

CHRISTIAN **counseling** TODAY
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**Sexual Harassment
in the Workplace:
Laws and Ethics**
Jeanneane Maxon

**Recovering from
Sexual Trauma:
What Every Counselor
Needs to Know**
Heather Davediuk Gingrich

**Shattered Innocence:
Childhood Sexual Abuse**
Diane Langberg

**Restoring Sexual Respect:
Stand Up, Step Up, Speak Up**
June Hunt

**Subtle Serpent:
Sexual Acting Out**
David Hawkins

**Power and Control:
The Trauma of Rape**
Molly-Catherine Goodson

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For I know the plans I have for you, "declares the Lord."
Plans to prosper you and not to harm you,
plans to give you hope and a future."

Jeremiah 29:11

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Jared Pingleton, Psy.D., serves as Vice President of Professional Development for AACC. As a clinical psychologist and credentialed minister, Jared is dually trained in both psychology and theology and specializes in the theoretical and clinical integration of the two disciplines. In professional practice since 1977, Jared is the author or coauthor of six books, including *Making Magnificent Marriages*, and numerous journal articles.

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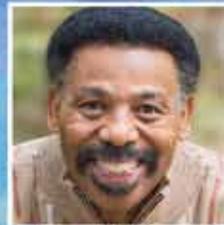
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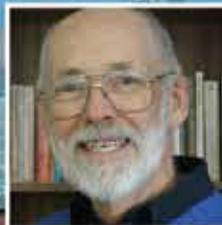
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When Sexuality and Trauma Collide

Genesis tells us that, "... In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female..." (Genesis 5:1-2). The fall of humankind in the Garden had many consequences, but one immediate result was that Adam and Eve became aware of their nakedness. In reality, they had always been naked... only now, the effects of sin brought with it a profound sense of shame, guilt, and an anxious fear that resulted in an attempt to hide from their Creator. What the Lord had fashioned as something beautiful, sacred, and holy became tarnished, and in the millennia since that tragic moment, sexuality has been twisted with lust, greed, abuse, violence, a disregard for innocence and, in many cases, a grotesque showcase for the depravity of man to be on full display before the eyes of the world.

The truth is that we are sexual beings (by design) and despite any gender confusion or identity concerns that may exist, we will always be sexual beings. In other words, there is no getting around the issue, even though it may be the "elephant in the room." However, childhood sexual abuse and pedophilia, incest, prostitution and sex trafficking, sexual addiction, harassment among both sexes, the degradation of women, rape and other forms of sexual trauma are examples of how Satan, as the master deceiver, has attempted to distort and despoil God's creation. The Church cannot, and must not, turn a blind eye to such threats.

The media in all its various forms, as well as much of the current national dialogue and elements within our cultural context, are inundated with



sexuality. Sometimes the messages and images are subtle and nuanced... far too often they are graphic, violent, and only objectify their victims. Everyone is surrounded by sexual themes, but many are also uncomfortable, embarrassed, uninformed, and silent about this critically important topic. In fact, when it comes to sexual trauma, be it harassment, abuse, rape, etc., silence is often the price one must pay for safety and survival, as false as these promises may be.

So, in this issue of *CCT*, we felt it was important to have "The Sex Talk" with our members. Sadly, millions of young children are exposed and traumatized by horrific sexual experiences years before they are developmentally mature enough to process the event. Diane Langberg

addresses the shattered innocence that comes from childhood sexual abuse and Katariina Rosenblatt delves into the dark and sinister world of human and sex trafficking. On another front, attorney and counselor, Molly-Catherine Goodson, discusses the trauma of rape, the difficult realities, and the legal process that survivors must often face.

The #MeToo Movement has dominated news cycles over the past year and engendered quite a bit of conversation and debate throughout the country. Shannon Ethridge examines some of the core tenets of the movement and how to take proactive steps in healing and recovery. Legal expert, Jeanneane Maxon, reviews current definitions and national guidelines related to

What is driving many of these sinful and dysfunctional behaviors in the first place? How should we approach the counseling process?

sexual harassment in the workplace, and June Hunt tackles the subject of having and maintaining a sense of mutual respect between the sexes.

Common questions for many counselors who work in the field of sexual trauma include: What is driving many of these sinful and dysfunctional behaviors in the first place? How should we approach the counseling process? What, then, should the Church's response be when members of the faith community violate sexual boundaries and social norms? In that regard, forensic psychologist, David Hawkins, addresses the complex world of sexual acting out, and Heather Gingrich outlines key factors (both clinically and spiritually) in treating sexual trauma. Finally, Wade Mullen offers a biblical orientation for Christians

to consider in finding the right balance between grace and mercy and accountability and justice.

In taking a closer look at many of these difficult and heartwrenching topics, it is essential to be prepared as mental health practitioners and people helpers. We have been called as His ambassadors of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18-20) and must bear in mind that "... a faithful envoy brings healing" (Proverbs 13:17). The broken and wounded, such as survivors of sexual abuse and trauma, are always close to the heart of God. They need a safe place, trusting voices, and compassionate hearts in which to experience healing and restoration. Beyond all else, this is a sacred trust... one we should approach prayerfully and with great care and humble diligence. ✨



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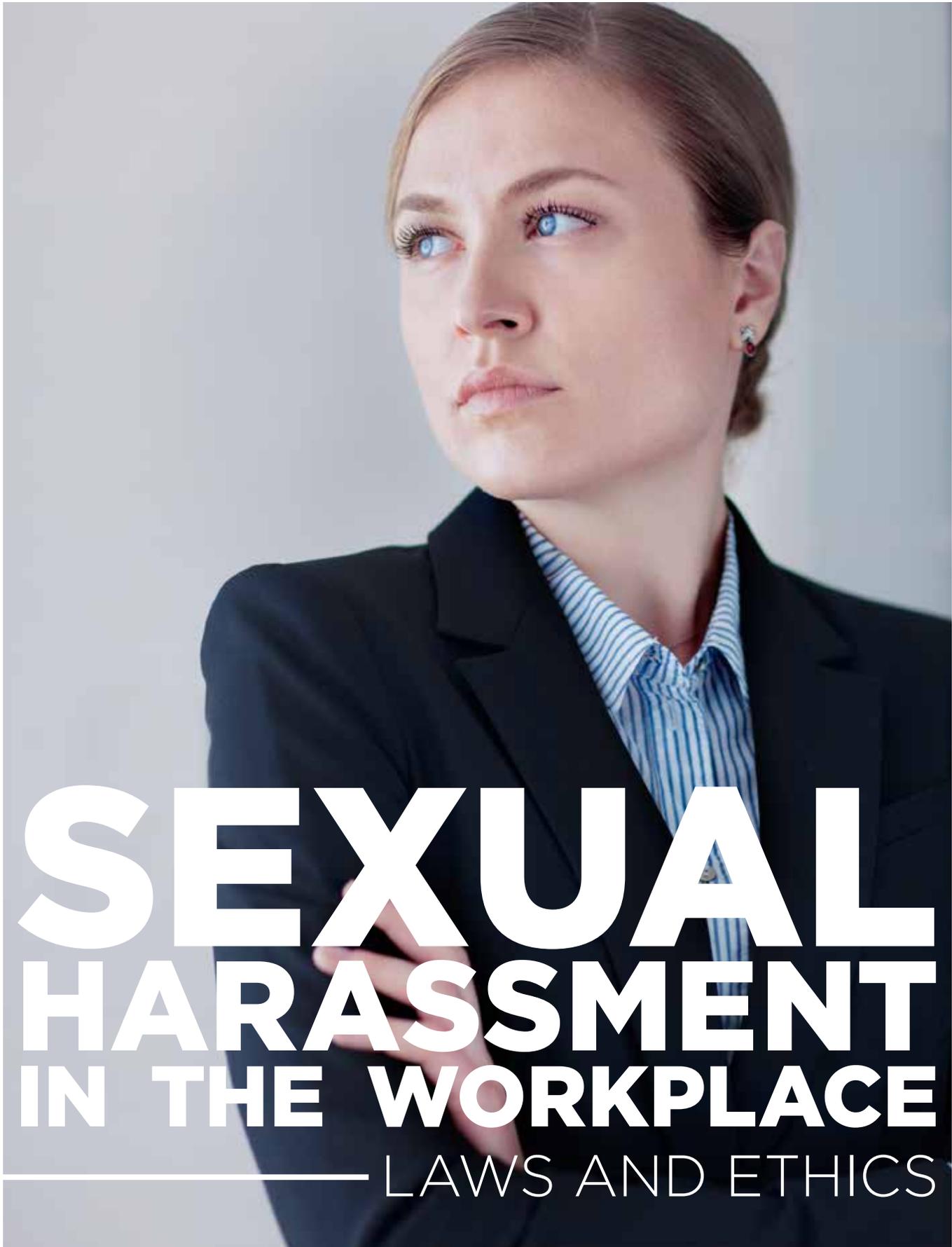


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SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

LAWS AND ETHICS

Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking,
which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.

– Ephesians 5:4 (NIV)

As Christians, we should be concerned about sexual harassment in the workplace, which intimidates the vulnerable and erodes the spirit. With increasing and often surprising reports of sexual harassment in various industries, we can be grateful that the law provides avenues of protection for those vulnerable to harassers. Christian counselors play a unique and important role in helping clients navigate the waters of sexual harassment, which are often wrought with fear and confusion. Victims may wonder if they are overreacting or may fear termination or other employer-based retaliation should they complain. Understanding the basic laws and policies concerning sexual harassment will equip Christian counselors with the tools they need to walk with clients who face these situations. The law clearly strives to protect those who speak up regarding offensive behavior of a sexual nature in the workplace and prohibits employers from taking adverse action against victims who do.

What is the Legal Definition of Sexual Harassment?

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) defines sexual harassment as:

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.¹

Legal protections from sexual harassment arise from Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII). This Act prevents discrimination on the basis of "race, color, religion, sex and national origin."² While the term "sexual harassment" is not specifically mentioned in Title VII, the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that "sexual harassment" is included within the Title VII prohibition against *sex* discrimination,³ which may also be expanded to prevent discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation/identity, depending on the laws in your state.

Title VII, a federal law, only applies to employers with 15 or more employees (on a full-time or full-time equivalent basis). For employers with fewer than 15 employees, state law applies. While several states have laws expanding the federal protections against sexual harassment,

many are simply silent. The best way to find the law in your state is to contact your state Department of Labor or a qualified employment law attorney.

Sexual harassment covers a wide range of behaviors, from physical sexual assault to references to an adult as "girl, boy, doll, babe, honey, sweetheart, or hunk." Other behaviors include: sexual jokes (whether or not specifically directed at the victim), unwelcome questions about the victim's dating or sexual activities or massages. The United Nations has published a helpful list of actions that might constitute sexual harassment titled, "What is Sexual Harassment?"⁴

Courts recognize sexual harassment claims as falling under one of two categories: *quid pro quo* or "hostile work environment." For both, the victim must find the conduct unwelcome or unwanted. *Quid pro quo* (Latin meaning, "something for something") harassment occurs when a harasser offers or demands a victim engage in sexual acts in exchange for something else.

Examples of *quid pro quo* harassment could include a supervisor or other person of power:

- demanding performance of a sexual act in exchange for a pay raise, promotion or other employee benefit (e.g., "Sleep with me and I will give you an extra week of paid time off.")
- demanding a sexual act in exchange for refraining from taking an adverse employment action (e.g., "Sleep with me or I will fire you.")

JEANNEANE MAXON

A hostile work environment occurs when an employee suffers from emotional or mental anguish due to repeated and unwanted harassment, such as sexual advances, exposure to offensive jokes, and/or discussion of images of a sexual nature. Courts often have significant discretion in determining whether the conduct in question arises to sexual harassment.

Examples of hostile work environment harassment could include:

- exposure to pornographic images around the victim's workspace
- repeated exposure to unwelcome sexual advances, jokes or comments
- unwanted touching, leaning over, covering or pinching
- unwanted pressure for dates

Sexual Harassment Misconceptions

Counselors play a vital role in helping clients dispel common misconceptions regarding sexual harassment. Perhaps the most common misconception is that sexual harassment only applies when a male is harassing a female. To the contrary, the harasser and victim can be either a man or woman, and same-sex harassment can also exist.⁵ Likewise, "the harasser can be the victim's supervisor, an agent of the employer, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or [even] a non-employee."⁶

Another misconception is that only the person subject to the harassment is entitled to complain. However, the EEOC has noted that "the victim does not have to be the person harassed, but could be anyone affected by the offensive conduct."⁷

Additionally, the victim need not suffer from economic injury or discharge to have a sexual harassment claim.⁸

Reporting Sexual Harassment

If an individual feels he/she is being sexually harassed in the workplace, he/she should ask the harasser(s) to stop the offensive conduct, assuming the victim feels safe in doing so. Alternatively, the victim should promptly talk to a member of the employer's Human Resource Department, a trusted supervisor or another workplace leader with authority to investigate the claim and take remedial steps. If the employer has a sexual harassment policy in place, the victim should attempt to follow it as best he/she can. If the victim has followed the policy and remains unsatisfied with the results, he/she may escalate the matter by filing a complaint with the EEOC.⁹ In fiscal year 2011, the EEOC resolved more than 12,000 cases with monetary benefits to the victims totaling over \$52 million. Unless state law has extended the time period, complaints to the EEOC must be made within 180 days of the offensive conduct.

Preventing Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

Title VII obligates employers to strive to prohibit sex discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace. To this end, employers should have a sexual harassment policy that has been reviewed by a qualified attorney. New employees should be provided a copy of the policy and encouraged to follow its procedures. Employees should be made to understand that sexual harassment will not be tolerated. Such steps typically include a sexual harassment training occurring at least annually.

If a sexual harassment complaint is filed, a qualified individual should investigate the complaint. The investigator should be an unbiased individual intent on discovering the truth in a fair and evenhanded manner. If the investigator determines sexual harassment has occurred, remedial steps should be taken to stop these behaviors and prevent future harassment. The employer may also choose to provide remuneration to the victim. As always, employers should consult with an employment law attorney should this situation arise. Helpful resources for employers include the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM),¹⁰ the EEOC,¹¹ and the Sexual Harassment Prevention Center.¹²

Sexual Harassment in Churches and Ministries

All too often, sexual harassment occurs in churches and Christian ministries. Churches and ministries must be especially vigilant and not assume their workplaces are free from sexual harassment simply because their employees are people of faith. Churches and ministries should follow the same sexual harassment advice as previously given, even when the ministry is predominately or wholly comprised of members of the same sex.

Additionally, churches and ministries must take steps to prevent sexual harassment of parishioners and others whom they serve, especially vulnerable groups like children and youth. Churches and ministries should include parishioners and those they serve, as well as employees, with sexual harassment policies and protections. Background checks on all members seeking to work with minors or vulnerable individuals should also be run. Many churches and ministries prohibit unsupervised one-on-one meetings between members of the opposite sex. Some have constructed private offices and conference rooms with large glass windows to discourage inappropriate behaviors.

Churches and ministries should also consider obtaining insurance that covers sexual abuse and harassment claims for additional protection. If the victim is agreeable, churches and ministries may propose using a neutral Christian mediator to help facilitate resolution to any sexual harassment complaint. Peacemaker Ministries may be a helpful resource.¹³ Sexual crimes, however,



should be promptly reported to the police or other authorities such as Child Protection Services. Churches and ministries have the additional benefit of resources provided by any applicable national conference, council or other national governing authority. The Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) maintains sample sexual harassment policies specifically tailored for churches and Christian ministries.¹⁴ Christian counselors can help clients experiencing sexual harassment by directing them to resources, such as the EEOC and attorneys, and encouraging good communication with employers, especially when the client(s) is facing fear and intimidation. ✕

The information contained in this article is provided for education purposes only. Nothing in this article should be construed as legal advice, and readers should seek advice from a qualified attorney within their jurisdiction for concerns/questions on specific matters. Law varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.



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Endnotes

- 1 U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. "Facts Sheet: Sexual Harassment." 14 Dec. 2009. Available at: <https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/publications/upload/fs-sex.pdf> (Accessed 19 Feb. 2018).
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- 7 *Ibid.*
- 8 *Ibid.*
- 9 Instructions of filing an EEOC claim can be found here: <https://www.eeoc.gov/employees/charge.cfm>.
- 10 Shrm.org.
- 11 EEOC.gov.
- 12 Stopharass.com.
- 13 <http://peacemaker.net/about/>.
- 14 www.ecfa.org.



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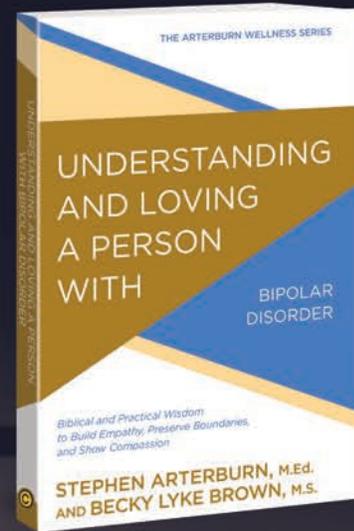
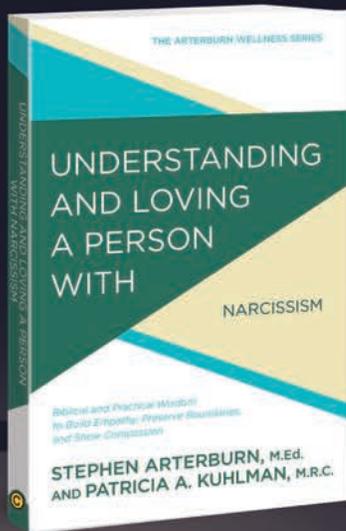
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RECOVERING FROM SEXUAL TRAUMA: *What Every Counselor Needs to Know*

“#MeToo!” Since October 2017, these two, simple words have sparked an exponentially expanding movement that has caught worldwide attention. Survivors of sexual assault are breaking the silence that has bound them with shame and are broadcasting the secrets that have protected their perpetrators. What the long-term effects of the “#MeToo” movement will be are yet to be determined. There is a good chance, however, that it may become less stigmatizing for those who have been abused to admit to having been victimized. As a result, Christian counselors may experience an influx of counselees who present with a background of sexual trauma. We need to be prepared.

How is Sexual Trauma Different from Other Trauma?

Our sexuality is integral to who we are as individuals. Therefore, trauma of a sexual nature is violation against a core aspect of the self. While sexual assault by a stranger is horrific, it is more common for the perpetrator to be someone known to the victim. The added sense of betrayal experienced by victims at the hand of someone they thought they could trust adds to the sense of injury. When abuse is chronic, and/or happens in childhood, the sexual trauma has the potential to impact every area of an individual’s life, including difficulty regulating emotion, an inability to develop a fully integrated sense of self, and problems developing healthy, secure attachments to others.

Post-traumatic symptoms, such as flashbacks, nightmares, avoidance of trauma triggers, hyperarousal, and so on, may be experienced by survivors of sexual trauma just as they are by those who have gone through a natural disaster or have witnessed a fatal car accident. However, for the reasons previously mentioned, the consequences of sexual assault are much more pervasive. This places sexual trauma, particularly in cases where there is chronic sexual abuse in childhood, under the broader category of complex trauma.

Phased Treatment

Judith Herman, in her groundbreaking book, *Trauma and Recovery* (2015), was the first researcher to discuss differences in treatment approaches between what is now commonly known as complex trauma (or complex PTSD) and PTSD. Her concept of phased treatment has become the standard of care for complex PTSD, including sexual abuse. Its use has been shown to lessen the risk of counselees decompensating emotionally to the detriment of day-to-day functioning by ensuring that adequate coping mechanisms are in place prior to processing the trauma.

Following, I briefly discuss how to approach each phase of treatment, using slightly modified labels for each phase. A more detailed description, with practical suggestions and examples of session transcripts, is given in my book, *Restoring the Shattered Self* (2013), for readers who want to more fully understand the process.

The time spent in each phase will vary depending on the particular client. A young woman who was healthy emotionally and spiritually prior to a single incidence of date rape may need to spend only a session or two in Phase I before spending several sessions processing her trauma in Phase II, and ending counseling with a couple of sessions in Phase III. On the other hand, a man who was sexually abused several times a week from early childhood into adolescence may require years in both Phases I and II, and another year or two in Phase III for a total of a decade or more.

Phase I: Safety and Symptom Stabilization. Developing a sense of safety in the therapeutic relationship is absolutely essential to successful

treatment of counsees who have been traumatized sexually. This is not as easy as it may sound! How does a sexual assault survivor (SAS) know that you (as a caregiver) are trustworthy when someone else they trusted violated them? If the perpetrator was a pastor or another Christian counselor (yes, unfortunately it happens), you may be even more suspect. Only with much empathy, compassion, patience, understanding, and time (often months or even years), where you will be tested many times over, will the therapeutic relationship be able to develop to the depth that is necessary. A solid, truly safe relationship is not only a prerequisite for doing Phase II trauma processing work, but can also be the key ingredient of broader healing.

Post-traumatic symptoms are often what bring survivors into counseling and can be a challenge to manage. Helpful interventions include teaching grounding techniques that use counsees' five senses to help them stay in the room with you. For example, asking individuals to tell you five things they see or hear, suggesting they rub their bare feet against the carpet or encouraging them to suck on a sour candy or drink ice water, etc. can be helpful. Relaxation techniques and Christian-based mindful techniques (see Tan, 2011) can also be used.

Lesser-known, but particularly effective, symptom containment techniques involve what has become known as "parts work." This involves acknowledging that we all have aspects of ourselves that we are not fully conscious of, but may be hijacking behavior. For example, there may be an eight-year-old inner child state that holds memories of a particular traumatic event that has been kept hidden from the adult self. While compartmentalizing in this way may have helped the individual function in the past, what was hidden may now be leaking into conscious awareness through nightmares, flashbacks or intense emotions that have become separated from the cognitive memory of the incident. These cut-off or, to use the technical term, dissociated parts of self can be negotiated with and helped to temporarily contain such memories, emotions or behavior (including suicidal behavior) until the counsee is ready to enter Phase II work.

Phase II: Trauma Processing. Trauma processing involves the SAS narrating incidents of trauma in detail, while experiencing (to some extent) the emotions, physical sensations, and behaviors that are connected to cognitive memories. Brain research gives support to what has been known by clinicians for several decades—that developing a trauma narrative is essential. However, proper pacing of the work and good use of Phase I coping and containment skills are also necessary in Phase II to prevent the SAS from becoming overwhelmed and potentially re-traumatized.

Bearing witness to a survivor's trauma by listening to horrific, graphic details of specific memories is not for

the faint of heart, but it is necessary. In addition, hearing the stories of how perpetrators intentionally inflict pain and suffering on others can produce depths of rage and despair. The intense mix of feelings of guilt, shame, rage, self-loathing, depression, self-blame, hatred, and so on, which are commonly expressed, can feel overwhelming to counselors, particularly if we also experience some of them. Rather than facilitating expressions of emotion, we can inadvertently shut down the process due to our own discomfort.

Dealing explicitly with the traumatic memories can turn an SAS's world upside down. An SAS finds out, for example, that the family members he or she thought were close are actually a danger, or the youth pastor who he or she respected was a perpetrator. It takes time to pick up the pieces of their lives and adjust to a new view of the themselves, others, and their world.

Phase III: Consolidation and Resolution. This final treatment phase involves learning to live life as a healthy, whole person. During this phase, survivors might choose different relationships, work environments, or even change churches, recognizing as they have grown, their needs have changed. Counseling in this phase will not be as specifically trauma-focused.

Tips for Dealing with Spirituality

Helping survivors navigate complicated spiritual issues can be daunting. Discerning if, and when, spiritual resources should be used in counseling and developing a theology of suffering yourself are essential.

Carefully discern when to use spiritual resources. I have had Christian survivors defiantly state that if I suggest we pray together or pull out my Bible, they will walk out of my office and never return! They are not ready to totally give up on their relationship with God, which is why they chose to come to a Christian counselor. However, they are angry and confused and want to put Him on hold for the time being. Our job is to pray on our own (implicitly vs. explicitly) for such counsees outside of the counseling room and wait patiently for God to work. In these situations, we become the face of Christ. When, over time, we have earned their trust, God may be viewed as trustworthy, too.

Develop a theology of suffering. We all suffer, but the suffering of survivors is profound. As counselors, we need to think through our theology of suffering so we can address the questions they raise, as well as come to grips ourselves with why God allows such pain.

SASs often ask, "Why didn't God protect me?" and may be angry at Him for not stopping the abuse. If their perpetrators were their fathers or a father-figure, survivors may view God the Father as punitive or judgmental

In these situations, we become the face of Christ. When, over time, we have earned their trust, God may be viewed as trustworthy, too.

rather than a source of compassion, love, and forgiveness. Giving space for such expressions of doubt and carefully choosing when to challenge bad theology are important.

SAs can easily identify with the powerful emotions expressed by the psalmist who often railed at God when he perceived the Lord was not there for him. A good place to start is with Psalm 22, 23, 88, and 89.

Another passage of Scripture that speaks to the experience of survivors is the heartwrenching account found in 2 Samuel 13:1-22 of the rape of Tamar by her half-brother, Amnon. Tamar pleads with Amnon, saying, “Don’t do this wicked thing. What about me? Where could I get rid of my disgrace?” (v. 13). Her shame is palpable. So are her depression and despair. We are told that Tamar put ashes on her head, tore her robe, and “went away, weeping aloud as she went” (v. 19). Sadly, her abuse impacted the rest of her life, as she “lived in her brother Absalom’s house, a desolate woman” (v. 22).

Is There Hope for Perpetrators?

With God, all things are possible. However, the reality is the recidivism rate for perpetrators of sexual abuse is high. Most treatments are not very successful. Not all, but many perpetrators have been victimized themselves. If they work through their own trauma, my experience has been they are better able to own what they have done to their victims and no longer have the need to reenact their own trauma by sexually perpetrating against others. However, many are not willing or able to admit to their own victimization.

Court-ordered offender treatment tends to be primarily in groups because of the ease with which perpetrators deny or minimize their actions, and the degree to which they

are able to fool others, including counselors, into thinking they are cured. Churches can be havens for pedophiles because Christians tend to want to think the best of people and are vulnerable to manipulation (see books and videos available through the Faithtrust Institute, www.faitrustinstitute.org). As a precaution, individuals who have perpetrated sexual offences, particularly pedophiles, should never be placed in ministry positions where they have access to children, no matter how healed or Christlike they may appear.

The Holy Spirit is the Great Counselor

While work with survivors is arduous and gut-wrenching, the good news is we are not alone! When we invite the Holy Spirit into the process by listening for His voice both within and outside of sessions with Christian and non-Christian clients, it lessens the burden. When I tell my students my favorite course to teach is “Counseling for Trauma and Abuse,” they are sometimes incredulous. However, what keeps me going is seeing the end result—the survivors, no matter how traumatized, coming out on the other side psychologically and spiritually whole. ✕



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SHATTERED INNOCENCE

CHILDHOOD SEXUAL ABUSE

Child sexual abuse—what a tangle of words! A child: little one; not mature; malleable; one in need of protection, nurture, and training. Now think of that child misused; treated with cruelty or violence; purposely injured by sexual means. Research done by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC)¹ indicates that one in six boys and one in four girls are sexually abused by the age of 18. In a 2012 maltreatment report, of the victims who were sexually abused, 26% were between 12 and 14, and 34% were younger than nine. Nearly 70% of all reports of sexual assault (including adults) occur to children ages 17 and under.

Child sexual abuse is a criminal offense and punishable by law. It includes any sexual act perpetrated by an adult on a minor or between two minors when one exerts some kind of power (e.g., size, position, age, etc. over another or any forcing or coercing a child to participate in a sexual act). Sexual abuse can also occur without physical contact, such as in voyeurism, exhibitionism, exposure to pornography or communicating via Internet or phone in a sexual manner. Most child sexual abuse occurs in the context of a relationship with an adult from whom the child had every reason to expect protection, warmth, and care. It is usually perpetrated by a family member or someone known to the child. Sexual abuse can be a one-time occurrence or span many years. A child is considered unable to consent due to developmental immaturity and an inability to understand sexual behavior.

The average age for abuse to begin is six for girls and 10 for boys. For a smaller sample, it begins before age six. The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ)² says that 14% are abused prior to age six. The majority of abusers are male (3-7% female). Please note that means *there are* female abusers. Most perpetrators are considerably older (though there is an increase in younger perpetrators). Law enforcement officials said that in 1995, 33% of all those arrested for sex crimes nationwide were younger than 18 (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, 9/98).

Years ago, child sexual abuse was believed to impact mostly female victims. More recently, we are learning new details about male victims as they are speaking out at higher rates. An article in the *AMA Journal*³ says boys born in poverty and raised in homes without a father are at greater risk for rape. By age 12, the rate of using alcohol, cocaine, marijuana, and IV drugs was 25-50 times higher for boys who have sexually abused. Abused boys have 12 times the normal suicide rate and go on to have higher rates of mental illness. Recent research regarding men who are in and out of homeless shelters suggests a 40% rate of child abuse of some kind. Research shows that male prisoners have been assaulted *prior* to prison, usually during childhood, at staggering rates. Prisons, homeless shelters, and rehab centers show elevated numbers of a history of child abuse. When I have spoken in homeless shelters or residential rehab centers, I have been told that 50% or more of the males there have a history of sexual violation. The reality surrounding abuse of males has left an untold number to suffer in silence.

What Do We Know about Sex Offenders?

Although not without some controversy, research done by Dr. Gene Abel in the 1980s asked voluntary sex offender clients how many total offenses they had committed.⁴ Confidentiality was guaranteed. The results stunned the professional community. Two hundred thirty-two child molesters reported 55,000 attempted incidents, claiming success in 38,000 cases with 17,000 total victims. Those male offenders who

molested out-of-home female victims averaged 20 victims each, and those male offenders who molested out-of-home males averaged 15 each. In his research, Dr. Abel computed the chances of being caught. It was three percent.

Dr. Anna Salter, author of *Predators*, says such things exist because of the problem of deception.⁵ Decades of research shows that people cannot reliably tell who is lying and who is not, yet most people believe they can. It is a very threatening idea to think we cannot really know whether or not someone is trustworthy.

Living a double life is a powerful strategy. Socially responsible behavior in public causes people to drop their guards and allow access to children. The ability to charm, be nice, and be likeable is critical to gaining access. Author of *The Gift of Fear*, Gavin de Becker, said the following: “Niceness is a decision... a strategy of social interaction; *it is not a character trait.*”⁶ It is a misconception to think child molesters are somehow different from the rest of us. They can be good friends, loyal employees, and responsible citizens. The difference between a child molester and other people is this—they have sex with children. There are often no telltale signs in their public behavior. This is a critical truth for churches to grasp. We think we can tell good people from bad. Yet, God tells us we are such deceived creatures we cannot know our own hearts. We say, “I know him; I trust him.” Jesus said, “I know him; I don’t trust him” (John 2:24).

Child Sexual Abuse

All mental health professionals are mandated to report knowledge of child sexual abuse to their states’ Child Protective Services or the police... or both. Clergy are also increasingly mandated in many states, though in some there is an exception for knowledge gained in the confessional (something that rarely exists in Protestant circles). Regardless of potential legal mandates, church leaders must also

DIANE LANGBERG



consider the moral and spiritual factors that exist. It is critical that churches know when and whom to report to and have the humility to know that they are not trained in forensics or criminal investigation. No church would presume to investigate a murder. Yet, many do presume they are qualified to investigate the life-altering crime of child sexual abuse. That is a failure to obey the law of the land (Romans 1:1-2) and, frankly, arrogant. The Church is desperately needed by the abused, faithful truth tellers, as well as the ones who weep with those who weep... but *not* as an investigator.

Effects of Child Sexual Abuse

Though not all sexual abuse is irreparably traumatic—it is *always* damaging and causes suffering. Abuse that begins at a young age and is chronic causes life-shaping damage to malleable children, for they have been marinated in the acid of premature sexual exposure. The assault is happening *to a child* who is, by definition, limited, dependent, vulnerable, and malleable. Sexual abuse of a child is, of course, often physical in excruciating ways. It also carries emotional, relational, mental, and spiritual baggage, impacting development again and again.

As a child, your options are very limited. You have few resources, little knowledge, no support, and no physical strength. And in many cases, you are dependent on your abusers for food and housing. Those who should, in fact, rescue, protect, and comfort are the very ones delivering the blows to your personhood. The betrayal is enormous. You are left with whatever you can find internally. You desperately need an oasis. How will you get that when repeatedly being abused? You must find a “narcotic”... a

way to numb the pain. You find a way to self-protect. You find a way to leave. Whatever it takes, that is what you do. The only other option is insanity. Hence, we find drug and alcohol addictions, self-injury, risk-taking behaviors, repeated abusive relationships, and overwhelming anxiety, dysregulated emotions and dissociation. Sexual abuse also has a profound spiritual impact. God is viewed through the lens of abuse. Who He is and what He thinks about the survivor is understood based on who daddy is, or grandfather, or youth pastor, or whomever. Victims have learned about love, trust, hope, and faith through the experience of sexual abuse. They have also learned about the unseen through the visible. They have been taught lies.

God’s call to the Christian world—mental health professionals and the Church—is to label this ungodly, life and soul-damaging evil by its right name. It is *not* a mistake. It is *not* poor judgment. It is *evil* done to a child and God’s response is that death would be an appropriate option for the perpetrator (see Matthew 18:6). To minimize that is to step out of God’s truth. Truth is to be spoken to both victim and perpetrator. To fail to do so is a failure of love. Our task is to live out before them the character of God Himself in the flesh. It is to follow in the footsteps of our Savior who boldly spoke the truth, who welcomed the children and extended Himself as a refuge to the wounded and afraid. It has long been my prayer that instead of protecting our institutions, reputations and wealth, that we, in the body of Christ, would follow our heads faithfully in caring for His little ones. Failing to do so is failing perpetrators, victims, and God. ✠



DIANE LANGBERG, PH.D., is globally recognized for her 45 years of clinical work with trauma victims, having trained caregivers on six continents. She directs a group practice in Jenkintown, Pennsylvania, and her most recent book is *Suffering and the Heart of God: How Trauma*

Destroys and Christ Restores.

Endnotes

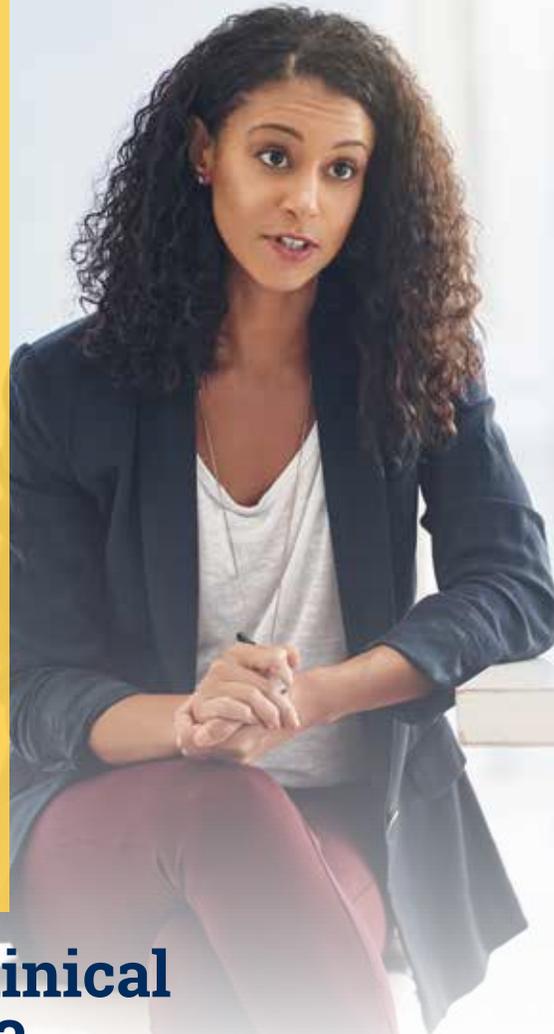
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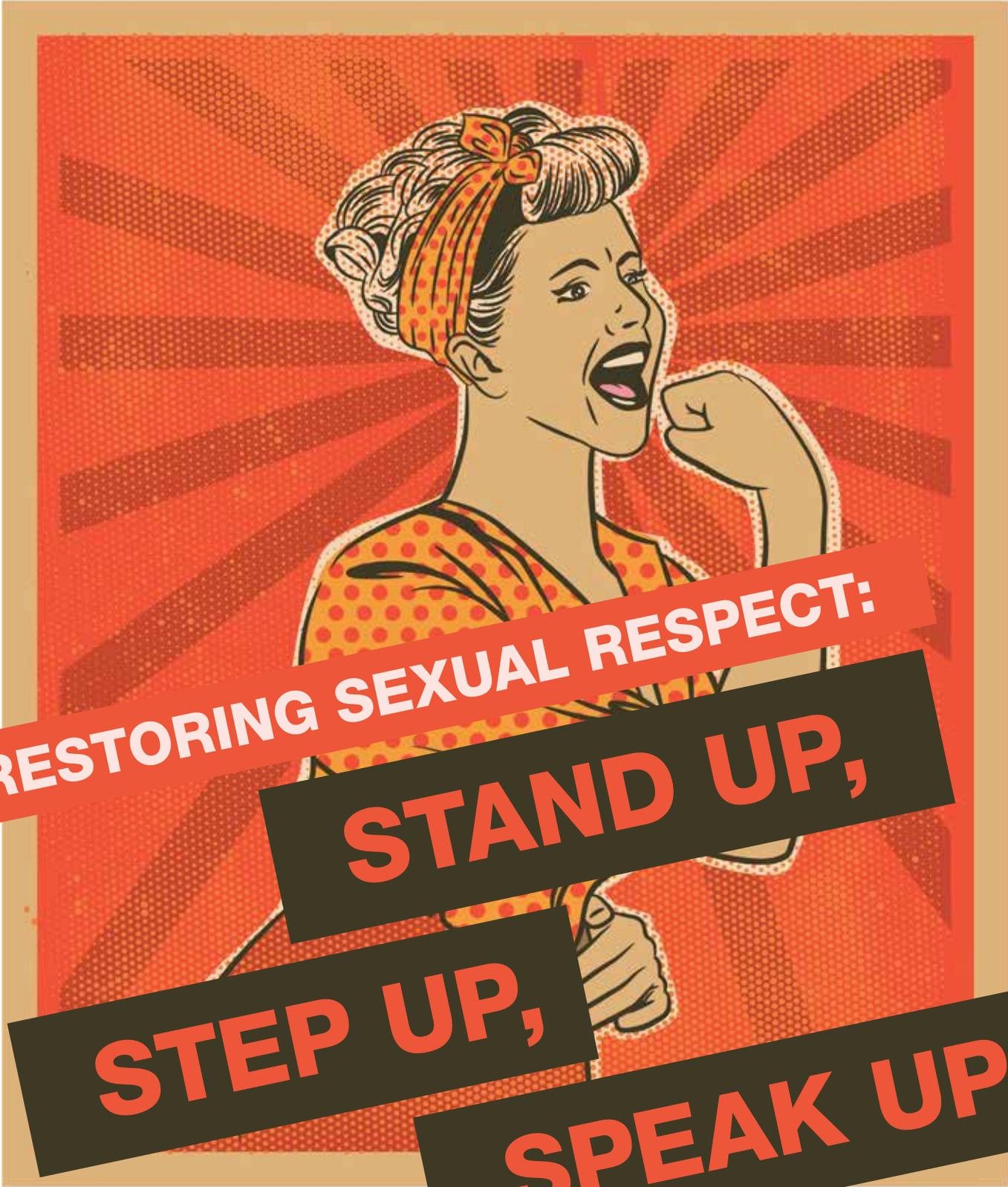
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RESTORING SEXUAL RESPECT:

STAND UP,

STEP UP,

SPEAK UP

Unprecedented! What an unparalleled time in human history. Headline after headline reveals story after story of sex offenders violating victim after victim. In the past, we periodically heard about a teacher preying upon a pupil, a priest abusing an altar boy, a coach molesting a young athlete... people in power victimizing the vulnerable. Yet today, survivors of sexual violation—those whose bodies have been disrespected—are speaking out in record numbers. Why? Why are victims speaking out... *now*? What can we do to make a difference?

Why are the headlines happening?

Ultimately, we all want justice, especially when it comes to those who have been taken advantage of or callously abused. Justice gives respect to our lives—signifying honor, deference, and value. That’s why we love justice. However, most of us hate *denied justice*—particularly when denial impacts us personally. The Bible paints this picture of injustice, “... *we moan mournfully like doves. We look for justice, but find none; for deliverance, but it is far away.*”¹

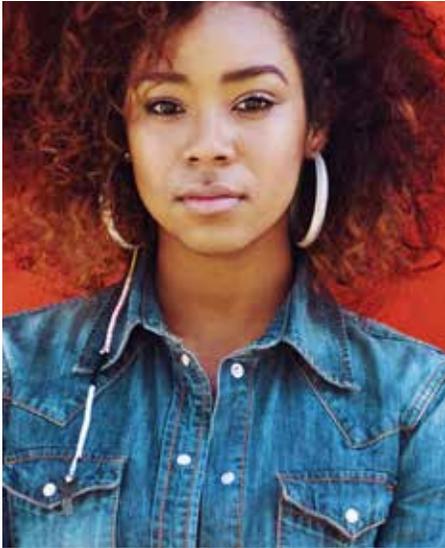
Some sexual abuse survivors experience a different picture. Imagine trying to hide a beach ball in a swimming pool... *under* water—it’s hard! Eventually, the ball bounds forcefully above the surface. Likewise, the pressure of *denied justice* becomes so strong it cannot stay hidden forever and will often surface with a splash.

Decades ago, the Sexual Revolution of the 1960s birthed an unbridled “anything-goes” morality, followed by legalized abortion in the 70s, and the rise of HIV/AIDS in the 80s. Sadly, today, God’s gift of sexuality has been compromised and our culture is reaping everything that has been sown over the past 50-60 years. Some argue, “Sexual immorality has been present since the dawn of history.” While true, Scripture never “sweeps under the carpet” the sexual sins recorded in the Bible (recall the rape of Tamar and the sexual harassment of Joseph... neither were avenged, only punished). Nevertheless, throughout history, God’s heart has always been grieved by sexual sin.

What is God's intention for sexual expression?

In the Bible, the first mention of a sexual relationship and its order within marriage is found in Genesis 2:24, “... *a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife (not girlfriend), and they become one flesh.*” By God’s design, the sexual experience is intended to be a respected act of love—for bonding in marriage and the procreation of children.

However, in hardened hearts, sex becomes an act of selfishness and humiliation, of cruelty and even violence. This has *never been* God’s plan. This will *never be* God’s plan. Because males and females are equal, both are due respect. However, bitterness and resentment have long been the feeding trough between “the battle of the sexes.”



How are both genders equal?

We are created male and female—each with unique gifts, talents, and abilities. God does not play favorites.

- **Both genders are created equal in His eyes.** Galatians 3:28 states, “*There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*”
- **Both genders are created in His image.** Genesis 1:27 (NLT) says, “*So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.*”
- **Both genders are created by God for specific plans and purposes.** In Jeremiah 29:11, the Lord says, “*For I know the plans I have for you... plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*”
- **Both genders have intrinsic worth—Jesus paid the ultimate price by dying for all of us.** John 3:16 explains, “*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*”

Each person is equal in God’s eyes, made in His image, and designed to be respected. The Bible specifically says, “*Show proper respect to everyone.*”²

What are the negative stereotypes for both genders?

Males who disrespect females generally...

- degrade girls, treating them as intellectually inferior and mere objects to be controlled, used for selfish purposes or dominated.
- treat women as sexual objects, assailing them with sexually-oriented slurs and slander.
- become fault-finders of females, demeaning their ideas, actions, and value.

Realize why fault-finders are negatively narrow-minded... because their focus is on finding fault, they seldom find anything else!

Females who disrespect males generally...

- belittle boys with bad-mouth banter about their awkward pubescent changes.
- marginalize and emasculate men with “male-bashing,” making them the brunt of jeering jokes.
- do an unfair share of mudslinging, labeling all males as sex-crazed.

Realize, mud-slingers only “lose ground;” thus, they will never gain the higher ground they secretly want to achieve.

Those who hold private prejudice against the opposite sex (e.g., “Of course, men are superior”) need to remember that “*God does not show favoritism.*”³ Since we are exhorted to be godly, we must fight any prideful prejudice within ourselves.

What do you need to do?

Have you thought, “But I’m just one person. I’m powerless to change disrespectful attitudes and actions so prevalent in those around me?” Actually, that’s not true. Jesus said, “... *you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free*” (John 8:32). You have a circle of people who make up your personal world. You can speak and model truth into your world—realizing truth sets us free.

You can make a difference when you act on these **10 Biblical Truths**:

1. **It is always right to resist wrongful sexual advances.** “... if sinful men entice you, do not give in to them” (Proverbs 1:10).
2. **Telling the truth about sexual violation saves the lives of others.** “A truthful witness saves lives...” (Proverbs 14:25).
3. **Speaking up for victims is always right in God’s sight.** “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves...” (Proverbs 31:8).
4. **Justice is never served when the guilty go unpunished.** “Whosoever says to the guilty, ‘You are innocent,’ will be cursed by peoples and denounced by nations” (Proverbs 24:24).
5. **The guilt for sexual assault is solely on the perpetrator—the assault is not the victim’s fault.** “Acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent—the Lord detests them both” (Proverbs 17:15).
6. **When victimizers are not quickly held accountable, others will increasingly commit wrongs.** “When the sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, people’s hearts are filled with schemes to do wrong” (Ecclesiastes 8:11).
7. **God is always against the violence of evil people.** “Bring to an end the violence of the wicked and make the righteous secure...” (Psalm 7:9).
8. **The Lord is the One who will avenge all sexual violators.** “It is mine to avenge; I will repay. In due time their foot will slip; their day of disaster is near and their doom rushes upon them” (Deuteronomy 32:35).
9. **The Lord is our refuge in times of trouble.** “The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble” (Psalm 9:9).
10. **God stretches our capacity for compassion, using our pain to comfort others.** “... the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort... comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God” (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

How can one life make a difference?

Imagine a little girl who loves gymnastics. From somersaults and splits to backflips on balance beams, young Rachael Denhollander exuded confidence vaulting through the air.

By age 15, Rachael’s lower back pain led her family to seek treatment from an osteopathic physician, Dr. Larry Nassar, at Michigan State University. Great news: He’s the doctor for the USA gymnastics team! They feel grateful for his willingness to help Rachael reach her Olympic size dream. However, her dream tumbles into a nightmare as ungloved hands perform their “medical treatment,” crossing the line from muscle massage to sexual intrusion.

Immediately, Rachel knows something is *very* wrong. Yet, she doubts her own instincts. *He’s a doctor—it must be okay. If I refuse treatments, I can’t compete. I’m too embarrassed to speak up.* Silently dreading each treatment, she cringes in fear. *When will this be over?*

Several years later, Rachael confides in her mother and, together, they *step forward* to pursue justice. They contact authorities, detail the assaults, and submit the reports... yet the authorities cause *double victimization* and commit *double disrespect*. Her report is contested, her concern is minimized, and her motive questioned.

Then in 2018, as gymnast turned attorney—an advocate for sexually

**THE GUILT
FOR SEXUAL
ASSAULT IS
SOLELY ON THE
PERPETRATOR—
THE ASSAULT
IS NOT THE
VICTIM’S FAULT.**

abused victims—Rachael Denhollander *stands up* at the seven-day sentencing trial of Nassar. Before a worldwide television audience, 156 young women give their “victim impact statements.” Rachael is the last to *stand up* to present her case. As she delivers her impassioned, 36-minute statement, the crowded courtroom clings to every carefully chosen word.

“Larry, I can call what you did evil... because it was. The Bible you carry says, ‘It is better for a millstone to be thrown around your neck and you be thrown into a lake than for you to make even one child stumble.’ And you have damaged hundreds.”

The former doctor is guilty of mind-boggling abuse with more than 260 accusers of sexual assault. Consequently, Nassar is serving a 60-year sentence for child pornography, followed by a sentence of up to 175 years for sexually assaulting countless girls, mostly other young gymnasts. Finally, justice is served and respect for survivors restored.

The final chapter of Proverbs presents this challenge to us all, “*Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves...*”⁴ Indeed, it is never too late to stand up... step up... speak up. That’s what Jesus did. That’s what Jesus would do. ✕

Excerpted from June Hunt’s Biblical Counseling Keys on Sexual Harassment and Assault: Stopping the Abuse of Power (Dallas, TX: Hope For The Heart, ©2018). Additional information is available at www.hopefortheheart.org.



JUNE HUNT, M.A., is Founder and CSO (Chief Servant Officer) of Hope for the Heart, a worldwide ministry that changes lives with resources translated into 33 languages in 60+ countries on six continents. She is an author, teacher, singer, and one of the world’s leading biblical counselors. June hosts two national radio programs: Hope For The Heart, and the live, one-hour, call-in program, Hope In The Night. Her 100-topic Biblical Counseling Library provides biblical hope and practical help, addressing the everyday challenges of life.

Endnotes

- 1 Isaiah 59:11.
- 2 1 Peter 2:17.
- 3 Romans 2:11.
- 4 Proverbs 31:8.

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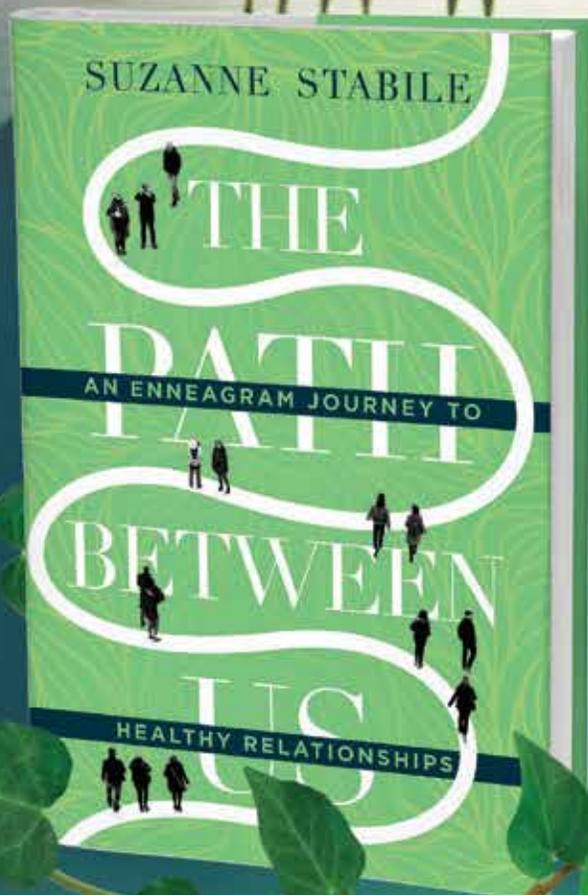
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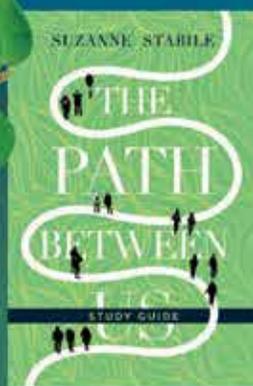
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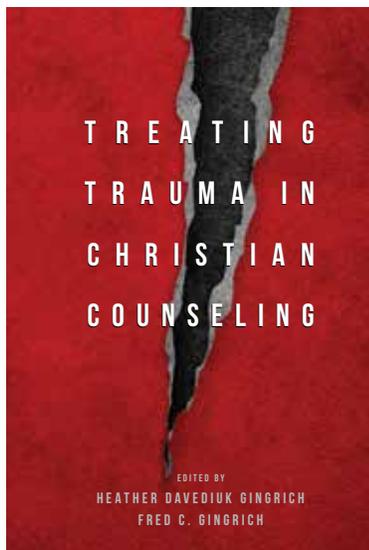
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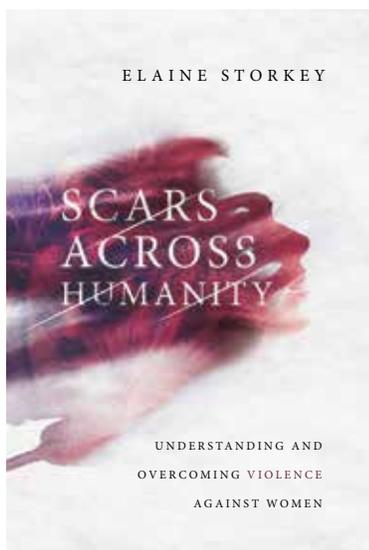
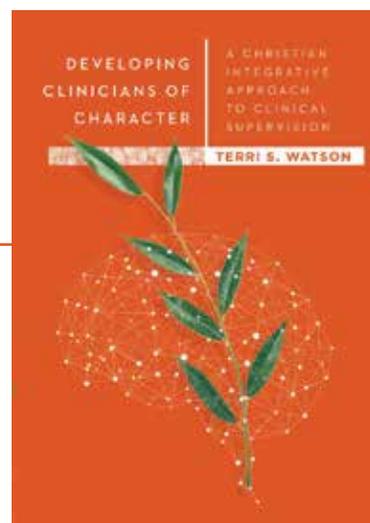
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SUBTLE SERPENT

Sexual Acting Out



As Christian therapists, we are fighting an epidemic. Conservative estimates indicate three to six percent of adults are involved in some form of compulsive sexual behavior. This equates to seven to 14 million adults who are creating untold damage in their marriages and families.

This is a largely unseen, unrecognized, and little discussed phenomenon, though the consequences are horrific. Sexual acting out ruins marriages, families, and the lives of the ones engaging in this wrongful behavior.

What is Going On?

Nothing new. Societies have been plagued with sexual acting out since the beginning of time with people behaving in egregious ways, harming others and themselves in the process.

We all know about “acting out”—expressing needs in indirect and destructive ways. We eat when distressed, get angry and rage when frustrated, pout when hurt—all forms of acting out. This article specifically addresses sexual acting out. We take our pain and anesthetize it with some substance or activity, which only serves to exacerbate the problem.

Men and women have always been tempted to sin. Sexual acting out is one way many attempt to minimize pain and make themselves feel good. Though God created sexuality for our pleasure, many of our clients have distorted His gift. They have taken this pleasure and twisted it through the use of pornography, affairs, visiting massage parlors, and more.

Sexual misbehavior is never innocent and always causes great harm. It can create the potential for sexual addiction, hurting innocent victims, and harming one’s self in the process. There is a biochemical component to these harmful behaviors. Having sex for sex’s sake is a selfish act, occurring partially because of our limbic system and the seat of core drives and emotions... it does not involve our more sophisticated brain, our neocortex. In the limbic system, we are more apt to act impulsively, do whatever feels good, and defer consequences until later.

DAVID B. HAWKINS



As clinicians, we must bear in mind that sex and sexual acting out makes people feel good. Through the release of dopamine, a neurotransmitter that activates the reward center of the brain, people are able to dull their pain. Studies show that sex and cocaine actually have some things in common. This helps explain why people can become rapidly addicted to various forms of sexual stimulation.

It is no wonder that people want to replicate the feelings they get from sex. We all want to feel good. We want to relieve our stress, get rid of depressive symptoms (yes, sex has been associated with antidepressant qualities), and feel the temporary suspension of worries. However, sexual acting out is more often than not a temporary fix to a far more complicated problem.

So, what is the real problem? Where do we need to apply our clinical skills and expertise? We should first look for the deeper problems being masked by the acting out. Where are your clients really hurting? Where are their wounds? What are they not talking about and what are they covering up with their behavior? We must go to their emotional pain, expose it, and offer true help. Also, we must critically explore character traits of impulsivity and compulsivity—acting without considering the consequences and in ways to create ritualized and compulsive behavior. We must help them see that their solution creates even more problems.

Why are our clients so prone to these sexual problems? We must explore the possibility that they have competing drives. Their impulsive brains want pleasure and want it now. They do not want to feel emotional pain or think about the consequences of their actions. If flooded with dopamine, which will make them impetuous and self-centered, they may impulsively “choose” to act out. Ignoring the logical part of their brain, the neocortex, they take the chance of getting caught in exchange for the “high” they receive.

Acting Out

We are all familiar with the Garden of Eden story. Adam and Eve had everything they could ever want, but were tempted by the serpent to eat the forbidden fruit. “When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate” (Genesis 3:6).

What causes our clients, like Eve, to make painful, costly, high-risk decisions that ultimately hurt themselves and others in their world? They know better. They may be aware, at least at some level, that succumbing to the temptations of the world will ultimately destroy them... yet, they give in anyway.

We are all like Eve. In various ways we all make poor choices in spite of adverse ramifications. We give in to temptations... acting out what is inside us. Why do we place ourselves in dangerous situations and do dangerous things in spite of inevitable negative consequences?

Knowing what we know, what should we look for to help our clients? Here are a few character traits to observe and monitor as we help our struggling clients to better manage their lives, delay gratification, and make healthier choices:

Impulsivity: Many of our clients are frustrated and impulsive. They give way to their emotions and behavioral temptations. You might reason that they would have learned to deal effectively with frustration, thinking before they act and then acting maturely; however, this is not often the case. Many fail to sit with their emotional pain and succumb to temptation for immediate relief.

Passive-aggression: Some of our clients are driven to act out sexually because of buried anger toward their mates. They feel justified because they consider themselves victimized in some way. When individuals lack the ability to heal problems in a healthy manner, those problems only grow and manifest in overt behaviors.

Unmet needs for love, attention, and excitement: Vulnerability plus opportunity equals catastrophe with our clients. If their needs are not met within the relationship, and within themselves, they will be tempted to find solutions externally. When needs for love, attention or even excitement are not met within a relationship, acting out is always a temptation.

Addiction: Behavior that is pleasurable is more likely to be repeated. If repeated frequently enough, addiction is very possible. Secret sin and “forbidden fruit” lead to ritualized behavior, often culminating in sexual addiction. We know that addictions play an important role in repeated compulsive sexual acts.

Consider each of these issues as they might relate to your clients. Then, consider how each is ultimately fueled by denial. Denial allows your clients to be immature. Through the power of denial, they rationalize and justify their behavior. The Apostle James describes the problem like this: “... but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire is conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death” (James 1:14-15).

Healing

Whether driven by impulsivity, passive-aggression, some unmet need or addiction, and then fueled by denial, the answer to these problems is the same: we must assist our clients to honestly “hold space” for troubled feelings,

emotional or physical temptation, and listen. They must listen carefully to their feelings, honestly addressing their unhappiness to determine what is happening inside of them so they can make sense of their inner world and create healthy choices.

Our clients must be helped to hold the tension between the various voices (impulses) in their heads, clamoring for attention. Listening earnestly to their feelings, their mates’ feelings, and others in their world, they can pause and reflect, consider what is happening, and make positive choices. Responding, instead of reacting, gives them more control over their inner lives and what is happening around them, bringing healthy connection to others, as well as their sense of self. This leads to greater self-control, healthy self-confidence, and positive changes.

We must also teach our clients to live authentically and transparently. Sin and sexual acting out prosper in the dark... in secret places. It is critical that our clients live openly, transparently, and with accountability. They must talk to others about their motives, thoughts, and temptations. They must surround themselves with people who will peer into their lives and offer needed guidance. They must invite critical feedback so they can grow.

Those who truly wish to avoid falling into temptation must recognize their vulnerabilities and make choices accordingly. Staying sexually safe means remaining clear of dangerous people, places, and circumstances. Our clients need to know what those areas are in their lives.

We, as counselors, have the opportunity to offer needed guidance to those who are acting out sexually, as well as those who have been victimized by these behaviors. Often, we are invited into people’s lives at their most desperate moments. As such, we have an opportunity and obligation to be ready to offer wise, godly counsel. ✦



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POWER AND CONTROL: The Trauma of Rape

Sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape are words that have been broadcasted on the news and social media outlets over the course of the past few months. In the wake of the “#MeToo” movement, people all across America have shared their most vulnerable and tragic moments in public and private spheres. The impact of the women who have come forward and shared their stories is changing the trajectory of the way our culture views sexual assault and sexual harassment. The “face” of a perpetrator is no longer a creepy looking man who victimizes a woman in an alley.

Rather, the “face” of a perpetrator has become one we watch on the morning news, one who coached our children, and even one of a close friend we often see at church. Yet, as we watch the news and read the stories of the incredible bravery these women have and the incredible courage they share, we must not forget the immense weight they carry and the extent of the trauma they experience.

Sexual assaults are among the most underreported crimes in the United States. Yet, research shows that every 98 seconds, an American is sexually assaulted.¹ According to the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program, rape is defined as the “penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim.”² This definition of rape is important because up until 2013, the FBI used what is considered the “legacy definition” when compiling statistics on what constituted rape. Under the legacy definition, rape consisted of “the carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will.”³ The new definition broadens the meaning of rape to include sexual practices that are more common in today’s society, such as oral sex. This definition also broadens the meaning so the law may recognize that men are victims of rape and sexual assault as well.⁴ Even still, in 2016, there were an estimated 95,730 rapes under the legacy definition alone reported to law enforcement.⁵

Perpetrators of rape and sexual assault include strangers, acquaintances, current or former spouses, and boyfriends or girlfriends. Oftentimes, the identity of the perpetrator, along with the nature of the assault, will ultimately determine what the victim chooses to do after the assault occurs. As a society, it is easier to think of a “rapist” as the man in the alley or the stranger who breaks into a home. However, 45% of rapists are acquaintances of their victims.⁶ When a victim knows her perpetrator, this adds an extra layer of complication in her mind as to whether or not she will disclose to someone that she was assaulted. One of the main reasons is because she does not want to get someone she knows or cares about in trouble.



After the assault occurs, many women will second-guess their actions before and during the assault. This leads to doubting and asking themselves questions such as: What was I wearing? Did I lead him on? Did I say no enough times? Wait... did I say yes or did I say no? How much did I have to drink last night? Why do I not remember everything that happened? Why was he taking pictures of me? Did he video us doing _____? What is he going to tell his friends? I think I told him no. What happened last night? Was it my fault? He told me I liked it, but I didn't. Did I act like I liked it? I should have left the party. I should have stayed home. I shouldn't have trusted him so soon. What's wrong with me? I think I was raped. No, he wouldn't do that—would he? What do I do now? Would anyone actually believe he raped me? And the questions go on, and on, and on.

One of the most difficult questions to answer for a victim of rape is what do I do now? From an outside perspective, most people assume that when a woman is raped, she will report the assault to law enforcement officials. However, recent studies reveal that out of every 1,000 rapes, only 310 are reported to the police.⁷ Of those

310 reports, only 57 lead to an arrest.⁸ Of those 57 cases, only 11 cases will actually get referred to prosecutors.⁹ Of those 11 cases, only seven will lead to a felony conviction, and of those convictions, only six rapists will be incarcerated.¹⁰ Choosing whether or not to report a rape is one of the hardest decisions a survivor will ever make. Some of the reasons a woman might choose not to report include: fear of retaliation, believing it is her fault, thinking nobody will believe her, a desire to protect her rapist because it is someone close to her, feelings of shame surrounding the assault, lack of memory surrounding all of the events that transpired or simply just not wanting to acknowledge the reality of what happened.

As professionals who encounter victims of rape, it is important to understand the possible next step options for a survivor and the various stressors that each of them will have. From a legal perspective, one of the most important steps a woman can take after she has been raped is to go to the hospital or appropriate advocacy center and have a "SANE exam" performed. A "SANE" (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner) professional, who is specially trained in how to help victims through the initial steps following a

MOLLY-CATHERINE K. GOODSON

rape, will perform a two-part examination. This includes an interview about the assault and then a physical examination that is often referred to as a “rape kit” in order to preserve evidence and assess any and all physical injuries that the survivor may have. While the nurse is trained on how to perform this exam with the care of the patient as the utmost importance, the procedure is highly invasive and can often be traumatizing for the victim. Many states have sexual assault response teams that will respond when a rape victim arrives at the hospital so the survivor has someone present who can provide comfort and care to help process the tragedy.

Having a SANE exam does not mean the survivor will be forced to go to court about the assault. Most states do not force women to testify against their rapists. However, having the SANE exam provides the most options for the survivor down the road. The exam must be completed within 120 hours of the assault in order to document material evidence—the sooner the better. A survivor is most likely not going to know what she wants to do next during those initial hours. However, in a couple of weeks or months, when she has had an opportunity to take a step back, process, and heal emotionally from the assault, she may want to come forward. Completing the SANE exam right away provides more options when it comes to legal action because she will have stronger evidence that an assault has occurred.¹¹

The Legal Process.¹² Once an investigation into the assault commences, it can take as long as two to three years from the date of the original event before the legal process is over. If an alleged perpetrator is charged with rape or sexual assault, the district attorney’s office in that particular county will prosecute the case. As a result of the criminal charge, the prosecution will generally take one of two routes. First, the defendant could plead guilty as a result of a “plea bargain.” This means that the prosecutor and defendant come to an agreement as to what charge the defendant will plead guilty to in exchange for a particular sentence. This

proposed agreement goes in front of a judge who will determine whether or not the sentence is appropriate. Oftentimes, this process is used in order to protect the victim from having to go forward with a trial.

If the defendant is not willing to plead guilty to the crime, then the case will go to a jury trial. This is undoubtedly the hardest part for a rape survivor. During the trial, she will be asked to take the witness stand in a room full of strangers and discuss in great detail the most horrific aspects of her assault. Once she is done answering questions from the prosecutor, the defense attorney, who will be sitting right next to her rapist, will ask her questions as part of the cross-examination.

The defense attorney’s goal during cross-examination is to demean and invalidate the credibility and/or testimony of the survivor. These questions may include topics such as: how much she had to drink before the assault, what she was wearing when the assault occurred, her sexual history with the defendant and other individuals, her criminal record, whether or not she explicitly said “no” and whether or not she said “yes” before she said “no,” what she did following the assault, who she told or did not tell, if there was any delay in reporting the assault to the police, and the list goes on. Many of these questions are directly associated with the doubts she has already planted in her mind following the assault.

While testifying in court is oftentimes traumatizing for victims of sexual assault and rape, there are many victims who find the process gives them closure and empowers them to stand up against their rapists. Many women feel as if they are all alone and that no one else has experienced what they have gone through. However, as the “#MeToo” movement continues, women are starting to see that people they know, love, and respect have also been victims of rape and sexual assault. This has empowered many women to come forward and use their voices against their rapists.

As counselors, advocates, and friends of known and unknown survivors, what is our responsibility? How can we support these individuals? First, we change the way we talk about rape. We stop asking questions that cause shame and start asking questions that bring healing. We ask them what they need and treat them individually—not as other clients or friends who were raped. Each victim is different and must be treated as a unique woman with a unique background and set of circumstances that will shape the way she responds to her current trauma.

Second, we must be present. We provide unwavering support so they do not feel alone. Never underestimate the power of little things, such as going to the police, hospital, and court with them. We recognize that when a man rapes a woman, he exercises his power and control over her—physically, mentally, and emotionally. As a result, we need to be cautious when it comes to telling a victim what to do, as we do not want to become the next person to exert power and control over her. Rather, we walk beside her, helping her process and heal so she will feel empowered and more in control.

Finally, we pray. We surround known victims with prayers particular to their situations. We surround our culture and the unknown victims around us with prayers. We pray they will feel the love of God who will never leave or forsake them. We pray they feel the courage of a God who saves and the peace and comfort of a Savior who walks beside them. And when we feel as if vengeance on earth is thwarted, we remember vengeance and justice belong to God. ✕



MOLLY-CATHERINE K. GOODSON, M.A., J.D., ESQ., is a North Carolina prosecutor, Adjunct Professor at Regent University, advocate, and speaker who is passionate about bringing professionals together to use a multi-faceted approach to address the issues of domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse. She graduated from Liberty University School of Law with a Juris Doctor and a Master of Arts in Human Services Counseling with a specialization in Children, Families, and the Law.

Endnotes

- 1 Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2010-2014 (2015).
- 2 <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2016/crime-in-the-u.s.-2016/topic-pages/rape>.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 This article specifically focuses on women victims, yet recognizes that men are also victims of rape and sexual assault.
- 5 <https://ucr.fbi.gov>, op. cit.

- 6 Department of Justice, op. cit.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Federal Bureau of Investigation, National Incident-Based Reporting System, 2012-2014 (2015).
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Felony Defendants in Large Urban Counties, 2009 (2013).
- 11 This does not mean that if a woman wants to come forward following an assault, but has not had a SANE exam done, that she should not come forward. She should still come forward and find out from the proper authorities what her options are in regard to legal recourse.
- 12 In the United States, each state is its own jurisdiction and has a particular set of laws that apply to that state. Therefore, the material provided here is general information about the legal process and does not apply to one particular state. This article is for educational purposes and does not constitute legal advice.



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CASTING THE FIRST STONE

PERPETRATORS, VICTIMS, AND SINNERS



The Problem

In 2016, I began researching the ways in which evangelical churches respond to events that threaten their image. I collected and analyzed 143 media reports of American pastors of evangelical churches who had been charged with a crime in 2016 and 144 reports during 2017. I was stunned to discover that more than 200 involved sex crimes, the vast majority of which were committed against children. I was gripped with grief and anger as I read descriptions of child sexual abuse, rape, child pornography, sex trafficking, and prostitution committed by those in positions of trust. Having significant firsthand experience with some of these types of situations from my own time serving as a pastor, and in consideration of the prevalence of non-criminal sexual acts like adultery, fornication, and pornography, I am convinced there is a growing specter of sexual sin in our midst.

Making Sense

The first response to sexual sin is an attempt to make sense of what happened or is happening. Individuals often process the same event in different ways. If a congregation is unprepared, the exposure of sexual sin might produce immediate confusion. This confusion can lead to poor, and even dangerous, responses. The research of Weick (1988) and Maitlis and Sonenshein (2010) suggest organizations will typically move in one of two directions when faced with a sensemaking dilemma: authoritative action, as a result of being overconfident... or inaction, as a result of being overcautious. They suggest wisdom is needed to balance these reactions. Their research provides a helpful theoretical framework through which to view a church's response to sexual sin.

The Overconfident

Some are overconfident in their understanding of the situation and ability to respond well. In cases of sexual abuse, the overconfident may shun outside help from experts because they believe they know what they need to know. They may object to reporting the abuse because they trust in their own abilities to investigate claims and render judgment. Pastors who take it upon themselves to self-investigate often inflict further harm through their actions.



One reason for this overconfidence is the obligation pastors might feel to act as if they have the knowledge to lead the response efforts. As a result, pastors might exercise authority and make decisions that come with the role identity of being in charge without the necessary knowledge to actually be in charge. Such leaders act out of concern for the protection of their own identities rather than for those they lead. A church's belief about its own capacity can be detrimental when the actual experience of handling sexual sin is lacking.

The Overcautious

Others are overcautious and choose to avoid the situation entirely. There may be multiple reasons for this abundance of caution but, like the overconfident, it is a self-protective response. First, in church cultures where sex is hardly mentioned, even in the context of its

proper use, some may lack the emotional maturity needed to address sex in the context of its abuse. Second, churches may feel threatened by the scandal of sexual sin. If a pastor is at fault, the church might try to avoid disgracing the pastorate. Third, some may argue the sin, if made known, will harm the reputation of Christianity. Dark secrets, when exposed, are trust-busters and churches may feel the need to guard against such threats. Last, churches can fall into an unhealthy clan culture mentality formed through strong family ties and friendships. This closeness heightens the tendency people might have to protect each other by covering up their secrets.

The overconfident respond with dangerous action, while the overcautious respond with dangerous inaction. Both are narrow-minded, lack the ability to make objective sense of the situation and, therefore, shun what is needed most when responding to sexual sin: discernment and wisdom.

The Wise

Wisdom begins with courageous discernment. Often those engaged in sexual sin have practiced deception for some time. They keep actions hidden through tactics that manage the impressions others are forming of them. Their deceptive strategies are used interchangeably depending on the audience and circumstance. They intuitively process interactions and, over time, develop a flexible script that can be automatically altered based on how others are receiving and/or perceiving the act. Therefore, accurately identifying and describing deception can be as difficult as hitting a moving target. In the absence of discernment, a church may easily be caught in the sinner's web of deception. For example, a sexual predator can engage in grooming behavior in plain sight because the entire church community tends to be overcautious and, thus, deliberately inattentive in order to keep peace and maintain tact. In doing so, they empower the deception by choosing to ignore its schemes.

This is why Paul instructed the Ephesian believers to be careful when confronting those caught in immorality (Ephesians 5:6). Like evil itself, a deceptive person wears a mask in order to appear as light even though the heart is dark. When that mask comes off, we may ignore, minimize, justify or excuse what we see. In doing so, we allow the deceiver to put the mask back on and the heart remains dark. Romans 12:9 says, "Let love be without hypocrisy [playacting with a mask]. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good." We must see exposure as an act of mercy for the sake of redemption, not as an act of shaming for the sake of condemnation.

Wisdom avoids the overly cautious response by placing the fear of God and a concern for the vulnerable before the fear of man and a concern for reputation. That God recorded in His Word numerous events in which His people failed in these areas suggests He is not concerned with covering up ungodly actions for the sake of preserving a certain appearance. We want to be judged rightly, not by mere

WADE MULLEN

appearances. Once a concern for appearances becomes the filter through which decisions are made, all efforts thereafter will become attempts to manage the form while the substance rots. Faith communities also need to be careful not to misplace their compassion by caring only for those who hold power. Too often the most profoundly affected—the victims—are the most easily forgotten because of their powerlessness.

Wisdom avoids overconfidence by recognizing limitations and partnering with others who are skilled in areas in which the Church is not. For example, a church should immediately report sexual abuse to the authorities, not simply because it may be required by law, but because those trained in investigating such crimes should be entrusted with that responsibility.

There are no shortcuts to redeeming sexual sin. It is by nature a sin committed in secret and kept hidden through deception. Therefore, the most compassionate, loving, merciful, and just response is one that leads everyone involved to see truthfully... and often that process of discovery will require expert help. It is difficult to know what to do when you do not know what is true. Conversely,

once you know what is true, it often becomes clear what you should do. Once truth surfaces, churches can then move toward forgiveness, healing, restitution, and reconciliation. ✚



WADE MULLEN, M.A., is an assistant professor and director of the Master of Divinity program at Lancaster Bible College/Capital Seminary & Graduate School. Prior to his transition to higher education, Wade served 10 years as a local church pastor. He is a Ph.D. in Leadership candidate and recently completed his dissertation on impression management strategies used by evangelical organizations in the wake of an image-threatening event.

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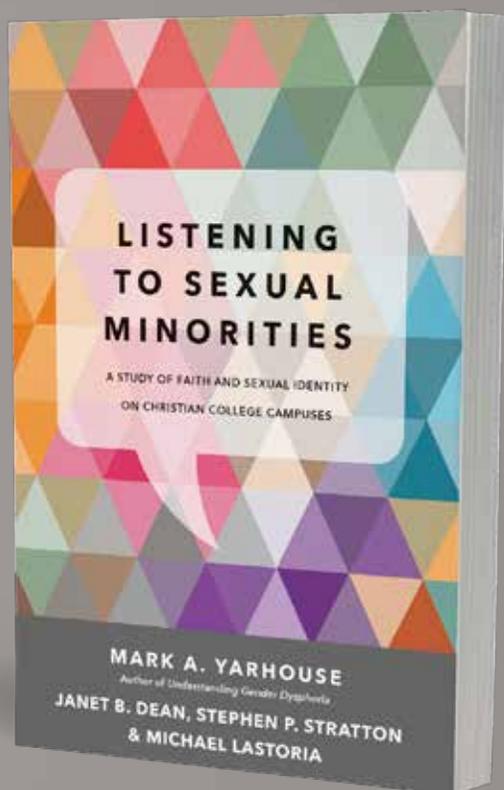
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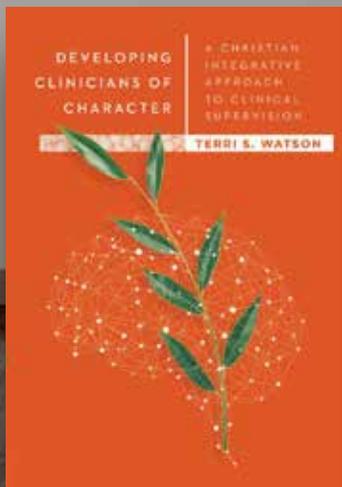
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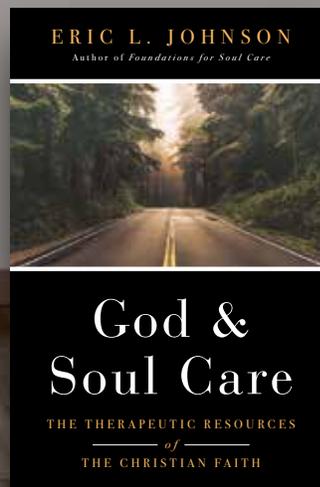
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The LOST ONES

human and sex trafficking

The actual numbers as to how many victims of human and sex trafficking there are in the United States are still unknown. What is known is that this insidious problem is still the number one trafficking crime in the country, although labor trafficking is close behind. Here is some insight into what the potential numbers could be in terms of domestic sex trafficking of minors within our borders. This is based on personal experience, work with the Thorn Foundation,¹ and my own nonprofit organization, There Is Hope For Me,² which has been ranked among the top three sex trafficking advocacy groups nationwide for two consecutive cycles under Thorn's survivor survey results.³

In our outreach estimates, where more than 300 middle and high school students were polled over a two-year period, we found that trafficking recruitment is at an emergent level. Students were asked directly if they were being approached for false modeling, false friendships or false romantic relationships, either on social media or through their friends in school. What we found was staggering! Students told us by their responses that one in three middle and one in nine high-schoolers were actively being recruited. Out of the schools polled, at least one student from every school had been directly affected by trafficking, and in some schools, more than one. Of all of the students surveyed, 6.9% were actively in the life and/or the process of entering the life of sex trafficking, and 20% of those were males. If this small sampling of Florida schools (taken from direct outreach) is any indication of trafficking in the United States, then we have a much bigger problem than anyone could have imagined or has dared to address!

In 2016, the International Labor Organization (ILO) estimated that 40 million people were enslaved worldwide.⁴

According to the ILO, there are a reported 5.9 adult victims for every thousand people and an additional 4.4 per thousand people were child victims of human trafficking. Additionally, 71% were women or minor girls; that means 28.7 million women and girls are enslaved in human trafficking around the world. Twenty-one percent of all victims were commercially sexually-exploited children according to ILO standards. Every country and region has been affected by human slavery; no one is exempt.

The U.S. State Department defines sex trafficking as the following: “When an adult engages in a commercial sex act, such as prostitution, as the result of force, threats of force, fraud, coercion or any combination of such means, that person is a victim of trafficking. Trafficking also may occur through a specific form of coercion whereby individuals are compelled to continue in prostitution through the use of unlawful ‘debt,’ purportedly incurred through their transportation, recruitment, or even ‘sale’—which exploiters insist they must pay off before they can be free.”⁵

The trafficking of children is no different, but may be even more prevalent; it exists through false relationships, which can often go undetected or under the radar. More specifically, it is when a child is under the age of 18 and recruited into the life of sex trafficking either through being enticed or lured through some form of false relationship or one of their basic living needs being met through the provision of food, clothing, shelter, drugs or anything of value (e.g., Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs) in exchange for sex. In such instances, they too have become a victim of sex trafficking. “There are no exceptions to this rule: no cultural or socioeconomic rationalizations alter the fact that children who are exploited in prostitution are trafficking victims. The use of children in commercial sex is prohibited under U.S. law and by statute in most countries around the world.”⁶ However, that has not stopped the traffickers from recruiting them! In America, wherever there are vulnerable people in need and opportunists who seek the financial gain that can be brought from meeting those needs, there will be exploitation: Vulnerability (V) + Need (N) = Targeted Victim (HT/Human Trafficking). Supply (S) – a pool of American children in such places as the public-school system + Demand (D) – our lust-driven society with an unchecked sexual appetite and promotion of immoral values = Exploitation (E). This is when the opportunists take advantage.

Whatever the form of recruitment, human and sex trafficking is the exploitation of the vulnerable or those in need. The vulnerability in the U.S. may come from the breakdown of the American family. Children from broken homes or those in foster care are then targeted and recruited primarily into the sex trade through a mirroring of family-like environments where they are provided with a false sense of belonging, which meets one or more of their immediate needs. A child who is starved for food or love may be drawn to what looks like

a father or mother figure. There are both male and female traffickers, as there are both male and female victims, including transgendered individuals.

It is not a crime to have an expressed need; the crime occurs when that need is exploited. Most child victims have not yet fully developed in terms of brain functioning and decision-making skills, so they are unaware of the actual recruitment when it takes place. Having never experienced a healthy parent-child relationship with boundaries, most children do not understand the difference when a counterfeit relationship is presented and entices them with false promises of love and support. In our society, there is still so much that needs to be done and learned in order to properly tackle this problem. Education, however, is key. Survivor-led organizations are paramount in reaching those who have been victimized by this crime and creating safe places whereby they can receive necessary services. The National Human Trafficking Hotline (1-888-373-7888) is a resource center offering referrals to services all over the country.

Every parent should be aware of the potential risk that their children could be the target of traffickers. Knowing who their children are spending time with is important, as well as monitoring their social media accounts and working with their schools to talk about unexplained absences. It is important to keep in mind that if they are minors, anyone who is over 18 and communicating with them in inappropriate ways, asking for pictures, etc. may be the beginning of an unhealthy relationship and possible recruitment. Parents should be engaged with their children; this is not a time for them to be complacent and expect schools to do all of the teaching. Schools rarely touch on the subject of human trafficking or provide education to students and their families even though they represent the largest pool of supply where traffickers can recruit children. Our children are at risk from elementary age up to university levels, and traffickers target

KATARIINA ROSENBLATT

Every parent should BE AWARE of the potential RISK that their children could be the TARGET of traffickers.

innocent, vulnerable children and young people in our society and societies around the world.

Parents need to be aware, foster parents need to be educated, and healthy family values need to be reincorporated into our society if we have any chance of preventing the trafficking of future generations. ✦



KATARIINA ROSENBLATT, LL.M., PH.D., is a highly sought-after speaker and trainer in the areas of human trafficking and domestic violence, as well

as an inspirational leader to many women all over the world. She has provided expert witness testimony on human trafficking cases in Florida, testified before the Florida legislature, and provided testimony in congressional briefings on Capitol Hill. In addition, Dr. Rosenblatt conducts nationwide trainings and consults on building up

survivor leadership, peer support and mentoring, as well as effective collaboration among the Florida Department of Children and Families and federal agencies nationwide. She is a longtime member of the National Survivor's Network (NSN) speaker's bureau and has ongoing speaking engagements on the issues of domestic abuse and human trafficking. Visit her Web site at www.DrKat.net to find out more.

Endnotes

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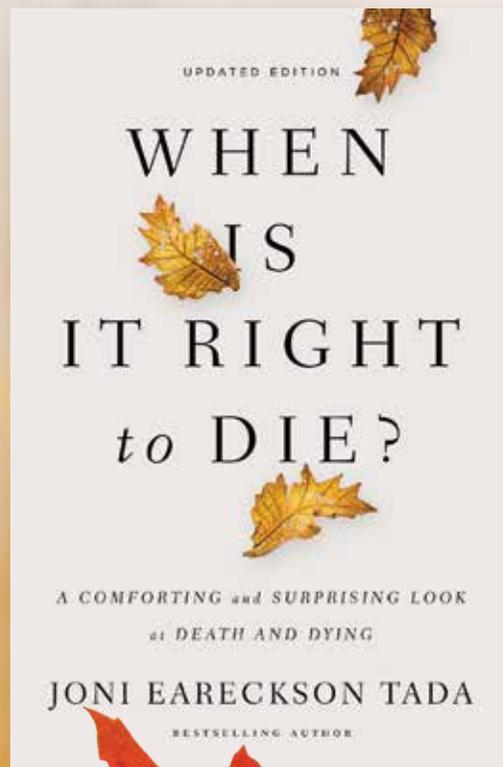
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THE #METOO MOVEMENT:

Hearing and Healing the Sexually Traumatized

Women are speaking out about their own sexual abuse, harassment, and trauma like never before thanks to the widespread #MeToo movement. Originally created in 2006 by civil rights activist, Tarana Burke, then popularized by actress, Alyssa Milano, in October 2017 following sexual misconduct allegations against Harvey Weinstein,¹ #MeToo has created space for sexual abuse survivors to share their stories and assure others that *they are not alone*.

Although sexual trauma impacts both men and women, sadly females represent the vast *majority* of cases.

- 81% of women reported experiencing some form of sexual harassment and/or assault in their lifetimes.²
- 82% of all juvenile victims are female and 90% of adult rape victims are female.³
- Females aged 16-19 are four times more likely than the general population to be victims of rape, attempted rape or sexual assault.⁴

Creating a “common experience” community such as the #MeToo movement increases public awareness, furthers prevention efforts, and promotes resiliency. That is probably why *TIME* magazine named Tarana Burke a “2017 Person of the Year” for being a “silence breaker.”⁵

Whether we have ever personally experienced sexual trauma or not, I believe we *all* can be part of the solution to this painful, cultural phenomenon. Therefore, the question I would like to pose to all people-helpers is, “How can we

not just *hear*, but also *heal*, the sexually traumatized?”

First, let’s highlight some of the most common responses to sexual abuse, such as:

- avoiding or being afraid of sex
- approaching sex as an obligation
- experiencing negative feelings such as anger, disgust or guilt with touch
- having difficulty becoming aroused or feeling sexual sensation
- feeling emotionally distant or not present during sex
- experiencing intrusive or disturbing sexual thoughts and images
- engaging in compulsive or inappropriate sexual behaviors
- experiencing difficulty establishing or maintaining an intimate relationship
- experiencing vaginal pain or orgasmic difficulties⁶

Over the past 25 years of speaking, writing, coaching individuals and couples, and leading intensive workshops designed to help women heal from these very issues (not to mention being a sexual abuse survivor myself), I have recognized the enormous power that a trusted counselor or coach can have in a client's healing journey.

In my book, *The Sexually Confident Wife*, I share the following "Steps Toward Healing from Sexual Abuse."⁷

1. Help her assign responsibility and let go of shame. Every person has the right to say *no* at any point in a relational encounter, and when perpetrators do *not* take *no* for an answer, they are guilty of sexual abuse. Or, perhaps, the victim is carrying a sense of shame because she *didn't* say *no* or was too young or inexperienced to assert herself. However, it is never a minor's responsibility to tell an adult to stop abusing him or her. The responsibility to do the right thing rests solely on the adult, so victims can drop the "hot potato of shame" and assign responsibility where it belongs.

2. Help her understand who she really is, apart from any abuse. The word *abuse* can best be understood by breaking it down into syllables: ab-use or ab(normal)-use. To abuse something means to use it for a reason other than its intended purpose. When she was abused, she was used for something other than what she was intended. She does not have to continually look at herself through the lens of being a victim. Someone else's misusing us to satisfy his/her own selfishness does not negate or change who we really are as valuable human beings, worthy of love, and deserving of healthy sexual pleasure.

3. Give her permission to seek the time and space to heal. If she is married, she may assume that she has to be a "sexual outlet" for her husband, even if she continues to feel abused by the experience. Yet, chances are, her husband does not expect her to be a sexual vending machine. He wants to connect not just with her body, but also with her heart, mind, and soul during lovemaking. He wants her to be present and enjoy their encounters, and he is most likely willing to give her what she needs in order to get there, even if it is a season of abstinence from any sexual expectations so she can grieve her losses and focus on healing her wounds.

4. Encourage experimentation. Just because a victim may need to refrain from sex for a season does not mean she can't enjoy intimate encounters with healthy physical touch. Needs and desires can be verbalized, and she can feel the freedom to go only where she feels safe, and no further. If she does not feel pressure to rush the process, she

may be surprised at how quickly she may start to desire the very activities from which she once felt threatened.

5. Teach her healthy boundaries. Sometimes it is difficult to find the voice or words to say, "I'm having a hard time right now!" when we are not used to having that freedom. Therefore, help her create a signal that says, "I need you to stop." A good signal needs to be both inoffensive and obvious, such as a tight squeeze of his elbow or using a code word like, "red light!" As she feels the freedom to stop anytime, she can learn to feel safe and secure in his arms.

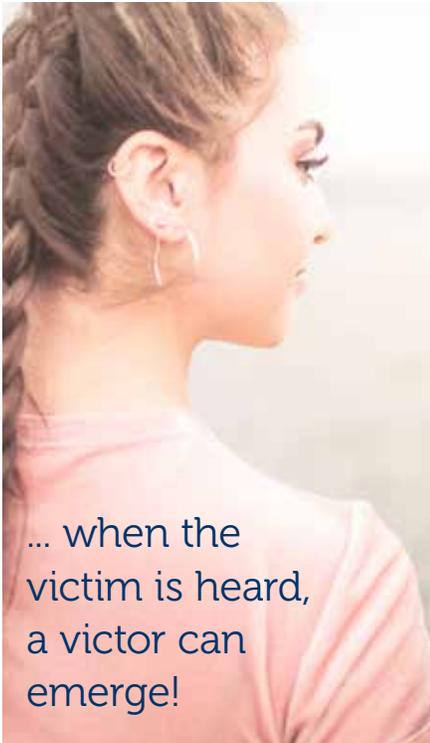
6. Let her "feel it" so she can "heal it." There may be times when sexual abuse survivors experience overwhelming emotions that they simply do not know how to handle. Repressed emotions create enormous amounts of pent-up anger and can produce deep depression. Give her opportunities to scream at empty chairs, punch pillows, tear up phone books, write angry letters, etc. Better to release the rage in a safe environment than at home toward her husband and children.

7. Collect and Connect the Dots. We often search for relief from the pain in the same places where we were wounded—in sexually abusive or dysfunctional relationships. We try to recreate similar scenarios and power struggles in order to "win this time." However, we never win at that game. We only hurt ourselves and others in the process. Helping her "collect and connect the dots" of her sexual/relationship history will reveal a great deal, particularly the WHY (root causes) behind her actions (e-mail shannon@shannonethridge.com to request Sexual History Worksheet instructions).

Remember that each sexually broken woman (and man) is a Redemption Story waiting to unfold. Help them write a great ending to their stories. Research local support groups, conferences, or workshops (such as my Women at the Well four-day, intensive workshops) that will help the client completely blossom in the bedroom rather than remaining stuck in the painful victim mentality.

Sometimes, all a person needs is a listening ear—someone who can hear the nitty-gritty of her life and not wince or run. Empathetic listening provides space for enormous healing. She may need someone to walk alongside her on a journey of fearless exploration to realize the ripple effects of the abuse. Or she may be ready for someone to challenge her to GROW far beyond what she thought was possible.

SHANNON ETHRIDGE



... when the
victim is heard,
a victor can
emerge!

As people-helpers, let us remember that all humans are really just looking to love and be loved, and are searching for a safe place to connect with others and feel heard and validated. And when the victim is heard, a victor can emerge! ✨



SHANNON ETHRIDGE, M.A., is a certified life coach, international speaker, and author of 22 books, including the million-copy, best-selling *Every Woman's Battle* series. Learn more about her books, coaching, workshops, and B.L.A.S.T. Mentorship Program at www.shannonethridge.com or www.blastmentoring.com.

Endnotes

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Healing from Trauma

What is a trauma? I would imagine that a trauma could be defined better by those who have experienced one, but a more general definition is, “a very severe shock or very upsetting experience, which may cause psychological damage.” Ever had one of those? Most of us have in one form or another.

Personally, I have been through a few experiences that might have qualified as a trauma. One time, I was a passenger on a hijacked airliner. It ended okay, but the emotional fallout was considerable. The hijacker received more than a 40-year prison sentence. Another situation involved an accident I had in the mountains of Oregon. I turned my car over on the side of a mountain and proceeded to walk for several hours in a blizzard. I was rescued, but the possibilities of losing my life were very real. One of the other trauma-like situations was being diagnosed with colon cancer. I had the surgery and things went well but, a few days later, I developed a fever that reached 105. I was re-admitted to the hospital and for nearly six months I was either in the hospital or under healthcare personnel at home. My doctor would later tell me there were three different occasions when they thought I was dying and fought to save my life. I am extremely thankful that God gave me more time to live and be in ministry, but I will never be the same from that ordeal or any of the other experiences I have shared. Each, in its own way, takes its toll on both mind and spirit.

Now, I am sure as you read the little rundown of some of my experiences, you might say, “Are you kidding? Let me share my traumatic



experience with you.” I know you could because we all have our own stories. Nevertheless, now let me share with you the one experience in my life that makes all of the others pale in comparison.

How My Big Story Unfolded

When I was a senior in high school, an only child of a very successful and talented minister, my dad had an affair with a coworker. He was my hero, my support, my pride and joy. I held him at the highest level of praise. His speaking ability was that he could mesmerize a crowd. He was funny and polished, and gifted like few others, but he also had a flaw that destroyed our little family. Life for me would never be the same again. Even as I tell this story, I can feel the

pain of my mother saying to me, “We will have to move... we are on our own now.” My next years were full of rebellion and personal pain. The one I had trusted for everything had let me down, so I decided I would not trust anyone. Instead, I would resist authority and never allow anyone close enough to hurt me like my father had. I was angry and resentful. Although I would later find the Lord, the pain and memory of that time in my life clung to me like a vine to a tree. I could not shake the pain or the anger. I was a member of the “walking wounded.” In some ways, I still am. People say to me, “Get over it.” And you do to a certain degree. However, you never really get over it because Satan has a way of constantly reminding you of your weaknesses. He hits you where it hurts.

Now Let Me Tell You Her Story

Luke 13:10-17 tells of a woman who was bent over and had been this way for 18 years. We are not told what caused her problem, because Satan uses a lot of different things to defeat us, but she was bent over by a “spirit of infirmity.” She, like many of us, was afflicted in such a way that the trauma of her situation caused her to always look down, to think the worst, to feel pointed out as a person never to be any different. She suffered from what we call a “hurt of the heart,” or “damaged emotions,” or “broken promises,” and even “unrealized dreams.” She, like so many of us, was living in the realm of the “Why me’s?” Yet, in her despair, the Lord lifted her up. She was set free from that which bound her.

How the Healing Begins

In Romans 8:26 it says, “... the spirit helps us in our weakness.” In other words, like the rising tide, He comes along and straightens out our situations, and life is changed forever. Yet, before any of that can happen, there are a few things we must acknowledge and recognize about ourselves.

Like, do we want to get well or will we be satisfied to hang on to our trauma situation? You must answer the same question that Jesus asked the man by the pool in John 5:6, “Do you want to get well?” Or will you be satisfied to limp along in your present situation? If you want to be well, you can be. The Spirit will lift you.

Are you willing to forgive? Are you willing to take responsibility for your situation and stop blaming other people? Are you willing to follow God’s lead to healing? Are you willing to pray specifically without reservation for the “Paraclete” to lift you to a new level of health and spiritual victory? Are you willing to claim healing even though your feelings might not have caught up with your journey? Are

you willing to leave your “emotional crutch” behind and live a life of faith? Traumas are never easily fixed because they depend so much on how we proceed. Do you want to get well?

Trauma Healing Comes in Different Packages

My healing was completed on the day of my father’s death. He was in the hospital and very ill. I visited him in the morning, and before I could get back to my office, the word had come of his passing. I returned to the hospital and entered a room that was occupied only by the body of my dead father. It was as though I was a little kid again and I began to talk to this person that no longer existed. “Dad,” I said, “Things could have been so different. You could have loved us more and been more attentive. You could have been a real dad. What happened?” And the dead man was silent. It was there that I knew what I had to do. I had to forgive him... and with tears streaming down my face, I did. It was as though I felt the arms of our Lord around my shoulders and Him saying to me, “It will be okay, son. Now let me take his place.” And I did. Have all the feelings and emotions passed with that moment? No, not at all, but I did what I needed to do. I took responsibility for my trauma and I was set free. Be blessed my friend... be free! ✠



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Are you willing to forgive? Are you willing to take responsibility for your situation and stop blaming other people? Are you willing to follow God’s lead to healing?

Sanctuary or Robber's Den?



The word sanctuary means a refuge, a shelter, a port in the storm. It originates from the Latin word, “sanctus,” which translates as “holy.” This means a sanctuary is a place of holiness that is also a refuge for the vulnerable. However, God’s Word indicates that His holy sanctuary can actually be turned into a refuge for robbers... a hiding place for those who are wronging or defrauding others. We know this from two people. One is Jeremiah, who quotes God as saying, “Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers?” (Jeremiah 7:11). The second person is Jesus Himself, who displayed His anger when cleansing the sanctuary by turning over tables and driving animals out, saying God’s house had been made a robber’s den (Matthew 21:13). By definition, a den is a hiding place for predators or illicit activity.

In this case, God’s sanctuary sadly becomes a den when it is used to hide predators or wrongdoing.

Both Jeremiah and Jesus spoke these words in the midst of worship and praise and large crowds. These are circumstances we usually view as proof of God’s presence and blessing. Under *those* circumstances, ones we usually rejoice in, God’s people were intentionally crushing the needy and vulnerable. For Jeremiah, the people of Israel were simultaneously worshipping Moloch, a large bronze idol full of fire into which children were sacrificed. The people of God worshipping in the His house were, in fact, worshipping with deceptive words and acts of evil as they continued to do to the little ones something God never commanded and which never even entered His mind (Jeremiah 7:31). Their behavior in the house of God looked and sounded like worship,

but it was in vile disobedience as they sinned against God and His creation. The only refuge they represented was a refuge of lies. A den indeed! The very place meant to be a dwelling of God in the Spirit and, therefore, a refuge for the weak and hurting was in need of cleansing. On both occasions, for Jeremiah and Jesus, God ultimately allowed those two magnificent temples to be destroyed when cleansing did not occur.

How is it, then, that we deem it holy to protect institutions over our children; or label marriage sacred when it is full of fear, violence, and abuse? Church sanctuaries and marriages have ceased to be sacred when they have become a hiding place for predators. Where in the Scriptures do we see God sending His sheep *back* to the wolves? Sheep require protection *from* wolves. Where do we who serve a holy God, full of

grace and truth, find justification for protecting a place where He desires to dwell, when that place is full of sin and harm done to His lambs? In doing so, we fail to even meet the requirements of the law of the land, which calls the abuse of children and spouses criminal.

Jesus cleansed the temple twice. His people did not listen. The spiritual leaders of the people failed to obey Him. This desecration of God's house and His people was scathingly denounced by both Jeremiah and Jesus. We the people of God, who worship in His sanctuary, need to pay heed and listen. Our God would have His refuge be holy as He is holy. Any complicity with sin or abuse in the sanctuary is to be joined with those things that make sanctuary a necessity. In the voices of both Jeremiah and Jesus, we hear condemnation and

anger... for not only are God's people plundered, His name has also been desecrated and abused.

In Matthew, after Jesus cleansed the temple the second time, He gave us a clear view of His ability to restore God's house to its true calling and, thereby, gave us a picture of what that restoration looks like. After the cleansing, the wounded and sick came in and He healed them. And the little ones came into the temple and sang praises to our God. When the people of God expose deeds of darkness and the wolves in our midst who commit them, the wounded are healed and the children sing. Then, we will know the sanctuary of our God is indeed a holy dwelling for our Lord's Spirit and, therefore, a safe harbor for His lambs.

One of the measures of our faithfulness to God is the way we conduct ourselves in relationship to

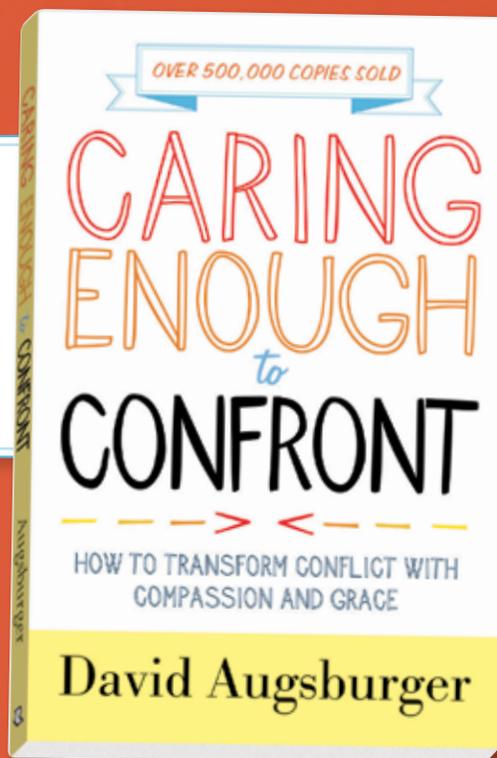
our fellow humans. A second measure of our faithfulness to God is in the stamping out of sins that wrong humanity. Only when these conditions are met do we, as His people, flesh out the character of a holy and loving God to the afflicted and needy in our midst before a watching world. Only then have we become a true sanctuary—a holy and safe place. ✠



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Trauma and Spiritual Formation: A Few World-changing Examples



It seems all but impossible to live a lifetime without exposure to deeply disturbing events. It is a sobering thought to realize that in addition to death and taxes, trauma is also frequently unavoidable. However, it can be deeply comforting to ponder some of the healing responses to trauma.

The life of St. Anthony the Great (a 4th century Christian monk from Egypt) wrapped around the Edict of Milan, the decree that brought the Church under the protection of the Roman Empire. Constantine ended

one form of trauma for Christians—physical danger and social persecution. Yet, his game-changing proclamation also opened the Church to what might be considered a more diabolical trauma—the potentially soul-damaging impact of new privilege, prestige, and power on church leaders. Anthony fled to the desert to live a radically Christian life and accidentally sparked the birth of the Christian monastic movement.

In 1521, St. Ignatius of Loyola took a canon ball to his leg. This traumatic event left him flat on his back for a

long period of recovery. From that painful and isolated position, he imagined his way into the creation of *The Spiritual Exercises* and, eventually, the birth of the Society of Jesus.

Bill Griffith Wilson had his happy childhood days shattered at age 11 by the divorce of his parents. This trauma became intensified by feelings of abandonment when his parents moved away from his hometown in two, different directions to pursue their education. Depression became his constant companion; that is, until he met the girl he expected to marry. But then she died. Bill wondered how he could survive his depression, and then he discovered alcohol. From that traumatic position, he was open to the spiritual teachings of the Oxford movement and went on to co-found Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)—which has grown to more than 10,000 chapters worldwide in less than 85 years.

Candy Lightner lost one of her three daughters, a twin named Cari, to a drunk driver. And from that trauma, she quickly founded Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) to increase awareness of this problem and lobby for stronger legislation. In 1984, she was invited by President Ronald Reagan to serve on a national commission.

Trauma can beget additional trauma, lives lived in psychological and physical distress. However, trauma can also take us to the end of our ropes. And as Christian philosopher, Dallas Willard, liked to say, that is the place where God lives.

Andrew Gordon¹ found himself near God's address, <endofyourrope.com>. He had been part of the initial

launch team and eventually became the lead pastor of a highly successful church in Toronto, Canada. Life was very good. Then it wasn't.

For the last few of those 17 years as a church planter and leader, he had been battling dramatically declining health that included the mysterious presence of weakness, anxiety, high blood pressure, sleeplessness, and kidney and liver problems. No diagnosis could be found. Then, one Sunday morning, after preaching a sermon inspired by his sickness titled, "In the Waiting Room: What to Do When Your Health Gives Out," his health gave out. He collapsed against the side of his car. His herculean battle to keep up appearances crumpled. Andrew believed, and with good reason, that he was dying.

The young pastor was rushed to the hospital and, going on a hunch, his doctor ordered a test that finally revealed a diagnosis. He was suffering from Cushing's disease. A small tumor had formed on his pituitary gland. The only hope was neurosurgery. The clock was ticking. Andrew was told he only had a few weeks to live, and that the surgery itself would be life-threatening.

So what would you do if facing that type of trauma? Andrew did three things. During the time leading up to the surgery, he had an increasing awareness that he was dying, so he determined as a prayer to God, "If I'm going to die, help me to die well." About that time, a pastor-friend dropped a sentence into his life. "If you are going to die well, you must learn to live well." So Andrew made something of a fearless moral inventory. He prayed that God would bring to his mind any people from his life that he had offended. He made a list of those he felt he might owe an apology, and worked that list by phone, letters, and over coffee. He offered both confession and tears.

Next, he made a list of folks whom

he needed to forgive. He considered the grudges that might be soiling his heart and blocking the flow of love. He no longer had the strength to carry those grudges, so he sat them down, one-by-one.

Finally, Andrew wrote down all of the people who had poured encouragement into his life. He contacted each of them and let them know about how God had used them to bless him and about his gratefulness for what they had done. Upon hearing this, some thought he needed money. Some thought he was dying. The latter group had it right, but by the end of these conversations, each person who received his blessing offered back their own.

Andrew's surgery was successful in terms of removing the tumor, but it also pushed him closer to death. Grand mal seizures, a pulmonary embolism, a saddle clot between his heart and lungs, and a conversation you never want to hear confused doctors who admitted they did not know what to do. Their only agreement was that if they did nothing, he would die. So they began a new treatment. Blood began to gush through Andrew's nose and the medical team was forced to stop the procedure and wait. For the second time, Andrew began to work hard in preparation for death.

He survived, but much of his memory did not. In the weeks that followed, he recalls, "It was as if I had to build my life from scratch." Then as tears formed in his eyes, he said, "I remember walking my son to school one morning. He hugged me when it was time for him to go inside the building and said how glad he was I was still alive. And as he walked away, all I could think was that I had no idea who he was or why this boy I did not know had hugged me."

Yet, in the midst of this traumatic confusion, Andrew remembered a powerful encounter he had with

Christ following his surgery. It was like a waking vision in which Jesus asked him for three gifts. "Will you give me today?" "Will you give me tomorrow?" "Will you give me yesterday with thanksgiving—even the times of suffering?" Andrew whispered, "Yes," to each question.

Five individuals... and five responses to trauma: St. Anthony saw the trauma of the Church being accepted by the world and fled to the desert. St. Ignatius was a chivalrous knight who took a canon ball to his leg. His response was to exchange worldly ambition and sensuality for becoming a Knight for Christ. Bill Wilson turned loss, depression, and alcoholism into clinical theology for millions of alcoholics. Candy Lightner transformed unspeakable anguish into a movement. And Andrew Gordon stared down death, twice, and put into practice how to live well: Let go of anger, apologize to those you have offended, offer gratitude to those who have encouraged you, and then give three gifts back to God—today, yesterday, and tomorrow. ✠



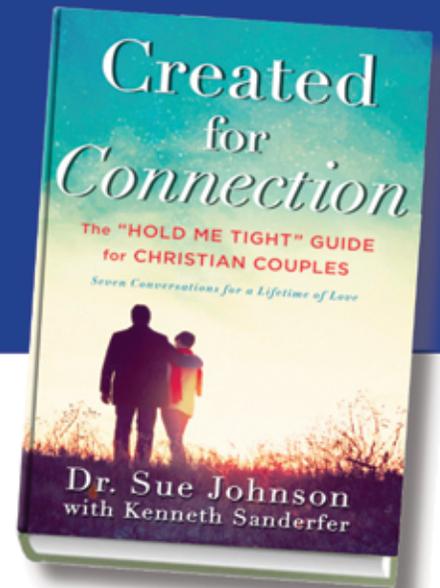
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Endnote

¹ Most of what follows is taken from an interview the author did with Andrew at the Renovaré Institute Retreat, September 2017. To listen to Andrew tell other aspects of his story, go to: <http://www.100huntley.com/watch?id=219729>.

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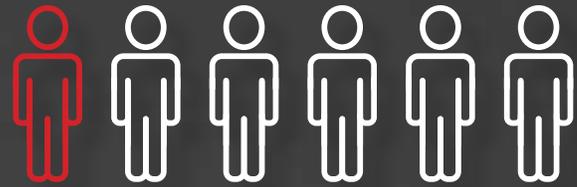


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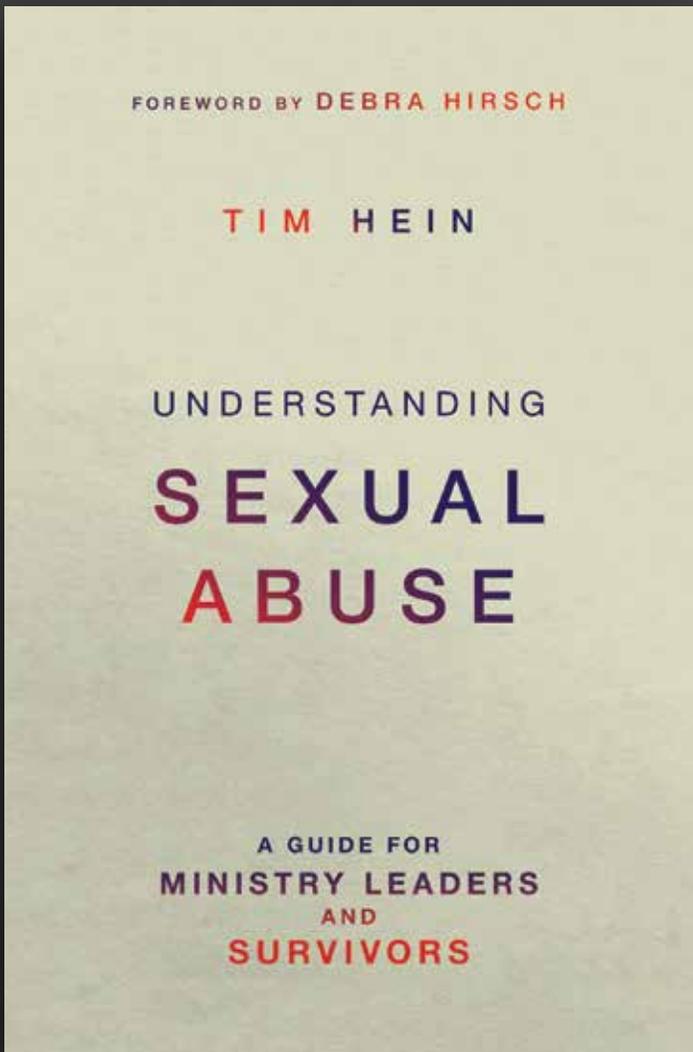


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Investment Advice for Trauma Survivors



Trauma is common in the fabric of life, with every significant character in the Bible experiencing it in some manner. As a cancer survivor (my most recent trauma), I can attest that the challenge is in how you respond. A mentor taught me that a core objective of trauma therapy is to help its victims avoid re-traumatizing themselves and, instead, invest in their recovery. The following practical “investment advice” can complement therapy with survivors of trauma.

- **Eat Breakfast.** A mixture of depression, irritability, and sleep-deprived fatigue can be the early morning consequences of significant trauma. Invest in getting your day started positively by eating a healthy breakfast—sodas and honey buns do not count. Dietary changes, in general, are important to our energy, mood, and cognition, but neglecting breakfast is self-defeating. Even Jesus prepared breakfast for the disciples (John 21:4-12).
- **Color Your Plate.** Significant stress can lead us to comfort eat with carbohydrates and refined sugars (a.k.a., junk foods). A simple way to invest in recovery is to “color” half of your plate with fruits and vegetables. Instead of denying yourself, splurge and eat as much of these “artistic” foods as you desire. Roasted carrots with cinnamon sprinkles are

my un-guilty pleasure. The DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) and Mediterranean diets are examples of “colorful” plans (Daniel 1:12-16).

- **Trust Your Doctor.** Trauma can tempt us to devalue ourselves and not engage in proper medical care. We can ignore known medical problems, engage in self-defeating addictive behaviors or not comply with our prescribed treatment plans. Invest in health by regular visits to your primary care physician (assuming that you have one) and following his or her advice. Trust is always an issue with post-trauma, so invest in developing a relationship with your doctor that will earn your trust (Proverbs 12:22).
- **Sleep at Least Seven Hours.** Investing in your physical and emotional health with sleep can be problematic as traumatic experiences tend to promote insomnia and/or nightmares. Practice good sleep habits that will give you the best opportunity for sleep (www.sleep.org). Seek medical evaluation if sleep problems are persistent, as a number of problems, like major depression, elevated thyroid, diabetes and sleep apnea, can disrupt sleep (Psalm 127:2).
- **Practice Balance.** Traumatic experiences can overwhelm you and skew your focus toward suffering and pain. An excessive focus on work or involvement in self-medicating, addictive behaviors can become unsuccessful attempts at “relaxation,” diversion or stress management. Invest time and

energy in exploring positive strategies to promote balance and regeneration. Engaging in spiritual disciplines, art, music, gardening, outdoor sports, and cooking are examples of activities that will overwrite some of the traumatic memories with healthier ones. Martha is an example of someone who was too busy and distracted to invest in her most profound needs (Luke 10:38-42).

- **Develop Relationships.** The absence of close, trust-based relationships with family or friends is a common challenge for trauma survivors. However, trust must be earned, not just given, and it takes time. Pray and invest time in seeking out one or two people who have tried to earn the trust that is so understandably difficult to give (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12).
- **Exercise.** Find something you enjoy, not something others have told you to do. Start with a minimal investment of 15 minutes per day of doing something (anything!) that gets your heart and body moving (I Corinthians 6:19-20).
- **Focus on Today.** Trauma can tempt you to live in the past instead of embracing today’s opportunities. Living one day at a time is preferred to the emotional paralysis of ruminating about the past or fearing the future (Matthew 6:25-34).
- **Have an Attitude of Gratitude.** Traumatic experiences can leave you highly skilled at recognizing pain and negativity in many situations. Although past pain cannot be forgotten, it can be overwritten by new

Engaging in spiritual disciplines, art, music, gardening, outdoor sports, and cooking are examples of activities that will overwrite some of the traumatic memories with healthier ones.

experiences that are positive and potentially transformative. Invest in focusing on one blessing per day for which you can truly have an attitude of gratitude (Lamentations 3:22-23).

- **Pursue Spiritual Development.** Seek God’s help in developing a new way of responding to the effects of trauma in your life. Traumatic experiences can tempt you to either run away from God or challenge you to run closer to Him. Running toward Him is a daily process that can produce change as you invest in your spiritual connection with God one day at a time (Psalm 37:23-24, I Peter 5:7).

Scripture teaches us that in this world, we will have tribulation... times of testing, trial, and even trauma (John 16:33). However, the God of all comfort and the Prince of Peace is ever present to help us walk through the valleys of life. Pray through the principles I have offered above and ask God to show you what, where, and how to invest in balanced self-care. May we, like the Apostle Paul, finish the race that has been set before us. ✕



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Pregnancy Discrimination in the Workplace



Even in the 21st century, pregnancy discrimination in the workplace remains a significant problem. With nearly half of all pregnancies in the United States being unintended,¹ fear of losing a job or being subjected to discrimination in the workplace can add to an already stressful and volatile situation for many pregnant women who are often single and/or working low-income jobs.

Attorneys for the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) reported that pregnancy discrimination in the workplace is among “the most overt, if unconscious, discrimination of any cases they litigate.”² In fiscal year 2017, the EEOC resolved more than 3,700 complaints of workplace pregnancy discrimination, resulting in approximately \$15 million of monetary benefits rewarded to victims.³ Adding to this problem, 2013 statistics

indicate that the vast majority of women who experience workplace pregnancy discrimination are employed in “low-wage” industries, such as retail and social assistance.⁴

Moreover, fears of pregnancy discrimination may tragically lead to an undesired abortion. The pro-abortion research organization, Guttmacher Institute, found that 38% of women who had an abortion listed “having a baby would interfere with [my] job/employment/career” as a reason for the pregnancy termination. Seventy-three percent listed, “[I] can’t afford a baby now.”⁵

It is well-documented that women who experience abortion often suffer from severe emotional, mental, and physical trauma, including an increased risk for depression, anxiety, and suicide.⁶ Accordingly, the Code of Ethics for the American Association of Christian Counselors (AACC) instructs counselors to “consider and

inform clients of potential adverse consequences (emotional and psychological consequences including any increased risk of depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation), as well as alternative means to abortion, recognizing the client will ultimately be responsible for the decision that is made.”⁷

Disastrous consequences arising from abortion may be prevented if a pregnant client is informed of her legal right to work without discrimination and/or repercussions resulting from her pregnancy.

The Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978 (PDA) amended Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to include prohibitions against pregnancy discrimination in the workplace. Essentially, pregnant employees must be treated in the same manner as other employees who are similarly situated in their ability or inability to work.⁸ Under the PDA, a pregnant employee is entitled to the same rights

to leave (whether disability leave or leave without pay) that are offered to other temporarily disabled employees. Additionally, “employers must hold open a job for a pregnancy-related absence the same length of time that jobs are held open for employees on sick or temporary disability leave.” The PDA also requires any health insurance offered by an employer to include coverage for pregnancy and pregnancy-related conditions, abortion excluded.⁹

The National Advocates for Pregnant Women (NAPW) has published a helpful guidance, listing actions prohibited under the PDA and other laws, including:

- An employer cannot refuse to hire you because of your pregnancy-related condition as long as you are able to perform the major functions of the job.
- You cannot be fired, demoted, or denied a promotion because you are or may become pregnant.
- Your employer may not single out pregnancy-related conditions for special procedures to determine your ability to work, but may use any procedure used to screen other employees’ ability to work.
- Your employer cannot force you to stop working and take pregnancy leave at any time during your pregnancy if you are still willing and able to perform your job.
- If you are temporarily unable to perform the functions of your job due to your pregnancy-related condition, your employer must treat you in the same manner as any other temporarily disabled employee by providing modified tasks, alternative assignments, disability leave, or leave without pay.
- Your employer must give

you the same level of rights, benefits, and reinstatement privileges given to other workers who are temporarily disabled.

- If an employer’s health plan includes spousal coverage, the employer cannot deny coverage for the pregnancy care of a male employee’s spouse.
- Pregnancy-related benefits cannot be limited to married employees.
- Employer-provided health insurance must cover pregnancy-related conditions [excluding abortion] on the same basis as costs for other conditions.¹⁰

The PDA applies to employers with 15 or more full-time employees (or full-time equivalents). State law may expand the PDA protections to employers with fewer employees.¹¹

Pregnancy within employment is generally recognized as a “disability” under the law, entitling pregnant workers for protection under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.¹² The ADA requires employers with 15 or more employees to provide “reasonable accommodation” for pregnant workers, such as light duty, modified work or administrative duties, unless it would cause an “undue hardship” (significant difficulty or expense). The accommodation should be requested by the employee and according to any employer policies. More information on the ADA can be found on the EEOC Web site.¹³ Other laws, such as the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993¹⁴ may also apply. A qualified employment law attorney can help clients navigate through the various federal and state laws that might be applicable to their situation.

If a pregnant client faces discrimination in the workplace, she should be encouraged to promptly contact an attorney and/or file a complaint with

the EEOC. The EEOC imposes a time limit of 180 days (approximately six months) for filing a complaint after the discrimination occurred. Of course, some states have their own state versions of EEOCs and/or pregnancy discrimination laws, which may offer extended time periods or other protections. Clients can contact their state Departments of Labor to inquire about applicable state law and avenues of recourse. Knowing these laws will help clients focus on healthy and happy pregnancies rather than suffering under a cloud of fear and uncertainty. ✦

The information contained in this column is provided for education purposes only. Nothing in this column should be construed as legal advice, and readers should seek advice from a qualified attorney within their jurisdiction for concerns/questions on specific matters. Law varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.



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Endnotes

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- 14 29 U.S. Code Chapter 28.

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Sexual Scandal or Safe Servanthood?



It seems nearly every day the headlines scream about another tragic case of high-profile sexual exploitation or inappropriate boundary violation in vivid, graphic, and lurid detail. To say there is a full-fledged epidemic of these egregious assaults would by no means be an exaggeration. Furthermore, the vast majority of these sordid, sensationalized, and salacious sexualized scandals have been allegedly perpetrated by *leaders* in the corporate, sports, entertainment, political, and media worlds.

As a society, we have to wonder—what in the world is going on? What ever happened to such basic (and now

seemingly old-fashioned or passé) moral values as decency, respect, dignity, honor, virtue, and integrity? Why has our culture sunk to such pervasive and pernicious perversions? What is causing this widespread corruption of character where leaders' narcissistic and abusive attitudes and behaviors are running amok over those within their realms of power?

Fortunately, various victims' groups are rising up, speaking out, and pushing back. Yet sadly, this is somewhat akin to locking the proverbial barn door after the horse has gotten out. Although blowing the whistle does help alert others to their painful reality and serve to hopefully

confront and call into account those perpetrating these assaults, no one should ever be the victim of sexual abuse and/or harassment.

Leaders who violate the vulnerability of those under their spheres of influence vilify their value as a human being. When someone exploits another person for the gratification of their own fleshly impulses, it destroys a basic sense of safety and, therefore, trust in the relationship. Abuse and harassment typically leave the exploited person feeling confused, conflicted, and crushed.

Why then, do leaders believe they can get away with oppressing and dominating a subordinate? What makes them believe they can abuse and harass someone? How do they ever believe they can insult and bully others with impunity? Why do they objectify and depersonalize another person by functionally reducing them to an egotistic commodity of fantasy and self-gratification?

Let's take a couple of steps back and think through these recent revelations both biblically and clinically. The fundamental common dynamics inherent in all these allegations are pride and sexual sin. All of these debased and depraved behaviors are not only disgraceful and disgusting, they are degrading and demoralizing not only to those under the perpetrators' purview, but also to society as a whole. Sin, like the leaven about which Jesus warned so frequently in his ministry, progressively permeates and insidiously infects the entirety of whatever its milieu.

Though we know there is actually no such thing as "secret sin," the self-deluded arrogance of a person's

narcissistic mentality somehow rationalizes that he/she is not subject to the same laws of consequence and outcome of mere mortals. Generally, the last person to identify one's pride is oneself. The overwhelming darkness of sin eventually can blind us to the enlightening truth that all of us like sheep have gone astray (Isaiah 53:6), that each of us proudly turns to our own broad egocentric, self-destructive way (Matthew 7:13-14), that we all fall far short of God's gracious glory (Romans 3:23), and are desperately in need of grace, mercy, and help to rescue us from ourselves (Hebrews 4:16). Truly, what is done in supposed secrecy is metaphorically shouted from mountaintops and what one thinks is hidden becomes laid bare for all to see (Hebrews 4:13)—all stern, severe, and sobering warnings.

Eventually, great is the fall of those who exploit and use others. King Solomon wisely advised us that pride precedes destruction and a person with a haughty spirit experiences gravity very painfully (Proverbs 16:18). When sinful desires (note the sexual metaphor and imagery which are symbolically pregnant with meaning—the Greek word consistently used for evil desire in the New Testament is *porneia*) are conceived, they give birth to death (James 1:14-15).

Clinically, we know that in addition to exhibiting classical narcissistic traits and features, leaders who traumatize others are exploiting their power. While unwanted advances, harassments, and personal boundary violations may be manifested sexually, they all constitute a perversion of power. Manipulating, coercing, attacking, and controlling a subordinate is an unacceptable distortion of authority, leadership, and sacred trust. Such so-called leaders are not safe, and certainly are not servants.

Fortunately, counterbalancing the recent, tabloid-like, sensationalized headlines have been the heroic tributes of a man who had the largest single impact for the Gospel of anyone in history. Billy Graham's recent promotion to heaven was celebrated globally, and the most consistent compliments people made about his greatness pertained to his deep humility and impeccable integrity. Billy Graham's remarkable leadership style was safe, secure, simple, servant-oriented, and scandal-free. And that was by design.

In 1948, Billy Graham was coming off a successful stint as a Youth for Christ evangelist and was about to enter a period of independent ministry that would last nearly six decades. His revival team included George Beverly Shea, Grady Wilson, and Cliff Barrows. Billy was 31-years-old, handsome, and charismatic. As Christianity entered its postwar boom, Americans flocked to revivals. Some sought salvation, but others had different aims. A number of politicians saw revivals as a hedge against the threat of cold war communism and entertainers saw an opportunity to promote themselves. Temptations abounded. To guard against allegations or actual abuse of money, sex, and power that had damaged the ministerial impact of many previous evangelists, the Graham team decided to take proactive, concrete measures to avoid even the slightest appearance of controversy.

The team gathered in a hotel room in Modesto, California, and drew up a compact which became known as the "Modesto Manifesto." This unpublished agreement included provisions for careful and accurate distribution of money raised by offerings, avoiding criticism of local churches, working only with churches that supported cooperative evangelism, and using only official

estimates of crowd sizes to avoid exaggeration. These policies would galvanize Graham and his team from charges of financial and moral impropriety and create an unfailing sense of safety and security.

However, most prominent to these young men was the realization that nothing looms larger than sex. Knowing that prevention is always easier and preferred to cure, the most well-known plank of the manifesto called for each man on the Graham team to never be alone with a woman other than his wife. This pledge insured Graham's sexual integrity and enabled him to avoid accusations that have tragically waylaid evangelists before and since. Consequently, his ministry and legacy was respectable, reputable, and reliable.

Billy Graham was, among many other wonderful things, a powerful and principled leader. He lived out his integrity by means of healthy, godly character; strong personal boundaries; rigorous interpersonal accountability; and a humble servant's heart—closely resembling and always pointing to the person of Jesus. So, too, should we all. ✨



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As a clinical psychologist and credentialed minister, Jared is dually trained in both psychology and theology and specializes in the theoretical and clinical integration of the two disciplines. In professional practice since 1977, Jared is the author or coauthor of six books, including *Making Magnificent Marriages*, and numerous journal articles. He has served on the staff of two large churches, founded and directed two Christian counseling centers, and taught at several Christian colleges and seminaries.

Sexual Abuse, Harassment, and Trauma

The Role Environmental Stimuli Can Play in Encouraging Sexual Harassment

Diehl, C., Rees, J., & Bohner, G. (2018). Predicting sexual harassment from hostile sexism and short-term mating orientation: Relative strength of predictors depends on situational priming of power versus sex. *Violence against Women, 24*(2), 123-143.

Diehl and colleagues utilized a priming experiment to investigate how environmental situation cues might heighten two personal factors that underlie some men's motivation to engage in sexual harassment. These personal factors include hostile sexism (HS), which involves prejudicial, negative beliefs about women, such as the belief that women are inferior and attempt to dispossess men of their power, and short-term mating orientation (STMO), which focuses on desiring sexual encounters that are spontaneous and do not include a long-term commitment. Priming experiments expose participants to a certain stimulus that the participants may or may not consciously notice and then investigate how this exposure influences later responses.

The study was conducted in Germany and included 85 heterosexual college men (18-46 years of age with the average age of 25) who participated in an online chat study that purported to test "memory processes in interactions at the workplace" (p. 128). To participate, the men had to individually walk down a hall where one of two posters was displayed. The poster was either titled, "Powerful Men," and included pictures of high-ranking politicians or, "Sexy Women," and included photos of women wearing lingerie. Random

assignment determined which poster was in the hallway. On the way to the computer chatroom, the researcher stopped and took a picture of the participant (ostensibly for the chat activity) in such a way that the volunteer was looking in the direction of the poster to increase the likelihood that it would be noticed. The participant would then sit down at a computer cubicle under the impression that multiple volunteers were taking part in the study simultaneously, and the woman he would be interacting with was "Julia." He saw a picture of her (a 25-year-old, attractive, white, German) and was told that due to technical difficulties, his picture could not be loaded into the chatroom. This increased the anonymity of his later communications.

After some preliminary interaction with "Julia," he was told that one of the chat partners would be selected at random to be the active sender of messages and the other would be a passive receiver. Of course, the participant was always chosen as the sender and he was told that he would later be asked to recall the materials in a memory test in order to give the "memory processes" original explanation for the study's credibility. He was then asked to choose from a triplet of possible jokes and remarks to continue the conversation with Julia. One joke was sexist; one was a personalized, sexually-harassing remark; and one a neutral joke. Twenty trials occurred with 16 involving a choice of those three options and four completely neutral filler trials. After the twentieth trial, the subjects filled out a questionnaire that measured their HS and STMO tendencies and were subsequently debriefed about the true purposes of the study.

The researchers found that STMO successfully predicted the amount of sexually offensive comments sent to a woman in the computer chat situation and that HS predicted the amount of sexist comments transmitted. The results provide emerging support that a sexual motive (STMO) increases the potential for sexual harassment, while a power motive (HS) predominantly results in unwanted sexual attention. The extent of this separateness in particular behaviors remains to be evaluated in further studies.

Equally important, the study suggests that "apart from individual motivations, contextual features matter in predicting sexual harassment... both motives [STMO and HS] can be triggered by situational cues and, thereby, strengthened in their impact on sexually harassing behavior" (p. 136). When one considers potential cues present in male athletic locker rooms, for example, and some workplace environments, the potential implications of these initial results are significant.

Further research may build or refine Diehl and colleagues' study findings. The results, however, highlight the potential role of contextual cues in promoting or discouraging sexual and gender harassment. They also demonstrate how even small amounts of stimuli—in this case, one poster on a wall—can promote unwanted or harmful behavior. For Christian counselors, such findings suggest the value of assessing a client's environmental context when sexually harassing behavior is a component of the clinical presentation. The study also supports the need for community organizational consultation and advocacy efforts to encourage work



environments that minimize implicit cues for sexual and gender harassment behavior.

Entrapment and Enmeshment Schemes Used by Non-relative Sex Traffickers

Reid, J.A. (2016). Entrapment and enmeshment schemes used by sex traffickers. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, 28(6), 491-511.

Developing research indicates that sex traffickers and pimps control the majority of juvenile female sex trafficking victims in the United States. The youths' ages and psychosocial maturity levels leave them vulnerable to exploitative strategies that traffickers use to entrap them, but what exactly are those strategies? In particular, what are the strategies of non-family, non-relative traffickers? This is something Dr. Reid wanted to know in her exploratory study utilizing a review of 43 case files of trafficked female youth obtained from social service agencies in two large cities in Florida. The case records were de-identified to protect confidentiality and revealed a culturally diverse sample (43% African-American, 32% Latino, 13% White, 9% Haitian, and 4% Other). Dr. Reid also interviewed service providers who had detailed knowledge of the cases to

gain further information on entrapment strategies.

Common strategies emerging from her study were divided into those who entrapped the girls into sex trafficking and those who kept them emotionally enmeshed there. The most frequent methods of entrapment, defined as scenarios that were seen in 10 plus case files and reported in six plus interviews, were the following: romance/wealth, becoming an ally, normalizing prostitution/pornographic activity, isolating, and taking advantage of intellectually disabled youth.

Many traffickers used flattery and romance, taking the girls out on expensive dates, engaging in sweet talk, and giving them attention that they never had. The girls would fall in love and eventually do the trafficker's bidding in engaging in prostitution and the production of pornography. Becoming an ally would involve activities such as helping a girl run away from home, helping her avoid police and other authorities, and providing a place to stay. In normalizing prostitution, the trafficker would use peers (trafficked girls about the same age) to recruit the victim and then get her used to viewing pornography, talking about sex, and engaging in a variety of sexual practices. These eventually led

to prostitution and the production of pornography for the trafficker. In isolating victims, the girls would be taken to another city or out of state. Their cell phones and media usage would be carefully controlled, and video-camera alarm systems would be installed at the house where the victim was moved to in order to track her every move and prevent escape. Of course, mixtures of the above categories would also occur in many case reports. One strategy differed substantially from the above when a trafficker realized a girl was intellectually disabled. Traffickers would kidnap them when they were leaving their homes or while waiting for the school bus. In Dr. Reid's particular review of cases, giving a girl drugs to promote addiction and holding her in a drug house only occurred sometimes (seen in three to nine case files and reported in three to nine interviews).

Common enmeshment strategies included the following: shame/blackmail, obligation, making the girl complicit in a crime, pregnancy, financial control, intimidation, and convincing the girl she was "special" or "family." Shaming and blackmail might involve activities such as telling the victim that no one will have her now and threatening to show her

family the pornographic photos the trafficker had of her. Obligation related to the illusion that the trafficker had rescued the victim from worse and she must now show loyalty (“Don’t be a snitch.”) To promote complicity in a crime, the trafficker might involve the girl in recruiting other girls, abusing other girls (or she would get abused herself), or other crimes such as shoplifting... so if he got arrested he could report her, too. In pregnancy, some men would pay more for sex with pregnant girls as a component of sexual fetishes, and after child birth the trafficker would threaten to sell the baby or give it up for adoption unless the victim complied with his wishes. Financial control was also a common tactic, keeping all or most of the money and controlling possessions. With

intimidation, the trafficker would use tactics such as physical abuse, threats of gun violence, threats to kick out the victim, kill family members, etc. Finally, another common strategy involved the trafficker making the girl feel like she was the truly “special” one out of all the girls he had, or creating the illusion that he and the girls were “family.” As in the entrapment strategies, these methods were often mixed.

Reid notes that knowledge about the recruitment strategies employed by sex traffickers is invaluable in the development of preventive programs for schools, treatment centers, and other organizations to build teen consciousness of the methods used by traffickers to trick youth into such bondage. For Christian counselors, such information is not only useful

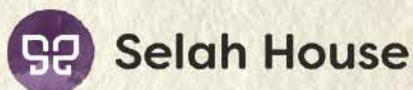
for those venues, but also for church workshops, youth programs, and other ministry settings to build awareness. ✦



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Casting the First Stone: Perpetrators, Victims, and Sinners – Wade Mullen

1. Mullen says, “We must see exposure (of sexual sin) as
- a. an act of shaming for the sake of condemnation
 - b. an act of mercy for the sake of redemption
 - c. an act often done prematurely and not based on facts
 - d. the response of the overly confident church leader

Boys to Men – Tim Clinton

2. _____% of teenagers said they unintentionally accessed porn, hate-based, or violent material while conducting school research on the Web.
- a. 50
 - b. 25
 - c. 91
 - d. 75

Pregnancy Discrimination in the Workplace – Jeanneane Maxon

3. Pregnancy within employment is generally recognized as
- a. a temporary disability under the law
 - b. a non-covered medical expense
 - c. sufficient grounds to mandate that employee take leave
 - d. legal grounds to deny a promotion or pay raise

Power and Control: The Trauma of Rape – Molly-Catherine K. Goodson

4. A “SANE” professional exam
- a. is a two-part examination with an interview and physical exam
 - b. does not mean the survivor will be forced to go to court
 - c. must be completed within 120 hours of the assault
 - d. all of the above

Recovering from Sexual Trauma... – Heather Davediuk Gingrich

5. Phase II of treatment involves
- a. creating a sense of safety in the therapeutic relationship
 - b. the SAS learning to live as a healthy, whole person
 - c. the survivor narrating incidents of the trauma in detail
 - d. all of the above

Restoring Sexual Respect: Stand Up, Step Up, Speak Up – June Hunt

6. The authorities created “double victimization” for Rachel, one of Larry Nassar’s patients, by
- a. contesting her report
 - b. minimizing her concern
 - c. questioning her motive
 - d. all of the above

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace: Laws and Ethics – Jeanneane Maxon

7. *Quid pro quo* harassment occurs when
- a. the harasser offers sex in exchange for something else
 - b. the harasser is verbally abusive in a sexual way
 - c. the victim is forced to pay money to retain her job
 - d. all of the above

Shattered Innocence: Childhood Sexual Abuse – Diane Langberg

8. Langberg says that abused children find _____ to numb their pain, self-protect, and find a way to leave.
- a. a safe person
 - b. some kind of “narcotic”
 - c. a safe place to stay
 - d. a release for anger

The #MeToo Movement: Hearing and Healing... – Shannon Ethridge

9. Sexual abuse victims often search for relief from pain
- a. in the same places they were wounded
 - b. in healthy relationships
 - c. in compulsive sexual behavior
 - d. in self-defeating behaviors

The Lost Ones: Human and Sex Trafficking – Katariina Rosenblatt

10. Rosenblatt believes the vulnerability in the U.S. to Human Trafficking may come from
- a. the availability of the Internet
 - b. the problems in the public school system
 - c. the breakdown of the American family
 - d. changing moral values in society

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2. Be able to articulate a more comprehensive understanding of this issue’s core theme.
3. Be able to integrate spirituality and faith-based constructs into the delivery of care.

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Please rate the following on a scale of 1–5 (1 meaning **Poor** and 5 meaning **Excellent**):

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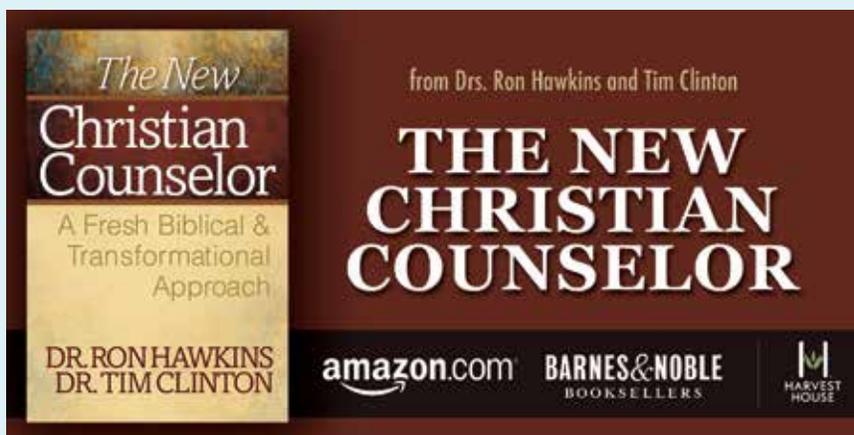
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Boys to Men

A tsunami is racing toward our boys... and the approaching devastation may overwhelm and consume them. I believe the coming destruction threatens to utterly destabilize the next generation, decimating their capacity for healthy relationships in the future, including the emotional closeness and intimacy critically needed for fulfilling friendships and marriages.

It's fascinating to me that a tsunami is not created like most waves that are generated by the gravitational pull of the sun and moon. A tsunami often starts with an event... an earthquake under the surface of the water. There's a hidden disruption... and by the time you can see the full power of what has been released, warnings may not help as everything in its path is swept away.

Our tsunami is a cultural one and something that also started with a hidden disruption—I believe we are now witnessing the poisonous death grip of Internet pornography. Some recent findings indicate that the number one consumer demographic of Internet porn is 12-17 year old boys. Not men in their 30s... not 20 somethings who are just moving into adulthood... but our young boys. Even more stunning is that the average age of first exposure to this insidious evil has dropped as low as five-years-old!

Think about that for a moment. What these minors now have access to and are downloading on their cell phones or iPads® is not simple nudity with consenting adults—the Internet is flooded with pornographic images portraying abuse, victims of sex trafficking, children, and graphically-deviant behaviors. Virtual reality has put live sexual chaos at the fingertips



of hormone-driven, red-blooded, and extremely curious prepubescent and pubescent kids. Our boys are bombarded daily by the crass and, at times, gross sexualization and objectification of women everywhere they turn. Sadly, this visual trauma takes place all through their formative years, when they are setting the groundwork for what kind of men they will one day grow up to be.

Through the #MeToo movement, tragic stories of abuse, intimidation, and harassment are being brought from the darkness and into the light. Yet, where did the darkness come from? Much of it has been fueled by the glorification of the “Playboy® mansion gone wild” on our phones, in our homes and neighborhoods, at our schools and churches, and even in our bedrooms. Author and evangelist,

Josh McDowell, recently stated that pornography has become the number one challenge for Christian homes.

Let's not forget that while pornography is part of the devastation, there are many other crippling factors... screen addiction... absent fathers... distracted mothers... the loss of community... little or no training on how to handle tough and turbulent emotions... the list goes on and on. In news reports all over the country, we have watched the opioid epidemic tragically take thousands of lives as these substances are often laced with poisonous fentanyl and other deadly chemicals. For our boys, the porn industry is similarly laced with poison—screen addiction, abuse, and more.

Nevertheless, our boys are expected to grow into morally behaved and decent men whose respect for the opposite sex is presumed, a natural default attitude that develops as they get older. The truth is that few boys are taught boundaries and consequences, yet they are expected to mature into men who represent integrity and ardently defend the rights of women. They are expected to grow into men who know how to process, manage, and guard their sexualized feelings in healthy and godly ways. But how? With what guidance? By whom? I wonder how many fathers avoid talking to their sons about sex because they wrestle with shame in their personal lives. I wonder how many words of encouragement we have heard from our pulpits lately on helping boys manage their sexuality? Meanwhile, pornography is most certainly the elephant in the room, sitting in the front pew. Everyone sees it, everyone smells it, everyone tiptoes around it... yet no one wants to address it.

Too many adults can barely get their theology and convictions straight about what it even means to be a man now, let alone manage raging

hormones, the lust of the eyes, and the lust of the flesh. We have lost our way and, as a result, our boys are suffering.

The Lost Boys of the New Era

This past winter, one of the best sledding hills in our neighborhood was empty on a snowy day. It wasn't that long ago that I can remember when every snow day led to a packed hill. Yet, this year, with no fewer children in the neighborhood, there was nothing but a foot of untouched snow. Childhood used to revolve around outdoor fun, adventure and friendships, with caring adults at home, the Church, and our communities as anchors. Today's boys are rudderless. Here's what we know:

- Almost one-third of kids aged 10 to 17 with computers at home have seen a pornographic Web site, often accidentally.²
- A study by the Safe American Foundation reported that 91% of teenagers said they unintentionally accessed Web sites featuring pornographic, hate-based or violent material while conducting research for school or just surfing the Web.³
- The prevalence of male child sexual abuse (MCSA) is higher than initially thought, with up to 26% of men in community samples reporting sexual abuse in childhood, and up to 36% of men in clinical samples reporting childhood sexual abuse.⁴
- One in seven boys will be sexually assaulted by the time he reaches 18.⁵
- An estimated 24.7 million children (33%) have absent biological fathers.⁶
- According to 72.2% of the U.S. population, fatherlessness is the most significant family or social problem facing America.⁷

- Fifty percent of surveyed teens admitted they felt addicted to their mobile devices.⁸
- The American Psychological Association (APA) estimates that teenagers are exposed to 14,000 sexual references and innuendos a year on television alone.⁹
- An April 2002 survey on teens, sex, and TV from the Kaiser Family Foundation found that nearly three out of four teenagers (72%) thought sex on TV influenced the sexual behavior of kids their age "somewhat" or "a lot."¹⁰

To be silent is to be complicit—and there is far too much silence on this issue.

Champion Both

In today's academic climate, girls are championed... and rightfully so, I might add. STEAM programs are designed to encourage girls in Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics, and they continually receive more funding and support. Programs to teach young girls leadership are rapidly being developed, and we need to keep championing, empowering, and valuing our girls and women in a clearly focused and proactive way.

However, let's not forget about raising our boys. We must send a clear message that masculinity is not the enemy—abuse and mistreatment are the enemy. Sin is the enemy. Objectifying and degrading other humans is evil. Let us confidently raise our boys to "Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong" (I Corinthians 16:13, ESV). We need to love on and care for our boys... teaching them to love and be loved, to be loyal, faithful, and filled with integrity. It starts one home, one coach, one teacher, one church, and one community at a time.

If you have the privilege of parenting a son or sons, spend some extra time with them, take a long drive, get out in nature, and play your part in shaping the next generation.



Moving Forward

The best time to do something about this problem was years ago. The second best time is to start today. Please don't read this article, nod, and move on. Find a young man to mentor and encourage. He has probably been watching you for a long time. Maybe it's a young man in your family with no father around. Local schools and churches regularly take volunteers to work with young students.

If you have the privilege of parenting a son or sons, spend some extra time with them, take a long drive, get out in nature, and play your part in shaping the next generation. The busy, preoccupied parent misses many cues and opportunities to have critical influence and stability during life's journey.

Virtually every man I have ever met struggles to believe God loves him. I know that often starts with what he sees or doesn't see, especially in his own dad. We have to work to do. Our boys are increasingly conflicted, confused, and broken. The good news is that it is never too late to be a good dad or mom and have the influence to help guide their steps from being a boy to becoming a man. And it's up to us to point them to God—the only One who can help strengthen them or put them back together. ✨



TIM CLINTON, ED.D.,

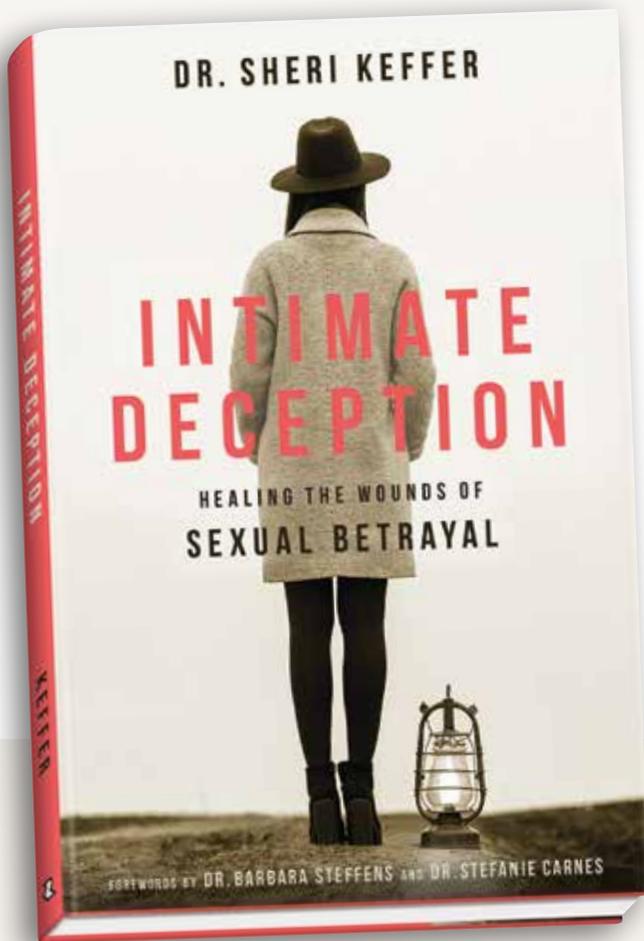
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Endnotes

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BETRAYAL AT THE DEEPEST LEVEL



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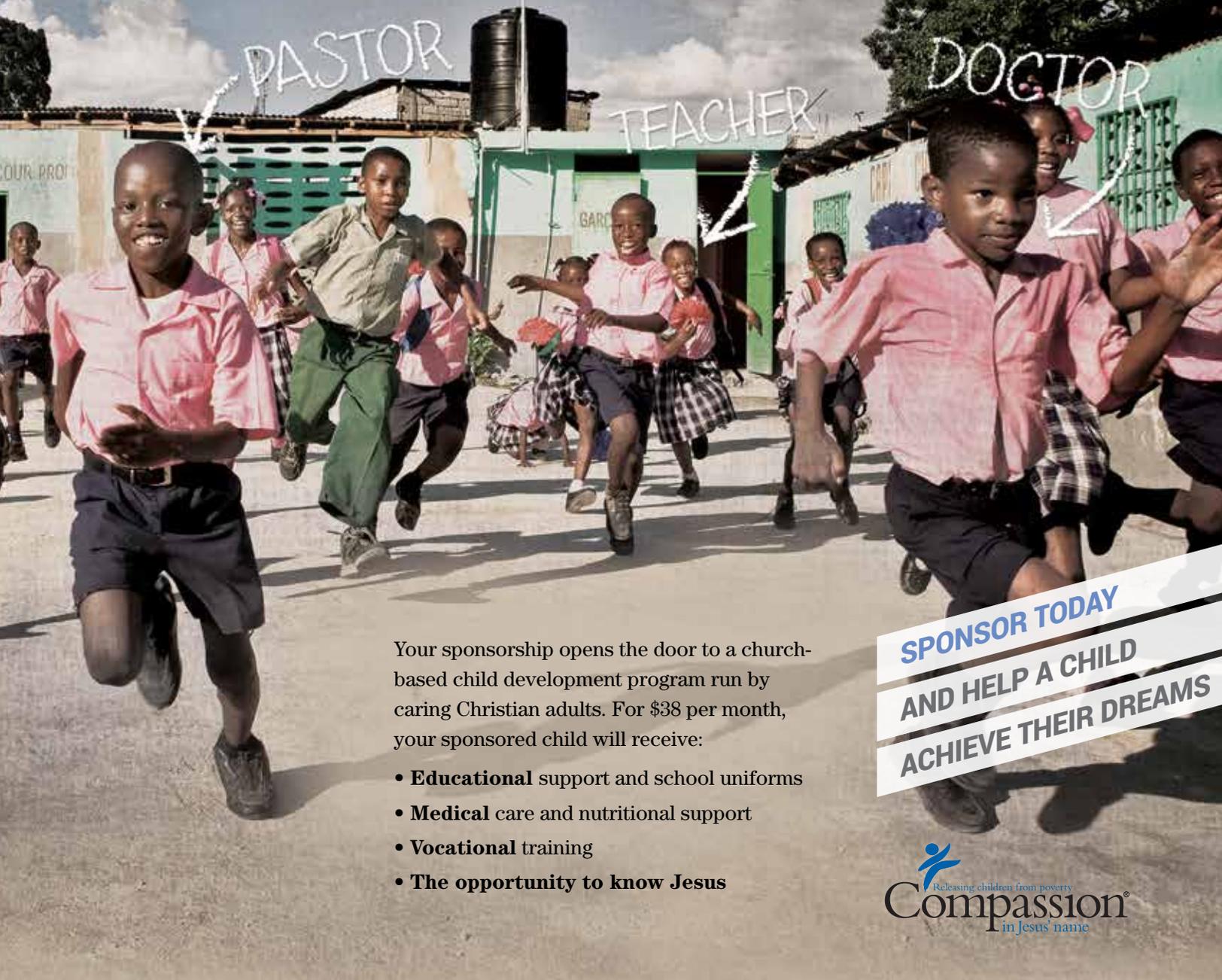
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