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Pathways Model for Online Child Sexual Exploitation Material Offending: Research and Clinical Practice

Symposium Chair: Derek Perkins, PhD
Royal Holloway University of London

This paper proposes three interrelated topics that together form a framework for understanding and working with clients whose sexual offense involved Child Sexual Exploitation Material (CSEM). The first paper will focus on the development and application of a case formulation model for individuals who have viewed, distributed, and/or shared child sexual exploitation material. Thematic analysis identified seven superordinate themes that are proposed to shape an individual's pathway to CSEM offending. Results from use of a multi-modal sexual interest assessment (EISIP) within this case formulation model are also presented. The second paper will summarize applications of the case formulation model in sex offender group therapy practice in UK and US contexts. The results of a feasibility evaluation that involved clinician's feedback on the use of the pathway in case formulation and treatment planning will be discussed. The third paper will focus on how autobiographies and the use of digital analysis could inform clinicians and clients about risk and treatment needs. We are exploring how autobiographies could also elicit information about an individual's pathway to offending.

Development of a Pathways Model for Online Child Sexual Exploitation Material Offending (CSEM_PM)

Derek Perkins, PhD
Royal Holloway University of London
Hannah Merdian, PhD
University of Lincoln

Significant increases in the number of arrests of individuals who download or distribute Child Sexual Exploitation Material (CSEM) has highlighted a need to further understand the pathways to offending of this relatively new offender group. Merdian, Perkins, Dustagheer & Glorney (2018) developed an aetiological model specific to CSEM offending, producing seven superordinate themes associated with: early developmental issues, offence-related (risk and protective) propensities, personal circumstances at the time of offending, permission-giving thoughts (and their interaction with online sexual arousal), modes of

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engagement with the internet, evaluation of personal consequences of offending, and desistence-inhibiting or -enhancing factors. This highlighted how complex interactions between offence-related propensities / vulnerabilities, personal circumstances, and immersion in the internet environment could decrease engagement with the real world and increase the risk of CSEM offending. The participants were assessed using a combination of information on file, interviews, psychometric assessments, and the Explicit and Implicit Sexual Interest Profile (EISIP) (Banse, Schmidt & Clarbour (2010), a laptop administered measure of age and gender sexual preferences that combines self-report measures and two objective measures based on viewing time and an implicit association protocol. Findings on the interactions between the EISIP results and other domains of the CSEM_PM with adult offenders and adolescents having engaged in sexually harmful behaviour, including use of CSEM, are presented.

Learning Goals:

- Attendees will be able to identify key risk factors and treatment need issues for online child sexual exploitation material (CSEM) offenders.
- Attendees will be able to explain key developmental processes in pathways to CSEM offending.
- Attendees will learn what the Explicit and Implicit Sexual Interest Profile (EISIP) assessment tool can contribute to the assessment and treatment of CSEM offenders.

Testing the CSE_PM Case Formulation Model and Tool in Sex Offender Group Therapy Practice in UK and US Contexts: Clinical and Research Issues

Hannah Merdian, PhD
University of Lincoln
Allen Azizian, PhD
California State University, Fresno
Derek Perkins, PhD
Royal Holloway University of London

The Child Sexual Exploitation Material Pathways Model (CSEM_PM) (Merdian et al, 2018) was translated into a case formulation and treatment planning tool specific for CSEM offending designed to be: (1) Collaborative: working with CSEM users in a process of shared enquiry and analysis, in which their own life goals and ideas for therapy are elicited and harnessed and (2) Comprehensive: covering a) the emergence of offence-related propensities (sexual deviance, antisociality, and socio-emotional dysfunctionality); b) the development of protective propensities (social responsibility, capacity for empathy for others, problem solving skills); c) current personal situational factors (including intimate relationships, friendships, and work-related issues); and d) wider, internet-related

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systemic factors. A feasibility study (Meridian et al, 2018) based on the REAIM principles, to test the integration of the CSEM_PM case formulation tool in a UK community treatment intervention for this offender group involved comparisons between two Intervention Groups, in which the CSEM_PM tool as used, and two Control Groups, in which the group program was run ‘as usual’ assessed program outcomes based on a combination of interviews, feedback from the group participants and group facilitators, and a series of psychometric tests administered before, during, and after the treatment. Based on this work, a second study was carried out in the US, which involved: training community-based sex offender treatment facilitators on the CSEM_PM model and assessing the effect of this on the offenders’ subsequent progress in a rolling group therapy program specifically designed for internet-based sexual offenders.

Learning Goals:

- Attendees will be able to describe the Pathways Model for child sexual exploitation material offending.
- Attendees will be able to explain key issues in providing psychological therapies for internet-related sex offending.
- Attendees will become familiar with the range of assessments used in re/assessing online sex offenders’ treatment needs and progress

What Autobiographies Tell About Risk and Treatment Needs: A Digital Analysis

Allen Azizian, PhD
California State University, Fresno
Sarah Paden
Devinalexus Marin
Ryan Boyd
Derek Perkins, PhD
Royal Holloway University of London

Completing and presenting an autobiography is considered one of the core group assignments in sex offender treatment programs. This presentation focuses on the extent to which computerized linguistic analysis of autobiographies could inform clinicians about risk level and treatment needs. The autobiographies of 33 clients whose offenses include at least one conviction of viewing child sexual exploitation material was studied. We used a linguistic analysis software called Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC; Pennebaker, Booth, Boyd, & Francis, 2015), which contains word-to-category mappings for around 80 categories of words, falling into either common content words or function words. The program operates by counting the number of words that fall into each of the LIWC dictionary categories, then producing an overall percentage for each category. The study was exploratory and aimed to

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investigate trends between LIWC word categories, risk level, and treatment needs. Clients were more likely to use first-person pronouns than other pronouns in their autobiographies. Preliminary analysis also suggested that words reflecting cognitive processes and positive emotions were correlated with low risk scores, whereas i-words, anger, and past-focused words were correlated with high risk scores. The digital analysis findings were consistent with the broader literature on the use of linguist markers and mental health functions. We are presently exploring how various themes such as loneliness, vulnerabilities, and permission-giving thought could be extracted from client autobiographies. Traditionally, presentation of their autobiography has provided clients with an opportunity for disclosure and insight on factors that may have contributed to the offending behaviour. We present implications on how the words that are used to tell life stories may influence thinking, feeling, and behaviour, and further understanding on pathway to offending.

Learning Goals:

- Attendees will be able to identify five principles of narrative-therapy.
- Attendees will be able to explain what autobiographies reveal about risk level and treatment needs.
- Attendees will learn how digital analysis could help with the interpretation of autobiographies.

Derek Perkins received his PhD in Psychology from the University of Birmingham, UK. He has worked in the prison service, community forensic services, and was Head of Forensic Psychology Services at West London Mental Health NHS Trust until 2014. He is currently a consultant clinical and forensic psychologist based at the UK high secure Broadmoor Hospital. He is a Professor of Forensic Psychology at Royal Holloway University of London, and a Trustee of the UK Lucy Faithfull Foundation child protection charity. He has set up and evaluated sex offender treatment services in prison, mental health and community settings, and has published papers and book chapters on forensic psychology, sexual offending, child sexual exploitation, sexual homicide, and personality disorder. He and Dr. Hannah Merdian (University of Lincoln) are co-directors of the onlinePROTECT research group on internet-related sexual offending.

Hannah Merdian received her PhD from the University of Waikato, New Zealand. She is a Principal Lecturer (Professional Practice) in Clinical and Forensic Psychology at the University of Lincoln, UK. She is co-Director of onlinePROTECT, a research and knowledge exchange programme addressing the safety of children and young people online and offline. She has published widely on offending behaviour concerning online child sexual exploitation material, and has devised case formulation tools and decision aids for working with complex cases. Hannah provides consultation and training for offender management and child protection services. Her work is rooted in the Scientist-Practitioner Model, with a specific interest in the analysis of “real life” data.

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Dr. Azizian received his PhD in Psychology from State University of New York, Stony Brook. After postdoctoral fellowships at Scripps Research Institute, and then University of California, Los Angeles, Integrated Substance Abuse Programs, he joined the faculty at University of Southern California as an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Psychology (non-tenure track). He then moved to Department of State Hospitals - Coalinga where he worked in assessment, treatment, and administrative, including Chief of Psychology, capacities. In 2009, he was awarded a Fulbright research and teaching award to lecture at Yerevan State Medical University, Armenia. His clinical and academic interests are threefold: sex offender laws, prevention of sexual abuse, reintegration and community supervision of sex offenders. He is an Assistant Professor of Criminology, at California State University, Fresno, Senior Psychologist, at Department of State Hospitals (Intermittent limited-term), and Clinical Director of a Community Sex Offender Treatment Program. He has published frequently in scientific journals, and presented in national and international conferences. Dr. Azizian is a research and clinical member of the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers