

“BUT I LOVE HIM....”

***INVESTIGATING AND INTERVIEWING
CHILDREN WHO ARE IN LOVE WITH
THEIR OFFENDER***

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Topics to Be Covered

- Victim Dynamics
- Offender Characteristics
- Disclosure Issues
- Interview Techniques
- Case Studies / Video Examples

Victim Dynamics

Who are we talking to?

Usually Pre-teen or Teen

- What we know about this age group
 - Poor relationships with parents /caregivers
 - Insecure
 - Misunderstood
 - Risk takers
 - Emotionally vulnerable
 - Lonely
 - Depressed

Who are we talking to?

- May be adult like physically and verbally but brain development is not the same
- Lacks emotional maturity to make sound responsible decisions
- Has limited cognitive control over impulse and high risk decisions
- The world is all about them; similar to toddlers
- Fighting for independence; similar to toddlers
- Not normal to discuss their sex life with adults in authority

[Redacted] shared FOX 4 News's post.
Yesterday at 9:42 PM · 👤

I'm sorry but I think the girl needs to get i trouble too. I get he is the adult but these girls now a days want to act grown and when they get caught up they back pedal.



FOX 4 News



Yesterday at 6:02 PM · 🌐

He and the teen girl had intercourse in his truck and she performed oral sex twice on him.



Denton teacher charged with having relationship with student

⚡ FOX 4 News



Offender Characteristics

“Exploring Sex Offender Grooming”

Jim Tanner, Ph.D.

KBSolutions, Inc.

www.kbsolutions.com

Stephen Brake, Ph.D.

Stephen Brake Associates

www.stephenbrakeassociates.com

What is Grooming?

*Patterned behavior designed to increase opportunity,
minimize victim resistance or withdrawal, reduce
disclosure or belief*

Types of Grooming

- Environmental Grooming
- Victim Grooming

Environmental Grooming

- What makes up a child's environment?
 - Parents
 - Family Members
 - School
 - Peers/Friends
 - Social Organizations
 - Significant Others

Environmental Grooming Continued

□ Factors

■ Position

- Social
- Personal

■ Charm

- Looks
- Personality

Environmental Grooming Continued

□ Factors Continued

■ Power

- Political
- Fiscal
- Absolute

■ Celebrity

- Fame
- Perceived Fame

B.R.A.T.

- B: Bond
 - *Treated like an adult, secrets, lures*
- R: Reliance
 - *Push/Pull*
- A: Attenuates Resistances
 - *Step by step progression of isolation and sexual activity*
- T: Trap
 - *Rewards, special friendships, threats either direct or indirect*

Lures

- Males = the 4 D's
 - Drinking
 - Driving
 - Dirty (movies, pictures, conversations)
 - Desires

- Females = L.I.S.T
 - Love
 - Interests
 - Support
 - Things

Disclosure Issues

Disclosure

There are two ways child sexual abuse is discovered:

□ Purposeful Disclosures

□ **Accidental Discovery Disclosures**

A lot of these cases will be discovered accidentally which will likely complicate the investigative interview

Accidental Discovery Disclosures

- Abuse is discovered accidentally
 - Evidence is discovered like: STD, pregnancy, images, video etc.
 - Eye witness discloses
 - Confident discloses
 - Acting out behaviors are observed

- Child has not made the decision to tell

- Child has not had time to emotionally prepare themselves

- Child may be in the “denial” or “tentative” stage of disclosure at the time of the forensic interview

Tentative Disclosure

Blocks to Disclosure

- **Forgetting**
 - *“I can't remember”; “I don't know”; “I forgot, it was a long time ago”*
- Distancing
 - *“He did it to my sister, but not me”*
- **Minimizing**
 - *“It only happened one time”; “It was my fault”*
- Empowerment
 - *“He tried but I wouldn't let him”*
- Dissociation
 - *“I was asleep”; “I blacked out”*
- **Discounting**
 - *“It's not a big deal”; “I've moved on”*

*“Compliant Child Victims: Confronting an
Uncomfortable reality”*



Where healing begins for abused children

Kenneth V. Lanning
Retired FBI

What does “compliant” mean?

- Compliant means:
 - The word used to describe children who “cooperate” or “consent” to the sexual abuse
 - Used for lack of a better word

- Compliant DOES NOT mean:
 - That the child is NOT a victim

- Compliant DOES NOT mean:
 - Legal consent was given

“Stranger Danger”

- The Stranger Danger concept, while necessary, causes some negative consequences:
 - Definition of who is a “stranger” varies
 - “say no, yell, tell” guilt
 - Societal attitudes and prevention programs have focused on “unwanted” sexual activity
 - Victims blame themselves for not doing what they were “supposed” to do
 - Victims feel the need to describe abuse in ways that society will accept

Vulnerability of Children

- Children learn early to manipulate environments to get something they want
- Children, especially adolescents, can be curious about sexual things, something adults do not like to admit
- Older children and teens desire to be older and be treated like someone older and seek out ways to do this
- Older children and teens are seeking independence

Compliant Victims are Not at Fault

Even if they:

- ❑ Did not say “no”
- ❑ Did not fight
- ❑ Actively cooperated
- ❑ Initiated the contact
- ❑ Did not tell
- ❑ Accepted gifts or money
- ❑ Enjoyed the sexual activity

Compliant Victims Might Possibly

- ❑ Trade sex for attention, affection or gifts
- ❑ Are confused over their sexuality and feelings
- ❑ Are embarrassed, guilt ridden over their activity
- ❑ Describe their victimization in socially acceptable ways
- ❑ Minimize their role, maximize offenders roles
- ❑ Deny or exaggerate their victimization

The Effects on Disclosures

- ❑ Failing to disclose or deny victimization when directly asked
- ❑ Incomplete, Inaccurate, distorted disclosures
- ❑ Lifetime of embarrassment, shame and guilt
- ❑ Offenders being able to have numerous victims over time
- ❑ Ineffective prevention programs

The Effects on Disclosures

- May maximize offender's role while minimizing their role
- May protect the offender so as to protect themselves
- May have "real" feelings for the offender

Interview Techniques

Using Evidence

□ Prepare and Predict

- Tell child you have photos, statements etc. right at the beginning of the interview
- Tell them what you are about to show them, read to them etc.

Barriers / Blocks to Disclosure

- ▣ May not see themselves as a victim
- ▣ Mad that others do see them as a victim
- ▣ May feel responsible, to blame, guilty
- ▣ May have a sense of loyalty or affection for offender
- ▣ May like aspects of what they've experienced (or pretend to)
 - Stability
 - Sense of importance
 - Attention
 - Sexual activity

OR

- May feel very much like a victim
- May feel helpless, scared or trapped
- May feel relieved to get out of the relationship

Get a sense of what the victim feels, may have to ask them directly and tailor your questions as needed – similar to an interrogation

Decide whether to ask questions that eliminate culpability in the act or that don't label child as a victim – either can shut a kid down

□ *Did you guys have a sexual relationship?*

OR

□ *Did he ever make you do sexual things with him?*

□ *Whose idea was it to have sex?*

OR

□ *Did he ever make you do something sexual?*

□ *What did he say about telling...?*

OR

□ *Did he threaten you in any way?*

Block Removal Techniques

- Safe room / Safe place to talk about anything – even illegal things
- Not concerned about perceived or actual wrong doings committed by the child
- Not judging anyone, or any decisions made – just need the facts
- I wasn't there – I don't know it all
- Demonstrating an understanding of the feelings involved

Do

- Be a good listener – allow for silence
- Let the child tell their story
- Acknowledge child's feelings – even if you know it's dysfunctional

Do

- Build strong rapport
 - This is not going to be your typical rapport
 - Consider building rapport after rules and T/L/O
 - Talk about their relationship during rapport
 - Feed off of their expressions
 - Rapport may last longer than usual

**You are going to be
building rapport the
entire interview**

Don't

- Don't allow their attitude to make you lose focus
- Don't be afraid to address the attitude
- Don't forget to ask yourself "What came first?"

The Attitude

Or

The Abuse

Questions