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Disclosure of Child Abuse

A Bibliography

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Championing and Strengthening the Global Response to Child Abuse

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Scope

This bibliography covers literature of multiple aspects of disclosure of child abuse. As the CAC response to disclosure involves a Multidisciplinary Team, efforts were made to identify articles written from a variety of professional perspectives.

Organization

This bibliography is divided into the sections listed below. Each section contains publications that include articles, book chapters, reports, and research briefs and are listed in date descending order. Links are provided to full text publications when possible but this collection may not be complete. More information can be obtained in the Child Abuse Library Online.

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General

Skoland, K., & Studsrød, I. (2024). Disclosure of parental physical abuse: Patterns in disclosure attempts among Norwegian teenagers. *Child Abuse Review, 33*(2), e2866. DOI:10.1002/car.2866

In recent years, Norwegian authorities have intensified their efforts to prevent and prosecute domestic violence while prioritising the protection of victims, with initiatives such as action plans, strategic measures and various programmes, with a particular focus on children. Despite increased awareness of violence towards children, a significant portion still goes unreported. Our study aims to examine patterns in disclosure attempts among Norwegian teenagers. We studied 11,615 teenagers from the Local Youth Survey between 2014 and 2016 who confirmed experiencing physical violence from an adult family member. Our findings indicate that, among those who did try to disclose, informal confidants like parents or friends, rather than school employees, were the preferred choices. When examining the factors that influence the likelihood of attempting to disclose, we observed that the frequency of violence played a significant role in explaining variation. The likelihood of attempting disclosure was also higher among girls and among those with a low socioeconomic background. Part of this pattern was confirmed also when studying the subgroup that had tried to disclose: the probability of attempting to tell a school employee was higher among those who had a low socioeconomic background and was exposed to violence more frequently. In this subgroup, however, no significant gender differences were observed.

Cooley, D. T., & Jackson, Y. (2022). [Informant discrepancies in child maltreatment reporting: A systematic review](#). *Child Maltreatment*, *27*(1), 126-145. DOI:10.1177/1077559520966387

Potential informants on child maltreatment include the youth who has experienced the alleged maltreatment, and the youth's caregivers, social workers and case files. When multiple informants are compared, they often disagree about whether or not a youth has experienced maltreatment. Such determinations are critical as endorsement—or lack of endorsement—of maltreatment can have significant consequences on the child's safety, future living arrangements and referral for treatment and services. The current study provides a systematic review of the literature on informant discrepancies in child maltreatment. Three databases—PsychINFO, Web of Science, and PubMed—were used to identify studies for the review and 13 articles met inclusion criteria. Results showed that more youth tend to report physical, sexual and emotional abuse than seen in case files. By contrast, more case files include neglect than reported by youth. Implications and future directions are discussed.

Dykstra, V. W., Harvey, M. B., Bruer, K. C., Price, H. L., & Evans, A. D. (2021). To disclose or not to disclose? The influence of consistently disclosing and disclosure recipient on perceptions of children's credibility. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *7*(17-18), NP16907-NP16930. DOI:10.1177/08862605211025021

With age, children become increasingly likely to make initial disclosures of transgressions, such as maltreatment, to peers. The present study examined adults' credibility evaluations of children's disclosures to peers across two studies. Study 1 examined credibility evaluations when children disclosed (or concealed) to a peer compared to an adult. Study 2 examined credibility ratings when children disclosed consistently or inconsistently across peer and adult interviews. Children were interviewed by a same-age peer and an adult regarding an event where an adult confederate spilled water on a laptop and broke it. In Study 1, participants heard a child interviewed by either a same-age peer or adult. In Study 2, participants heard a child interviewed by both the same-

age peer and adult. In both studies, participants evaluated the child's credibility. Children who disclosed the transgression were rated as significantly less credible than those who concealed the transgression; however, credibility ratings did not differ by whether the child was interviewed by a peer or adult (Study 1). Furthermore, children who concealed the transgression across both interviews were rated as significantly more credible than children who disclosed in both interviews or disclosed to the peer, but not the adult, interviewer (Study 2). The current study provides the first evidence that peer disclosures may hinder children's credibility and that adults may be hesitant to believe children's disclosures of an adult's transgression.

Mooney, J. (2021). How adults tell: A study of adults' experiences of disclosure to child protection social work services. *Child Abuse Review*, *30*(3), 193–209. DOI:10.1002/car.2677

This paper presents the findings of a study examining adult disclosures of childhood sexual abuse to child protection social work services in the Republic of Ireland. Limited literature indicates that adults can have negative experiences when disclosing childhood abuse; this is primarily owing to a lack of training, policy and guidance for practitioners, and legal complexities regarding allegations of abuse. This study used a biographic-narrative interpretive method (BNIM) to gather the experiences of adults who engaged with child protection social work services. The findings were analysed using both BNIM panel analysis and open, axial and selective coding. Six main themes were identified, and the findings are discussed under three headings: (1) the system as a barrier presents the various influences that acted as barriers for adults coming forward to disclose; (2) issues of power examines the influence of power from the time of abuse throughout the adults' life courses and their interactions with services; and (3) the system as a facilitator presents practice and policy recommendations based on participants' narratives and the wider research literature. Implications for child protection practice in this extremely sensitive and sometimes controversial area are considered.

Solberg, E. T., Halvorsen, J. E., & Stige, S. H. (2021). [What do survivors of child sexual abuse believe will facilitate early disclosure of sexual abuse](#)?. *Frontiers in Psychiatry, 12,* 945. DOI:10.3389/fpsyt.2021.639341

The purpose of this study was to explore what adult survivors of child sexual abuse (CSA) believe will facilitate early disclosure of sexual abuse. We conducted semi-structured interviews with 12 adult survivors of CSA aged 18–57 years, and analyzed the transcripts using reflexive thematic analysis. Our analysis resulted in three main themes: Adults making it possible to tell; Adults daring to consider the unthinkable; and Conveying knowledge of CSA that facilitates understanding. The findings highlighted the importance of adults facilitating disclosure and making it possible for survivors to tell about their experiences, but also the responsibility adults have to dare to consider the possibility of CSA when children struggle. Another important finding was the significance of enhancing the general population's understanding of the complexity of CSA, including why disclosure is difficult, so adults are given the tools needed to understand and know what to do when they suspect CSA. The findings also have important implications for the planning and implementation of interventions to facilitate early disclosure of CSA.

McElvaney, R., Moore, K., O'Reilly, K., Turner, R., Walsh, B., & Guerin, S. (2020). Child sexual abuse disclosures: Does age make a difference?. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 99*, 104121. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.104121

The literature is inconsistent as to the relationship between age at time of abuse and time to disclosure of child sexual abuse (CSA) and the factors that influence early disclosure. This study sought to investigate the relationship between age of child at time of disclosure, taking account of age at time of abuse, delay in disclosure, and the relationship, if any, between factors influencing disclosure (feeling distressed, being believed, fear, contact with alleged perpetrator, difficulty saying it, and being asked) and age at time of disclosure. The files of children (n=273) seen for evaluation in a child sexual abuse (CSA) centre were reviewed. Demographic information and data relating to the

child's experience of informal disclosure were extracted from children's evaluation reports, based on interviews with children and their parents, where professionals deemed that a credible account of CSA has been given. A significant relationship was found between age at time of abuse and age at time of disclosure ($\chi2$ (16) = 261.434, p < 0.05), whereby children were more likely to tell within the developmental period during which they were abused than within any other period; this pattern increased across each age category. Overall, no specific psychological factors were found to be predictive of early disclosure. The findings suggest that children of all ages need to be targeted for prevention efforts and a larger study is needed to investigate whether some psychological factors are more predictive of disclosure than others.

McGuire, K., & London, K. (2020). A retrospective approach to examining child abuse disclosure. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 99*, 104263. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.104263

Often times, a child's disclosure is the only forensic evidence available in child abuse cases. Therefore, understanding disclosure patterns of suspected child abuse victims plays a critical role in the forensic investigations of both child physical abuse (CPA) and child sexual abuse (CSA) cases. The objective was to explore adults' retrospective reports about childhood disclosure of CPA and CSA. College students (N = 907) were screened for reported histories of CSA (n = 94) or CPA (n = 109). Through an online survey, participants provided anonymous information regarding CSA and CPA experiences along with information about any disclosure events or opportunities that they have encountered since the abuse. Among the adults reporting CSA histories, 50 % indicated disclosing the abuse during childhood; 80 % indicated any lifetime disclosure. Among the adults indicating CPA histories, 32 % reportedly disclosed the abuse to someone during childhood with 52 % reporting any lifetime disclosure. For both groups, length of delay until disclosure was bimodal with many individuals reporting immediately and many waiting considerable time. Among adults reporting CSA, a minority (16 %) indicated the abuse came to the attention of authorities, with even fewer CPA cases (8%) reporting authorities

were aware of their abuse. Denial and recantation in a formal setting was infrequent regardless of abuse type reported. Given that participants experiencing CSA and CPA both reported low levels of denial and recantation, forensic investigators and practitioners may benefit from considering consistent interviewing approaches and protocols, regardless of the type of abuse suspected.

Stige, S. H., Halvorsen, J. E., & Solberg, E. T. (2020). Pathways to understanding–How adult survivors of child sexual abuse came to understand that they had been sexually abused. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 29*(2), 205-221. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2019.1643432

While child sexual abuse is recognized as a global challenge in need of attention, all too often it takes years before sexual abuse is disclosed. We therefore need to understand more of the process leading to disclosure of child sexual abuse. The purpose of this study was to investigate how adult survivors of child sexual abuse came to understand that they had been sexually abused. We conducted semi-structured interviews with 8 women and 3 men (18–57 years old) and analyzed the interview transcripts using a hermeneutic-phenomenological approach to thematic analysis. Our analysis resulted in three main themes: The ambiguity of memory: "To remember the catastrophic"; The language of the body: "Let the body speak"; and Encountering an observant other: "The significance of being seen and recognized". The findings highlighted the complexity of the individual process of understanding that one has been sexually abused. The availability and intrusiveness of traumatic memories, bodily sensations and symptoms, and encounters with others proved to be contributing factors in the process. The findings give insights into why disclosure of sexual abuse can be difficult and have important implications for health professionals and policy makers working to help victims of child sexual abuse.

Faller, K. C. (2019). The child sexual abuse disclosure controversy: New perspectives on an abiding problem. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 99*, 104285. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.104285

Unlike other forms of child maltreatment, determination of child sexual abuse relies principally upon the child's disclosure. That is to say physical child abuse is typically diagnosed by a health care professional who determines the child's injuries have been inflicted (Dias, 2015). Child physical neglect derives from the child's physical condition and/or living conditions (Giardino et al., 2019). For example, the child is filthy, hungry, and living in squalid conditions. This diagnosis may be made by a health care professional, a child protection worker, and/or the police.

Malloy, L. C., Sutherland, J. E., & Cauffman, E. (2019). Sexual abuse disclosure among incarcerated female adolescents and young adults. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 116*(Pt1), 104147. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.104147

Childhood sexual abuse (CSA) is over-represented among incarcerated girls and women. In order to inform effective methods of response, they represent a critical group for better understanding disclosure processes. The purpose of the current study was to assess the CSA and CSA disclosure experiences of incarcerated female adolescents and young adults. Participants were 94 serious female offenders, ages 15–24 (M = 18.72, SD = 1.94), incarcerated in a secure juvenile facility. In one-on-one interviews, participants answered questions about abuse characteristics, whether they had previously disclosed, to whom they had disclosed and after how long, and reasons for prior disclosure or nondisclosure. Over half of the sample (51.8%,n = 44) reported experiencing CSA. Most individuals who reported a CSA history had previously disclosed (79.5%, n = 35), with approximately equal proportions claiming to disclose within one week (40%) and after a year or years (45.8%). However, 20.5% (n = 9) claimed that our study interview was their first disclosure. Several reasons for their disclosure patterns were endorsed: Most commonly feelings of shame or embarrassment prevented disclosure (56%) and no

longer wanting to keep the abuse a secret motivated disclosure (44%). Although many incarcerated girls and women share a history of CSA, our results indicate that the abuse and disclosure experiences of incarcerated females are diverse. Understanding their disclosure patterns can inform mental health services, rehabilitation, and professional interviewing strategies that may facilitate disclosure (e.g., forensic interviews, facility intake interviews).

McInnes, E. (2019). Young children's drawings after sexual abuse: Disclosure and recovery. In E. McInnes & A. Mason (Eds.), *Where to from here? Examining conflict-related and relational interaction trauma* (pp. 47-69). Brill Rodopi.

Child sexual abuse is a contested social field where victims can face a range of risks arising from disclosure, including fear of threats and punishment by the perpetrator, lack of language or understanding to identify what has happened to them and the reactions of others, such as non-offending parents, police, child protection workers and educators. Unlike other forms of child abuse, child sexual abuse is always a criminal act, normally denied by alleged perpetrators, often involving investigations by child protection authorities and police. Disclosing sexual abuse can leave victims disbelieved, blamed for making such claims and isolated from safety and recovery processes. Despite these barriers, young children who are experiencing abuse can indirectly disclose what is happening to them through their behaviour and through drawings depicting their experiences. The interpretations placed on children's behaviour and the meanings attributed to their drawings are vulnerable to the beliefs of relevant adults, such as teachers, and their reactions. Improving educators' and other relevant professionals' abilities to interpret children's behaviours and drawings after abuse is important to improving the safety and recovery of victims. Using a collection of drawings from child victims the chapter identifies some common elements of abuse disclosures and the relationships between the drawings and the victims' emotional states. It briefly reviews

some of the key behavioural differences marking normal and concerning behaviour of young children at school.

Azzopardi, C., Eirich, R., Rash, C. L., Macdonald, S., & Madigan, S. (2018). A meta-analysis of the prevalence of child sexual abuse disclosure in forensic settings. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 93*, 291-304. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2018.11.020

Identification, substantiation, prosecution, and treatment of child sexual abuse often rely heavily on a disclosure from the victim in the absence of corroborating evidence. For some, disclosure can be impeded by developmental or motivational barriers, thus compromising child safety and wellbeing. The literature on disclosure prevalence and mitigating influences does not yield a coherent picture. A more accurate estimate will help to inform investigation strategies to facilitate disclosure. This study provides a meta-analysis of available research examining the prevalence of sexual abuse disclosure in forensic interviews with children under 18 years, and examines a range of factors that may influence the likelihood of disclosure. Databases were searched for published and unpublished studies up to May 2017. In total, 2393 abstracts were assessed for eligibility, 216 full-text articles were reviewed, and 45 samples (with 31,225 participants) provided estimates of effect sizes. The mean prevalence of child sexual abuse disclosure in forensic settings was 64.1% (95% CI: 60.0– 68.1). Between-study variability was explained by: (1) child age and gender, with higher prevalence in older children and females; (2) prior disclosure, with higher prevalence when present; and (3) study year, with higher prevalence in more recent studies. This meta-analysis confirms an upward trend in child sexual abuse disclosure prevalence. However, more than a third of children do not disclose when interviewed, with those who are younger, male, and without a prior disclosure at greatest risk. Important implications for forensic interviewing protocols and future research are discussed.

Bracewell, T. E. (2018). Outcry consistency and prosecutorial decisions in child sexual
    abuse cases. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 27*(4), 424-438.
    DOI:10.1080/10538712.2018.1474413

This study examines the correlation between the consistency in a child's sexual abuse outcry and the prosecutorial decision to accept or reject cases of child sexual abuse. Case-specific information was obtained from one Texas Children's Advocacy Center on all cases from 2010 to 2013. After the needed deletion, the total number of cases included in the analysis was 309. An outcry was defined as a sexual abuse disclosure. Consistency was measured at both the forensic interview and the sexual assault exam. Logistic regression was used to evaluate whether a correlation existed between disclosure and prosecutorial decisions. Disclosure was statistically significant. Partial disclosure (disclosure at one point in time and denial at another) versus full disclosure (disclosure at two points in time) had a statistically significant odds ratio of 4.801. Implications are discussed, specifically, how the different disciplines involved in child protection should take advantage of the expertise of both forensic interviewers and forensic nurses to inform their decisions.

Lahtinen, H. M., Laitila, A., Korkman, J., & Ellonen, N. (2018). Children's disclosures of
    sexual abuse in a population-based sample. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 76,* 84-94.
    DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2017.10.011

Most previous studies on disclosing child sexual abuse (CSA) have either been retrospective or focused on children who already have disclosed. The present study aimed to explore the overall CSA disclosure rate and factors associated with disclosing to adults in a large population-based sample. A representative sample of 11,364 sixth and ninth graders participated in the Finnish Child Victim Survey concerning experiences of violence, including CSA. CSA was defined as having sexual experiences with a person at least five years older at the time of the experience. Within this sample, the CSA prevalence was 2.4%. Children reporting CSA experiences also answered questions regarding

disclosure, the disclosure recipient, and potential reasons for not disclosing. The results indicate that most of the children (80%) had disclosed to someone, usually a friend (48%). However, only 26% had disclosed to adults, and even fewer had reported their experiences to authorities (12%). The most common reason for non-disclosing was that the experience was not considered serious enough for reporting (41%), and half of the children having CSA experiences did not self-label their experiences as sexual abuse. Relatively few children reported lacking the courage to disclose (14%). Logistic regression analyses showed that the perpetrator's age, the age of the victim at the time of abuse, and having no experiences of emotional abuse by the mother were associated with disclosing to an adult. The results contribute to understanding the factors underlying children's disclosure patterns in a population-based sample and highlight the need for age-appropriate safety education for children and adolescents.

Quas, J. A., Stolzenberg, S. N., & Lyon, T. D. (2018). The effects of promising to tell the truth, the putative confession, and recall and recognition questions on maltreated and non-maltreated children's disclosure of a minor transgression. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology, 166*, 266-279. DOI:10.1016/j.jecp.2017.08.014

This study examined the utility of two interview instructions designed to overcome children's reluctance to disclose transgressions: eliciting a promise from children to tell the truth and the putative confession (telling children that a suspect "told me everything that happened and wants you to tell the truth"). The key questions were whether the instructions increased disclosure in response to recall questions and in response to recognition questions that were less or more explicit about transgressions, and whether instructions were differentially effective with age. Two-hundred and seventeen 4- to 9-year-old maltreated and comparable non-maltreated children played with a stranger. This included playing with a set of toys. For half of the children within each group, two of the toys appeared to break while they were playing. The stranger admonished secrecy. Shortly thereafter, children were questioned about what happened in one of the three

interview conditions. Some children were asked to promise to tell the truth. Others were given the putative confession, and still others received no interview instructions. When coupled with recall questions, the promise was only effective at increasing disclosures among older children, whereas the putative confession was effective regardless of age. Across interview instruction conditions, recognition questions that did not suggest wrongdoing elicited few additional transgression disclosures; recognition questions that explicitly mentioned wrongdoing elicited some true reports but also some false alarms. No differences in disclosure emerged between maltreated and non-maltreated children. Results highlight the potential benefits and limitations of different interviewing approaches when questioning reluctant children.

Skinner, G. C., Andrews, S. J., & Lamb, M. E. (2018). The disclosure of alleged child sexual abuse: An investigation of criminal court transcripts from Scotland. *Psychology, Crime & Law*, *25*(5), 458-481. DOI:10.1080/1068316X.2018.1538415

This study systematically assessed children's disclosure processes and lawyers' questioning about children's disclosures in the courtroom. We analysed transcripts of 72 trials in which 5- to 17-year-old children testified as alleged victims of sexual abuse and found that children typically delayed disclosing abuse for over 6 months, with the length of delay greater when the alleged perpetrator-victim relationships were closer. When questioning children about disclosure, prosecutors used more directive and option-posing questions, and sought to establish the plausibility, credibility, reliability, and consistency of children's disclosures. On the other hand, defence lawyers used more suggestive questions than prosecutors, and sought to undermine children's testimony by accusing them of lying or being coached. Children's responses to questions about their disclosure differed depending on who was questioning them: notably, children contradicted themselves more during cross-examinations than direct-examinations. Both prosecutors and defence lawyers tended to ask developmentally 'risky' questions, illustrating the difficulties that may arise when attempting to achieve a balance between

securing accurate testimony and protecting the right of defendants to challenge the evidence against them.

White, C., Shanley, D. C., Zimmer-Gembeck, M. J., Walsh, K., Hawkins, R., & Lines, K. (2018). "Tell, tell, tell again": The prevalence and correlates of young children's response to and disclosure of an in-vivo lure from a stranger. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 82*, 134-143. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2018.06.001

Despite being a key target outcome to prevent child maltreatment, little research has been conducted to examine the prevalence and predictors of interpersonal safety skills in a standardized manner. In this study, interpersonal safety skills were measured in a Year 1–2 student sample through use of a standardised simulated risk scenario, with three primary skills examined: withdrawal from an unknown confederate (motor safety response), verbal refusal of an abduction lure (verbal safety response) and disclosure of confederate presence. Children who participated in this study had not completed any prior behavioural skills training or child protective education programs. Overall, the prevalence of interpersonal safety skills varied, with 27% children withdrawing from the confederate, 48% refusing the lure and 83% disclosing the confederate's presence. For correlates, motor and verbal safety responses were positively associated with each other. However, the only other correlate of interpersonal safety skills was anxiety, with children who had greater anxiety disclosing earlier but also being more likely to agree to leave with the confederate. Future research may seek to examine whether these correlates remain present with different types of interpersonal safety risk (e.g., bullying) and to identify other potential predictors of interpersonal safety skill use.

Leach, C., Powell, M. B., Sharman, S. J., & Anglim, J. (2017). The relationship between children's age and disclosures of sexual abuse during forensic interviews. *Child Maltreatment, 22*(1), 79-88. DOI:10.1177/1077559516675723

Children's disclosures of sexual abuse during forensic interviews are fundamental to the investigation of cases. Research examining the relationship between age and disclosure has shown mixed results; the aim of the current study was to clarify and extend our knowledge by modeling linear, quadratic, and interaction effects of age on disclosure. Child sexual abuse reports made by children, their caregivers, or mandated reporters over a 12-month period to police in one state of Australia were examined. Of the 527 children (age range 3–16 years) offered a forensic interview, 81% disclosed abuse during it. The other 19% did not disclose or refused the interview. Age had both linear and quadratic effects, whereby disclosure increased with age until 11 years, after which disclosure decreased with age to 16 years. The effect of age on disclosure was moderated by five variables: abuse severity, the child–suspect relationship, suspects' violence histories, delay of report to police, and children's previous disclosures. Particular groups of children had lower likelihoods of disclosing abuse in forensic interviews than others, such as adolescents who alleged abuse against suspects with histories of violent offending. By identifying these groups, targeted strategies may be developed to help increase their disclosure rates.

Magnusson, M., Ernberg, E., & Landström, S. (2017). Preschoolers' disclosures of child sexual abuse: Examining corroborated cases from Swedish courts. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 70*, 199-209. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2017.05.018

Young victims of child sexual abuse can – for a range of developmental, motivational and contextual reasons – have difficulties disclosing their experiences. In the present study, corroborated court cases concerning 57 preschoolers' disclosures of sexual abuse were examined using qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Together, the cases involved 53 girls and 4 boys between 2–6 years (M =4.2, SD=1.2) during the (first) incident of abuse.

The children were between 3–7 years (M =5.3, SD=1.2) during their police interview. Analyses showed that many children could provide at least one central detail about the abuse to; i) informal disclosure recipients, and ii) during their police interview. However, the time up until their first disclosure was often delayed. A range of barriers for disclosing were observed in the court cases, and many young victims were assessed as reluctant during their police interview. Repeated sessions, direct questions, and other reassurances could at times facilitate the disclosure process. Other suggestions on actions and future research that may help young child abuse victims are discussed.

McElvaney, R., & Culhane, M. (2017). A retrospective analysis of children's assessment reports: What helps children tell?. *Child Abuse Review*, *26*(2), 103-115. DOI:10.1002/car.2390

This paper explores a retrospective analysis of children's file data as a research method of gathering information on children's experiences of informal disclosure of child sexual abuse. This study extracted data from files where children were seen for a child sexual abuse evaluation in Ireland and the children were deemed to have given a credible account of abuse by the professionals concerned. A content analysis was conducted using themes identified in previously published research, based on direct interviews with children about their experiences of informal disclosure. The paper discusses the relative merits and limitations of this method, through reporting on the findings of the file analysis and comparing these findings with findings obtained from a smaller sub-sample of this sample of children, who were interviewed about their experiences of disclosure. It is suggested that this method is worth exploring with a larger sample size which would enable statistical analysis and thus explore the predictive factors influencing early informal disclosure. Frontline services can contribute to the knowledge base on what helps children tell through service-based research that uses data already collected from evaluation interviews with children, thus eliminating the need to interview children for research purposes.

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McGuire, K., & London, K. (2017). Common beliefs about child sexual abuse and
disclosure: A college sample. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 26*(2), 175-194.
DOI:10.1080/10538712.2017.1281368

Adults' common beliefs about child sexual abuse and disclosure were explored. Participants (N = 670) were questioned about key areas of child sexual abuse that could affect decision- making processes of jurors evaluating child sexual abuse cases. These areas included victim and perpetrator characteristics, medical and behavioral indicators of child sexual abuse, memories for the event, and disclosure of the event. The scientific literature pertaining to these same areas are reviewed. While individual beliefs were consistent with some areas of the scientific literature (e.g., victim and perpetrator characteristics), they strongly contrasted the literature in other important areas (e.g., memories for the event, indicators of child sexual abuse, and the likelihood of denial and recantation). Implications, including the option of providing expert testimony to reduce discrepancies, are discussed.

Alonzo-Proulx, A., & Cyr, M. (2016). Factors predicting central details in alleged child
sexual abuse victims' disclosure. *Journal of Forensic Psychology Practice*, *16*(3),
129-150. DOI:10.1080/15228932.2016.1172422

The purpose of this study is to explore the predictive value of child sexual abuse characteristics (relationship between the child and the suspect, reported coercion, type and frequency of abuse) as well as the disclosure context (disclosure made on purpose or accidentally, maternal belief, and protective actions) on the number of central forensically relevant (CFR) details elicited during the investigative interview of alleged child victims. The effects of the child's age and use of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Investigative Protocol were controlled for, in order to focus on the aspects of the sexual abuse and disclosure variables. Of the 116 investigative interviews conducted with children aged from 4 to 14 years old, half followed the NICHD Protocol; the other half were conducted by the same 18 interviewers prior to their training

in the NICHD protocol. Police files and interview transcripts were analyzed to collect information about the child sexual abuse characteristics, the disclosure context, and the number of CFR details. As expected, the child's age and use of the NICHD Protocol were the two strongest predictors of the number of CFR details. Coercion (physical and verbal) as well as maternal protection following the disclosure also increased the number of CFR details. Explanations of these results and implications for further research are discussed.

Bottoms, B. L., Peter-Hagene, L. C., Epstein, M. A., Wiley, T. R., Reynolds, C. E., & Rudnicki, A. G. (2016). Abuse characteristics and individual differences related to disclosing childhood sexual, physical, and emotional abuse and witnessed domestic violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *31*(7), 1308-1339. DOI:10.1177/0886260514564155

Many adult survivors of childhood abuse hide their victimization, avoiding disclosure that could identify perpetrators, end the abuse, and bring help to the victim. We surveyed 1,679 women undergraduates to understand disclosure of childhood sexual, physical, and emotional abuse, and, for the first time, witnessed domestic violence, which many consider to be emotionally abusive. A substantial minority of victims failed to ever disclose their sexual abuse (23%), physical abuse (34%), emotional abuse (20%), and witnessed domestic violence (29%). Overall, abuse-specific factors were better predictors of disclosure than individual-level characteristics. Disclosure of sexual abuse was related to experiencing more frequent abuse (by the same and by multiple perpetrators), being more worried about injury and more upset at the time of the abuse, and self-labeling as a victim of abuse. Disclosure of physical abuse was related to experiencing more frequent abuse (by the same and multiple perpetrators), being less emotionally close to the perpetrator, being older when the abuse ended, being more worried and upset, and self-labeling as a victim. Disclosure of emotional abuse was associated with being older when the abuse ended, and being more worried and upset. Disclosure was unrelated to victim demographic characteristics or defensive reactions (dissociative proneness, fantasy proneness, repressive coping style, and temporary forgetting), except that among

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physical and emotional abuse victims, repressors were less likely to disclose than non-repressors. Disclosure of witnessing domestic violence was not significantly related to any factors measured.

Swingle, J. M., Tursich, M., Cleveland, J. M., Gold, S. N., Tolliver, S. F., Michaels, L., Kupperman-Caron, L. N., Garcia-Larrieu, M., & Sciarrino, N. A. (2016). Childhood disclosure of sexual abuse: Necessary but not necessarily sufficient. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 62*, 10-18. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2016.10.009

Prevention programs often encourage sexually abused children to disclose without fully considering the potential for adverse consequences. This study examined the impact of disclosure on abuse cessation and later adult symptomatology. A clinical sample of 301adult survivors completed the Impact of Event Scale (IES/IES-R), and the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI-II). Participants were divided into 3 groups: Nondisclosure (n = 221), Disclosure/Abuse Ended (n = 25), and Disclosure/Abuse Continued (n = 55). Multivariate analyses of covariance, adjusting for abuse characteristics (age of onset, penetration, and number of perpetrators) and other trauma exposure, revealed significant differences in psychiatric symptom severity among the three groups, Wilks' = 0. 95, $F_{(6, 584)}$ = 2.69, p = 0.014, p2= 0.03. Specifically, those in the Disclosure/Abuse Continued group scored significantly higher on the IES/IES-R Intrusion subscale (p = 0.04) and the BDI-II (p = 0.01), as compared to the Nondisclosure group. The Disclosure/Abuse Ended group did not differ significantly from the other groups. Results suggest that disclosure may be detrimental unless adequate steps are taken to ensure abuse cessation and appropriate treatment.

Wessel, E. M., Eilertsen, D. E., Langnes, E., Magnussen, S., & Melinder, A. (2016). Disclosure of child sexual abuse: Expressed emotions and credibility judgments of a child mock victim. *Psychology, Crime & Law*, *22*(4), 331-343. DOI:10.1080/1068316X.2015.1109087

Both lay persons and professionals believe that the emotions displayed by a child witness during disclosure of sexual abuse are a factor of importance when judging the child's credibility. Unfortunately, not all children display emotions according to expectations, leading to misjudgments, and possible miscarriage of justice. In the present study, we examined how lay people's credibility judgments were influenced by a child's displayed emotions during the disclosure of sexual abuse. Participants (n = 119), viewed video recordings of a mock police interview of an 11-year-old child actor disclosing sexual abuse, displaying one of four emotional expressions (angry, sad, neutral, and positive). Results showed that participants were strongly influenced by the emotions displayed; in particular, the display of strong negative emotions (anger) or positive emotions during disclosure significantly reduced judged credibility. The credibility ratings predicted the participants' judgments of the defendant's guilt and the willingness to pass a guilty vote in a hypothetical trial.

Korkman, J., Laajasalo, T., Juusola, A., Uusivuori, L., & Santtila, P. (2015). What did the child tell? The accuracy of parents' reports of a child's statements when suspecting child sexual abuse. *Journal of Forensic Psychology Practice, 15*(2), 93-113. DOI:10.1080/15228932.2015.1003439

Often cases of suspected child sexual abuse (CSA) come forward through children's accounts to their parents and the parents' subsequent reporting thereof. In this study (N = 22), randomly assigned parents listened to a mother-daughter conversation concerning suspected CSA. When freely reporting "what the child told," participants assessed most of the information brought up by the mother as being brought up by the child. However, when asked to assess the source for each utterance, participants

differentiated better. Interestingly, who they deemed brought up an event was not associated with how probable participants deemed it was that the event had occurred.

Leclerc, B., & Wortley, R. (2015). Predictors of victim disclosure in child sexual abuse: Additional evidence from a sample of incarcerated adult sex offenders. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *43*, 104-111. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2015.03.003

The under-reporting of child sexual abuse by victims is a serious problem that may prolong the suffering of victims and leave perpetrators free to continue offending. Yet empirical evidence indicates that victim disclosure rates are low. In this study, we perform regression analysis with a sample of 369 adult child sexual offenders to examine potential predictors of victim disclosure. Specifically, we extend the range of previously examined potential predictors of victim disclosure and investigate interaction effects in order to better capture under which circumstances victim disclosure is more likely. The current study differs from previous studies in that it examines the impact of victim and offense variables on victim disclosure from the perspective of the offender. In line with previous studies, we found that disclosure increased with the age of the victim and if penetration had occurred. In addition, we found that disclosure increased when the victim came from a non-dysfunctional family and resisted the abuse. The presence of an interaction effect highlighted the impact of the situation on victim disclosure. This effect indicated that as victims get older, they are more likely to disclose the abuse when they are not living with the offender at the time of abuse, but less likely to do so when they are living with the offender at the time of abuse. These findings are discussed in relation to previous studies and the need to facilitate victim disclosure.

Tener, D., & Murphy, S. B. (2015). Adult disclosure of child sexual abuse A literature
     review. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, *16*(4), 391-400. DOI:10.1177/1524838014537906

Victims of childhood sexual abuse carry the experience of abuse into adulthood. One of the dilemmas victims face during adulthood is the decision to disclose or conceal the abuse. Although adult disclosure may be affected by former disclosure during childhood, adult survivors face new challenges and dilemmas, such as to whom, when, and how to tell. The purpose of this article is to review the domains found in the literature on survivors' experiences regarding disclosure of child sexual abuse during adulthood, all of which were published between 1980 and 2013. Domains include decisions to disclose during adulthood, barriers and facilitators to disclosure and potential recipients of the disclosure, as well as the process of telling and its impact on survivors' well-being. The authors present implications for policy, practice, and research.

Castelli, P., & Goodman, G. S. (2014). Children's perceived emotional behavior at
     disclosure and prosecutors' evaluations. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *38*(9), 1521-1532.
     DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2014.02.010

The present study investigated the perceived emotional behavior of alleged child victims when disclosing sexual abuse in a forensic interview. It also addressed whether the perceived emotional behavior influenced prosecutors' evaluations of children's potential as witnesses and prosecutors' recommendations to press charges. Ninety-eight videotapes of forensic interviews with alleged child sexual abuse victims (4- to 17-year-olds) were coded for behavioral indicators of emotions. Case file information and district attorney evaluations were also coded. Results indicated that children were not generally perceived as being emotional (e.g., sad) during disclosure. However, the perceived intensity of expressed emotions was greater when children disclosed the alleged abuse compared to when they discussed more neutral topics in rapport building. Greater perceived emotional withdrawal by children at disclosure was associated with more negative evaluations of child witnesses by prosecutors. Moreover, children's emotional

behaviors, as noted by prosecutors, were among the predictors of prosecutors' recommendations to file charges. Practical implications are discussed.

Korkman, J., Juusola, A., & Santtila, P. (2014). Who made the disclosure? Recorded discussions between children and caretakers suspecting child abuse. *Psychology, Crime & Law*, *20*(10), 994-1004. DOI:10.1080/1068316X.2014.902455

Within investigations of suspected child abuse, the child's account is often at the core of the judicial process. When analysing the child's account, it is therefore important to consider how parents may have discussed the suspected abuse prior to the official investigation. However, no studies up to the present time have investigated discussions in real cases where parents suspect that their children have been abused. We analysed a sample (N = 19) of recorded conversations between parents and their children, delivered to the police as evidence for alleged physical or sexual abuse. Analyses of the questions used and the information provided in the discussions showed that the parent's strategies when questioning their children were extremely leading and that in the majority of the cases, all new information was provided by the parents. In spite of this, the parents deemed the recorded conversations as records of the children's accounts. While the sample was small and likely to be unrepresentative of child abuse suspicions in general, the findings have important practical implications. The results indicate that when planning an interview in a case where the alleged abuse relies on what a child allegedly has told a parent, particular caution should be taken when referring to these conversations.

Malloy, L. C., Quas, J. A., Lyon, T. D., & Ahern, E. C. (2014). [Disclosing adult wrongdoing: Maltreated and non-maltreated children's expectations and preferences](#). *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology, 24,* 78-96. DOI:10.1016/j.jecp.2014.01.018

Little is known about the process by which children disclose adult wrongdoing, a topic of considerable debate and controversy. In the current study, we investigated children's evaluations of disclosing adult wrongdoing by focusing on children's preferences for particular disclosure recipients and perceptions of the consequences of disclosure in hypothetical vignettes. We tested whether children thought that disclosure recipients would believe a story child as a truth teller and what actions the recipients would take against the "instigator" who committed the transgression. Maltreated and non-maltreated 4- to 9-year-olds (N = 235) responded to questions about vignettes that described a parent's or stranger's transgression. Older children preferred caregiver recipients over police officer recipients when disclosing a parent's transgression but not a stranger's transgression. Maltreated children's preference for caregiver recipients over police officer recipients developed more gradually than that of non-maltreated children. Older children expected disclosure recipients to be more skeptical of the story child's account, and older children and maltreated children expected disclosure recipients to intervene formally less often when a parent, rather than a stranger, was the instigator. Results contribute to understanding vulnerable children's development and highlight the developmental, experiential, and socio-contextual factors underlying children's disclosure patterns.

Milne, L., & Collin-Vézina, D. (2014). Disclosure of sexual abuse among youth in residential treatment care: A multiple informant comparison. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 23*(4), 398-417. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2014.896841

This exploratory study describes the child sexual abuse experiences of 53 youth (ages 14–17) in child protective services residential treatment care using three informants: youth (via the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire), residential treatment workers (via the Child

Welfare Trauma Referral Tool), and the child protective services record. Child sexual abuse was self-reported by 38% of youth, with reporting by females almost four times higher. Child sexual abuse co-occurred with physical abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect in 75% of cases. Agreement between youth and residential treatment worker reports was high, while agreement between youth reports and their child protective services record was low. The study suggests systematic child sexual abuse screening among residential treatment care youth through self-reports and residential treatment worker reports. Case studies are provided, and implications for practice, policy, and future research are discussed.

Rush, E. B., Lyon, T. D., Ahern, E. C., & Quas, J. A. (2014). Disclosure suspicion bias and abuse disclosure: Comparisons between sexual and physical abuse. *Child Maltreatment*, *19*(2), 113-118. DOI:10.1177/1077559514538114

Prior research has found that children disclosing physical abuse appear more reticent and less consistent than children disclosing sexual abuse. Although this has been attributed to differences in reluctance, it may also be due to differences in the process by which abuse is suspected and investigated. Disclosure may play a larger role in arousing suspicions of sexual abuse, while other evidence may play a larger role in arousing suspicions of physical abuse. As a result, children who disclose physical abuse in formal investigations may be doing so for the first time, and they may be more reluctant to provide details of the abuse. We examined abuse disclosure and evidence in comparable samples of court-substantiated physical (n ¼ 33) and sexual (n ¼ 28) abuse. Consistent with predictions, the likelihood that the child had disclosed abuse before an investigation began was lower in physical (27%) than that in sexual (67%) abuse cases, and there was more nondisclosure evidence of abuse in physical abuse cases. These findings have implications for understanding the dynamics and meaning of disclosure in cases involving different types of abuse.

Malloy, L. C., Brubacher, S. P., & Lamb, M. E. (2013). "Because she's one who listens":
        Children discuss disclosure recipients in forensic interviews." *Child Maltreatment,
        18*(4), 245-251. DOI:10.1177/1077559513497250

The current study examined investigative interviews using the National Institute of Child
Health and Human Development (NICHD) Investigative Interview Protocol with 204, five-
to thirteen-year-old suspected victims of child sexual abuse. The analyses focused on
who children told, who they wanted (or did not want) to tell and why, their expectations
about being believed, and other general motivations for disclosure. Children's
spontaneous reports as well as their responses to interviewer questions about disclosure
were explored. Results demonstrated that the majority of children discussed disclosure
recipients in their interviews, with 78 children (38%) explaining their disclosures. Only 15
children (7%) mentioned expectations about whether recipients would believe their
disclosures. There were no differences between the types of information elicited by
interviewers and those provided spontaneously, suggesting that, when interviewed in an
open-ended, facilitative manner, children themselves produce informative details about
their disclosure histories. Results have practical implications for professionals who
interview children about sexual abuse.

Sim, M. P., & Lamb, M. E. (2013). Children's disclosure of child sexual abuse: How
        motivational factors affect linguistic categories related to deception detection.
        Psychology, Crime & Law, *19*(8), 649-660. DOI:10.1080/1068316X.2012.719621

The current study explored the linguistic profiles of children's statements about alleged
sexual abuse, focusing on whether and how the truthfulness of children's disclosures
might be affected by such motivational factors as age, gender, relationship to the
suspect, abuse type, number of incidents and interview type. While some researchers
have attempted to apply linguistic analyses to detect deception in children's accounts,
the results have been unpromising and inconsistent. A crucial missing step is to
understand more about the normative linguistic styles adopted by children when

speaking about alleged sexual abuse. This study found that all examined motivational factors had some effect on the linguistic categories associated with deception. Age differences were the most robust, with children's total productivity and use of exclusive, motion and insight words varying by age. These results suggest caution should be exercised when using linguistic analyses to assess credibility in children's statements, in light of the group differences and possible effects of children's reluctance, cooperativeness and motivation.

Lyon, T. D., Ahern, E. C., & Scurich, N. (2012). [Interviewing children versus tossing coins: Accurately assessing the diagnosticity of children's disclosures of abuse](#). *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 21*(1), 19-44. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2012.642468

We describe a Bayesian approach to evaluating children's abuse disclosures and review research demonstrating that children's disclosure of genital touch can be highly probative of sexual abuse, with the probative value depending on disclosure spontaneity and children's age. We discuss how some commentators understate the probative value of children's disclosures by: confusing the probability of abuse given disclosure with the probability of disclosure given abuse, assuming that children formally questioned about sexual abuse have a low prior probability of sexual abuse, misstating the probative value of abuse disclosure, and confusing the distinction between disclosure and nondisclosure with the distinction between true and false disclosures. We review interviewing methods that increase the probative value of disclosures, including interview instructions, narrative practice, noncontingent reinforcement, and questions about perpetrator/caregiver statements and children's reactions to the alleged abuse.

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Finn, C. (2011). Forensic nurses' experiences of receiving child abuse disclosures. *Journal for Specialists in Pediatric Nursing, 16*(4), 252-262. DOI:10.1111/j.1744-6155.2011.00296.x

A child's self-disclosure of abuse is a critical component in initiating intervention to stop abuse and decrease the likelihood of long-term negative outcomes. This study described the context in which child abuse victims disclosed to forensic nurses. Thirty interviews were conducted at the International Forensic Nurses' Scientific Assembly of 2007 and then analyzed using narrative inquiry methodology. Five themes emerged: child-friendly environment, building rapport, engaged listening, believing unconditionally, and the potential for false disclosures. Nurses can provide an environment that allows a child the perception of limitless time to share their unique stories.

Lyon, T. D., & Ahern, E. C. (2011). Disclosure of child sexual abuse. In J. E. B. Myers (Ed.), *The APSAC handbook on child maltreatment* (3rd ed., pp. 233-252). Sage.

This chapter gives a synopsis of the generally accepted facts about CSA disclosure. The authors reviewed research on: (1) disclosure by children substantiated as sexually abused and (2) surveys of adults asking whether they were sexually abused as children. The research reviewed supports the proposition that CSA victims often delay disclosure or do not disclose and that delays and nondisclosure are most common among children abused by a familiar person, especially a family member living in the child's household. The authors imply that inconsistencies and recantations in children's reports may be due to reluctance rather than a false allegation. The authors also reviewed research asking child sex offenders to describe their modus operandi, to help professionals understand the dynamics underlying children's failure to disclose abuse. At the end of the chapter, implications for professionals interviewing children about CSA based on the research reviewed are described in a comprehensible manner.

Parent, S. (2011). Disclosure of sexual abuse in sport organizations: A case study. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 20*(3), 322–337. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2011.573459

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

Schaeffer, P., Leventhal, J. M., & Asnes, A. G. (2011). Children's disclosures of sexual abuse: Learning from direct inquiry. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 35*(5), 343–352. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2011.01.014

Forensic interviewers asked children about how they came to tell about sexual abuse and if children waited to tell about abuse, and the children gave specific answers to these questions. The reasons children identified for why they chose to tell were classified into three domains: (1) disclosure as a result of internal stimuli (e.g., the child had nightmares), (2) disclosure facilitated by outside influences (e.g., the child was questioned), and (3) disclosure due to direct evidence of abuse (e.g., the child's abuse was witnessed). The barriers to disclosure identified by the children were categorized into five groups: (1) threats made by the perpetrator (e.g., the child was told (s)he would get in trouble if (s)he told), (2) fears (e.g., the child was afraid something bad would happen if (s)he told), (3) lack of opportunity (e.g., the child felt the opportunity to disclose never presented), (4) lack of understanding (e.g., the child failed to recognize abusive behavior as unacceptable), and (5) relationship with the perpetrator (e.g., the child thought the perpetrator was a friend). The authors conclude that specific reasons children identify for why they told and why they waited to tell about sexual abuse can be obtained by direct inquiry during forensic interviews for suspected child sexual abuse. When asked, children

identified the first person they told and offered varied and specific reasons for why they told and why they waited to tell about sexual abuse. Understanding why children disclose their abuse and why they wait to disclose will assist both professionals and families. Investigators and those who care for sexually abused children will gain insight into the specific barrier that the sexually abused child overcame to disclose. Prosecutors will be able to use this information to explain to juries why the child may have delayed his or her disclosure. Parents who struggle to understand why their child disclosed to someone else or waited to disclose will have a better understanding of their child's decisions.

Cromer, L., & Goldsmith, R. (2010). Child sexual abuse myths: Attitudes, beliefs, and individual differences. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 19*(6), 618-647. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2010.522493

Child sexual abuse myths comprise incorrect beliefs regarding sexual abuse, victims, and perpetrators. Relations among myth acceptance, responses to disclosure, legal decisions, and victims' subsequent psychological and health outcomes underscore the importance of understanding child sexual abuse myths. Despite accurate knowledge regarding child sexual abuse among many professional and other individuals, child sexual abuse myths persist. A Google search produced 119 child sexual abuse myths, some with overlapping themes. Coders grouped myths into four categories: (a) minimizations or exaggerations of the extent of harm child sexual abuse poses, (b) denials of the extent of child sexual abuse, (c) diffusions of perpetrator blame, and (d) perpetrator stereotypes. This review provides available data regarding the prevalence for these myths, empirical research that refutes or confirms myth categories, and considerations of cultural contexts and implications.

Faller, K. C., Cordisco Steele, L., & Nelson-Gardell, D. (2010). Allegations of sexual abuse of a child: What to do when a single forensic interview isn't enough. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 19*(5), 572-589. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2010.511985

This article describes the state of knowledge about extended assessments/forensic evaluations in situations of possible sexual abuse. It provides a critical review of the modest body of relevant research, describes two models for extended assessments, and presents descriptive survey findings of 62 professionals conducting extended assessments, most of whom conduct extended assessments intermittently as part of their other work on sexual abuse cases. Agencies should consider conducting extended assessments with young or traumatized children whose sexual abuse allegations are not resolved with a single interview as well as in complex child sexual abuse cases.

Faller, K. C., & Nelson-Gardell, D. (2010). Extended evaluations in cases of child sexual abuse: How many sessions are sufficient? *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 19*(6), 648-668. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2010.522494

This article provides new findings from a national study involving 18 forensic interview sites of 137 children who were randomly assigned to a four or eight session extended evaluation. Cases assigned to the eight session protocol were significantly more likely to be classified "credible disclosure" of sexual abuse (56.6%) than cases assigned to the four session protocol (29.5%) and significantly less likely to be classified "credible nondisclosure" of sexual abuse (9.2%) than cases in the four session protocol (24.6%). When four versus eight sessions, demographic variables, and case characteristics were entered into a regression, variables that predicted likelihood of sexual abuse were eight session protocol, older victim age, and caretaker belief the child had been sexually abused. When new disclosures were examined by session in the eight session protocol, 95% of new disclosures occurred by the sixth session.

Gordon, H. M., & Connolly, D. A. (2010). Failing to report details of an event: A review of the directed forgetting procedure and applications to reports of childhood sexual abuse. *Memory, 18*(2), 115-128. DOI:10.1080/09658210903130772

Recent reviews of child sexual abuse (CSA) disclosure indicate that many victims delay disclosing abuse for some period of time (e.g., London, Bruck, Ceci, & Shuman, 2005). During this period of nondisclosure, CSA victims may avoid thinking about or discussing their abuse experiences. Some scholars argue that this may lead to a directed forgetting (DF) effect, whereby later recall of the unrehearsed memories becomes more difficult (e.g., M. A. Epstein & Bottoms, 2002). This paper reviews the DF literature and discusses the potential contribution of DF to silence. The review begins with a description of the basic DF protocol used, discusses underlying mechanisms thought to be responsible for the DF effect, and then examines applications of the DF protocol to memory for emotion-laden word lists and autobiographical events. Overall, the applied studies demonstrate that DF effects generalize beyond memory for innocuous word lists; however, we describe several important avenues of research that require further exploration. Most noteworthy, and particularly relevant to the common application of DF to memory for CSA, are those studies that examine the influence of DF on children's autobiographical memory.

Kulkofsky, S., & London, K. (2010). Reliability and suggestibility of children's statements: From science to practice. In E. P. Benedek, P. Ash, & C. L. Scott (Eds.), *Principles and practice of child and adolescent forensic mental health,* (pp. 217-227). American Psychiatric Publishing. DOI:10.1176/appi.books.9781585629015

This book chapter provides an overview of the literature on the factors that can affect the accuracy of children's statements. In the first major section, the authors provide a review of the literature on children's accuracy when reporting past events. In the second major section, they address disclosure patterns among sexually abused children, as beliefs about how and when children disclose abuse often influence interviewers' decisions to pursue more aggressive questioning strategies. Finally, they end the chapter with an overview of recommendations for practitioners.

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Lyon, T. D., Ahern, E. C., Malloy, L. C., & Quas, J. A. (2010). [Children's reasoning about disclosing adult transgressions: Effects of maltreatment, child age, and adult identity](). *Child Development*, *81*(6), 1714-1728. DOI:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01505.x

A total of 229 four to nine year-old maltreated and nonmaltreated children of comparable socioeconomic status and ethnicity judged whether children should or would disclose unspecified transgressions of adults (instigators) to other adults (recipients) in scenarios varying the identity of the instigator (stranger or parent), the identity of the recipient (parent, police, or teacher), and the severity of the transgression ("something really bad" or "something just a little bad"). Children endorsed more disclosure against stranger than parent instigators and less disclosure to teacher than parent and police recipients. The youngest maltreated children endorsed less disclosure than nonmaltreated children, but the opposite was true among the oldest children. Older maltreated children distinguished less than nonmaltreated children between parents and other types of instigators and recipients.

Teoh, Y.-S., & Lamb, M. E. (2010). Preparing children for investigative interviews: Rapport-building, instruction, and evaluation. *Applied Developmental Science*, *14*(3), 154-163. DOI:10.1080/10888691.2010.494463

The present study examined (1) the ways investigative interviewers in forensic settings prepared children for substantive questioning, and (2) whether the techniques used and the amount of time spent in the pre-substantive phase were related to children's informativeness. Accuracy of the children's statements was not assessed. The sample included investigative interviews of a small sample of 75 alleged victims of sexual abuse in Malaysia, aged 5 to 15 years. Explanations of the conversational rules, purpose of the interview, and the children's roles as informants appeared to help the youngest children to be informative. The results also revealed possible limits to the potential benefits of rapport-building and suggest that interviewers should monitor the amount of time they

spend preparing children for substantive questioning. Implications for addressing the limitations of the present research and directions for future research are discussed.

Lippert, T., Cross, T. P., Jones, L., & Walsh, W. (2009). Telling interviewers about sexual abuse: Predictors of child disclosure at forensic interviews. *Child Maltreatment*, *14*(1), 100-113. DOI:10.1177/1077559508318398

This study aims to identify characteristics that predict full disclosure by victims of sexual abuse during a forensic interview. Data came from agency files for 987 cases of sexual abuse between December 2001 and December 2003 from Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) and comparison communities within four U.S. states. Cases of children fully disclosing abuse when interviewed were compared to cases of children believed to be victims who gave no or partial disclosures. The likelihood of disclosure increased when victims were girls, a primary caregiver was supportive, and a child's disclosure instigated the investigation. The likelihood of disclosure was higher for children who were older at abuse onset and at forensic interview (each age variable having an independent effect). Communities differed on disclosure rate, with no difference associated with having a CAC. Findings suggest factors deserving consideration prior to a forensic interview, including organizational and community factors affecting disclosure rates.

Lamb, M. E., Hershkowitz, I., Orbach, Y., & Esplin, P. W. (2008). *Tell me what happened: Structured investigative interviews of child victims and witnesses.* John Wiley & Sons, Inc. DOI:10.1002/9780470773291

This book summarizes key research on children's memory, communicative skills and social tendencies, describes how it can be incorporated into a specific structured interview technique and reviews evidence involving more than 40,000 alleged victims. It is a primer for those wishing to learn more about the NICHD Protocol.

London, K., Bruck, M., Wright, D. B., & Ceci, S. J. (2008). Review of the contemporary literature on how children report sexual abuse to others: Findings, methodological issues, and implications for forensic interviewers. *Memory*, *16*(1), 29-47. DOI:10.1080/09658210701725732

Methods used during forensic interviews with children are driven by beliefs about how children recall and report child sexual abuse (CSA) to others. Summit (1983) proposed a theory (Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome) contending that, due to the specific traumatic characteristics of CSA, children will often delay disclosing abuse or altogether fail to disclose during childhood, deny abuse when asked, and often recant abuse allegations. His theory has had a tremendous impact on the field of CSA forensic evaluations, despite its dearth of empirical support. In this paper, we review and critique the contemporary literature from two main sources: retrospective accounts from adults reporting CSA experiences and studies of children undergoing forensic evaluation for CSA. We conclude that data support the notion that children often delay abuse disclosure, but that among valid abuse cases undergoing forensic evaluation, denial and recantation are not common. Methodological issues and implications for forensic interviewers are discussed.

Cromer, D., & Freyd, J. J. (2007). What influences believing child sexual abuse disclosures? The roles of depicted memory persistence, participant gender, trauma history, and sexism. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 31*(1), 13-22. DOI:10.1111/j.1471-6402.2007.00327.x

This vignette study investigated factors that influence believing child sexual abuse disclosures. College student participants (*N* = 318) in a university human subject pool completed measures about their own trauma history and responded to questions about sexist attitudes. Participants then read vignettes in which an adult disclosed a history of child sexual abuse, rated disclosures for accuracy and believability, and judged the level of abusiveness. Continuous memories were believed more than recovered memories. Men believed abuse reports less than did women, and people who had not experienced

trauma were less likely to believe trauma reports. Gender and personal history interacted such that trauma history did not impact women's judgments but did impact men's judgments. Men with a trauma history responded similarly to women with or without a trauma history. High sexism predicted lower judgments of an event being abusive. Hostile sexism was negatively correlated with believing abuse disclosures. Results are considered in light of myths about child sexual abuse.

Faller, K. C. (2007). *Interviewing children about sexual abuse: Controversies and best practice*. Oxford University Press. DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195311778.001.0001

The author critically analyzes the research on assessing child sexual abuse. Noting that issues such as memory and suggestibility, questioning techniques, the use of media, and false allegations remain hotly contested, chapters guide readers in applying available research to professional judgment while drawing also on best practice guidelines and conceptual, clinical, and consensus-based writings. This book covers the entire interview process, showing professionals how to structure, document, and follow up on children's responses in interviews; work with children who are very young, have special needs, or come from diverse backgrounds; use standardized tests and measures; formulate conclusions about sexual abuse; and defend those decisions in a courtroom or clinical setting. Mental health, forensic, and child welfare professionals will find in this volume a wealth of expert information that will guide them through the challenging process of interviewing children about sexual abuse.

Malloy, L. C., Lyon, T. D., & Quas, J. A. (2007). Filial dependency and recantation of child sexual abuse allegations. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, *46*(2), 162-170. DOI:10.1097/01.chi.0000246067.77953.f7

Controversy abounds regarding the process by which child sexual abuse victims disclose their experiences, particularly the extent to which and the reasons why some children,

once having disclosed abuse, later recant their allegations. This study examined the prevalence and predictors of recantation among two to seventeen year-old child sexual abuse victims. Case files (n = 257) were randomly selected from all substantiated cases resulting in a dependency court filing in a large urban county between 1999 and 2000. Recantation (i.e., denial of abuse post-disclosure) was scored across formal and informal interviews. Cases were also coded for characteristics of the child, family, and abuse. The results were as follows: a 23.1% recantation rate was observed. Multivariate analyses supported a filial dependency model of recantation, whereby abuse victims who were more vulnerable to familial adult influences (i.e., younger children, those abused by a parent figure and who lacked support from the nonoffending caregiver) were more likely to recant. An alternative hypothesis, that recantations resulted from potential 40 nclusionn of cases involving false allegations, was not supported. The authors conclude that these results provide new insight into the process by which children reveal interpersonal trauma and have implications for debates concerning the credibility of child sexual abuse allegations and treatment in dependency samples.

Carlson, B. E., & Macio, K. (2006). Sibling incest: Reports from forty-one survivors. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, *15*(4), 19-34. DOI:10.1300/J070v15n04_02

An exploratory study was conducted with a convenience sample of 41 adult survivors of sibling incest using a retrospective survey design. Participants were interviewed about their childhood sexual experiences with a sibling. Most participants reported vaginal or oral intercourse and coercive experiences. Half of the sample reported sexual experiences with family members, as well as other child abuse. Half of the participants showed evidence of distorted beliefs about child sexual abuse. Disclosure of the incest during childhood was rare.

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Cronch, L. E., Viljoen, J. L., & Hansen, D. J. (2006). Forensic interviewing in child sexual abuse cases: Current techniques and future directions. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 11*(3), 195-207. DOI:10.1016/j.avb.2005.07.009

In child sexual abuse cases, skillful forensic interviews are important to ensure the protection of innocent individuals and the conviction of perpetrators. Studies have examined several factors that influence disclosure during interviews, including both interviewer and child characteristics. Numerous interviewing techniques have received attention in the literature, including allegation blind interviews, open-ended questioning, cognitive interviewing, the Touch Survey, truth-lie discussions, and anatomical dolls. Recent studies have examined new directions in forensic interviewing, such as structured interview protocols and the extended forensic evaluation model. In addition, the child advocacy center model has been established as a strategy to prevent repeated interviewing. Child Advocacy Centers provide a safe, child-friendly atmosphere for children and families to receive services. Limitations of the research are discussed and empirically based recommendations for interviewers are provided.

Kuehnle, K., & Sparta, S. N. (2006). Assessing child sexual abuse allegations in a legal context. In S. N. Sparta & G. P. Koocher (Eds.), *Forensic mental health assessment of children and adolescents* (pp. 129-148). Oxford University Press. DOI:10.1093/med:psych/9780195145847.003.0010

Because child sexual abuse allegations occur in a variety of psycholegal contexts, considering each case according to the appropriate legal standards for the respective jurisdiction becomes critically important. Mental health opinion may arise in many different psycholegal contexts, including but not limited to child custody evaluations in a family court, child protection proceedings in a family or juvenile court, personal injury cases in civil proceedings, and criminal prosecution or defense. Few areas of psychological evaluation involve such a variety of complex evaluation issues and potentially serious consequences for error. This chapter reviews issues critical to the

assessment of alleged child sexual abuse victims and, when possible, offers empirically supported procedures rather than subjective opinions.

Lyon, T. D., & Saywitz, K. J. (2006). Post-mortem to preventive medicine: Next steps for research on child witnesses. *Journal of Social Issues*, *62*(4), 833-861. DOI:10.1111/j.1540-4560.2006.00489.x

Five directions for future child witness research are proposed by the authors, inspired by recognition of the day-to-day realities of the legal system and the opportunities of psychology to react proactively to challenges child witnesses face. These directions include (1) the refinement of developmentally sensitive questioning aids that increase completeness without increasing suggestibility, (2) the development of approaches to non-disclosure and recantation, including understanding of the reasons underlying non-disclosure and the potential for building rapport and increasing trust, (3) the construction of interventions that meet mental health needs of child-victim witnesses without creating false memories or tainting testimony, (4) a focus on details of children's narratives that are often lacking, including temporal information and emotional reactions, and (5) expanding our attention beyond child sexual abuse allegations in criminal court and considering the many contexts in which child witnesses are questioned, including areas in which preferences rather than memories are elicited.

Staller, K. M., & Nelson-Gardell, D. (2005). "A burden in your heart": Lessons of disclosure from female preadolescent and adolescent survivors of sexual abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *29*(12), 1415-1432. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2005.06.007

The authors' purpose was to enhance understanding of the sexual abuse disclosure process from the perspective of preteen and teenage survivors and then reconsider prominent models of the disclosure process in light of their findings. They conducted a secondary analysis of data from four focus groups in which 34 preadolescent and

adolescent female survivors of sexual abuse had been asked about their treatment experiences. Girls often recounted disclosing their victimization to others. Using the *disclosure segment* as their unit of analysis, they isolated 106 for study. During analysis, they wrote narrative summaries of each segment's significance, grouped these conceptually, and examined their interconnectedness. When synthesized, individual experiences of disclosing contributed to understanding the overall disclosure process. Three phases were identified: *Self*, where children come to understand victimization internally; *Confidant Selection-Reaction*, where they select a time, place, and person to tell and then weather that person's reaction (supportive or hostile); and *Consequences* (good and bad) that continued to inform their on-going strategies of telling. The actions and reactions of adults were significant and informed the girls' decisions. Based on their findings, the authors advocate integrating existing theories and research into a model which views the disclosure process from the child's perspective and includes pre-disclosure and a post-initial public disclosure stages. The model conceptualizes disclosure as an iterative process in which children interact with adults and incorporate responses into their on-going decisions about telling (recant, deny, affirm, etc.). The combined model should recognize the concerns and position of adults as well as the perspective and logic of youth.

Yozwiak, J. A., Golding, J. M., & Marsil, D. F. (2004). The impact of type of out-of-court disclosure in a child sexual assault trial. *Child Maltreatment*, *9*(3), 325-334. DOI:10.1177/1077559504266518

This study investigated the impact of type of out-of-court disclosure in a child sexual assault case involving a six-year-old alleged victim. Community participants read a fictional criminal trial summary of a child sexual assault case in which the alleged victim's out-of-court disclosure of the assault was: (a) complete on two occasions or (b) incomplete at first, but later included the full account of the incident. The results showed that there were more guilty verdicts, higher ratings of the defendant's guilt, and greater

belief of the alleged victim when there was full disclosure on two occasions compared to when there was a delay in full disclosure. These results are discussed in terms of the impact the nature of out-of-court disclosure can have when a child testifies in a sexual assault case.

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 legal and therapeutic intervention. Unfortunately, research indicates that lengthy delays in disclosure and even nondisclosure are common. The authors conducted a comprehensive review of the clinical and research literature on CSA and an overview of related bodies of literature. Areas addressed include the context of sexual abuse as it relates to disclosure, the context and elements of children's disclosures, motivational factors inhibiting disclosure, and models of the disclosure process. Ancillary and analogue research on secrecy and disclosure are also reviewed. Implications for future research and practice are discussed.

Delay, Denial, & Non-Disclosure

Allard-Gaudreau, N.A., Poirier, S., & Cyr, M. (2023). Factors associated with delayed
disclosure of child sexual abuse: A focus on the victim's having been led to
perform sexual acts on the perpetrator. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 147*, 106537.
DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2023.106537

Contextual variables associated with children's willingness to disclose sexual abuse have
been identified in previous studies, but further investigation is needed to better
understand delayed disclosure of child sexual abuse (CSA). This study aimed to examine
the factors associated with the risk of delayed disclosure of CSA. More specifically, it
focused on a factor that has rarely, if ever, been looked into: the fact that some victims
are led to perform sexual acts on the perpetrator. A content analysis was performed on
68 transcripts of investigative interviews with CSA victims aged 4 to 12 years old. Based
on our content analysis, the time between the first abuse and the first disclosure was
determined for each victim. The age and gender of the victim, the victim's relationship
with the perpetrator, the age of the perpetrator, the frequency and severity of the abuse,
and whether or not the victim mentioned having performed sexual acts on the
perpetrator were also coded. Chi-square analyses showed that the risk of delayed
disclosure was associated with the victim's having performed, or not performed, sexual
acts on the perpetrator ($\chi2$ = 16.327, p < 0.001), the victim's relationship with the
perpetrator ($\chi2$ = 10.013, p = 0.002), and the frequency of the abuse ($\chi2$ = 11.617, p < 0.001).
Our study is the first to demonstrate that having been led to sexually touch the
perpetrator is associated with delayed disclosure of CSA.

Hartman, D. T., Wang, Y., Wu, Y., Goldfarb, D., Vidales, D., Qin, J., Eisen, M. L., & Goodman, G.
S. (2023). Childhood sexual abuse: A longitudinal study of disclosures and
denials. *Child Maltreatment*, *28*(3), 462-475. DOI:10.1177/10775595231165335

In legal cases regarding child sexual abuse (CSA), children have various options, such as
to disclose or deny maltreatment. When interviewed in adulthood, their accounts may be

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consistent with their childhood responses. Alternatively, denial in childhood could be followed in adulthood by disclosure ("deferred disclosure"), confirming previous suspicions. Or the adults could possibly recant. We conducted a longitudinal study of CSA disclosures and denials (N = 99; Time 1 [T1], 3- to 16-year-olds). T1 CSA disclosures and denials at a forensic unit were compared to the individuals' responses 20 years later (Time 2 [T2]. 22- to 37-years-old). We found that consistent disclosure was associated with being older at T1 and female. Deferred disclosure was significantly associated with greater T2 trauma-related symptoms. Corroboration and higher CSA severity predicted T2 recantation. Consistent denial was related to less severe CSA. Our findings add to knowledge about CSA disclosures, which affect legal pathways available to child victims.

Alaggia, R., & Wang, S. (2020). "I never told anyone until the# metoo movement": What can we learn from sexual abuse and sexual assault disclosures made through social media?. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 103*, 104312. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.104312

Social media is providing new avenues for survivors to disclose sexual abuse and/or assault. Since the creation of #MeToo (2017), and the larger MeToo movement founded by American activist Tarana Burke in 2006, millions are disclosing sexual assaults and past childhood sexual abuse on-line. Social media for disclosing the highly stigmatized problem of sexual abuse/assault was studied to build knowledge about on-line disclosures. Participants were tweeters and posters on Twitter and Reddit. Purposive sampling captured on-line sexual abuse/assault disclosures from September 28, 2018 to October 16, 2018 for thematic analysis. Using a phenomenological design 171 social media posts were analyzed for deeper understanding into new options for disclosing sexual abuse and/or sexual assault. Posts were independently coded by the authors. Sampling was stopped when categorical saturation was reached with no new information coming forward on the research question. Themes that emerged showed the MeToo/#MeToo movement is precipitating sexual abuse/assault disclosures on social media in unprecedented ways; posters identified internal barriers, mixed responses from family,

and friends/peers, as well as variable responses from professionals. While some conditions for sexual abuse/assault disclosures have improved, barriers still exist. Social media represents an environmental shift for disclosing sexual violence. Sexual abuse/assault survivors have found voice through social media after periods of silence and being silenced, turning to posting on-line when people and systems have failed to validate and support them. Further investigation is needed on the impacts of on-line sexual abuse and/or assault disclosures.

Okur, P., van der Knaap, L. M., & Bogaerts, S. (2020). A quantitative study on gender differences in disclosing child sexual abuse and reasons for nondisclosure. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *35*(23-24), 5255-5275. DOI:10.1177/0886260517720732

Despite the available literature on disclosure of child sexual abuse (CSA), little is known about how gender affects disclosure. This article aims to quantitatively examine whether gender differences exist in formal (to legal or child protection authorities) and informal (to a family member or friend) disclosure of CSA and, if so, to assess whether this relation is associated with abuse characteristics and attitudes toward gender roles. The study also aimed to examine whether gender differences exist in reasons not to disclose CSA. Data of a sample of 586 participants, who reported to have experienced CSA committed by a single person, have been used for the analyses. There were no gender differences for formal disclosure, but the informal disclosure rate of CSA was 2.4 times higher for women than men, and this effect remained significant after controlling for abuse characteristics and attitudes, even though the gender difference decreased slightly. Furthermore, women and men reported different reasons for not disclosing CSA in their personal network. Women were more worried than men that family and friends would discover the abuse and reported more insecurity of what to do in this situation. Professionals in the field of CSA should consider a gender perspective when developing guidelines. Men have rarely been the subject of studies of disclosure after CSA.

Professionals should focus more on general mental health outcomes of men that are not related with CSA directly, but where the effects of CSA may exert more indirectly through associations with other problems in life.

Wallis, C. R., & Woodworth, M. D. (2020). Child sexual abuse: An examination of individual and abuse characteristics that may impact delays of disclosure. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 107*, 104604. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2020.104604

Nondisclosure in cases of child sexual abuse (CSA) can lead to numerous aversive outcomes for children who have been sexually abused, the most serious of which include untreated psychological symptoms and possible further abuse. While victim testimony is often required for perpetrator conviction or disruption of contact, children face multiple barriers to reporting abuse. Research suggests the likelihood of disclosure is impacted by both characteristics of children (i.e., age and gender), as well as abuse characteristics (i.e., relation to perpetrator, severity and frequency of abuse). Although these factors have been studied in relation to rates of disclosure, relatively little is known about their impact on temporal delays in reporting CSA. Participants and Setting: Special access was obtained to review classified RCMP case files on CSA drawn from the greater Okanagan area, British Columbia, Canada (n = 164). Cases were coded according to victim and abuse characteristics. A multivariate Cox regression analysis was used in order to analyze the impact each variable of interest had on time until a disclosure was made. All predictors were found to significantly impact delays of disclosure, $x2(6)$ = 65.558, p = .000. Delays of disclosure were decreased as age of the child increased or if the child was female. Alternatively, if abuse was more severe, occurred at a higher frequency, or if perpetrators were more closely related, delays of disclosure increased. The current study provides potential for tailored approaches according to individual characteristics and vulnerabilities in CSA investigations and treatments.

Tener, D. (2017). The secret of intrafamilial child sexual abuse: Who keeps it and how?. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 27*(1), 1-21. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2017.1390715

This article analyzes how women survivors of intrafamilial child sexual abuse perceive the family members who took part in keeping it secret and their tactics for doing so. Analysis of 20 in-depth interviews with Jewish Israeli women revealed unique ways of guarding the secret. These were attributed to the perpetrator, the mother and the family. Secret-keeping tactics included presenting a normative public identity or an unstable psychological identity, presenting multiple personas, reframing the abuse, concealing any trace of the secret after it was disclosed, as if the abuse had never happened, and making a monument of the abuser. These tactics are discussed in the context of silencing, the interpersonal relations orientation model, and the wider concepts of secrecy in society. Implications for professional practice and for society are considered, and new attitudes toward intrafamilial child sexual abuse secrecy are suggested.

Tashjian, S. M., Goldfarb, D., Goodman, G. S., Quas, J. A., & Edelstein, R. (2016). Delay in disclosure of non-parental child sexual abuse in the context of emotional and physical maltreatment: A pilot study. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 58*, 149-159. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2016.06.020

The present pilot study sought to identify predictors of delays in child sexual abuse (CSA) disclosure, specifically whether emotional and physical abuse by a parental figure contributes to predicting delays over and above other important victim factors. Alleged CSA victims (N = 79), whose parental figures were not the purported sexual abuse perpetrators, were interviewed and their case files reviewed, across two waves of a longitudinal study. Regression analyses indicated that experiencing both emotional and physical abuse by a parental figure was uniquely predictive of longer delays in disclosure of CSA perpetrated by someone other than a parental figure. Victim–CSA perpetrator relationship type and sexual abuse duration also significantly predicted CSA disclosure delay, whereas victim age at the time of the police report, victim gender, and victims'

feelings of complicity were not significant unique predictors. Child abuse victims' expectations of lack of parental support may underlie these findings. Parent–child relationships are likely crucial to timely disclosure of CSA, even when a parent is not the CSA perpetrator.

McElvaney, R. (2015). Disclosure of child sexual abuse: Delays, non-disclosure and partial disclosure. What the research tells us and implications for practice. *Child Abuse Review*, *24*(3), 159-169. DOI:10.1002/car.2280

This paper reviews the research on disclosure of child sexual abuse with specific reference to delays in disclosing, non-disclosure and partial disclosure of experiences of child sexual abuse. Findings from large-scale national probability studies highlight the prevalence of both non-disclosure and delays in disclosure, while findings from small-scale qualitative studies portray the complexity, diversity and individuality of experiences. The possible explanations regarding why children are reluctant to disclose such experiences have significant implications for addressing the issue of child sexual abuse from the perspectives of child protection, legal and therapeutic professionals. The importance of understanding the dynamics of disclosure, in particular the needs of young people to maintain control over the disclosure process, the important role that peers play in this process, the responses of adults in both informal and formal networks, and the opportunities to tell, is key to helping young people speak more promptly about their experiences of sexual abuse.

Katz, C., Hershkowitz, I., Malloy, L. C., Lamb, M. E., Atabaki, A., & Spindler, S. (2012). Non-verbal behavior of children who disclose or do not disclose child abuse in investigative interviews. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 36*(1), 12-20. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2011.08.006

The study focused on children's nonverbal behavior in investigative interviews exploring suspicions of child abuse. The key aims were to determine whether non-verbal behavior

in the pre-substantive phases of the interview predicted whether or not children would disclose the alleged abuse later in the interview and to identify differences in the nonverbal behaviors of disclosing and non-disclosing children. DVD-recorded interviews of 40 alleged victims of child abuse were studied. In all cases, there was external evidence strongly suggesting that abuse had occurred. However, half of the children disclosed abuse when interviewed using the NICHD Investigative Interview Protocol, whereas the other half did not. Two raters, unaware whether or not the children disclosed, independently coded the videotapes for nonverbal indices of positive and negative emotions, stress, and physical disengagement in each 15-second unit of the introductory, rapport building, and substantive interview phases. The results were that indicators of stress and physical disengagement increased as the interviews progressed while indices of positive emotions decreased. Non-disclosers showed proportionately more physical disengagement than disclosers in both the introductory and substantive phases. The researchers concluded that awareness of non-verbal behavior may help investigators identify reluctant children early in forensic interviews. The practice implications are that there is substantial evidence that, when questioned by investigators, many children do not disclose that they have been abused. The early detection of reluctance to disclose may allow interviewers to alter their behavior, helping the children overcome their reluctance by providing non-suggestive support before the possibility of abuse is discussed. Of course, nonverbal behavior alone should not be used to assess children in investigative interviews. However, nonverbal cues may nonetheless provide additional information to interviewers and assist them in identifying reluctant children.

Alaggia, R. (2010). An ecological analysis of child sexual abuse disclosure: Considerations for child and adolescent mental health. *Journal of the Canadian Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, *19*(1), 32-39.

Research continues to indicate a concerning number of children and youth, between 60-80%, withhold disclosure until adulthood suggesting that many children endure

prolonged victimization or never receive necessary intervention. The study aim was to qualitatively identify factors that impede or promote child sexual abuse (CSA) disclosure. Using a phenomenological design, 40 adult survivors of CSA were interviewed about their disclosure experiences to provide retrospective accounts of their childhood and adolescent abuse experiences, disclosure attempts, and meaning-making of these experiences. The findings show that disclosure is multiply determined by a complex interplay of factors related to child characteristics, family environment, community influences, and cultural and societal attitudes. An ecological analysis is offered to understand these complexities. Unless barriers to disclosure are eradicated, negative effects of CSA can persist manifesting in serious mental health issues. Practitioners can expect to work with children, adolescents and adults who have withheld disclosure or attempted to tell over time having experienced a wide range of responses. Multi-level intervention is recommended at the individual, community and macro levels. Future investigations should focus on how to identify and measure the impact of community and macro level factors on disclosure, aspects that have received much less attention.

Leander, L. (2010). Police interviews with child sexual abuse victims: Patterns of reporting, avoidance and denial. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 34*(3), 192–205. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2009.09.011

The present study investigated 27 sexually abused children's reports about abuse given in the context of police interviews. All abuse cases had been verified (with, e.g., photographs or video films), proving that abuse had occurred. The interviews with the children were analyzed regarding amount and type of information reported, and the frequency of denial and avoidance. Furthermore, children's reporting on different interview occasions was investigated. Children reported significantly more neutral information from the abusive acts per se than sexual information. The children were also highly avoidant and, on several occasions, denied that (documented) sexual acts had occurred. Furthermore, the second and third interviews generated twice as many (new)

sexual details as the first interview. The children also produced more denials and avoidances at the first interview compared to subsequent interviews. The present study indicates that sexually abused children may be highly resistant to reporting about the abuse in police interviews, and that two or three interviews may be needed to enable children to give complete and informative reports. It is of vital importance that professionals within the legal system be aware of this problem when conducting child interviews and when evaluating the reliability of child sexual abuse reports.

Foynes, M. M., Freyd, J. J., & DePrince, A. P. (2009). Child abuse: Betrayal and disclosure. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *33*(4), 209-217. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2008.11.001

This study tested several hypotheses about disclosure of childhood sexual, physical, and emotional abuse derived from Betrayal Trauma Theory (Freyd, J. J., 1996). The authors predicted that the duration of time from abuse to its disclosure would vary as a function of victim–perpetrator closeness. Data collected from 202 undergraduate participants using a survey methodology were submitted to logistic regression analyses. The relative variance explained by other variables was also examined. The findings were that compared to survivors of emotional abuse (EA) who were in not very close (NVC) victim–perpetrator relationships, EA survivors in very close (VC) victim–perpetrator relationships were significantly more likely to wait one or more years to disclose, or never to disclose, than to wait a period of time less than one year (OR = 2.65). Further, survivors of physical abuse (PA) in VC victim–perpetrator relationships were significantly more likely to wait one or more years to disclose their abuse, if it was disclosed at all, than PA survivors of NVC victim–perpetrator relationships (OR = 3.99). Results for sexual abuse were not significant. The authors concluded that for EA and PA, VC victim–perpetrator relationships predicted longer durations of time from abuse to its disclosure than NVC victim–perpetrator relationships. The practice implications of these findings are that delayed disclosure may support necessary (albeit abusive) attachments with caregivers; it may also prolong the abuse and prevent receipt of support. Increased awareness that VC

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victim–perpetrator relationships may predict longer durations of time from abuse to its disclosure, and that these delays may serve a functional purpose, can help guide supportive and empathic responses to traumatic disclosures.

Hébert, M., Tourigny, M., Cyr, M., McDuff, P., & Joly, J. (2009). Prevalence of childhood sexual abuse and timing of disclosure in a representative sample of adults from Quebec. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, *54*(9), 631-636. DOI:10.1177/070674370905400908

This study explored patterns of disclosure of child sexual abuse (CSA) in a telephone survey of adult men and women (n=804) in Quebec. Analyses were carried out to determine whether disclosure groups differed in terms of psychological distress and symptoms of posttraumatic stress, and a logistic regression was used to examine factors associated with prompt disclosure. Prevalence of CSA was 22.1% for women and 9.7% for men. About one survivor out of five had never disclosed the abuse, with men more likely not to have told anyone, than women. Only 21.2% of adults reported prompt disclosure (within a month of the first abusive event), while 57.5% delayed disclosure (more than five years after the first episode). CSA victims who never disclosed the abuse and those who delayed disclosure were more likely to obtain scores of psychological distress and posttraumatic stress achieving clinical levels, compared with adults without a history of CSA. In the multivariate analysis, experiencing CSA involving a perpetrator outside the immediate family and being female were factors independently associated with prompt disclosure. The authors concluded that a significant number of adult women and men reported experiencing CSA, and most victims attested to either not disclosing or significantly delaying abuse disclosure.

O'Leary, P. J., & Barber, J. (2008). Gender differences in silencing following childhood sexual abuse. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 17*(2), 133-143. DOI:10.1080/10538710801916416

The clinical literature commonly asserts that males are less likely than females to disclose child sexual abuse at the time it occurs and take longer to discuss their experiences. These hypotheses were tested in this study. This study included 145 men and 151 women. Participants were asked about disclosure at the time of the abuse and the length of time it took for them to discuss the experience. Comparison across these two studies found that boys were significantly less likely than girls to disclose the abuse at the time it occurred and also took significantly longer to discuss their childhood experiences later in life.

Hershkowitz, I., Lanes, O., & Lamb, M. E. (2007). Exploring the disclosure of child sexual abuse with alleged victims and their parents. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 31*(2), 111-123. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2006.09.004

This study examined how children disclosed sexual abuse by alleged perpetrators who were not family members. Thirty alleged victims of sexual abuse and their parents were interviewed. The children were interviewed using the NICHD Investigative Interview Protocol by six experienced youth investigators. The same principles were followed when the parents were asked to describe in detail what had happened since the abusive incidents. The statements made by the children and parents were then content analyzed. Major characteristics of the children's and parents' reported behaviors were identified by two independent raters. More than half (53%) of the children delayed disclosure for between one week and two years, fewer than half first disclosed to their parents, and over 40% did not disclose spontaneously but did so only after they were prompted; 50% of the children reported feeling afraid or ashamed of their parents' responses, and their parents indeed tended to blame the children or act angrily. The disclosure process varied depending on the children's ages, the severity and frequency of abuse, the parents'

expected reactions, the suspects' identities, and the strategies they had used to foster secrecy. The authors concluded that children's willingness to disclose abuse to their parents promptly and spontaneously decreased when they expected negative reactions, especially when the abuse was more serious. A strong correlation between predicted and actual parental reactions suggested that the children anticipated their parents' likely reactions very well.

Pipe, M.-E., Lamb, M. E., Orbach, Y., & Cederborg, A.-C. (Eds.). (2007). *Child sexual abuse: Disclosure, delay, and denial*. Psychology Press. DOI:10.4324/9780203936832

This volume provides the first rigorous assessment of the research relating to the disclosure of childhood sexual abuse, along with the practical and policy implications of the findings. Leading researchers and practitioners from diverse and international backgrounds offer critical commentary on these previously unpublished findings gathered from both field and laboratory research. Cross-cultural, clinical, and multi-disciplinary perspectives are provided. The goal is to learn more about why children frequently remain silent about their abuse, deny it, or if they do disclose, do so belatedly and incompletely, often recanting their allegations over time. The book opens with a close examination of the existing literature on disclosure and the difficulties in conducting such research. It then examines the individual and contextual factors that determine whether, when, and how childhood sexual abuse is disclosed. This portion reviews how the interview techniques have a profound impact on disclosure patterns. details of how reluctant children are interviewed are included. The third section examines the broader implications of disclosure for the child, family and peers, and for the suspect. Child Sexual Abuse examines how the interview strategies influence how, when, or if children disclose abuse, by examining both domestic and international data and by analyzing detailed interviews with children. Child Sexual Abuse is for researchers and practitioners from child, forensic, and clinical psychology, social work, and all legal professionals who need to understand this crime.

Hershkowitz, I. (2006). Delayed disclosure of alleged child abuse victims in Israel. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *76*(4), 444–450. DOI:10.1037/0002-9432.76.4.444

This study identifies characteristics of alleged child abuse victims that are associated with delayed disclosure of abuse. The database includes all alleged victims investigated in Israel between 1998 and 2004. Analyses suggest that most children delay disclosure and that delay is associated with type of abuse, child's age and gender, relationship to suspect and characteristics of abusive event.

Hershkowitz, I., Orbach, Y., Lamb, M. E., Sternberg, K. J., & Horowitz, D. (2006). Dynamics of forensic interviews with suspected abuse victims who do not disclose abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 30*(7), 753-769. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2005.10.016

This study was designed to explore structural differences between forensic interviews in which children made allegations and those in which children did not make allegations. Fifty forensic interviews of four to thirteen year-old suspected victims of abuse who did not disclose abuse during the interview were compared with the same number of forensic interviews of alleged victims who made allegations of sexual or physical abuse. Only cases in which there was substantial reason to believe that abuse had taken place were included in the study. Audiotapes of the interviews were examined with a focus on interviewer utterances and children's responses during the pre-substantive rapport-building, episodic memory training, and getting the allegation phases of the interviews, which all employed the NICHD Investigative Interview Guide. Findings were as follows: Forensic interviews which yielded allegations of child abuse were characterized by quite different dynamics than interviews with children who did not make allegations. When interviewing non-disclosers, interviewers made less frequent use of free recall prompts and offered fewer supportive comments than when interviewing children who made allegations of abuse. Children who did not disclose abuse were somewhat uncooperative, offered fewer details, and gave more uninformative responses, even at the very beginning

of the interview, before the interviewers focused on substantive issues and before the interviewers themselves began to behave differently. The authors concluded that a premature focus on substantive issues may prevent children who are not responsive in the episodic memory training phase from disclosing abuse. Identifying reluctant disclosers and making more extensive efforts to build rapport before substantive issues are broached, or interviewing such children in more than one session, may help suspected victims disclose their experiences.

Goodman-Brown, T. B., Edelstein, R. S., Goodman, G. S., Jones, D. P. H., & Gordon, D. S. (2003). Why children tell: A model of children's disclosure of sexual abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 27*(5), 525–540. DOI:10.1016/S0145-2134(03)00037-1

This study investigated variables associated with delay of disclosure of child sexual abuse and tested a model of time to disclosure. Data were obtained for 218 alleged child sexual abuse victims whose cases had been referred to District Attorneys' Offices. Five variables were posited to influence the delay between an abusive event and children's disclosure of that event to a reporting adult: child's age, gender, type of abuse experienced (intrafamilial or extrafamilial), perceived responsibility for the abuse, and fear of negative consequences of disclosure. These variables were used to create a model of factors influencing children's disclosure of sexual abuse. RESULTS: Results indicated that age, type of abuse, fear of negative consequences, and perceived responsibility all contributed to predicting time to disclosure. There was significant support for the model, suggesting that children who were older, came from incestuous families, felt greater responsibility for the abuse, and feared negative consequences of disclosure took longer to disclose. The authors concluded that children's cognitive appraisal of others' tolerance of disclosure of child sexual abuse, and their own perceptions of responsibility for the abuse, are crucial to the decision to disclose. When evaluating children for possible sexual abuse, developmental, cognitive, and socio-emotional factors need to be taken into consideration.

Barriers & Facilitators

Latiff, M. A., Fang, L., Goh, D. A., & Tan, L. J. (2024). [A systematic review of factors associated with disclosure of child sexual abuse](). *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *147*, 106564. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2023.106564

Background and objective: Disclosure of CSA is key to victims having access to support and protection, but the current understanding of what factors play a key role is still limited. The present review aims to understand a range of socio-ecological factors that can either facilitate or obstruct the disclosure of CSA. Methods and results: Through a systematic review of 27 quantitative studies published from 2000 to 2022, the current review identified 17 significant predictors of CSA disclosure. Facilitators of disclosure included older age, being female, higher IQ, recent abuse, resistance during abuse, clergy perpetrator, non-offending caregiver support, and acculturation. Barriers to disclosure included intellectual disability, avoidant coping, romantic relationships with the perpetrator, family criminality, domestic violence, adherence to traditional Asian values, and ethnic minority identity. The findings also suggested that the relationship between predictors and disclosure tends to be mixed, contradictory, or indirect/interactional, emphasizing the importance of situating the findings in specific social-ecological contexts. Conclusions: The findings can inform future research and practice by providing a comprehensive understanding of the predictors of CSA disclosure and highlighting the importance of considering the socio-ecological context when interpreting findings. Moreover, the review provides a valuable resource for professionals who work with victims of CSA, helping them better identify factors that may facilitate or hinder disclosure and allowing for tailored interventions.

Price, H. L., & Kehn, A. (2023). [Potential reporters of suspected child maltreatment are sensitive to the amount of evidence and the potential consequences of reporting](#). *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *38*(1-2), 391-417. DOI:10.1177/08862605221081934

The context of suspected maltreatment cases is likely to influence the decision of whether or not to make a formal report. Across one pilot study (N = 368) and two experiments (Exp. 1 N = 444; Exp. 2 N =416), undergraduate students and online community participants reported their anticipated actions and beliefs when confronted with evidence of child maltreatment. Participants reviewed case dossiers built from real-world child neglect cases in which increasing levels of evidence were presented and the consequences of reporting, or not reporting, the maltreatment were made salient to the adult or child. The experiments revealed a clear difficulty in deciding whether or not to report suspected maltreatment. Highlighting the impact on either the child or the adult by describing potential consequences moved participants either closer to (child-salient) or farther from (adult-salient) a formal report. Participants were also sensitive to the amount of evidence to support a suspicion of abuse, which influenced the likelihood of a formal report. This work suggests that increasing the salience of maltreatment consequences to child victims may increase the likelihood that suspected maltreatment will be reported.

Halvorsen, J. E., Solberg, E. T., & Stige, S. H. (2020). ["To say it out loud is to kill your own childhood."–An exploration of the first person perspective of barriers to disclosing child sexual abuse](#). *Children and Youth Services Review, 113*, 104999. DOI:10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.104999

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is a serious threat to a child's existence and development. Yet, on average it takes 17 years before victims disclose their abuse. Objective: The purpose of this study was to explore barriers to disclose sexual abuse from the perspective of adult survivors of CSA. Participants and Setting: 12 survivors of CSA (nine women and three men), aged 18–57 years old. The study was conducted in one of the largest cities in Norway where there has been a particular focus on disclosure of sexual abuse. Methods:

We conducted semi-structured interviews, and interview transcripts were analyzed using a hermeneutic-phenomenological approach to thematic analysis. Results: Our analysis resulted in three themes: Fear of reprisals; CSA stains – Negative implications for self-representation; and the complicating effect of ambiguity. Conclusions: Our main finding was that CSA affects self-representation in ways that become significant barriers to disclosure. An important and unexpected implication of our findings is that society's focus on informing people about CSA to facilitate disclosure, might instead, work as a barrier. Thus, it is crucial to explore this potential effect further when developing future interventions to facilitate early disclosure of CSA.

Kellogg, N. D., Koek, W., & Nienow, S. M. (2020). Factors that prevent, prompt, and delay disclosures in female victims of child sexual abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 101*, 104360. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2020.104360

Several studies conducted in clinical and non-clinical settings have described why and when children disclose sexual abuse. Yet, there is incomplete understanding of how adolescents and young children may differ in factors that delay, prompt and deter disclosure that could inform strategies for clinical practice and prevention. The aim of this study was to identify factors that prevent, prompt, and delay disclosure among pediatric patients presenting for acute and non-acute medical evaluations of sexual abuse or assault, and to examine any differences in disclosure tendencies among female adolescents and pre-adolescents. A chart review of a consecutive sample of pediatric patients presenting to the emergency department or outpatient clinic identified 601 patients who were diagnosed with sexual abuse and were willing to answer examiner questions about their disclosure. Data collection included attainment of patient narratives which were utilized to gather information about abuse disclosures. Recursive abstraction was applied to categorize patient statements for further analysis, while Pearson chi square and logistic regression were utilized for quantitative data. Young age (<11 years) at abuse onset was the strongest predictor of, and fear of consequences to

self was the most common reason for, disclosure delay in both adolescent and pre-adolescent females. Severity of abuse, adult perpetrator, and self-blame predicted delays only in pre-adolescent females. Social and moral development during middle childhood likely has a strong influence on disclosure tendency. Strategies to promote disclosure should consider reducing fear of consequences associated with the adult-child paradigm.

Van Os, E. C. C., Zijlstra, A. E., Knorth, E. J., Post, W. J., & Kalverboer, M. E. (2020). Finding keys: A systematic review of barriers and facilitators for refugee children's disclosure of their life stories. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 21*(2), 242-260. DOI:10.1177/1524838018757748

The systematic review presented in this article aims to reveal what supports and hampers refugee children in telling their, often traumatic, life stories. This is important to ensure that migration decisions are based on reliable information about the children's needs for protection. A systematic review was conducted in academic journals, collecting all available scientific knowledge about the disclosure of life stories by refugee minors in the context of social work, guardianship, foster care, asylum procedures, mental health assessment, and therapeutic settings. The resulting 39 studies were thoroughly reviewed with reference to what factors aided or hampered the refugee children's disclosure of their life stories. The main barriers to disclosure were feelings of mistrust and self-protection from the side of the child and disrespect from the side of the host community. The facilitators for disclosing life stories were a positive and respectful attitude of the interviewer, taking time to build trust, using nonverbal methods, providing agency to the children, and involving trained interpreters. Social workers, mentors, and guardians should have time to build trust and to help a young refugee in revealing the life story before the minor is heard by the migration authorities. The lack of knowledge on how refugee children can be helped to disclose their experiences is a great concern because the decision in the migration procedure is based on the story the child is able to disclose.

Morrison, S. E., Bruce, C., & Wilson, S. (2018). Children's disclosure of sexual abuse: A systematic review of qualitative research exploring barriers and facilitators. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, *27*(2), 176-194. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2018.1425943

This study evaluates and synthesizes qualitative evidence addressing factors affecting a child's decision to disclose an experience of sexual abuse. Childhood sexual abuse is a devastating crime, with long-term negative impacts. Understanding the factors that affect a child's decision to disclose is vital. Disclosure enables access to support and protection, both therapeutically and legally. A systematic review was conducted focusing on factors affecting a child's decision to disclose an experience of sexual abuse. Seven studies were identified, quality appraisal undertaken, and meta-ethnography used to synthesize the studies. Six new super-ordinate themes were developed: Fear of what will happen; Others' reactions: fear of disbelief; Emotions and impact of the abuse; An opportunity to tell; Concern for self and others; and Feelings toward the abuser. Themes indicated the importance of support, structure, and opportunity to facilitate disclosure and should be utilized by agencies to develop practices that facilitate disclosures.

Alaggia, R., Collin-Vézina, D., & Lateef, R. (2017). Facilitators and barriers to child sexual abuse (CSA) disclosures: A research update (2000–2016). *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, *20*(2), 260-283. DOI:10.1177/1524838017697312

Identifying and understanding factors that promote or inhibit child sexual abuse (CSA) disclosures has the potential to facilitate earlier disclosures, assist survivors to receive services without delay, and prevent further sexual victimization. Timely access to therapeutic services can mitigate risk to the mental health of survivors of all ages. This review of the research focuses on CSA disclosures with children, youth, and adults across the life course. Using Kiteley and Stogdon's literature review framework, 33 studies since 2000 were identified and analyzed to extrapolate the most convincing findings to be considered for practice and future research. The centering question asked: What is the state of CSA disclosure research and what can be learned to apply to practice and future

research? Using Braun and Clarke's guidelines for thematic analysis, five themes emerged: (1) Disclosure is an iterative, interactive process rather than a discrete event best done within a relational context; (2) contemporary disclosure models reflect a social–ecological, person-in-environment orientation for understanding the complex interplay of individual, familial, contextual, and cultural factors involved in CSA disclosure; (3) age and gender significantly influence disclosure; (4) there is a lack of a life-course perspective; and (5) barriers to disclosure continue to outweigh facilitators. Although solid strides have been made in understanding CSA disclosures, the current state of knowledge does not fully capture a cohesive picture of disclosure processes and pathways over the life course. More research is needed on environmental, contextual, and cultural factors. Barriers continue to be identified more frequently than facilitators, although dialogical forums are emerging as important facilitators of CSA disclosure. Implications for practice in facilitating CSA disclosures are discussed with recommendations for future research.

Gruenfeld, E., Willis, D. G., & Easton, S. D. (2017). "A very steep climb": Therapists'
    Perspectives on barriers to disclosure of child sexual abuse experiences for
    men. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, *26*(6), 731-751.
    DOI:10.1080/10538712.2017.1332704

Recent studies indicate that men experience unique barriers to disclosure of child sexual abuse. Blind spots held by mental health providers and social service agencies may inadvertently help produce and sustain these barriers. However, therapists who specialize in treating this population may also hold important insights into the barriers clients face. Because delayed and nondisclosure of child sexual abuse have been associated with negative mental health outcomes for adult survivors, understanding these barriers is critical to improve clinical practice and facilitate help-seeking. Using conventional content analysis, this study examined the perceptions of nine therapists who specialize in the treatment of men who were sexually abused in childhood, many of whom are

considered pioneers in the field. Analyses identified nine types of barriers, which were organized into three categories: intrapersonal experience (difficult feelings, lack of language, and self-engagement), social milieu (internalized social stigma, negative responses, social loss or judgment, and masculine identity dissonance), and health care environment (structural barriers, relational challenges with therapists, and unhelpful therapeutic strategies). Implications for future research, clinical training, and clinical practice are discussed.

Lemaigre, C., Taylor, E. P., & Gittoes, C. (2017). Barriers and facilitators to disclosing sexual abuse in childhood and adolescence: A systematic review. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 70,* 39-52. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2017.05.009

Children and young people often choose not to disclose sexual abuse, thus preventing access to help and allowing perpetrators to continue undetected. A nuanced understanding of the barriers (and facilitators) to disclosure is therefore of great relevance to practitioners and researchers. The literature was systematically searched for studies related to child and adolescent disclosures of sexual abuse. Thirteen studies were reviewed and assessed for methodological quality. Results of the review illustrate the heterogeneous nature of these empirical studies. Findings demonstrate that young people face a number of different barriers such as limited support, perceived negative consequences and feelings of self-blame, shame and guilt, when choosing to disclose. Being asked or prompted, through provision of developmentally appropriate information, about sexual abuse facilitates disclosure. The review highlights the need for robust, longitudinal studies with more sophisticated methodology to replicate findings. The review identifies the need for developmentally appropriate school-based intervention programmes that facilitate children's disclosure by reducing feelings of responsibility, self-blame, guilt and shame. In addition, prevention programmes should encourage family members, friends and frontline professionals to identify clues of sexual abuse, to explicitly ask children about the possibility of sexual abuse and also to respond

Disclosure of Child Abuse: A Bibliography

supportively should disclosures occur. Facilitating disclosure in this way is key to safeguarding victims and promoting better outcomes for child and adolescent survivors of sexual abuse.

Sawrikar, P., & Katz, I. (2017). Barriers to disclosing child sexual abuse (CSA) in ethnic minority communities: A review of the literature and implications for practice in Australia. *Children and Youth Services Review, 83*, 302-315. DOI:10.1016/j.childyouth.2017.11.011

Research on child sexual abuse (CSA) among ethnic minority communities in Australia is essentially absent. To begin to address the gap, a systematic literature review was conducted; which necessarily borrowed from overseas to help inform the national context. A wide array of barriers to disclosure were identified, suggesting that this is a fundamental issue for ethnic minorities. The most significant of these barriers appears to be the need to protect family name. This also leads to non-supportive and protective responses from non-offending mothers, however this experience (although more intense) is shared with the Western mainstream. In comparison, fear of stigmatising their whole community is a unique barrier and highlights that racism is a significant and additional burden. The findings suggest that service worker training in Australia is critical for informing professionals of: the importance of family reputation for collectivist groups; the importance of responding supportively and protectively to child victims who have disclosed to them first; the cross-cultural complexities that surround construals of 'child safety'; educating non-offending mothers about the importance of at least believing their child's disclosure (associated with mediating mental illness among victims, but also culturally appropriate because it acknowledges the protective role of family cohesion in collectivist cultures and the high motivation to avoid social exclusion – the most common reprisal for shaming the family name); exploring acculturation as a possible predictor of disclosure; and the risk of racism being overlooked or minimised. Overall, it is argued that practice informed by a well-developed national research agenda is critical.

Münzer, A., Fegert, J. M., Ganser, H. G., Loos, S., Witt, A., & Goldbeck, L. (2016). Please tell! Barriers to disclosing sexual victimization and subsequent social support perceived by children and adolescents. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *31*(2), 355-377. DOI:10.1177/0886260514555371

The present study examines barriers to disclosing sexual victimization and perceived social support after disclosure from the perspective of children and adolescents. Forty-two children and adolescents aged 6 to 17 years participated in semistructured interviews about their history of sexual victimization, the delay of disclosure, barriers to disclosure, informal and formal recipients of disclosure, as well as abuse-specific social support as perceived by the recipients. The participants disclosed their victimization with a delay of approximately 17 months, ranging from immediate reporting to 10 years of nondisclosure. The most frequent reasons to withhold the information were feelings of shame and threats by the perpetrator. A majority felt that people believed and supported them after disclosing, but a considerable proportion of study participants reported a lack of perceived protection against recurring victimization. The results underline the importance of educating children and adolescents about sexual victimization and of encouraging the immediate reporting of critical incidents. Possibilities to address the barriers identified in this study are discussed.

Collin-Vézina, D., De La Sablonnière-Griffin, M., Palmer, A. M., & Milne, L. (2015). A preliminary mapping of individual, relational, and social factors that impede disclosure of childhood sexual abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *43*, 123-134. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2015.03.010

Uncovering the pathways to disclosures of child sexual abuse (CSA) and the factors influencing the willingness of victims to talk about the abuse is paramount to the development of powerful practice and policy initiatives. Framed as a long interview method utilizing a grounded theory approach to analyze data, the objective of the current study was to provide a preliminary mapping of the barriers to CSA disclosures through an ecological systemic lens, from a sample of 67 male and female CSA adult survivors,

all of whom had recently received counselling services. The current project led to the identification of three broad categories of barriers that were each comprised of several subthemes, namely: Barriers from Within (internalized victim-blaming, mechanisms to protect oneself, and immature development at time of abuse); Barriers in Relation to Others (violence and dysfunction in the family, power dynamics, awareness of the impact of telling, and fragile social net-work); and Barriers in Relation to the Social World (labelling, taboo of sexuality, lack of services available, and culture or time period). This study points to the importance of using a broad ecological framework to understand the factors that inhibit disclosure of CSA, as barriers to disclosure do not constrain solely the victims. Results are discussed in light of their implications for research, prevention and intervention programs, and social policies and media campaigns, as the burden is on the larger community to create a climate of safety and transparency that makes the telling of CSA possible.

Easton, S. D., Saltzman, L. Y., & Willis, D. G. (2014). "Would you tell under circumstances like that?": Barriers to disclosure of child sexual abuse for men. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, *15*(4), 460-469. DOI:10.1037/a0034223

Although public awareness is increasing in regard to the realities of child sexual abuse (CSA) for boys, male survivors often delay disclosure of the abuse for years or even decades. Little is known about the factors that impede or obstruct disclosure for sexually abused boys/men. Because disclosure is often a prerequisite to help-seeking and accessing resources for healing, the purpose of this study was to identify barriers to disclosure of CSA for male survivors. Using content analysis, the researchers conducted a secondary analysis of data obtained from a large, nonclinical sample of men with histories of CSA (N = 460) who completed an online survey. The data analyzed in this study included responses to an open-ended item on disclosure barriers. Our analyses identified 10 categories of barriers that were classified into 3 domains: sociopolitical (e.g., masculinity, limited resources), interpersonal (e.g., mistrust of others, abuser factors), and

personal (e.g., internal emotions, naming the experience as sexual abuse). Based on our results, these domains were distinct yet interrelated. The implications for policy, clinical practice, and future research are discussed.

Crisma, M., Bascelli, E., Paci, D., & Romito, P. (2004). Adolescents who experienced sexual abuse: Fears, needs and impediments to disclosure. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *28*(10), 1035-1048. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2004.03.015

The authors sought to understand the impediments that prevented sexually abused adolescents from disclosure to their family or to professionals, and analyzing the responses they received when they did disclose. In-depth anonymous interviews were conducted in Italy through a toll-free telephone line with 36 young people who experienced sexual abuse in adolescence. A qualitative analysis was carried out of the adolescents' feelings, fears and needs, and of the help received, if any. Results were that main impediments to disclose to a family member were fear of not being believed, shame, and fear of causing trouble to the family. The main impediments for not seeking services were ignorance of the existence/functioning of protective agencies, wish to keep the secret, lack of awareness of being abused, mistrust of adults and professionals, and fear of the consequences of disclosure. When they did disclose to professionals, the teens received very limited support. The authors concluded that adolescents need to receive proper information about the risk of being sexually abused and about the help they can receive from their social network and protective agencies and emphasize the crucial need for appropriate training of professionals.

Alaggia, R. (2005). Disclosing the trauma of child sexual abuse: A gender analysis. *Journal of Loss & Trauma, 10*(5), 453-470. DOI:10.1080/15325020500193895

This study qualitatively explored dynamics that impede or promote disclosure of child sexual abuse. Findings on the impact of gender on disclosure are reported based on data

from 30 in-depth interviews of adult survivors. While there were strong similarities, noteworthy differences connected to gender and disclosure emerged. The overall trend was toward delaying disclosure, and for those who tried to disclose in childhood, attempts were often made in behavioral or indirect verbal ways. However, males reported difficulty disclosing because they feared being viewed as homosexual and as victims. Women's difficulties centered on feeling conflicted about responsibility, and they more strongly anticipated being blamed or not believed. Findings are linked to therapeutic work with traumatic loss.

The Process of Disclosure & Reluctance

Hershkowitz, I., Lamb, M. E., Blasbalg, U., & Karni-Visel, Y. (2021). [The dynamics of two session interviews with suspected victims of abuse who are reluctant to make allegations](#). *Development and Psychopathology, 33*(2), 739-747. DOI:10.1017/S0954579420001820

Supportive forensic interviews conducted in accordance with the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Revised Protocol (RP) help many alleged victims describe abusive experiences. When children remain reluctant to make allegations, the RP guides interviewers to (a) focus on rapport building and nonsuggestive support in a first interview, and (b) plan a second interview to allow continued rapport building before exploring for possible abuse. We explored the dynamics of such two-session RP interviews. Of 204 children who remained reluctant in an initial interview, we focused on 104 who made allegations when re-interviewed a few days later. A structural equation model revealed that interviewer support during the first session predicted children's cooperation during the rapport-building phase of the second session, which, in turn, predicted more spontaneous allegations, which were associated with the interviewers' enhanced use of open-ended questions. Together, these factors mediated the effects of support on children's free recall of forensically important information. This highlighted the importance of emphasizing rapport with reluctant children, confirming that some children may need more time to build rapport even with supportive interviewers.

Grandgenett, H. M., Pittenger, S. L., Dworkin, E. R., & Hansen, D. J. (2021). [Telling a trusted adult: Factors associated with the likelihood of disclosing child sexual abuse prior to and during a forensic interview](#). *Child Abuse & Neglect, 116*(Pt 1), 104193. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.104193

Background:: Many child sexual abuse (CSA) survivors delay or withhold disclosure of their abuse, even when presenting for formal investigation interviews. Objective: This study examined factors that relate to the CSA disclosure process. Participants and Settings: Participants were CSA victims (N = 1,732) presenting to a Child Advocacy Center (CAC)

for a forensic interview. Method: We tested a structural model to predict disclosure before and during a forensic interview using secondary data analysis. Results: Youth were less likely to disclose before a forensic interview if they witnessed domestic violence ($\beta = -.233$, $p < .05$). Caregivers were less likely to believe the abuse allegation if the alleged perpetrator resided in the home $\beta = -.386$, $p < .05$) and more likely to believe if the youth made a prior disclosure ($\beta = .286$, $p < .05$). Youth were more likely to disclose during the forensic interview if they were older ($\beta = .388$, $p < .05$), if the alleged perpetrator resided in their home ($\beta = .209$, $p < .05$), if they disclosed prior ($\beta = .254$, $p < .05$), and if their caregiver believed the allegation ($\beta = .213$, $p <. 05$). The alleged perpetrator residing in the youth's home ($\beta = -0.082$, $p < .05$) and making a prior disclosure ($\beta = 0.060$, $p < .05$) were both indirectly associated with forensic interview disclosure through caregiver belief. Conclusions: Findings highlight the importance of the family context and caregiver belief in the disclosure process for youth involved in formal CSA investigations.

Katz, C., Piller, S., Glucklich, T., & Matty, D. E. (2021). "Stop waking the dead": Internet child sexual abuse and perspectives on its disclosure. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *36*(9-10), NP5084-NP5104. DOI:10.1177/0886260518796526

The phenomenon of Internet child sexual abuse (ICSA) has been receiving growing attention over the last decade, and studies have promoted knowledge with respect to the phenomenon's epidemiology, as well as to characteristics of the victims, perpetrators, and dynamics in these cases. The current retrospective study sought to delve into the disclosure component in cases of ICSA. The sample comprised 52 cases of adolescents who arrived at a child advocacy center (CAC) following ICSA. Analysis of these cases was targeted to capture the multifaceted nature of disclosure using those perspectives that could be documented by the CAC staff—of the practitioners, the adolescents, and their parents. Beyond the descriptive results regarding the victims and the nature of the abuse, the case analyses illustrate the disclosure process as experienced by the various parties involved, highlighting the challenging nature of this aspect of the phenomenon. For the

parents, the disclosure experience can perhaps be best epitomized by the expression that was heard repeatedly—"Stop waking the dead"—an expression that indicated their wish to bring the subject to a close. The difficulty in disclosing such incidents was also illustrated by the fact that 20 children in the current sample were reluctant to collaborate during the CAC process. In fact, according to these data, most of the incidents were revealed following a police investigation rather than by a disclosure initiated by the children themselves. Focusing on this specific aspect of ICSA—that is, disclosure—enables a new perspective on it and stresses the need to further study it in such cases. A better understanding of the disclosure experience as it pertains to the individuals involved in cases of ICSA may improve and help modify future prevention and intervention efforts in the field.

Brennan, E., & McElvaney, R. (2020). What helps children tell? A qualitative meta-analysis of child sexual abuse disclosure. *Child Abuse Review, 29*(2), 97-113. DOI:10.1002/car.2617

The increasing use of qualitative methodologies to explore experiences of child sexual abuse (CSA) disclosure has led to the need to synthesise these findings. Recent reviews have tended to focus on the barriers to disclosure more than the facilitators or to conflate findings from studies of adults and studies of children and adolescents. This paper focuses on a qualitative meta-analysis of studies conducted in the past 20 years (1998–2018) that addresses the question of what helps children disclose experiences of CSA. An analysis of 20 studies that met the inclusion criteria suggests that six key themes are important facilitators of disclosure: access to someone you can trust; realising it's not normal; inability to cope with emotional distress; wanting something to be done about it; expecting to be believed; and being asked. These can be conceptualised as representing two key dynamics that help children tell: needing to tell (pressure cooker effect), and opportunity to tell. Professionals and carers can facilitate the process of disclosure

through building trusting relationships with children, recognising their distress and initiating conversations with children about their wellbeing.

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Brattfjell, M. L., & Flåm, A. M. (2019). "They were the ones that saw me and listened." From child sexual abuse to disclosure: Adults' recalls of the process towards final disclosure. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 89*, 225-236. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2018.11.022

When child sexual abuse (CSA) is not disclosed, children run the risk of being subjected to longer or repeated abuse, not receiving necessary treatment, and being re-victimized. This study examines what adults exposed to child sexual abuse in hindsight evaluate as

important for disclosure. The aim was to explore exposed own experiences of steps towards final disclosure. Participants and setting: Data were obtained from adult users of Norwegian Sexual Abuse Support Centers. Included were users exposed to CSA before the age of 18 (N=23). Data were collected through anonymous questionnaires at each support center. The material was transcribed and analyzed in the tradition of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. The study illustrates a process towards disclosure as a dialogically anchored process evolving over time and along life-course inside encounters with important others towards whom the exposed pays attention, attunement, and adjustment whether to tell, delay, re-try, turn towards others, or actually disclose. Their experiences elucidate processes towards exploring and telling through direct and indirect hints and signs, decisions to tell, re-decisions and delaying, or withholding until adulthood, and the dependency on trusted confidants who ask and listen for final disclosure to occur. Thus, the present study sends an important message to exposed, confidants, and professionals when questions of CSA appear. That is to know of, facilitate, trust, and tolerate the dialogical dependency on being asked and heard by trusted persons and the many steps a process towards disclosure of CSA may entail in order to succeed.

Jeanette, J. C. (2019). Recognition, telling and getting help with abuse and neglect: Young people's perspectives. *Children and Youth Services Review, 106*, 104469. DOI:10.1016/j.childyouth.2019.104469

An understanding of children's perspectives on telling about abuse and neglect has potential to boost children's access to services. The literature on disclosure has mostly focused on child sexual abuse with many studies based on adult survivors' accounts of their childhoods. However, disclosure is one part of a wider process which also includes how children recognise abuse and experience services. This paper presents findings from a thematic analysis of 30 interviews with children and young people who had experienced multiple types of abuse and neglect. A conceptual framework for

understanding how children and young people recognise and tell about abuse and neglect and what they think of the help they receive is presented. The framework is used to present case studies tracing the processes of recognition, telling and help over time, in relation to multiple problems of abuse. Implications for professional practice are discussed.

Lavoie, J., Dickerson, K. L., Redlich, A. D., & Quas, J. A. (2019). Overcoming disclosure reluctance in youth victims of sex trafficking: New directions for research, policy, and practice. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law, 25*(4), 225-238. DOI:10.1037/law0000205

An alarming number of youth worldwide are victims of commercial sexual exploitation, particularly sex trafficking. Normative developmental processes and motivations across the adolescent period—the age when youth are at greatest risk for trafficking—combined with their history, make them highly likely to be reluctant to disclose their exploitation to police, who often encounter victims because they are suspected of delinquency and crime and who interrogate the victims as suspects. Little scientific and policy attention has been devoted to understanding how to question these victims in a way that reduces their disclosure reluctance and increases their provision of legally relevant information. In the current review, we describe research concerning trafficking victims' histories and exploitative experiences, juvenile suspects' and victims' encounters with the legal system, and best-practice forensic interviewing approaches to elicit disclosures from child victims. We highlight the implications of these areas for understanding the dynamics between how police encounter and interact with adolescent trafficking victims and whether and how the victims disclose trafficking details during these interactions. We close with an agenda for research to test interviewing methods for suspected victims of sex trafficking and with policy and practice recommendations for interviewers.

Lev-Wiesel, R., & First, M. (2018). Willingness to disclose child maltreatment: CSA vs other forms of child abuse in relation to gender. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 79,* 183-191. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2018.02.010

The aim of the study was to examine the role of gender in willingness to disclose childhood sexual abuse (CSA) compared to other forms of abuse (physical, emotional and neglect) in young adolescents. Willingness was examined through two terms: reluctance— the level of unwillingness or disinclination to disclose, and urge—the need to share in order to get rid of unbearable feelings. The sample consisted of 3,156 boys (n=1,544) and girls (n=1,612) between the ages of 11–16 who reported having been abused at least once during their life. Participants were divided into three groups: experiencing other than CSA, sexual abuse with no physical contact, and sexual abuse with physical contact. Regarding measures, a self-report questionnaire incorporating the following instruments was administered: Demographics, the Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire (JVQ), and the Disclosure of Trauma Questionnaire (DTQ). Study results indicated that CSA victims were more reluctant to disclose than victims of other than CSA forms of abuse. The more severe the CSA (physical contact) the lower was the willingness to disclose. Boys were more reluctant than girls to disclose sexual abuse whether or not it involved physical contact. Reluctance to disclose was positively associated with emotional reactions to disclosure while urge to talk was negatively correlated with emotional reactions to disclosure.

Ahern, E. C., Hershkowitz, I., Lamb, M. E., Blasbalg, U., & Karni-Visel, Y. (2017). Examining reluctance and emotional support in forensic interviews with child victims of substantiated physical abuse. *Applied Developmental Science*, *23*(3), 227-238. DOI:10.1080/10888691.2017.1387057

Socio-emotional dynamics were examined in 230 forensic interviews of 3- to -13-year-old Israeli children who disclosed chronic physical abuse that could be substantiated. Half of the children were interviewed using the Standard (SP) National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Protocol and the others using the Revised Protocol (RP)

that emphasized emotional support from interviewers. When children disclosed physical abuse in the RP interviews, they did so in response to fewer prompts than children in the SP interviews. The number of turns in the transitional phase (during which the interviewer transitioned from rapport-building to exploring the possibility of abuse) was associated with increased directness and more specific utterance types. The younger children displayed reluctance more than older children. The RP interviews were characterized by more emotionally supportive statements throughout. These findings highlight various aspects of child forensic interviews that should be considered when seeking to understand children's willingness to engage with interviewers.

Lev-Wiesel, R., First, M., Gottfried, R., & Eisikovits, Z. (2017). Reluctance versus urge to disclose child maltreatment: The impact of multi-type maltreatment. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *34*(18), 3888-3914. DOI:10.1177/0886260516672938

Child maltreatment is a major public health issue in Israel. According to a recent Israeli national epidemiological survey, approximately half of Jewish and Arab girls and boys between the ages 12 and 17 experienced at least one type of child maltreatment, at any severity level. The purpose of the present study was to investigate the influence of multi-type maltreatment on Israeli children and youth survivors' reluctance versus urge to disclose; with the effects of gender, age, and ethnicity taken into account. The study is important since non-disclosure has deleterious effects in terms of continuation of the abuse, delays in criminal prosecution and commencement of treatment. A self-report questionnaire incorporating the following instruments was administered: the Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire, the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire, and the Disclosure of Trauma Questionnaire. The sample consisted of 6,253 Jewish and Arab children and youth who reported experiencing at least one lifetime child maltreatment event. Study results indicated that children and youth's reluctance to disclose is positively associated with their emotional reactions to disclosure, as well as with higher instances of child

maltreatment exposure; whereas urge to talk is negatively correlated with their emotional reactions to disclosure.

Anderson, G. D. (2016). The continuum of disclosure: Exploring factors predicting tentative disclosure of child sexual abuse allegations during forensic interviews and the implications for practice, policy, and future research. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, *25*(4), 382–402. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2016.1153559

When a child sexual abuse investigation ensues, many children do not disclose readily to professionals. Defining disclosure beyond the disclosure versus nondisclosure dichotomy is essential, yet little research exists on factors associated with a continuum of disclosure, including active and tentative disclosure. Through the coding of 196 forensic interviews using content analysis and subsequent regression analysis, findings suggest that children of color, children abused by adults, unintentional initial disclosure, and those lacking family support were more likely to tentatively disclose in this study. Implications include a need to understand tentative disclosure as part of a normal continuum of disclosure within court proceedings and investigations of abuse allegations.

Reitsema, A. M., & Grietens, H. (2016). Is anybody listening? The literature on the dialogical process of child sexual abuse disclosure reviewed. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, *17*(3), 330–340. DOI:10.1177/1524838015584368

We conducted an exploratory review of the current literature on child sexual abuse disclosure in everyday contexts. The aim of this study was to provide an overview of relevant publications on the process of child sexual abuse disclosure, in order to generate new directions for future research and clinical practice. The findings of the exploratory review show that disclosure is a relational process, which is renegotiated by each interaction and evolves over an extended period of time. The characteristics and reactions of the interaction partner appear to be as critical to this process as the behavior and words of children themselves. Methodological limitations of the review and the

publications are discussed, as well as directions for future research and implications for practice.

Lewy, J., Cyr, M., & Dion, J. (2015). Impact of interviewers' supportive comments and children's reluctance to cooperate during sexual abuse disclosure. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *43*, 112-122. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2015.03.002

In the field of child sexual abuse (CSA) disclosure, many studies have been conducted on the impact of interviewers' questioning style, but few have examined the impact of interviewers' supportive comments on children's cooperative and reluctant disclosure of substantive details. This field study used a sample of children ranging from 4 to 13 years of age who have all disclosed CSA. The first objective was to examine if the interviewer's and the child's comments during CSA interviews would vary as a function of the use of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Protocol. The second objective was to identify the strongest correlates of the proportion of details disclosed by the children during forensic interviews. A total of 90 matched NICHD Protocol and non-Protocol interviews done by the same interviewers were audio-taped, transcribed, and coded using verbal subscales. The goal was to explore if differences exist between the interviewers' supportive and non-supportive comments as well as children's cooperative and reluctant statements during investigative interviews conducted prior to or after the NICHD Protocol training. Results of a MANCOVA showed that the use of the NICHD Protocol had no influence on interviewers' and children's demeanors. A hierarchical multiple regression analysis controlling for relevant variables (e.g., child's age and NICHD Protocol) showed that children's reluctance and interviewers' non-support were associated with a lesser proportion of details. Overall, these results indicate that in order to promote detailed disclosure of CSA, interviewers should decrease their non-supportive comments and learn to deal more effectively with children's reluctance during forensic interviews. As such, protocols and training should encourage investigative interviewers to devote more time identifying early signs of children's verbal reluctance

and to understand the negative impact of non-supportive comments on the disclosure of substantive details.

McElvaney, R., Greene, S., & Hogan, D. (2012). Containing the secret of child sexual abuse. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 27*(6), 1155-1175. DOI:10.1177/0886260511424503

This study reports a grounded theory study of the process of how children tell of their experiences of child sexual abuse from the perspectives of young people and their parents. Individual interviews were conducted with 22 young people aged 8 to 18, and 14 parents. A theoretical model was developed that conceptualizes the process of disclosure as one of containing the secret of child sexual abuse. Three key dynamics were identified: the active withholding of the secret on the part of the child, the experience of a 'pressure cooker effect' reflecting a conflict between the wish to tell and the wish to keep the secret, and the confiding itself which often occurs in the context of an intimacy being shared. Children's experiences of disclosure were multi-determined and suggest the need for multifaceted and multisystemic approaches to prevention and intervention. The need for the secret to be contained, individually and interpersonally in appropriate safeguarding and therapeutic contexts needs to be respected in helping children tell.

Schönbucher, V., Maier, T., Mohler-Kuo, M., Schnyder, U., Landolt, M. A. (2012). Disclosure of child sexual abuse by adolescents: A qualitative in-depth study. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 27*(17), 3486-3513. DOI:10.1177/0886260512445380

This qualitative study aimed to study the process of disclosure by examining adolescents from the general population who had experienced child sexual abuse (CSA). Twenty-six sexually victimized adolescents (23 girls, 3 boys; age: 15-18 years) participated in a qualitative face-to-face in-depth interview on different aspects of disclosure. A qualitative content analysis was conducted following Mayring and using the qualitative

data analysis program Atlas.ti. In addition, quantitative correlation analyses were calculated to identify factors associated with disclosure. Less than one third of participants immediately disclosed CSA to another person. In most cases, recipients of both immediate and delayed disclosure were peers. More than one third of participants had never disclosed the abuse to a parent. Main motives for nondisclosure to parents were lack of trust or not wanting to burden the parents. Factors that correlated positively with disclosure were extrafamilial CSA, single CSA, age of victim at CSA, and having parents who were still living together. Negative associations with disclosure were found for feelings of guilt and shame and the perpetrator's age. Many adolescent survivors of CSA have serious concerns about disclosure to their parents and consider friends as more reliable confidants. These findings have two main implications for prevention: (1) In order to facilitate disclosure to parents, the strengthening of the child–parent relationship should be given specific attention in prevention programs, and (2) prevention programs should aim at teaching adolescents how they can help a victim if they become a recipient of disclosure.

Hunter, S. V. (2011). Disclosure of child sexual abuse as a life-long process: Implications for health professionals. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy, 32*(2), 159-172. DOI:10.1375/anft.32.2.159

One of the aims of this research project was to develop a fuller understanding of the process of disclosure of child sexual abuse. Face-to-face in-depth interviews were conducted with 22 men and women aged 25 to 70 years old, who had an early sexual experience at the age of 15 or under with someone of 18 or over. Narrative inquiry methodology was used and data was analysed using Rosenthal and Fischer-Rosenthal's (2004) process of data analysis. Disclosure can be conceptualized as a complex and life-long process, and most participants did not make a selective disclosure until adulthood. The findings extend Alaggia's (2004) model of disclosure to include the life stage and the person to whom the disclosure is being made. The main barriers to disclosure and

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possible gender differences are discussed. Family therapists need to manage the challenges inherent in disclosure of child sexual abuse at any age.

Kim, T. K., Choi, S., & Shin, Y. J. (2011). Psychosocial factors influencing competency of children's statements on sexual trauma. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 35*(3), 173–179. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2010.09.005

The objectives of this study were to assess children's competence to state their traumatic experience and to determine psychosocial factors influencing the competency of children's statements, such as emotional factors of children and parents and trauma-related variables, in Korean child sex abuse victims. We enrolled 214 children, who visited "Sunflower Children's Center" for sexual abuse. The children were aged eight to thirteen. Their parents were surveyed using questionnaires [Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI)] to obtain demographic information, traumatic event profiles and self-report scale. Children completed psychological measures as follows: Children's Depression Inventory (CDI), Revised Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale (RCMAS), and Traumatic Symptom Checklist for Children (TSCC). The modified-Criteria-Based Content Analysis (CBCA) was used to assess children's statements. ANOVA, independent *t*-test, and Pearson correlation were used. All statistics were demonstrated using SPSS 12.0. Findings were as follows: Modified-CBCA scores did not differ according to children's level of depression and anxiety. Children with parents who showed supportive reactions scored significantly higher on the modified-CBCA scores than those with unsupportive parents. Children with severely depressed parents had lower modified-CBCA scores than those with less depressed parents. Modified-CBCA scores were significantly higher in participants who experienced a single traumatic event than those who had multiple events. However, the severity of sexual abuse, relationship with the perpetrator, types of disclosure, and duration of initial disclosure did not show significant differences in capability of statement. The authors concluded that the competence of statements in Korean sexually child sex abuse victims is related to parental emotional

states and support rather than children's factors such as psychopathology or age, and appears to be more reliable with a single traumatic experience. Therefore, promoting parental support through psychoeducation is one of the most important things to be done to help children overcome psychological trauma but also enhance the accuracy of their statement.

Lyon, T. D. (2009). Abuse disclosure: What adults can tell. In B. L. Bottoms, C. J. Najdowski, & G. S. Goodman (Eds.), *Children as victims, witnesses, and offenders*: *Psychological science and the law* (pp. 19-35). Guilford Press.

Whether abused children are reluctant to disclose abuse is currently the subject of some controversy. The resolution of the controversy has implications for assessing the truthfulness of children's reports. If children are not reluctant to disclose abuse, then a child who denies abuse has not been abused. If children are reluctant to disclose abuse, then denial is evidence against abuse, but it is not conclusive evidence. Reluctance is thus an important factor in assessing the truth of abuse allegations when the alleged victim has been inconsistent in alleging abuse. In this chapter, I review population surveys that ask respondents about childhood abuse. These surveys provide support for the proposition that most sexual abuse is not disclosed during childhood, and that, indeed, disclosure is difficult even for older respondents, and particularly so in cases of intrafamilial abuse.

Ungar, M., Tutty, L. M., McConnell, S., Barter, K., & Fairholm, J. (2009). What Canadian youth tell us about disclosing abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 33*(10), 699-708. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2009.05.002

This study reports findings from a study of anonymous disclosures of abuse experiences among a national sample of youth in Canada who participated in violence prevention programming. A qualitative analysis was done of a purposeful sample of 1,099 evaluation

forms completed following Red Cross RespectED violence prevention programming delivered between 2000 and 2003. Forms were selected based on program facilitators identifying voluntary, anonymous disclosures by youth participants of neglect and emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. Additional data for this analysis includes 27 interviews and focus groups that were used to understand the context of these disclosures and to engage the help of youth and program facilitators in the interpretation of findings. While this study was exploratory and non-representative in its design, findings suggested high rates of hidden abuse, with less than a quarter of youth with abuse experiences reporting a disclosure. Disclosure patterns vary with boys, youth aged 14–15, victims of physical abuse, and those abused by a family member being most likely to disclose to professionals or the police. Interviews help to explain the large number of youth who express reticence to disclose to professionals. Specifically, the data show a perception among youth of negative consequences following disclosure. The authors concluded that the study raised questions regarding why youth are reluctant to report abuse to professionals, preferring to cope independently or by confiding in peers. Youth in this study reported feeling anxious about disclosing to authorities, fearful of the potential loss of control over decisions which affect them. Findings suggest that professionals who provide support to young people's own networks of family and friends may help to facilitate youths' disclosures of abuse. Furthermore, prevention programming that promotes a positive attitude towards disclosure of abuse experiences and provides an anonymous forum (such as an evaluation form) in which to do so is likely to encourage more young people to disclose.

Tang, S., Freyd, J. J., & Wang, M. (2007). What do we know about gender in the disclosure of child sexual abuse? *Journal of Psychological Trauma, 6*(4), 1-26. DOI:10.1080/19322880802096442

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is usually concealed by shame and secrecy, and it is often not disclosed for long periods or is not disclosed at all. Lack of disclosure has profound

implications for prevention, treatment, and science. Gender is often assumed to be a factor in disclosure rates. Although empirical investigations of the role of gender in the disclosure of CSA have increased in psychological research in the past decade findings are often contradictory, and support for common beliefs such as males being more reluctant to disclose than females may not be as strong as assumed. The authors evaluate the degree of validity of reported rates of CSA by examining the methods used to gather epidemiological evidence for CSA. They also provide a critique of two methods commonly used in the study of CSA: prospective and retrospective studies. They conclude by identifying areas to address in future studies concerning gender and CSA.

Olafson, E., & Lederman, C. S. (2006). The state of the debate about children's disclosure patterns in child sexual abuse cases. *Juvenile and Family Court Journal*, *57*(1), 27-40. DOI:10.1111/j.1755-6988.2006.tb00112.x

In current research studies about the disclosure patterns of sexually abused children, experts agree that most victims delay disclosure for years, often until adulthood. Researchers disagree about disclosure rates and recantation rates among children during formal interviews. Studies of children who had not previously disclosed but are known through corroborative evidence to have been sexually abused show lower rates of disclosure than do studies of children who had disclosed prior to the formal interview. Gradual disclosures among children are common, and more than a single interview may be necessary in some cases. Prior disclosure, level of support by non-offending parents, developmental level, and relationship to perpetrator affect children's rates of disclosure and their disclosure patterns. More research is necessary to clarify children's post-disclosure recantation rates and predictors.

Jensen, T. K., Gulbrandsen, W., Mossige, S., Reichelt, S., & Tjersland, O. A. (2005). Reporting possible sexual abuse: A qualitative study on children's perspectives and the context for disclosure. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 29*(12), 1395-413. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2005.07.004

This study investigated the context in which children were able to report their child sexual abuse experiences and the children's views as to what made it difficult to talk about abuse and what helped them in the disclosing process. The aim was to study disclosures as they were occurring in their natural settings. Data were obtained from therapeutic sessions and follow-up interviews from 20 families with 22 children. These children had said something that made their caregivers concerned about ongoing child sexual abuse. Qualitative analysis was conducted to capture the children's and caregiver's perspectives of the disclosure process. The children felt it was difficult to find situations containing enough privacy and prompts that they could share their experiences. They also were sensitive to others' reactions, and whether their disclosures would be misinterpreted. When the children did disclose they did it in situations where the theme of child sexual abuse was in some form addressed or activated. The results indicate that disclosure is a fundamentally dialogical process that becomes less difficult if the children perceive that there is an opportunity to talk, and a purpose for speaking, and a connection has been established to what they are talking about. The authors concluded that it is difficult for children to initiate a conversation about something secret, confusing and distressful, and where there are few conversational routines in a family for talking about such themes. Children also are sensitive to the needs of their caregivers and fear consequences for their family and offender. Children need a supportive structure or scaffold in order to reveal their experiences of child sexual abuse.

London, K., Bruck, M., Ceci, S. J., & Shuman, D. W. (2005). Disclosure of child sexual
abuse: What does the research tell us about the ways that children tell?
Psychology, Public Policy, and Law, *11*(1), 194–226. DOI:10.1037/1076-8971.11.1.194

The empirical basis for the child sexual abuse accommodation syndrome (CSAAS), a theoretical model that posits that sexually abused children frequently display secrecy, tentative disclosures, and retractions of abuse statements was reviewed. Two data sources were evaluated: retrospective studies of adults' reports of having been abused as children and concurrent or chart-review studies of children undergoing evaluation or treatment for sexual abuse. The evidence indicates that the majority of abused children do not reveal abuse during childhood. However, the evidence fails to support the notion that denials, tentative disclosures, and recantations characterize the disclosure patterns of children with validated histories of sexual abuse. These results are discussed in terms of their implications governing the admissibility of expert testimony on CSAAS.

Alaggia, R. (2004). Many ways of telling: Expanding conceptualizations of child sexual
abuse disclosure. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 28*(11), 1213-1227.
DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2004.03.016

The aim of this study was to explore influences that inhibit or promote child sexual abuse (CSA) disclosure. Face-to-face in-depth interviews of 24 female and male survivors of CSA were conducted, using the Long-Interview method to trace disclosure processes. Verbatim transcriptions of the interviews were analyzed by hand and by using a computerized data analysis system (N*Vivo). The results of this investigation identified several patterns of disclosure. Prolonged engagement, persistent observation, negative case analysis, and peer debriefing were among the techniques used to ensure the trustworthiness of data. Through analysis of the interview data, previously undefined dimensions of disclosure emerged. First, three frequently used categories of *'accidental, purposeful, and prompted/elicited'* disclosure types accounted for 42% of disclosure patterns in the study sample. However, over half the disclosure patterns described by

research participants did not fit these previously established definitions. Results of the study facilitated expanding conceptualization of additional disclosure patterns to include behavioral and indirect verbal attempts, disclosures intentionally withheld, and disclosures triggered by recovered memories. The author concludes that these supplementary definitions integrate complex facets of disclosure derived within the context of human development, memory and environmental influences. This expanded conceptualization provides professionals with a broader framework to understand and respond to child victims and adult survivor's disclosures more effectively.

Post Disclosure Effects

Lateef, R., Alaggia, R., Collin-Vézina, D., & McElvaney, R. (2023). The legacy of shame following childhood sexual abuse disclosures. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 32*(2), 184-203. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2022.2159910

Shame has been recognized as a barrier to child sexual abuse (CSA) disclosures, but there has been less focus on the impact of shame on post-disclosure. This study explores how shame is experienced by CSA survivors following disclosure. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with eleven CSA survivors aged 14–25 years on their CSA disclosure experiences. Thematic analysis of the transcripts produced four themes that highlight the various impacts of shame post-disclosure: 1) struggles with identifying as a sexual abuse survivor; 2) manifestations of shame; 3) shaming responses to disclosures; and 4) strategies to overcome shame. Clinical implications are presented using a social ecological perspective.

Williams, A. W., Williams, A. H., PettyJohn, M. E., Cash, S. J., & Schwab-Reese, L. M. (2023). Understanding how peers respond to online child maltreatment disclosures: A qualitative content analysis of family violence discussions on social media. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 146*, 106401. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2023.106401

Background: Positive, supportive responses to child maltreatment disclosure are critical for victims to receive appropriate resources and support for healing. Young people often prefer to disclose to their peers, frequently on social media platforms. Objective: We assessed young people's use of TalkLife, an online peer-to-peer support platform, to respond to the disclosure of child maltreatment. Methods: We conducted a qualitative content analysis of 1090 comments on childhood maltreatment-related posts on TalkLife between 2013 and 2020. We used an iterative, team-based qualitative content analysis approach to understand how peers responded to maltreatment disclosure. Findings: Peer responses tended to be supportive, including asking questions about the abuse and offering advice, emotional support, and other positive responses. Most commonly, peers

advised the victim to report, focus on their strengths instead of the abuse, reach out to adults for more support, or confront the perpetrator. On occasion, however, peers began an irrelevant discussion, joked about the situation, or even directly attacked the discloser. Conclusions: Learning about child maltreatment disclosures on social media builds the foundation for research to assist in identifying and applying interventions on online platforms. Further, these findings can inform programs that teach how to provide healthy responses to child maltreatment disclosures.

McElvaney, R., McDonnell Murray, R., & Dunne, S. (2022). [Siblings' perspectives of the impact of child sexual abuse disclosure on sibling and family relationships. family process.](#) *Family Process*, *61*(2), 858-872. DOI:10.1111/famp.12681

Child sexual abuse (CSA) may have significant consequences for siblings; however, limited research has been conducted on the impact of the abuse on sibling and family relationships following the disclosure of CSA. This study sought to investigate sibling responses to disclosures of CSA among a group of adult siblings in Ireland, and the impact on sibling and family relationships through an online survey. A thematic analysis was conducted on a sub-set of participants who responded to open-ended questions (n = 45). Three main themes were identified as follows: (a) intense emotional reactions, (b) relationship support and strain, and (c) managing family dynamics. CSA disclosure may have a substantial impact on sibling and family relationships. Supporting siblings in the aftermath of CSA disclosure is essential, both for the well-being of the individual who was sexually abused and for the wider family.

Easton, S. D. (2019). [Childhood disclosure of sexual abuse and mental health outcomes in adulthood: Assessing merits of early disclosure and discussion](#). *Child Abuse & Neglect, 93*, 208-214. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.04.005

Empirical research on the impact of early disclosure of child sexual abuse (CSA) on survivor health is limited and mixed. One recent study found that early disclosure may actually be detrimental for abuse cessation and adult symptomatology (Swingle et al., 2016). The current study re-examined the effects of early disclosure and related variables on long-term mental health for men with histories of CSA. The primary aims of this study were to: a) investigate whether early disclosure and response to early disclosure were related to mental distress in adulthood, and b) examine whether having an in-depth discussion and timing of that discussion were related to mental distress in adulthood. Data were collected from a large, non-clinical sample of male survivors (N=487), ranging in age from 19 to 84 years, through an online, anonymous survey. Hierarchical regression analyses were conducted by entering groups of variables in four steps: control variables, CSA severity, disclosure, and discussion. Overall, models explained between 24-28% of the variance in mental distress. None of the CSA severity variables reached significance. Both early disclosure (β= -0.126, p = 0.003) and response to first disclosure (β = -0.119, p = 0.006) were significant protective factors in Model 3. In the final model, having an in-depth discussion (β = -0.085, p = < 0.036) and years until discussion (β = 0.102, p = 0.029) were also related to mental distress. Results support the merits of early disclosure and discussion on long-term mental health. Implications for future research and practice are presented.

Malloy, L. C., Brubacher, S. P., & Lamb, M. E. (2011). Expected consequences of disclosure revealed in investigative interviews with suspected victims of child sexual abuse. *Applied Developmental Science, 15*(1), 8-19. DOI:10.1080/10888691.2011.538616

The current study explored the expected consequences of disclosure discussed by 204 five to thirteen year-old suspected victims of child sexual abuse during the course of

investigative interviews conducted using the NICHD Investigative Interview Protocol. Expected consequences were mentioned in nearly half of all interviews, with older children and those alleging multiple incidents more likely to do so. Most consequences were mentioned spontaneously by children and most consequences were expected to befall the children themselves. The most common consequences were "physical harm" and "feeling negative emotions" for the child and "jail/legal" consequences for the suspect. Expecting consequences for the child or another family member were associated with delaying disclosure, but expecting consequences for the suspect was not related to delay. Results provide insight into developmental and socio-motivational influences on children's disclosure of negative events and are of considerable practical interest to legal and clinical professionals who must interview, treat, and evaluate children alleging sexual abuse.

Broman-Fulks, J. J., Ruggiero, K. J., Hanson, R. F., Smith, D. W., Resnick, H. S., Kilpatrick, D. G., & Saunders, B. E. (2007). Brief report: Sexual assault disclosure in relation to adolescent mental health: Results from the National Survey of Adolescents. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, *36*(2), 260-266. DOI:10.1080/15374410701279701

Child sexual assault is a risk factor for a wide range of emotional and behavioral problems. Little is known about mental health functioning in relation to victims' decisions to tell someone (or not) about their assault. This study used data from a nationally representative sample of 4,023 adolescents to examine the relation between sexual assault disclosure characteristics and mental health outcomes. Results indicated that youth who disclosed the assault to someone within 1 month were at reduced risk for current major depressive episode (MDE) and delinquency. No relation was found between disclosure latency and risk for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or substance use problems. Notably, disclosure to mothers was associated with significantly reduced risk for current PTSD and delinquency.

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Priebea, G., & Svedinb, C. G. (2008). Child sexual abuse is largely hidden from the adult society: An epidemiological study of adolescents' disclosures. *Child Abuse & Neglect 32*(12), 1095–1108. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2008.04.001

The aim of this study was to investigate disclosure rates and disclosure patterns and to examine predictors of non-disclosure in a sample of male and female adolescents with self-reported experiences of sexual abuse. A sample of 4,339 high school seniors (2,324 girls and 2,015 boys) was examined with a questionnaire concerning sexual experiences in this study with a focus on disclosure of sexual abuse (non-contact, contact or penetrating abuse, and including peer abuse). Results were as follows: 1,505 girls (65%) and 457 boys (23%) reported experience of sexual abuse. The disclosure rate was 81% (girls) and 69% (boys). Girls and boys disclosed most often to a friend of their own age. Few had disclosed to professionals. Even fewer said that the incident had been reported to the authorities. Logistic regression showed that it was less likely for girls to disclose if they had experienced contact sexual abuse with or without penetration, abuse by a family member, only a single abuse occasion or if they had perceived their parents as non-caring. Boys were less likely to disclose if they studied a vocational program, lived with both parents or had perceived their parents as either caring and overprotective or non-caring and not overprotective. The authors concluded that disclosing sexual abuse is a complex process. Much is hidden from the adult society, especially from professionals and the legal system. Since peers are the most common receivers of abuse information, programs for supporting peers ought to be developed. Differences in disclosure patterns for girls and boys indicate that a gender perspective is helpful when developing guidelines for professionals. The practice implications are that professionals, especially in the school system, need to be more aware of the finding that few sexually abused children seek help from professionals or other adults and that support offers should be directly addressed not only to the vulnerable young persons themselves but also to peers who wish to help a friend.

Ullman, S. E. (2007). Relationship to perpetrator, disclosure, social reactions, and PTSD symptoms in child sexual abuse survivors. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, *16*(1), 19-36. DOI:10.1300/J070v16n01_02

This research examined victim relationship to the perpetrator, disclosure characteristics, social reactions, and PTSD in adult survivors' of child sexual abuse (CSA) identified in a convenience sample of 733 college students. Results indicated that relationship to the perpetrator was related to CSA characteristics and outcomes. More negative reactions such as disbelief were observed for those victimized by relatives compared with acquaintance and stranger victims, especially for those disclosing in childhood. Victims of relatives had more PTSD symptoms if they delayed disclosure, received more negative reactions in childhood, and engaged in self-blame at the time of the abuse. Results are discussed in the context of Freyd's (1996) betrayal trauma theory, in order to better understand the traumatic impact of CSA.

Kogan, S. M. (2005). The role of disclosing child sexual abuse on adolescent adjustment and revictimization. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 14*(2), 25-47. DOI:10.1300/J070v14n02_02

The role of disclosing child sexual abuse on adolescent survivors' symptomology and the presence of additional unwanted sexual experiences was investigated in a subsample of 111 adolescents from the National Survey of Adolescents who reported child sexual abuse. Results indicated that prompt disclosure of sexual abuse to an adult moderated the influence of penetration during the abuse on the number of symptoms at assessment. Thus, prompt disclosure buffered the influence of more severe abuse. Disclosure also had a main effect on the likelihood of further victimization. Participants who told an adult promptly after the abuse were less likely to report additional unwanted sexual experiences.

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Ghetti, S., Alexander, K. W., & Goodman, G. S. (2002). Legal involvement in child sexual abuse cases: Consequences and interventions. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry, 25*(3), 235-251. DOI:10.1016/S0160-2527(02)00104-8

Disclosure of sexual abuse potentially leads to a variety of stressful experiences for children. In the present paper, the authors first discuss potential stressors, which include separation from the family, the formality and unfamiliarity of the legal environment and procedures, multiple interviewing about the event, and testifying. Further, shame and stigma related to disclosing and publicly speaking about the abuse negatively affect children involved in the legal system. Measures that have been developed to reduce the stress associated with legal involvement are also described. Finally, the authors draw conclusions about the current state of understanding about the emotional effects of legal involvement and legal interventions, and offer directions for future research.

Sperry, D. M., & Gilbert, B. O. (2005). Child peer sexual abuse: Preliminary data on outcomes and disclosure experiences. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *29*(8), 889-904. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2004.12.011

This study compared experiences of children sexually abused by peers to those of children abused by adolescents/adults. Variables examined included perceived negativity of the abuse, self-reported outcomes, overall psychological functioning, and disclosure. An archival data set containing retrospective reports of childhood sexual experiences was culled for instances of sexual abuse by child peers and adolescents/adults. An equivalent nonabused comparison group was identified. The Self-Report Outcome Checklist (SROC; Gilbert; 1994b), the MMPI-Hugo Short Form (Hugo, 1971) and a disclosure survey were also retrieved from these data. Findings were that compared to abuse by peers, abuse perpetrated by adolescents/adults was more intrusive and intrafamilial. Both groups rated their experiences as equally negative, and reported equally pervasive outcomes. Those abused by adolescents/adults reported significantly higher scores on the Psychopathic Deviate, Psychasthenia, and

Schizophrenia scales compared to nonabused controls; similar findings did not emerge for those abused by child peers. Less than a fourth in either abuse group reported disclosing their experience to a parent. Among those who did not disclose, participants abused by child peers anticipated less support from both parents and more anger from their mothers. The authors concluded that child peer sexual abuse may be associated with adverse outcomes.

Disclosure of Child Abuse: A Bibliography

Support & Response

Schwab-Reese, L. M., Cash, S. J., Lambert, N. J., & Lansford, J. E. (2022). "They aren't going to do jack shit": Text-based crisis service users' perceptions of seeking child maltreatment-related support from formal systems. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *37*(19-20), NP19066-NP19083. DOI:10.1177/08862605211043577

Many of the children reported to child protective services (CPS) exhibit signs and symptoms that allow others to recognize their abuse or neglect and intervene; others, especially adolescents, must disclose their experiences to be identified. Relatively little is known about young people's disclosure experiences, but individual, interpersonal, and cultural factors appear to influence when and how young people disclose. Technology-facilitated approaches, such as text- or chat-based hotlines or crisis services, may be one way to help young people share their maltreatment experiences and seek help. The current study contributes to the small body of literature that includes nonsexual maltreatment disclosures and sheds some light on how to support young people during their disclosures. We conducted a qualitative content analysis of all conversations from a text-based crisis service that resulted in a report to CPS (n = 244). Many of the texters had previously sought support from their peers or parents, and some had engaged with more formal systems. Many young people were hesitant to reach out to formal systems in the future, in part because of negative experiences during past disclosure experiences. Young people may be more likely to seek support through their preferred communication medium, so providing text- and chat-based communication may be one way to encourage and facilitate disclosure. As these resources become increasingly available, determining best practices for receiving disclosures through technology-facilitated platforms will be critical.

Disclosure of Child Abuse: A Bibliography

Manay, N., & Collin-Vézina, D. (2021). Recipients of children's and adolescents' disclosures of childhood sexual abuse: A systematic review. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 116*, 104192. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.104192

Disclosure of childhood sexual abuse (CSA) is a complex, multifaceted process with many barriers that are largely shaped by individual, familial, and systemic characteristics. Children and youth tend to withhold or delay disclosure for many years, such that most CSA goes unreported. This systematic review aimed to synthesize evidence regarding the pathways and recipients of CSA disclosures and to identify potential developmental and gender differences in the recipients of disclosures. Thirty-seven studies conducted between 1990 and 2017 were selected for review. Results indicated that children and youth follow a gradual pattern of disclosure, whereby they first disclose to peers before disclosing to a parent or trusted adult, who can then help the child report to a person of authority. Key developmental patterns in CSA disclosure were identified, whereby older children and adolescents are significantly more likely to turn to peers, keeping the abuse largely hidden from adults. Gender differences were also found, whereby girls are more likely to seek emotional support by disclosing to peers, whereas boys are significantly less likely to disclose the abuse all together; when boys do disclose, they tend to do so for practical reasons, such as protection or accessing services. This review contributes to our understanding of the various pathways of CSA disclosure and highlights the importance of further understanding youth-directed disclosures and how the reactions of informal recipients of disclosures may impact further disclosures to authorities and professionals. Research and clinical implications of the findings are discussed.

Wallis, C. R., & Woodworth, M. (2021). Non-offending caregiver support in cases of child sexual abuse: An examination of the impact of support on formal disclosures. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 113*, 104929. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2021.104929

Childhood sexual abuse (CSA) is a highly prevalent issue, impacting a substantial number of children globally (12 %; Stoltenborgh et al., 2011). Past research has found many

children who have been sexually abused will delay their disclosure until adulthood, if they disclose at all (McElvaney, 2015; Reitsema & Grietens, 2016). This is often likely because of the adverse impact that reporting abuse can have for the child and their families (especially when committed by an intrafamilial perpetrator). Non-offending caregiver support has evidenced promise in increasing rates of disclosure (Cyr et al., 2014). It was hypothesized that higher levels of caregiver support would result in shorter delays of disclosure and that less support is given when the abuser is closely related to the child. CSA cases (n = 164) were pulled from the RCMP database of reported crimes for the greater Okanagan Area, British Columbia, Canada. Cases were coded for non-offending caregiver behaviors that indicated support and for relation to perpetrator. Higher levels of non-offending caregiver support were found to lead to shorter delays of disclosure. Non-offending caregivers were significantly less supportive when the abuser was more closely related. Caregiver support acted as a protective factor against delays of disclosure. However, this support decreased significantly when the abuser was closely related. The current study provides evidence for the need to support caregivers of children who have been abused with educational programs and resources so they can properly support the child impacted.

Koçtürk, N., & Bilginer, S. Ç. (2020). Adolescent sexual abuse victims' levels of perceived social support and delayed disclosure. *Children and Youth Services Review, 118*, 105363. DOI:10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.105363

Similar to disclosure rates, the timing of disclosure may also vary among sexual abuse (SA) victims. While some victims immediately disclose the SA, others may hide it until later in their adult lives. The main aims of this study were to not only compare the perceived social support levels of SA victims who disclosed the abuse immediately versus those who delayed doing so, but also evaluate the social reactions to these reports. This study comprised 116 victims who are aged between 15 and 18. The Perceived Social Support Scale was administered, and independent samples t-test analysis and the chi-square

test was conducted for data analysis. We found no significant difference between victims who disclosed immediately and those who delayed the disclosure in terms of the perceived social support levels from families and the surrounding community. However, victims who first disclosed the SA to their family members have higher the perceived social support than victims disclosing the SA to other people. The most common reason for delayed disclosure was a fear of creating domestic problems. In addition, the victims who delayed disclosure experienced the most negative reactions from others. In the most negative reactions, victims who delayed disclosure were blamed for the SA and were labeled. The findings of the study may guide psychosocial interventions. Therefore, professionals working with children should interact with families and the community at large to encourage adolescent victims to disclose SA and approach these victims in a suitable way following the disclosure.

Tener, D., Lusky, E., Tarshish, N., & Turjeman, S. (2018). Parental attitudes following disclosure of sibling sexual abuse: A child advocacy center intervention study. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 88*(6), 661-669. DOI:10.1037/ort0000311

Sibling sexual abuse (SSA) represents a range of childhood sexual behaviors that cannot be considered manifestations of age-appropriate curiosity. Despite being the commonest and longest lasting form of sexual abuse within the family, SSA is the least reported, treated, and researched. This qualitative study is based on a sample of 60 mostly religious Jewish families referred to a child advocacy center (CAC) in Jerusalem from 2010 to 2015. It examines parental attitudes to SSA and their reconstruction, during and after their experience at the CAC. Analysis of case summaries and documented conversations between child protection officers and parents reveals 2 main initial parental attitudes after the disclosure SSA. The first is the attitude that no sexual acts took place at all. The second is that they did occur, with 3 different variations: the sexual acts as "not serious," as a "rupture in the family's ideal narrative," and as "another tragic episode in the family's tragic life story." Findings also suggest that the CAC intervention is

a turning point, leading most parents to reconstruct their initial attitudes from "never happened" or "not serious" to "rupture in the family image" or to "another negative event in the family." These findings underscore the need to study the experiences of parents whose children were involved in SSA to inform policy, treatment and research. This is critical, as interventions that are not aligned with family attitudes and needs are known to exacerbate the family crisis.

Ahern, E. C., & Lamb, M. E. (2016). Children's reports of disclosure recipient reactions in forensic interviews: Comparing the NICHD and MoGP protocols. *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology*, *32*(2), 85-93. DOI:10.1007/s11896-016-9205-x

Reactions from confidantes who receive children's abuse disclosures can affect children's well-being and the likelihood that they will recant. Disclosure recipient (DR) reactions were coded in 95 forensic interviews of 4- to 13-year-old alleged sexual abuse victims. Half of the interviews were conducted using the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Protocol (which includes a disclosure phase focused on the child's initial abuse report) and the other half using the Memorandum of Good Practice (MoGP), a predecessor of the Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) guidelines used in the UK today (which recommends asking about children's initial disclosures but has no designated disclosure phase). Children reported a variety of DR reactions, including supportive and unsupportive responses, and noted that many DRs questioned them about the allegations. NICHD interviews contained more references to DR reactions than MoGP interviews. NICHD interviews elicited more DR reaction information using invitations rather than more focused prompts and by asking children explicitly about their disclosures rather than relying on children to provide the information spontaneously. Findings indicated that children may be willing and able to provide disclosure information but may require prompting.

Gagnier, C., & Collin-Vézina, D. (2016). The disclosure experiences of male child sexual abuse survivors. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, *25*(2), 221-241. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2016.1124308

This article explores the diversity in the disclosure process of male survivors of child sexual abuse. Disclosure is a complex process for victims of both genders, however masculine norms and stereotypes have contributed to an environment that often negates the experiences of men. The disclosure process of 17 adult male survivors of child sexual abuse was explored using transcripts of telephone interviews. A combination of two qualitative methodologies, the phenomenological method and interpretive description approach, was used to analyze this secondary data. The results indicated that the majority of the men in the study waited until adulthood to disclose their abuse, with negative stereotypes contributing to their delayed disclosures. In terms of specific experiences with disclosure, the participants found they received both positive and negative responses. These results were consistent with the literature.

Hunter, S. V. (2015). Perceptions of the role of mothers in the disclosure and nondisclosure of child sexual abuse: A qualitative study. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, *24*(8), 887-907. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2015.1092005

One of the aims of this research was to develop an understanding of the role mothers were perceived to play during the process of disclosure of child sexual abuse. Using narrative inquiry methodology, face-to-face in-depth interviews were conducted with 22 men and women who had an early sexual experience. Even though a mother's support and protection is known to be important, this study showed that many mothers were seen as unable to offer such support, which had an important influence on nondisclosure. The heterogeneity of perceptions of mothers among adults who experienced child sexual abuse and gender differences are described. Health professionals need to manage complex relational dynamics between adult survivors and their mothers.

Walker-Descartes, I., Sealy, Y. M., Laraque, D., & Rojas, M. (2011). Caregiver perceptions of sexual abuse and its effect on management after a disclosure. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 35*(6), 437-447. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2011.02.003

The aim of the study was to examine caregiver management strategies for child sexual abuse (CSA) when presented with hypothetical scenarios that vary in physical invasiveness. One hundred fifty three caregivers were given three scenarios of CSA with seven management strategies presented in the 21-item Taking Action Strategies (TAS) scale. Caregivers were asked to rate strategies according to their willingness to carry out each action with rating of 5 = greater likelihood of carrying out the action specified while a rating of 1 = a lower likelihood of carrying out that action. CSA scenarios included exposure to pornography/masturbation, fondling, and penetration while management strategies including fighting the accused, blaming the child, and outreaching to the authorities. Repeated measures ANOVA was used to compare mean TAS scores for the management strategies across CSA scenarios. The difference between TAS scores across the abuse scenarios was statistically significant ($p < .001$). Mean TAS scores reflected greater preference for taking action if the abusive act was perceived as more physically intrusive (exposure to pornography/masturbation-TAS 3.5, fondling-TAS 3.7, penetration-TAS 3.8). Caregivers reported being less willing to handle a disclosure of CSA without outreach (TAS 2.5 and 2.0 for fighting and blaming the child, respectively) and more willing to manage a disclosure with outreach to authorities (TAS 3.8, 4.5, and 4.7 for outreaching to Child Protective Services [CPS], to the child's healthcare provider and police, respectively). A predictor of caregiver outreach to authorities identified was the caregiver having past interactions with CPS. The authors concluded that perception of the physical invasiveness of CSA and demographic factors can impact caregiver management strategies after a disclosure.

Plummer, C. A. (2006). The discovery process: What mothers see and do in gaining awareness of the sexual abuse of their children. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *30*(11), 1227-1237. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2006.05.007

The aim of this study was to explore how mothers discovered that their children had been sexually abused. The exploration included learning from whom or in what ways mothers learned about the abuse, whether there were prior suspicions, if actions were taken to determine likelihood of abuse, and the barriers to recognizing abuse. An exploratory survey of 125 non-abusive mothers of sexually abused children in three clinical sites was used. The sample included primarily Caucasians and African-Americans in a Midwestern state. A focus group study was used to develop the instrument. The survey was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results were as follows: Mothers first came to learn of sexual abuse from a verbal report (42%) or behaviors (15%) of their victimized child. Almost half of the mothers had a sense that something was "not quite right" prior to knowing about the abuse. Mothers took many actions to try to clarify what was occurring including talking with their child (66%) or watching things more closely (39%). Evidence most convincing to mothers of the abuse included child's disclosure (74%), child's behavior (66%), and child's emotions (60%). Factors increasing uncertainty included denial by the abuser (21%). The author concluded that this exploratory study provides initial data on how mothers come to learn of and believe the sexual abuse of their children. Educating mothers about effective ways to explore suspicions and weigh the evidence for or against abuse may enhance maternal protection and expedite investigations.

Lovett, B. B. (2004). Child sexual abuse disclosure: Maternal response and other variables impacting the victim. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal, 21*(4), 355-371. DOI:10.1023/B:CASW.0000035221.78729.d6

Disclosure of childhood sexual abuse is a process unique to each victim and may be influenced by factors of race, ethnicity, culture, religion, and gender, as well as by abuse

specific factors. The response by caregivers and professionals effects disclosure and can be responsible for recantation. Maternal responses that convey protection and support have been found to be associated with victims' improved mental health and social functioning. Non-abusive caregivers are often marginalized by the child welfare system in its attempt to secure physical safety for the child. This article summarizes the literature regarding sexual abuse disclosure and maternal response. Areas for future research are discussed.

Disclosure of Child Abuse: A Bibliography

Cultural Issues

Van Os, E. C. C., Zijlstra, A. E., Knorth, E. J., Post, W. J., & Kalverboer, M. E. (2020). Finding keys: A systematic review of barriers and facilitators for refugee children's disclosure of their life stories. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 21*(2), 242-260. DOI:10.1177/1524838018757748

The systematic review presented in this article aims to reveal what supports and hampers refugee children in telling their, often traumatic, life stories. This is important to ensure that migration decisions are based on reliable information about the children's needs for protection. A systematic review was conducted in academic journals, collecting all available scientific knowledge about the disclosure of life stories by refugee minors in the context of social work, guardianship, foster care, asylum procedures, mental health assessment, and therapeutic settings. The resulting 39 studies were thoroughly reviewed with reference to what factors aided or hampered the refugee children's disclosure of their life stories. The main barriers to disclosure were feelings of mistrust and self-protection from the side of the child and disrespect from the side of the host community. The facilitators for disclosing life stories were a positive and respectful attitude of the interviewer, taking time to build trust, using nonverbal methods, providing agency to the children, and involving trained interpreters. Social workers, mentors, and guardians should have time to build trust and to help a young refugee in revealing the life story before the minor is heard by the migration authorities. The lack of knowledge on how refugee children can be helped to disclose their experiences is a great concern because the decision in the migration procedure is based on the story the child is able to disclose.

Braithwaite, J. (2018). Colonized silence: Confronting the colonial link in rural Alaska Native survivors' non-disclosure of child sexual abuse. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 27*(6), 589-611. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2018.1491914

Though there is evidence linking the history of colonialism and oppression of Indigenous people to the high rates of rape and child sexual abuse experienced by this population

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today, it is less understood how colonial processes, past and present, condition the decision to disclose or report victimization. Drawing on a survivorship storytelling study of rural Alaska Native survivors of child sexual abuse, this paper underscores the importance of centering colonialism in understanding the culture of silence surrounding sexual victimization among Indigenous people. Results show that reasons for nondisclosure are quite embedded within larger social, historical and political themes of colonialism, oppression, and marginalization. Implications for policy and praxes are discussed, as well as a broader mandate of social change to remove barriers to disclosure.

Xiao, H., & Smith-Prince, J. (2015). Disclosure of child sexual abuse: The Case of Pacific Islanders. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 24*(4), 369-384. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2015.1022294

A number of factors influence the disclosure of child sexual abuse by survivors. While the influence of race and ethnicity on disclosure patterns is getting more attention, little has been written on abused children of Pacific Islanders, due in part to both lack of relevant data and a relatively small Pacific Islander population in the United States. Drawing on interviews with Pacific Islander women who were sexually abused in childhood and who delayed revealing their victimization, we explore the reasons for delayed disclosure. Findings suggest that cultural norms and family dynamics affect disclosure decisions. Concerns for the family and self-blame were the most common reasons for delay and lack of disclosure. We discuss implications of the findings and make policy recommendations.

Haboush, K. L., & Alyan, H. (2013). "Who can you tell?" Features of Arab culture that influence conceptualization and treatment of childhood sexual abuse. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 22*(5), 499-518. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2013.800935

The literature on child sexual abuse reflects growing recognition of the manner in which culture impacts the conceptualization, experience, and treatment of such cases. Despite heightened visibility of Arab Americans within the United States, population due to recent media attention, little empirical research exists on the occurrence of child sexual abuse within this population. Arab culture is often characterized by an emphasis on collectivism and familial obligations, and such features may prove to either facilitate or impede assessment and treatment of child sexual abuse, depending on how they are manifested. In terms of reporting child sexual abuse, cultural values pertaining to shame and honor as well as the stigma attached to mental health problems may influence the response to abuse. As such, enhancing the cultural competence of the therapist is key to facilitating effective cultural practice. Empirical research is required to investigate and substantiate these concepts as they relate to child sexual abuse in Arab-American populations.

Chan, Y.-C., Lam, G. T., & Shae, W.-C. (2011). Children's views on child abuse and neglect: Findings from an exploratory study with Chinese children in Hong Kong. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 35*(3), 162-172. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2010.12.001

This research study explored children's views on issues about child abuse in Hong Kong and examined their implications on child protection work and research in Chinese societies. Six primary schools were recruited from different districts of Hong Kong. Five vignettes of child maltreatment in the form of flash movies were presented to 87 children in 12 focus groups for discussion. The process was video-taped and the data were transcribed verbatim for data analysis by NUDIST. The results were: (1) children do not have a homogeneous view on issues about child abuse and neglect, and their awareness and sensitivity to different kinds of child abuse are also different; (2) some of their views on child abuse and neglect are uniquely their own and are markedly different from those

of adults; (3) some of the views expressed by children, however, are very much akin to those of adults, such as the factors they would consider in deciding whether a case is child abuse or not; (4) children's disclosure of abuse in Hong Kong is often affected by the Chinese culture in which they live, like filial piety and loyalty to parents. The authors concluded that views on issues of child abuse and neglect, no matter they are the same or different from those of adults, serve to inform and improve child protection work. Children are not only victims in need of protection. They are also valuable partners with whom adult practitioners should closely work. The practice implications are that children have, and are able to give, views on child abuse. They should be listened to in any child protection work no matter their views are same with or different from those of adults. As this study suggests, the relatively low sensitivity of the children to child neglect and sexual abuse, and their reluctance to disclose abuse and neglect due to their loyalty to parents are areas to focus on in preventive child protection work in a Chinese society like Hong Kong.

Fontes, L. A., & Plummer, C. (2010). Cultural issues in disclosures of child sexual abuse. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 19*(5), 491-518. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2010.512520

Cultural norms affect the likelihood that child sexual abuse will be discovered by an adult or disclosed by a child. Cultural norms also affect whether abused children's families will report child sexual abuse to authorities. This article explores the ways ethnic and religious culture affect child sexual abuse disclosure and reporting, both in the United States and internationally. Guidelines for culturally sensitive child abuse interviewing are provided to facilitate disclosures of abuse from culturally diverse children in formal settings.

Disclosure of Child Abuse: A Bibliography

Olumoroti, O. (2008). Sexual offending: Ethnicity, culture and diversity issues in assessment and management. In J. Houston, & S. Galloway (Eds.), *Sexual offending and mental health: Multidisciplinary management in the community* (pp. 90-108). Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

This chapter considers the evidence for the prevalence of sexual offending among different ethnic and cultural groups, and examines the available literature on the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of sex offenders. It discusses factors contributing to sexual behavior and offending in different groups; the attitude, practices and sanctions for sexually inappropriate behavior in different cultures; factors affecting disclosure; and the response to disclosures of sexual offending. It examines the role of ethnicity and culture in child sexual abuse and rape, and concludes by commenting on the role of ethnicity, culture and other diversity issues in assessment and management of sex offenders and their victims. American literature and research findings have provided useful insight for this work and references to specific countries and cultures are made without any malice or prejudice. Major ethnic groups and cultures are largely referred to in this chapter and the reader's attention is drawn at this point to the heterogeneity that exists in individual ethnic categories, which should be born in mind throughout.

Springman, R. E., Wherry, J. N., & Notaro, P. C. (2006). The effects of interviewer race and child race on sexual abuse disclosures in forensic interviews. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 15*(3), 99-116. DOI:10.1300/J070v15n03_06

This study examined the impact of interviewer race and child race on disclosures by alleged child sexual abuse victims during forensic interviews. Despite findings that supportiveness of caretaker, gender of interviewer, gender of child, and age of child affect disclosure, previous studies have failed to examine race as a variable impacting disclosure in a real-world setting. The study examined 220 cases from an archive of reports generated from forensic interviews in an urban setting. The reports were reviewed and coded for degree of disclosure, focusing on African American and Caucasian children and interviewers. The results indicate that child race and the interaction of child

race and interviewer race reliably distinguished between no disclosure, tentative disclosure, and disclosure with detailed account of activity, while interviewer race alone failed to serve as a significant predictor. The interaction between child race and interviewer race was not in the predicted direction, with cross-race dyads disclosing more than same-race dyads. Results are discussed in the context of real-world applications versus the previous analogue child sexual abuse literature.

Gilligan, P., & Akhtar, S. (2005). Cultural barriers to the disclosure of child sexual abuse in Asian communities: Listening to what women say. *British Journal of Social Work, 36*(8), 1361-1377. DOI:10.1093/bjsw/bch309

There is apparent under-reporting of child sexual abuse in Britain's Asian communities and a varied capacity amongst professionals to respond with cultural competence. Professional approaches originate in cultural contexts, which are often different from those of most British Asians. If the proportion of children and non-abusing carers from Asian communities who access relevant services is to increase, professionals need to develop better understandings of cultural imperatives which determine behaviour in those communities. Consultations with Asian women in Bradford reinforce the view that culturally competent practice and respectful dialogue are essential to the protection of children. They also highlight a number of recurring themes. Members of Asian communities are aware of child sexual abuse, they recognize that the issue needs to be addressed by all communities and they report that many of those affected within their own communities have found it difficult to access relevant services. These consultations, like reports of similar work elsewhere, indicate that difficulties, which appear to arise from Asian women's fears about how agencies will respond, are frequently compounded by the impact of cultural imperatives arising from izzat (honour/respect), haya (modesty) and sharam (shame/embarrassment), which have a considerable influence on how many will behave.