

# Male Sexual Abuse

Trilogy of [REDACTED] Strategies

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A Trilogy of Intervention Strategies

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# **Male Sexual Abuse**

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—J. C. G.

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—D. L.

# Introduction

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This book describes three clinical intervention approaches to working with adolescent and young adult males who are victims or perpetrators of sexual abuse. These perspectives differ both in the populations for whom the applications are intended and in the style and theoretical orientation of the intervention techniques.

Part I: Assessment of and Treatment Planning and Individual Psychotherapy for Sexually Abused Adolescent Males describes assessment, treatment planning, and individual psychotherapy with primarily young adult or later adolescent males who have been sexually abused. The theoretical perspective draws upon adaptations of Heinz Kohut's self-psychology. In terms of technique, this perspective often employs interventions from a cognitive-behavioral perspective.

Part II: Family Systems Therapy for Adolescent Male Sex Offenders proposes a model of family systems therapy for working with adolescent males who are perpetrators of sexual abuse. A variety of family systems perspectives and techniques are synthesized into a victim-sensitive therapy for offenders.

Part III: A Model for Working With Adolescent Male Prostitutes relates a model of working with male street youth who are engaged in prostitution. The detached youth work perspective is derived from an older social work tradition best articulated by Gisela Konopka, and recently adapted by Jackie Thompson. The intervention described



falls more under the rubric of youth work, not therapy. Indeed, the population described is generally viewed as untreatable in therapy.

*Male Sexual Abuse* is not a primer on sexual abuse of children. Finkelhor's *Sourcebook on Child Sexual Abuse* (1986) attempts to do that. The two-volume series by O'Donohue and Geer, *The Sexual Abuse of Children: Theory and Research* (1992a) and *The Sexual Abuse of Children: Clinical Issues* (1992b), offers a thorough and well-documented grounding in the complexities of this field.

Nor is *Male Sexual Abuse* a comprehensive view of males as victims of sexual abuse. *Males at Risk* by Bolton, Morris, and MacEachron (1989) fits best in that category. *Male Sexual Abuse* is not written for a lay audience, as is Lew's *Victims No Longer: Men Recovering From Incest and Other Childhood Sexual Abuse* (1988); nor it is a self-help book for sexual abuse victims such as Nestingen and Lewis's *Growing Beyond Abuse: A Workbook for Survivors of Sexual Exploitation or Childhood Sexual Abuse* (1990). These and similar volumes published in recent years effectively address such topics.

Our intent is to provide a diversity of clinically sophisticated points of view in working with adolescent and young adult males involved as victims or perpetrators of sexual abuse. The intended audience is mental health and human service professionals. The sexual abuse field needs greater sophistication in clinical approaches than the first wave of writings produced. We also believe a greater emphasis and respect for diversity of ideas is needed; the field has moved prematurely and somewhat dogmatically to a level of purported consensus about childhood sexual abuse, unwarranted by the nascent databases and clinical explication currently available.

We do not attempt, except in the most rudimentary manner in the Epilogue, to coalesce our three different perspectives. Indeed, they have been developed in a divergent, not convergent, fashion. Some readers may find this unsatisfying. The intent of this book is more to raise questions than to give answers, and to stimulate, not to conclude, discussion.

We come from a variety of backgrounds. John C. Gonsiorek is a traditionally trained clinical psychologist who works primarily in the areas of sexual orientation and sexual identity, and sexual exploitation by health-care professionals and clergy. In the area of sexual abuse, his primary focus has been on young adult and late adolescent males

who are victims of sexual abuse and perpetrators, both male and female, whose abuse occurs in a professional context. Walter H. Bera is a psychologist and family therapist whose involvement in the field has been primarily with adolescent sexual abuse perpetrators and male victims. Other influences have been family systems approaches and behaviorism. Don LeTourneau is a traditionally trained social worker with a background in juvenile delinquency, community mental health for adolescents and families, and public policy. He has spent most of his career doing youth work and, in recent years, his focus has been street work with adolescents, primarily males who are often involved in prostitution.

The reader should not attempt to utilize our suggestions as the single correct approach to individual psychotherapy, family therapy, or street work. We have taken subsections of the areas of male sexual abuse and integrated them with our preferred theoretical perspectives. We encourage the reader to do the same with his or her preferred clinical populations, theory base, and set of skills, rather than to adopt our models in their entirety. As we have challenged each other in assembling this volume, we have mercifully disabused each other (not without some protest and discomfort) of the idea that each of us is "correct." Our greatest hope is that our struggle to maintain respect for diversity of perspectives is catching.

Throughout this book, we often use the word "victim" to refer to those who have been on the receiving end of sexual abuse. We recognize there is considerable debate about the most descriptive and respectful term. Some argue that the word victim suggests a passivity and resignation and is hence undesirable, preferring the word "survivor." This is a valid point, but the word survivor has an even more complex set of connotations. We are uncomfortable with the term survivor, as it tends to imply only the most severe outcomes and suggests that an ongoing struggle is the only appropriate way to respond, thus disenfranchising individuals whose experience may not have been an ongoing struggle.

Around the turn of the century, knowledge of sexual abuse began to emerge, only to become submerged again and repressed on a massive scale. We therefore prefer the word victim, as it captures, in a raw but riveting manner, the violation that is inherent in sexual abuse. We believe the emphasis should be on the wrong that was done, not

on any particular way of coping with that wrong. We also realize, however, that the many points of view on this issue of terminology all reflect different facets of sexual abuse experiences.

*Male Sexual Abuse* is organized into three parts. Part I: Assessment of and Treatment Planning and Individual Psychotherapy for Sexually Abused Adolescent Males is written by John C. Gonsiorek. Chapter 1 reflects on historical perspectives regarding adolescence and male sexual abuse. Chapter 2 critiques current models for understanding sexual abuse. Chapter 3 reviews some of the more salient findings from the male abuse literature and related areas; chapter 4 describes a model for psychological assessment and individual psychotherapy with young adult and late adolescent male victims of sexual abuse.

Part II: Family Systems Therapy for Adolescent Male Sex Offenders is written by Walter H. Bera. Chapter 5 reviews the clinical literature on adolescent sex offenders; chapter 6 describes family systems treatment approaches. Chapter 7 relates in detail victim-sensitive offender therapy.

Part III: A Model for Working With Adolescent Male Prostitutes is written by Don LeTourneau. Chapter 8 reviews what is known about male prostitution. Chapter 9 describes various treatment approaches and a detached youth work model.

An epilogue, by John C. Gonsiorek, finishes the volume. In keeping with the open-ended and inconclusive way we view this field, each author draws the conclusions he sees fit in each chapter, and the book is not "tied together" with a grand summary. We believe that at this juncture, divergent, not convergent, thinking will most benefit the study and understanding of sexual abuse.

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PART I

**Assessment of and Treatment  
Planning and Individual  
Psychotherapy for Sexually  
Abused Adolescent Males**

**JOHN C. GONSIOREK**

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## Historical and Background Perspectives on Adolescent and Male Sexual Abuse

THIS CHAPTER ADDRESSES issues that are typically neglected, avoided, or misunderstood. For a comprehensive historical perspective, readers are referred to the work of Vander Mey (1988, 1992a, 1992b) and the references cited in this chapter. This chapter critiques some internal contradictions in the sexual abuse field; places the concept of adolescence in a historical context; raises the often neglected issues of diversity, erotophobia, and homophobia; and introduces recent understandings about sexual orientation.

The study of sexual abuse is a relatively new field, at least in its current incarnation. Masson (1984) describes an effort to explore this area almost 100 years ago, as well as its eventual suppression. Yet, much writing on sexual abuse lacks historical perspective. It appears that this area emerged suddenly as victims came forward in the 1970s. Writers with more historical grounding point to Freud's "discovery" of sexual abuse in his early work and his later refutation of it. This is important not only for its historical significance, but for its theoretical import. The refutation of the reality of client reports of sexual abuse is a central component in Freud's theory of the unconscious. Arguably the most powerful theoretical structure in mental health, the psychoanalytic perspective is predicated on the belief that reports of childhood sexual abuse generally are not real. Psychological