

A U.S.-based firm may or may not use a laundering scam to produce child pornography but may build up its inventory and send it to a “contact” abroad. Catalogs then are sent to U.S. customers. The customer sends the order to the overseas agent, who deposits the money and fills the order. This kind of laundering system protects the identity of the firm and makes it difficult for law-enforcement officials to track down the production operation.

The laundering process is costly, but so are penalties for the prosecuted offender. The tax advantages of foreign banking are also a consideration.

Laundering is a deceptive but temporarily effective practice. However, as in any firm that deals with such large groups of employees and customers, eventually complaints arise. And it takes only one disgruntled employee to blow the whistle on an operation. So, mobility and transiency are keys to staying in the child-pornography business.

LEGAL DIFFICULTIES

Another reason why child pornography is a hard problem to solve is that it is difficult for prosecuting attorneys to gather evidence against pornographers.

Some of the methods defense attorneys have used include seeking lenient judges, seeking federal-court rulings, and giving a vague charge to a jury.

Pornographers who seek lenient judges shop for the most liberal judge to try the case. Some judges are known for being soft on pornographers. Too, a buildup of cases with lenient judges in one community adds to the difficulty prosecutors have in getting a strict ruling in a nearby community.

Pornographers who have sought federal court rulings on local community issues have often found a more lenient judge to hear the case. Defense lawyers have often tried to confuse the issue by raising the question of First Amendment protection, thus obtaining a new hearing as well as additional time for preparing the case. State courts are fully capable of dealing with the First Amendment issue, but the request for hearing in the higher court prolongs the appeal process.

Judges who have given vague or even incorrect charges to juries have also made child pornography difficult to prosecute. A judge, through misunderstanding or intent, may ask the jury to decide whether the material is obscene, using the standard of whether it “appeals to the prurient interest of the average person.”

Jurors, most of whom see themselves as average persons, recoil with horror or disgust when shown child pornography. But does the material appeal to the prurient (lustful or lewd) interests (longings)? "No, of course not," jurors answer; certainly *they* are not "turned on" by it. Therefore it is not obscene according to the judge's charge. The charge should be, "does it appeal to *a* prurient interest" according to the 1973 Supreme Court decision (*Miller v. California*). The advent of the 1982 Supreme Court decision cracking down on all aspects of child pornography will strengthen local court decisions. Many of the legal obstacles mentioned here will be removed.

Postal Service

The U.S. Postal Service for years has spent much time and effort in the investigation and prosecution of dealers in adult and child pornography. Inspectors enforce several federal laws which prohibit the distribution by mail of obscene material. The 1865 Postal Obscenity Statute is the basic statutory weapon by which the Postal Service tries to restrict the use of the mails for dissemination of child pornography material. The statute provides for criminal penalties of up to five years in prison, a \$5,000 fine, or both, for using the mails to transmit any "obscene, lewd, lascivious, indecent, filthy or vile article, matter, thing, device or substance." The penalties are doubled for recidivists.

However, inspectors depend largely on customer complaints to help locate violators. About 90 percent of the cases begin after a customer who receives unsolicited matter in the mail files a complaint. The Postal Service initiates a few cases by answering ads in sex-related newspapers and magazines.

A problem the Postal Service has had for years is the use of post-office boxes by pornographers and pornography collectors, a use that is prohibited by regulation. This rule, backed up by the basic statute, could be the legal broom for cleaning up the post-office box problem. However, postal authorities say lack of time and personnel prohibit such a move.

Customs Service

The U.S. Customs Service seizes some shipments of pornographic matter entering this country. But, while the volume stopped is large (15,000 items in 1976), it is generally thought that these seizures represent only "the tip of the iceberg."

Like the Postal Service, the Customs Service faces problems in enforcing statutes applicable to child pornography because of the difficulty in establishing the age of the victim and identifying the point of origin.

In hearings in several states and at the federal level, customs officials stated that 60 percent of the seized material included child pornography, and that they believed it to be a rapidly growing import.

The major problem in enforcement of laws against importing child pornography is that no action is taken against the sender or the receiver. The material is destroyed but no charges are filed. Thus, the only penalty is the loss of a shipment, a loss that may be easily absorbed by big-time operators.

FIRST AMENDMENT

Is child pornography covered by the First Amendment? It is a question that has been debated in the courts and in countless articles—from professional journals to junior-high class papers.

The law states: “Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech or of the press.”

Some civil libertarians feel that any restriction of expression violates the First Amendment. On the other hand, reasonable limits on obscenity do not restrict freedom of speech or press; rather, they extend freedom in society as a whole.

Wise laws against child pornography do not inhibit the freedom to express ideas; they restrict profiteering at the expense of child victims by making perpetrators think twice before becoming involved.

With some anguish, the American Civil Liberties Union in 1977 examined the legislative push toward a definitive statute on child pornography and decided it could not support the effort. As strict First-Amendment constitutionalists, ACLU attorneys maintained that freedom of expression extends even to peddlers of this “most repellent” material. Prosecute the producer, the child recruiter, they urged, but what they produce—what is in print—must have the full protection of the Constitution. With the 1982 Supreme Court decision, the ACLU may establish a different viewpoint.

The Constitution has always permitted certain restrictions on speech and the press. For example, there are laws forbidding incitement to violence, libel, slander, partisan campaign speeches by federal civil servants, misleading and fraudulent advertising, the divulgence of mili-

tary secrets, verbal interference with court proceedings and picketing in a context of violence. The Supreme Court has added one more—child pornography.

Chief Justice Burger put it well: “To equate the free and robust exchange of ideas and political debate with the commercial exploitation of obscene material . . . demeans the First Amendment and its high purposes in the historic struggle for freedom” (Christianson, 1981).

PUBLIC DEMAND

Another reason why child pornography is such a difficult problem to solve is the demand for it by child pornography consumers.

Commercial Videotapes

In increasing numbers, stores offer every form of explicit sexual behavior that commercial ingenuity has invented. It is now for sale, rent or trade on videotape cassettes. Although the majority of this material has adults as the topic, some child-related material is available for “special customers.”

“Brown Bag” Child Pornography

An offshoot of this type of commercial pornography is the ability of adults now to make their own movies with video cameras at home. The cost of videotape equipment has decreased while the quality has increased. It has become a boon to the “do-it-at-home” pornographer. There is no way to estimate the traffic in material that has been produced in this way.

Lucrative Business

There is a business law that states: “Demand decrees price.” Because the demand is high for child pornography, because the risks are also high to produce, distribute and purchase it, and because victims are not demanding, the profit margin on child pornography is extremely high.

Production costs for magazines and films are much the same whether the subject matter is pornographic or not. But the retail prices

of pornography, for these other reasons, are much higher than the prices charged for non-pornographic material of the same type. For example, a 200-foot, eight-millimeter film portraying explicit sexual material might cost \$10 to produce but retail for \$50 to \$100 or more. A 50-page, glossy paper, color printed magazine might cost \$6 to produce and sell at \$15 to \$20 a copy. The Los Angeles Police Department estimated sales of child pornographic material in that city in 1977 at a hundred million dollars. As can readily be seen from typical profit-margin figures, the net on such sales is enormous.

Investigators (Martin 1981) reported that one 50-foot homemade reel featuring two youths engaged in hard-core sex was priced at \$50 each and scheduled for mailing to a list of 2,000 waiting customers. The film, seized in an arrest, was produced in one evening, the investigators said.

Some pornography dealers have regarded their success as a triumph for the small-business person. They have had a glimpse of the demand and built a business based on that demand. Stories are told of persons without any previous business experience parlaying \$500 into "a gold mine."

Even conservative estimates clearly show that child pornography is profitable, and growing more so.

Organized-Crime Interests

Such profits are naturally more than a little attractive to that element of society known as "Organized Crime."

There is little question that the total pornographic industry is organized. One entity, Erotic Words and Pictures (known as EWAP), has numerous locations in California and several other states. Various law-enforcement agencies have gathered information indicating existence of interlocking and wide-ranging connections between adult-entertainment businesses around the country.

A Texas special grand jury report (Select Committee on Child Pornography 1978) heard expert testimony that 90 percent of the pornography in the United States appeared to be controlled by a few groups operating with the blessing and cooperation of the national crime syndicate.

Before 1970, pornography dealers were independents, obtaining their merchandise from local wholesalers. The industry at that time was virtually untouched by organized crime. However the high potential for profit eventually proved irresistible; since 1970, retail outlets

have been organized and monopolized by groups with organized crime connections. Film-processing laboratories controlled by crime figures are flourishing. Both local producers and distributors operating nationwide have syndicate connections.

It is typical that ownership and management of the various facets of the industry are held by operators who do not belong directly to organized-crime families. Instead, they are backed and controlled by organized-crime members, who use intimidation and various illegal business practices to force the independents to sell to the "organization." The result is that in the last few years the industry has become dominated by organized crime.

It is interesting that organized crime's relatively rapid takeover of the pornography industry coincided with the courts' more liberal attitude toward sexual license. (Gates 1977)

Retail owners have admitted that they frequently look to organized-crime elements for distribution and "other assistance," but say they are forced to do so. They contend that the mob influence is there because nobody else wanted to take over organization of the industry. Federal prosecutors have testified, however, that the involvement of the underworld runs deeper than just the distribution end of the business.

A 1976 study on organized crime by a presidential commission found that mobsters "moved in, first, in the distribution of pornography, and then into all aspects of the industry, literature and films of all types and their production, wholesaling and retailing." (Task Force 1976)

In fact, pornography now is organized crime's third largest source of income, surpassed only by gambling and narcotics. In child pornography, production centers seem to be clustered in California, Texas, Illinois, New York, Florida, and, curiously, Arizona. New York is a major distribution center, as is Chicago, and the network of sales outlets covers the nation. (Ayood 1978)

Interest Groups

Another issue that crops up when concerned citizens begin to speak out about the victims of child pornography and sexual exploitation is that of interest groups which promote sexual activity between children and adults.

The Rene Guyon Society

Probably the most well-known of all these groups is the Rene Guyon Society. This radical group bases its philosophy on the writings of Guyon (1933) and a grotesque distortion of the early work of Freud. The Society's slogan is "Sex by year eight or else it's too late." Members contend that children need sex with compassionate adults to reduce violent antagonisms supposedly aroused by societal repression and guilt.

Sexual repression is advanced as the cause of depression, suicide, delinquency, gang warfare, assault, and a host of other social problems. The Society also advocates sexual rights for children including abolition of laws restricting incest and sexual abuse. The Guyon Society, organized since 1964, claims up to 5,000 members primarily parents and psychiatrists (Martin, 1981).

NAMBLA

Another group that promotes sex between adults and children is the North American Man Boy Love Association (NAMBLA). This group believes there should not be any age-of-consent for child sex—the earlier the child has sex, the better. In fact, the association contends that it is a parent's responsibility to make sure a child understands the body's sexual capabilities very early in life.

At a 1981 Boston University conference on the Sexual Exploitation of Children, several NAMBLA members and their legal counsel disrupted the conference to protest that the child molester's side of the story wasn't being told. A group of 12- to 16-year-old boys picketed the meeting, carrying signs that read, "Repeal Child Porno Laws." Proponents said the boys were all well-adjusted children who liked having sex with adults and posing for nude pictures (NAMBLA, 1981).

Four months after the conference, police arrested a college teacher and three other men in connection with a "man-boy" sex ring. Orgies with boys aged eight to 15 were regularly conducted at the Long Island home of one of the members of this national organization.

Police had evidence that on numerous occasions boys were brought to a home where they were introduced to middle-aged men who sodomized and sexually abused them while videotape cameras recorded the action. Some 300 videotapes were seized along with 50 reels of 8-mm film.

The men, all members of NAMBLA, were charged with possession of pornographic materials and endangering the welfare of minors.

The New York District Attorney said that the North American Man-Boy Love Association was founded in Boston in 1978, with the announced purpose of breaking down the barriers of sex taboos between men and boys.

Childhood Sensuality Circle

The Childhood Sensuality Circle, a sex group based in San Diego, California, believes children should begin sex at birth. In fact, the group contends that it “causes a lot of problems not to practice incest” (Cradle of Intimacy, 1981).

Pedophilic Movement

The Pedophilic Movement is led by a small group of liberal, outspoken, militant people who advocate child-adult sex. In some states they have organized lobbying efforts based on the theme “children have the right to control their own bodies” (Cradle of Intimacy, 1981).

Sexologists

Pedophiles and child molesters have picked up on rhetoric and preachings of some sexologists in the United States. In journal articles, interviews and speeches, some sexologists have advocated that very young children should be allowed, and perhaps encouraged, to have a full sex life without interference from parents and the law. Although these professionals have found ways to work their ideas into other less controversial material, the message has been that children are sexual beings who need to develop these skills early in life.

In general, these professional sex experts contend that Freud’s “latency period”—a time of low sex interest from early childhood to puberty—is a myth imposed on society by conservative thinkers. They point out that the body’s sexual response system begins early: infant boys get erections and infant girls’ vaginas lubricate.

One has only to examine the past decade’s work by leading sexologists to learn that prestige, notoriety and the number of lecture invitations tend to increase as they attack the sacred taboos of society. Although they may be adept at challenging long-held beliefs and attitudes, it is doubtful that they are equipped to undo the psychological damage suffered by a child introduced prematurely to sex. Most child-development experts, psychotherapists and many psychiatrists think that if the sexologists had to treat these victims they would quickly change their rhetoric.

Private clubs, camps and "churches"

Perpetrators with economic resources and a measure of community status may organize their own camps, clubs or churches in order to have access to children for their interests and pleasures. Some may infiltrate established youth organizations and adjust regulations to accommodate their own needs and desires.

Cult of Youth Philosophy

In recent years, the media have sold the public the dogma that "younger is better and youth reigns." In the 1960s the community-held belief was, "if you are over 30, you can't be trusted." However, as the years moved up by 10, the age of trust moved down by 10.

Designer jeans, cars, cosmetics and other commodities are being sold by teen-agers. As society accepts advertising's message that youth is beautiful, sexy, desirable, it also accepts advertising's version of child pornography. This makes it easier for child molesters to try to justify their deeds when television and glossy magazines promote a seemingly sympathetic view.

A recent wire-service feature story begins, "The sensuous face that beckons from the fashion magazine is that of a sophisticated, mature woman with wind-swept, honey-blond hair and full, moist red lips. The model is Tamara Jones. The rest is illusion. Tamara is 12 years old. She is the newest—and youngest—entrant in the 'pretty baby' model wars." (Porno Movies 1981)

While Tamara is legally selling products with her prepubescent sexuality, there are much younger children, both boys and girls, illegally selling their sex before the camera in motel rooms, abandoned houses and studios.

PUBLIC ATTITUDES

Ignorance

One of the major reasons child pornography is such a difficult problem to solve is because the public does not know its reality, extent and pervasiveness.

Most people, when asked what they know about child sexual exploitation or child pornography are likely to respond in this vein: "Well, there's nothing like that going on around here, is there?" What the public must come to know and understand is that no children, urban or rural, are exempt from victimization.

Unwilling to Get Involved

Many of the people who realize the seriousness of the subject are unwilling to get involved in doing anything about it. It is easier to not fully understand nor get emotionally involved, easier to look the other way. However, no one concerned about the environment children are living in today, to say nothing of the future, can afford the luxury of not becoming involved.

"Live and Let Live"

Another public attitude that helps soothe a pricking conscience is titled "tolerance." Moral indifference combined with an unwillingness to be involved in the fight against child sexual exploitation can be justified in the admonition that "Americans are tolerant people—they practice a live-and-let-live philosophy."

Often, those most thankful for a tolerant society are the ones caught in a social deviation. However, for the perpetuation of a societal norm, toleration must have a limit, lest society become contaminated and self-destruct. Murder and rape—even speeding—destroy people.

To maintain the moral structure of society, as it emerges through its children, child sexual exploitation must be eradicated. In the long run, child pornography is more damaging than theft. Stealing takes only property; pornography takes away a child's character, destroys self-concept, privacy and worth of the individual.

Conspiracy of Protection Phenomenon

Investigators and researchers report that protection of the perpetrator by the child seems to be the rule, not the exception. Advice to law-enforcement officers is: If you get a confession from a child, be sure to hold him or her in custody until you arrest the perpetrator. In many cases, even when the child wanted out of the relationship, a firm sense of loyalty sent him or her to warn the perpetrator.

There are many reasons why a child conspires to protect the perpetrator: fear, embarrassment, even love. Some children may not want to "kill the goose laying the golden egg."

Fear of Exposure

When parents of sexually exploited children are confronted with their child's involvement, they rarely are willing to file a complaint. They fear social censure, shame and the trauma of subjecting the child and themselves to court questioning. They dread the publicity.

Moreover, children often do not report incidents of sexual abuse to their parents. They may be afraid that their parents will blame them; they may have been threatened by the perpetrator and fear reprisal; or they may feel guilty about any physical pleasure received from the sexual contact.

In a study (Protection of Children . . . 1977) which asked 1,800 college students whether they had been subjected to some form of sexual exploitation as children, almost one-third reported that they had. Of that group, only 50 percent of the females reported it to their parents; only 10 percent of the males told their parents.

It is clear that the number of incidents of sexual exploitation is considerably greater than the number that comes to the attention of parents and/or authorities.

There are both simple and extremely complex reasons why child pornography is such a difficult problem. The solutions, however, are also complex, though certainly not impossible. The solutions can be arrived at through an intelligent, informed public that is motivated and determined to stop child pornography.

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Problem-Solving

GROWING PUBLIC AWARENESS

Although the problem of child exploitation, particularly children involved in pornography, has been growing slowly for decades, not until the mid-1970s did it surface as a national concern. A variety of resources came together as individuals campaigned, hearings were held, legislation was enacted, special law-enforcement units were formed and the media took up the cause. Since that time, the stop-child-pornography movement has had its ups and downs but slowly gained increased recognition.

The television audience watching the CBS program "60 Minutes" on May 15, 1977, was stunned by the program's report on child pornography. The network had been thorough in its investigation, and presented an accurate picture of the problem. Response to law-enforcement agencies and the media was strong for a few weeks afterward and then faded away, as has been the case with similar problems.

Later, CBS approached a private movie company to make a film on child pornography. The outcome of this request was a film titled "Fallen Angel," which was aired Feb. 24, 1981.

The fine line between producing an accurate presentation and stirring prurient interests was a difficult balancing act; the executive producer noted that the script went through 14 rewrites. The producers were determined to avoid sensationalism and exploitation in the telling but equally intent on getting the message across.

"Fallen Angel" told the story of a shy girl, Jennifer, who felt neglected after the death of her father. Her mother worked long hours at a coffee shop and was becoming involved with an old friend. Jennifer, turning 13, sulked, watched TV, rode her bike around the neighborhood, and occasionally erupted in prepubescent tantrums.

On one of her frustration-venting bike trips Jennifer met Howard, the coach of a girls' softball team. Howard skillfully began seducing her with ice cream, flattery and intimations that he was the only person who really cared about her. He managed to take photographs of Jennifer at every meeting, some of which she kept to decorate the walls of her room. Gradually, Howard used pressure to take more sexually exploitative pictures; at each photo session, his requests grew more demanding.

At first Jennifer resisted, but Howard was patient, persistent and, finally, persuasive. Soon after Jennifer disrobed for a series of pictures, she was introduced to a director of child-pornography films and a couple of child "stars." They told Jennifer that they traded a few pictures for some drugs and stardom and that it was all really very "cool."

When Jennifer's mother happened to see a picture of Jennifer in a sex magazine ad, she decided to take the matter into her own hands. She traced the photo to Howard, and intercepted the pair just prior to overt sexual activity.

At this point in the film, a social worker discussed the subject of runaways and the statistical relationship between runaways and child pornography. Then an analysis of the story line was given. (O'Connor 1981)

The "Fallen Angel" script adhered closely to the profile of a pedophile, considering what little is known about such offenders. Jennifer found herself in a situation many children find themselves in: uncomfortable and scared about their involvement, but at the same time feeling too scared and guilty to call on parents for help. Although the film told the story through a female child, it could also have told it through a 12-year-old male protagonist, since the child-exploitation industry is no respecter of gender.

Casting problems for the film presented singular insight into how delicately the topic had to be handled. The pedophile role, Howard, offered to several leading male actors, was turned down with remarks such as: "How could I possibly explain it to my children and grandchildren?" Actor Richard Masur finally agreed to take the part because he felt so strongly that the statement needed to be made.

The casting search for “Jennifer” also was sensitive. Regulations concerning the topic prevented employing an actual 12-year-old, but the producers solved that problem when they found Dana Hill, a 17-year-old who had a pituitary imbalance that had slowed her growth. (Stern 1981) The production and airing of “Fallen Angel” was a big step toward increased public awareness.

Law-Enforcement Strategies

Law-enforcement officials in many large cities have carefully worked out problem-solving strategies to eradicate child pornography and thus reduce sex-related crimes inevitably associated with it.

Some or all of the following ideas have been successful in reducing the child-pornography element in communities:

Community education

When members of a child pornography speakers’ bureau present information to parent-teacher organizations or service groups, doubting Thomases become believers. Speakers encourage listeners to warn children that child molesters exist and to make sure that they know how to protect themselves—without becoming paranoid. Particularly, parents need to be aware of the importance of listening carefully to a child’s complaint, no matter how much they might doubt its merit. Community education involves both the massive media campaign and meeting with small groups, even one-on-one, to expose child pornography’s dangers.

Law-enforcement officers, social workers, educators and anyone who works around children, can ask if there are any adults who hang around the area. New Orleans police, adopting this strategy, compiled a list of individuals who frequently haunted school grounds and arcades. Follow-up revealed a number of registered sexual offenders. The subsequent investigation resulted in a series of arrests that cleared up several unsolved child-assault cases. (Ayoob 1978).

Media cooperation

The anti-child-pornography campaign organized by law-enforcement and other individuals in 1976 caused many adult bookstores to drop child-related merchandise. The media, primarily television and newspapers, picked up on the campaign and helped raise the public outcry, which led to picketing of porno bookstores and theaters.

Enforcing existing laws

Some law-enforcement officers have found that assiduous enforcement of laws already on the books is greatly helpful toward thinning the ranks of offenders. For example, since some pornography businesses are located in poorer, low-rent sections of town, strict enforcement of building codes in those areas can be an effective deterrent. And, gaining health-department cooperation to force adherence to health regulations can double the pressure.

Careful investigative work

The pornography-industry magnates usually have expert legal counsel and enough money to fight long court battles. Because of this, law officers must take special care to get airtight search warrants. The wording of a warrant must avoid broad, subjective terms as well as specific medical descriptions—the aim being to leave no doubt about the nature of the material being sought.

Enlist help of local government

Since some of the biggest money-makers in the adult-entertainment business are the “peep shows,” a heavy tax can be levied on the automatic amusement devices used. If city councils or county supervisors want to make business unprofitable for pornography dealers, heavily taxing the machines that pay the rent usually produces results.

Publish owners names

Some owners of adult bookstores and theaters are well-known citizens with clean reputations to maintain. Often, if an arrest is made in connection with the store, the manager is the person named. A way to discourage these absentee owners is to publish their names along with those of others involved.

Maintain professionalism

One of the most difficult arrests in which a law-enforcement officer may participate is related to child pornography. The temptation to call the perpetrator an obscene name, or to tell reporters, or to simply lose one’s “cool,” can be very strong. However, more than one court case has been lost as a result of one or more of these lapses. To be successful, officers must keep a professional demeanor, no matter how they personally feel about the individuals involved.

INTERVENTION AND TREATMENT PROGRAMS

In the United States, few intervention and treatment programs specifically focus on the sexually exploited child victim and the perpetrator. Of those available, only a few samples in each of these three categories will be given: law enforcement, direct service, and medical.

Law Enforcement

In 1977, the Sexually Exploited Child Unit within the Juvenile Division of the Los Angeles Police Department was created. The unit was staffed with detectives who were responsible for the following duties:

Seek out and investigate violations of state and federal laws pertaining to the sexual exploitation of children when:

- Children under 16 years of age are exploited for commercial purposes.
- The exploitation activities are of an organized nature, such as a child-prostitution ring.
- The suspect is a recidivist and/or multiple victims may be involved.
- An investigation is requested by detectives in any of the police areas, and approved by the commanding officer of division.
- Exchanging information with outside agencies concerning sexually exploited victims and suspects.
- Reviewing all crime and arrest reports relating to sexually exploited children.
- Maintaining files on all suspects who molest, annoy, or commit certain sex crimes against juveniles.

Because of the experience, training and expertise of these detectives, they were asked to carry out other special assignments within the department and in the community.

- The Unit's staff taught police personnel at the Police Academy about the sexual exploitation of children. Instructors were provided for the Department's Juvenile Procedures School, Basic Detective School, Vice School, Advanced Officer In-Service School, and the Detective In-Service School.

- Investigation into sexual exploitation revealed that a substantial effort toward public education was necessary. Public awareness of the problem was enhanced by the detectives providing lectures and presentations to community organizations. They included parent/teacher groups, educators, medical groups, and others.
- The unit established working relationships with local, state, federal and international law enforcement agencies. These working relationships were directly responsible for the apprehension of major producers and distributors of child pornography.
- Members of the unit testified before federal and state legislative bodies for stronger legislation in the area of sexual exploitation of children.

The Los Angeles Police Department's Sexually Exploited Child Unit has become a model for other communities. Law enforcement officers throughout the country have visited the unit to receive training toward a better understanding of the sexually exploited child.

Direct Service

Very few direct service programs exist with samples of sufficient size to objectively measure change in patients before and after treatment. Further, there have been only minimal attempts to compare the behavioral, psychoanalytic, counseling, or penal approaches to treatment of perpetrators.

Research in child exploitation is still in a "pioneering" stage, and those who work with the victims and perpetrators have scant documented information to build on. So they have to proceed very slowly, experimenting as they go.

Among "pioneer" programs in the United States, two serve as models for beginning sex abuse intervention and treatment programs. One, in Santa Clara County, California, primarily treats victims of incest; the other, in New York, provides direct services to troubled youth.

The Child Sexual Treatment Program operated by the Santa Clara Juvenile Probation Department is one of the most successful programs to use intensive family and group therapy in treating sex abuse victims. The program's therapeutic approach is based on the theory and techniques of Humanistic Psychology. The family is treated primarily as a system, and the intent of therapy is to foster personal growth and development of self-responsibility in family members. The program has also included public education and professional training. (Groth 1978)

Another such program that has been successful in treating troubled youth is Odyssey Institute, a New York-based, non-profit organization with both domestic and foreign subsidiaries.

In 1966, Dr. Judianne Densen-Gerber, an attorney and the founder and chief psychiatric officer of Odyssey Institute, set up a treatment center for drug addicts. Over the years, the center expanded to include programs in child abuse and neglect, services for women in distress, special-education programs and research programs on the twin-discipline collaboration of law and medicine. Odyssey provides front-line direct services to these various target populations and works with other professional groups, particularly legislative bodies and others in policy-making positions, to help troubled youth.

Institute staff members got involved in intervention and treatment of child-abuse and neglect victims in 1975. In their investigations they had found that 44 percent of their clients were victims of incest, 75 percent were abused before age 12, and 45 percent before they were 9. They began to see correlation between these abused and neglected children and use of alcohol and other drugs. So, in their fight against drug abuse they began efforts to help children earlier in life by aiming at child abuse.

As they began investigating incidents of abuse, an anonymous tip called Odyssey's attention to the commercial exploitation of children. Someone sent some pornographic materials to Dr. Densen-Gerber and asked if the Institute knew what was going on. That query stirred the Odyssey staff into action against the sexual exploitation of children. In subsequent news conferences, at legislative hearings and in seminars on community-awareness strategy, Odyssey led the way in education about the nationwide problem of child exploitation.

Medical Treatment

Several kinds of treatment programs have been set up to help perpetrators reach emotional maturity and a more stable, productive life. Some involve counseling, psychotherapy and behavioral change, and some include imprisonment. Professionals disagree on the relative merit of the various methods. Some authorities believe that all sexual deviants have some genetic defect that interferes with emotional maturation. Others think the deviants were themselves assaulted at a particular point in their young lives and thus were fixated at that point. It is basically a nature-nurture debate.

There is increasing awareness that the wrong kind of intervention can do more harm than good. Therefore, more sympathetic, sensitive techniques for working with perpetrators are being developed.

There are definite signs of a change from punishment-oriented intervention and treatment rehabilitation. This approach, when it is in the best interests of the child involved, is both hopeful and consistent with the trend toward family rehabilitation as the first goal in child-abuse and neglect intervention.

Probably the most important factor in intervention and treatment is the cooperation between various disciplines and professional groups. A concentrated, coordinated effort between law enforcement, social-service agencies, private organizations and the medical community is essential to preserve the best interests of the child, the family and the perpetrator.

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Steps toward Action

KNOW THE FACTS

There are three basic facts to keep in mind in initiating action to stop child pornography and general sexual exploitation of children:

1) *Child pornography is occurring.* In a society that would rather turn its head than deal with ugly, unpleasant problems, the fact remains: child exploitation is occurring in both urban and rural communities.

2) *Child pornography is illegal.* The law prohibits any child from being used by a pornography producer in any sexually explicit manner. In all states, forced sexual contact is against the law, as is any sexual contact with a child by an older person.

3) *Child pornography can be stopped.* The key to stopping child pornography is community cooperation toward action. Each person must have an understanding of the problem, see it as solvable, and cooperate with others to bring about action to stop it.

KNOW THE LAW

Federal

The federal law dealing with sexual exploitation of children, the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation Act of 1977, incorporates the term "obscene" into the legislation designed to control child pornography, bypassing the constitutional hurdles of the First

Amendment. The bill incorporates a dual approach—penalizing child-pornography producers as child abusers, and focusing on the issue of obscenity with distributors and retailers of sexually explicit material involving children. The law prohibits any child under 16 from being used by a producer in any sexually explicit manner.

State

Since 1977, much of the state-level legislative activity concerning child sexual abuse and exploitation has focused on appropriate jurisdiction and clarifying legal definitions of sexual abuse. In most deliberations, better protection of the child has been a primary concern.

Prior to this focus, many states had criminal laws, such as those dealing with incest and rape, that failed to specifically consider the sexually abused child. All cases brought under these statutes fall within the jurisdiction of the criminal court, since no provision is made for juvenile-court child protective intervention. In the past few years, an increasing demand for protection of children from sexual exploitation has created an upsurge in legislative activity dealing with the problem. Hearings have been held and bills have been introduced in state legislatures.

Some efforts have concentrated on the producer of pornography as a child abuser, while others have concentrated on both producers and distributors. Violations of obscenity statutes, which formerly were ruled misdemeanors, have been made felonies when children are involved.

The Courts

Usually, the use of the criminal courts involves law enforcement agencies rather than child protective service agencies. The criminal courts focus on punishing the offender rather than focusing on protecting or treating the child and family.

Both criminal and juvenile courts have specific procedures for handling cases involving children. They can remove the child from the home, order agencies to provide treatment for the child and family, avoid the necessity for courtroom testimony by the child, and permit a judge to question a child in chambers out of the presence of the others involved. The focus of the two courts, however, differs significantly: criminal court procedure centers on the perpetrator, while the concerns of the juvenile court focus on the child. The juvenile court is more likely to have access to support services for supervision and treatment and tends to be more flexible.

The use of the criminal courts, on the other hand, may be more suitable for cases where physical injury is involved, or where the perpetrator's behavior is compulsive, repeated, or sociopathic. Criminal court prosecution or the threat of prosecution can be a powerful incentive for the perpetrator to change behavior.

KNOW THE SIGNS

Parents, educators, social-service personnel and law-enforcement officers—anyone who works with children or is concerned about them—probably wonder if they could recognize when or whether a child is involved in pornographic activity. Is there anything different about a child who is so involved? There are a few clues to this type of trouble in a child's life. No single sign serves for positive identification, but as a group the signals might alert one to look further.

Behavior

Abrupt behavior changes in children send up warning flags that something may be troubling them. If they have bright, outgoing personalities and suddenly become quiet, withdrawn and moody, they may be in trouble. On the other hand, when children who usually are well-behaved, obedient and passive suddenly turn belligerent, quarrelsome, antagonistic, they may be in trouble. If a child's personality seems to change overnight and the pattern persists, it is a signal that something is wrong.

Another distinctive sign is depression. The child may not want to eat, go to school, go outside and play, try new experiences or show any interest in activities ordinarily found interesting and exciting. This kind of behavior change may be interpreted as laziness or a physical illness but it may actually have a psychological base.

These drastic behavior changes may first show up in the school classroom or on the playground, in fact, many times educators are the first to spot these personality changes.

Secrecy

Another sign or clue that a child may be involved in pornographic activity is a secretive demeanor. The child may stop mid-sentence in

describing some experience, may become selective in explaining activities or relationships, may conceal photographs or other material related to the pornography or simply become devious, vague and indirect.

Manipulation

The child who has the upper hand in a relationship with an adult may try to treat all adults the same way. Child pornography perpetrators will give a child anything that child wants, both in material goods and in attention and affection. That child controls the adult: the games, food, clothing, toys, money—everything but the sexual activity. And, in fact, pedophiles have admitted that after a period of time in the relationship the child even controls the amount, time and type of sexual encounters.

Language

A child may use terms to describe parts of the body, sex acts or deviant behavior that are not appropriate for the setting, the child's age or development. The child may seem to have a sexual understanding well beyond his or her stage of development. Words not commonly used in the home or school environment may be used by the perpetrator. Children have a way of incorporating words and patterns of speech of those with whom they spend time.

A child also may talk obsessively of a person unknown to the family. If the child is spending a lot of time with such an individual, hints of the activities and experiences usually will come out. And even when a perpetrator is someone well known to the family, there is a signal that something is wrong if a child seems obsessed with that particular individual.

Material Goods

Sometimes children involved in pornography suddenly exhibit money, clothes, toys or other gifts that parents did not buy. Parents, educators and others who work with children should question the source of any gifts strangers give to children. Perpetrators may employ psychological persuasion, but usually they add gifts to build up a sense of obligation in the child.

These are a few signs that may serve to alert adults concerned about children who may be in this kind of trouble. Again, one sign alone may not mean the child is involved in pornographic activity, but several signs together should send up a warning to concerned individuals.

KNOW HOW TO INTERVIEW VICTIM

Probably the most difficult part of the total problem of child exploitation is that highly-charged moment when the child begins to try to tell what has happened. Because all children are different from one another, every abuse situation is unique; there are no "right" answers, and certainly there are no easy solutions.

Even specialists in the area of child exploitation take a tight rein on their emotions before sitting down to talk to a child in these circumstances. They need few reminders of the sensitive nature of the task before them.

If the trained professional finds the child-victim interview difficult, how much more important it is for parents who suspect their child has been involved in sexual activity to have help in approaching the child.

Approach

In the interview with a child victim, both parents and professionals must give prime consideration to the child. They must take into consideration that a child's initial reaction may be unpredictable, or quite different from that of an adult. This is the case because children get their ideas of what is right and wrong from older children or adults closest to them. It is usually their parents' reaction that they monitor first. If a child tells his or her story and the parent or professional shows shame, disgust and disgrace, the child will reflect those feelings.

On the other hand, if the adults are sensitive, compassionate and sympathetic, the child will open up and be more trusting. The child will also have a better chance of coming through the experience with less trauma.

Adults who react with emotional outbursts, with anger, hysteria or out-of-control behavior may so disturb or frighten the child that he or she may not say another word about the abuse. If possible, law-enforcement or hospital personnel should wear civilian clothing during the interview. Many children, particularly very young ones, are frightened by professionals in uniform.

Finding out that a child has been victimized or that there has been ongoing sexual activity is a crisis. It can be overwhelming and devastating. The best reaction for parents and professionals is a slow, cautious concern for the child's needs. Although it may be difficult, it is a good idea not to ask for too much information too quickly. The child needs reassurance, needs to know that he or she is safe, that you will listen and believe the story, and will help the child. In order to be heard, their important messages can only be received in a calm, composed and caring atmosphere.

If you suspect that a child has been victimized, you should ask him or her the direct question. You may need to be quite specific in wording the question, because, although some children may understand the correct terms for sexual activity and parts of the body, others do not. To be clearly understood, you may need to use certain slang or vulgar terms.

If you feel unsure of how to begin, here are some suggestions to gently encourage a child to talk about the experience:

"I want to help you."

"It is okay for you to talk to me."

"Can you tell me what happened?"

"Take as much time as you want."

"Use your own words."

"Go as slowly as you like."

"I'm not going to push you."

If the victim does not want to talk about the experience at that time, you need to keep the communication lines open for another time. You might say something like:

"It isn't easy to talk about this, I understand."

"If you don't feel like telling about it now, maybe you will later."

"I'll listen to you anytime you want to talk about it."

"If this begins to worry you, remember, I want to help you."

"If you find yourself thinking about it a lot, please tell me."

When children have been victimized, and someone close to them asks about it, they may automatically deny it. The suspicion may come as a surprise because they have been hiding it for so long a time. However, usually the guilt is relieved by disclosure and after thinking about it for a while, the child may decide he or she wants to talk about it.

Messages

There are 10 messages that a victimized child needs to hear from you in the interview.

1) *"It is OK to tell me about it."*

The child needs to know that you are glad he or she is telling you about it. The child needs to be reassured that to tell someone about it is the right thing to do.

Any accusations or threats about how the perpetrator should be punished may make the child feel guilty about discussing the experience. If the child is fond of the perpetrator, which sometimes is the case, he or she may feel guilty about informing. Your reaction should be to listen quietly and encourage the child to keep talking.

Although it may be difficult, try to focus on the child's needs and feelings—not on the child's genitals. The natural impulse may be to quiz the child about who did what to whom, how much and how often—losing sight of how the child may view the experience. For, in fact, some children, particularly young ones, may not view themselves as victims; may not be aware there is anything wrong in what has occurred. Since they will take their cues from you and will reflect your emotions, you need to be very careful in your reaction.

2) *"I believe you."*

Studies that have sought to measure veracity of children's sexual-assault stories have shown that only a very small percentage make up stories about abuse. They may not be able to give the dates, times, places and details of occurrences, but they would not be capable of such precision regarding other events, either. The child's language development, communication skills, memory patterns and time concepts are not at a high enough level to be able to marshal such details, but that is not good reason for skepticism—only understanding.

3) *"You are safe with me."*

The child may or may not have experienced fear in the sexual relationship; that depends on the nature of the encounter, the child and the perpetrator. Either way, however, most child victims will experience considerable disquiet in disclosure of the occurrence. You must reassure the child that whatever has happened is past, he or she is safe, and that you will do everything in your power to keep it that way.

4) *"I am determined to put a stop to this."*

Although it is tempting to make sweeping promises or threats about what is going to happen now that you know about the encounter, it probably is not a good idea to do so. There may be experiences the child will have to endure, such as additional interviews or court appearances that are beyond your control. However, if you can convince the child of your determination to help, the child will feel that you can be trusted.

5) *"It's OK to feel . . ."*

Most children have been taught since their early years to defer to adults and to trust them. Yet, here is a situation where an adult has victimized them. Many children may feel betrayed. The first task is to get this message across: It is OK to feel angry, confused, helpless, powerless, hurt or unfairly treated, that these are emotions anyone might feel in the same situation.

The child must have the opportunity to express these honest feelings in an atmosphere of trust. Patience and understanding cannot be overemphasized at this time.

6) *"It was not your fault."*

It is very important for the child to be relieved of guilt feelings or responsibility for precipitation of the encounter. If a child has been sexually exploited, the perpetrator, not the child, is to blame. This should be explained in specific terms and repeated over and over again.

Children may feel particularly guilty about disclosure—about telling their story. Your responses should very plainly put the blame in the proper place: on the perpetrator. You might say: "When that man took pictures of you without your clothes on, he was being very unfair to you. He needs some help so he will never do that again to you or anyone else."

Some children may not know that they have been used, and they should be told that it is OK that they didn't know what was happening was bad, that it still wasn't their fault.

Children who are taught that there is justice in the world, and punishment comes to those who do wrong, become very confused when they are molested. They think the molestation has happened to them because of something they have done.

Susie, age 9, said it happened to her because she had stolen money from her mother's pocketbook. Mike, age 11, said he thought it happened because he had beaten his sister.

Those who work with sexually abused children need to tell the children that bad things can happen to good people. Even Cinderella—who supposedly lived a good life—got a few bad turns from the stepmother and stepsisters. It wasn't Cinderella's fault that the others did bad things to her.

7) *"Some people take advantage of children."*

The child should get the message from you that not all people want what is best for children. Some people take advantage of other people, especially children.

By their size alone, adults are perceived as authorities to be obeyed. Moreover, children are trained from early age to obey grown-ups. Yet, not all adults have a child's best interests in mind. Some perpetrators of child exploitation have claimed to be the only person who really cares about the particular child. If this is true, and in some cases it may be, it is a terrible tragedy.

8) *"I'm sorry about what happened."*

Closely connected to these messages to get across to child victims, is the thought that you are very sorry about what happened. You probably deeply regret that the child was ever involved and wish you could just wipe it all away with a wave of your arm. The child needs to know how much you feel that regret.

9) *"I will help you."*

Reassure the child that even though you are upset and angry, you will help in any way you can. The child must know you are someone who can be counted on.

10) *"I care about you."*

This is the underlying message for all of the previously noted messages: if you don't care about the child, none of the other messages will get through.

Children are very perceptive regarding whether you are truthful about how you feel about them. They can see through a faked response much quicker than most adults.

If you feel you can't be perfectly honest about your feelings for the child, then you should insist that someone else conduct the interview.

Follow-up

The procedures of professionals involved in treating victims of sexual abuse vary greatly, based on their experience and training. If you are helping a child through some of the additional interviews, you may need to run some interference.

Medical

Whether the child is physically injured or not, a thorough physical exam may be reassuring to both you and the child. The type of exam you request will vary, depending on the type of sexual activity that occurred and the child's age. Whether young or older, the child should be checked for possible venereal disease. If the child is an older female, the possibility of pregnancy should be checked. Evidence collected in the medical exam may be valuable at a later date, depending on whether there is court involvement.

Some medical personnel are experienced in handling child sexual victims. They are careful to consider the child's feelings and needs above all else. Others might choose not to see the victim because they lack experience, adequate equipment or interest in the problem. Your aim should be to make the medical exam a positive, helpful experience.

Be sure to prepare the child before you go the physician—explain exactly what he or she will experience. If the child has experienced trauma, he or she may need to be convinced that the physical exam will be helpful.

Law enforcement

Some law-enforcement personnel have been specially trained to conduct child-victim interviews. Others have not had the advantage of this kind of training, however, so you may need to help the child understand the procedures. You may also need to help the police officer understand the child.

Each situation will differ depending on the offense, the age of the child and experience of the officer. The best situation would be one in which a trained officer not in uniform would sensitively lead the child through a single investigative process, without asking the child to repeat the story for other personnel.

Court system

Although a court trial might make the recovery period longer and more painful for the child, it may be in the child's best interests in the long run. It may also help to protect other children.

Children should undergo a minimum of interviews about what happened. Every attempt should be made to handle court cases in pretrial conferences, judges' chambers, or special closed settings. In addition, careful diagnosis and follow-up should be made to determine what long-term effects the court experience might have on the child. Whether the child is exploited by a known criminal or by a first-offender, the child's needs must come first. The child must have the same rights as any adult, and those involved must exercise compassion and understanding.

Personnel support

Because even the knowledge of the sexual exploitation is disturbing in itself, it may be advisable to arrange for some support in the interview. Perhaps you will need to talk through your feelings with a counselor or helping agency. Everyone reacts differently to such situations, but even experienced professionals find that working with child sexual abuse sometimes affects them more deeply than they expected.

KNOW HOW TO REPORT

The Decision

Deciding whether to report knowledge of a case of child sexual exploitation may be difficult for some. The decision is not as difficult to reach, of course, if a child has been brutally abused. That clearly would be physical abuse. But sexual abuse, with its possible long-term consequences, also is a form of child abuse. It definitely should be reported.

Here is some encouragement if the reporting decision is difficult to make:

Crime

Sexual assault, child pornography, child prostitution or any other form of sexual exploitation is criminal. The age of the victim or the identity of the perpetrator doesn't make any difference—it is a crime.

Repeated behavior

Even if a particular victim may no longer be vulnerable to possible further exploitation, the perpetrator will probably repeat the offense with other children unless some action is taken. Pedophiles are attracted to children of a certain age span, and there is a pattern of repeated behavior.

Child's durability

You may hesitate to report because of a concern that trauma may be compounded by repeated inquiries and possible court hearings. Ideally, the professionals who work with child victims are sensitive to the child's needs. If handled correctly, the process of getting the matter out in the open can have therapeutic value for the child.

Child's believability

You may hesitate to report because the child involved may not get all the details correct or remember the particulars of the experience. Again, if those involved exercise patience, compassion and understanding, the child will be believed by the authorities.

Reporting

There are several ways and places to report sexual exploitation. You can make an anonymous report or a full information report. If the anonymous report is made to a crisis center or agency that deals directly with victims, it may not become a part of official records. It is your right to remain anonymous but if you give your name, address and phone number, you will be providing credibility for your report. Also, if you have failed to provide complete information, the authorities can contact you at a later time.

If you choose to report directly to the police, they can provide immediate assistance and arrange for collection of evidence. Usually an officer takes the report, a detective investigates, and evidence is given to a prosecutor.

PROMOTE COMMUNITY AWARENESS

Enlist Help from Others

One of the most effective ways to combat the spread of child pornography is a concentrated public awareness program. Ideally, such a program would have the cooperation and support of any government agencies involved.

In some communities, law enforcement officers have teamed with rape crisis counselors in public appearances to advise parents on how to become more involved with their children and more aware of the problem.

The entire community has a responsibility to protect its children from child molesters. Parents, educators and youth workers should be encouraged to discuss the subject with children and to caution them against potentially dangerous situations.

The presence of child pornography constitutes a threat to the moral values of children in a community. Professionals can educate the public about pornography's existence. But it will take the joint effort of all concerned—parents, educators, law enforcement, legal and social service personnel—working together to solve the overall problem.

To find out whether your own community has facilities to help victims and their families, contact your local department of social services or public health. Other possible sources of aid are local police departments and women's centers. Also, many rape crisis centers, run jointly by women's organizations and police departments, have special units to deal with child victims.

Start Prevention Programs

The availability of telephone help has been important in advancing awareness and prevention of child exploitation. Helpline volunteers can counsel a child or family in the event of crisis and provide referral for therapeutic treatment after disclosure. In some instances they can provide information that might prevent an encounter.

Another excellent prevention program is that of placing a specially trained officer in a police department to investigate the sexual exploitation of children. Because children usually are not complaining victims—they usually do not say anything to anyone about the problem—the officers must go to where children congregate. Finding non-complaining victims takes time and effort, but it is one of the most effective methods to combat the exploitation.

TAKE STEPS TOWARD ACTION

What Must Be Done

Screening

Careful screening methods must be set up to eliminate known deviates from employment involving supervision of children.

Enforcement

Statutes that make it a felony to be involved in the production and sale of sexually explicit material involving children must be continually enforced. These statutes should provide penalties on grounds of child abuse.

Counseling

Funding must be made available for counseling and rehabilitation of child victims.

Rehabilitation

Programs must be developed to rehabilitate the perpetrator.

Programs

Funding must be made available for victim-witness assistance programs to create an atmosphere conducive to voluntary cooperation of victims and their families in the judicial process.

How to Do It

Unfortunately, laws are not enforced, programs begun or funding allocated unless concerned citizens demand it—and hold officials responsible for follow through.

Here are some steps toward the type of action needed to combat child sexual exploitation:

- Obtain a copy of your state's child pornography laws
Ask your librarian to help you locate the provision of your state law that deals with child pornography. Obtain a copy.

- **Build resource file**

Collect newspaper articles, magazine clippings and other pieces of information on research, case studies and new treatment programs across the U.S. and in your state.

- **Write letters**

Write letters to newspapers, radio, television stations, and legislators informing them of current cases and urging them to maintain strong law enforcement on child pornography.

- **Collect petitions**

- Collect signatures to form a statewide coalition against child pornography.

- **Contact Attorney General**

Send the Attorney General copies of petitions and individual letters requesting enforcement of federal laws.

Legal authorities have stated that effective enforcement of laws against child exploitation depends on aggressive investigation and certainty of prosecution.

- **Law enforcement units**

Work toward establishing or maintaining special units within local law enforcement agencies who have child sexual exploitation as their primary responsibility.

- **Establish public policy**

There must be a point of agreement that everyone can rally around in the fight against child exploitation. Here is an example of such a resolution:

Protection

To protect all children from becoming sexually exploited.

Prohibition

To prohibit any conduct which causes or threatens psychological, emotional or physical harm to children as a result of such sexual exploitation.

Prevention

To prevent any person from benefitting, financially or otherwise, from the sexual exploitation of children.

Punishment

To impose just and deserved punishment on those who sexually exploit children.

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Prevention

Just as there are no pat answers in dealing with child victims, there are no quick remedies for the child-exploitation problem. Most of the recommendations listed here are obvious. Yet, they are complex, too, in that they require the cooperation of large groups of people—parents, professionals, in fact, everyone in the community.

A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM

An effective attack against the sexual exploitation of children could be launched in a comprehensive program. Components of such a program would include awareness and education for the public, training of professionals and parents, crisis intervention and counseling for victims and families. It also would include medical and legal services, alternate living environments for crisis resolution and follow-up therapy services for the child and family.

Data Collection

An initial need in the comprehensive program is data collection. Social-service personnel, physicians, educators, law-enforcement officials and the public all need the foundation of hard data on which to build the program. Juvenile department workers as well as police and sheriffs' departments, require factual information to make evaluations of the situations they come across in the line of duty. No one should be assigned to a sex-abuse case without prerequisite training in the area.

Physicians, as first-line professionals dealing with child sexual abuse, also need to have current data available. They are in the important position to minimize the emotional trauma inflicted on child sex victims. Physicians need to know that the social, psychological and legal needs of the victims are as important as physical trauma. If sexual abuse is not handled properly in the medical setting, damage can occur that will show up later in a child's psycho-sexual development, courtship and/or marriage.

Physicians often have the first contact and thus have the opportunity to help the child and the family through the initial trauma. Some communities need to provide stronger legal safeguards for doctors who testify in court cases. State statutes, legal protection and the professional code of ethics need to be in agreement to support cooperation in intervention, prosecution, treatment and follow-up.

Training of Professionals

Another high-priority component is the training of professionals involved in child sexual abuse. More and more, administrators are discovering the value of providing special workshops, briefings and updates on these complex topics. Without new information and current methodology, insensitive habits and patterns develop based on faulty premises.

Outline

Here is a general child pornography training outline for professionals:

- Introduction to the Sexual Exploitation of Children
- Definitions
- Statistics
- Categories
- Products
- Myths
- History
- Victim Profile
- Perpetrator Profile
- Enticement
- Disclosure
- Symptoms
- Effects

- Obstructions
- Problem-solving
- Steps to action
- Prevention

A variety of training aids—films, slides, tape recordings, videotapes and experts in the field—might be used in teaching these components.

Treatment of the Perpetrator

Some authorities believe complete rehabilitation is not achievable in a prison setting, but there is little research to prove or disprove this. There is considerable evidence, however, that imprisonment fails to check sexual deviation. This suggests a need to research the efficacy of indeterminate sentences for sex offenders. A few existing programs do not allow the release of the offender until there is some reasonable guarantee that the person no longer is a menace. However, who decides the terms of “reasonable guarantee,” and how it is tested, is in question.

There needs to be a priority for research in this area because many sex offenders do return to the community. In fact, it would be helpful to have answers to several related questions. For example, what is the recidivism rate for sex offenders? What problems do they have on returning to the community? How does the perpetrator’s family adjust? Did imprisonment help or hinder rehabilitation?

It is difficult to attach a priority listing to this type of comprehensive program because each component seems more important than the other. Community awareness and education for prevention definitely rate priority. The very reason that it is called a comprehensive program, though, is because each component calls for priority.

MORAL EDUCATION

In the late 1960s, through the 1970s and into the '80s, many families that seemed stable and free of any serious problems were falling apart. Many homes still are undergoing stress rising out of the problems of inflation, divorce, drug addiction, and delinquency. Because of more two-paycheck families, many children came home from school to an empty house and have nothing to do for two or three hours. Families find they cannot get by on one income, so both parents work. In most single-parent families, the option to work or not work does not exist.

Even with all these problems, most American parents are very “child conscious.” They know about vitamins, shots and the various “needs” of children at certain age levels. Yet, there seems to be a missing link. There seems to be some basic training many children are not receiving at certain crucial points in their lives. Although children need parents’ nurturing love and care, they also need a sense of purpose, a notion of what is right and wrong and models for these subtle teachings.

Parents, in the last two or more decades, have relaxed in their responsibility for the moral education and training of their young. They have also forgotten that children learn most of the lessons about life by precept in everyday situations.

Children need more than good food, a pleasant physical environment and psychological understanding; they need to learn ethical principles—a firm idea about what they ought to do and what they should not do, and why. They also need to believe in something beyond themselves—in principles and values that serve to guide them as they move away from the family.

There are children who have grown up and exist in a moral vacuum of self-centeredness. The “me-generation” label aptly describes this phenomenon.

Parents need to model as well as verbally teach the values they want their children to learn and hold true for their lives. Each individual needs to know exactly what he or she believes in, holds sacred, and what has value to stand by through thick and thin.

There are two possible long-term solutions to consider in facing this dilemma: intergenerational living arrangements and parenting education outside the home.

Intergenerational Living Arrangements

Economic stress is expected to continue to plague most Americans for several years to come. Thus, it is predicted, more parents will be working, and there will be family problems as consequences of continuing stress. Consider, for a moment, that perhaps the family was never meant to be nuclear. Parenting is a learned behavior; perhaps the best place to learn to be a parent is in the home. If Americans would return to the extended-family lifestyle, young parents could work while the grandparents cared for the children and they could also learn the art of child rearing from the grandparents.

Over the past two decades, millions of young parents have moved away from their parents both physically and mentally. Resulting isolation and alienation create an environment conducive to family violence—particularly abuse and neglect of children.

By living in the extended family, children probably would also have a greater chance to obtain a family-oriented moral education—a feeling for what is right and what is wrong. It is a long-range approach to solving the problem of child sexual exploitation, but it merits serious consideration.

Parenting Education outside the Home

Another possible solution to help children become all they are capable of being is teaching individuals in schools and churches how to be parents. High schools need to set up parenting courses for all students; teen-agers and young adults have very little idea about the reality of parenting. They romanticize the concept of being a parent but do not visualize the total day-in, day-out responsibility involved.

Churches have a responsibility to help educate young parents in the art of child rearing. They can also help parents teach moral values and ethical behavior to children.

SEXUAL ASSAULT EDUCATION

Another important means of combating child sexual exploitation lies in giving children proper information about the possibility of sexual assault. Teaching children how their bodies function and about appropriate sexual behavior can be an important step toward prevention of sexual assault.

Research has shown (Lewis 1980) that:

- Children whose parents make it a point to discuss sex education tend to delay first intercourse longer than those whose parents avoid sex talks.
- If and when the better-informed children do have intercourse, they are more likely to use contraceptives, and
- The more sex information children have, the less likely they are to become pregnant or catch a venereal disease.

These conclusions suggest that when parents talk to their children about sex they not only help them toward responsibility in their sexual behavior, they also help them develop a better attitude about sex. In these talks parents are presenting their value system and providing guidance as much as informing and educating. They are helping the child make the sharp distinction between knowing and doing, between what is possible and what is right for them.

Using the same discussion methods, parents can help their children understand the possibilities of a sexual assault. Although most parents would talk to their children about sexual assault that has happened in the neighborhood, few provide such information in a preventive way.

Information about sexual exploitation can be a part of every child's basic safety education. As the child grows older, the amount, level and understanding of the safety details change. A child's understanding of sexual assault can grow and change also.

Unless there has been an incident in their home area, children are not likely to ask questions about sexual assault. So parents must initiate the discussion. The place to begin is to provide the words for all body parts. Mouth, eyes, elbows and knees are labels a child learns early in life. However, proper names for the anal, breast and genital areas are usually not mentioned. Without these names it is impossible to be specific in discussions concerning sex and/or sexual assault.

Parents find it very difficult to discuss sex with their child. However, their discomfort is usually not shared by a curious child unless they let it show. Parents are reluctant to talk about sex for several fundamental reasons. Not only are open sexual relations in a family unacceptable, but the typical family also desexualizes its relationships for the sake of day-to-day comfort. Too, if sexual issues are awkward, the topic of assault compounds the difficulty.

Beginning

There are ways parents can lessen discomfort in discussing the possibility of sexual assaults. One way is to gather good sex-education materials on both the adult and children's levels, read the materials and then practice the words, beginning slowly and carefully. Parents may want to discuss the material with another adult before approaching the child.

The steps just mentioned are very formal and are presented here for the benefit of those parents who keep postponing the job of sex education.

Ideally, sex education starts when the child is quite young and continues through life. Providing answers to a child's questions as they come up, one by one, is the most natural and best form of sex education.

Asking children what they already understand about the topic is also a good way to initiate sex discussions. It also gives parents an opportunity to clear up any misconceptions. Learning what level of understanding a child has can help a parent decide what and how much new information to offer.

Content

What each parent says to each child will be different, since much depends on the child's age, the parent's values, openness, language and family structure. Preschool-age children have had some experience with assault behavior if they have been around other children at all. They may understand this type of behavior as someone who is unfair, does not take turns, or is a bully. Finding an analogy that the child already understands is a good starting point.

An important issue to establish about sexual assault is that not all people want what is best for a child. Some people may try to make a child do something that makes a child feel uncomfortable or is unfair. A parent might say: "Sometime someone might want to touch your crotch (vagina or penis) and you don't want them to," or, "someone might try to make you touch his penis and you don't want to." These are ideas that preschoolers as well as school-age children can understand.

Another important issue to establish is that the "someone" who might want a child to do unfair things might be a friend. It is difficult to explain the difference between a forced assault and more subtle types of coercion. It is important to explain that the "someone" may even be a person everyone knows, likes and trusts. Statistics show that a majority of all sexual assaults of children are by people known to the victim.

There are many opportunities to discuss this topic with the impetus of television programs, stories brought home from school about assaults, or newspaper accounts of rape victims. The more specific parents are and the more occasions on which it is discussed, the easier and more effective this type of education becomes.

The Game without Rules

Growing up and learning about how to cope with the possibility of a sexual assault is a little like learning how to play a game without rules. Children have a natural trusting instinct and they are taught to obey those who are older—to do what they say.

It is confusing for a child if a person such as an older relative or a baby-sitter says:

“It’s OK to do this; your mom told me it was OK before she left,”
or

“What is wrong with you—don’t you like me any more? You make me feel bad,” or

“Now that you are a big boy (girl), I’m supposed to find out if you are OK.”

On one hand, the child feels uncomfortable about the requests; on the other hand, mom said to mind and “be a good boy (girl).” These statements might not seem coercive to an adult but they certainly do to a child, because of the mixed messages involved—their own feelings versus what they have been told.

Children have very little control over their personal environments. They can’t control who touches them, how much, when or where. Older siblings, relatives or friends can take advantage of a child’s age, lack of experience and innocence without realizing it.

Examples of this include playful wrestling, tickling or chasing sessions that get out of hand. Probably no one means harm in this, but when a child pleads “stop!” and is ignored, panic can ensue. Also, wrestling and tickling sessions can turn into sexual assaults if one has that in mind.

Often children’s efforts to protect themselves are ignored. They are told not to speak back, be sassy or argue with adults. Because adults set the rules, children think adults are always right. That is why children must be cautioned that not all adults want what is best for them. Although children might not think the game they are playing has any rules, it does. They need to be told the rules: no one should touch them in their private places; no one should ask them to do something sexual; and people should treat their bodies in a fair way.

DECISION-MAKING SKILLS

Children can be taught self-defense against sexual exploitation. Two important defense concepts to teach are: 1) you can say “no,” and strictly mean it, and 2) you can call for help if you need it. If children are given these how-to lessons, along with the language to use and permission to get angry, they can be effective in preventing sexual assault. This type of intervention—resistance from the child—will almost always stop a perpetrator from advancing further.

Saying “No”

Parents can be the backup authority for children to base their decisions on. If children know their own bodies and can decide who touches it, they can simply say, “Don’t do that. My mom (dad) told me not to let anyone touch me there.” “You can’t do that in this house—it’s against the rules.” “My dad (mom) said if anyone ever did that to me I was supposed to tell them right away.”

Teaching children when and how to say “no” is a delicate balancing act for parents. Children need to understand that “no” is inappropriate when they are supposed to get up, eat breakfast, or do chores. However, if a child understands that “no” is reserved for those times when he or she really needs the word, it can be an effective deterrent.

Getting Help

One of the most frustrating issues about child sexual abuse is the situation in which a child has tried to tell someone and no one listened and believed. Children need to be given the decision-making skills to call for help when they need it.

Relatives, teachers, neighbors, friends and especially parents are all people available to the child in trouble. Sometimes children feel more comfortable in telling someone other than a family member about personal problems. If parents tell their children that it’s OK to ask people outside the family for help when they need it, the child will have many more resources available.

Surprises v. Secrets

Many sexual assaults have occurred because the perpetrator was able to capitalize on a young child's love for secrets. To tell a secret when it should not be told is a serious breach of trust to a child. However, most children's secrets could be categorized more correctly as surprises—for example, what is in a birthday present, or who is coming to dinner. When older children or adults require a child to keep a secret about sexual matters, it is unfair. Surprises are fun, but sometimes "secrets hide things that shouldn't be hidden." (Adams 1981)

PROTECTIVE PRACTICES

Another solution to the child sexual exploitation problem is some very basic protective practices that children, parents, teachers and neighbors can exercise. The protection of children is the responsibility of everyone in the community, and it takes the cooperation of all.

Abusive situations do not always occur in the home and within the family circle. Many crimes are committed by older children against younger children. Sometimes the "perfectly normal, all-around" teen or preteen goes berserk and commits hideous crimes against younger children. Parents, teachers and youth workers can help prevent some of the child-related crimes by giving children rules and guidelines to follow for their own protection.

For Children

Children can protect themselves by learning to be observant. Often children lapse into a dreamworld, shutting out everything and everyone. During such times, they may step in front of a car, run across a street against the light, or fall down. Some children tend to daydream more than others, and learning to be observant is more difficult for them. However, if they can learn to note the unusual, the suspicious, the strange behavior of others, half the battle is won. Adults can model this behavior by commenting on unusual happenings when they are with the child. Children can learn to note descriptions of people, license plates, and vehicles or strange cars parked at the playground or schoolyard if they understand that such observation is for their own safety and well-being.

Children can protect themselves by refusing gifts, candy, toys, money or rides from strangers. They should know, absolutely, that a stranger will not be sent to pick them up at school or at the store or a movie. They should also realize that if someone calls to them from a car, they should never get close enough to be snatched or pulled into the car.

Children can protect themselves by absolutely refraining from hitchhiking. The no-hitchhiking rule must be firm and unbreakable. Sometimes a youngster pretends to hitchhike while waiting for a bus or for a ride with family or friends. Kidnapping and physical abuse can result from such a game.

The once-stylish coin loafer shoe also had an extra practical use: children could carry coins in the shoetops for emergency phone-call use. Perhaps that idea is still sound. Children can protect themselves by taping a couple of dimes into their shoes for an emergency call home.

The "latch-key" child is one who arrives home in the afternoon, several hours ahead of the rest of the family. It is not uncommon for some children to let themselves into the house, fix a snack, and then either watch TV or go out to play until other family members get home. The child may either wear the house key (hence the term latch-key children), or use one hidden at the house or apartment. Here are some basic security rules for these children:

- When children return home alone they need to have the house key in their hand so they can enter quickly. This habit also reminds the child to keep alert;
- The child should keep the doors and windows locked.
- No visitors should be admitted when the child's parents are not at home.
- If the phone rings, information such as "My parents aren't home," "No one is home but me," or "I'm alone" should never be given. Children can protect themselves by saying, "Mom can't come to the phone," and immediately end the conversation.

Older children often harass younger children for lunch or newspaper money. Young children who tend to boast about their "riches" are caught in this predicament more often than children who are quiet about their wealth. However, a child must understand that belongings are never worth risking physical harm. This is a difficult lesson, because small treasures are precious to young children.

One of the best tactics children can use is yelling loudly to attract attention; but fighting back, running, or talking their way out of difficult situations are also useful tactics. Children should not be limited to using one tactic alone, although this depends on the child and the particular situation.

For Parents

Parents can protect their children by having the kind of relationship that permits open and frank discussion of personal subjects, fears and apprehensions. Children who say they can't talk to their parents, and parents who say their children don't listen to them, are in for trouble because neither has confidence or trust in the other.

If parents find it upsetting to talk calmly about such matters as sexual offenses, they should ask a close relative, a friend, or the child's teacher to explain appropriate safety measures.

Although it is important to talk openly and honestly about crime, parents shouldn't try to frighten a child into being careful. By their tone of voice and their body language, parents can transfer fears and anxieties to their children.

One important guideline is to refrain from telling children more than they can understand, especially graphic details. A common-sense approach is appropriate.

Parents should develop friendships with the parents of their children's friends. These friendships help both sets of parents keep in touch and to check on what their children are doing together.

Parents need to set up safety rules that have well-thought-out explanations for the "whys" of each rule.

- One standard safety rule is: "I want to know where you are at all times. If you are playing in a certain area and decide to go somewhere else, let me know first." Parents often require that children call them when they arrive at their destination and when they leave for home. In this way they can monitor unusual delays and can anticipate problems that might occur. Most families set a certain time for children to come home. They ask their children to call them if they cannot meet the deadline.

- Another safety rule: “Tell me if you go into your friend’s house to play. Call me and let me know where you are and how long you will be there.” Many parents have desperately searched a neighborhood, only to find their child playing in the house next door.
- Parents may want to know the exact route their children walk to and from school so that they can pick them up if necessary. It is also important that a child walk the same way each day for safety reasons. Shortcuts through different neighborhoods with strange people or stray dogs may be dangerous for children.
- Parents have a responsibility to inform and educate their child about emergency behavior. What action to take in case of fire, accident, or another emergency is good practice for children as well as adults. A list of emergency phone numbers should be kept beside the phone.
- Parents can model good safety behavior by taking travel precautions, such as using well-lighted streets and keeping car doors locked and windows closed. In case of emergency, they should try to reach a police station or a busy, populated area. If this is not possible, they should remain in the locked car and honk the horn until help arrives. Children learn from their parents’ behavior, both the good and the bad. Parents can help protect their child by modeling only the best safety behavior.
- Closely related to this point is the basic attitude parents have toward law-enforcement officers and agencies. If parents consider officers to be helpers—people to look to in time of emergency—children will also see them in this light. Parents should cooperate with the police and consult them immediately if any suspicious event occurs. No neighbor, relative, or friend should be shielded or protected if they harm children or commit other crimes. All obscene phone calls, exhibitionists, peepers and “offers” should be reported immediately.
- Parents should practice the “what if” game with their child. For example, “What if a stranger offers you a ride home?” “What if older children begin to hurt you to get your money?” “What if you think you are being followed?” By rehearsing some possible situations, parents can bring out their child’s fears and anxieties as well as see if they know what to do in certain dangerous situations.

For Teachers

Teachers can encourage the “buddy system.” If children live near each other, teachers can help them coordinate their walk or bike route. Because “there is safety in numbers,” children should be in the company of other children, older brothers and sisters or adults, if at all possible.

Teachers can have children draw a map of the safest walk or bike route to school and arrange for older children to accompany younger ones.

Teachers can help children memorize their home phone number or that of their parents’ work place. They can also teach the child how to dial the operator or an emergency police number.

Teachers can offer their personal phone number as an emergency number in case the child in crisis cannot contact a parent, a neighbor or a relative.

For Neighbors

One of the best preventives against crime is a caring neighbor. In many communities, residents have volunteered to provide help for children in trouble. Sometimes these neighbors put signs in their windows to tell children where they can go if they are in trouble. Such a program can be a deterrent to crime.

BUILDING FAMILY STRENGTHS

Over the years, when populations have suffered disasters and after the danger passed and it was safe to emerge from hiding, the first thing people have done was search for their families. Or they would look for people who were like family to them. Observation and research has shown that family life is more important to us than we sometimes realize.

As we look back in history we see that the quality of family life is very important to the strength of nations. We can see this pattern in the rise and fall of great societies such as ancient Rome, Greece and Egypt. When these societies were at the peak of their power and prosperity, the family was strong and highly valued. When family life became weak in these societies, when the family was not valued, when society became extremely individualistic, the society began to deteriorate and eventually fell.

There is considerable evidence that the quality of family life is extremely important to emotional well-being, happiness and mental health. Poor relationships within the family are very strongly related to many of the problems in society. Obviously, strengthening family life should be one of the nation's top priorities. Unfortunately, it has not been a top priority in the recent past.

In bookstores, supermarkets and the newsstand, there are many books and magazine articles about what's wrong with families and about the problems families have. Many books predict that the family will disappear, that it is no longer meeting the needs of society. Much of what is written about families has focused on problems and pathology in family life.

Although new information is needed about family problems, a balanced view is also needed. For example, information about positive family models and what strong families are like should be discussed. Most people learn best by studying a positive model.

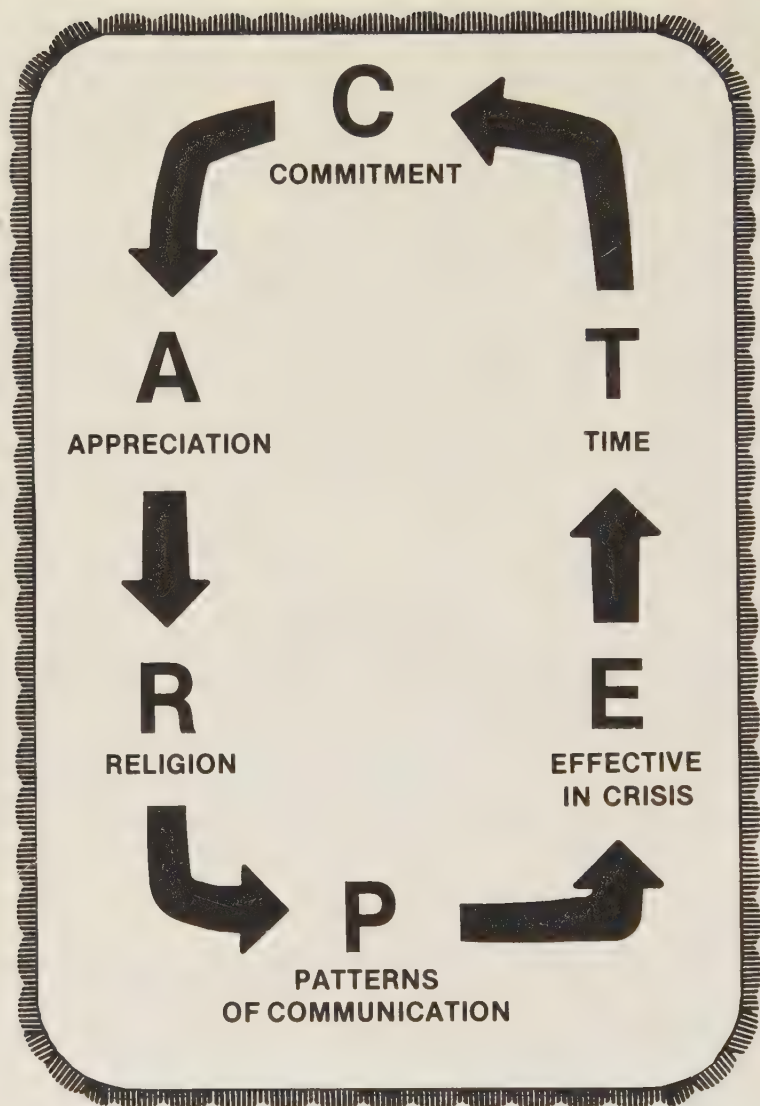
One such study tried to identify and study intact families. (Stinnett 1981) To be included, these families were both recommended by others as being strong and rated themselves as strong. They were given questionnaires and participated in interviews about factors concerning their interaction patterns.

There were six qualities of family life that the families shared. These qualities seemed to play a very important role in the strength and happiness of the families. To help remember them, view them as the CAR-PET. (See the diagram on the following page.)

C = Commitment

These strong families had a commitment to each member's happiness and welfare. That they were also very committed to the family group was reflected by their investment of time and energies into the family.

An important point about these families is that they structured a lifestyle that enhanced the quality of their family relationships and satisfactions. They were on the offensive. They did not just react; they made things happen for their family. They were not at the mercy of the environment or outside influences. They exercised their ability to make life more enjoyable for all members.



A = Appreciation

These strong families expressed a great deal of appreciation for each other. They built each other up psychologically. They gave each other many positive psychological strokes, and made members feel good about themselves. This tended to give each person a feeling of self-worth and a high self-concept.

Although everyone wants to be appreciated, it seems to have extra importance if the appreciation comes from within the family.

R = Religion

These strong families all expressed a high degree of religious orientation. This quality also agrees with other research. It shows a positive relationship of religion to marriage, happiness and successful family relationships. These strong families went to church together often and they participated in religious activities together. Most of them, although not all of them, were members of organized churches. All of them were very religious.

There are indications that this religious quality went deeper than attending church services or participating in religious activities together. It could more appropriately be called a commitment to a spiritual lifestyle. Members of these families said they had an awareness of God or a higher power that gave them a sense of purpose and gave their family a sense of support and strength. The awareness of this higher power in their lives helped them to be more patient with each other, more forgiving, quicker to get over anger, more positive, and more supportive in their relationships. Many of the values emphasized by religion when put into action can enhance the quality of human relationships.

P = Patterns of Communication

The strong families had very good communication patterns. They spent time talking with each other. It is difficult for people to communicate with each other unless they spend time together.

Another important aspect of this pattern of communication was that these strong families also listened well. They reported that their family members were good listeners and this was important to them. The fact that family members listen to one another also communicates a very important message—respect. These families are saying to one another, “You respect me enough to listen to what I have to say. I’m interested enough to listen, too.”

Another factor related to communication is that these families did fight. They got mad at each other, but they got conflict out in the open and were able to talk it over, to discuss a problem. They shared their feelings about alternative ways to deal with the problem and selected a solution that seemed best for everybody.

E = Effective in Crises

These strong families had the ability to deal with crises and problems in a positive way. Not that they enjoyed crises, but they were able

to deal with it. They managed, even in the darkest situations, to look at the issue and to see some positive element, no matter how tiny. It may have been, for example, that in a particular crisis they simply had to rely to a greater extent on each other and develop the trust that they had in each other. They were able to unite in dealing with the crisis instead of being fragmented by it. They dealt with the problem and were supportive of each other.

T = Time

These strong families did a lot of things together and spent a good deal of time together. It was not a “false” togetherness nor a “smothering” type of togetherness. They genuinely enjoyed being together. Another important point here is that these families structured their lifestyles so that they could spend time together. It did not “just happen.” They made it happen. And this togetherness was in all areas of their lives—eating meals, recreation, and work.

It was noted that most of the qualities which characterized the CARPET of these strong families are not seen in families having severe relationship problems. This observation supports the validity of the findings and suggests the importance of the CARPET in building family strengths.

A comprehensive program, moral and sexual education, teaching decision-making skills and protective practices and building family strengths are all suggested parts of a battle plan to combat sexual exploitation. Some of them can be accomplished in a short time; we may not see progress on others in our lifetime. Each solution has both strong and weak points, and what may work for one group of people may not serve well for others. But, it is obvious from the nature and scope of the suggestions that it will take the cooperation of everyone to eradicate child sexual exploitation.

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CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Shirley O'Brien

About the Author: Shirley O'Brien is a person concerned about children. Her experiences include TV writer/teacher of children's programs, child psychologist, Head Start coordinator, public school teacher, researcher, curriculum consultant, conference speaker, workshop leader and entertainer through song and guitar. She received her doctorate in child development from Oregon State University. For the past few years she has been writing parenting materials. Through her many speaking engagements she has met individuals requesting help with family abuse, particularly child sexual exploitation. It was through these experiences that ***Child Pornography*** was written.

The goals of this book are:

- (1) To increase the reader's awareness of child pornography and sexual exploitation;
- (2) To categorize child pornography as a type of child abuse;
- (3) To dramatize that child pornography is a growing problem;
- (4) To identify characteristics of child victims as well as perpetrators; and
- (5) To offer possible ways to combat the problem.



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