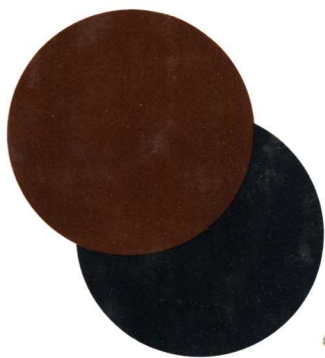


Jeffrey J. Haugaard
N. Dickon Reppucci



**THE
SEXUAL
ABUSE
OF
CHILDREN**

THE SEXUAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN

*A Comprehensive Guide
to Current Knowledge
and Intervention Strategies*



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PREFACE

*T*he past few decades have seen a dramatic increase in the attention paid to all forms of child abuse. Much of this attention is now being focused on the sexual abuse of children by adults. This topic, once the concern of only a few, now receives considerable attention from professionals in the academic, medical, mental health, social work, and legal fields. Since the 1970s, the mass media have helped to focus the attention of the general public, which has become increasingly aware of the victims of child sexual abuse. The research, treatment, and legal literature regarding child sexual abuse has burgeoned. Many investigations of the prevalence, etiology, and consequences of child sexual abuse have been reported. Writers in social work, psychology, and medicine have described a multitude of interventions for victims of child sexual abuse and their families and for perpetrators. Numerous articles on the involvement of victims in the legal system have been published in legal journals, as well as debates about the constitutionality of reforms designed to reduce what some have described as the further abuse of victims during the prosecution of alleged perpetrators.

Few attempts have been made to integrate the accumulated knowledge from the research, treatment, and legal literature. Our goal is to accomplish this task. An integration is im-

portant at this point if our knowledge about child sexual abuse is to expand and if the ways in which we intervene with victims and their families are to improve. Professionals from many fields now have increased interactions with child sexual abuse victims and their families, and, as a result, the interactions among these professionals have also increased. The knowledge gained by each type of professional within this diverse group can be of value to the others. Each type of professional may have a slightly different perspective on victims, families, and perpetrators, and a sharing of these perspectives should promote increased understanding of the phenomenon of child sexual abuse for all. Moreover, such understanding may help to bridge the gaps between the often different goals and concerns of each group, resulting in an increased likelihood that the most effective services for child victims and families will be provided.

We believe that the integration of the literature presented in this book will be of value to anyone concerned with the topic of child sexual abuse. Service providers to victims and their families may be able to improve the effectiveness of their interventions as they learn about the successes and failures of others. They can also gain by understanding the various theoretical perspectives and empirical findings about the causes and consequences of child sexual abuse. Researchers will be better able to develop meaningful research projects by having both a thorough knowledge of previous research and an understanding of the problems and concerns faced by those providing services. Furthermore, the material presented in this book should be of value to all who are, or who plan to be, regularly involved in any capacity with children and their families. Child sexual abuse occurs throughout our society, and its effects may be felt by many children who have never been identified as victims. Knowing about the prevalence, consequences, treatment, and prevention of child sexual abuse will be valuable to teachers, counselors, members of the clergy, and others who have regular contact with children, as well as to parents and other concerned citizens.

Throughout this book we not only report the information available in the literature but also try to provide the reader with a framework within which to analyze it. Most of the litera-

ture in this area is relatively new, with many discrepancies and areas in which information is scarce. In addition, there are important limitations to much that has been written. Understanding the literature and using it properly require an appreciation of both its assets and its limitations. As will be seen, able researchers and clinicians often disagree about the meaning of a particular finding or about the most effective way of handling a particular situation. Other authors have dealt with these disagreements by expounding the process or method that they have found to be the best. We take a different approach. We discuss the various positions that have been taken on an issue and then describe the aspects of the situation that we believe should be considered as a decision is reached about it. We believe that this approach is most beneficial in helping each individual come to conclusions about how to consider or resolve one or more of the many thorny issues in this field.

We outline both what is known about child sexual abuse and what is unknown. We argue throughout the book that too little is known for anyone to make firm statements about nearly any topic in the field. Although our knowledge is steadily increasing, it must expand much further before "the truth" begins to emerge. Although some may suggest that more should be known before a book such as this is undertaken, we disagree. Distinguishing between what is known, what is hypothesized, and what is unknown is an important step in the further development of this field. We hope that this book will be a stepping stone in the development of a comprehensive body of knowledge about child sexual abuse.

We begin the book with a general introductory chapter that describes how society has dealt with the sexual abuse of children in the past and the problems we encounter in dealing with it today. The chapters in Part One present basic information about child sexual abuse. In Chapter Two, we address the issue of defining child sexual abuse. The development of legal, research, and clinical definitions is discussed, and implications of the use of differing definitions by those in these fields are explored. In Chapter Three, we review research on the prevalence

of child sexual abuse in our society and the form that it takes with boys and girls of various ages and backgrounds. An examination of the consequences experienced by victims of child sexual abuse, as well as of the factors that appear to increase or decrease those consequences, is the focus of Chapter Four. In the last chapter of Part One, theories concerning incest and the families in which it occurs are reviewed.

This basic information is integral to an understanding of child sexual abuse and thus is an important foundation for the following chapters. How one defines child sexual abuse determines which children and families will be intervened with by legal and clinical agencies. Information about prevalence influences the extent of the effort that must be made to counteract any negative effects and suggests which children face the greatest risk of being abused. Methods for assessing whether a child has been sexually abused or for providing therapeutic interventions to victims and families should be based on findings about the specific consequences of child sexual abuse and theories about the causes of these consequences. Methods for dealing with incestuous families differ depending on conceptualizations about the ways that a family becomes incestuous.

Part Two discusses the identification of child sexual abuse victims. Chapter Six focuses on the various signs that suggest that a child or adult who is in therapy for some other reason is a victim of child sexual abuse. Many authors are beginning to comment on the importance of recognizing victims so that the consequences of their abuse can be directly addressed in therapy. Chapter Seven outlines procedures that have been used to assess whether a child who claims to be a victim is telling the truth. An increasing number of clinicians are being asked to assess children who claim to have been abused, and knowledge of the procedures used in this assessment is important for anyone who has contact with these apparent victims. We have kept these chapters apart from those dealing exclusively with therapeutic interventions in order to emphasize the difference between these two processes and the importance of keeping them separate.

The six chapters in Part Three focus on clinical interven-

tions used with child sexual abuse victims and their families. Chapter Eight provides a discussion of several issues of general concern to those intervening in these cases. These issues include countertransference while working with victims and perpetrators, the benefits and limitations of legal coercion for treatment, and the need for interagency cooperation. Chapters Nine through Twelve outline the procedures generally used during the treatment of children and families and with adult victims of child sexual abuse—crisis intervention, individual treatment, group treatment, and family therapy. Chapter Thirteen concerns the development, implementation, and evaluation of prevention programs for children, parents, and professionals.

The goal of Part Three is to present a compilation of the treatment styles used by many clinicians. As a result, it is quite different from most writings on the treatment of child sexual abuse, which usually focus on the treatment program developed and used by the author. We do not present the reader with a blueprint for treating victims and families; rather, we describe many treatment issues and the ways they have been handled by various clinicians. Our aim is to provide information about the variety of therapeutic styles and programs that have been established in order to assist those interested in developing or improving a treatment program or evaluating the programs of others. By discussing several unresolved therapeutic issues, we hope also to provide researchers with directions for meaningful future investigations.

Part Four is on relevant legal issues. Chapter Fourteen deals with the child and clinician as witnesses in child sexual abuse trials. The questions addressed are whether young children are competent to testify about an abuse experience and when it is appropriate for a clinician to provide expert testimony in child sexual abuse trials. Many in the legal, mental health, and social science fields are debating the effects on victims' and defendants' rights of innovations such as the increased use of hearsay testimony, videotaped testimony of the victim, and shielding the defendant from the victim during the trial. The legal and clinical arguments for and against these innovations are presented in Chapter Fifteen. With the increased in-

volvement of victims and clinicians in the legal system, an understanding of these proposed changes will help clinicians think about them clearly.

Chapter Sixteen, a concluding summary, highlights the major themes found throughout the book. It also suggests some directions for future research and action.

Because the overall focus of this book is on the victims of child sexual abuse and their families, we do not provide a review of the literature concerning the etiology of pedophilia or child molesting in general. We do discuss perpetrators if they are family members, because we believe that in many cases the treatment of the incest perpetrator has a major impact on the well-being of the victim and family. Consequently, there is some information on the etiology of sexually abusive behavior in adults in Chapter Five and some material on the treatment of the incest perpetrator in Chapters Ten, Eleven, and Twelve. For a thorough review of theory and research concerning the perpetrator, the reader is referred to Cook and Howells (1981), Finkelhor and Associates (1986), Langevin (1983), and Lanyon (1986).

An initial short review of research literature (Haugaard and Reppucci, 1986) led to the writing of this book and was funded by the Virginia Treatment Center for Children. We gratefully acknowledge this support and the continued encouragement of the center's director, Robert Cohen. Richard Bonnie, director of the University of Virginia's Institute for Law, Psychiatry, and Public Policy, provided financial resources near the end of this project. The thoughtful comments of Richard Barth, Lucille Berliner, William Henry, and an anonymous reviewer on drafts of this book contributed much to its final form. Carolyn Williams provided insightful comments about the differences between victims' psychological and legal guilt, and her encouragement was valuable throughout this project. Mary Alice Fisher provided guidance on ways for clinicians to understand their roles in sexual abuse cases. Elizabeth Scott's mentorship regarding legal issues was also valuable, as were her clarifying comments on the two legal chapters. Moreover, the Center for the Study of Law and Children, which she directs, has contributed greatly to the intellectually stimulating environment at

the University of Virginia. Our colleagues Mark Aber, Jinger Atteberry-Bennett, Robert Emery, Edward Mulvey, John Monahan, Christine Reppucci, Mindy Rosenberg, Jeanne Smith, and Janet Warren helped over the years to clarify our thinking on several important issues discussed in this book. We owe much gratitude to each of these individuals. Our thanks go also to Deborah Mundie, who typed the initial draft of the bibliography, and Anna Reppucci, who spent many hours cross-checking the references, both singularly unrewarding tasks. Lastly, we would like to acknowledge those who pioneered the recognition of child sexual abuse as an important national problem. These researchers and clinicians provided the foundation for today's research by their early efforts and guided the development of treatment programs by their innovative approaches to the children and their families. The reader will find their names throughout this book.

Charlottesville, Virginia
February 1988

Jeffrey J. Haugaard
N. Dickon Reppucci

THE AUTHORS

Jeffrey J. Haugaard is a doctoral candidate in child clinical psychology in the Department of Psychology at the University of Virginia. He received a B.A. from the University of California, Santa Cruz (1973), with majors in psychology and politics; an M.A. in marriage, family, and child counseling from Santa Clara University (1984); and an M.A. in psychology from the University of Virginia (1987).

After receiving his bachelor's degree, he worked for ten years at a private elementary and junior high school as boarding program director and school counselor. His current research and clinical interests include child sexual abuse, divorce mediation, and the interface of psychology and the law. He has written articles on the competence of child witnesses, methodological issues in child sexual abuse, and coercive sexual experiences between children. In 1986 he coauthored with Edward Mulvey the report of the Surgeon General's Workshop on Pornography and Public Health.

Dickon Reppucci is professor of psychology and director of graduate studies in the Department of Psychology at the University of Virginia. He received his B.A. in psychology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (1962), his

M.A. in social relations from Harvard University (1964), and his Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Harvard University (1968).

Reppucci's main research activities have been in the areas of community and preventive psychology; juvenile correctional institutions; child abuse; and children, mental health, and the law. His experience includes being an assistant and associate professor at Yale University (1968-1976). He has served on the editorial boards of the *American Journal of Community Psychology* (1974-1983; 1988-1991), *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* (1973-1979; 1986-1987), *Professional Psychology* (1987-present), and *Law and Human Behavior* (1985-1987; associate editor, 1988-1990), and on the National Institute of Mental Health internal review committees on criminal and violent behavior (1980-1983) and on child and family and prevention (1987-1989). He served as chair of the American Psychological Association Task Force on Psychology and Public Policy (1980-1984), as a member of the American Psychological Association Task Force on Psychology and the Criminal Justice System, and was chosen as a G. Stanley Hall Lecturer (1985). He served as president of the American Psychological Association's division of community psychology (1986) and is a fellow of that division and those of clinical psychology, law and psychology, and children, youth, and families. He was organizer of the first Biennial Conference on Community Research and Action (1987). He is the author or coauthor of more than sixty professional articles and book chapters, and with Lois Weithorn, Edward Mulvey, and John Monahan is editor of *Children, Mental Health, and the Law*.

Reppucci is an associate of the University of Virginia's Institute of Law, Psychiatry and Public Policy, and cofounder of its Center for the Study of Law and Children. He is also a member of the Virginia Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation's Advisory Council on Prevention and Promotion (1987-1989).

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Child Sexual Abuse: A Critical Social Problem

Prohibitions have existed against the sexual abuse of children in the form of incest since ancient times (Wulkan and Bulkley, 1985). Both primitive and modern cultures have provided strong penalties for breaking these prohibitions, including death, which perhaps indicates the intense emotional reactions provoked in many people by such acts (Meiselman, 1978). Considering the universality of this negative reaction to incest, it is surprising that only in the last few decades has the sexual abuse of children been acknowledged as an important social problem by both professionals and the general public (Sgroi, 1982b).

Inattention to child sexual abuse may have its roots in the historic view of children as miniature adults, owned by their parents (Aries, 1962; Greenleaf, 1978). Ancient Roman law used the concept of *patria potestas* to give the father complete power, including the right to commit infanticide and to sell his children into slavery (Avery and Sand, 1975). Moreover, deMause (1974) documents that in ancient Greece and Rome sexual use of children in some form was prevalent; for example, boy brothels flourished in many cities. The first glimmerings of the concept of children as distinctive individuals did not occur until the Renaissance, and not until the present century did children gain a new status as individuals with independent rights.

Despite these views, children have had some protections since the early 1700s. In 1722 the English monarch was given the *parens patriae* power: the obligation to defend the rights of "children, idiots, and lunatics" who were incapable of protecting themselves (Avery and Sand, 1975). Current laws in the United States that grant the state the power to protect children and to intervene in the family are based on this *parens patriae* concept. However, the right and obligation of the state to intervene on the behalf of children have had to be balanced against the legal tradition that the right to family privacy is inviolate except in exceptional circumstances. Giovannoni, Conklin, and Iiyama (1978) suggest that the traditional imbalance in favor of the sanctity of the family is one of the major reasons why child abuse of any sort has been acknowledged as a problem of significant proportions only since the 1960s.

Although professional interest in child sexual abuse probably began with the publication of several incest histories in Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* in 1886, Freud's ([1933], 1965) discussion of incest fantasies by females ensured that most reports were considered as just that—fantasy. The professional interest that did exist remained focused either on incest cases, as illustrated by the increasing number of case histories that began appearing in the professional literature in the 1950s (Meiselman, 1978), or on the perpetrator of the abuse. Psychiatrists labeled the problem *sexual psychopathy*, a term that first appeared in legal nomenclature in statutes enacted during the late 1930s (Weisberg, 1984). Public attention became focused on extrafamilial sexual abuse and the sexual psychopath following sensational publicity surrounding the 1949 sex murder of a child in California and the passage of sexual psychopath laws (Sutherland, 1950). In the 1950s, increased attention was paid to the criminal aspects of child sexual abuse, although psychiatrists encouraged relabeling sexual psychopaths to emphasize the idea of perpetrators as patients; in California, they were termed *mentally disordered sex offenders* (Weisberg, 1984).

Calls from the public sector for help in stopping child sexual abuse tended to be ignored by professionals, probably because they believed that child sexual abuse of any variety was

a relatively rare phenomenon. Moreover, Finkelhor (1979) suggests that many professionals in the 1950s and 1960s were interested in liberalizing sexual mores, and this agenda may have influenced them to cite research and theory that downplayed the importance of sexual abuse. However, beginning with the vast increase in attention to the problem of physical child abuse as a result of Kempe and others' (1962) landmark article on the "battered child syndrome" and the subsequent institution of child abuse reporting laws in the late 1960s, the incidence of child sexual abuse, either internal or external to the family, could no longer be denied (Rosenfeld, 1977).

In the 1970s, advocates for children and feminist groups helped make the public and professionals aware of child sexual abuse (Finkelhor, 1986). The label *child sexual abuse* first appeared in the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 1974. Weisberg (1984) claims that psychologists and social workers replaced psychiatrists as the new experts during this period. The focus shifted from the extrafamilial offender to the familial offender, usually the father or stepfather, and interventions often included some form of family counseling rather than hospitalization or civil commitment of the perpetrator. For the first time, experts viewed the entire family, rather than the perpetrator alone, as the source of the problem. In addition, and most significantly, attention focused on the child victim, for whom treatment was also recommended. Weisberg (1984) credits a California psychologist, Henry Giarretto, with playing a prominent role in this development (see Chapter Twelve for details), and a social worker and lawyer, Vincent DeFrancis, with being especially influential in broadening the federal definition of child abuse to include sexual abuse. The federal government required states to accept this broadened definition in order to qualify for federal funds for the treatment and prevention of abuse.

Since 1974, there has been an explosion of interest in and concern about child sexual abuse of all types. A study by Kinsey, Pomeroy, Martin, and Gebhard (1953), indicating that many children had sexual experiences with adults, was revived. Large-scale surveys using relatively broad definitions of child