

"Body self" in the shadow of childhood sexual abuse: The long-term implications of sexual abuse for male and female adult survivors

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Keywords: Childhood sexual abuse, Objectified body consciousness, Disrupted body boundaries, Body shame, Discomfort in close proximity to others.

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Abstract

Childhood sexual abuse (CSA) may have long-term negative outcomes for survivors' body representations, manifested by both body shame and discomfort when in close proximity to others. The first manifestation results from the internalization of outside devaluing voices toward one's body, and the second derives from difficulties in demarcating one's "body self" and the sense of invasion the individual may feel. In this study we examined a model in which the relation between CSA and survivors' discomfort when in close proximity to others is mediated by disrupted body boundaries, and the relation between CSA and body shame is mediated by body self-objectification. Since most of these variables have previously been conceptualized and assessed primarily among women, gender differences regarding the proposed model were examined. A battery of self-report questionnaires including the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire, Experience of Shame Scale, Objectified Body Consciousness Scale, The Comfort in Close Physical Proximity Scale and the Sense of Body Boundaries Survey were filled out by 843 college/university students. Female participants reported higher levels of CSA, self-objectification, disrupted body boundaries, body shame and discomfort in close proximity to others. Structural equation modeling (SEM) analyses indicated that in both genders, disrupted body boundaries mediated the relations between CSA and an individual's discomfort when in close proximity to others, as well as between CSA and body shame. The findings of this study point to the importance – in the therapy and therapeutic relationships of CSA survivors – of emphasizing the body's significance.

Extra-familial child Sexual Abuse with multiple victims in small communities

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The term Extra-familial child Sexual Abuse (ESA) refers to child sexual abuse by perpetrators outside of the family. Although ESA is the most prevalent form of child sexual abuse, the issue has received very little research and clinical attention. Incidences of child sexual abuse with multiple victims which occurs in small communities are a form of ESA, which takes place in a social environment with a unique characteristic. These characteristics include a sense of trust and confidence of members of the community; Personal acquaintance between the perpetrators and the victims, as well as between their families and other members of the community, and more. Understanding these unique characteristics is essential for understanding the processes that shaped the dynamic of the ESA, and later on coping with it. The lecture will discuss aspects of ESA with multiple victims which occur in small communities that arose during clinical intervention research among parents of child victims these incidences and it will present examples of case studies from four small communities where ESA with multiple victims occurred.

Keywords: Extra-familial child Sexual Abuse; multiple victims; small communities

Whose Trial is it anyway?
The Perspectives of Young Victims of Sexual Assault regarding the Criminal
Process

Keywords: Childhood victimization, Therapeutic jurisprudence, Crime victims, Qualitative research, criminal process

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The continuing growth in reported child sexual abuse cases has highlighted the inherent tension between the interests of victimized children and those relating to the criminal justice process. While popular thinking assumes that children's interests are for a swift trial (ideally, without their active involvement) leading to a conviction and a significant penalty for the perpetrator, very little is known about the way these youths actually perceive their participation in the criminal process.

The scant knowledge about victimized children revolves around their testimony, is typically concerned with their reliability as witnesses and does not include the child's subjective narrative and meanings. In this sense, the focus and methods of most studies are similar to the inherent problem within the criminal process, namely the reduction of the victim's voice and his subjective experience.

Therapeutic jurisprudence (TJ) sees the law as a social force that produces therapeutic and anti-therapeutic outcomes that should be explored. The current study uses this framework to examine the experiences of young victims of sexual abuse involved in criminal trials against their abusers.

The participants, youths aged 14-21, raise important insights drawn from in-depth interviews about their status in the criminal process and the therapeutic and anti-

therapeutic elements in it. A complex picture emerges that includes both hope and despair, a search for control, loneliness and support networks.

The presentation will present these themes and their contribution to our understanding of the ways that victimized youth experience the criminal process. Practical and theoretical conclusions will be discussed.

The Association between Interviewer's Support and the Quality of Forensic Statements

Made by Reluctant Children about Intra-Familial Abuse

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Abstract

Children asked to report intra-familial abuse when forensically interviewed often exhibit reluctance and produce partial statements due to emotional inhibitions such as guilt feelings or fear of incriminating loved perpetrators. Strikingly, interviewers were found to be typically non-supportive rather than supportive when encountering reluctance, thus leading to poor interview outcomes. A revision of the NICHD investigative interview protocol (RP) which emphasizes supportive interviewing yielded children's reduced reluctance and enhanced cooperation only in the pre-substantive part of the interview, while an effect during the substantive part, was not examined yet.

In this study, support provided while eliciting abuse-related information was hypothesized to correlate with reduced reluctance and reduced reluctance, in turn, was expected to mediate support's effects on children's informativeness and coherence. The sample included 200 RP interviews made by official child interviewers with Israeli children aged 5-13, who made allegations of intra-familial physical abuse. Interviews were coded to identify children's reluctance (omission, resistance and denial), informativeness and coherence indices, and interviewers' supportive interventions. A Generalized Mixed Model analysis was carried out using R software. The hypotheses were systematically established, first confirming that support was followed by decreased reluctance, and then that support's association to enhanced production was mediated by decreased reluctance.

The findings highlight the reversibility of reluctance effect on children's substantive production and the beneficial effects of support in facilitating positive effects. Confirming that support's effects is mediated by reluctance decrease, an indirect mechanism of support is suggested.