

BOOK REVIEW

***Child Sexual Abuse:
Forensic Issues in Evidence, Impact, and Management***

Edited by India Bryce and Wayne Petherick

Cambridge, MA: Academic Press, 2020, 717 pages

The editors of this book have solicited contributions from sixty-five highly qualified and scholarly authors from around the world on child sexual abuse, victimology, stalking, and sexual assaults. Although many of the chapters are couched in the Australian justice and social systems, it contains a wealth of information in epic proportions about child sex offenders and victims of child sex abuse.

India Bryce is a doctoral candidate at the University of Southern Queensland, and holds a Masters Degree in Guidance and Counseling from James Cook University and a Masters Degree in Social Work from Monash University. She has published books, book chapters, and journal articles on child protection, maltreatment, and cumulative harm. Wayne Petherick is a forensic criminologist at Bond University. He has authored or co-authored over sixty book chapters, books, and journals articles. In addition, he has lectured across Australia and the United States on forensic victimology, stalking, and sexual assaults.

Part one of the book tackles the challenge of identifying the types of child sex abuse. Although no single, universal cross-cultural definition of child sex abuse exists, the term pedophilia is a helpful psychological classification while child molester is a sociological term. "Some child molesters are pedophiles, but not all pedophiles are child molesters, thus the terms are not interchangeable" (6). The most prevalent type of child sex abuse is intrafamilial, meaning the molesters are parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, or grandparents. Extrafamilial child sex abuse is at the hands of acquaintances, neighbors, and extended family not related to the victim. Finally, stranger perpetrated abuse occurs when the victim has no relationship with the offender.

Chapter two is devoted to offender subtypes that demonstrate that no two child sex offenders are alike. "A person who engages in any sexual activity with a person younger than the age of consent cannot justify that sexual activities were consensual, at least in the eyes of the law" (28). While the age of consent laws vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, the age range is most commonly between fourteen and eighteen. Child sex abusers are commonly categorized into two groups, fixated and regressed. The fixated pedophile possesses an exclusive attraction to children, and the regressed subtype has sexual relationships with adults but molests children as a substitute for an adult.

In chapter three, the authors explain how corporal punishment teaches a child to comply with adult requests and how this practice facilitates a child accepting an adult's request in a child sex abuse effort. "This link . . . presents a further argument supporting the total ban on corporal punishment in all settings . . . as 59 countries in the world have already implemented" (57). Evangelical Christians will argue that judicial use of corporal punishment is a biblically sound practice. Children are reticent about disclosing sexual abuse for many reasons: guilt, shame, fear of retaliation, fear of not being believed or blamed, conjugal violence and dysfunction in the family, grooming and manipulation, and lack of someone to tell.

Chapter four is devoted to the sexual exploitation of children through travel and tourism. Thousands of individuals are traveling to sexually abuse children in countries where this practice is tolerated. One rapidly growing aspect of the sex tourism market is known as voluntourism. Voluntourists are people who agree to work in non-governmental and charity organizations in exchange for travel and accommodations that grant them access to children legitimately. The author of this chapter posits that this activity is a form of "modern sex slavery as the perpetrators exploit the young and that the abusive encounters between sex tourists and the young people they abuse reflect the need for power, control, and dominations" (74).

Chapter five explores child sex offences on the internet. The internet is perceived as a place that provides a private and anonymous space to explore and meet one's sexual needs. Unfortunately, abusers of pornography on the internet fail to appreciate that children are harmed to facilitate their involvement. Even though police agencies have had some success in prosecuting developers of criminal internet sites, the availability of encryption and other privacy measures now help to avoid detection, which has led to the "Darknet" where all manner of child exploitation material can be exchanged with anonymity. As a result, there are a growing number of specialized treatment programs for those addicted to internet pornography. Part One also includes discussions of the complexities of sibling sexual abuse, female sex offenders, and the sexual abuse of the disabled.

Part Two of the book focuses on the impact of child sex abuse. A child sex offender is someone who commits an offense against an individual deemed to be a child in the jurisdiction in which the offense occurred. A child sex offense includes online offenders where material is depicted that exploits children under sixteen. For child sex offenders and the pastoral care workers interacting with them to empathize with their victims, it is necessary to understand the impact that abuse has on a child's neurodevelopment. The impact is a myriad of biopsychosocial sequelae contributing to a significantly increased risk for psychological and physical pathology and early mortality. "The earlier the abuse and subsequent trauma, the more pervasive the potential impact on a child" (187). The impact of child sexual abuse in churches or para-church organizations on the spirituality or relationship with God of the child is addressed in chapter eleven. In addition, Part Two also explores in great detail the psycho/physical impacts on child abuse victims that last a lifetime and how these outcomes

create a propensity for revictimization. Finally, the current news is replete with reports of sexual abuse and human trafficking on the United States' southern border. The complexities of human trafficking as it relates to child sex abuse are explored in chapter sixteen.

In Part Three of *Child Sex Abuse*, the focus is on response. Recognizing, detecting, and reporting child sex abuse is problematic for all professionals, including pastoral care workers. It is also essential for children to be educated in ways that increase their self-protection skills. Recantations and retractions by child sex victims are common and can be caused by many things, including shame, fear, family pressure, and material gain, Chapter twenty-two addresses interviewing children, which is aimed at judicial and social services. However, the chapter contains many ideas for pastoral workers dealing with a confiding child.

Finally, the author of chapter twenty-five explains the extraordinary challenges in the reunification of intrafamilial child sex offenders. The process of reunification can promote healing for the child. However, "there is an inherent level of risk involved in returning a child home from substitute care, and it is likely that some families will fail to keep their children safe from additional harm" (547). Interventional approaches for child sex offenders are discussed in chapter twenty-six. The lengthy appendices to this chapter are helpful tools for pastoral care workers interacting with convicted pedophiles. Two widely discussed models of community-based programs for convicted child sex offenders appear in chapter twenty-seven. The Good Lives Model and the Circles of Support and Accountability models have tremendous potential in preventing re-offending, could be church-based. The Good Lives Model is a clinical approach to treating sexual offenders that relies on the offenders' understanding of their physical, social, and psychological well-being. Circles of Support and Accountability is a model that uses a small circle of volunteers to assist offenders in re-integration into the community.

Child Sex Abuse is a literary encyclopedia covering the despicable subject of child sex offenders and their victims. The book contains large amounts of essential information for pastoral care workers ministering to convicted child sex abusers.

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