**SEXUAL ABUSE**

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1. Types of sexual abuse

A. Definition -- sexual abuse is any sexual activity (with or without consent) which exploits a child to meet the needs of an adult or older child.

1. Sexual molestation

2. Incest -- sexual relations between close blood relatives, including step relationships where no blood relationship exists. Leviticus 18:6-18 lists 16 sexual activities prohibited between family members.

3. Exploitation for prostitution or the production of pornographic materials

B. Contact

1. Very severe -- rape: physical force is used and penetration (oral or anal) takes place

a. Blitz rape -- the victim is attacked and forced without consent to engage in sexual activity.

b. Confidence rape -- the victim is enticed into trusting the assailant and then is forced to engage in sexual activity.

c. Accessory-to-sex (inability to consent) -- individuals agree to engage in sexual activity with some willingness but are sexually misused because they lack the ability to provide informed consent because of their age (minors) or mental incapacity.

d. Sex-stress situations (sex with initial consent) -- the victim agrees to have sex, either for or without pay but becomes a victim when the sexual partner goes beyond the bounds of the initial implied or explicit contract by becoming violent or by forcing a type of sexual activity to which the victim objects.

2. Severe -- indecent liberties

a. Unclothed genital contact without penetration including manual touching, fondling, or masturbation

b. Simulated intercourse (forcible or non-forcible)

3. Least severe -- sexual kissing, sexual touching of buttocks, thighs, legs, clothed breasts or genitals (forcible or non-forcible)

C. Interaction

1. Verbal

a. Direct solicitation for sexual purposes

b. Subtle innuendoes

c. Descriptions of sexual practices

d. Repeated use of sexual language and sexual terms as personal names

2. Visual

a. Exposure to use of pornography

b. Intentional exposure to sexual acts, sexual organs, or sexually provocative attire (exhibitionism)

c. Inappropriate attention directed toward body or clothing for purposes of sexual stimulation (voyeurism)

3. Psychological

a. Physical/sexual boundary violations

(1) Intrusive interest in menstruation, pubic development, clothing

(2) Repeated use of enemas

b. Sexual/relational boundary violations

(1) Intrusive interest in child's sexual activity

(2) Use of child as spouse surrogate (confidant, intimate companion, protector, counselor)

II. Incidence of sexual abuse (USA)

A. It is estimated that one in six Americans has been involved in some form of sexual abuse

B. 38% of women report at least one sexual abuse experience by age eighteen; 28% reported the abuse occurred before age 14.

C. One-third of the sexually abused persons (male or female) were molested before they were nine years of age.

1. 60% involved someone known to the victim but was not related

2. 11% involved total strangers

D. Sexual abuse in the family (incest)

1. 29% of sexual abuse involves family members

a. 25% by uncles

b. 24% by fathers

c. 18% by first cousins

d. 13% by brothers

e. 10% by some other relative

f. 6% by grandfathers

2. Sibling incest is more common than mother-son or father-daughter incest.

3. Mother-son incest is the strongest and most universal of the incest taboos.

4. Father-son and mother-daughter incest violates two taboos -- incest and homosexuality.

E. Cycles of sexual addiction (James 1:14,15)

1. Preoccupation -- the trance or mood wherein the addict's mind is completely engrossed with thoughts of sex. This mental state creates an obsessive search for sexual stimulation.

2. Ritualization -- the addict's own special routines that lead up to the sexual behavior; the ritual intensifies the preoccupation, adding arousal and excitement.

3. Compulsive sexual behavior -- the actual sexual act, which is the end goal of the preoccupation and ritualization. Sex addicts are unable to control or stop their behavior once they have reached this stage.

4. Despair -- the feelings of utter hopelessness sexual addicts have about their behavior and their powerlessness.

III. Indicators of sexual abuse

A. Individual behavior

1. Indirect hints or open statements about abuse

2. Difficulty in peer relationships, i.e., violence against younger children

3. Withdrawn, less verbal, depressed, apathetic

4. Self-mutilation

5. Preoccupation with death, guilt, heaven, or hell

6. Retreat to fantasy world (dissassociative reactions)

a. Loss of memory

b. Imaginary playmates

c. Referring to self by more than one name

7. Fear, clinging to parent, child requires assurance

8. Unwillingness to participate in physical/recreational activities

9. Refusal to undress for athletic activities

10. Sudden increase in modesty

11. Fear of bathrooms and showers

12. Anger, acting out, disobedience

13. Refusal to be left with potential offender or caretaker

14. Lack of trust

15. Runaway behavior

16. Refusal to go home or stated desire to live elsewhere

17. Extreme fear or repulsion when touched by an adult of either sex

18. Touching to either extreme (over/under touching)

19. Sophisticated sexual knowledge

20. Precocious, provocative sexual behavior

21. Seductive, indiscriminate displays of affection

22. Regression to earlier infant behavior – bedwetting, thumb sucking

23. Sleep disturbances, nightmares

24. Inability to concentrate in school; hyperactive

25. Sudden drop in school performance

26. Overly compliant or almost compulsive in action

27. Arriving early at school and leaving late with few, if any absences

28. Excessive masturbation

29. Combination of violence and sexuality in art, writing, language and play

30. Hysterical seizures

31. Attempts to establish boundaries, such as wearing clothing to bed

32. Total denial of problem with total lack of expression or feeling

B. Sibling behavior

1. Brother and sister behave like a girl friend and boy friend

2. Child fears being left alone with sibling

3. Child appears to be embarrassed when found alone with a sibling

4. Child is teased or antagonized by sibling but does not retaliate

5. Siblings report another child is favored by parent

C. Parental behavior

1. Blurring of generational lines

2. Strained marital relationships

3. Parent often alone with one child

4. Favoritism by parent toward one child

5. Over protective or jealous parent

D. Characteristics of incestuous (dysfunctional) families

1. Shame complicated by guilt

2. Abuse of power – authoritarian parenting style

3. Distorted communication

4. Social isolation

5. Denial

6. Lack of intimacy

7. Lack of privacy

8. Lack of modesty

9. Blurred boundaries

10. Strong dependency needs

11. Lack of forgiveness

12. Emotional immaturity and lack of impulse control

13. Conspiracy of silence

IV. Responses of victims to sexual abuse

A. Worsened relations with the family

B. Increased insecurities concerning sexual attractiveness

C. Worsened relations with husband or boyfriend perpetrator

D. Increased nightmares

E. Increased negative feelings toward men

F. Worsened heterosexual relationships

G. Increased fear of being home alone

H. Worsened sexual relations with a partner

I. Change in eating habits

J. Change in sleeping patterns

K. Decreased social activities

L. Increased fear of the streets

V. Issues victims need to resolve

A. Denial that it ever happened

B. Anger

1. Toward abuser

2. Toward self for having provoked the abuse nor not stopping it

3. Toward those who should have protected you

C. Betrayal

D. Powerlessness

E. Emotional isolation - dissociation

F. Shame -- something to hide, need for Inner healing

G. Need for cleansing -- someone to take responsibility for what happened

H. Forgiveness -- trust God for judgment and punishment

I. Grieving -- lost childhood boundaries

J. Need for an apology -- someone to take responsibility for what happened, to share the pain and grieve with you

VI. Helping the victim of sexual abuse

A. Treatment begins with prevention.

B. Treatment must include therapy for the victim as well as the whole family unit.

C. Rationalizations of the perpetrator must be challenged.

1. Seductiveness of the victim

2. Frigidity of the spouse

D. Rebuilding shattered self-esteem

1. Definition: self-esteem is a person's judgment of worthiness that is expressed in attitudes he/she holds toward self; it is the single most significant key to human behavior.

2. Dimensions of self-esteem

a. Belonging -- an awareness of being wanted and accepted, of being cared for and enjoyed

b. Worth -- a feeling of being valuable and significant

c. Competence -- a feeling of adequacy, of courage, and of helpfulness with strength enough to carry out the tasks of daily life

VII. Developing boundaries after abuse

A. Lack of intergenerational boundaries may result because the child has been treated as an equal

1. Abuse frequently eliminates private time and space the child needs, leaving no boundaries.

2. The child may develop tough boundaries and vow, "I'll never let them see me cry!"

1. If abuse is severe, the child may split off a part of his/her personality and develop a multiple personality disorder -- the ultimate in internal boundaries.

B. Adults who experienced child abuse must learn how to develop appropriate and healthy adult boundaries.

VIII. Steps in recovering from sexual abuse

A. Step One: recognize powerlessness -- recognize you are powerless to heal the damaged emotions resulting from sexual abuse and look to God for the power to be made whole.

B. Step Two: acknowledge victory in Christ – acknowledge that God's plan for your life includes victory over the experiences of sexual abuse.

C. Step Three: receive freedom from shame and guilt -- confess that the person who abused you is responsible for the sexual acts committed against you and refuse to accept the shame and guilt resulting from those sexual acts.

D. Step Four: discover your identity in Jesus Christ -- look to God and His Word to find your identity as a worthwhile and loving person.

E. Step Five: share your feelings -- become willing to share your feelings with God and at least one other person who can help you identify areas of your life that need cleansing and healing.

F. Step Six: accept responsibility for your own behavior -- accept responsibility for your responses to being sexually abused.

G. Step Seven: become a forgiving person -- make the decision to receive God's help in forgiving yourself and those who have offended (violated) you.

H. Step Eight: mature in your relationship with God and others -- give yourself permission to grow into maturity as a child of God and be willing to share your discoveries with other people.

I. Step Nine: minister to others -- be willing to be used by God as an instrument of healing and restoration in the lives of others.

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