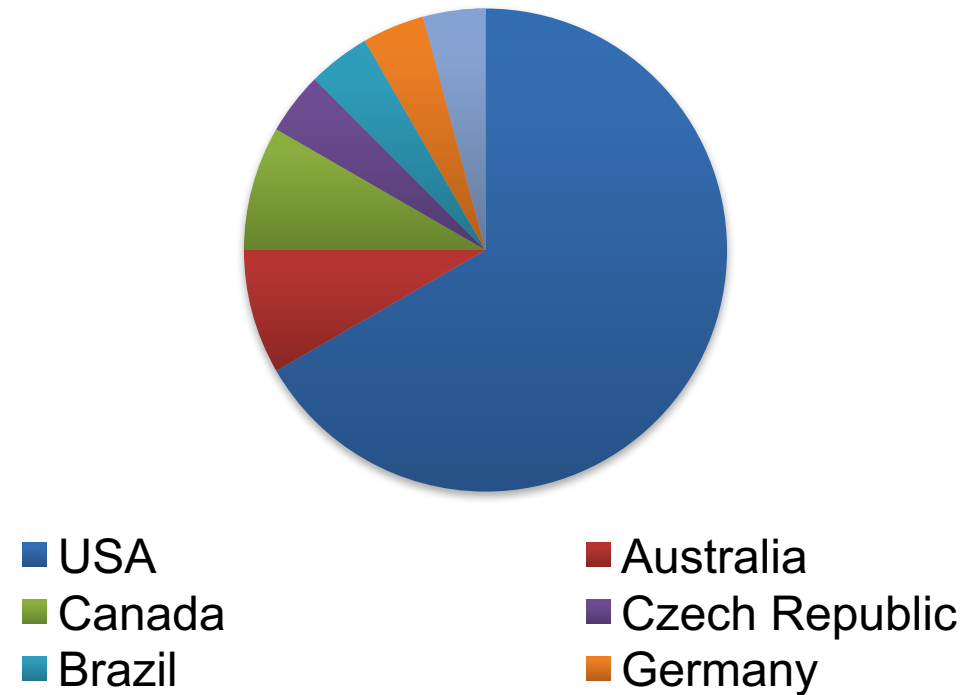
THE HELP WANTED PROJECT: PHASE 1

- September 2015 to July 2016 we conducted qualitative interviews with 30 young adults between the ages of 18 and 30 who identified as having a sexual attraction to prepubescent children.
- Participants were recruited through previous contacts, Virtuous Pedophiles, and social media.
- Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using Dedoose software.

STUDY PARTICIPANTS

- 14% exclusively attracted to prepubescent children (n=4)
- 93% male (n=26)
- 93% White (n=26)

Country of Residence



DEVELOPING AN ATTRACTION TO CHILDREN

- Age of awareness: 10-14
- A “slow” realization
- Varied reactions to acknowledging attraction
- Focused on trying to understand their new identity

THEMES ASSOCIATED WITH HAVING AN ATTRACTION TO CHILDREN:

- Social isolation and loneliness
- Shame
- Hopelessness
- Confronting the “monster” label
- Suicide

“There's nobody to talk to about that for a teenager. You can't tell your parents. You can't tell your teacher, your community...There's just nobody out there. There's no support for them.”

THEMES RELATING TO DISCLOSURE:

- Disclosure during adolescence wasn't common
- Most waited until young adulthood
- Reasons for disclosing:
 - Fear of “losing it”
 - Wanted to receive or maintain acceptance

“Actually the first time I was really going to tell my mother I was about to buy a handgun. I was ready to basically die at that point if she didn't take it well. I had a total mental breakdown. I came out to about 20 people that I know through the internet that I'd known for 5 or 6 years, since I was a teenager. They took it really, really well and probably saved my life.”

RISK FACTORS FOR ACTING ON ATTRACTION

- Lack of empathy (not often stated explicitly, but implicit comments like, “I was never at risk of offending, I didn’t want to hurt anyone.”)
- Social isolation - may lead to accessing pro-contact communities
- Lack of understanding the harm to children
- Adolescence: hormones high/impulse control low
- Mixed views on whether 1-on-1 time with a child is a risk factor

RISK FACTORS FOR ACTING ON ATTRACTION

“I would say that one of the greatest negative factors that I've seen is the - because the attraction is so - I want to say ostracized, but it's forced underground, it leads to people who have the attraction, going and getting into echo chambers with others who feel the same way, which does not lead to healthy points of view, or behavior.”

“The internet has been particularly harmful like that. ...Forcing minor attracted persons underground and them not having opportunities in the real world to have people understand, or ... help them manage things, means that they do find these underlying communities of others like them, some of whom... are not going to have instructive advice on how to deal with things and will only make things worse for everyone else.”

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARENTS

- Backgrounds and experiences with parents varied
- Disclosing attraction to parents is important but is a challenge even with supportive parents
- Consistent themes highlighted the importance of parental:
 - Support
 - Acceptance
 - Openness
 - Awareness
 - Non-judgmental

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARENTS

“I think a parent should bear in mind that the main factor is it's very scary. It's the unspeakable for the child. I'm a very strong person like I mentioned, not everybody is in my kind of situation, it's very scary...

For parents I think they have to reinforce all the time that they're not going to judge them, they just want the best, that kind of thing. That's all I needed, a calm person to talk to. I needed to be massively reassured that they're still there for me. That they're not going to disown me, that kind of thing. I think parents should just bear in mind that it's a massive, massive, massive thing that people have probably been hiding for about 2-3 years trying to deal with it.”

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THERAPISTS

- Reduce barriers to therapy:
 - Need for trained therapists
 - Access to therapists
 - Cost
 - Confidentiality
- Structure therapy around wellness, not crime prevention
- Avoid assuming that sexual abuse is inevitable

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THERAPY

“Thankfully, there was a therapist available specifically for ... They call it children and young adults engaging in sexual harmful behavior. That's what the therapeutic intervention was for, it was very specific so they knew what was what as soon as you walked through the door. They knew what I was going to tell them. That made it very easy....”

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ONLINE COMMUNITIES

- Online communities for adolescents should:
 - Be easily accessible
 - Be educational
 - Be free of judgmental language
 - Include role models and peer support

“Online resources, I've become very involved in them...I've been on there many, many times in situations where I'm feeling a bit upset...it's massively beneficial because there's so many different people on there. We all have the core kind of attraction to children but there's a lot of first hand advice. That might work for you and this may work for you, try it all. That kind of thing is very, very helpful...”

SUMMARY

- Recognition of attraction occurs in adolescence
- Difficulty in dealing with the meaning of their attraction, not just in keeping oneself from acting on attraction
- Lack and need for resources for adolescents
- Online community support is very important

THE HELP WANTED PROJECT

- Our qualitative study served as the foundation to the remaining project phases
- Using the knowledge gained from these interviews, our team set to identify our initial areas of focus
- Once we settled the focus areas, we assigned them to modules that would form the basis of our resource

INITIAL HELP WANTED MODULES

1. Provide information about CSA and why sex with children is harmful
2. Disclosure and safety skills
3. Practical advice for self management and coping techniques
4. Self Identity and developing positive narratives
5. Skill building for healthy sexuality
6. Providing links to treatment services and other resources

PHASE 2: INTERVENTION DEVELOPMENT



- 3CI designs/creates software applications that provide interactive online training & practice experiences
- Instructional modules consist of interwoven segments of:
 1. **Tell Me:** Didactic instructional video
 2. **Show Me:** Video interview and role play
 3. **Let Me Try:** Embedded interactive self-assessments, virtual simulations and self-reflections with feedback
- Each module will provide a 10-12 min learning experience with no more than 3-5 min of didactic content

PRIMARY USERS: ADOLESCENTS WITH UNWANTED SEXUAL ATTRACTION TO CHILDREN

- “Sean” is a 16 year old boy from Akron, OH, who has recognized a sexual attraction to girls between the ages of 7 and 10. Sean first noted his attraction to young girls when he was 12, but didn’t really think too much about it. Over the last four years, his attraction has not changed. He does not feel attracted to peers, older teens, or adults and he has grown increasingly concerned about this attraction. He has not disclosed his attraction to anyone.
- In the past year, he has started to feel depressed. He has shut off most contact with friends, and tends to stay at home most evenings and weekends. Sean is technologically savvy, but spends most of his “screen time” on his iPhone, iPad, or Xbox. Sean wants help, but is concerned that telling someone that he is attracted to children will get him arrested, so he is hesitant to share any personal identifiers.

WHO ELSE IS THIS RESOURCE FOR?

- In addition to adolescents who are attracted to children, we envision this site as a resource for parents/families of adolescents with a sexual interest in children, as well as a resource for treatment providers.
- We also recognize that “adolescents” might include emerging adults, perhaps up to age 25 or so.
- Future plans for the site include modules specific to these groups. However, in its initial version, our focus is primarily on adolescents. Still, we imagine the general content directed toward adolescents will be useful to anyone who accesses the site.

WHAT DO WE WANT THESE USERS TO LEARN/TAKE AWAY FROM THE SITE?

- We want this site to accomplish two key tasks:
 1. to serve as a prevention intervention for individuals at risk of engaging in CSA
 2. to be a positive, affirming resource that can help our users live healthy, safe, and happy lives.
- We want our users to develop a positive self narrative that runs counter to the “monster” frame they often hear about people who have sexually offended.
- We want them to have accurate, appropriate information about sexual health and consent.

I don't want
to hurt
anyone

Am I a
monster?

I wish I
was dead

Could I go to
jail just for
looking for
help?

I'm not a
bad guy

I hate
myself

No one will
help me



I found the
help I
needed

I've got
this!

My
parents
love me

My
attractions
don't define
me

I am a
good
person

The future
looks good

I will never
hurt a child



CONCLUSION

HOW DO WE ACHIEVE A PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH TO CSA PREVENTION?



NEXT STEPS

- In order to prevent CSA from happening in the first place, we need to:
 - convince the public that CSA is preventable
 - convince policymakers to support and resource the development, evaluation and dissemination of effective CSA prevention models
- These goals are achievable!
- How might you promote a public health response to CSA?

THANK YOU!

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