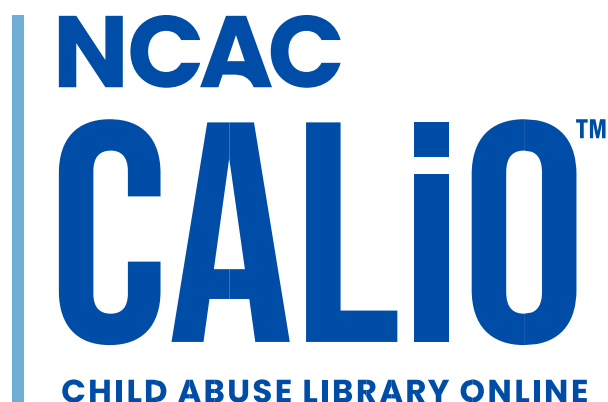




The Manipulation (Grooming) of Victims in Child Sexual Abuse

A Bibliography

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**Championing and Strengthening the
Global Response to Child Abuse**

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Scope

This bibliography lists research publications relevant to how perpetrators manipulate and groom their victims of sexual abuse. Characteristics, risk, prevention, perpetrator tactics used online & in-person, and occurrences within the community are among the topics represented.

Organization

Publications include articles, book chapters, reports, and research briefs and are arranged in date descending order. Links are provided to full text publications when possible. However, this collection may not be complete. More information can be obtained in CALiO™, the Child Abuse Library Online.

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The Manipulation (Grooming) of Victims of Child Sexual Abuse

A Bibliography

Jeglic, E. L., Winters, G. M., Johnson, B. N., Steedman, L. A., & Rasol, A. (2026). Examining sexual grooming behaviors of children: Variations by relationship to the perpetrator. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 178, 108174. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2026.108174

Sexual grooming is present in almost all cases of child sexual abuse (CSA). However, limited research has examined whether sexual grooming varies according to the perpetrator's relationship to the child. Through an online research platform, 918 adult survivors of CSA were recruited to examine differences in sexual grooming behaviors and abuse characteristics across four perpetrator relationship types: family members, friends/romantic partners, acquaintances, and community members. Participants completed the Sexual Grooming Scale-Victim Version (SGS-V) and information about the characteristics of the CSA which were compared across perpetrator relationship categories. Sexual grooming behaviors were reported in nearly all cases. However, some significant differences in both situational factors and grooming tactics emerged based upon by relationship type. Intrafamilial abuse was associated with younger victim age, longer duration, abuse occurring primarily in the home, and more instructions not to disclose. Community perpetrators had the highest overall number of grooming behaviors, particularly those involving gaining access, isolation, and trust development, often within youth-serving organizational contexts. Friend/romantic partner perpetrators were associated with adolescent victims and greater use of emotionally intimate strategies. Abuse perpetrated by acquaintances involved fewer overt grooming behaviors overall. Despite these differences, several core grooming behaviors were consistently reported across relationship types. Findings suggest that while core sexual grooming dynamics remain consistent across contexts, there are some differences in specific strategies used based upon the perpetrators' relationship to the child that may inform prevention programming, professional training, and forensic assessment.

Metcalf, K. E., Thompson, K. J., Mecum, L., Gomez, A., & Dalenberg, C. J. (2026). [Development of the Trauma Research Institute Grooming Scale for Educational Settings \(TRIGS-E\)](#). *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 0(0).
DOI:10.1177/08862605261428180

Sexual grooming, a common facet of sexual abuse, involves preparing a child for abuse by gaining emotional and/or physical access. However, definitions of sexual grooming vary. The lack of consensus among experts contributes to the difficulty in identifying behaviors that are solely characteristic of sexual groomers, as opposed to behaviors in which a well-intentioned individual might also engage. There are various models and measures that attempt to define sexual grooming after the fact; however, a forensic measure to better detect the likelihood of grooming is necessary for improved prevention. Given that children spend the majority of their time away from home at school, we chose to focus on the educational setting. The current project is an initial stage in the development of the Trauma Research Institute Grooming Scale (TRIGS) and is intended for use in the assessment phase of a clinical or forensic assessment or investigation. The present study of 99 psychologists and educational professionals confirmed the presence of 2 subcategories of grooming behavior: Desensitization (DS) and Relationship Enhancement (RE). Results demonstrated DS behaviors as more clearly indicative of grooming, whereas RE behaviors were not only less likely to be identified as definite grooming indicators but also produced less agreement as to which items within this category should be seen as problematic. Additionally, all DS behaviors were consensually identified as “red flags” or reportable to an administrator, whereas only a little over a quarter of RE behaviors were seen as such. The initial findings of the TRIGS provide strong evidence for the two distinct categories of grooming behaviors and hold promise for prevention efforts against sexual grooming in schools.

Porcelli, C., Anderson, F., & Kloess, J. A. (2026). [Unraveling the complexities of offender strategies as part of online sexual grooming and technology-assisted child sexual abuse: A systematic review](#). *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 0*(0). DOI:10.1177/15248380251411261

Over recent years, there has been a notable increase in online sexual grooming and technology-assisted child sexual abuse (CSA). However, to date, a comprehensive overview of the manipulative strategies used by individuals with a history thereof to approach, identify, and engage children & young people in these contexts, with a focus on real-world, naturally-occurring data, is absent from existing literature. The systematic literature review presented here therefore intends to fill this gap. In September 2023, mixed-methods systematic literature search was conducted across six databases, in addition to a gray literature search, using relevant terms. Twelve articles were included in the review, and a thematic synthesis approach was used to integrate the qualitative and quantitative data. Eight themes and 37 subthemes were identified. The findings highlight that individuals use a number of different strategies which are of a highly manipulative, adaptive, and individualized nature in order to identify, approach, and engage victims in online sexual grooming, & technology-assisted CSA respectively. Findings are discussed with a view to informing directions for future research and practical implications.

Spenard, K. D., Cash, D. K., & Russell, T. D. (2026). Recognising risk: Perceptions of risk factors for female children and adolescents at risk of being sexually groomed. *Journal of Sexual Aggression, 32*(2), 252–268. DOI:10.1080/13552600.2025.2493955

Research examining the recognition and prevention of child sexual abuse predominantly focuses on identifying warning signs of abuse after its occurrence. However, recognising children who are more at risk of sexual grooming could preemptively prevent abuse. Research has identified risk factors that make minors more susceptible to grooming and abuse, but it is unclear whether people are sensitive to these cues. It is possible that the minor's age may also affect risk factor recognition. In 2 studies, participants read vignettes describing children & adolescents with characteristics either consistent or

inconsistent with higher risk of being groomed. Experiment 2 also investigated whether providing information about risk factors increased recognition. Psychological factors were the most recognisable risk factors & informing participants about risk factors increased recognition of these traits, particularly for adolescents. These data provide insight into people's ability to recognise known risk factors and highlight the potential benefits of risk education.

Spenard, K. D., Pazos, L. A., Cash, D. K., & Russell, T. D. (2026). Perceptions and recognition of female-versus male-perpetrated grooming behaviors. *Journal of Child & Adolescent Trauma*, 19(2), 501-510. DOI:10.1007/s40653-025-00782-2

Most research on child sexual abuse (CSA) focuses on male-perpetrated abuse, with minimal attention paid to female-perpetrated CSA. It is currently unclear whether people can detect early warning signs of female-perpetrated abuse. The current studies examined participants' beliefs about the prevalence of male- and female-perpetrated CSA and compared participants' detection accuracy for grooming and non-grooming behaviors perpetrated by male and female adults. A sample of 38 undergraduate students completed a pilot study where they indicated how prevalent they believed various adult-child sex pairings in CSA to be. Participants believed men were more likely to commit CSA and believed CSA involving a male adult abusing a female child to be the most prevalent form of. Experiment 1 consisted of 145 participants from Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). In Experiment 1, participants read vignettes describing grooming and non-grooming interactions between adults and children. Sex of both the adults and children were also manipulated. Participants were more likely to interpret interactions as inappropriate when they involved a male adult compared to a female adult. Participants were also more accurate in recognizing grooming behaviors when interactions described male adults as opposed to female adults. These data suggest sex roles and abuse stereotypes influence interpretations regarding potentially dangerous interactions between an adult and a child.

Thorpe, C., Jennings, F., Shams, A., Chong, L. Y., Mir, K., Barry, B., McKeever, S., & Bowden, M. (2026). Building societal resilience against child grooming: A design thinking approach to understanding the problem and priorities. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 183, 108834. DOI:10.1016/j.childyouth.2026.108834

Child grooming is a pervasive yet often hidden issue, with children frequently delaying disclosure until abuse or exploitation has occurred. This study presents the first empirical phase of GroSafe, a National Challenge Fund project led by TU Dublin in partnership with the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC) and funded by Research Ireland. Aligning with the *Empathise & Define* stages of Design Thinking, this concept phase aimed to understand the problem space & co-design a solution grounded in stakeholder needs. Stakeholder mapping was followed by qualitative interviews with 33 professionals across law enforcement, education, social services, & advocacy. The frontline professionals were engaged for their systemic perspectives and also as informed proxies for children's lived experiences, given their daily safeguarding roles. Thematic analysis of interview data generated 15 structured needs statements, which were subsequently prioritised by 20 of the 33 participants through a structured ranking process. Stakeholder insights revealed six key barriers to early reporting of grooming: limited awareness among children and caregivers; fear and distrust of authorities; discomfort discussing personal experiences; shame & embarrassment; cultural stigma inhibiting open discussion; and inaccessible or unclear reporting pathways. These issues contribute to persistent underreporting, leading to data gaps and delayed intervention. This phase generated a set of stakeholder-informed design priorities and a conceptual framework to guide the future development of a technology-enabled intervention. The outcome is a flexible, stakeholder-informed structure to inform subsequent design decisions. Subsequent phases have engaged young people and carers in co-design activities, helping to ensure that future developments are grounded in their needs.

Winters, G. M., Jeglic, E. L., & Matthews, S. (2026). The use of sexual grooming by attorneys in court. *Behavioral Sciences & the Law*. DOI:10.1002/bsl.70080

Child sexual abuse (CSA) cases rely on attorneys, judges, and jurors having an accurate understanding of complex abuse dynamics, including sexual grooming. While sexual grooming is widely used in research & legal contexts, little is known about how attorneys understand and use the construct. This study examined attorneys' perception, knowledge, and utilization of sexual grooming in CSA cases. Fifty-one attorneys from 23 U.S. states completed an online survey. Attorneys viewed sexual grooming as useful, with 88% having used it in their cases. Around half (55%) used expert testimony on the topic, which they rated as highly helpful. Most attorneys learned about sexual grooming through professional trainings, and many expressed a need for additional expert witnesses & investigative evidence on sexual grooming. Sexual grooming is valued in CSA prosecution therefore, continued education, expert consultation, & use of current research are important.

Almeida, T. C., & Pereira, A. (2025). [Prevalence of grooming and sexting among Portuguese youth: Adaptation of the Questionnaire for Online Sexual Solicitation and Interactions with Adults and Sexting questionnaire](#). *Children and Youth Services Review*, 171, 108179. DOI:10.1016/j.childyouth.2025.108179

Online grooming is a type of victimization that is related to sexting behaviors and hurts youth. Research shows a high prevalence of online grooming victimization and sexting behaviors. This study aims to analyze the Portuguese version of the Questionnaire for Online Sexual Solicitation and Interactions with Adults (QOSSIA) and Sexting Questionnaire (SQ) factor structure and psychometric properties; assess the relationship between the QOSSIA and sexting, sexual victimization, and positive emotions; and to assess the prevalence of online grooming victimization and sexting among Portuguese youth. The sample comprised 172 adolescents between 12 and 17 years old ($M = 15.84$, $SD = 1.13$), of which 101 were girls (58.7 %) and 71 were boys (41.3 %). QOSSIA and

SQ show good internal consistency and an adequate model fit. Positive correlations were identified between QOSSIA, sexting, and sexual victimization. Negative correlations were identified between QOSSIA and positive emotions. Seventy-two youths reported at least one online grooming solicitation during the past year. This is the first Portuguese version of the QOSSIA and SQ. The QOSSIA and the SQ allow the assessment of online grooming and sexting, contributing to identifying youth victimization and developing multicultural research. According to our study, the prevalence of online grooming victimization and sexting behaviors among Portuguese youth is high. These findings highlight the importance of assessing and addressing these issues in youth interventions.

An, H., Silva, M., Zhang, Q., Singh, A., Liu, M., Zhang, X., Quadir, S., Lee, S. W., Huang, L., Wisniewski, P. J., & Cho, J. H. (2025). [Toward integrated solutions: A systematic interdisciplinary review of cybergrooming research](https://arxiv.org/abs/2503.05727). *arXiv preprint arXiv:2503.05727*. DOI:10.48550/arXiv.2503.05727

Cybergrooming exploits minors through online trust-building, yet research remains fragmented, limiting holistic prevention. Social sciences focus on behavioral insights, while computational methods emphasize detection, but their integration remains insufficient. This review systematically synthesizes both fields using the PRISMA framework to enhance clarity, reproducibility, and cross-disciplinary collaboration. Findings show that qualitative methods offer deep insights but are resource-intensive, machine learning models depend on data quality, and standard metrics struggle with imbalance and cultural nuances. By bridging these gaps, this review advances interdisciplinary cybergrooming research, guiding future efforts toward more effective prevention and detection strategies.

Arett, J. P., Weaver, T. L., Garner, A., & Murugan, V. (2025). A content analysis of conversation characteristics of online sexual grooming. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 17(Suppl 1), S69–S78.
DOI:10.1037/tra0001816

The online landscape is a rapidly evolving context through which perpetration of child sexual abuse may be enacted differently than offline childhood sexual abuse, and these distinctive methods remain understudied. This study aimed to identify strategies/patterns of online communication to test a theoretical model of online grooming and of offline trauma-related dynamics of sexual abuse and to examine the nature of appearance-focused dialogue present in the online grooming process. Our study investigated a sample of 50 verbatim transcripts comprised of dialogue between adult offenders and adult decoys posing as adolescents between 2004 and 2016 from an archived database. A coding manual consisting of theoretically derived, content-focused domains of these conversations was developed. Using both a basic & interpretive content analysis approach, codes were applied, and the codebook was iteratively altered to best represent the data. Four primary themes included support for O'Connell's (2003) model of the stages of online grooming, the presence of two traumagenic dynamics, an emphasis on appearance-focused communication, and unique online grooming strategies. Additional online context-based grooming strategies that were found could be incorporated into an updated theoretical framework of the grooming process. Parents and children should be informed of the strategies leveraged by online groomers to increase their ability to detect and avoid risky online communication.

Broome, L. J., Izura, C., & Davies, J. (2025). [An investigation of the linguistic and deceptive characteristics of online grooming types](#). *Journal of Sexual Aggression*, 31(3), 378–395. DOI:10.1080/13552600.2023.2300470

A defining feature of online grooming (OG) behaviour is the development of a deceptive relationship to hide the intent of sexual abuse. The OG discourse model proposes deceptive trust is central to entrapment and is predominantly achieved through

language, yet it is unclear whether the intent of intimacy or sex impacts the communicative and deceptive properties of the chats. Fifty-seven chatlogs categorised according to the European OG Typology were analysed to address this gap. The results showed that whilst intentions might be distinct, adults develop positive/authentic social bonds with victims, and engage in strategies to match with victims who fulfil their goal for intimacy or sex. The impact of this study on the theoretical understanding of OG informs an updated and empirical definition of OG: “OG is when cyber-technology is used to build an emotional connection with a person to exploit their vulnerabilities and gain their trust causing harm and/or distress”.

Halvorsen, J. (2025). [Where are minors initially contacted for sexual exploitation grooming in North America? Implications for prevention programming](#). *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 26(1), 202–205. DOI:10.1177/15248380241290247

Baird & Conolly’s systematic review on North American domestic minor sexual exploitation claimed that the literature most frequently identifies the internet as the initial site of contact. However, in my analysis of their sources, only 3 of the 7 identified studies indicated that the internet was the site of initial recruitment, 3 studies did not have enough information to make a determination, and 1 study did not identify the internet as the site of initial recruitment. For the papers that did cite the internet as the initial site of recruitment, most identified the internet as among the least frequent locations of initial recruitment. The internet is not the most frequent location of initial recruitment and correcting this error is important because prevention programs that focus on raising awareness of risks may lead youth to develop a false sense of safety offline and contribute to the moral panic of youth risk online. Rather, prevention programs should focus on healthy relationship skills.

Jeglic, E. L., & Winters, G. M. (2025). An analysis of sexual grooming in cases of child sexual abuse by educators. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 170, 108119. DOI:10.1016/j.childyouth.2025.108119

There is growing recognition that educator sexual misconduct is prevalent in kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) schools. While there is some evidence that educators may use sexual grooming in the abuse process, this has yet to be systematically examined. The present study aimed to investigate the extent to which adult survivors of educator-perpetrated child sexual abuse (CSA) reported experiencing sexual grooming behaviors. Twenty-four adult survivors of CSA who reported that the perpetrator was an educator completed an anonymous online study. As part of a larger study examining sexual grooming behaviors, participants who reported a history of CSA responded to questions about the characteristics of their abuse, including whether they experienced sexual grooming behaviors as delineated by the content-validated Sexual Grooming Model and measured by the Sexual Grooming Scale: Victim Version. The results showed that sexual grooming behaviors were present in all (100%) cases of educator sexual abuse and across all stages of the sexual grooming process. The most commonly reported behaviors included that the educator was involved in youth-serving organizations (92%), selected a child who was overly compliant/trusting of adults (83%), was charming/likable/nice (71%), gave the child a lot of attention (67%), used seemingly innocent touch (67%), and used accidental touching or distraction while touching (67%). We also found that most of the abuse occurred on school property during the school day, while school was in session, and that one third of the educators who perpetrated the CSA were gym teachers or coaches. The findings of this study, coupled with findings from past research, can inform policies for the prevention of CSA within educational settings.

Melo Laclote, P., Martínez-Líbano, J., Céspedes, C., Fuentealba-Urra, S., Ramírez, N. S., Lara, R. I., & Yeomans-Cabrera, M. M. (2025). [Grooming risk factors in adolescents with abuse histories: Insights from Chilean reparative programs](#). *Adolescents*, 5(1), 3. DOI:10.3390/adolescents5010003

The increasing use of digital platforms by adolescents has brought to light critical vulnerabilities related to online grooming. This study explores the risk factors associated with grooming among adolescents aged 12 to 17 years enrolled in a Reparative Program for Abuse in Chile. Using a non-experimental, quantitative, exploratory cross-sectional design, a sample of 50 adolescents was evaluated. Data collection employed validated instruments, including the Okasha Scale for Suicidality (EOS), the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale-21 (DASS-21), the Subjective Well-being Scale (EBS-8), and the Online Grooming Risk Scale (OGR-S). Findings revealed significant associations between grooming and variables such as excessive cellphone use, number of virtual social networks, lack of social connections, economic hardships, and depressive symptoms. Regression analysis highlighted that adolescents with unrestricted internet access, poor social interaction skills in face-to-face contexts, & exposure to environmental risk factors exhibit a heightened likelihood of experiencing grooming. These results underscore the necessity for targeted preventive interventions and policy enhancements to safeguard adolescents in vulnerable circumstances.

Schittenhelm, C., Kops, M., Moosburner, M., Fischer, S. M., & Wachs, S. (2025). [Cybergrooming victimization among young people: A systematic review of prevalence rates, risk factors, and outcomes](#). *Adolescent Research Review*, 10(2), 169-200. DOI:10.1007/s40894-024-00248-w

Adolescence is marked by a unique blend of factors, including adolescents' exploration of their emerging sexuality and growing engagement with digital media. As adolescents increasingly navigate online spaces, cybergrooming victimization has emerged as a significant concern for the development & protection of young people. Yet, there is a lack of systematic analyses of the current state of research. The present systematic review

aimed to integrate existing quantitative research on prevalence rates, risk factors, and outcomes of cybergrooming victimization, informed by an adaptation of the General Aggression Model. Studies providing self-reported data on cybergrooming victimization of people between the ages of 5 and 21 were included. A total of 34 studies met all inclusion criteria, with most focusing on adolescence. Reported prevalence rates were characterized by strong heterogeneity, which could largely be attributed to the underlying methodology. Overall, the included studies showed that at least 1 in 10 young people experiences cybergrooming victimization. Findings further indicated that various factors, for example, being a girl, being older, engaging in risky behavior, displaying problematic Internet use, reporting lower mental well-being, & experiencing other types of victimization, are positively associated with cybergrooming victimization. However, most studies' cross-sectional designs did not allow for an evidence-based classification into risk factors, outcomes, and co-occurrences, so findings were embedded in the proposed model based on theoretical considerations. In addition, there is a noted lack of studies that include diverse samples, particularly younger children, LGBTQIA+ youth, and youth with special educational needs. These findings emphasize that cybergrooming victimization is a prevalent phenomenon among young people that requires prevention and victim support addressing multiple domains.

Aktu, Y. (2024). Self-esteem, family support and online grooming risk among adolescents: The role of problematic internet usage. *Child Abuse Review*, 33(6), e70007. DOI:10.1002/car.70007

The online grooming risk (OGR) among adolescents has risen due to the development of technology and the growing use of social media. Although crucial links have been described among family support, self-esteem and OGR, little is known about the mechanisms problematic Internet usage has in these links. This study aims to investigate the mediating role of problematic Internet usage in the relationship among family support, self-esteem and OGR. The participants consist of a total of 406 adolescents in

Türkiye, with 283 girls and 123 boys. The relationships among the variables were examined using the Pearson correlation, while mediation analyses were carried out using structural equation modelling. Correlational analyses reveal family support to be negatively associated with both OGR and problematic Internet usage. Meanwhile, family support was positively correlated with self-esteem. Similarly, a positive and statistically significant relationship was determined between OGR and problematic Internet usage. The results indicate problematic Internet usage to mediate the relationship between family support and OGR as well as the relationship between self-esteem and OGR. These results highlight the importance of paying attention to adolescents' mental health regarding problematic Internet usage by considering the protective factors of self-esteem and family support due to their close association with OGR.

Dolev-Cohen, M., Yosef, T., & Meiselles, M. (2024). [Parental responses to online sexual grooming events experienced by their teenage children](#). *European Journal of Investigation in Health, Psychology and Education*, 14(5), 1311-1324.
DOI:10.3390/ejihpe14050086

Online sexual grooming (a manipulative process in which the perpetrator locates a young person and creates an abusive relationship with the child that involves sexual exploitation) poses significant challenges to parents. This study examined how parents of adolescent victims of online sexual grooming experienced guiding their children through the event. This qualitative study, conducted in Israel, was based on semi-structured in-depth interviews with 15 parents who guided their adolescents who had been subjected to online sexual grooming. Results indicate that the parents reported a spectrum of emotions, from insecurity & guilt to a sense of control & satisfaction in managing the situation. Also, the reluctance of some parents to engage with the education system indicates potential trust issues. The study demonstrates the urgent need for targeted interventions to equip parents and educational professionals with the

necessary knowledge for prevention and effective response to online sexual grooming. Implications for future research, policy, and practice are discussed.

Jeglic, E. L., Winters, G. M., & Steedman, L. A. (2024). The sexual grooming behaviors of youth who engage in harmful sexual behaviors. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 33(3), 290–319. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2024.2321275

Little is known about the extent to which youths who commit harmful sexual behaviors (HSBs) against another minor utilize sexual grooming during the offense process. This study examined sexual grooming behaviors reported by adults ($n = 250$) who experienced HSBs by another minor during their childhood. Participants completed a self-report survey which included the Sexual Grooming Scale – Victim Version (SGS-V). The results showed that most participants ($n = 242$; 96.9%) reported at least one sexual grooming behavior, with an average of 11.3 behaviors reported. These findings will be discussed as they pertain to the identification and prevention of HSBs among youth.

Kaviani Johnson, A. (2024). [Grooming and child sexual abuse in organizational settings: An expanded role for international human rights law](#). *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, 16(1), 355–373. DOI:10.1093/jhuman/huad039

This article focuses on child sexual abuse in organizational settings, with a particular emphasis on ‘grooming’. While grooming is often associated with online behaviour, its origins predate the digital age. Consequently, this article challenges the misconception of solely linking grooming to online platforms and highlights its broader recognition. The article aims to explore how international human rights law addresses grooming and how the framework can be enhanced to effectively combat grooming & protect children from sexual abuse in organizational settings. First, the article discusses sexual grooming, including in organizational contexts, drawing from scientific & theoretical literature, case reviews, and government inquiries. It then analyses international and regional human

rights laws, along with guidance from treaty-based human rights mechanisms, to outline existing standards on child sexual abuse and grooming. The article examines examples of domestic legislation and proposes an expanded role for international human rights law. By situating the issue within human rights discourse and emphasizing children as having rights and agency, the article challenges prevailing paradigms of child safeguarding research and practice that prioritize risk aversion and compliance. The article urges practitioners to advocate for more comprehensive approaches at local and global levels. The human rights system provides additional avenues for advocates to drive change, fostering greater State & organizational accountability and ensuring every child's right to be free from sexual abuse.

Reneses, M., Riberas-Gutiérrez, M., & Bueno-Guerra, N. (2024). ["He flattered me". A comprehensive look into online grooming risk factors: Merging voices of victims, offenders and experts through in-depth interviews.](#) *Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace*, 18(4), Article 3. DOI:10.5817/CP2024-4-3

Online grooming is the process by which an adult uses the Internet to initiate a dynamic of sexual persuasion and victimisation through online contact to obtain an encounter or sexual content from a minor. Although there is an abundant literature of attempts to define the risk factors for grooming, fewer studies have addressed the risk factors qualitatively through direct interviews with offenders, victims and experts. Further understanding such characteristics of the grooming process allows the development and improvement of evidence-based prevention programmes, designed to target specific risk factors. To deepen our understanding of how risk factors operate and how offenders exploit minors' vulnerabilities, the European H2020¹ project RAYUELA conducted 15 in-depth interviews with offenders, 8 with victims, and 23 with subject-matter experts from different European countries. The results, based on a categorical content analysis, are consistent with previously reported risk factors for victims. Social isolation was revealed as the most relevant factor. The age of greatest risk is in adolescence due to the

characteristics of this developmental stage, among which sexual curiosity stands out. In relation to gender, although girls receive more requests from groomers, boys are more likely to accept them, showing a different perception of the risk. Other relevant factors found non-heterosexual sexual orientation, and poor family communication. In addition, a high percentage of offenders were found to be from the victims' environment. Thus, a relevant conclusion is that risk factors cannot be separated from structural aspects of the offline reality, such as gender stereotypes and lack of sex education, so focusing on them in prevention may be more effective than addressing exclusively Internet aspects.

Shappley, A. G., & Walker, R. V. (2024). The role of perpetrator attractiveness and relationship dynamics on perceptions of adolescent sexual grooming. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 33(8), 1048–1065. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2024.2428282

Sexual grooming, exacerbated by increased internet & social media usage, is a growing concern. Past researchers have found differences in perceptions of sexual grooming based on gender-pairing, perpetrator attractiveness, as well as perpetrator and victim age & gender. Our study extends this research by exploring how the attractiveness of the perpetrator and their relationship to the victim – specifically, whether they are a teacher, religious leader, or family friend – affects perceived grooming severity & recommended legal response. Contrary to expectations, relationship type, not attractiveness, impacted perceptions. Vignettes involving family friends were perceived as less harmful compared to those involving teachers or religious leaders, highlighting nuanced responses based on the perpetrator's role. These findings suggest that grooming perceptions are heavily influenced by the nature of the relationship rather than the attractiveness of the perpetrator, indicating a need for policies and educational initiatives that address these complexities to enhance the detection and prevention of sexual grooming.

Soldino, V., & Seigfried-Spellar, K. C. (2024). [Criminological differences between contact-driven and online-focused suspects in online child sexual grooming police reports](#). *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 149, 106696. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2024.106696

Differences exist between contact and noncontact-driven online child sexual abuse offenders; however, there is still a notable lack of empirical studies with police samples from non-English speaking countries, including Spain. We address this gap by analyzing the criminological characteristics of online child sexual grooming (OCSG) suspected offenders from de-identified law enforcement investigations in Spain. We anonymously coded data provided by Spanish law enforcement agencies from 257 OCSG cases (i.e., unique chat logs between a suspect and minor) extracted from 98 police reports with index investigation years from 2008 to 2021. A total of 101,391 messages were analyzed. Three distinct datasets were created: 257 OCSG cases, 120 unique suspects (79 online-focused, 41 contact-driven), and 234 unique victims. Each dataset focused on different criminological variables for analysis, such as grooming strategy, motivation, and victim high-risk behaviors. There were no significant differences between suspects on gender, age, or criminal offense history. Contact-driven suspects were more likely to use positive rapport, send unprompted sexually explicit images of themselves, and offer something in exchange. Victims of contact-driven individuals were more likely to be male and offer something in exchange for sex or sexually explicit images. Victims of online-focused individuals were more likely to be younger. These findings suggest criminological differences in the online grooming strategies between contact-driven & online-focused suspected offenders in Spain.

Steely Smith, M. K., & ten-Bensel, T. (2024). Sexual grooming behavior and processes of women who commit sexual offenses against children. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 39(21-22), 4526-4548. DOI:10.1177/08862605241239450

Individuals who sexually offend often engage in manipulative and coercive behavior to begin, conceal, & continue the sexual abuse of children over time, referred to as grooming

behavior. The large majority of research regarding grooming behavior derives exclusively from male sex offending samples, which is problematic because male and female sex offenders vary widely in their offending patterns, motivations, & behaviors. For the present study, we examined the nature of sexual grooming and processes exhibited by a sample of 50 women convicted of sexual offenses against a child. We were guided by Craven et al. model of sexual grooming, which focuses on self, environmental, and child grooming. To date, this is the only proposed model of sexual grooming that includes self-grooming as a step in the grooming process. Data included narrative interviews with women who were arrested, convicted, and assessed for risk & community notification purposes between 2014 and 2019. We also examined interviews with victims, witnesses, and other guardians. The findings from the current study indicated that women who sexually offend utilize a variety of self, environmental, & child grooming behaviors. Self-grooming was an intricate, complex, and layered process that continued throughout the duration of the offense. Details provided by the women in our sample suggested that environmental and child grooming occurred simultaneously rather than two distinct steps. A better understanding of grooming behaviors can assist in the detection of grooming behavior, development of appropriate responses to child victims, and inform future legislation and its implementation. Theoretical and policy implications are discussed.

Winters, G. M., & Jeglic, E. L. (2024). Sexual grooming in the Boy Scouts of America. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 33(8), 1066–1099.
DOI:10.1080/10538712.2024.2444636

Research has shown child sexual abuse (CSA) within youth-serving organizations (YSOs) often went undetected for decades, which may in part be due to the use of sexual grooming behaviors. One such YSO is the Boy Scouts of America (BSA), with nearly 100,000 individuals alleging CSA within this organization. This study aimed to describe the characteristics of CSA within the BSA and the presence of sexual grooming behaviors as described by the Sexual Grooming Model. Files ($n = 156$) were coded from a public

database of volunteers who were expelled from BSA due to suspicions of CSA from the 1960s through 1990s. Results provided an overview of who perpetrated and experienced CSA, as well as characteristics of the abuse itself. There was evidence of sexual grooming in many cases; behaviors related to gaining access to and isolating the child were most common, followed by tactics used to develop trust and desensitize the child. These findings are discussed as they pertain to the identification and prevention of CSA, including the importance of providing training informed by sexual grooming that may occur in YSOs, screening and monitoring individuals seeking placements in YSOs, establishing procedures that limit alone time with children, and policies prohibiting volunteer's involvement in the changing and bathing of minors.

Winters, G. M., Jeglic, E. L., Johnson, B. N., & Chou, C. (2024). The prevalence of sexual grooming behaviors among survivors of childhood sexual abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 154, 106842. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2024.106842

Childhood sexual abuse (CSA) is a global problem that is preventable. Sexual grooming behaviors have been deemed an integral part of CSA for the purpose of avoiding detection and preventing disclosure. Many of these behaviors are reported more often by adults who experienced CSA as compared to those that did not. Such behaviors form important targets for prevention efforts, as well as the investigation and prosecution of CSA. Consequently, it is important to identify the prevalence rates of sexual grooming behaviors. The aim of the present study was to identify the prevalence of sexual grooming as reported by adult survivors of CSA. A large sample of adults who reported a history of CSA ($n = 1045$) completed an online, anonymous self-report survey which included the Sexual Grooming Scale – Victim Version via Prolific. Overall, 99% of participants endorsed experiencing at least one sexual grooming behavior, with an average of 14.25 sexual grooming behaviors out of a possible 42 reported per survivor. Participants endorsed behaviors across all five stages of the sexual grooming process: victim selection, gaining access & isolation, trust development, desensitization, and post-abuse maintenance. The

most frequently reported sexual grooming behaviors included the perpetrator selecting a child who was compliant/trusting (68%) or had low self-esteem (61%); arranging activities alone with the child (57%); presenting themselves as nice/charming/likeable (70%); showing the child large amounts of attention (56%) or affection (54%); and using seemingly innocent touch (51%). These findings will be discussed as they pertain to the prevention, detection, and prosecution of CSA.

Denne, E., & Stolzenberg, S. N. (2023). [Exploring how attorneys address grooming in criminal trials of child sexual abuse](#). *Behavioral Sciences & the Law*, 41(6), 488–503. DOI:10.1002/bsl.2637

Grooming is a common tactic among perpetrators of child sexual abuse (CSA). It is important that grooming is addressed in court to explain the unintuitive ways a child may act when they have been victims of abuse. The present study draws upon 134 transcripts of CSA criminal trials to establish how attorneys talk about grooming in court. Only 1.8% of attorney's questions addressed grooming behaviors. The majority of these focusing on exposure to pornography (27%) or boundary pushing (19%). Invitations elicited the most productive reports of grooming from children. There was a statistically significant difference in the proportion with which defense and prosecuting attorney's raised grooming issues, with prosecutors raising grooming issues more often than defense attorneys. We suggest that attorneys consider devoting proportionally more time to addressing grooming in court, to help jurors demystify common myths surrounding CSA.

Jeglic, E. L., Winters, G. M., & Johnson, B. N. (2023). [Identification of red flag child sexual grooming behaviors](#). *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 136, 105998. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2022.105998

Sexual Grooming is the deceptive process wherein a would-be perpetrator prepares a child for sexual abuse (CSA) and prevents disclosure and detection. It is often difficult to

detect sexual grooming because some grooming behaviors resemble normal adult-child interactions. To prevent CSA, it is vital to identify sexual grooming behaviors that can be considered “red flag” behaviors. This study compared reported sexual grooming behaviors between adults who experienced CSA and those with no CSA history to identify which behaviors differed between the two groups. Further we explored whether the relationship to the adult male in the Non-CSA group impacted reported behaviors. Participants were recruited online through Prolific and included adults who experienced CSA (n = 411) and those with no CSA history (n = 502). Participants who reported CSA completed the Sexual Grooming Scale – Victim Version (SGS-V) about their CSA experience. Those with no CSA history were randomly assigned to one of three conditions (family member/non-family member/community member) and completed a modified version of the SGS-V about an adult male with whom they had the most interpersonal contact before age 18. Numerous sexual grooming behaviors that differentiated the behaviors of adults who engaged in CSA and those who did not were identified. The relationship to the adult was an important consideration. Red flag sexual grooming behaviors, specifically those related to desensitizing the child to physical and sexual content, can be identified in cases of CSA and have an important role in prevention.

Kaylor, L. E., Winters, G. M., Jeglic, E. L., & Cilli, J. (2023). An analysis of child sexual grooming legislation in the United States. *Psychology, Crime & Law*, 29(9), 982-1000. DOI:10.1080/1068316X.2022.2043313

Both in-person and online sexual grooming of children is a common process used by those who sexually abuse children. Sexual grooming refers to the method by which an adult manipulates a potential minor victim into situations where sexual abuse can more readily take place while at the same time preventing the minor from disclosing the abuse or others recognizing the inappropriate behaviors. Child sexual grooming is considered a precursor to the criminal act of child sexual abuse; however, in some jurisdictions child sexual grooming in and of itself is considered a standalone criminal offense. Both federal

and state governments in the United States have created anti-grooming laws to criminalize these preparatory acts to protect children before the sexual abuse can occur. This paper will explore the current research on sexual grooming to provide a framework for understanding sexual grooming behaviors, critically examine federal and state sexual grooming legislation, and provide recommendations on how to evaluate and integrate sexual grooming research into criminal prosecution and policy.

Thomas, K., Hamilton-Giachritsis, C., Branigan, P., & Hanson, E. (2023). [Offenders' approaches to overcoming victim resistance in technology-assisted child sexual abuse](#). *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 141, 106143. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2023.106143

Perpetrators of technology-assisted abuse use an abundance of strategies to manipulate and sexually abuse children online, however victim resistance during and post abuse has yet to be explored in detail. This study aimed to explore the strategies perpetrators use to overcome direct victim resistance and the strategies victims use to resist perpetrators' demands. The sample was recruited through National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), Childline, and the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP). This consisted of 10 semi-structured interview transcripts of 1 male and 9 female victims of technology-assisted sexual abuse, who were aged between 9 and 15 years at the time of the abuse. This study qualitatively analysed secondary data collected by Hamilton-Giachritsis et al. (2020). The interview transcripts were analysed using a thematic analysis. The thematic map consisted of 2 key themes and 6 sub-themes. Results identified how all perpetrators appeared to adapt their strategies of overcoming victim resistance using a variety of approaches, ranging from isolating victims & depriving them of sleep, to more extreme approaches such as threats to share sexual images of the victims. Victims also used a range of strategies to resist & de-escalate the abuse, such as feigning ignorance and complying with some but not all requests. This study identified the key strategies used by offenders to overcome victim resistance, and the strategies young people used to resist, de-escalate & end the abuse.

Winters, G. M., & Jeglic, E. L. (2023). Sexual grooming behaviours in sibling sexual harm. *Journal of Sexual Aggression*, 29(3), 306–326.
DOI:10.1080/13552600.2023.2249491

Little research has explored sexual grooming behaviours in sibling sexual harm (SSH). This study investigated the characteristics of SSH, as well as the extent to which sexual grooming behaviours were used, based on the self-report of 38 individuals who were sexually harmed by a sibling. Results showed the SSH most often involved a sibling that was a juvenile themselves. In terms of SSH characteristics, fondling/kissing were the most commonly reported behaviours, and many cases of SSH occurred during afternoon and evening hours, over summer months, & within the siblings' homes. On average, individuals who experienced SSH reported 13 out of a possible 42 sexual grooming behaviours and the most commonly endorsed sexual grooming behaviours were Victim Selection tactics, while Gaining Access and Isolation behaviours were the least endorsed. The results can be used to inform prevention, education, and policy efforts related to SSH.

Winters, G. M., Jeglic, E. L., Terry, K. J., & Gilleran, K. (2023). Child sexual grooming of catholic clergy: A comparison between victims allegedly abused by clergy with single versus multiple victims. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 32(1), 91–115.
DOI:10.1080/10538712.2022.2163020

There is evidence that clergy who commit child sexual abuse (CSA) may utilize sexual grooming behaviors in the process consistent with a content-validated model (Sexual Grooming Model; SGM). Although research has examined differences in characteristics between clergy with single versus multiple CSA victims, little is known about how sexual grooming behaviors may vary between these groups. The present study utilized a large sample of alleged clergy sexual abuse incidents to examine the differences in reported sexual grooming behaviors for victims who experienced abuse by an individual who had a single (V-SVOs) or multiple (V-MVOs) victims. As part of a larger study, files of victim reports of CSA were reviewed from 195 dioceses/eparchies and 140 religious institutes in the United States; these data were analyzed based on behaviors in the SGM for the

present study. Overall, the findings showed that the 2 groups experienced similar tactics throughout the sexual grooming process outlined by the SGM. However, there were some differences for certain grooming tactics within the trust development, gaining access & isolation, and desensitization to sexual contact & physical touch stages. The implications for prevention, policy, & treatment as well as future directions of research, are discussed.

Chiu, J., & Quayle, E. (2022). [Understanding online grooming: An interpretative phenomenological analysis of adolescents' offline meetings with adult perpetrators](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2022.105600). *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 128, 105600. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2022.105600

It is the norm for adolescents to form friendships online but connecting with strangers poses risks of online grooming. Adult perpetrators take advantage of the internet's anonymity and accessibility to befriend and groom young people for sexual abuse. Much of the existing research has focused on the offender's perspective and grooming tactics, while extensive studies on victim profiles have focused on risk factors and young people's vulnerabilities to online grooming. This research takes an in-depth look into grooming processes from the perspective of the adolescent victim and explores how the relationships progressed online-to-offline, resulting in sexual abuse. It aims to understand young people's motivations and mindsets by exploring their lived experiences of offline meeting with adult perpetrators. The sample consisted of adolescents aged 14–21 in the UK and EU. Using data from the Risk-taking Online Behavior Empowerment through Research and Training Project, six interviews were examined using an interpretative phenomenological analysis. Four themes emerged: 1) Varied interpretations of risk 2) Taking control 3) Seeking security and validation; and 4) Shifts in perspective. The subtleties of online grooming were masked by the adolescents' misplaced trust as they displayed agency in pursuing opportunities for online friendships or sexual activities. Findings suggest an insufficient knowledge of grooming and the need to more clearly define risks among adolescents. Safety guidelines should highlight the

subtleties of grooming tactics and harmful behaviours that may not be readily perceived as abuse.

Cook, D., Zilka, M., DeSandre, H., Giles, S., Weller, A., & Maskell, S. (2022). [Can we automate the analysis of online child sexual exploitation discourse?](#) *arXiv*, 2209, 12320. DOI:10.48550/arXiv.2209.12320

Social media's growing popularity raises concerns around children's online safety. Interactions between minors and adults with predatory intentions is a particularly grave concern. Research into online sexual grooming has often relied on domain experts to manually annotate conversations, limiting both scale and scope. In this work, we test how well-automated methods can detect conversational behaviors and replace an expert human annotator. Informed by psychological theories of online grooming, we label 6772 chat messages sent by child-sex offenders with one of eleven predatory behaviors. We train bag-of-words and natural language inference models to classify each behavior, and show that the best performing models classify behaviors in a manner that is consistent, but not on-par, with human annotation.

Finkelhor, D., Turner, H., & Colburn, D. (2022). [Prevalence of online sexual offenses against children in the US](#). *JAMA Network Open*, 5(10), e2234471-e2234471. DOI:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.34471

Sexual abuse is increasingly facilitated by technology, but the prevalence and dynamics of such offenses have not been well delineated, making it difficult to design prevention strategies. The objective was to examine the frequency and characteristics of online and technology-facilitated sexual abuse against children and youth. In this nationally representative online survey study performed from November 19 to December 29, 2021, young adults aged 18 to 28 years were asked retrospectively about their childhood (<18 years) experiences of online and technology-facilitated abuse. The 2639 participants

were sampled from an online panel. Participants were asked questions about 11 different kinds of online and technology-facilitated sexual abuse with follow-up questions about their dynamics and offenders. Prevalence rates were calculated for several cross-cutting concepts (online child sexual abuse, image-based sexual abuse, self-produced child sexual abuse images, nonconsensual sexting, online grooming by adults, revenge pornography, sextortion, and online commercial sexual exploitation). Survey weights were applied to obtain population prevalence estimates. A total of 2639 individuals (48.5% male, 49.8% female, and 1.8% other gender; 23.7% Hispanic, 12.6% non-Hispanic Black, 53.9% non-Hispanic White, 4.8% other race, and 5.0% ≥2 races) were surveyed. Childhood (before 18 years of age) prevalence rates were as follows: online child sexual abuse, 15.6%; image-based sexual abuse, 11.0%; self-produced child sexual abuse images, 7.2%; nonconsensual sexting, 7.2%; online grooming by adults, 5.4%; revenge pornography, 3.1%; sextortion, 3.5%; and online commercial sexual exploitation, 1.7%. The prime age of vulnerability across all categories was 13 to 17 years. Perpetrators in most categories were predominantly dating partners, friends, & acquaintances, not online strangers. The results of this national survey study suggest that a considerable portion of youth have experienced online child sexual abuse. Professionals planning prevention & intervention strategies for online sexual abuse should understand that dynamics include diverse episodes that are often extensions of dating abuse, sexual bullying, and sexual harassment, not only events perpetrated by adult internet predators.

Katz, C., & Field, N. (2022). Unspoken: Child-perpetrator dynamic in the context of intrafamilial child sexual abuse. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 37(5-6), NP3585-NP3604. DOI:10.1177/0886260520943723

The literature on child sexual abuse (CSA) has contributed greatly to the understanding of child-perpetrator dynamic while mainly addressing the concepts of grooming and manipulation. Considerably less attention has been dedicated, however, to child-perpetrator dynamic in intrafamilial child sexual abuse (IFCSA). The current study

examined how children perceive and experience the dynamic with their perpetrator parents in the context of IFCSA, as conveyed by victims. Analysis of 29 forensic interviews with children aged 8 to 14 years suggested above all, across all identified themes, the unspoken nature of IFCSA. Specifically, the children shared their surprise at the abusive incidents despite having described a long and unspoken grooming process. The children shared their understanding of the secretive nature of IFCSA although that too was unspoken, while illustrating the fear and terror in the family dynamic. Finally, the children discussed the elusiveness of the dynamic in terms of the natural and unnatural aspects of the relationship. The discussion addresses the unique nature of IFCSA and the family dynamic. The main implication for practice is the urgent need to modify existing instruction and training programs for practitioners to better adjust them to IFCSA survivors. More specifically, the elusive nature of IFCSA must be conveyed to both clinical and forensic practitioners who need to evaluate and intervene in with child survivors of IFCSA. In addition, the fear and terror that characterize the family dynamic and the unspoken, unbridled rule of the perpetrator fathers are of central importance in adapting interventions to children and their families in the context of IFCSA.

Kaylor, L. E., Winters, G. M., & Jeglic, E. L. (2022). Exploring sexual grooming in female perpetrated child sexual abuse. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 31*(5), 503–521. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2021.1994505

According to official statistics, two percent of those who commit sex crimes are women, most of which involve child victims. However, victimization surveys suggest the true rate of female-perpetrated child sexual abuse is significantly higher than official statistics, and that it is under-detected and under-reported. Compared to men, relatively little is known about the behaviors and tactics that females employ to perpetrate child sexual abuse. While as many as half of male-perpetrated child sexual abuse involves sexual grooming, sexual grooming has not been empirically studied as it pertains to women. Existing literature, case studies, and media reports describe behaviors and strategies of

women who abuse minors which may be suggestive of sexual grooming, particularly in cases of child sexual abuse perpetrated by female educators and child sex traffickers. This article explores what is known about female sexual offending, integrating it with the research on sexual grooming to provide a framework for understanding female sexual grooming behaviors. Implications for prevention, policy, and practice will be examined.

Nicol, S. J., Harris, D. A., Ogilvie, J., Kebbell, M. R., Craig, C., & Knight, R. (2022). Evading detection: What do we know about men charged with extrafamilial child sexual abuse following delayed detection?. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 31(3), 333–352. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2022.2047856

Most child sexual abuse (CSA) remains unreported and undetected. Despite this, much of what we know about perpetrators of CSA is derived from samples of convicted CSA offenders. Significant knowledge gaps remain about those who have evaded detection. This study addresses this gap with an in-depth content analysis of the case files of ten convicted child sexual offenders (CSOs) with the longest detection lag, selected from a broader group (n = 349) of men incarcerated at the Massachusetts Treatment Center (MTC). Participants were examined on a range of offender characteristics including Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), cognitive distortions, antisocial traits, indicators of pedophilia & Machiavellian or narcissistic traits, offense facilitating factors, and grooming behavior. A tentative profile emerged with the following characteristics: direct experience of childhood abuse, various cognitive distortions, specialized rather than versatile criminal history, pedophilic traits, Machiavellian traits, and engaging in a range of offense-facilitating behaviors including grooming. We provide insight into offenders who evade detection for CSA and set the foundation for further research to inform prevention strategies for law enforcement agencies and child-serving organizations.

Ringenberg, T. R., Seigfried-Spellar, K. C., Rayz, J. M., & Rogers, M. K. (2022). A scoping review of child grooming strategies: Pre-and post-internet. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 123, 105392. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2021.105392

In this study, we conducted a scoping review of grooming strategies both pre- and post-Internet. Our goal was to enumerate strategies analyzed in both time periods, provide similarities & differences, and discuss how changing datasets & technology have impacted the grooming process in both online and offline environments. We performed a scoping review of peer-reviewed journal articles from 1970 to 2020 within PubMed, Medline, PsychInfo, and ERIC. This resulted in 19,679 unique articles. Titles and abstracts were screened resulting in 266 articles which were then read in full, resulting in 93 papers which qualified based on inclusion criteria. Grooming strategies identified pre-Internet included: enticements, coercion, isolation, substance abuse, gradual sexualization, and secrecy. In comparison, the strategies identified post-Internet were: enticements, risk assessment, trust, sexualization, fantasy, secrecy, isolation, meeting, media progression, deception, coercion, substance use as a tool, authority, and repetition. While grooming strategies overlapped pre and post-Internet, the timing & scope of concepts differed. Additionally, grooming offline began to incorporate technology post-Internet which increased accessibility & isolation of the victim in a similar manner to online grooming.

Spenard, K. D., & Cash, D. K. (2022). Retrospective perceptions of grooming in same-sex versus opposite-sex child sexual abuse. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 31(6), 692-706. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2022.2123755

Research on child sexual abuse (CSA) has predominantly focused on opposite-sex (e.g., male adult-female child) adult-child pairs, neglecting same-sex (e.g., male adult-male child) adult-child pairs. Grooming behaviors are an early indicator of CSA and while it is important to recognize grooming to prevent abuse, research has shown that detecting these behaviors is a difficult task. Despite this difficulty, people retrospectively overestimate their ability to recognize abuse once it is clear that abuse has occurred. The

current study investigated how outcome information (abuse did or did not occur) and the sex of the adult-child pair influenced perceptions of adult-child interactions. Participants evaluated vignettes depicting grooming and non-grooming behaviors in same-sex & opposite-sex adult-child conditions. Participants who were told CSA occurred provided higher likelihood ratings that abuse occurred than participants who were not given information about the abuse. There was some evidence that gender pairings influenced retrospective perceptions of these interactions.

Winters, G. M., Kaylor, L. E., & Jeglic, E. L. (2022). Toward a universal definition of child sexual grooming. *Deviant Behavior*, 43(8), 926–938.
DOI:10.1080/01639625.2021.1941427

It is estimated that 30–45% of child sexual abusers use sexual grooming tactics. While sexual grooming is considered integral to the child sexual abuse process, there has yet to be a universally accepted definition of the construct that condenses & summarizes this complex process. Based upon a thorough evaluation and critique of prior definitions and research on a content validated model of sexual grooming, a new operational definition of sexual grooming is proposed. An easily understood and applied definition of sexual grooming is needed for measurement of the construct. Further, having a common language to describe sexual grooming is necessary for research, prevention, detection, communication, and intervention of child sexual abuse.

Oltman, J. D., & Surface, J. (2021). [Preventing sexual grooming by teachers: One state's legislative approach](https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/edadfacproc/9). *Educational Leadership Faculty Proceedings & Presentations*, 9. <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/edadfacproc/9>

Research on reported sexual grooming between teachers & students began somewhere around the 1980s but, with the arrest of former Pennsylvania State football coach Jerry Sandusky for numerous counts of child sexual abuse, the concept of sexual grooming

became more public and recognized in the most recent decade. Following the Sandusky cases, sexual grooming has been implicated in other high-profile organizations involving such large groups as the Catholic Church, the Boy Scouts, and numerous public & private school. Sexual abuse tactics have been found to be used by 30–45% of child sexual abusers indicating that sexual abuse by a trusted adult (teacher, coach, leader) is often preceded with grooming activities priming a child to be lured into a sexual relationship.

van Gijn-Grosvenor, E. L., & Lamb, M. E. (2021). Online groomer typology scheme. *Psychology, Crime & Law*, 27(10), 973–987. DOI:10.1080/1068316X.2021.1876048

One hundred and one transcripts of conversations between volunteer workers purporting to be minors and convicted offenders in the United States of America who had groomed minors online for offline sexual encounters were analysed. Based on rapport building, sexual, & concealment variables, 5 offender profiles were identified using cluster analysis. The intimacy-seeking groomers employed rapport-building. The dedicated, hypersexual offenders built rapport, talked about sexual matters, and used strategies to conceal contact. The social groomers built some rapport but talked less about sexual topics and ways to conceal contact. The opportunistic-social groomers spent little time talking online, built very little rapport, and were not concerned about getting caught. Implications for parents, policy makers, and teachers attempting to protect children from online grooming are discussed.

Winters, G. M., & Jeglic, E. L. (2021). [The sexual grooming scale–victim version: The development and pilot testing of a measure to assess the nature and extent of child sexual grooming](#). *Victims & Offenders*, 17(6), 919–940. DOI:10.1080/15564886.2021.1974994

Sexual grooming has been deemed an integral component of child sexual abuse (CSA). However, the nature and extent of sexual grooming remains understudied in large part

because an empirically-validated scale for child sexual grooming has yet to be developed. We developed the Sexual Grooming Scale – Victim Version (SGS-V) to assess the stages and behaviors described in the content-validated Sexual Grooming Model from a victim’s perspective. The SGS-V was pilot tested with 115 adult victims of CSA. Overall, results supported the feasibility in terms of implementation & its limited-efficacy. The implications for prevention, investigation, treatment, and research are discussed.

Winters, G. M., Kaylor, L. E., & Jeglic, E. L. (2021). Toward a universal definition of child sexual grooming. *Deviant Behavior*, 43(8), 926–938.
DOI:10.1080/01639625.2021.1941427

It is estimated that 30–45% of child sexual abusers use sexual grooming tactics. While sexual grooming is considered integral to the child sexual abuse process, there has yet to be a universally accepted definition of the construct that condenses and summarizes this complex process. Based upon a thorough evaluation and critique of prior definitions and research on a content validated model of sexual grooming, a new operational definition of sexual grooming is proposed. An easily understood and applied definition of sexual grooming is needed for measurement of the construct. Further, having a common language to describe sexual grooming is necessary for research, communication, detection, prevention, and intervention of child sexual abuse.

Greene-Colozzi, E. A., Winters, G. M., Blasko, B., & Jeglic, E. L. (2020). Experiences and perceptions of online sexual solicitation and grooming of minors: A retrospective report. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 29(7), 836–854.
DOI:10.1080/10538712.2020.1801938

Internet predation of minors has become a focus of child sexual abuse research and legislation. Studies reveal that many American youth report experiencing sexual solicitation and sexual grooming online, but the youth perspective of these experiences has not been examined. This study examined retrospective perspectives of online sexual

solicitation and grooming experienced as a minor. Participants were 1,133 undergraduate college students at two public institutions in the United States who completed an online survey retrospectively exploring Internet behaviors, experiences of online sexual solicitation or online grooming, and perceptions of the experience. Results showed that one-quarter of total participants conversed with adult strangers online as minors. Importantly, 65% of participants who chatted with adult strangers as minors experienced sexual solicitation from an adult stranger. Twenty-three percent of 1,133 total participants recalled having a long, intimate conversation as a minor with an adult stranger from an online chatroom that followed a pattern of online sexual grooming. While less than half (38%) of the youth who engaged in an intimate online relationship with an adult stranger met the adult in-person, a large majority of those who did meet in-person (68%) reported physical sexual intercourse. Implications for Internet safety and guidelines are discussed.

Lorenzo-Dus, N., Kinzel, A., & Di Cristofaro, M. (2020). The communicative modus operandi of online child sexual groomers: Recurring patterns in their language use. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 155, 15–27. DOI:10.1016/j.pragma.2019.09.010

Online child sexual groomers manipulate their targets into partaking in sexual activity online and, in some cases, offline. To do so they use language (and other semiotic means, such as images) strategically. This study uses a Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies methodology to identify recurring patterns in online groomers' language use, mapping them to the specific grooming goal that their use in context fulfils. The analysis of the groomers' language (c. 3.3 million words) within 622 conversations from the Perverted Justice website newly identifies 70 such recurring linguistic patterns (three-word collocations), as well as their relative strength of association to one or more grooming goals. The results can be used to inform computational models for detecting online child sexual grooming language. They can also support the development of training resources that raise awareness of typical language structures that characterise online sexual groomers' communicative modus operandi.

Pollack, D., & Reiser, R. (2020). [Social workers have a role in curbing sexual grooming in schools](#). *Children & Schools*, 42(2), 139–142. DOI:10.1093/cs/cdaa004

Schoeps, K., Hernández, M. P., Garaigordobil, M., & Montoya-Castilla, I. (2020). [Risk factors for being a victim of online grooming in adolescents](#). *Psicothema*, 32(1), 15–23. DOI:10.7334/psicothema2019.179

The risk of child grooming has spread exponentially with the massive access of adolescents to social networks and the internet. The aim of the study was to examine the personal factors (body self-esteem and disinhibition) and erotic-sexual factors (sexual initiation strategies and erotic-pornographic sexting) that predict grooming. The sample was comprised of 1,200 adolescents aged between 12 and 16 years ($M = 14.54$, $SD = 1.17$; 50.83% girls). A cross-sectional design with self-report data was used and structural equation modeling (SEM) with mediation analysis was performed. The results indicated two paths explaining child grooming: 1) physical attractiveness and disinhibition are indirectly associated with grooming through erotic sexting and direct sexual initiation strategies; both of which partially mediate this relationship; 2) disinhibited behavior has an indirect impact on grooming; pornographic sexting and coercive strategies acting as mediators. The semi-partial mediation model explains 54% of the variance of grooming. These findings highlight the urgent need to implement prevention programs considering these attitudes and behaviors that function as precursors of victimization and the risk of falling into pedophile networks.

Winters, G. M., Jeglic, E. L., & Kaylor, L. E. (2020). Validation of the sexual grooming model of child sexual abusers. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 29(7), 855–875. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2020.1801935

Sexual grooming has been deemed an integral part of the child sexual abuse process. However, there has yet to be a universally accepted model for this process and, as a consequence, there is no clear understanding of which behaviors constitute sexual

grooming. One proposed model of in-person sexual grooming outlined five stages of the process: 1) victim selection, 2) gaining access and isolating a child, 3) trust development, 4) desensitization to sexual content and physical contact, and 5) maintenance following the abuse. The present study sought to validate this Sexual Grooming Model (SGM) and identify behaviors that may be employed during each stage of the process. First, a thorough review of the literature was conducted to generate a comprehensive list of sexual grooming behaviors ($n = 77$). Second, 18 experts in the field completed a survey which asked them to rate the extent to which each of the five stages and potential grooming behaviors were relevant to the sexual grooming process. Results provided support for the SGM and produced 42 behaviors that were considered to be grooming tactics within these stages. From this, the first validated, comprehensive model of in-person sexual grooming is proposed. The article concludes with a discussion of the implications and future directions in the field.

Arthur, R., & Down, L. (2019). Preventing the criminalisation of children who have been victims of group-based sexual exploitation involving grooming tactics: Understanding child sexual exploitation as enslavement. *The Journal of Criminal Law*, 83(5), 370–380. DOI:10.1177/0022018319879013

The United Kingdom has been beset by a series of moral panics concerning grooming gangs sexually exploiting young girls. These moral panics derive from a number of well-publicised cases, the most infamous of which took place in Rochdale, Greater Manchester. Further grooming rings have been exposed in Rotherham, Oxfordshire, Oldham, Derby, Huddersfield and Newcastle. Grooming children has been criminalised by section 15 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 and section 67 of the Serious Crime Act 2015. These offences apply to online and offline communication, including social media. Adult groomers face up to two years in prison and being automatically placed on the sex offenders register. These laws are intended to protect children from abuse and exploitation. However, child victims who have been abused by gangs and coerced into

offending may still be liable for prosecution for any offending they have engaged in. These offences will also be recorded on their criminal records. Fear of being prosecuted may stop victims coming forward and prevent survivors from moving on with their lives. This article will examine how the law can be reformulated to ensure protection of children from sexual exploitation and also ensuring children are not charged for committing crimes whilst being groomed or coerced. The article will consider whether the Modern Slavery Act 2015, and in particular the statutory defence available under section 45 of the 2015 Act, potentially offer a means of protecting victims of grooming without the risk of criminalisation.

Jonsson, L. S., Fredlund, C., Priebe, G., Wadsby, M., & Svedin, C. G. (2019). [Online sexual abuse of adolescents by a perpetrator met online: A cross-sectional study.](#) *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health*, 13(1), 32.
DOI:10.1186/s13034-019-0292-1

The current study aimed at exploring adolescents' experiences of online sexual contacts leading to online sexual abuse by a perpetrator whom the victim had first met online. Associations with socio demographic background, experience of abuse, relation to parents, health & risk behaviors were studied. The participants were a representative national sample of 5175 students in the third year of a Swedish high school. Analyses included bivariate statistics and stepwise multiple logistic regression models. In total 330 (5.8%) adolescents had gotten to know someone during the preceding 12 months for the purpose of engaging in some kind of sexual activity online. Thirty-two (9.7%) of those, the index group, had felt that they had been persuaded, pressed or coerced on at least one occasion. Sexual interaction under pressure was seen as constituting sexual abuse. These adolescent victims of online sexual abuse, the index group, did not differ with respect to socio-demographic background from the adolescents without this experience, the reference group. The index group had significantly more prior experiences of different kinds of abuse, indicating that they belong to a polyvictimized group. More frequent risk

behavior, poorer psychological health, poorer relationships with parents & lower self-esteem also characterized the index group. Online sexual abuse, without experiences of offline abuse, was associated with poorer psychological health, at least at the same level as offline sexual abuse only. The study made clear the importance of viewing online sexual abuse as a serious form of sexual abuse. Professionals meeting these children need to focus not only on their psychological health such as depressions & symptoms of trauma but need to also screen for online behavior & abuse and previous forms of abuse.

Kloess, J. A., Hamilton-Giachritsis, C. E., & Beech, A. R. (2019). Offense processes of online sexual grooming and abuse of children via internet communication platforms. *Sexual Abuse, 31*(1), 73–96. DOI:10.1177/1079063217720927

The aim of the present study was to provide an inclusive and realistic account of the offense processes of naturally occurring, sexually exploitative interactions between offenders and victims that took place via Internet communication platforms, and develop an offense process diagram of online sexual grooming and abuse. Five case series, comprising 29 transcripts of 22 interactions, were analyzed using the qualitative approach of thematic analysis. Police reports were reviewed for descriptive and case-specific information. The five offenders were men aged between 27 and 52 years, and the number of children they communicated with ranged from one to 12. Victims were aged between 11 and 15, and were both female ($n = 17$) and male ($n = 6$). Findings revealed that offenders employed either an indirect or a direct approach to conversations with victims and initiating contact with them. The approach offenders employed was also reflected in the types of strategies they used. Only two offenders were found to engage in aspects of sexual grooming as part of an indirect approach; the majority of the interactions by the other three offenders, that lacked features of sexual grooming altogether, were found to be of a direct approach. These findings are discussed in relation to current issues surrounding terminology and definition of sexual grooming, as well as theoretical and practical implications, concluding with suggestions for future research.

Kloess, J. A., Larkin, M., Beech, A. R., & Hamilton-Giachritsis, C. E. (2019). Case studies of men's perceptions of their online sexual interactions with young people: An interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Sexual Abuse, 31*(8), 867–885. DOI:10.1177/1079063218769031

The aim of the present study was to gain an understanding of the perspectives of men who were convicted of committing a sexual offense that included online sexual grooming. It explores their experiences of illegal interactions with young people via Internet communication platforms, which progressed to physical meetings. Semistructured interviews were conducted with two men and analyzed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), providing in-depth accounts of their personal experiences. These are presented in a case study format. Three dominant themes emerged from the analysis: (a) fulfilling an unmet need, (b) spiraling cycle of use, and (c) confrontation with reality. Narrative tones employed by the two men were “being trapped in a lie,” analogous to a problem narrative through which their Internet use was presented as a poor and/or failed coping strategy to deal with life stress. Through a process of habituation, their Internet use spiraled out of control. A progression was described in terms of time spent on the computer, frequency and intensity of online interactions, and the impact this had on the men's personal lives, highlighting the “compulsive” nature of such interactions for them. A consideration of individual and situational vulnerability factors provides new insight into the progression of online sexual behavior and contributes to our understanding thereof.

Lorenzo-Dus, N., & Kinzel, A. (2019). [‘So is your mom as cute as you?’: Examining patterns of language use in online sexual grooming of children](#). *Journal of Corpora and Discourse Studies, 2*, 15–39. DOI:10.18573/jcads.31

Linguistic research into online grooming is scarce despite both the communicative essence of this form of online child sexual abuse and a substantial body of literature into it across other Social Sciences. Most of this literature has examined small data sets via qualitative methods, primarily Thematic Analysis. This study evaluates the contribution

that a Corpus Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS) approach can make to this body of literature, with a focus on online groomers' language. The corpus, extracted from the Perverted Justice Foundation archive, consists of c. 3.3 million words produced by >600 convicted child sexual offenders interacting online with adult decoys whom they believed to be children. Lexical dispersion (DPNorm), collocation and concordance analyses were conducted. The corpus was also run through the software LIWC (Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count), which is the only other software-assisted methodology that has been adopted to examine Perverted Justice data. Our analysis shows that LIWC may not be the most efficient software to analyse online groomers' language due to a lack of general language comparison scores, the non-transparency of some of its analytic variables and a focus on de-contextualised words. Comparatively, CADS methods can shed light upon online groomers' strategic use of language. They can also reveal the complex and nuanced ways in which discourse features such as sexual explicitness/implicitness and interpersonal (in)directness operate alongside these strategies.

McMahon, M., & Kirley, E. A. (2019). [When cute becomes criminal: Emoji, threats, and online grooming](#). *Minnesota Journal of Law, Science and Technology*, 21(1), 3.

Emoji are widely used and are frequently perceived as cute or benign adjuncts to online communications. Employed to humanise truncated digital messages by conveying humour, emotion and sociability, emoji perform a far more sinister role when used to convey threats or to sexually exploit minors. These activities exploit the emotive function of emoji and/or their role in facilitating trust, albeit for a criminal purpose. This paper explores the role of emoji in both threats and online grooming. Through a review of a sampling of criminal cases from diverse jurisdictions, we examine relevant prosecutions and find that emoji are being increasingly recognized as a facilitator or adjunct to criminal threats and unlawful sexual solicitation made on online platforms such as Facebook, Instagram or through private messaging. The review also examines the multiple and diverse ways in which evidence of emoji has been admitted in criminal trials,

raising contentious (but hitherto largely unrecognised) issues in relation to the application of the best evidence rule. While noting the distinctive opportunities, challenges and problems posed in relation to how to interpret and best represent these stylised visual representations in criminal proceedings, the article concludes that despite these various difficulties, imposing criminal liability for threats or solicitation conveyed by emoji is a necessary evolution of the criminal law, demonstrating its adaptation to the digital age.

McElvaney, R. (2019). Grooming: A case study. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 28(5), 608-627. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2018.1554612

In recent years, legislation recognizing the grooming of a child for the purposes of sexual abuse as a criminal offense has been introduced. However, there is a limited evidence base on the mechanisms involved in grooming behavior, particularly from the perspective of those who have experienced grooming. This article, drawing on an in-depth case study of a 52-year-old man, using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, explores the experience of grooming from childhood into adulthood. Four key themes were identified: abuser as benefactor, a substitute parent, abuser as mind controller, and facilitating system. The findings suggest that two key relationship dynamics are helpful in understanding the process of grooming; the traumatic bond established between the abuser & the abused and relationships within the child's wider system that facilitated the child's silence. These dynamics illustrate how the sexual abuse experience is normalized, and how the occurrence of abuse & maintenance of the secret is facilitated by those in the victim's wider ecological system over a number of decades. A better understanding of the process of grooming can enhance professionals' responses to those who have experienced grooming, in particular helping to alleviate self-blame associated with experiences of sexual abuse and non-disclosure.

Quayle, E., & Koukopoulos, N. (2019). Deterrence of online child sexual abuse and exploitation. *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 13(3), 345–362.
DOI:10.1093/police/pay028

‘Cyberspace’ has added a dimension to the ecology of the child and should be a starting point for practitioners (including police) to think about digital media in the context of child sexual abuse (CSA). While there is no evidence to suggest that online abuse & exploitation is a more serious offence than crimes occurring offline, the behaviours enabled by social media may present a significant risk factor for some children. This article gives a brief overview of the phenomena and prevalence of online CSA & exploitation and the role that the Internet may play. This is considered in relation to deterrence, prevention & management of these crimes, and further develops a public health approach to online child abuse & exploitation. Finally, the article critically considers emerging evidence to support this interaction between the individual and the online environment.

Raine, S., & Kent, S. A. (2019). The grooming of children for sexual abuse in religious settings: Unique characteristics and select case studies. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 48, 180–189. DOI:10.1016/j.avb.2019.08.017

This article examines the sexual grooming of children and their caregivers in a wide variety of religious settings. We argue that unique aspects of religion facilitate institutional and interpersonal grooming in ways that often differ from forms of manipulation in secular settings. Drawing from Christianity (Catholicism, Protestantism, and Seventh-day Adventism) and various sects (the Children of God, the Branch Davidians, the Fundamentalist Latter-day Saints, a Hindu ashram, and the Devadasis), we show how some religious institutions and leadership figures in them can slowly cultivate children and their caregivers into harmful and illegal sexual activity. A number of uniquely religious characteristics facilitate this cultivation, which includes: theodicies of legitimation; power, patriarchy, obedience, protection, & reverence towards authority figures; victims' fears about spiritual punishments; and scriptural uses to justify adult-child sex.

Ramiro, L. S., Martinez, A. B., Tan, J. R., Mariano, K., Miranda, G. M., & Bautista, G. (2019). Online child sexual exploitation and abuse: A community diagnosis using the social norms theory. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 96, 104080. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.104080

This study focused on the drivers of online child sexual exploitation and abuse (OCSEA) among Filipino children & youth, with emphasis on community norms. An ethnographic qualitative study was conducted in 2 communities in MetroManila that are considered “hotspots” for child sexual abuse. One hundred and forty-four males & females from various age groups served as key informants. Political officials, Internet shop managers, professionals and police officers were also interviewed. Non-participant observations & mapping were used to provide context regarding OCSEA in the communities. The results revealed that OCSEA was committed online by heterosexual and same sex attracted men in their 40s–50s. The usual victims were girls aged 13–17 years, although boys were also noted. The various forms of online activities leading to OCSEA included sexual chatting, showing of child sex photos & live videos as well as sextortion. The online transactions were usually initiated by the peer group. In general, online sexual activities were perceived as “normal” among young people, although regarded as “disgusting”. Online sex activities had become a source of “easy money” for the child and family. They were perceived as not harmful because of anonymity and the absence of any actual physical contact. People in the community tolerate these online practices and do not report the incidence to authorities. The effects on children & youth were predominantly social and psychological, albeit perceived as economically beneficial. Some preventive & mitigating actions were recommended to curb the incidence of OCSEA in the communities.

Wolf, M. R., & Pruitt, D. K. (2019). Grooming hurts too: The effects of types of perpetrator grooming on trauma symptoms in adult survivors of child sexual abuse. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 28(3), 345–359. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2019.1579292

There are a multitude of behaviors that child sexual abusers use to ‘groom’ children into becoming vulnerable to abuse. In this study of 277 adult survivors of child sexual abuse,

participants advised the many ways they were groomed into being abused by up to three perpetrators. The effects of three categories of grooming (Verbal Coercion, Grooming that used Drugs/Alcohol, and Threatening/Violent Grooming) were examined for their effects on trauma symptom severity. Using Linear Regressions, each grooming category had a significant predictive effect on trauma symptom severity. Multiple Linear Regressions revealed that for most trauma symptoms, Threatening/Violent Grooming was a significant predictor of trauma symptom severity, even when other more well-known variables were controlled for (including age at onset of abuse, relationship to perpetrator, and severity of abuse), with a notable exception of verbal coercion as a significant predictor of sexual problems in adulthood (i.e. not satisfied, low drive, overactivity, confusion, bad thoughts or feelings).

Berliner, L. (2018). The concept of grooming and how it can help victims. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 33(1), 24-27. DOI:10.1177/0886260517742057

This commentary describes the clinical benefits of the concept of “grooming” for certain types of sexual abuse situations.

Burgess, A. W., & Hartman, C. R. (2018). On the origin of grooming. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 33(1), 17-23. DOI:10.1177/0886260517742048

The concept of grooming has long been identified with language in child sexual abuse. This article reviews a brief history of child sexual abuse with regard to efforts to identify and classify abuser and victim behavior. We examine the evolution of terms used to label different behaviors particularly those used to obtain initial control over the child victim including grooming.

De Santisteban, P., Del Hoyo, J., Alcázar-Córcoles, M. Á., & Gámez-Guadix, M. (2018). Progression, maintenance, and feedback of online child sexual grooming: A qualitative analysis of online predators. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 80, 203–215. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2018.03.026

The limited literature on online child grooming has focused mainly on studying the characteristics of perpetrators and victims that facilitate the sexual abuse of minors. Little attention has been given to the perceptions of the perpetrators about the abuse process and the strategies used to sustain it over time. In the present study, after identifying a sample of 12 men convicted of online grooming, we used qualitative grounded theory through in-depth interviews and comparisons with the proven facts of their convictions. The results show how aggressors actively study the structural environment, the needs and vulnerabilities of the minors). In this way, the aggressors adapt by using most effective strategies of persuasion at all times, so that the child feels like an active part of the plot. This allows the aggressors to have sexual interactions with minors either online or offline and in a sporadic or sustained manner. This process is maintained with some distorted perceptions about minors and the abuse process, which seem to feed back to the beginning of the cycle with other potential victims. The interaction between the persuasive processes and the distorted perceptions of the aggressor leads to a potential work focus for treatment as well as detection and prevention. Trying to visualize the complexity of the phenomenon could also help researchers to understand processes from this approach that may be applied with other types of vulnerable populations.

Dietz, P. (2018). Grooming and seduction. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 33(1), 28–36. DOI:10.1177/0886260517742060

Ken Lanning's recollections of the origins of the use of the term "grooming" to refer to techniques used by acquaintances to gain sexual access to and control over children is an important contribution to the history of the significant recognition that many cases of child sexual abuse occur at the hands of offenders who are acquaintances of the child

and who do not need to use force, threats, or violence to gain the compliance of their victims. That this recognition was slow in coming is obvious in retrospect, as is true of any social problem that remains hidden for centuries only to burst into public consciousness over the course of a few years. In this article, I report the results of searches using Google Scholar to look at the introduction of this use of the term “grooming” to the peer-reviewed literature in 1984 and its increasing use through 2016. Since 2008, the usage has been adopted in hundreds of articles in the professional literature each year, suggesting that this usage of the term “grooming” will remain common in the decades ahead. I also examine the history of the term “seduction” in the context of child sexual abuse, particularly two archaic uses of the term: as a euphemism for any sexual or sexually stimulating encounter between child and adult and in the context of suggestions that it was the child who seduced the adult. To avoid resurrecting any confusion over these issues, it would be a mistake to abandon “grooming” in favor of “seduction.” I conclude that the best strategy may be that adopted by Lanning of using the terms grooming and seduction in tandem, explaining the parallels between the seduction of one adult by another and the grooming or seduction of a child by an adult.

Gómez-Guadix, M., Almendros, C., Calvete, E., & De Santisteban, P. (2018). Persuasion strategies and sexual solicitations and interactions in online sexual grooming of adolescents: Modeling direct and indirect pathways. *Journal of Adolescence*, 63(1), 11–18. DOI:10.1016/j.adolescence.2017.12.002

Online sexual grooming and exploitation of adolescents is receiving increasing social attention. Drawing on a social influence framework, the aim of this study was to test a model of the direct and mediated relationships between an adult’s use of persuasion strategies and online sexual grooming of early adolescents. The initial sample of the study consisted of 2731 early Spanish adolescents between 12 and 15 years old (50.6% female). Of these, 196 adolescents (7.17% of the total; 53% girls) were involved in online grooming (mean age = 14.93, *SD* = 0.90). Persuasion strategies by the adult through internet

increased the probability of using deceit, bribery, and the minor's nonsexual involvement. In addition, deceit and bribery were associated with higher rates of sexual solicitation, which in turn increased abusive sexual interactions. Understanding strategies used by adults to groom minors contributes to the prevention of and intervention in this crucial societal problem.

Lanning, K. (2018). The evolution of grooming: Concept and term. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 33(1), 5–16. DOI:10.1177/0886260517742046

This discussion is not intended to be a detailed analysis of the complexities and dynamics of *grooming*. Instead, it will focus on the evolution of the concept and the term. More than an historical narrative, however, this evolution provides valuable insight into recognizing the diverse nature of contact sex offenses against children and important differences among types of cases. In this victimization context, the term *grooming* generally refers to specific nonviolent techniques used by some child molesters to gain access to & control of their child victims. The techniques a child molester employs are most influenced by the relationship between the offender and the victim. Although acquaintance child molesters are sometimes violent, to avoid discovery, they tend to control their victims primarily through this *seduction* or *grooming* process. I believe the term was first used by a group of law enforcement investigators beginning in the late 1970s to describe aspects of a seduction pattern of offender behavior that was poorly understood by most professionals. The term *grooming* then evolved, as language does, and spread into more common usage by law enforcement, other professionals, and then by the media and laypersons. The term *grooming* has pretty much supplanted *seduction* as the term of choice for this behavior pattern. Hopefully, understanding the evolution of the concept of grooming, the diversity of cases, the need for precise and consistent definitions, and the use of nonviolent grooming techniques to access and control victims will help interveners to better respond to and evaluate cases.

Plummer, M. (2018). Lived experiences of grooming among Australian male survivors of child sexual abuse. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 33(1), 37–63.
DOI:10.1177/0886260517732539

Because child sexual abuse (CSA) is a pervasive social issue affecting up to one in five girls, and one in 10 boys, there have been significant developments in legal responses to the problem of CSA. One such response is to acknowledge the significance of grooming behaviors in the commission of child sex offenses by criminalizing behaviors that are engaged in with the intention of facilitating the sexual abuse of a child. However, grooming behaviors remain underresearched, and current knowledge is based largely upon the perspectives of offenders, with few studies analyzing how grooming is experienced by victims. The purpose of this article is to address key gaps in the grooming literature by analyzing the lived experiences of grooming from the perspectives of 11 adult male CSA survivors. Qualitative analysis revealed novel insights into the characteristics, stages, and impact of grooming for male survivors. The implications of the findings suggest that New South Wales's (NSW) grooming legislation could better reflect the types of grooming behaviors engaged in by child sex offenders. Tentative evidence for enduring impacts of grooming also indicates the need for further qualitative research into men's experiences of sexual grooming during childhood with larger and more representative samples.

Elliott, I. A. (2017). A self-regulation model of sexual grooming. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 18(1), 83–97. DOI:10.1177/1524838015591573

A preparatory process is widely accepted to be a common feature in the perpetration of sexual offenses. Numerous commentators, however, have documented the difficulties in defining and understanding this process, given its transient nature and its specificity to this one form of criminal behavior. This theoretical review aims to provide a universal model of a grooming process for the achievement of illicit or illegal goals in which achievement requires the compliance or submission of another individual— one that can

be applied both to the sexual offending process and beyond. First, an evaluation of three process models of grooming is conducted. Second, using a process of theory knitting, an integrated universal model of illicit grooming is developed. This model unites salient elements of the previous models while seeking to address their limitations. It is founded in control theory and self-regulation approaches to behavior, assumes a goal-directed protagonist, and comprises two distinct phases, namely, (1) a potentiality phase of rapport-building, incentivization, disinhibition, and security-management and (2) a disclosure phase in which goal-relevant information is introduced in a systematic and controlled manner in order to desensitize the target. Finally, the theoretical quality of the model is appraised, and its clinical implications are discussed.

Smallbone, S., & Wortley, R. (2017). Preventing child sexual abuse online. In J. Brown (Ed.), *Online risk to children: Impact, protection and prevention* (pp. 143–162). Wiley-Blackwell. DOI:10.1002/9781118977545.ch8

This chapter focuses on online grooming and solicitation and internet child pornography. These are the two aspects of online abuse that seem to have attracted the most public concern, law enforcement attention and research interest. The chapter proposes a typology within which to organise prevention strategies for online sexual abuse. The typology is based on a fusion of the preventative health care model and the routine activities approach. A comprehensive approach to prevention should include a mix of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention activities targeting offenders, victims and settings. Sexual abuse, including online abuse, relies to a significant extent on children's vulnerabilities associated with their sexual deference to adults. Police are assisted in the task of removing internet child pornography material by various groups such as the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) and CyberTipline. It is not yet clear whether vulnerabilities associated with online abuse are the same as those associated with contact sexual abuse.

Winters, G. M., Kaylor, L. E., & Jeglic, E. L. (2017). Sexual offenders contacting children online: An examination of transcripts of sexual grooming. *Journal of Sexual Aggression*, 23(1), 62–76. DOI:10.1080/13552600.2016.1271146

The present study investigated transcripts of adults sexually grooming decoy victims on the Internet. One hundred transcripts were coded for offender characteristics, victim characteristics, and dynamics of the conversation. The results revealed that all of the offenders were male, most of whom believed they were communicating with an adolescent female. The sexual intentions of the offenders were made clear, with the majority introducing sexual content early on into the conversation. The length of the contact ranged from one day to nearly one year, suggesting that the duration of the online grooming process may vary significantly. The majority of offenders also communicated with the decoy victim over the telephone and attempted to arrange an in-person meeting, many within short periods of time. Implications for prevention and future research are discussed.

Winters, G. M., & Jeglic, E. L. (2017). [Stages of sexual grooming: Recognizing potentially predatory behaviors of child molesters](#). *Deviant Behavior*, 38(6), 724–733. DOI:10.1080/01639625.2016.1197656

It has been proposed that sexual grooming behaviors of child molesters are not easily identified prior to the abuse. The present study investigated whether participants could recognize grooming behaviors, and if so, identify which stages of the process were most easily identified. Participants were randomly assigned to read one of six vignettes describing the stages of the grooming process. Results revealed no differences in likelihood ratings that the person in the vignette was a child molester and would commit sexual abuse between any of the conditions, suggesting that people may be unable to identify potentially predatory behaviors of child molesters prospectively.

Julich, S. J., & Oak, E. B. (2016). [Does grooming facilitate the development of Stockholm syndrome?: The social work practice implications](#). *Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work*, 28(3), 47–56.

This article focuses on the problem of risk instrumentalism in social work and the way it can erode the relationship-based nature of practice and with it, the kinds of critical reflexivity required for remedial interventions to keep children safe. By exploring the relationship between the process of grooming and the condition known as Stockholm syndrome, the article seeks to address this problem by offering some concepts to inform a critical understanding of the case dynamics in the sexual abuse of children which can explain the reluctance of victim-survivors to disclose. Beginning with an overview of the development of actuarial risk assessment (ARA) tools the article examines the grooming process in child sexual abuse contexts raising the question: "Is grooming a facilitator of Stockholm syndrome?" and seeks to answer it by examining the precursors and psychological responses that constitute both grooming and Stockholm syndrome. The article identifies the underlying concepts that enable an understanding of the dynamics of child sexual abuse, but also identifies the propensity of practitioners to be exposed to some of the features of Stockholm syndrome.

Katz, C., & Barnett, Z. (2016). Children's narratives of alleged child sexual abuse offender behaviors and the manipulation process. *Psychology of Violence*, 6(2), 223–232. DOI:10.1037/a0039023

An investigation of child sexual abuse (CSA) offenders' behaviors and manipulation tactics has the potential to increase the existing knowledge in this area to modify prevention and intervention programs for children, families, communities, and societies. The exploration of this matter is highly challenging given the nature of child abuse, in which both offenders and children typically remain silent following reluctance. Most of the literature regarding this issue has predominately been generated from the offenders' narratives, perspectives, and reports. The current study seeks to shed light on CSA while

focusing on the children's narratives, experiences, and perceptions with respect to the offenders' behaviors and manipulation tactics. Mixed method analyses were conducted to enhance understanding with respect to these tactics, as well as to describe their frequencies and relations to both children and abuse characteristics.

van Gijn-Grosvenor, E. L., & Lamb, M. E. (2016). Behavioural differences between online sexual groomers approaching boys and girls. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 25(5), 577-596. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2016.1189473

This study focused on the behavior of convicted offenders who had approached profiles of boys and girls online for offline sexual encounters. A detailed coding scheme was designed to code and analyze offenders' grooming behaviors in transcripts of conversational interactions between convicted offenders and 52 volunteer workers purporting to be girls and 49 volunteer workers who masqueraded as boys. Behavioral differences and commonalities associated with the gender of the groomed child decoys were examined. Results showed that offenders approaching boys were significantly older and pretended to be younger than offenders approaching girls. When compared to offenders grooming boy decoys, offenders grooming girl decoys typically built more rapport, were less sexually explicit, and approached sexual topics carefully and indirectly. Offenders also used more strategies to conceal contact with girls than with boys.

Winters, G. M., & Jeglic, E. L. (2016). I knew it all along: The sexual grooming behaviors of child molesters and the hindsight bias. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 25(1), 20-36. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2015.1108945

Recent high profile cases of child sexual abuse have increased interest in the grooming behaviors of child molesters and why these offenders are not identified sooner. This study examined one possible explanation—the hindsight bias. Five hundred and twenty-six undergraduates were randomly assigned to read one of six vignettes and asked to rate

the likelihood the person in the story is a child molester. Results supported the presence of the hindsight bias, with participants who were given outcome information overestimating the likelihood they would have predicted that the person was a child molester. Also, participants were able to recognize sexual grooming behaviors when the potential child molester was a relative and nonrelative. Findings indicated that sexual grooming behaviors may be more easily identified than previously proposed, but individuals greatly overestimate the likelihood they would have predicted a person was a child molester once they are given outcome information.

Black, P. J., Wollis, M., Woodworth, M., & Hancock, J. T. (2015). A linguistic analysis of grooming strategies of online child sex offenders: Implications for our understanding of predatory sexual behavior in an increasingly computer mediated-world. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 44, 140–149.
DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2014.12.004

There is a large body of evidence to suggest that child sex offenders engage in grooming to facilitate victimization. It has been speculated that this step-by-step grooming process is also used by offenders who access their underage victims online; however, little research has been done to examine whether there are unique aspects of computer-mediated communication that impact the traditional face-to-face grooming process. This study considered the similarities and differences in the grooming process in online environments by analyzing the language used by online offenders when communicating with their victims. The transcripts of 44 convicted online offenders were analyzed to assess a proposed theory of the online grooming process (O’Connell, 2003). Using a stage-based approach, computerized text analysis examined the types of language used in each stage of the offender–victim interaction. The transcripts also were content analyzed to examine the frequency of specific techniques known to be employed by both face-to-face and online offenders, such as flattery. Results reveal that while some evidence of the strategies used by offenders throughout the grooming process are present in online environments, the order and timing of these stages appear to be

different. The types (and potential underlying pattern) of strategies used in online grooming support the development of a revised model for grooming in online environments.

Quayle, E., Allegro, S., Hutton, L., Sheath, M., & Lööf, L. (2014). Rapid skill acquisition and online sexual grooming of children. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 39, 368-375. DOI:10.1016/j.chb.2014.07.005

The limited research on online sexual grooming has largely focused on the stages of grooming, typologies of offenders, or comparisons with people who download abusive sexual images of children. Little attention has been paid to Internet affordances and the role these might play in the offending behavior, the development of expertise and the avoidance of detection. This exploratory, qualitative grounded theory study involved interviews with 14 men convicted of online grooming. The analysis indicated that the Internet was used to create a private space within which to engage in purposive, sexual behavior with young people. This engagement was for all an aid to fantasy, and for some was a precursor to an offline sexual assault. The opportunities afforded by Internet platforms not only allowed access to young people but facilitated the rapid acquisition of expertise.

Whittle, H. C., Hamilton-Giachritsis, C. E., & Beech, A. R. (2014). [“Under his spell”: Victims’ perspectives of being groomed online](#). *Social Sciences*, 3(3), 404-426. DOI:10.3390/socsci3030404

The aim of this paper is to highlight key themes within the process of online grooming from the victim’s perspective. Eight adolescents who experienced online grooming were interviewed and data were analysed using Thematic Analysis. It was found that participants, who had been both sexually abused online and/or offline, were subjected to a range of grooming experiences. Consistent grooming themes within this sample

included: manipulation; deception; regular/intense contact; secrecy; sexualisation; kindness and flattery; erratic temperament and nastiness; and simultaneous grooming of those close to the victim. These themes are similar to those identified by the literature surrounding grooming offline. Analysis demonstrated that once a participant was 'enmeshed' in the relationship with the offender, they were more likely to endure negative feelings associated with the grooming, than if the victim was not 'enmeshed'. This paper supports the notion that grooming is a varied and non-linear process. Recommendations are made for practitioners, parents and carers, as well as suggestions for primary preventative education.

Whittle, H., Hamilton-Giachritsis, C., Beech, A., & Collings, G. (2013). A review of online grooming: Characteristics and concerns. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 18*(1), 62–70. DOI:10.1016/j.avb.2012.09.003

The process of online grooming facilitates child abuse and is a threat to young people across the world. This literature review explores the research surrounding how young people are targeted by offenders on the internet. Definitions, prevalence, and characteristics of online grooming are addressed in addition to consideration of child sexual abuse theories and internet behaviors. There are a variety of techniques used by internet groomers to manipulate young people (e.g., flattery, bribes, and threats) and different ways that young people engage in risk taking behavior on the internet (e.g., communicating with strangers online and sharing personal information). While models and typologies can aid professionals in understanding the crime, it is important to acknowledge that internet offenders, victims, and the dynamics between the two are often unique and varied. This is fundamental to the development of effective preventative education for online grooming and abuse. The review concludes that research concerning the online grooming of young people is limited, and calls for further study in this field.

Whittle, H., Hamilton-Giachritsis, C., Beech, A., & Collings, G. (2013). A review of young people's vulnerabilities to online grooming. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 18*(1), 135-146. DOI:10.1016/j.avb.2012.11.008

This review explores risk factors that may make a young person vulnerable to being groomed online. Even though research in this area is extremely limited, adolescents appear to be the age group most vulnerable to online grooming. Other vulnerabilities appear to be consistent with those associated with offline sexual abuse. The review suggests that behaviors specific to online grooming include: engaging in risk taking behavior online, high levels of internet access, and lack of parental involvement in the young person's internet use. Vulnerabilities to carry out these types of behavior & be more exposed to the risk of online grooming, are set within the context of the Ecological Model of child protection, consisting of individual, family, community, & cultural risk factors. Patterns of vulnerability regarding living environment, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and personality are tentative, but are often interconnected. The more risk-taking behaviors the young person carries out, plus greater levels of vulnerability factors, the less resilient they are likely to be towards protecting themselves against online grooming. A protective factor appears to be parental involvement in their child's use of the internet. Therefore, this, in combination with internet safety education at school, is encouraged.

Williams, R., Elliott, I. A., & Beech, A. R. (2013). Identifying sexual grooming themes used by internet sex offenders. *Deviant Behavior, 34*(2), 135-152.
DOI:10.1080/01639625.2012.707550

In the context of the sexual abuse of children, "grooming" is a process by which an individual prepares the child and their environment for abuse to take place, including gaining access to the child, creating compliance & trust, and ensuring secrecy to avoid disclosure. Grooming can be difficult to identify and define, especially Internet sexual grooming, as it incorporates a variety of behaviors & processes and can differ greatly in duration. This study looks to establish possible strategies that Internet sex offenders use

within the grooming process, within the initial hour of contact with a child on-line. Eight transcripts were qualitatively analyzed using thematic analysis. The transcripts featured a “decoy” adult posing as a child, and an adult male who was later convicted following those discussions. Three main themes were identified in the transcripts: Rapport-building, Sexual Content, and Assessment. Implications for practice are discussed in the article.

Wachs, S., Wolf, K. D., & Pan, C. (2012). [Cybergrooming: Risk factors, coping strategies and associations with cyberbullying](#). *Psicothema*, 24(4), 628–633.

The use of information and communication technologies has become ubiquitous among adolescents. New forms of cyber aggression have emerged, cybergrooming is one of them. However, little is known about the nature and extent of cybergrooming. The purpose of this study was to investigate risk factors of cybergrooming, to identify various coping strategies and to explore the associations between being cyberbullied & cybergroomed. The sample consisted of 518 students in 6th to 10th grades. The computer assisted personal interview method (CAPI method) was implemented. The «Mobbing Questionnaire for Students» was further developed for this study & served as the research instrument. While being a girl, being cyberbullied and willingness to meet strangers could be identified as risk factors; no significant age differences were found. Furthermore, 3 types of coping strategies, aggressive, cognitive-technical and helpless, were identified with varied impacts. The findings not only shed light on understanding cybergrooming, but also suggest worth noting associations between various forms of cyber aggression.

Davidson, J., & Gottschalk, P. (2011). Characteristics of the Internet for criminal child sexual abuse by online groomers. *Criminal Justice Studies*, 24(1), 23–36.
DOI:10.1080/1478601X.2011.544188

This paper presents a number of characteristics of the Internet that makes it attractive to online groomers. Relevant Internet characteristics include disconnected personal

communication, mediating technology, universality, network externalities, distribution channel, time moderator, low-cost standard, electronic double, electronic double manipulation, information asymmetry, infinite virtual capacity, independence in time and space, cyberspace, and dynamic social network. Potential sex offenders join virtual communities, where they meet other persons who have the same interest. A virtual community provides an online meeting place where people with similar interests can communicate and find useful information. Communication between members may be via email, bulletin boards, online chat, web-based conferencing or other computer-based media.

Knoll, J. (2010). Teacher sexual misconduct: Grooming patterns and female offenders. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 19*(4), 371–386. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2010.495047

Educator sexual misconduct has received increasing attention over the past decade. The attention has exposed a number of concerning issues, including a lack of formal research in the area and difficulties in recognizing and prosecuting cases. Public responses to high profile cases of sexual misconduct involving female teachers suggest that gender-biased views on sex offenders remain prominent in society. This article will review the literature on female teacher sexual misconduct in addition to what is known about grooming patterns and warning signs. Finally, current dilemmas in resolving cases of educator sexual misconduct will be discussed, and basic prevention strategies will be recommended.

Kierkegaard, S., (2008). Cybering, online grooming and ageplay. *Computer Law & Security, 24*(1), 41–55. DOI:10.1016/j.clsr.2007.11.004

Recent advances in computer technology have been aiding sexual predators, stalkers, child pornographers, child traffickers, and others with the intent of exploiting children. Internet bulletin boards, chat rooms, private websites, and peer-to-peer networks are

being used daily by paedophiles to meet unsuspecting children. Compounding the problem is the lack of direct governance by an international body, which will curb the illegal content and activity. Most countries already have laws protecting children, but what is needed is a concerted law enforcement and international legislation to combat child sex abuse. With the enactment of the Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, this may soon become a reality in Europe. This current article will discuss some of the recent legal developments concerning online child protection, including the new Convention.

Shannon, D. (2008). Online sexual grooming in Sweden—online and offline sex offences against children as described in Swedish police data. *Journal of Scandinavian Studies in Criminology and Crime Prevention*, 9(2), 160–180.
DOI:10.1080/14043850802450120

The expansion in Internet use since the mid-1990s has created a completely new and largely unmonitored forum for contacts between adults and children. The anonymity provided by Internet communications has been viewed as creating favourable conditions for adults wishing to develop manipulative relationships with children, and there has been a growing concern about the way the Internet may be used by adults intent on sexually exploiting and abusing young people. Much of the focus of this concern has been directed at adults using the Internet to create opportunities for the commission of offline sex offences. Based on police data from Sweden, this article describes the range of Internet related sexual offences against children currently being brought to the attention of the Swedish justice system. It focuses not only on the range of strategies employed by adults to persuade children to meet them offline for the purposes of sexual exploitation and abuse but also on the different types of online sexual offences that children in Sweden are currently being subjected to.

Dombrowski, S. C., Gischlare, K. L., & Durst, T. (2007). Safeguarding young people from cyber pornography and cyber sexual predation: A major dilemma of the Internet. *Child Abuse Review*, 16(3), 153–170. DOI:10.1002/car.939

Over the past 20 years, the internet has provided an expedient mode of communication and access to a wealth of information. The internet is a valuable tool but it can also be detrimental to the wellbeing of children due to numerous online hazards. There is the potential for children to be abused via cyberspace through online sexual solicitation and access to pornography. Indeed, the internet is replete with inappropriate material, including pornography, adult themed chatrooms and access to instant messaging where others could misrepresent themselves. Because children are actively utilizing the internet where unknown others can have access to them or where they can be exposed to inappropriate sexual materials, they require safeguarding & education in safe internet use. We contend that society needs an overall shift in its attitude towards young people's internet use.

Olson, L. N., Daggs, J. L., Ellevold, B. L., & Rogers, T. K. (2007). Entrapping the innocent: Toward a theory of child sexual predators' luring communication. *Communication Theory*, 17(3), 231–251. DOI:10.1111/j.1468-2885.2007.00294.x

This paper examines the communicative process of entrapment used by child sexual predators to lure their victims into an ongoing sexual relationship. Specifically, using grounded theory methodology to analyze extant literature, a theory of luring communication (LCT) is proposed. The LCT begins by discussing how certain perpetrators gain access to particular types of children. Once in contact with a child, the perpetrator sets in motion the cycle of entrapment, which allows him to communicatively groom & entrap the child into accepting sexual advances. The theory then explores how certain communication responses by the perpetrator & the victim characterize the sustenance or disruption of an ongoing sexually abusive relationship. The essay ends with a series of propositional statements and suggestions for empirically testing & extending the theory.

Craven, S., Brown, S., & Gilchrist, E. (2006). Sexual grooming of children: Review of literature and theoretical considerations. *Journal of Sexual Aggression, 12*(3), 287–299. DOI:10.1080/13552600601069414

The current review aims to outline the existing understanding of sexual grooming. Issues of poor definition, the adoption of the term “grooming” and the prevalence of sexual grooming will be discussed. Consideration will be given to how prominent theories of child sexual abuse often neglect sexual grooming. This will be followed by a detailed account of the existing knowledge within the literature. Three types of sexual grooming were thus identified: self-grooming, grooming the environment & significant others and grooming the child. Based on these findings, a new definition of sexual grooming is suggested. Furthermore, the findings correspond well with current models of the sexual offence process. A more comprehensive understanding of sexual grooming is required to facilitate a preventative approach to child protection.

McAlinden, A.-M. (2006). ‘Setting ‘em up’: Personal, familial and institutional grooming in the sexual abuse of children. *Social and Legal Studies, 15*(3), 339–362. DOI:10.1177/0964663906066613

The term ‘grooming’ has been used to describe the offender’s actions during the preparatory stage of sexual abuse. This article will argue that current discourses on grooming have created ambiguities and misunderstandings about child sexual abuse. In particular, the popular focus on ‘stranger danger’ belies the fact that the majority of children are abused by someone well known to them, where grooming can also occur. Current discourses also neglect other important facets of the sex offending pattern. They fail to consider that offenders may groom not only the child but also their family and even the local community who may act as the gatekeepers of access. They also ignore what can be termed ‘institutional grooming’, that sex offenders may groom criminal justice and other institutions into believing that they present no risk to children. A key variable in the grooming process is the creation and subsequent abuse of trust. Given that the

criminal law may be somewhat limited in its response to this type of behaviour, ultimately concerted efforts must be made to foster social and organizational awareness of such processes in order to reduce the offender's opportunity for abuse.

Mitchell, K. J., Finkelhor, D., & Wolak, J. (2005). [The Internet and family and acquaintance sexual abuse](#). *Child Maltreatment*, 10(1), 49–60. DOI:10.1177/1077559504271917

This article explores the dynamics of cases involving family and acquaintance sexual offenders who used the Internet to commit sex crimes against minors. Although the stereotype of Internet crimes involves unknown adults meeting juvenile victims online, Internet use can also play a role in sexual crimes against minors by family members and acquaintances. Data were collected from a national sample of law enforcement agencies about arrests for Internet-related sex crimes against minors. Family and acquaintance offenders were nearly as numerous as offenders who used the Internet to meet victims online. They used the Internet in various ways to further their crimes including as a tool to seduce or groom, reward victims, store or disseminate sexual images of victims, arrange meetings & communicate, or advertise or sell victims. Prevention messages and investigation approaches should be revised to incorporate awareness of such cases and their dynamics.

Berson, I. R. (2003). Grooming cybervictims: The psychosocial effects of online exploitation for youth. *Journal of School Violence*, 2(1), 5–18.
DOI:10.1300/J202v02n01_02

Presents an overview of the benefits and risks of Web-based interactions for youth. Discusses, as an illustrative example, the psychosocial effects of online “grooming” practices that are designed to lure and exploit children by enticing them, typically in a nonsexual way, toward a sexual encounter. Suggests constructive solutions and a plan for action to foster protective and productive learning.

O'Connell, R. (2003). [*A typology of cybersexexploitation and online grooming practices*](#). Cyberspace Research Unit.

This paper summarizes the value of researching & describing a typology of online child sex related activities. A brief outline is provided of how the capabilities associated with both existing and emerging technologies alter the parameters of paedophile activity specifically in relation to victimology & criminal activity. The main findings of the research are outlined in the Executive Summary, followed by recommendations for further action.

Paine, M. L., & Hansen, D. J. (2002). [*Factors influencing children to self-disclose sexual abuse*](#). *Clinical Psychology Review*, 22(2), 271-295. DOI:10.1016/S0272-7358(01)00091-5

Self-disclosure by victims of child sexual abuse (CSA) is critical to initiate intervention that is legal & therapeutic. Unfortunately, research indicates that lengthy delays in disclosure and even nondisclosure are common. A comprehensive review of the clinical & research literature on CSA and an overview of related bodies of literature was conducted. Areas addressed include the context of sexual abuse as it relates to disclosure, the context & elements of children's disclosures, motivational factors inhibiting disclosure, and models of the disclosure process. Ancillary and analogue research on secrecy & disclosure are also reviewed. Implications for future research & practice are discussed.

Canter, D., Hughes, D., & Kirby, S. (1998). Paedophilia: Pathology, criminality, or both? The development of a multivariate model of offence behavior in child sexual abuse. *The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry*, 9(3), 532-555. DOI:10.1080/09585189808405372

Variations in crime scene behavior among child sex offenders was investigated. Hypotheses concerning behavioral consistencies were drawn from the literature on child sexual abuse wherein 3 conceptually distinct behavioral themes are identified. These themes are characterized by aggressive (violence, force, threats), intimate (promise of

gifts, reassurance, affection), or criminal–opportunist (stranger victim, outdoors, child alone) modes of offender–victim interaction. Crime scene data from 97 recorded child sex offenses that occurred between 1987–1989 in England were analyzed. Victims were 5–12 yrs old (67% were female), and the male offenders were 10–61 yrs old at the time of the offense. The results provide empirical support for all 3 themes, suggesting a multivariate model of offense behavior in child sexual abuse. These findings are seen to effectively demonstrate that pedophilia can exist as both a pathology and a form of criminality.

Kaufman, K. L., Hilliker, D. R., & Daleiden, E. L. (1996). Subgroup differences in the modus operandi of adolescent sexual offenders. *Child Maltreatment*, 1(1), 17–24.
DOI:10.1177/1077559596001001003

The current investigation examined the predictability of adolescent sexual offenders' modus operandi based upon differences in victim, perpetrator, & offense characteristics. Questionnaires regarding modus operandi and history of victimization were completed by 179 male adolescent sexual offenders. Subgroups of perpetrators were delineated based upon their history of sexual abuse, as well as the gender, age, and relatedness of offenders' child victims. Results indicated that a history of sexual abuse was related to the selection of male victims & younger victims. Furthermore, subgroups of offenders differed significantly in the strategies they employed to build victims' trust, gain compliance with illicit sexual activity, and maintain victims' silence following the onset of sexual abuse. Implications are discussed for sexual abuse theory & prevention, as well as treatment.

Elliott, M., Browne, K., & Kilkoyne, J. (1995). Child sexual abuse prevention: What offenders tell us. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 19(5), 579–594. DOI:10.1016/0145-2134(95)00017-3

Ninety-one child sex offenders were interviewed about the methods they used to target children, the age range of their victims, how they selected children and maintained them

as victims, and what suggestions they had for preventing child sexual abuse. Offenders were selected from treatment programs, probation, special hospitals, and prisons. They were interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire. Results indicate that offenders gained access to children through caretaking, such as babysitting; targeted children by using bribes, gifts and games; used force, anger, threats, and bribes to ensure their continuing compliance; and systematically desensitized children through touch, talk about sex, and persuasion. Nearly half the offenders had no bad feelings about sexually abusing children. The implications for prevention programs are discussed.

Singer, M. I., Hussey, D., & Strom, K. (1992). Grooming the victim: Analysis of a perpetrator's seduction letter. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 16(6), 877-886.
DOI:10.1016/0145-2134(92)90089-A

The authors review the current literature on the sexual victimization of adolescent males with attention given to victim characteristics and victim selection factors and strategies. Following this review, a letter written by a middle-aged man to entice a teenage boy into sexual activity is presented and analyzed. The strategy used by the letter-writer is to refute the usual reservations a teenage boy might have about engaging in sexual activity with a man. The approach used in the letter and the ensuing analysis are generalizable to teenage boys experiencing similar encounters and highlight the sophisticated seduction and grooming strategies used to sexually victimize adolescent males.

Berliner, L., & Conte, J. R. (1990). The process of victimization: The victims' perspective. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 14(1), 29-40. DOI:10.1016/0145-2134(90)90078-8

Twenty-three child victims (aged 10-18 years) of childhood sexual abuse were interviewed about the victimization process, the person who abused them, and how abuse might have been prevented. Specific questions obtained information about the quality of the relationship between victim and offender, the offender's pre-abuse

behavior, the explanation for the behavior given by the offender, and the child's understanding of the behavior. Results suggest that the victimization process involves three overlapping processes: sexualization of the relationship, justification of the sexual contact, and maintenance of the child's cooperation.

Christiansen, J. R., & Blake, R. H. (1990). The grooming process in father-daughter incest. In A. L. Horton, B. L. Johnson, L. M. Roundy, & D. Williams (Eds.), *The incest perpetrator: A family member no one wants to treat* (pp. 88-98). Sage Publications.

Most acts of incest perpetrated by fathers involve coercion without physical force drawing on the research of de Young (evolved incest and courting behavior), Russell (persuasion), Herman (courting behavior), and others, a series of studies was begun in 1986 by a research team consisting of both faculty and graduate students . . . that illuminated the psycho-social process involved in father-daughter incest / we call this form of socialization, the "grooming process" these studies support the view that perpetrators use trust, favoritism, alienation, secrecy, boundary violations, and evaluation in "grooming" their daughters to participate in sexual activities.