

Sexual Abuse: The Challenge of Prevention

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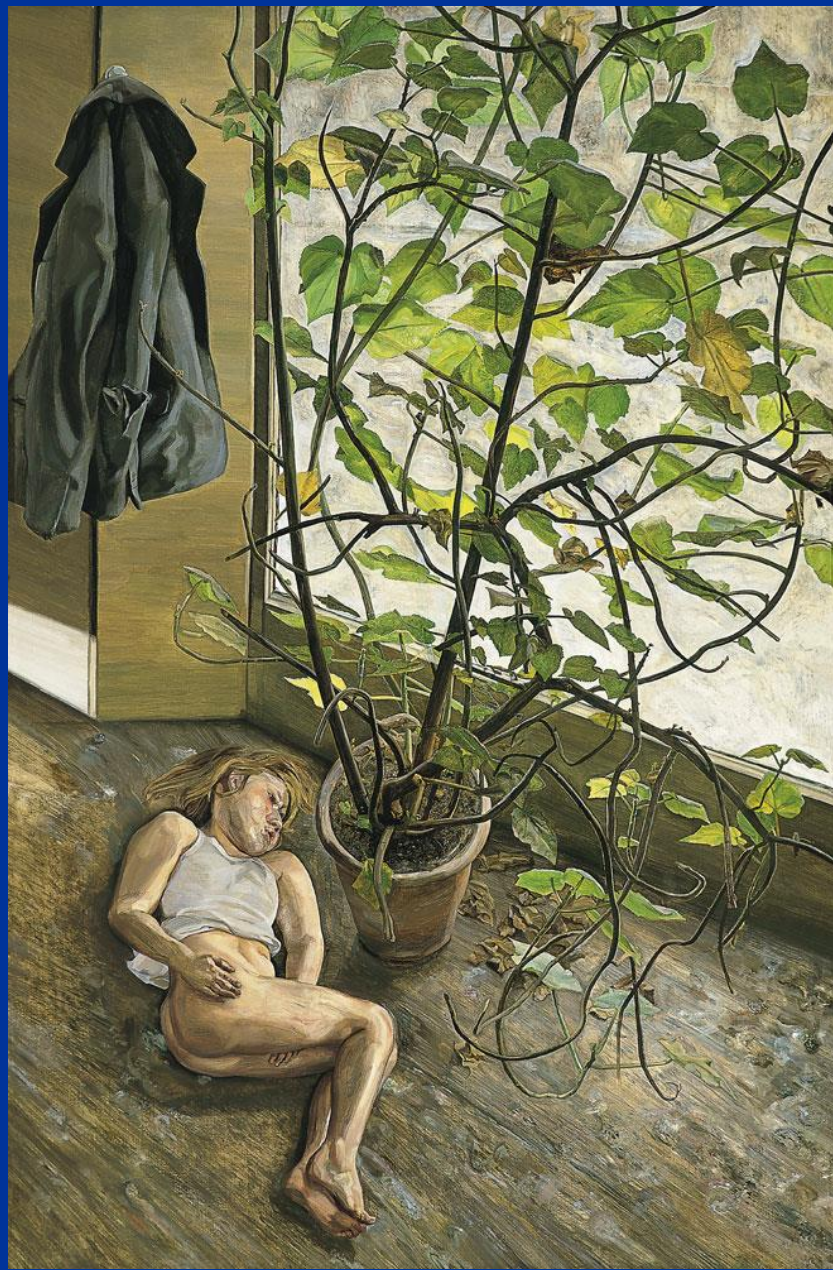
Crimes against Children Research Center

University of New Hampshire

Hebrew University Conference

22 May 2013

Jerusalem

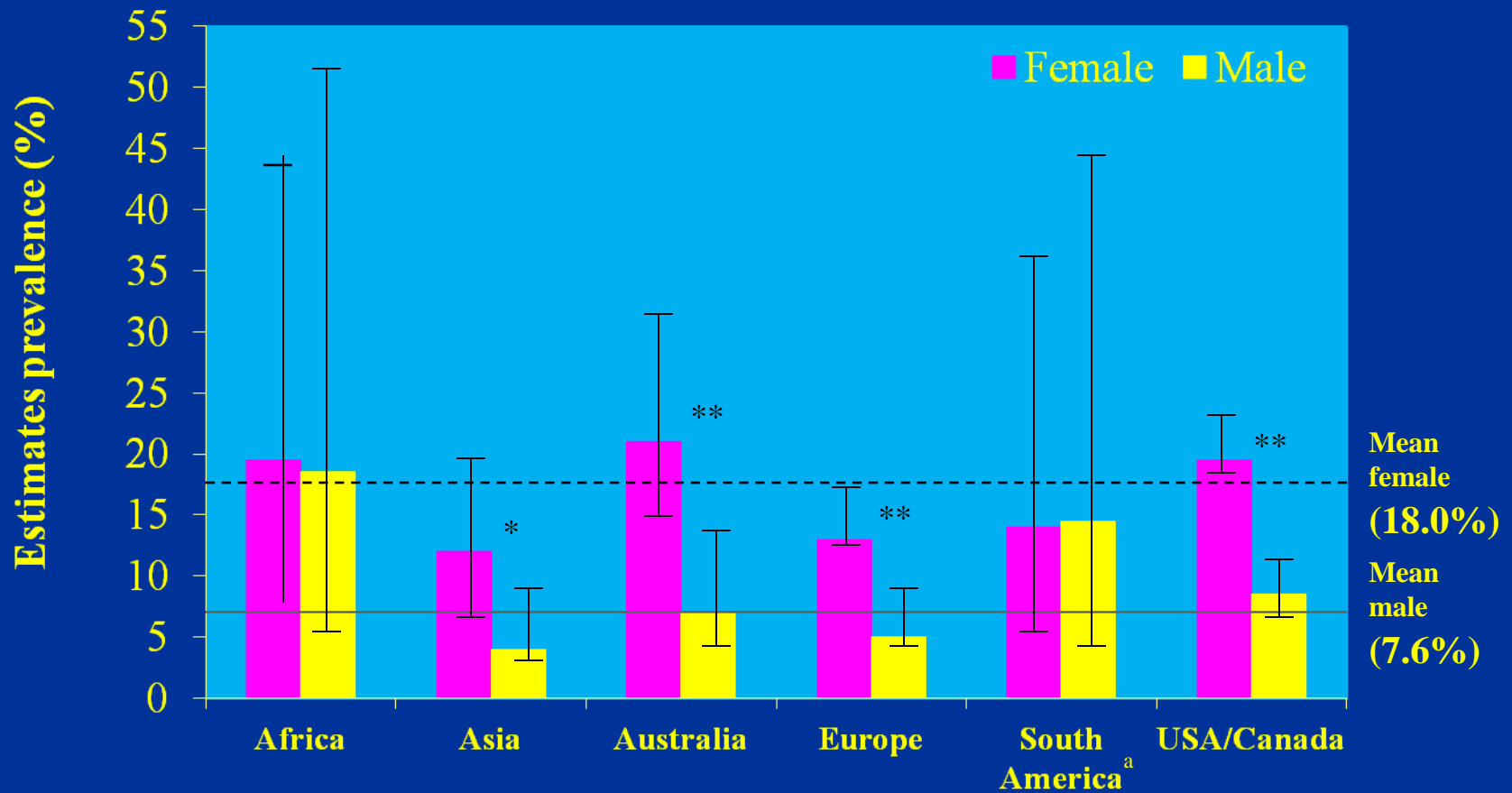


Lucian Freud *Large Interior. Paddington* 1968 Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid

International Prevalence

- ✓ Sexual abuse occurs world wide
- ✓ Rates do vary
- ✓ But it is the problem that has been identified as affecting a considerable number of children in every context where it has been studied

International Prevalence CSA from 331 Self-Report Studies



Source: Stoltenborgh et al (2011). A Global Perspective on CSA: Meta-Analysis of Prevalence Around the World. *Child Maltreatment*, 16(2): 79-101.

Age distribution of victims of sexual assault

Rate per 1,000 victims

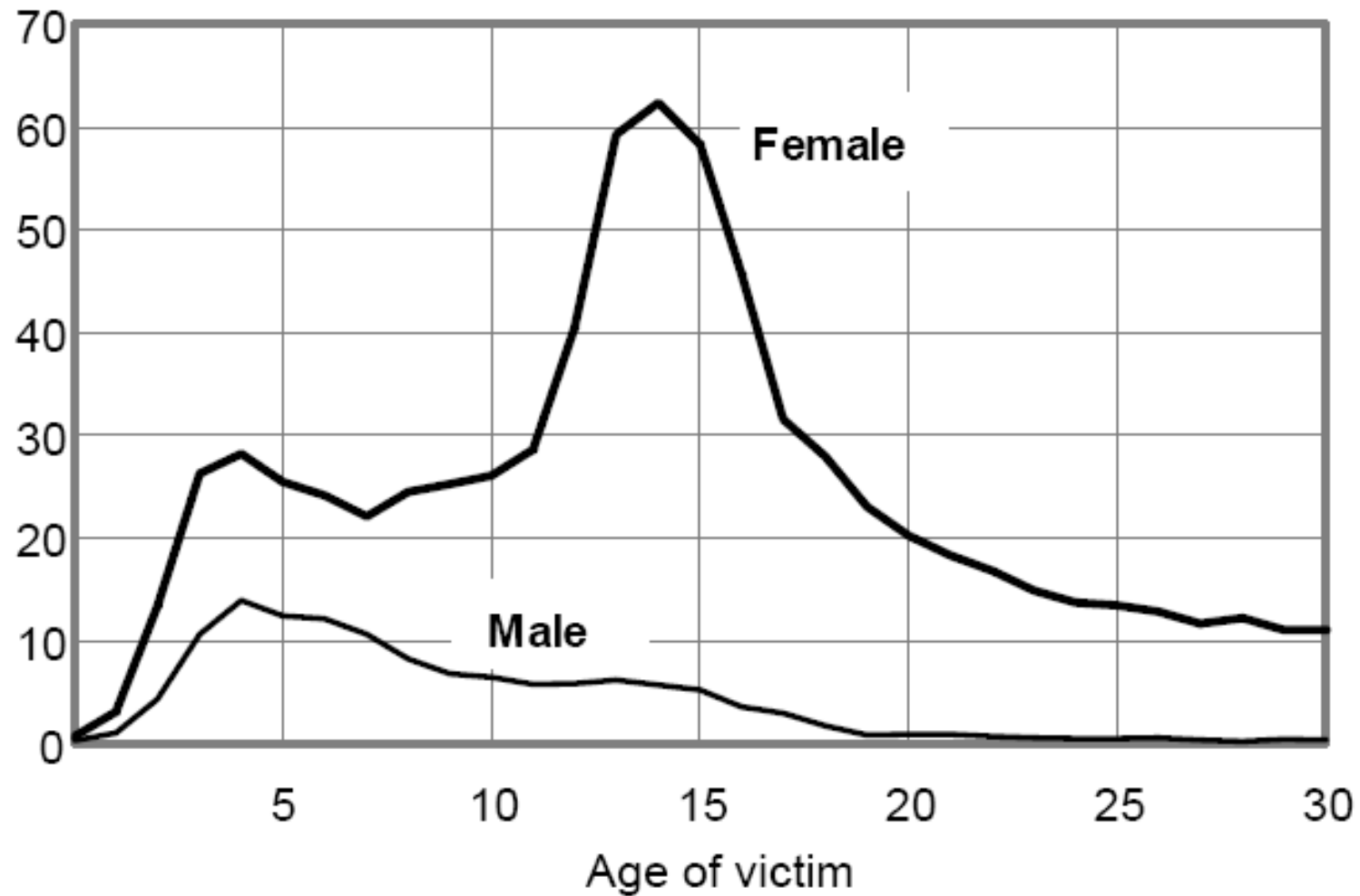


Source:

Snyder, H. (2000). Sexual assault of young children as reported to law enforcement: Victim, incident, and offender characteristics. *Bureau of Justice Statistics Statistical Report – NCJ182990*, Figure 1. Washington, DC. <http://bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/saycrle.pdf>

Age distribution of sexual assault victims, by gender

Rate per 1,000 victims



Source:

Snyder, H. (2000). Sexual assault of young children as reported to law enforcement: Victim, incident, and offender characteristics. *Bureau of Justice Statistics Statistical Report – NCJ182990*, Figure 4. Washington, DC. <http://bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/saycrle.pdf>

Perpetrators

- ✓ Men much more than women
 - ✓ Women offenders 5%
- ✓ Other youth as well as adults
 - ✓ 37% of cases coming to police attention
 - ✓ 75% of cases in self-report surveys
- ✓ Family 25%, acquaintances 60% and strangers 15%
 - ✓ family comprises 60-80% of CPS cases
 - ✓ family less disclosed

Perpetrators

- ✓ Young victims
 - ✓ More family perpetrators
 - ✓ Not more adult perpetrators

Diversity of Dynamics

- ✓ Intra-family sexual abuse
- ✓ Neighborhood, social network
- ✓ Adult leader/teacher/mentor/authority
- ✓ Older youth victimizing younger child
- ✓ Peers
- ✓ Commercial sexual exploitation
- ✓ Statutory victim/compliant victim
- ✓ ??? Internet perpetrator ???

Diversity of Dynamics

- ✓ Intra-family sexual abuse
 - ✓ Includes fathers, step-fathers, brothers, uncles, grandfathers
 - ✓ Step-fathers, step-families higher risk
 - ✓ Earlier onset, longer duration
 - ✓ Can involve multiple victims
 - ✓ Lower disclosure rate
 - ✓ Lower re-offense rate
 - ✓ Family violence, poor supervision, neglect risks

Diversity of Dynamics

- ✓ Neighborhood, social network
 - ✓ Friends of family
 - ✓ Fathers, brothers of neighbors

Diversity of Dynamics

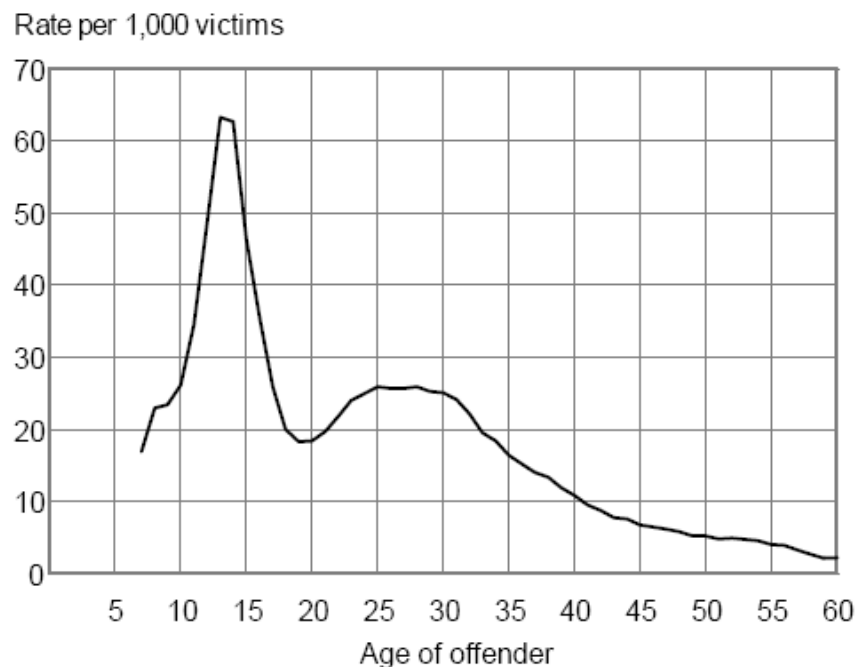
- ✓ Adult leader/teacher/mentor/authority
 - ✓ School personnel probably most frequent
 - ✓ Religious, youth organization, sports
 - ✓ Unique grooming resources
 - ✓ Divisive disclosures
 - ✓ Role of institution

Diversity of Dynamics

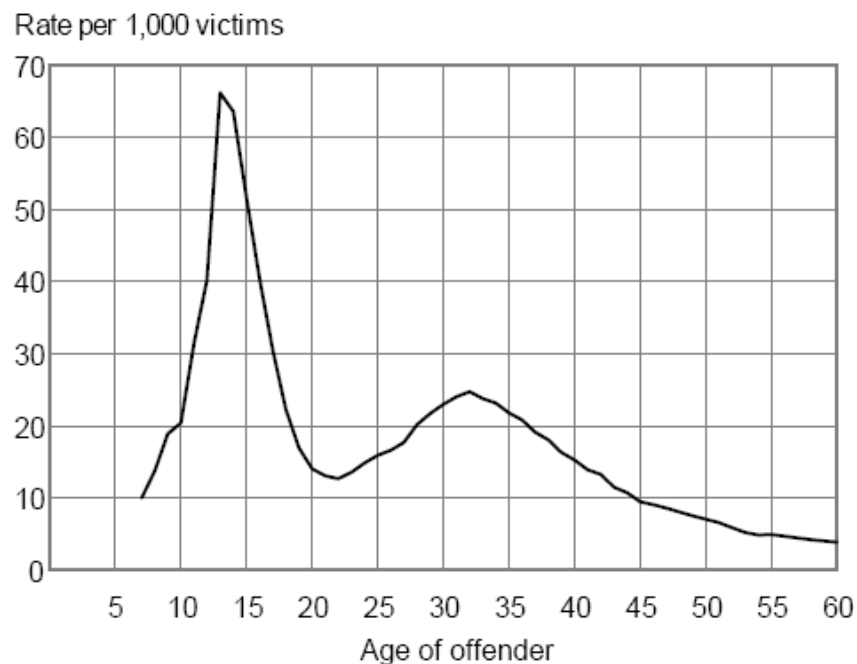
- ✓ Older youth victimizing younger child
 - ✓ Baby sitter, older sibling/cousin, neighbor
 - ✓ Spike at puberty
 - ✓ Female abusers
 - ✓ Media influence?

Age profiles of sexual assault offenders within victim age categories

Victims under age 6



Victims ages 6 through 11



Source:

Snyder, H. (2000). Sexual assault of young children as reported to law enforcement: Victim, incident, and offender characteristics. *Bureau of Justice Statistics Statistical Report – NCJ182990*, Figure 7. Washington, DC. <http://bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/saycrle.pdf>

Diversity of Dynamics

✓ Peers

- ✓ Bullying
- ✓ Group assaults
- ✓ Harassment
- ✓ Humiliation motive
- ✓ Peer pressure
- ✓ Dating partners

Diversity of Dynamics

- ✓ Commercial sexual exploitation
 - ✓ Pimp facilitated prostitution
 - ✓ Some involvement of young victims, family facilitated
 - ✓ “trafficked”
 - ✓ image production, including internet solicitation
 - ✓ Risk factors: Abuse and neglect
 - ✓

Diversity of Dynamics

- ✓ Statutory victim/compliant victim
 - ✓ Teens
 - ✓ Female offenders
 - ✓ LGBT vulnerable
 - ✓ Allure of older partners
 - ✓ Offenders 18 – 25 vs 25+

Diversity of Dynamics

- ✓ ??? Internet perpetrator ???
 - ✓ Not clear that Internet perpetrator is distinct from other perpetrators
 - ✓ Majority of internet facilitated CSA involves known not unknown perpetrators
 - ✓ All CSA forms are migrating to electronic communications media because all relationships are
 - ✓ “automobile rapist” “telephone molester”
 - ✓ Non-molesting child porn possessor may be special category

Risk Factors

- ✓ Girls
- ✓ Conditions of family conflict and disruption
- ✓ Conditions of neglect
 - ✓ Inadequate supervision and emotional neediness
- ✓ Other victimization

Important Misconceptions

- ✓ Not all offenders are pedophiles
- ✓ Not all offenders are predatory
- ✓ Enormous diversity of sexual behaviors
- ✓ Cannot profile offenders
- ✓ Most CSA is not violent
- ✓ Victims sometimes protect offenders
- ✓ Disclosure does not always bring benefits for victims

Important Misconceptions

- ✓ Not all offenders are pedophiles
 - ✓ half victims are post-pubescent
 - ✓ one-third of adult offenders who abuse children < 13 are not pedophiles
 - ✓ one-third of offenders are other youth ≠ pedophile
- ✓ Not all offenders are predatory
- ✓ Implication: cannot easily identify on basis of interests, sexual orientation, polygraphy, motives, or screening

Important Misconceptions

- ✓ Most offenders do NOT have offense history
 - ✓ Only 10% of newly identified offenders have prior record of abuse

Implication: Even perfect background screening and total offender management success will prevent a small quantity of abuse

Important Misconceptions

- ✓ Cannot profile offenders
- ✓ Higher educated and better social skills than typical criminal population
- ✓ Enormous diversity of sexual behaviors
- ✓
- ✓ Implication: common sense instincts about who is “risky”, and what is “benign” are often misleading. Better to train about behaviors than personal characteristics

Important Misconceptions

- ✓ Most offenders do NOT reoffend
 - ✓ 14% adults reoffend within 5 years
 - ✓ 24% after 15 years
 - ✓ Juvenile re-offense rates are <5%
- ✓ Implications: Draconian punishment and expensive management are not needed for all offenders. Relatively good risk assessment tools are available.

Important Misconceptions

- ✓ Youth offenders generally more benign than adult offenders
 - ✓ Generally not a sign of incipient pedophilia
 - ✓ Recidivism rates are considerably lower
 - ✓ Some youth appear to offend due to peer pressure or transient impulses or influences
 - ✓ General delinquency more a problem than sexual deviation

Implication: Youth offending may be easier to prevent and treat. Long-term sanctions and supervision often not necessary.

Important Misconceptions

- ✓ Most CSA is not violent
 - ✓ In a relationship of trust
 - ✓ Grooming, manipulation
 - ✓ Attention , affection, incentives, normalization

Implication: to extent that victims, parents and investigators think “real” CSA is violent and coercive, victims will be blamed and feel guilty

Important Misconceptions

- ✓ Children and youth do not always find the contact unpleasant and sometimes participate voluntarily
- ✓ Victims sometimes protect offenders
- ✓ Implications: “feel yucky” instruction incomplete. Youth feel guilty and blame themselves. Youth lie about what happened. Youth sometimes devastated by revelation

Important Misconceptions

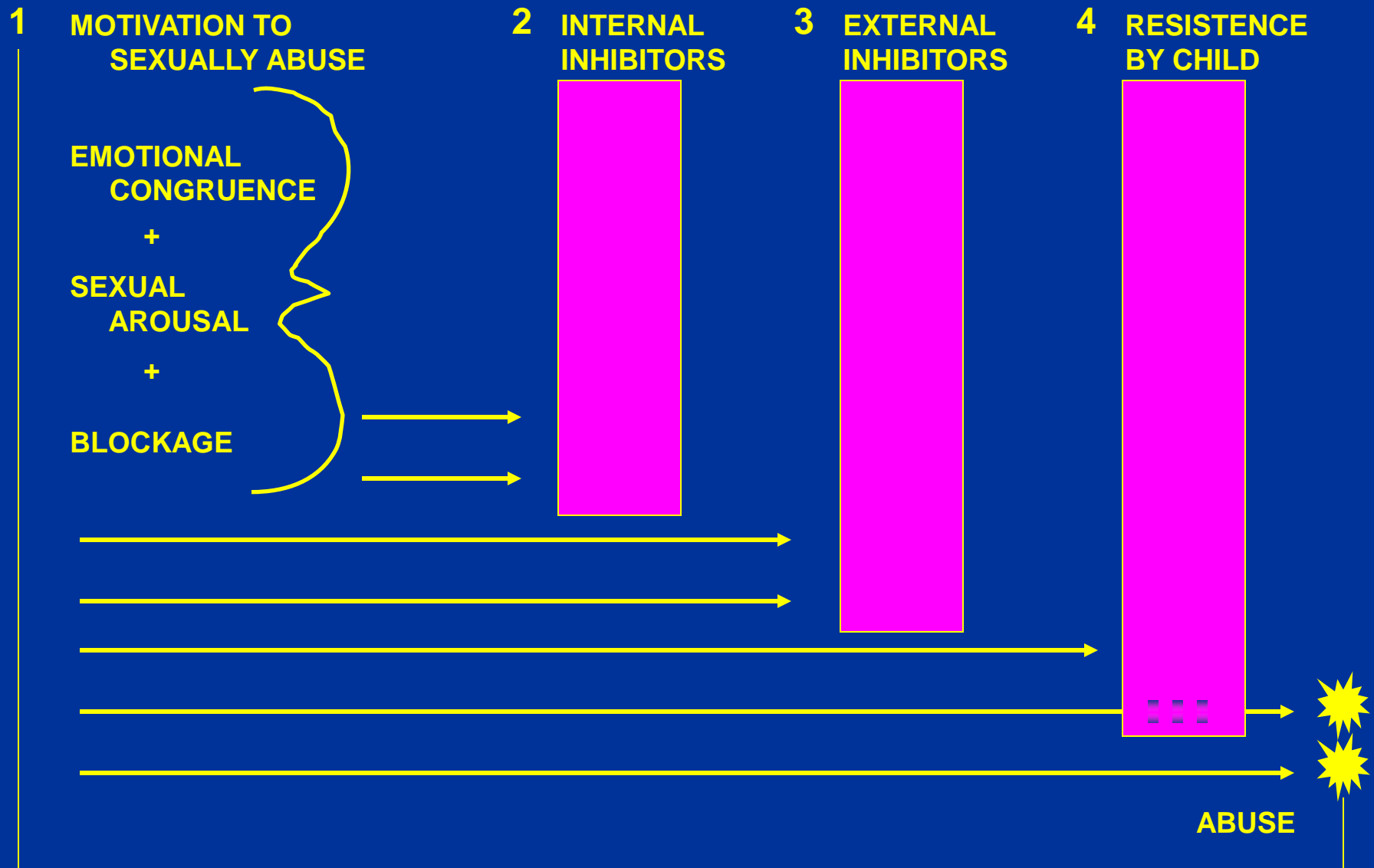
- ✓ Disclosure does not always bring benefits for victims
 - ✓ Negative response from family and friends
 - ✓ Exposure
 - ✓ Secondary harm from investigation
 - ✓ Studies show: no difference in impact between those that disclosed and those that did not
- ✓ Implications: need to improve response. Respect child and family ambivalence about disclosure.

Possible Misconceptions

- ✓ CSA is risk factor for later MH problems, but
- ✓ Not all victims experience long-term distress
 - ✓ Only 20% with current disorder
 - ✓ Disorder rates may be falling
 - ✓ Not all the disorder can be attributed to CSA

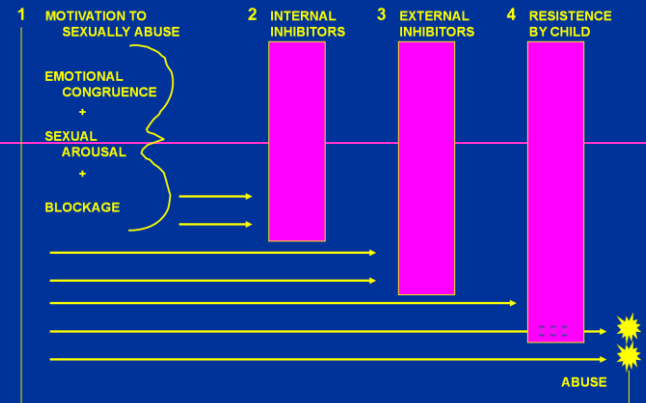
Prevention Strategies

Four Preconditions of Sexual Abuse: A Model



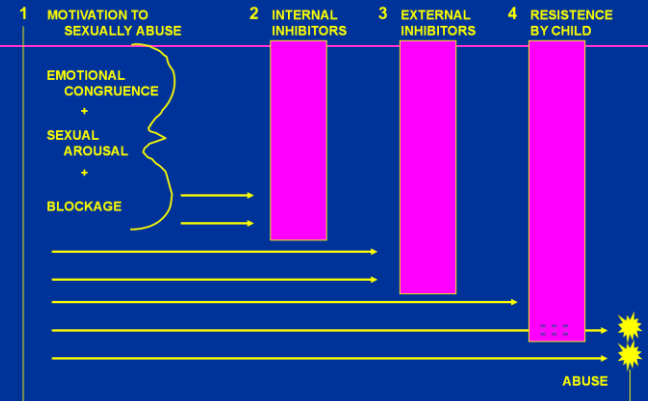
Internal Inhibitors

- ✓ Fear of detection
- ✓ Bright lined perimeters
- ✓ Debunking abuse rationales
- ✓ Self-management skills
- ✓ Alcohol substance treatment
- ✓ Mental health treatment



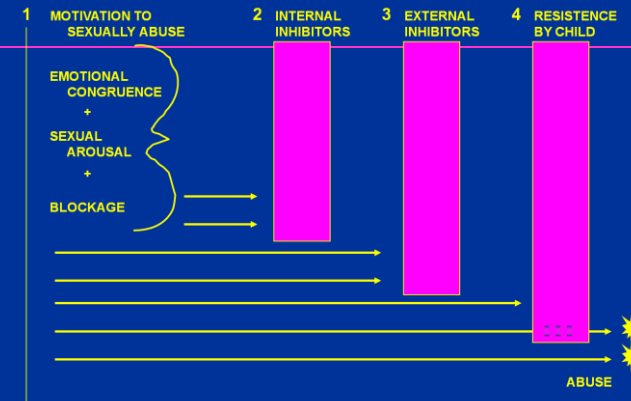
External Inhibitors

- ✓ Parental awareness
- ✓ Youth worker vigilance
- ✓ Environmental structuring
- ✓ Organizational protocols and guidelines about behaviors
- ✓ Incarceration and sex offender management



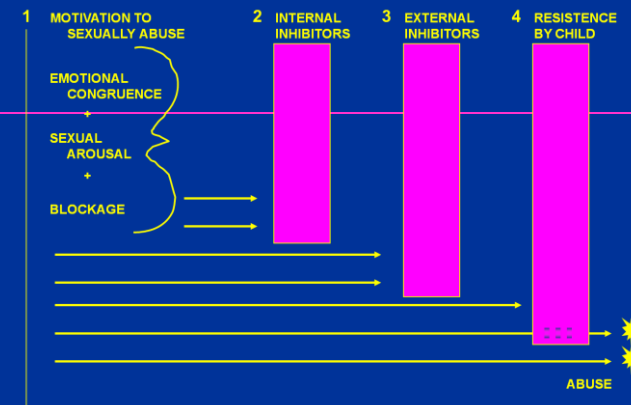
Child Resistance

- ✓ Child and youth awareness of norms
- ✓ Refusal skills
- ✓ Emotional security
- ✓ Positive knowledge about sex
- ✓ Adult support



Reducing motivation

- ✓ Treating victims of abuse
- ✓ Reducing family violence exposure
- ✓ Affection based parenting
- ✓ Providing sexual information
- ✓ Fewer images of sexual exploitation
- ✓ Changing definition of masculinity



Promising Strategies

- ✓ School based education

Logic Model

✓ Education

- Resistance and avoidance training
- Disclosure promotion
- Secondary harm prevention
- Stigma reduction
- Deterrence
- Improved guardianship

School based Education Programs

✓ Virtues

- Proven prevention paradigm
- Considerable research
- Relatively low cost
- Can be combined with harm reduction
- Reaches potential perpetrators

✓ Limitations

- No evidence as yet that it prevents sexual abuse
- Burden on schools and teachers

Considerable Research

- ✓ Children learn concepts
- ✓ Children acquire skills
- ✓ Some sustained learning

Promising Strategies

- ✓ School based education
- ✓ Parent education

Logic Model

✓ Parent education

- ❑ Male involvement in child care
- ❑ How to teach prevention to young children
- ❑ Sibling conflict management
- ❑ Sexual vocabulary skills
- ❑ Reducing punitive and shaming

Promising Strategies

- ✓ School based education
- ✓ Public awareness raising
- ✓ Treatment for victims
- ✓ Treatment for juvenile and adult offenders

Promising Strategies

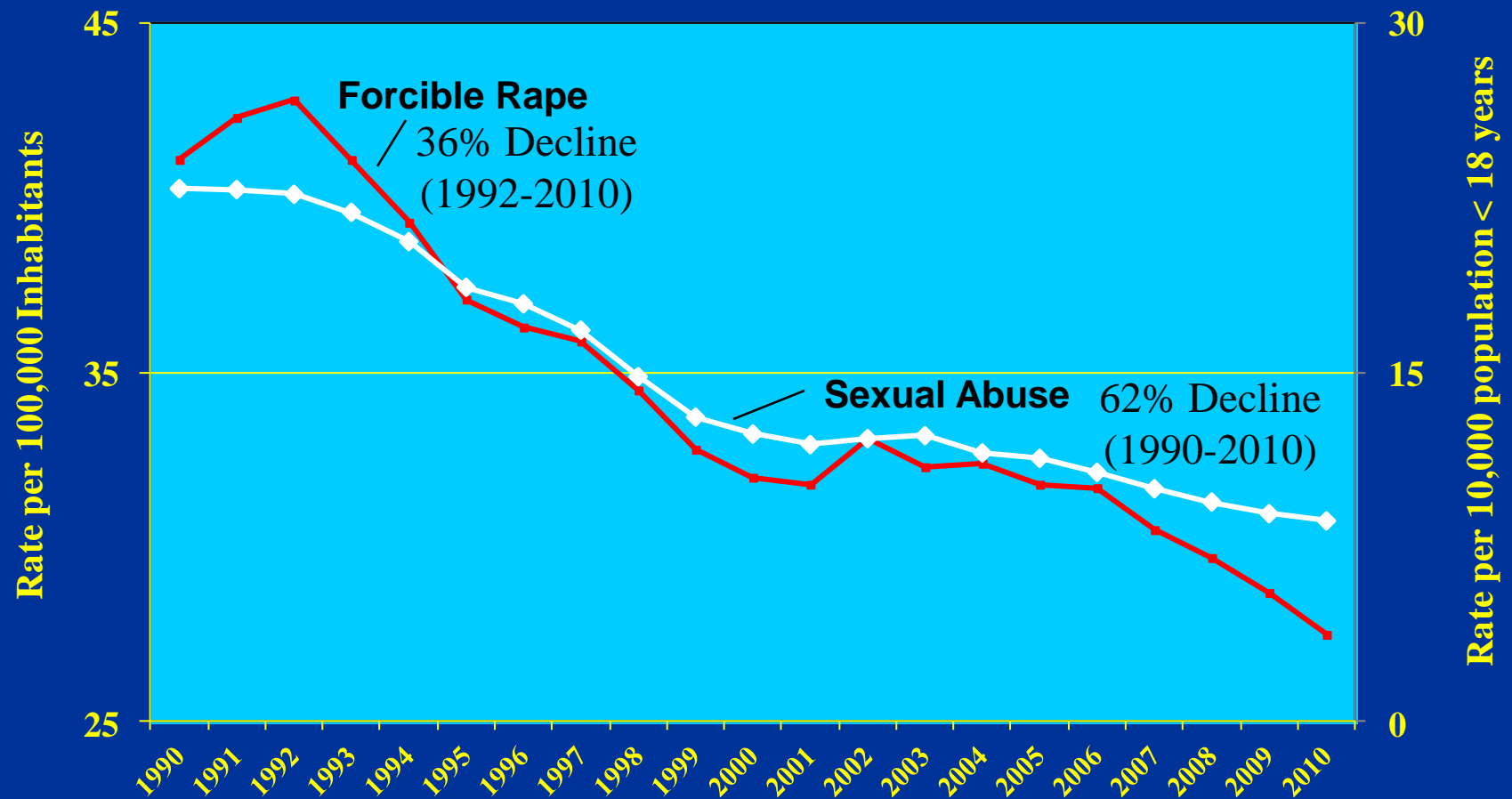
- ✓ School based education
- ✓ Public awareness raising
- ✓ Treatment for victims
- ✓ Treatment for juvenile and adult offenders
- ✓ Aggressive case finding and disclosure promotion
- ✓ Law enforcement training
- ✓ Multi-disciplinary investigation/Children's Advocacy Centers
- ✓ Interviewer training

Logic Model

✓ Law enforcement

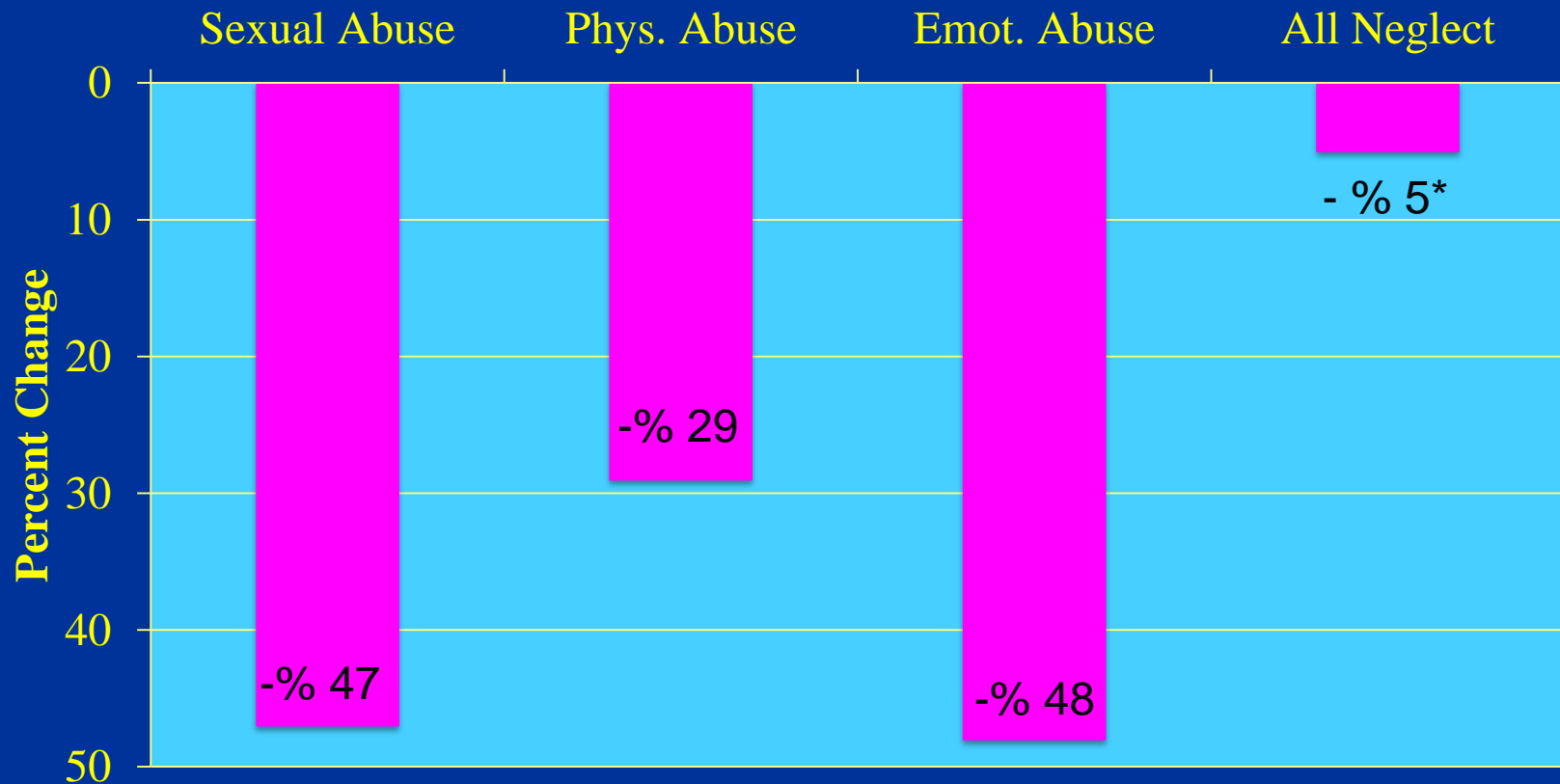
- ❑ Taking offenders out of circulation
- ❑ Reducing chance for continued or renewed offending
- ❑ Deterring offending by conveying likelihood of being caught
- ❑ Reducing secondary trauma to victims

FBI Forcible Rape Rate & NCANDS Sexual Abuse Rate 1990-2010



*Source: FBI, Crime in the United States Reports and NCANDS

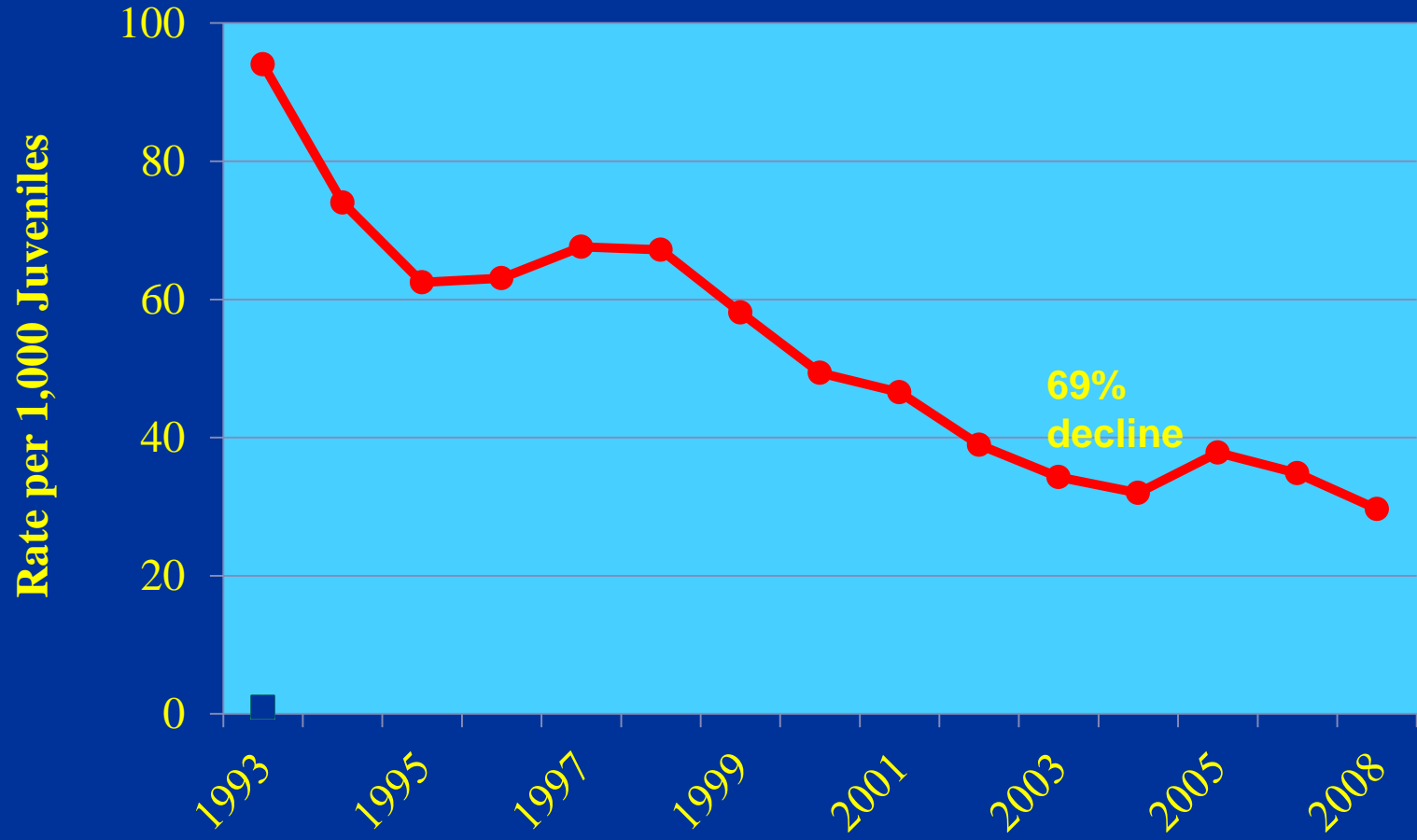
National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS): *1993-2005 (Endangerment Standard)*



*Change in rate not statistically significant

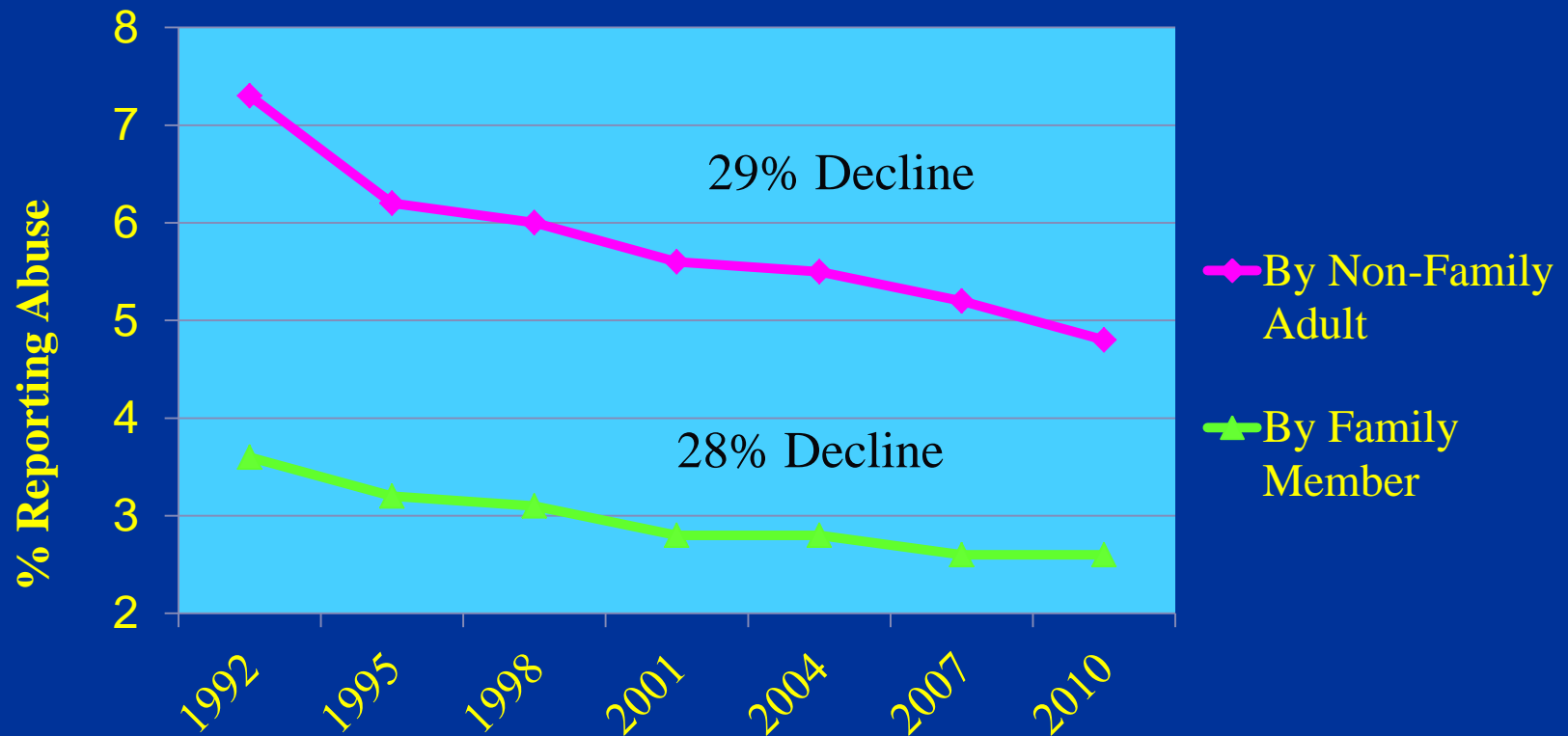
Juvenile Victimization Trends, 1993 – 2008 (NCVS)

Sex Assault



Note: Age 12 – 17 years; 3 year averages except 2008 which is a 2 year average. 2006 data excluded.

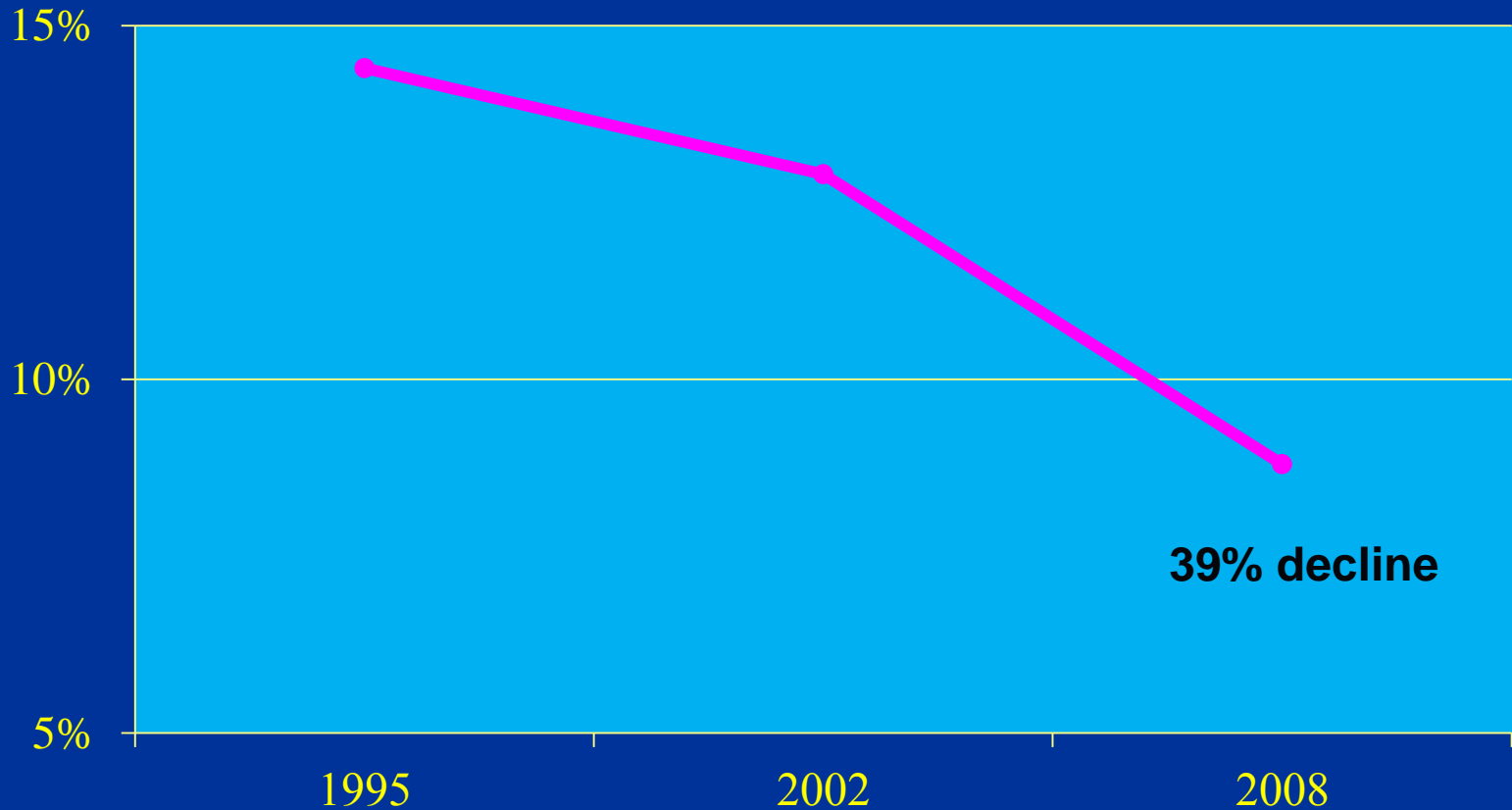
Juvenile Sexual Abuse Trends in Minnesota (1992 – 2010)



Note: respondents are 6th, 9th, and 12th grade students enrolled in public schools in selected Minnesota school districts.
Source: Minnesota Student Survey, 1992-2010

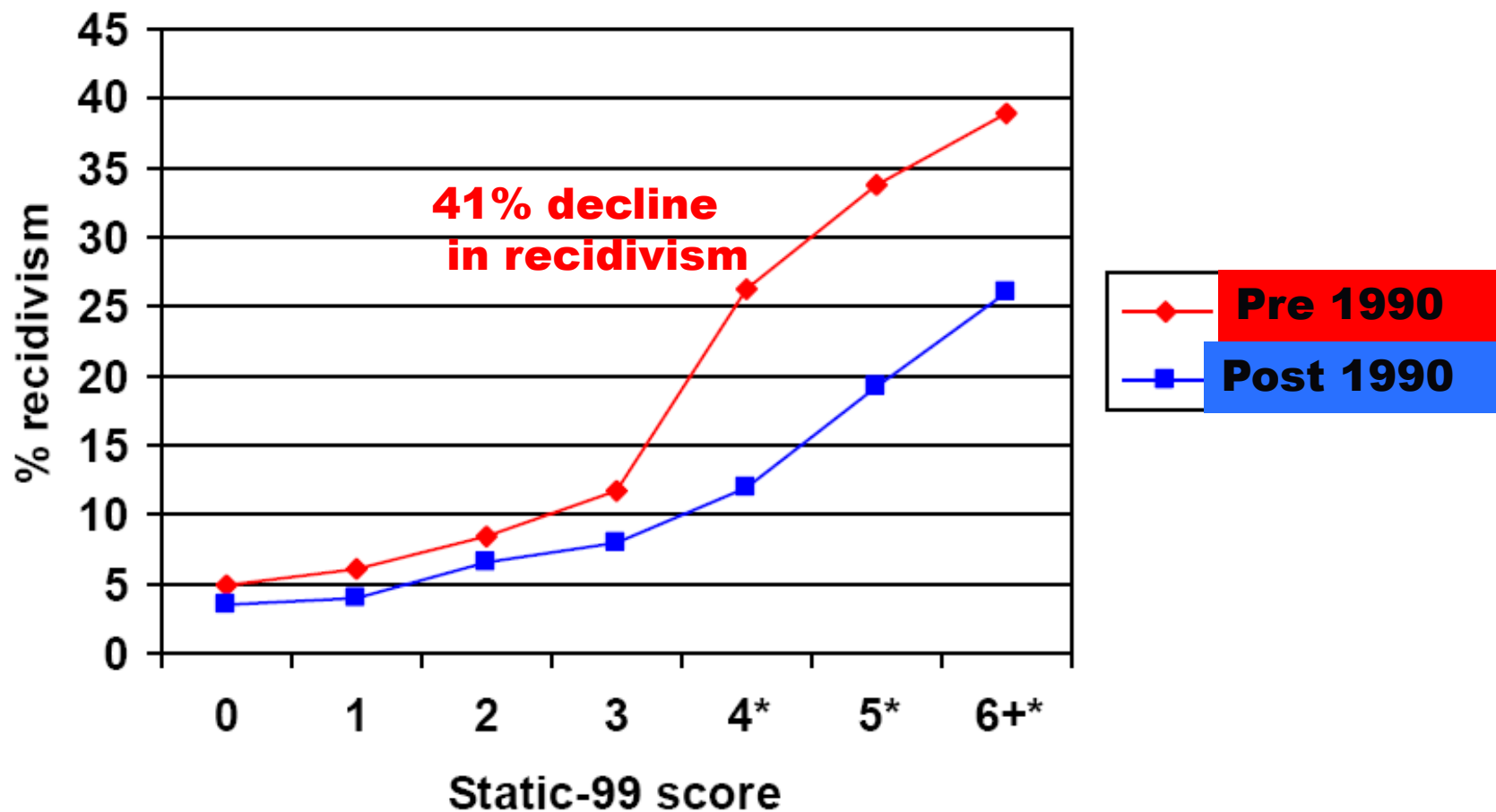
Trend in Statutory Rape

Percentage of Females, Ages 15-24, Whose First Sexual Intercourse Occurred at Age 15 or Younger with an Individual 3+ Years Older



Sources: National Survey of Family Growth, analyzed by Child Trends

Figure 1: Five-year sexual recidivism rates for Static-99 based on survival analysis



Possible Lessons

- ✓ Big improvements possible and quickly
- ✓ Be encouraged by what we have done
- ✓ Importance of epidemiology (e.g., counting)
- ✓ Be careful what we abandon

Resources

Finkelhor, D.(2009). The Prevention of Childhood Sexual Abuse. *The Future of Children*, 19(2): 169-194.

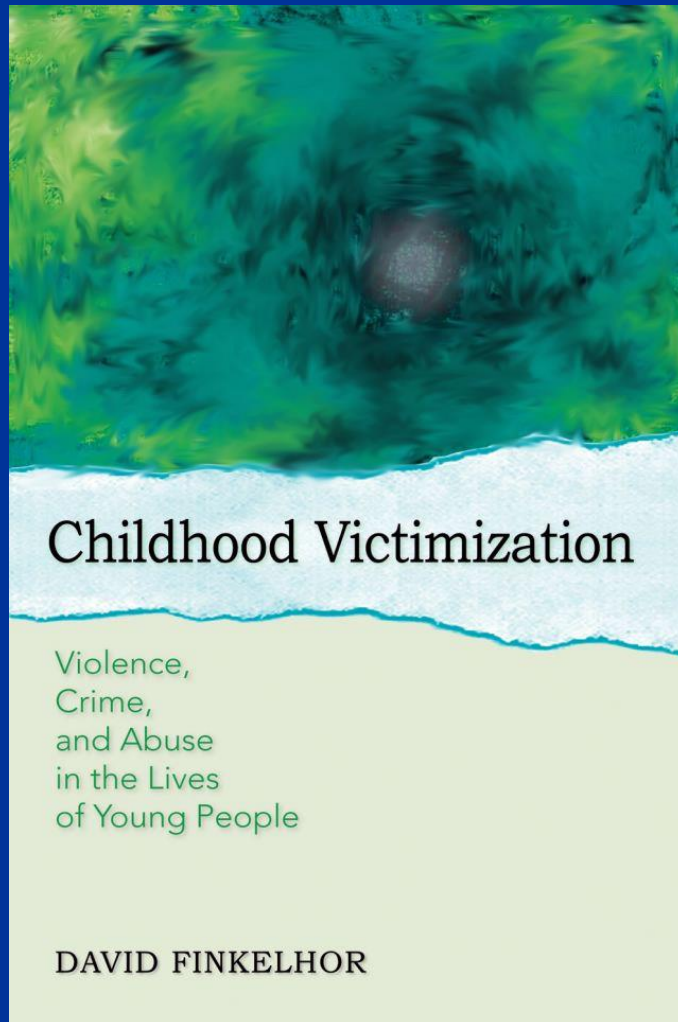
Finkelhor, D. & Jones, L.M. (2006). Why have child maltreatment and child victimization declined? *Journal of Social Issues*, 62(4): 685-716.

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Daniel Schneider Child Welfare Book of the Year Award