

BETTER TOGETHER

2018 ATSA Conference | Friday October 19 | 3:30 PM – 5:00 PM

F-40

Exploring Why Men View Internet Child Pornography; Implications for Treatment, Research and Prevention

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The viewing and trading of child sex abuse images (child pornography) has become the fastest growing category of sexual offense in the modern era. There is increasing evidence that the perceived anonymity of the internet is acting as a catalyst in facilitating an interest in the sexual images of children and subsequent offending behaviors. Researchers and treatment providers have a better understanding of the dynamics of this type of internet offending, but there is an emerging need to develop a deeper understanding of the how and why these men initially access child pornography, as well as what kept them viewing this material. The presenters believe that, when the foundations of offenses involving internet child sex abuse images are better understood, the information will guide assessment and treatment to be more effective, as well as lend itself to more detailed and relevant prevention efforts in the communities we serve.

The presenters developed and distributed a survey for internet child pornography offenders. This survey was distributed to sex offender treatment clinics throughout the Pacific Northwest United States (Oregon & Washington) and was administered to men who had been convicted of a sexual offense involving accessing or trading child pornography. The purpose of this survey was to obtain information directly from offenders regarding how and why they initially accessed illegal images. Subjects were also queried regarding sexual, interpersonal and emotional factors that contributed to their continued viewing of these materials once they initially accessed them. The survey also examined some other potentially relevant factors including early sexual experience, knowledge of illegality, other risk taking behaviors, initial access and history of any type of pornography, history of contact offending and sexual attractions.

This presentation will begin with a brief review of what is known, including the current literature on the demographics of internet offenders and dynamics of accessing and viewing child pornography. The presenters will then reveal the findings of their research in four sections: 1) How and why men initially accessed child pornography; 2) relevant factors that maintained their behaviors; 3) Other relevant factors that may have contributed to a propensity to view child pornography and ; 4) Subject demographics.

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Using the results of their research, the presenters will compare and contrast their findings to the current literature. They will offer a model of pathways to child pornography use, integrating the relevant information in a way that emphasizes client vulnerabilities and significant intervention areas. The practical application of this information will then be discussed in the context of how it can improve assessment and treatment of men who have accessed child pornography. The information on how and why men initially access child pornography will be discussed in the context of future targeted prevention efforts and how these efforts might be improved. There will be a brief talk on the limitations of this project and how this information might guide future research in this area. The presenters intend to leave 10-15 minutes for a facilitated discussion on how this information converges or diverges from audience experience in working with this population. There will be time for questions at the conclusion of this presentation.

Learning Goals:

- To develop an understanding of the historical and dynamic factors that contribute to men initially accessing child pornography.
- To more clearly recognize the emotional, interpersonal and sexual motivations for offenders to continue child pornography use after initially accessing such.
- To identify at least one new concept that participants can apply in their future research, treatment, assessment or prevention efforts with internet child pornography offenders.

Dr. McGovern is a licensed psychologist who has specialized in the assessment and treatment of sexual disorders for 42 years. In this professional role he has completed over four thousand psychosexual assessments including a large number of evaluations of internet offenders. During his career, he has also consulted with a variety of state agencies and was an affiliate faculty member in the department of psychiatry Oregon Health Sciences University for decades. He is a Certified Sex Offender Treatment Provider in the State of Washington and a Certified Forensic Evaluator in the State of Oregon. Dr. McGovern regularly testifies in court regarding forensic issues associated with offending and victimization. A dynamic and entertaining presenter, Dr. McGovern has presented at many conferences and professional settings over the last four decades.

Dr. Thomas Brewer has a vast experience base working in a number of mental health and addictions treatment setting. He has a wealth of experience assessing and treating sexual offenders as well as identified sexual addicts, and has done so since 1994. He is a psychologist and Clinical Director of Sunset Psychological Services, LLC in Portland Oregon, which houses six clinicians and serves a large population from numerous counties in both Oregon and Washington. He is certified as a Sex Offender Treatment Provider in two states and is certified as a Certified Sex Addiction Therapist by the International Institute of Trauma & Addiction Professionals. He has developed and run specialized programs for child pornography offenders since 2006 and spoken on issues of treatment and assessment of men who have accessed child pornography at numerous state and national conferences.