

THEORIES AND ETIOLOGY OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE BY MALES

Why men sexually abuse children has been one of the foremost questions guiding research on sexually deviant behavior in the twentieth century. As with most forms of deviant behavior, there are various explanations as to the etiology and maintenance of sexual offending. Within the specialist literature, biological, psychological and sociological theories have been designed to explain the onset of deviant sexual fantasies and behavior. However, owing to the heterogeneity of the perpetrators of such abuse and the complex nature of this behavior, no one theory adequately explains: (a) the motivating factors that lead an adult male to have sexual relations with a child and (b) the sustaining factors that contribute to the continuance of such relations (Bickley & Beech, 2001). Nonetheless, understanding the etiology and maintenance of sexual offending is important in order to implement policies that are appropriate for all types of sexual offenders. Table 1 at the end of this section summarizes the theories on deviant sexual behavior.

BIOLOGICAL THEORY

Biological theorists are concerned with organic explanations of human behavior. Therefore, when it comes to sexual behavior, these theorists postulate that physiological factors, such as hormone levels and chromosomal makeup, have an effect on the behavior (Berlin, 1983; Marshall & Barbaree, 1990). Androgens, which are male sex hormones, promote sexual arousal, orgasm, and ejaculation, as well as regulate sexuality, aggression, cognition, emotion and personality (Rösler & Witztum, 2000; Marques et al., 2002). As a result, biological theories about deviant sexual behavior usually pertain to rape because it is considered an act of violence, and researchers have long hypothesized that there is a correlation between aggression and high testosterone levels (Money, 1970; Rada, Laws and Kellner, 1976). The theories that address pedophilia most often look at abnormal hormonal and androgenic levels in the brain.

Biological theories of deviant sexual behavior are particularly concerned with the role of androgens and androgen-releasing hormones, which are known to be related to physical changes in the male. The secretion of androgens is controlled by the hypothalamus and the pituitary, and hormones are carried from the anterior lobe of the pituitary to the testes. The testes are an important contributor to the body's output of testosterone, which, once released, circulates in the blood. When not bound to proteins, the testosterone is metabolically active; if bound, androgens can only become active when in contact with receptors for testosterone. It is at this time that physical changes, such as increases in body hair, muscle mass and penis enlargement, are caused through androgenic effects (Hucker and Bain, 1990).

When males reach puberty, there is a major increase in testosterone levels in the testes. Because sex drive increases dramatically at this time, there is generally believed to be a correlation between testosterone levels and sex drive, with testosterone being the primary biological factor responsible for normal and abnormal sexual behavior. Levels of plasma testosterone increase with erotic activity, which has been measured in males before, during and after they view erotic films (Pirke, Kockott and Dittmar, 1974). Although a review of biological studies shows conflicting results about the correlation between rising hormonal levels and sexual activity, Bancroft (1978) stated that the results imply that hormone levels are affected by erotic stimulus.

From a chromosomal perspective, Berlin (1983) discusses the possibility of a biological condition, such as Klinefelter's Syndrome, predisposing a male towards sexually abusive behavior. Klinefelter's Syndrome is a condition wherein males appear to be essentially normal boys until puberty. At puberty, 80% of males with this syndrome display both the physical characteristics and hormonal profiles of women. Berlin proposes that males with Klinefelter's Syndrome may experience problems with regard to both their sexual orientation and the

nature of their erotic desires. A review of the literature suggests that the prevalence of sexual deviation among individuals who are diagnosed with Klinefelter's Syndrome may be higher than it is among individuals who have not been diagnosed with Klinefelter's Syndrome. Although Berlin cautions against making causal inferences between sexual deviation and Klinefelter's Syndrome, he attempts to support his theory by citing evidence presented by Baker and Stroller (1968). Over 100 articles regarding Klinefelter's Syndrome were reviewed, and Berlin's conclusion was in concordance with Baker and Stroller's findings.

PSYCHODYNAMIC THEORY

Psychoanalytic explanations of deviant sexual behavior were initially attributed to Freud, who proposed four states of childhood development: oral, anal, phallic and genital. He viewed sexual deviance as an expression of the unresolved problems experienced during the stages of development. These unresolved problems brought about fixations or hindrances during stages of development, with consequent distortion of a sexual object or a sexual aim (Schwartz, 1995). For example, psychoanalytic theory proposes that boys experience what is termed "the oedipal conflict" during the phallic stage of development. The oedipal conflict is characterized by competition between father and son for the mother's affection. At the same time, boys discover the differences between themselves and girls and conclude girls are actually boys whose jealous fathers have cut off their penises (Schwartz, 1995). Schwartz (1995) states that castration anxiety leads to the oedipal conflict, which is when boys no longer compete with their fathers for their mother's affections. However, if a boy fails to resolve the oedipal conflict, he may develop a permanent aversion to females as an adult if their appearance brings back this fear of castration.

Psychodynamic theory also asserts that the human psyche is composed of three primary elements: the id, the ego and the superego. In order to understand how all three elements interact, Freud proposed that all human behavior is motivated by wishes that often exist at a preconscious level (Holmes & Holmes, 2002).

The id is the unconscious domain from which all the instinctual human drives originate (i.e., hunger, sex, aggression, etc.). The id is ruled by the pleasure principle that demands instant gratification of these urges. The second part of Freud's model, the ego, is the conscious part of the human psyche that serves as the mediator between the id and the external environment. This element is primarily conscious and is ruled by the reality principle that accepts that there is a time and a place for everything (Holmes & Holmes, 2002). It is this aspect of the psyche that interacts with the external environment in order to ensure survival. The final element, the superego, is more commonly referred to as the conscience. This aspect of the psyche has both conscious and unconscious aspects and, as Holmes and Holmes state, "most lessons about the consequences of behavior stem from experience and not perceptions of how the self would look relative to its environment" (Holmes & Holmes, 2002, p. 30). Thus, the superego is bolstered by past experiences that clearly define the behaviors that warrant punishment and reward. These notions are then internalized in such a manner as to allow for the development of a system of morals.

In summary, Freudian theory portrays the human psyche as being in a constant struggle to fulfill the primal desires of the id and the moral authority of the superego. This theory assumes that sexual aggressors are lacking in a strong superego and have become overwhelmed by their primal id. While psychologists generally once accepted this explanation, it has fallen out of favor due to its lack of empirical evidence in favor of more testable theories, such as cognitive behavioral and integrated theories.

BEHAVIORAL THEORY

Behavioral theorists explain deviant sexual behavior as a learned condition. Laws and Marshall (1990) presented a theoretical model of sexually deviant behavior that describes how sexually deviant interests may be learned through the same mechanisms by which conventional sexuality is learned. The model is divided into two parts: the acquisition processes and the maintenance processes. There are six basic conditioning principles (Pavlovian Conditioning, Operant

Conditioning, Extinction, Punishment, Differential Consequences and the Chaining of Behavior); two social learning influences (General Social Learning Influences and Self-Labeling Influences); and three maintenance processes (Specific Autoerotic Influences, Specific Social Learning Influences and Intermittent Reinforcement). The model adopts the position that maladaptive behavior can result from quantitative and qualitative combinations of processes that are intrinsically orderly, strictly determined and normal in origin. Thus, deviant sexual preferences and cognitions are acquired by the same mechanisms by which other individuals learn more conventionally accepted modes of sexual expression.

ATTACHMENT THEORY

According to attachment theory, humans have a propensity to establish strong emotional bonds with others, and when individuals have some loss or emotional distress, they act out as a result of their loneliness and isolation.

As Marshall and Barbaree (1976) point out, the period surrounding pubescence and early adolescence is critical in the development of both sexuality and social competence. With adequate parenting up to this point in development, boys should have by now acquired appropriate inhibitory controls over sexual and aggressive behavior and, thus, the transition to adult functioning, with both social constraints against aggression and the skills necessary to develop effective relationships with age appropriate partners, should not be compromised. Parents also fulfill the role of instilling a sense of self-confidence in the developing boy as well as a strong emotional attachment to others.

Research indicates that there is a relationship between poor quality attachments and sexual offending. Marshall (1989) found that men who sexually abuse children often have not developed the social skills and self-confidence necessary for them to form effective intimate relations with peers. This failure causes frustration in these men that may cause them to continue to seek intimacy with under-aged partners. Seidman et al. (1994) conducted two studies aimed at examining intimacy

problems and the experience of loneliness among sex offenders. According to these studies, sex offenders have deficiencies in social skills (i.e., problems in accurately perceiving social cues, problems in deciding on appropriate behavior and deficiencies in the skills essential to enact effective behavior) that seriously restrict the possibility of attaining intimacy. The evidence suggests that deficiencies in intimacy are a distinctive and important feature of sex offenders. The rapists and non-familial child molesters in the sample appeared to be the most deficient in intimacy. Loneliness was also a significantly distinguishable variable in differentiating the sex offenders from controls and wife batterers.

Mulloy and Marshall (1999) outlined Bartholomew's four-category model of attachment and make the following observations. A secure attachment style is characterized by the individual having a positive concept of both himself and others. He is confident about his ability to make friends and interacts well with others. An individual utilizing a preoccupied attachment style has a negative self-concept but a positive concept of others. He does not feel confident about his ability to deal with problems without the help of others. The fearful attachment style, wherein the individual has a negative concept of himself and others, finds that the individual is likely to blame himself for problems in his life and finds it frightening to go to others for help and to trust people around him. Those engaging in a dismissing attachment style have a positive self-concept and a strong sense of self-confidence. However, this individual has a negative concept of others and does not seek out others for help or support. This individual is likely to say that he does not care what others think of him and rarely has a strong emotional involvement in relationships. Marshall and Marshall (2002) cited Ward et al.'s (1995) proposition that sexual offenders who have a preoccupied insecure attachment style will characteristically "court" the child and treats him or her as a lover.

COGNITIVE-BEHAVIORAL THEORY

When individuals commit deviant sexual acts, they often try to diminish their feelings of guilt and shame through "neutralizations." These neutralizations generally take the forms of excuses and justi-

fications, with the offenders rationalizing their behavior (Scott and Lyman, 1968; Scully, 1990; Sykes and Matza, 1957). These neutralizations are cognitive distortions (CDs), or distorted thinking patterns that allow the offenders to remove from themselves any responsibility, shame or guilt for their actions (Abel et al., 1984). These rationalizations protect the offenders from self-blame and allow them to validate their behavior through cognitive defenses. Cognitive-behaviorists explore how offenders' thoughts affect their behavior.

CDs are not unique to sex offenders, only the content of the distortions (Marshall et al., 1999:60). All individuals have distorted thoughts, and in most situations CDs are relatively harmless (e.g., a motorist rationalizes that speeding on the highway is acceptable since there is little traffic). However, sex offenders' CDs are likely to lead to victimization (e.g., she didn't fight with me so she must have wanted sex). Though sex offenders do not form a homogeneous group of individuals, they show strikingly similar CDs about their victims, their offenses and their responsibility for the offenses.

It is unclear as to whether CDs are conscious distortions or whether offenders genuinely believe these altered perceptions of reality. Some researchers suggest that CDs are self-serving, and thus, the offender consciously distorts thoughts initially (Abel et al., 1984). However, it is also suggested that the offenders eventually believe the distortions as they become more entrenched in their behavior (Marshall et al., 1999). Regardless, CDs are considered crucial to the maintenance of offending behavior for both rapists and child molesters because they serve the needs of the offenders to continue their behavior without feeling guilt for their actions.

There are many ways in which distortions manifest themselves in sex offenders. Sykes and Matza (1957) list five primary neutralization techniques, including the denial of responsibility, the denial of injury, the denial of the victim, the condemnation of the accusers, and the appeal to higher loyalties. Cognitive-behavioral theorists have explained these techniques in terms of CDs, the most common of which are minimization and/or denial of the offense and justification of the offense. Additionally, sex offenders often lack victim empathy and show an

inability to recognize the level of planning that went into their offenses (including grooming of the victims). Some researchers also label sexual entitlement as a specific CD, resulting from the narcissistic attitudes of offenders who seek only to fulfill their own desires (Hanson, Gizzarelli and Scott, 1998, p. 197). However broadly or specifically the CDs are defined, these distorted thoughts are conducive towards the maintenance of deviant sexual practices.

Most sex offenders minimize or deny their offenses, including the damage caused to the victim, the violence used, their responsibility for the offense, the planning of the offense and the lasting effects as a result of the offense. Several researchers have categorized types of minimization and denial (Haywood et al., 1994; Marshall et al., 1999), and these include: complete or partial denial of the offense, minimization of the offense, minimization of their own responsibility, denial or minimization of harm to the victim, denial or minimization of planning, denial or minimization of deviant fantasies and denial of their personal problems that led to the deviant behavior.

Some sex offenders deny all or part of their offenses. They may completely deny that they committed the offense – claiming, for instance, that the victim made up the story or they cannot remember what happened – or they may not admit to aggravating factors of the offense. Partial denial, as described by Marshall et al. (1999), includes refutation of a problem (e.g., I am not a sex offender) or the refusal to accept that an act was sexual abuse (e.g., the victim consented). Though some researchers claim that denial is not an accurate predictor variable for recidivism (Hanson and Bussiere, 1998), there is a substantial body of literature that claims the opposite (Marques, Day et al., 1994; Simkins, Ward, Bowman and Rinck, 1989.) Few therapists allow deniers to participate in treatment until they at least admit that they committed the offense (Marques, Day et al., 1994).

In addition to minimizing or denying their offenses, sex offenders make excuses as to why they committed the deviant acts. By justifying their actions, offenders acknowledge their guilt in the acts, but they do not take responsibility for them. Commonly, they blame the victims for their

offenses or justify their offenses through the victims' actions.

Justification is common in the vast majority of sex offenders since it assists in allaying remorse and guilt for the acts committed. Scully and Marolla (1984), who interviewed 114 incarcerated rapists, explain five ways in which rapists commonly justify their behavior. They claim that the victim is a seductress, and she provoked the rape; women mean yes when they say no, or the victim did not resist enough to really mean no; most women relax and enjoy it, and they are actually fulfilling the woman's desires; nice girls do not get raped, and prostitutes, hitchhikers and promiscuous women get what they deserve; and the rape was only a minor wrongdoing, so the perpetrator is not really an "offender." Though these researchers focused on the excuses and justifications of rapists, many of their findings are also evident in child sexual abusers, who also justify their actions by neutralizing their guilt.

Child molesters justify their actions in many ways. Common justifications include claims that they are helping the child to learn about sex, that sexual education is good for the child, that the child enjoys it, that there is no harm being done to the child, that the child initiated the sexual contact and that the child acts older than he or she is. Like offenders with adult victims, child molesters often assert that the child did not resist and must have therefore wanted the sexual interaction. They fail to recognize any other explanations as to why the child might not have resisted, such as fear, uncertainty about what was happening or the idea that the perpetrator is someone they knew and trusted.

Ward and Keenan (1999) claim that the cognitive distortions of child sexual offenders emerge from five underlying implicit theories that they have about themselves, their victims and their environment. These implicit theories consider the following factors:

- Children as sexual objects. Children, like adults, are motivated by a desire for pleasure and are capable of enjoying and desiring sex.
- Entitlement. The desires and beliefs of the abuser are paramount and those of the victim are either ignored or viewed as only of secondary importance.

- Dangerous world. The abuser views other adults as being abusive and/or unreliable and perceives that they will reject him in promotion of their own needs.
- Uncontrollability. The abuser perceives his environment as uncontrollable wherein people are not able to exert any major influence over their personal behavior and/or the world around them.
- Nature of harm. The abuser considers the degree of harm to his victim and perceives sexual activity as beneficial and unlikely to harm a person.

Offenders rarely modify these implicit theories even when faced with evidence (behavior) to the contrary. Instead, the offender may simply reinterpret or reject it. For example, a child's friendly behavior might be evidence to the offender that the child wants to have sex with him.

Similar to Ward and Keenan's idea that the distortions of sexual offenders reflect their more general implicit theories about their victims, Marshall et al. (1999) stress that "the distorting process thought to be characteristic of sexual offenders does not differentiate them from the rest of us; it is the content of their distortions, and the goals manifested by their behaviors, that differentiates them."

All sex offenders have a tendency to misread social cues by others and are poor at identifying emotions such as anger or fear in their victims. Both rapists and child molesters often perceive their victims as initiating sexual contact, and see their victims' actions as sexually provocative. Child molesters misread cues from children in several ways, and the better they know the victim the more likely this is to happen. Children are naturally affectionate towards adults, particularly those whom they know well. Child molesters view these naturally affectionate actions – such as sitting on an adult's lap—as sexual in nature and perceive the children as initiating sexual contact. They also perceive any sexual curiosity displayed by the child as a desire to know about sex, and they want to "teach" the child through sexual experiences. These misperceptions reinforce the offenders' narcissistic beliefs and detract from the ability for an offender to feel any empathy for his victims.

INTEGRATED THEORY

Finkelhor (1984) is one of the leading theorists on child sexual abuse. He proposed a four-factor model of the preconditions to child sexual abuse, which integrate the various theories about why individuals begin to participate in sexually deviant behavior. This organizational framework addresses the full complexity of child sexual abusers, from the motivation to offend (etiology of offending behavior) to the rationalization of this behavior (maintenance of behavior). The primary focus of Finkelhor's model is on the internal barriers, or "self talk," comments and observations of sex offenders about the world around them. This self talk allows offenders to break through barriers which, until this time, had prevented them from acting out their feelings about perceptions of injustice, loneliness and other such stressors. Once these barriers are diminished, this mistaken thinking can lead to actions, which are the result of normal internal barriers being absent.

In order to better explain this process, Finkelhor constructed an organizational framework consisting of four separate underlying factors that explain not only why offenders abuse, but also why the abuse continues. These factors include: (1) emotional congruence, (2) sexual arousal, (3) blockage and (4) disinhibition.

Finkelhor coined the term "emotional congruence" to convey the relationship between the adult abuser's emotional needs and the child's characteristics. For example, if an abuser's self-perception is child-like (i.e., he has childish emotional needs), he may wish to relate to other children. Similarly, if an abuser suffers from low self-esteem and a low sense of efficacy in social relationships, he may be more comfortable relating to a child due to the sense of power and control.

Sexual arousal, the second component of Finkelhor's theory, evaluates the reasons why children would elicit sexual arousal in an adult. Finkelhor looks to social learning theory in order to explain this phenomenon. One explanation is that the child sexual abuser was molested when he was a child. Through conditioning and imprinting, he comes to find children arousing later in adulthood.

An alternate explanation is that the child sexual abuser's experience of being victimized as a child is not conditioned, but modeled by someone (i.e., his abuser) who finds children sexually stimulating.

Blockage essentially deals with the abuser's ability to have his sexual and emotional needs met in adult relationships. Finkelhor looks to both psychoanalytic theory and attachment theory to explain this component. As stated previously, psychoanalytic theory describes child molesters as having intense conflicts about their mothers or "castration anxiety" that makes it difficult or impossible to relate to adult women. With regard to adult attachments, child molesters have failed to develop the appropriate social skills and self-confidence necessary to form effective intimate relations with adults. Finkelhor further breaks down the theory of blockage to incorporate what he calls developmental blockages and situational blockages. Developmental blockages once again refer to psychoanalytic theory wherein an individual is psychologically prevented from moving into the adult sexual stage of development. Situational blockage refers to the event wherein an individual, who has apparent adult sexual interests, is blocked from normal sexual expression owing to the loss of a relationship or some other transitory crises.

The final component, disinhibition, refers to the factors that help a child molester overcome his inhibitions so that he allows himself to molest a child. Finkelhor looks to cognitive-behavioral theories to explain this component. Specifically, he considers the influence of cognitive distortion in the facilitation of child molesting behavior. Further, personality factors, such as substance abuse and stress, are viewed as entities that contribute to the lowering of inhibitions.

Overall, this organizational framework describes who is at risk to offend. It is likely that individuals who offend have been able to cope with many of the above problems (e.g., developmental blockage) and opportunities (e.g., access to children) at different times. However, it is the combination of these problems, in addition to some type of demand on their coping system that contributes towards an attitude supportive of sexual offending, thereby establishing a risk to offend. That risk increases the likelihood that a person may act out in a sexual

fashion because his or her belief system has filtered out the normal inhibitions towards sexual offending. Unfortunately, the relief that is associated with sexual offending is reinforcing because it provides an emotional and physical response to coping in a way in which the offenders feel they have control, unlike much of the other parts of their lives.

THEORIES OF OFFENDING BY CLERGY

There is no clear consensus as to why some priests molest children and others do not. Hands (2002) has proposed a psychodynamic model in which experiences of shame interact with unrealistic, moral expectations conveyed through Church teachings that have been internalized. The result of this process is the creation of a shame cycle, which stunts the individual's psychosexual development and contributes to sexual misconduct. The internalization of Church doctrine concerning celibacy/chastity reinforces many cognitive distortions, which allows the abuse to persist. Hands also hypothesizes that the steps the Church has taken to discourage the formation of close friendships between priests, under the pretense that it may lead to homosexual behavior, have also played a role in the creation of a pro-offending environment. With this increased social isolation comes a greater alienation from the body. Therefore, sexuality is repressed only to later emerge as an obsession. Hands cites the work of Sullivan, who theorizes that the result of this repression is the development of "primary genital phobia." Central to this theory is the notion that when the individual experiences any sexual feelings, thoughts, or emotions, they are ignored only to later manifest themselves as obsessions unless they are directly addressed.

Sipe (1995) has proposed a model of clergy offending which consists of four specific categories. Those in Sipe's Genetic Lock find that their sexual attraction is inherently determined. The Psychodynamic Lock consists of priests who, as a result of their childhood experiences, have been locked at a level of psychosexual development that makes them prone to offending. Sipe hypothesizes that combina-

tions of genetic and psychodynamic factors contribute to one another and interact with cognitive factors. All of these variables combine in such a manner as to influence the priests to sexually abuse a child. In the Social/Situational Lock, the priest is otherwise healthy, but the experience of celibacy suspends psychosexual development. Similar to the theory of primary genital phobia, sex is externally denied, but internally explored. Sipe concludes that offending behavior in this model is of a developmental nature and can be resolved once the offender psychologically matures. The Moral Lock displays no clear explanation for the offending behavior other than the individuals in this model make a conscious choice to commit sexual abuse.

In his 1990 book, *A Secret World: Sexuality and the Search for Celibacy*, Sipe theorized that a history of childhood sexual abuse might contribute to sexual offending as an adult. In discussing the causes of pedophilia, Sipes noted that a large number of sexually abusive clerics had been victimized as youths. While this is not applicable to every case, sexual victimization as a child may lead the individual to seek refuge in the clergy as a way of denying the reality of life. Sipe contends that the experience of celibacy interacts with these past traumas and can either enhance the memory or stunt the priest's psychosexual development at a preadolescent/ adolescent stage, leading to sexual misconduct.

In contrast to the psychodynamic approach adopted by Sipe, Krebs (1998) claims that the institutional hierarchy of the Catholic Church contributes to the creation of a pro-offending environment. In concordance with the theories of Andrew Shupe, institutional religion is based upon "hierarchies of unequal power," which span both spiritual and organizational dimensions. Those in elite positions within the institution have moral authority over the masses, which allows them to control privileges and ostracize individuals. The Church also engages in neutralization tactics in order to protect these offending priests and the image of the institution. In turn, this gives the pedophile approval from superiors to continue offending and establishes an environment in which the behavior can persist.

Table 1. Summary of theories explaining child sexual abuse

THEORY	DESCRIPTION OF THEORY
BIOLOGICAL THEORY	Concerned with organic explanations of human behavior; physiological factors (e.g., hormone levels, chromosomal makeup) have an effect of sexual behavior; androgens promote sexual arousal, orgasm, and ejaculation, as well as regulate sexuality, aggression, cognition, emotion and personality; abnormal levels of androgens lead to aggressive sexual behavior.
PSYCHODYNAMIC THEORY	Sexual deviance is an expression of the unresolved problems experienced during the stages of development; the human psyche is composed of three primary elements: the id, the ego and the superego; sexual deviancy occurs when the id (pleasure principle) is overactive.
BEHAVIORAL THEORY	Deviant sexual behavior is a learned condition, acquired through the same mechanisms by which conventional sexuality is learned; it is acquired and maintained through basic conditioning principles.
ATTACHMENT THEORY	Humans have a propensity to establish strong emotional bonds with others, and when individuals have some loss or emotional distress, they act out as a result of their loneliness and isolation.
COGNITIVE-BEHAVIORAL THEORY	Addresses the way in which offenders' thoughts affect their behavior; focuses on the way in which sex offenders diminish their feelings of guilt and shame by rationalizing it through excuses and justifications.
INTEGRATED THEORY	There are preconditions to child sexual abuse, which integrate the various theories about why individuals begin to participate in sexually deviant behavior; addresses the motivation to offend and the rationalization of the behavior; focus is on the inhibitions of the offenders (internal barriers) and how when these barriers are diminished, distorted thoughts can lead to deviant actions.
THEORIES ON ABUSE BY CLERGY	No clear consensus as to why some priests molest children and others do not, though many theories address the stunted psychosexual development of the priest; the psychodynamic model addresses the way in which the experiences of shame interact with unrealistic, moral expectations conveyed through church teachings that have been internalized, resulting in the creation of a shame cycle that stunts the individual's psychosexual development and contributes to sexual misconduct; experience of celibacy interacts with past traumas (e.g., childhood sexual abuse) and may stunt the priest's psychosexual development at a preadolescent/adolescent stage leading to sexual misconduct.

THE OFFENSE CYCLE

When sexually abusing a child, the abuser must make a series of decisions prior to committing the deviant act. These decisions may be made over a period of time or on the spur of the moment if the opportunity to abuse presents itself. In order to understand a child molester's behavior, it is necessary to evaluate the antecedent conditions that allow for a pro-offending environment and how these antecedents vary amongst offenders. Though discussed at a greater length in the next section of this paper, a brief explanation is necessary here of two types of child molesters: the fixated offender and the regressed offender.

Fixated, or preferential, child molesters are exclusively attracted to children. They are likely to have many victims as a result of their failure to have developed a sexual attraction to their age mates. In contrast, the regressed offender is sexually attracted to age mates, but the abuse is triggered by some type of stressor in the environment. These offenders are less likely than fixated offenders to have multiple victims since the abuse serves almost as a means of them coping with the stressful situation. Regressed offenders display greater guilt and shame and exhibit a positive treatment prognosis.

Since regressed offenders are influenced by external stressors in the environment, it is possible to teach them to identify their high-risk situations. Most importantly, it is possible to identify a series of Seemingly Unimportant Decisions (SUDs). These decisions place the offenders in a position where they are likely to reoffend. An example of this would be a child molester who starts to walk by the playground on his way home from work. Through the utilization of cognitive distortions, it appears to him as if he is just taking a new route home. However, this SUD places him in an environment in which he has access to victims. If the process is not stopped, he is likely to progress until the antecedent conditions create an environment in which reoffending is inevitable.

The key feature of the offense cycle involves the interaction of thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Essentially, negative thoughts will cause the offender to experience negative feelings, prompting

the use of certain behavioral measures to combat these feelings. There are multiple determinants involved in this cycle, but the core point is that sexual abuse is not a random act. These determinants may include situational factors (i.e., the opportunity to offend), affective states (depression, anger, isolation), past learning, biological influences and prevailing contingencies of reinforcement (current, unforeseen support or back up). As mentioned earlier, the regressed offender is susceptible to external stressors and utilizes the abuse as a means of coping. This cycle is most applicable to these offenders as it illustrates the interaction of the external world and individual perception.

There are several steps involved in the offense chain. The offender will first have negative thoughts. Thoughts may be characterized by themes such as "Nobody likes me" or "I'm no good." These thoughts then lead to feelings such as anger, frustration, sadness and inadequacy. The thoughts and feelings then interact in such a manner as to influence the offender's behavior. It is at this point that the offender begins to make poor decisions (SUDs) and withdraws from people around him. Isolation results in a lack of communication that causes the thoughts and feelings mentioned earlier to go unresolved.

The pro-offending thinking then causes the offender to progress to the point where he starts to experience deviant sexual fantasies also referred to as lapse fantasies. These fantasies lead to masturbation, and the offender begins to feel better about the negative thoughts and feelings experienced earlier in the cycle. Through fantasizing and orgasm, the offender has now found a way to tame the painful feelings, but he is placing himself into more dangerous situations. It is not uncommon at this point for the offender to take steps short of committing a sexual offense such as targeting a victim and engaging in a fantasy rehearsal of the future abuse.

Once the offender has engaged in the fantasy rehearsal, he reaches a point in the cycle where he decides to give up. In a sense, he is saying to himself, "Why not? I've already gone this far. I may as well do it." It is at this point when the offender begins to "groom" his victim (see next section) and plan the abusive act. This planning causes the

offender to experience a sense of excitement that further motivates him until he is at the point of committing the offense.

After adequate grooming has taken place, the offender sexually abuses the victim. The act itself serves as a reinforcement of the original fantasy. However, once the act has occurred, there exist new anxiety provoking thoughts. Examples of some of the thoughts the offender may be contemplating include, "What have I done? I might get caught." These thoughts lead to new feelings of guilt and fear despite the release of tension achieved through the recent abusive act. These feelings of guilt, fear and remorse cause the cycle to come to a stop during which the offender tries to regain a sense of normality. By refusing to acknowledge the thoughts and feelings associated with the abuse, the cycle begins once more since the original issues had never been addressed.

GROOMING

Those offenders who take time to plan the deviant act are known to indulge in what is termed "grooming" behavior. Grooming is a pre-meditated behavior intended to manipulate the potential victim into complying with the sexual abuse. Based on a survey of tactics used by abusers to groom their victims, Pryor (1996) describes several methods by which offenders approach and initiate sex with their victims. These methods include verbal and/or physical intimidation, seduction or the use of enticements such as candy, money or other gifts. The tactics used by offenders depend somewhat on the potential victim's response to the tactic. If an offender encounters little to no resistance from the potential victim, he will continue to use the same tactic repeatedly. If, however, some resistance is encountered, the offender may either change the tactic and/or become more forceful in his endeavor. One common tactic noted by Pryor is the seduction and testing of a child. This tactic is used when there is an existing relationship with a child and the child is accustomed to the affectionate expression of the offender. The offender gradually extends the affectionate touching to include sexual behavior, all the while "testing" the child's response. If no overt resistance is observed, the sexual abuse continues.

A less frequent tactic that is mentioned by Pryor entails the offender catching the victim by surprise. In this instance, the offender may orchestrate a situation to distract the victim or seize the opportunity to abuse when it arises. The latter is most common and is usually a result of the offender's frustration from waiting for the right time to initiate contact. A third and more intimidating tactic used by offenders entails garnering victim compliance through the use of either verbal or physical force. In this situation, the offender either commands the victim to perform sexual acts and/or physically forces the victim to engage in sexual acts. This tactic is more common in more serious, repeat offenders. Pryor found that emotional manipulation and verbal coercion were the most common tactics used by offenders to groom their victims. This occurs in various ways, such as doing favors for the victim in exchange for sex and/or emotionally blackmailing the victim into compliance. Even though it may appear that there is room for negotiation on the part of the victim, the outcome always favors the offender. Offenders who have ongoing contact with their victims often utilize this tactic (i.e., incest offenders).

Another tactic used by offenders in order to groom their victims entails disguising sexual advances in the context of playing a game. For example, the offender will begin by tickling the victim and gradually progress to fondling. While this approach may appear spontaneous, it has been well planned by the offender, yet orchestrated in a rather surreptitious manner.

The most methodical and deliberate tactic of engaging a victim in sex involves a process of initially introducing the victim to the idea of sex and then gradually engaging them in sexual activity. Pryor describes this tactic as turning the victim out. For example, the offender will begin by displaying himself in the nude or introducing the victim to pornography. Then there is a period of rationalizing that sex is okay. This may be followed by fondling the victim or having the victim fondle him, all the while rationalizing that sex is okay and possibly verbally praising the victim for his/her efforts. This exchange slowly builds up to more serious sexual acts and possibly to the point where the victim is being rewarded with gifts for his/her participation.

Over time, the victim becomes groomed to the point that engaging in sex with the offender is more or less automatic. While most grooming tactics are premeditated, this tactic is more methodically planned and the offender is willing to wait months or possibly years to accomplish his task.

When offenders set out to groom a victim, they will usually use tactics that have previously proved successful in gaining their victim's compliance. However, given that offenders attend to their victim's response, they are open to changing their tactics if an approach proves unsuccessful.