

Institutional Abuse: Understanding and Responding to child abuse within Faith Communities, Sports, Youth Serving Organizations, and Universities

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Agenda

- **Overview of institutional abuse**
- **Generic reasons for institutional failure**
- **Reasons unique to each culture**
- **Twelve things we can do**
- **Resilience**

A special announcement



The happy grandparents



Institutional abuse

SCANDAL

Abuse within faith communities



MARK RUFFALO MICHAEL KEATON RACHEL WASSERMAN LEEV SCHREIBER JOHN SLATTERY BRIAN D'ARCY JAMES CRIBB BILLY AND STANLEY TUCCI

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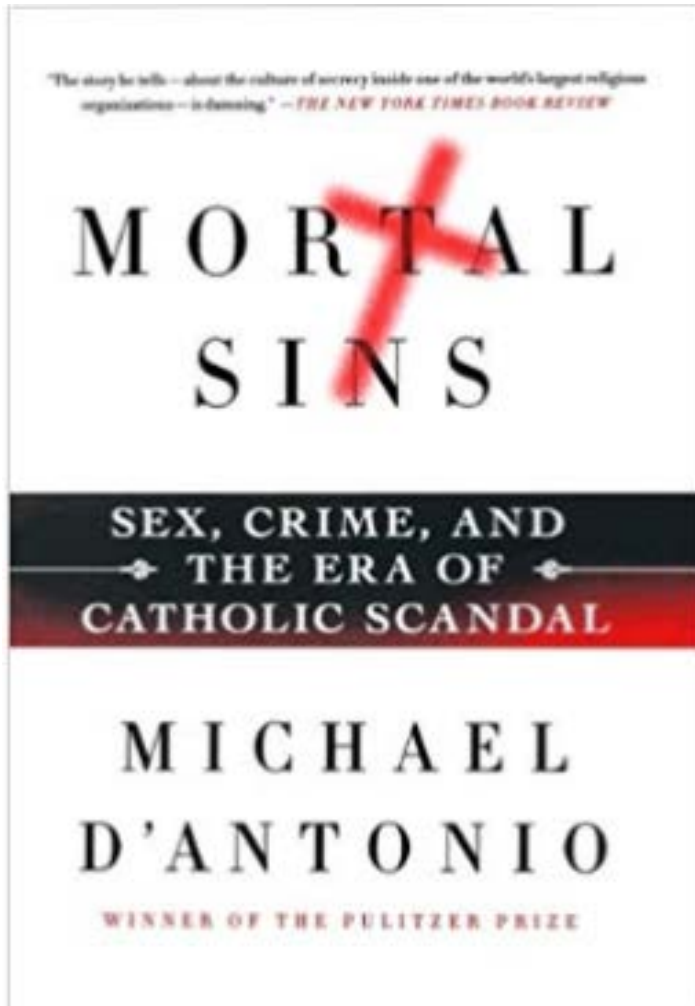
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Catholic and Protestant scandals



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SPECIAL SERIES
faith matters

 **Protestant Churches Grapple With Growing Sexual Abuse Crisis**

16:25
May 23, 2014 · 11:33 AM ET
Heard on Tell Me More

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MICHEL MARTIN, HOST:

I'm Michel Martin, and this is TELL ME MORE from NPR News. Now it's time for Faith Matters. That's the part of program where we talk about matters of faith, religion and spirituality. And today, we want to take a closer look at how one faith community dealt with allegations of sexual abuse within its ranks. Now, of course the Catholic Church has been in headlines for years for its handling - or mishandling - of this issue in congregations around the world. But evangelical and other Protestant

The John Jay Study



- The “prevalence of the problem in the Catholic Church” was “widespread”
- More than 95% of the U.S. dioceses impacted
- Between 3-6% of priests credibly accused
- Many scholars believe the numbers are low (e.g. most victims never disclose)

SBC Sexual abuse

HOUSTON★CHRONICLE



Abuse of Faith

20 years, 700 victims: Southern Baptist sexual abuse spreads as leaders resist reforms

By Robert Downen, Lise Olsen, and John Tedesco
Multimedia by Jon Shapley



Protestant clergy abuse: 260 reports annually

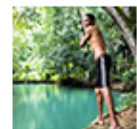
Data Shed Light on Child Sexual Abuse by Protestant Clergy

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS JUNE 16, 2007

NASHVILLE, June 14 (AP) — The three companies that insure a majority of Protestant churches say they typically receive upward of 260 reports a year of children younger than 18 being sexually abused by members of the clergy, church staff members, volunteers or congregants.

The figures released to The Associated Press offer a glimpse into what has long been a difficult phenomenon to detail: the frequency of sexual abuse in Protestant congregations.

Religious groups and victims' supporters have been keenly interested in the figure since the Roman Catholic sexual-abuse crisis erupted five years ago. The church has said it has recorded 13,000 credible accusations against Catholic clergymen since 1950.

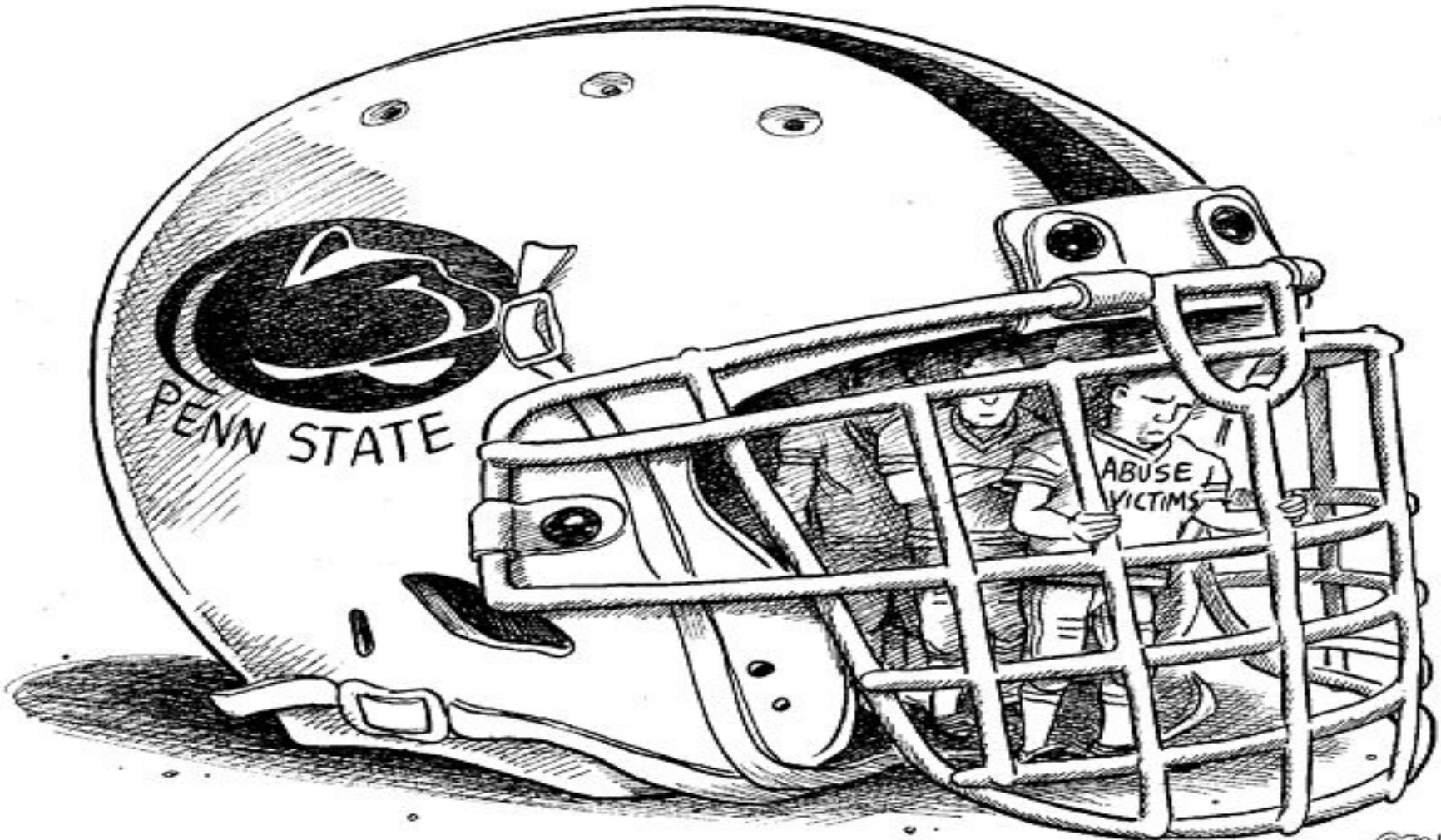


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University scandals

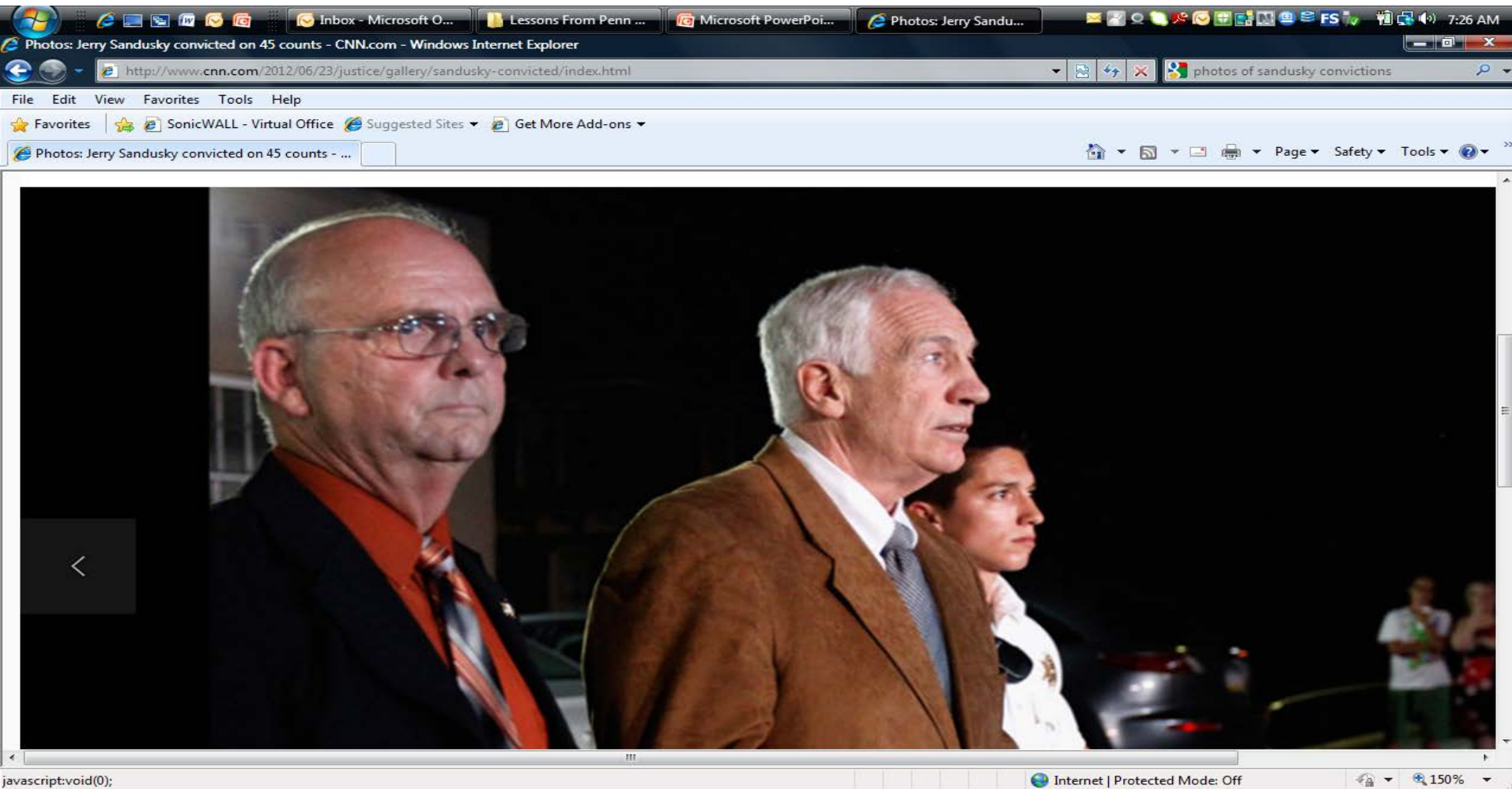


Penn State University

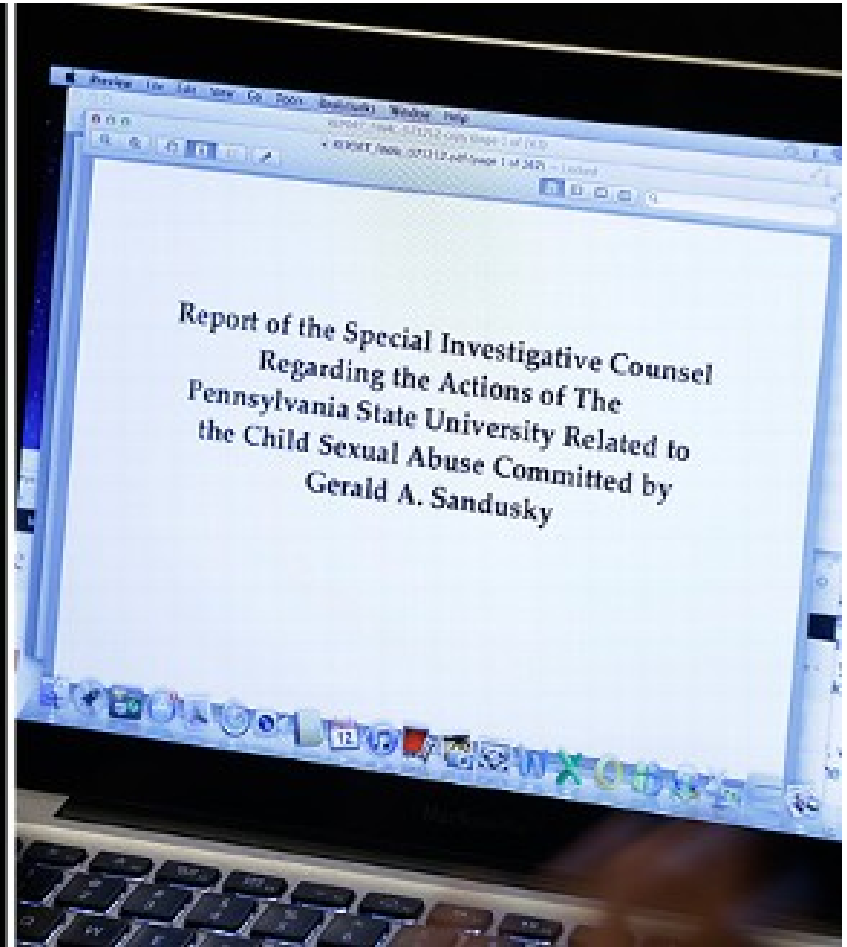


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THE BUFFALO NEWS 2/6/15

Sandusky convicted 45 counts



Freeh report: PSU Officials Failed for a decade out of a fear of bad publicity



Freeh Report

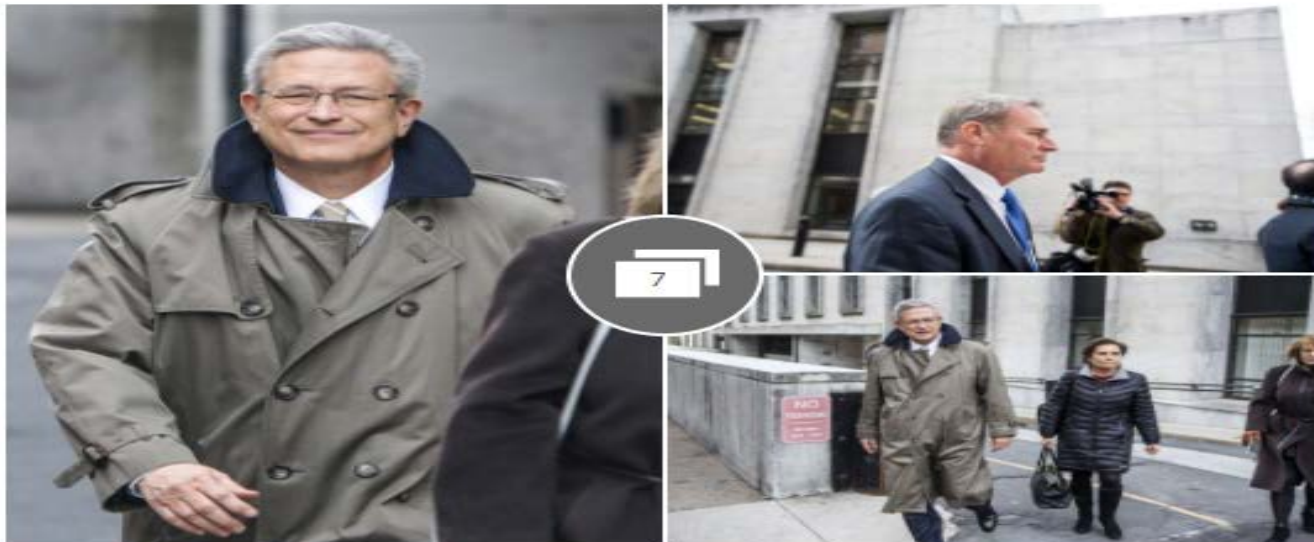
“...in order to avoid the consequences of bad publicity, the four most powerful leaders at the university—Spanier, Curley, Paterno and Schultz—repeatedly concealed critical facts relating to Sandusky’s child abuse from the authorities, the Penn State Board of Trustees, the Penn State community, and the public at large.”

Curley (AD), Schultz (VP) plead guilty

PENNSYLVANIA REAL-TIME NEWS

Tim Curley, Gary Schultz plead guilty in Sandusky coverup case

Updated Mar 13, 2017: Posted Mar 13, 2017



Gallery: Tim Curley, Gary Schultz plead guilty in alleged Sandusky coverup case

Spanier convicted, serves jail sentence

Sports






Former Penn State president Graham Spanier sentenced to jail for child endangerment in Jerry Sandusky abuse case

By Will Hobson June 2, 2017 [Email the author](#)



Former Penn State president Graham Spanier, center, arrives for his sentencing hearing Friday. (AP Photo/Matt Rourke)

Most Read Sports

- 1 Perspective**
The Nationals must think about the unthinkable: Trading Bryce Harper 
- 2** Jerry Jones called Trump's interest in NFL anthem issue 'problematic.' Trump thanked him anyway. 
- 3** Wizards deleted Team USA photo of John Wall but couldn't stop him from getting roasted 
- 4** LeBron James says he regrets giving his older son the same name 
- 5** This is the man who delivers the most specialized skill in college football 



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Penn State's Failure to Report

- Nineteen adults, many well educated, who failed to report suspicions of abuse or whose response is best categorized as “limited”
- Three of the adults witnessed abuse

What happened at PSU is national norm

- A 1990 study found that only 40% of maltreatment cases and 35% of the most serious cases known to mandated reporters were in fact reported
- A 2000 study found that 65% of social workers, 53% of physicians and 58% of physicians assistants were not reporting all cases of suspected abuse
- 2001 study of 197 teachers: only 26% would report familial abuse & only 11% abuse at hands of a fellow teacher

Michigan State University



Child abuse within sports



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51 women sue U.S. Olympic Committee for failing to stop Nassar abuse

- **Sexual abuse of children in athletics ranges from 2-8%**

– Kirby (2000); Leahy (2002); Toflegaard-Nielsen (2001)

The local coach

San Jose Youth Basketball Coach Arrested on Suspicion of Lewd Acts With Child

By Bay City News

Published Apr 5, 2019 at 8:34 PM | Updated at 8:35 PM PDT on Apr 5, 2019



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Sexual abuse in YSOs

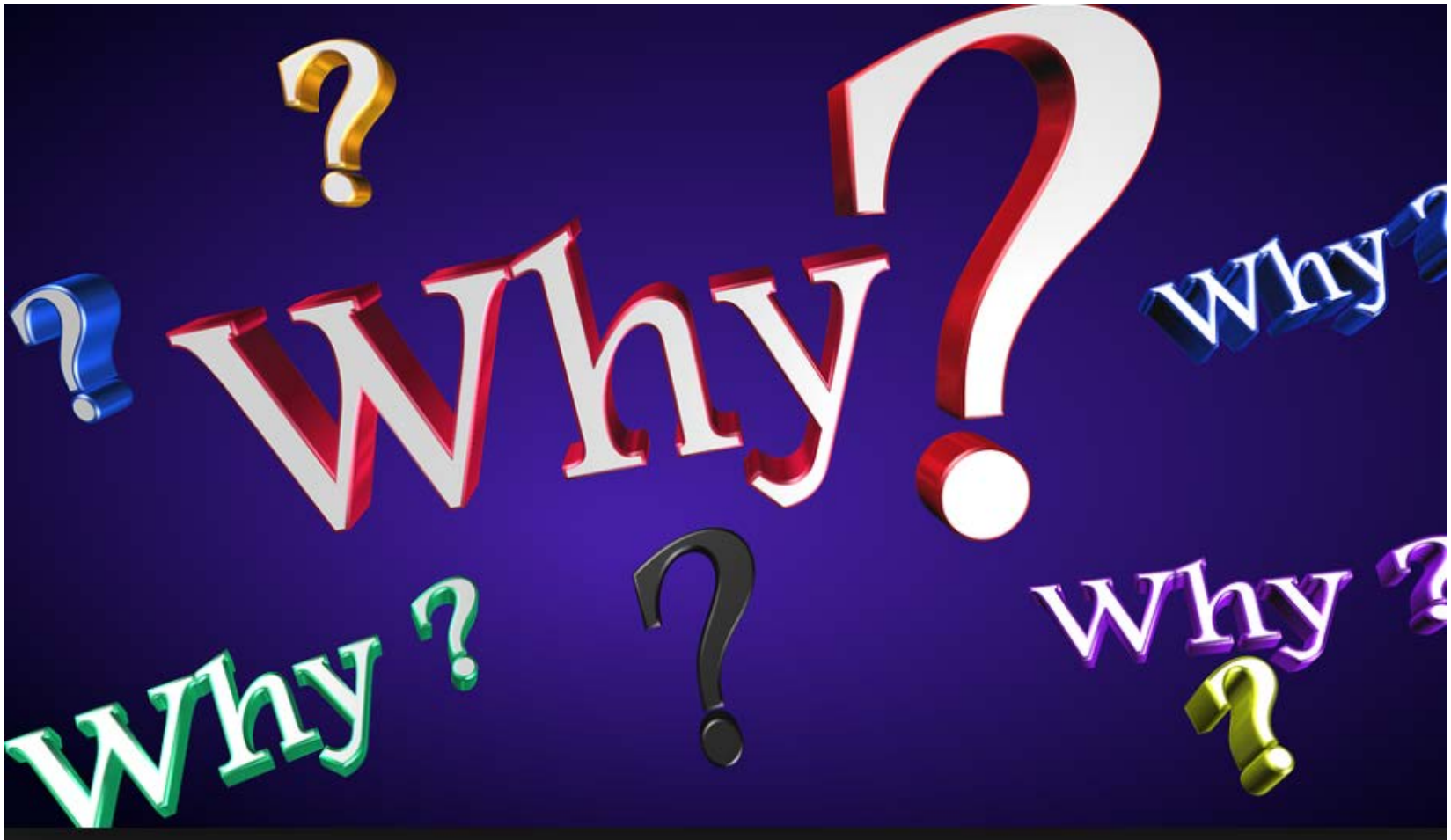
4 men sue Boy Scouts of America over alleged sexual abuse

By Lia Eustachewich

July 24, 2018 | 3:57pm



Understanding abuse in YSOs



Cognitive dissonance

- **When confronted with evidence that conflict with our beliefs about a person or organization, we may “seek to discredit and reject the conflicting evidence.”**
- **Sex offenders report exploiting this tendency by “intentionally situating themselves at the center of the community, as generous, kind, learned and pious leaders, who are truly exemplar in every way.”**
 - Berkovits (2017)

What cognitive dissonance looks like

“The rabbi listened and responded, ‘I’m hearing everything you have to say, and I know you must be right. And yet, I cannot believe this wonderful person would ever harm a child. Even now, if I needed to teach a *shiur* at *shul* and my wife wasn’t home, I wouldn’t hesitate for a moment to ask this man to babysit and leave him alone with my children.”

– Berkovits (2017)

Cognitive distortions: the danger of all or nothing thinking

- **The public perceives offenders as “monsters” and thus can’t conceive that someone who may have done much good can be an offender**
- **In one instance, a rabbi engaged in voyeurism and exhibitionism with children but also “served numerous families in times of need, waking in the middle of night to sit with those who lost loved ones, visiting the ill...”**
- **We must educate the public that someone can do very good things and still commit offenses.**
 - **Berkovits (2017)**

Myths & stereotypes

Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 20:322–337, 2011
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ISSN: 1053-8712 print/1547-0679 online
DOI: 10.1080/10538712.2011.573459



CASE STUDIES

Disclosure of Sexual Abuse in Sport Organizations: A Case Study

SYLVIE PARENT

Laval University, Québec, Québec, Canada

The disclosure of sexual abuse in the world of sports is a process that has not been widely documented. This article presents the results of a document analysis of sport organization policies and interviews conducted with 27 sport stakeholders. The interviews focus on these stakeholders' perceptions of how the disclosure process would unfold if a case of sexual abuse were to arise in their organization and their perceptions of the actual cases experienced in the sport organizations participating in this study. The results reveal several problems affecting the disclosure of sexual abuse in sport organizations.

KEYWORDS sexual abuse, sport organizations, disclosure, policies and complaint procedures

“The results obtained show that sport stakeholders (including athletes) minimized and trivialized the problems experienced by the victims, blamed the victims for the acts perpetrated against them, or even challenged the victims’ credibility.”

--Parent (2011)

Discounting victims disclosures

- **“After every atrocity one can expect to hear the same predictable apologies: it never happened; the victim lies; the victim exaggerates; the victim brought it upon herself; and in any case it is time to forget the past and move on. The more powerful the perpetrator, the greater is his prerogative to name and define reality, and the more completely his arguments prevail.”**
 - Dr. Judith Herman (1997)

The dynamics of boy victims in sport

- **Boys disclose less frequently than girls**
 - Afraid of being labeled weak, gay, and worried about reaction of parents and peers
- **Boys disclose much later in life with one study finding that boys who did disclose took over 20 years to report**
- **“Victimization and the way it is experienced are different for boys than girls.”**
 - Parent & Benson (2012)

A mindset of protecting the institution

- **Church officials blamed outside forces for the scandal (such as the departure of society from traditional church teachings on sex)**
- **Contended the media was “sensationalizing and exaggerating the problem,”**
- **Asserted there was an “anti-Catholic agenda” at work to weaken the church**
- **Suggested that homosexuality and not child sexual abuse was the root of the problem**
- **Maintained that the church leaders had a limited understanding about child sexual abuse**
 - Doyle & Rubina (2003)

Tremendous power of the institution over the child and family

- **Nearly all the victims were “raised in devout Catholic families” with “strong ties to the Church as well as individual clergy members.”**
- **Reverence for the church, or at least a close affiliation with Catholicism served the cause of silence.**
- **For many children and their families, there was a fear that rebellion against the church would bring eternal consequences.**
- **When children or their parents did make an outcry, intimidation of victims and their families by church leaders also served to keep the abuse secret.**
 - Michael D’Antonio (2013)

The power of the institutional church


- **Megan was a devout, fourteen-year-old Catholic girl with aspirations of becoming a nun.**
- **She was often found alone in the pews praying amidst the “quiet light that came through the stained glass windows.”**
- **One day, a Catholic Priest by the name of Joseph Jeyepaul invited her into his office to borrow a book.**
- **He then locked the door and raped her. During and after the course of the rape, Father Jeyepaul incorporated theological constructs into his crime.**
- **Jeyepaul told his victim that it was a sin not to cooperate and then demanded that she confess at the conclusion of the sexual assault.**
- **On subsequent occasions, Jeyepaul raped Preston within a confessional—and then gave the child penance to pay for her sins.**
 - **D’Antonio (2013)**

An issue in all faith communities

Jack Schaap, Indiana Pastor, Claimed Jesus Wanted Him To Have Sex With Teenage Girl

The Huffington Post | By Meredith Bennett-Smith  Posted: 03/14/2013 4:53 pm EDT | Updated: 03/15/2013 
12:26 pm EDT

 Recommend

 11,215 people recommend this.



Jack Schaap, a former megachurch pastor accused of having sex with a teenage girl, gives an animated sermon on "Polishing the Shaft."



Victim's letter to judge

“My entire life the Church has been my universe. Growing up, I watched (Schaap) in Church, listening to his sermons three times a week. I was raised by my parents and teachers to trust and obey my pastor. He was a celebrity to me, a father figure, and a man of God...I felt most safe when I was in Church. I first met (Schaap) when I was in kindergarten, and still had my baby teeth...”

Victim's letter to judge

“As my pastor, I sought guidance and counseling when I was in need of help. He told me to confide in him...He told me I was special, that he loved me, and that he wanted to marry me. He told me that I was his precious gift from God...he made me believe what we were doing was okay and right in the eyes of God. I felt so special when he texted me from the holy alter during his sermons...”

**Many offenders view
religious people as gullible**

**“If children can be silenced and
the average person is easy to fool,
many offenders report that
religious people are even easier to
fool than most people.”**

--Anna Salter

How sex offenders view religious institutions

- **“I consider church people easy to fool...They have a trust that comes from being Christians...They tend to be better folks all around. And they seem to want to believe in the good that exists in all people...I think they want to believe in people. And because of that, you can easily convince, with or without convincing words.”**
- **The case of the choir director**

Sex offenders and religion

- **93% of sex offenders describe themselves as “religious”**
 - Abel study of 3,952 male offenders
- **In a survey of 2,864 church leaders, 20% knew of a sex offender attending/member of their church (Christianity Today 2010)**
- **Hard core offenders maintaining significant involvement with religious institutions “had more sexual offense convictions, more victims, and younger victims.”**
 - Eshuys & Smallbone, *Religious Affiliations Among Adult Sexual Offenders (2006)*
- **Why?**
- **Faith community provides “cheap Grace”, gullible religious people, and easy access to children**

Powers unique to each institution

- **Heaven**
- **Gold medals**
- **Eagle Scout**
- **Good grades**
- **College scholarships**
- **Loyalty to the institution**

What do we do?



1. Teach a nuanced approach

- **“By acknowledging a nuanced approach—a person can do good things without being all good—perception moves beyond the archetypal ‘monstrous’ abuser and we can search out the truth in a person’s sometimes bifurcated existence. Just as individual victims may continue to love and hate their abusers simultaneously, so too a community may recognize that existence of both beneficence and malevolence within a particular community member.”**

– Berkovits (2017)

2. Teach a new dialogue about ambiguous behavior

- **When the behavior is ambiguous, institutions often debate whether the behavior is “committed with nefarious intent or merely poor judgment.”**
- **“If an individual has violated policies, engaged in concerning behavior or disregarded widely accepted norms for a given institution, community members need not identify whether the behavior itself is or is not *technically* abusive.”**
 - Berkovits (2017)

3. Meet the CDC standards

- **Screening/selection of employees & volunteers**
- **Guidelines on interactions**
- **Monitoring behavior**
- **Ensuring safe environments**
- **Responding to inappropriate behavior**
- **Training of employees, caregivers, youth**

Preventing Child Sexual Abuse Within Youth-serving Organizations:

Getting Started on Policies and Procedures



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



4. Expand YSO policies to protect all children

- **Percentage of children abused by biological parents or non-biological parent or partner**
 - 100% of neglected children
 - 93% of emotionally abused children
 - 91% of physically abused children
 - 60% of sexually abused children
- **NIS 4 (2010)**

5. Incorporate polyvictimization into training and policies

- Exposure to multiple forms of victimization was common.
- Almost 66% of the sample was exposed to more than one type of victimization, 30% experienced five or more types, and 10% experienced 11 or more different forms of victimization in their lifetimes.
- Poly-victims comprise a substantial portion of the children who would be identified by screening for an individual victimization type, such as sexual assault or witnessing parental violence.
- Poly-victimization is more highly related to trauma symptoms than experiencing repeated victimizations of a single type and explains a large part of the associations between individual forms of victimization and symptom levels.
- Abuse in one setting (home) increases risk of abuse in other settings.
 - (Turner, Finkelhor, et al, 2010)

Educate YSOs about polyvictimization

- **Unless we pay attention to all forms of abuse, we may not be able to protect a child from any form of abuse**



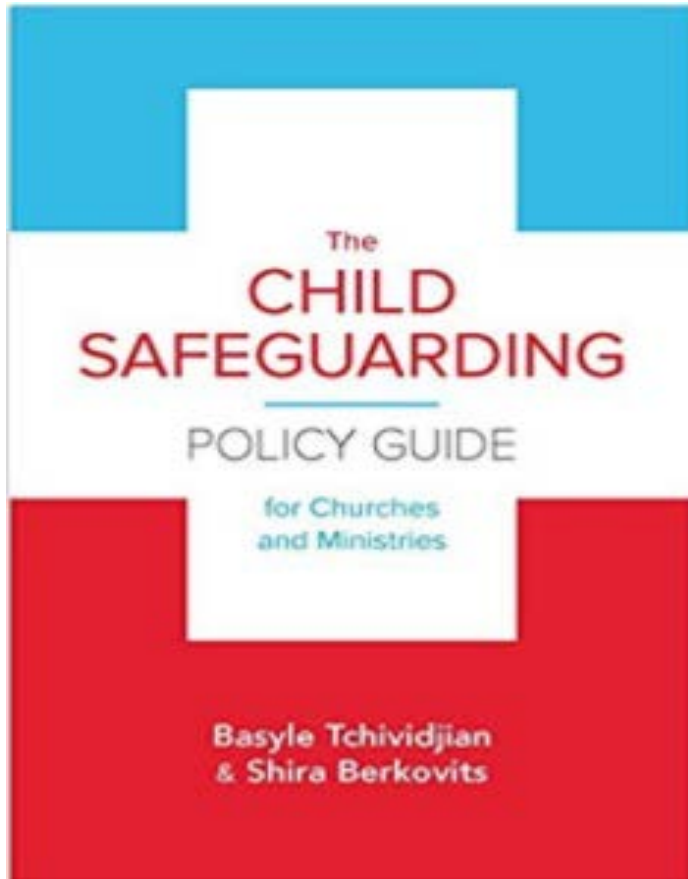
Most trafficked children were originally abused in the home

- **History of sexual abuse, physical abuse or neglect in the home can play a significant role in leading to sexual exploitation/trafficking (Kortla 2010; Williamson & Prior 2009).**
- **One study finds 91% of exploited/trafficked children in the U.S. were abused in their home, 77% had prior involvement with CPS (Williamson & Prior 2009).**

Sex offenders implicitly understand polyvictimization and ACEs

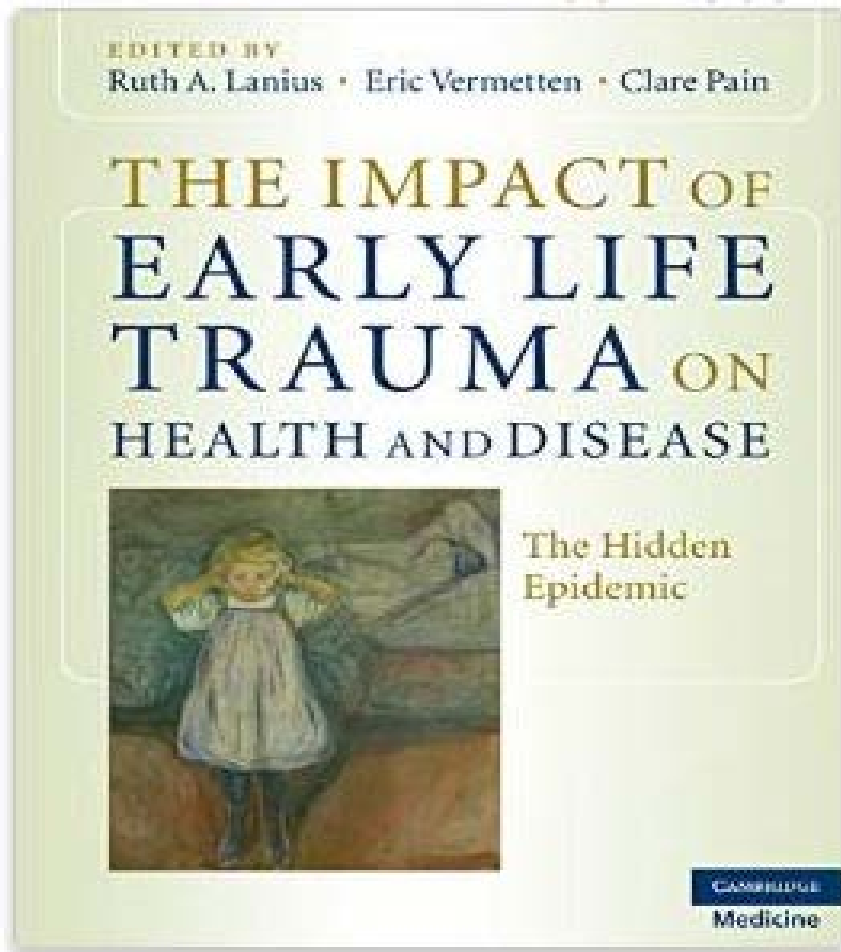
- **Q. At church, you did not molest all the children. How did you choose?**
- **A. “First of all you start the grooming process from day one...the children that you’re interested in...You find a child you might be attracted to...For me, it might be nobody fat. It had to be a you know, a nice looking child...You maybe look at a kid that doesn’t have a father image at home, or a father that cares about them...if you’ve got a group of 25 kids, you might find 9 that are appealing...then you start looking at their family backgrounds. You find out all you can...which ones are the most accessible...you get it down to one that is the easiest target, and that’s the one you do.”**

One example of what can be done



- **Companion guide for Synagogues to be published in 2019**

6. Educate about ACE research



“In the context of everyday medical practice, we came to recognize that the earliest years of infancy and childhood are not lost but, like a child’s footprints in wet cement are often lifelong.”

– Felitti & Anda (2010)

Effects of Exposure to IPV

(Summers, 2006)

	Infants	Preschool Age	School Age	Adolescents
Behavioral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Fussy •Decreased responsiveness •Trouble sleeping •Trouble eating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Aggression •Behavior problems •Regressive behavior •Yelling, irritability •Trouble sleeping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Aggression •Conduct problems •Disobedience •Regressive behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Dating violence •Delinquency •Running away •Truancy •Early sexual activity
Social		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Trouble interacting with peers •Stranger anxiety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Few and low quality peer relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Dating violence (victim or perpetrator) •Increased risk for teen pregnancy

Effects of Exposure to IPV

(Summers, 2006)

	Infants	Preschool Age	School Age	Adolescents
Emotional/ Psychological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Attachment needs not met 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Fear/anxiety, sadness, worry •PTSD •Negative affect •Feeling unsafe •Separation anxiety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Somatic complaints •Fear & anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, shame •PTSD •Limited emotional response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Substance abuse •Depression •Suicidal ideation •PTSD •Feeling rage, shame •Unresponsiveness
Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Inability to understand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Self-blame 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Self-blame •Distracted, inattentive •Pro-violent attitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Short attention span •Pro-violent attitude •Defensive

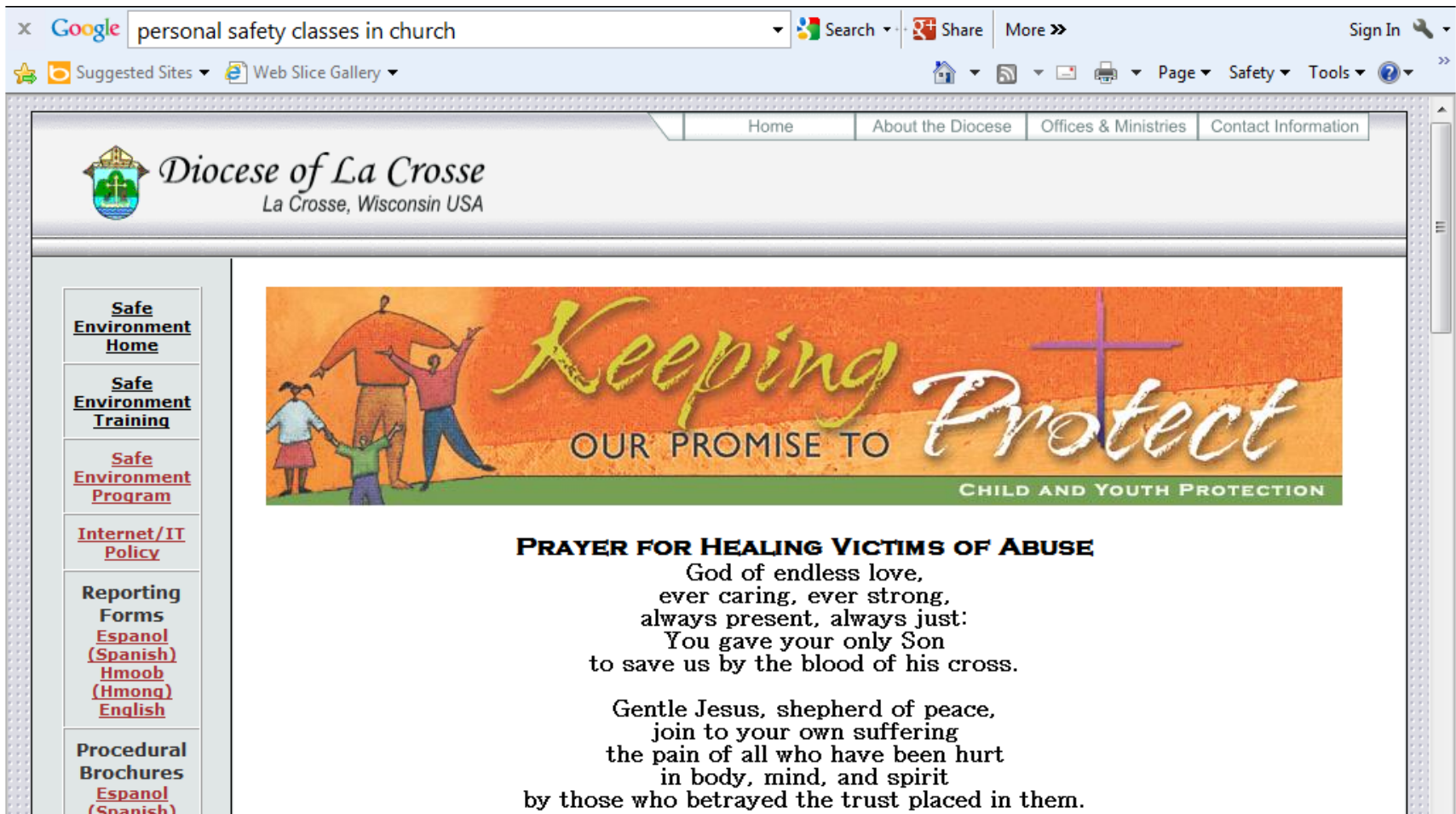
7. Make everyone in YSO a mandated reporter

- “A fellow youth worker confessed to me that, years ago, he had sexually abused a child and was investigated but no charges were brought. I told him I would have to tell our supervisor but he pointed out I was not a mandated reporter, that he would deny our conversation, and sue me for any consequences of such a disclosure. I’m worried he will abuse another child, but I don’t want to be sued or otherwise castigated. He is very popular with the children and the parents.”
- Perhaps if this worker were required by her organization to report, no matter what, she would be able to overcome her fears.
- If YSOs don’t report, what chance do children have?

BSA Mandated Reporting Policies

- **“All persons involved in Scouting must report to local authorities any good faith suspicion or belief that any child is or has been physically or sexually abused, physically or emotionally neglected, exposed to any form of violence or threat, exposed to any form of sexual exploitation including the possession, manufacture, or distribution of child pornography, online solicitation, enticement, or showing of obscene material. This duty cannot be delegated to any other person.”** (emphasis added)
- **“Immediately notify the Scout Executive of this report, or of any violation of BSA’s Youth Protection policies, so he or she may take appropriate action for the safety of our Scouts, make appropriate notifications, and follow-up with investigating agencies.”**

8. Implement personal safety classes



Google personal safety classes in church

Diocese of La Crosse
La Crosse, Wisconsin USA

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KEEPING OUR PROMISE TO **Protect**
CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION

PRAYER FOR HEALING VICTIMS OF ABUSE

God of endless love,
ever caring, ever strong,
always present, always just:
You gave your only Son
to save us by the blood of his cross.

Gentle Jesus, shepherd of peace,
join to your own suffering
the pain of all who have been hurt
in body, mind, and spirit
by those who betrayed the trust placed in them.

Research supports personal safety training

- **“Ample empirical evidence” to support personal safety training**
 - Finkelhor (2007)
- **Children more likely to use self-protection techniques if instructed**
 - Finkelhor (1995)
- **In person training much more effective**

9. Protect children with disabilities

- **Several studies find that children with disabilities are at greater risk for abuse & neglect**
 - OJJDP (2015)
- **Accordingly, policies should be aware of this enhanced risk and take into account the needs of particularly vulnerable populations**

Resources



U.S. Department of Health & Human Services



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Children With Disabilities

Resources and information about serving children with disabilities, including State and local examples.



10. Teach YSOs that predators will abuse a child with others present

- **54.9% of child molesters offended when another child present**
 - The Tricky Part by Martin Moran
- **23.9% offended when another adult present**
 - Underwood, et al, *Do sexual offenders Molest when Other Persons are Present?* 11(3) Journal of Research and Treatment (1999)
- **Note—it may be subtle (under the blankets)**
- **Why? Increases power over child, the chance of getting caught enhances arousal, etc.**

11. Teach YSOs what victims want

1. Offer an “unequivocal apology”
2. Symbolic gestures (i.e. a memorial or rock garden)
3. Changes in policies (two deep leadership, proper screening, immediate reporting to the authorities—no exceptions)
4. Archive the past (victims want the assurance there will never be a revisionist history)
5. The practical (institution should help access mental health and medical services)
6. Listen and act (the hymn that hurt)

--Clark (2009)

12. Faith and child protection communities must work together to address the spiritual impact of abuse

Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy
2009, Vol. 1, No. 2, 130–145

© 2009 American Psychological Association
1942-9681/09/\$12.00 DOI: 10.1037/a0016211

Changes in Personal Religion/Spirituality During and After Childhood Abuse: A Review and Synthesis

Donald F. Walker, Henri Webb Reid, Tiffany O’Neill, and Lindsay Brown
Richmont Graduate University

Psychologists have begun to consider the potential role of traumatic experiences on the victim’s spirituality and religiousness as well as the role personal religious and spiritual faith might have in recovery from abuse. In this review, the authors were particularly interested in these issues as they pertain to childhood abuse. The authors identified 34 studies of child abuse as they relate to spirituality and religiosity that included information on a total of 19, 090 participants. The studies were classified according to both the form of abuse and the form of religiousness or spirituality that were examined. The majority of studies indicated either some decline in religiousness or spirituality ($N = 14$) or a combination of both growth and decline ($N = 12$). Seven studies gave preliminary indications that religiousness/spirituality can moderate the development of posttraumatic symptoms or symptoms associated with other Axis I disorders. The authors discuss implications for both therapy and future research.

Keywords: childhood abuse, religion and spirituality

The impact of abuse on spirituality

- **Subjects of most studies, victims or perpetrators have Judeo-Christian background**
- **A study of 527 child abuse victims (physical, sexual or emotional) found these victims had a “significant” spiritual injury**
- **The injuries included feelings of guilt, anger, grief, despair, doubt, fear of death and belief God is unfair.**
- **However, the victims reported praying more frequently & having a “spiritual experience.”**
 - **Lawson, et al, Child Abuse & Neglect (1998)**

The role of spirituality in coping with abuse

- Researchers have found a victim's "spiritual coping behavior" may play a positive or negative role in the ability to cope with the abuse
- Victims of severe abuse and very young victims are more likely to remain "stuck" in their spiritual development (i.e. remain angry with God)
- Nonetheless many victims reporting "greater resolution" of childhood abuse were able to "actively turn to their spirituality to cope...rather than attempt to cope on their own."

– Gall, *Spirituality and Coping with Life Stress Among Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse*, 30 *Child Abuse & Neglect* 829 (2006)

More research

- **Religious and spiritual forms of coping “contribute to decreased symptoms, greater self esteem, and overall greater life satisfaction.”**
 - Bryant-Davis (2012)
- **Religiousness can moderate posttraumatic symptoms for child abuse survivors**
 - Walker (2009)
- **In a study of 2,964 female child sexual abuse survivors, researchers noted “significantly more posttraumatic symptoms” in survivors with no current religious practices.**
 - Elliott (1994)

Religion and health

International Scholarly Research Network
ISRN Psychiatry
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Review Article

Religion, Spirituality, and Health: The Research and Clinical Implications

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This paper provides a concise but comprehensive review of research on religion/spirituality (R/S) and both mental health and physical health. It is based on a systematic review of original data-based quantitative research published in peer-reviewed journals between 1872 and 2010, including a few seminal articles published since 2010. First, I provide a brief historical background to

American Psychological Association publications

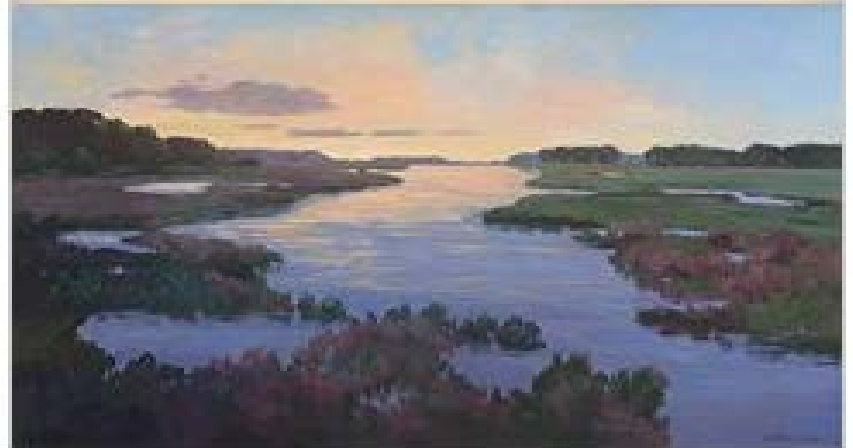
Spiritual Interventions in Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy



Edited by
Donald F. Walker and William L. Hathaway

Spiritually Oriented Psychotherapy for Trauma

Edited by Donald F. Walker, Christine A. Courtis,
and Jamie D. Allen



Collaboration with mental health

(Bilich et al, 2000)

- **Pastor as consultant**
- **Therapist as consultant**
- **Referrals**
- **Limited collaboration**
- **Full collaboration**
 - **Therapy and spiritual guidance offered as integrated whole**

Faith and CAC collaborations



- **Recommendations:**

- **Foster respectful understanding between CACs and faith communities**
- **Provide education to faith leaders**
- **Train CAC staff on religious issues**
- **Discuss religious issues in MDT case reviews**
 - **Tishelman & Fontes (2017)**

Julie Valentine Center Chaplain



Youth serving organizations and resilience



What is resilience?

- Resilience has been used to describe behavior, intellect, emotional well-being, social functioning or all of the above
 - Houshyar (2005)
- Between a third to half of all individuals who have experienced sexual abuse do not (or at least no longer) exhibit adult psychiatric or psychological problems and can therefore be referred to as ‘resilient’
 - Fergusson & Mullen, (1999); McGloin & Widom, (2001)

What makes a child resilient?

- **Perceived social support and social reactions to abuse can influence mental health outcomes and recovery from trauma**
 - Futa et al, (2003); Krause, Kaltman, Goodman, & Dutton, (2008); Ullman, Filipas, Townsend, & Starzynski (2007)
- **Accordingly, when we are supportive of a child making an outcry, this may build resiliency**

Healthy relationships & emotional support

- **The ability to find supportive relationships outside of the family helps overcome the aftermath of abuse**
 - Lauterbach et al., (2007)
- **The availability of emotional support at the time of the abuse will strengthen the ability of an individual to draw support from others in adulthood, thereby engendering resilient functioning**
 - Collishaw et al., (2007)
- **When we respond compassionately to an abused child, and provide one or more healthy relationships with adults or peers, this builds resiliency**

Strong family dynamics

- **A study with hundreds of university students who had experienced childhood abuse found that family characteristics (family conflict or cohesion) affected resilience in adult life far more than the length or type of abuse people had suffered**
 - **McClure, Chavez, Agars, Peacock, & Matosian (2007)**
- **To the extent YSOs build stronger family dynamics, we are also building resiliency**

Laughter and imagination

- **Outgoing personality, good sense of humor, strong intellect, an active imagination decrease risk factors**
 - Pickering, Farmer, & McGuffin (2004)
- **To the extent YSO's make a child's personality stronger or encourage his or her imagination and intellect, even humor, we are building resiliency.**

Self esteem

- **Research suggests that high self-esteem, external attributions of blame, and individuals' coping strategies all predict more positive outcomes**
 - Collishaw et al., (2007).
- **To the extent YSOs build self esteem and coping strategies, and reinforce that children are not to be blamed for abuse, we are building resiliency**

“Till the night be passed”



**“Silence in the
face of evil is
itself evil. Not to
act is to act.”**

– Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Thank You

