Perpetrator Behaviour in the context of Child Sexual Exploitation

Craig Barlow
Independent Forensic Social Worker
Is Sexual Exploitation a New Phenomenon?

Victorian Child Prostitutes were as young as 12 and 13

- Working class girls lived in terrible conditions and there were assumptions they would be abused by their fathers and brothers anyway.
- There was a lack of interest in these girls as it was not going to affect the more protected middle and upper classes.
undercover journalist William Thomas Stead, posing as a client, bought a 13-year-old virgin for the night by

- Her name was Eliza Armstrong. She was bought for £5 - the equivalent of around £527 today.
- She was taken to a midwife to "procure the certification of her virginity" who remarked - "The poor little thing... She is so small."
- She was then brought to a brothel and drugged, and the paper's readers were led to believe the worst. She let out "a helpless, startled scream like the bleat of a frightened lamb", Stead wrote.
The Nature of sexual exploitation

- Sexual exploitation can take many forms from the seemingly ‘consensual’ relationship where sex is exchanged for attention, affection, accommodation or gifts, to serious organised crime and child trafficking.
- The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim, increasing the dependence of the victim as the exploitative relationship develops.
- Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement including unwanted pressure from their peers to have sex, sexual bullying (including cyber-bullying), and grooming for sexual activity.
A Spectrum of Sexual Exploitation

- **Inappropriate Relationships**
  - Lone perpetrator with inappropriate power and control over young person.
  - Likely to be significant age gap.
  - Child may believe they are in a loving and equal relationship.

- **“Boyfriend” Model and Peer Exploitation**
  - Perpetrator befriends and grooms child into a “relationship and subsequently coerces them into sexual activity with multiple other men. Victim may be used to draw in other young victims.

- **Organised/Networked Exploitation or Trafficking**
  - Young people are passed through networks of offenders, possibly between towns and cities, where they may be coerced into sexual activity with multiple men. Victims may also be used to recruit other young victims.
Not all Children are groomed into Sexual Exploitation...

- Some young people are engaged in informal economies that incorporate the exchange of sex for rewards such as drugs, alcohol, money or gifts.
- Others exchange sex for accommodation or money as a result of homelessness and experiences of poverty.
- Some young people have been bullied and threatened into sexual activities by peers or gangs which is then used against them as a form of extortion and to keep them compliant.
“Localised Grooming” (CEOP)

- Involves an element of grooming and solicitation in a public place (e.g. place where children and young people congregate and may be on-line as well as off-line), where a child or young person has been groomed for sexual activity with the offender and their associates.
- Grooming leads to exploitation over extended periods
- Victims may be coerced into recruiting other children into the network
Offender Characteristics

- Likely to be in his 20s
- Perceived as an older “Boyfriend”
- Introduces victims to a wider group of men in various locations, usually in private residences
- Sex is exchanged for drugs, alcohol, clothes, commodities – victims saw this as part of the relationship indicating prior grooming
Previous Offence History

- Acquisitive offences,
- Violent offences inc. Domestic violence, sexual offences (including making / distributing child abuse images, extreme images and prohibited images)
- Non-sexual offences against children including neglect, cruelty and abduction
- Miscellaneous offences e.g. supply / possession of drugs, public order offences, perverting the course of justice, harassment, driving offences, possession of an offensive weapon, criminal damage, arson and supervision breaches
Findings of Banardo’s Street team, Glasgow

- Young people attended parties in private residences in Glasgow where they were introduced to older men and exchanged sex to gain drugs, alcohol etc. (Munro 2004)
- Some girls were taken to a restaurant where they were exploited
- Grooming created dependency
- Offenders residences were considered “Safe Houses” by victims
- In some cases victims believed that they were exploiting the adults
Models of Offending
4 PRECONDITIONS FOR SEXUAL OFFENDING (Finkelhor et al)

- MOTIVATION
- OVERCOMING INTERNAL INHIBITIONS
- OVERCOMING EXTERNAL INHIBITIONS
- OVERCOMING THE RESISTANCE OF THE VICTIM
Motivation

- Personal Affirmation
- The need for power and control and/or sadistic tendencies
- Gaining status and respect among peers or a reputation within a group of offenders
Overcoming Internal Inhibitions

- Cognitive Distortions e.g. Post Hoc Rationalisation, Objectification of the victim
- Behaviour is legitimised by other offenders within the network
- Attitudes e.g. gender and sex role expectations, misogyny, attitudes that support or condone sexual violence
- Generalised anti-social behaviour and attitudes
Overcoming External Inhibitions

Perpetrators have become well organised and sophisticated in their tactics:

- Targeting areas where there young people congregate and there is little or no adult supervision e.g. Shopping centres, parks, taxi ranks, train stations.
- Grooming may also be found in adult environments such as pubs, clubs and bars
- On-line e.g. web sites and chat rooms and social media
Overcoming the resistance of the victim

GROOMING

- Ensnaring
- Creating Dependency
- Taking Control
- Total Dominance
Control and Coercion

- Mobile Phone as gift: Once the victim becomes dependent upon the offender and the phone for communication, he takes the phone away.
- Abuse is filmed on mobile phones – images are shared with other offenders and the victim is blackmailed.
- Victims often present when peers are abused by the offender group, often in the same room or somewhere else on the premises. The knowledge of violent abuse of peers reinforces fear of perpetrators.
- Trafficking between large towns disorientates victim and increases reliance on the offender.
- Actual and threatened violence towards victim, threats to harm family, friends or pets if they disclose or do not comply.
Coercion and Control

- Emotional Coercion is closely associated with the “Boyfriend” MO
- Offenders often reinforce the perception among victims of owing a debt as a means of psychological coercion (most common when drugs have been supplied as part of the grooming process)
- In some cases victims have been locked in premises
- Some victims have been held down and gang raped
THE OFFENDING CYCLE

- LOW SELF-ESTEEM
- EXPECTS REJECTION
- WITHDRAWS
- UNASSERTIVE
- COMPENSATORY FANTASIES
- SEXUAL ESCAPISM
- GROOMING/REHEARSAL
- OUTLET
- INADEQUATE OFFENDER TYPE
- TRANSITORY GUILT
- PUSH AWAY GUILT

Craig Barlow Consultancy & Training Ltd 2013
5 Tracks (Circumstances under which offender abuses a victim – Brayley & Cockbain 2010)

- **Cruise** – victim selection, searching out a victim, on foot or in car
- **Abuse** – Where the offender has already socialised with the victim but not previously sexually abused them; “relationship” escalates to abuse
- **Recruit via girl** – “Girlfriend” is coerced into recruiting other girls (usually friends), offender may give specific instructions who to recruit
- **Re-Abuse**
- **“Pimp”** – Motivated to obtain power and respect / reputation from peers
Each Track has 3 stages

- Find
- Groom
- Abuse – vaginal, oral and anal rape, forced masturbation and sexual touching / assault

Alcohol and drugs are used to cause confusion and disorientation

Threats and actual physical violence are used to coerce victims and establish control
Networked Offending

- Offender networks may vary in organisation and structure
- Social network analyses helps to identify offenders with key roles in the overall function of the network
- Offender networks are based upon pre-existing social networks (friends, associates and relatives)
- Not all offenders within the network groom victims – a subset of offenders may recruit and groom victims for abuse
Organised Crime Groups

- Groups of offenders, working in networks to abuse children may be considered Organised Crime Groups (OCGs)
- These can vary in characteristics and level of organisation
- 2 or more offenders acting in concert to abuse children may be considered an OCG
- Unlike other forms of Organised Crime, Child Sexual Exploitation OCGs are primarily motivated by sexual deviancy
How can we tackle CSE?

- The difficulty in addressing Child Sexual Exploitation is that it does not conform to a single model.
- This is because it is a concept that operates on numerous levels and manifests itself in a variety of ways.
- The distinctive characteristic of Child Sexual Exploitation is that it involves two or more offenders working together to sexually exploit children.
- CSE is a modus operandi, a way of committing sexual offences and therefore may vary in nature and form according to victimology and characteristics of the area, network and perpetrators.
Address the developmental and situational factors that lead to Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse occurring.

- **Primary Measures:** focus on the general well being of individuals
- An educational programme for children and young people
- Provide information to parents and carers (including residential carers) and communities to raise awareness through leaflets, meetings and information on warning signs and sources of help and advice.
Secondary Measures: Focus on intervening with children and young people at risk of becoming victims or perpetrators.

- Early intervention strategies for young people identified as being at risk of being sexually exploited.
- Reporting systems that facilitate analysis of the nature and extent of the issues locally.
- Improve the quality of data on the numbers of children that go missing from home or care.
- A multi-agency co-operation and information sharing.
• **Tertiary Measures**: Target those that have already been involved in crime or victimisation and relate to deflection, investigation, arrest, prosecution

• Use of ROSHOs, SOPOS, ASBOS, Child Abduction Notices

• Evaluate the experiences of victims from referral through investigation and prosecution and identify unmet victim / witness support needs.

• Explore wider and creative options for use of existing legislation and measures and the engagement of other agencies such as Licensing Departments, Housing Departments.